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Editor  
*Deepan Das*

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### *Dedicated to*

*Prof. Pradip Kumar Sengupta, Former Dean, faculty of Arts, University of North Bengal, a well known Social Scientist in India who is no more with us. He will always be remembered by each one of us for his valuable contribution to the academic World.*

# CONTENTS

*Pages*

❑ From the Desk of the Editor

❑ Ethical accountability in Medical Sciences

*Niru Hazarika*

*Tejprakash Sinha*

17-30

❑ The theme of violence in the short stories of Temsula Ao

*Ritashree Kaur*

31-39

❑ In the queue of quest for revival: Kamatapur Movement

*Dhananjoy Biswas*

40-50

❑ Urban Development and its problems in India

*Rumita Boro*

51-62

❑ Urbanization and changes of Social Institutions: A case study of two Towns in Assam

*Tuniram Kalita*

63-72

❑ Jan Lokpal bill: An anti corruption draft as a means of combating Corruption

*Sikha Dutta*

73-80

❑ How can the environment of Assam be protected from getting Polluted: An analysis

*Nabashruti Paul*

81-87

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <p>❑ <b>Insurgency and Development of North east India</b><br/><i>Yugal Jyoti Gogoi</i></p>  | 88-95   |
| <p>❑ <b>The role of Gaonsabha in Panchyat adminstration</b><br/><i>Mayuri Dutta</i></p>  | 96-103  |
| <p>❑ <b>Kamala Markandaya's theme : Hunger and Degradation in Rural India</b><br/><i>Bijoya Mech</i></p>   | 104-109 |
| <p>❑ <b>Social Empowerment through Wage employment: A case of MGNREGA in Sabarkantha district, Gujarat</b><br/><i>Lemanshu Kumar</i></p>   | 110-127 |
| <p>❑ <b>Traditional Forest Resource Management in Manipur : The bond between Nature and the Society</b><br/><i>Dinjangam Riamei</i></p>  | 128-141 |
| <p>❑ <b>Peoples' Participation in Rural Development : A study of Jorhat and Margherita Development Blocks of Assam</b><br/><i>Kanaklata Konwar</i></p>                                   | 142-157 |
| <p>❑ <b>Dissenting voices and Collective Actions: An exploration towards theory-building</b><br/><i>Purnima Roy</i></p>  | 158-167 |
| <p>❑ <b>Telangana: An analysis of its emergence and the causes</b><br/><i>Rajiv Thengal</i></p>  | 168-175 |
| <p>❑ <b>Education as a tool for Women Empowerment in rural areas: An analytical study with special reference to Panitola Development Block, Dibrugarh</b><br/><i>Gayatree Lahkar</i></p> | 176-183 |

- ❑ **Negotiation is better than suppression to minimize the Insurgency in assam**  
*Jhuma Das* 184-202
- ❑ **The Sculptures of Goddess Lakshmi of ancient Assam**  
*Swadhinata Das* 203-214
- ❑ **Impact of Primary Health Centre on fertility: A Sociological study**  
*Munmi Gogoi* 215-221
- ❑ **The Bodos: The Transformations of their society in different aspects**  
*Indrani Saha* 222-229

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## About CESR

Centre for Ethnic Studies & Research (CESR) is a registered Academic Society vide regd no. RS/KAM(M)263/J/24 of 2015-2016 established on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2015 with an aim to organise seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, demonstrations, public opinion campaigns to the various ethnic issues. It will also try to publish magazines, journals etc. which will provide a platform for all Social Scientists including young scholars for exchange of ideas, interchange of opinions on the issues of the socio-economic, political, ethno-cultural and historical problems of the region at large. Publication of the **Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research** ( JHSSR) is an such kind of effort towards this direction.

## ***From the Desk of Editor***

The Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research (JHSSR) is a peer-reviewed journal published in English. It is a multi-disciplinary publication dedicated to the scholarly study of all aspects of Humanities and Social Sciences. Particular attention is paid to Philosophy, History, Geography, Political Science, Public Administration, Human Rights, Rural Development, Economics, Commerce, Management, Education, Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work, Mass Communication, Law, Environment and Developmental issues, as well as ethical questions related to scientific and empirical research.

The Journal seeks to encourage comprehensive and critical study and research on the above subjects; to provide a forum for the study of Humanities and Social Sciences in the global context; to promote dissemination, exchange and discussion of research findings; and to encourage interaction among academics from various traditions of learning.

The main objective of the journal is to provide a platform to all social scientists including young scholars for exchange of ideas, interchange of opinions on the issues of the socio-economic, political, ethnocultural and historical problems of India and abroad.

It welcomes articles with rigorous reasoning supported by authentic documents. Papers based on empirical research will be given priority in publication.

It also encourages the inter-disciplinary studies that are accessible to a wider groups of social scientists, young scholars and the policy makers.

The journal will also provide ample scope to research notes, comments, book reviews in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Contributions to the volume poured in from different scholars and well wishers from North East India and abroad. While at the very outset no specific

themes were decided upon for the purpose, papers prepared by the scholars according to their own choice covering major contemporary issues in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences are published in this issue.

Niru Hazarkia and Tez Prakash Sinha in their paper ***Ethical Accountability in Medical Sciences*** assert that medical professionals occupy a unique position in the human society as they deal with the ailing members of it and their decisions and performance of duties have immediate impact on the right to life of the patients. The ethical accountability in the medical services is much higher than that of other services available in a modern democracy.

Ritashree Kaur in her paper ***The Theme of Violence in the Short Stories of Tamsula Ao*** says that fiction from the North-East is mainly ethnographic and woman writers have made a huge contribution to that fiction. Insurgency, which has dominated the region for the last half century or more is one of Mrs. Ao's main themes.

***In the queue of Quest for Revival : Kamatapur Movement*** by Dhananjay Biswas is interesting and region specific. In this paper he makes a serious attempt to highlight the historical background and factors that involve in the rise of various ethnic identity based Movements in general and Kamatapur Movement in particular. The paper also tries to give a brief description of the historical origin of the Kamatapur Movement.

Rumita Boro's paper entitled ***Urban Development and its Problems in India*** is mainly centred around the city life and the problems faced by the city dwellers of India. The paper highlights some of the major factors that are directly or indirectly responsible for sufferings of the city residents. The paper also mentions the social effect of urbanisation in family life of the urban people.

Tuniram Kalita in his paper ***Urbanization and Changes of Social Institutions: A Case Study of two Towns in Assam*** tries to examine the various factors for undergoing changes in the present day social institutions due to the

impact of urbanization.

In her paper entitled ***Jan Lokpal Bill: An Anti Corruption Draft as a Means of Combating Corruption***, Sikha Dutta tries to contend that modern civilization is corrupt to the core. Eradication of corruption must be made within the framework of the constitution. The Jan Lokpal bill is designed for the good of life and thus it must be powerful enough to enable society to change over to a normal way of life.

Nabashruti Paul in her paper titled ***How Can the Environment of Assam be Protected from Getting Polluted: An Analysis*** make an attempt to analyse the meaning of environment pollution, and its impact on human life and the solutions to the problems.

In his paper titled ***Insurgency and Development of North East India***, Yugal Jyoti Gogoi has stated that North-East region is being surrounded by international borders is plagued by insurgency which has hampered the development of the region at large.

Mayuri Dutta in her article, ***The Role of Gaon Sabha in Panchyat Administration*** observed that Gaon Sabha is the only institution which provides direct and active participation of people in the affairs of village governance. However, operational aspects of Gaon Sabha are not satisfactory in most of the states in India. There is need for strong political will and awareness on the part of the villagers to strengthen this institution for success of participatory democracy.

Bijoya Mech in her paper ***Kamala Markandaya's Theme : Hunger and Degradation in Rural India***, takes a closer look at her novel, "Nectar in Sieve" (1954). Nathan and Rukmani the protagonists, represent thousands of innocent poor farmers hiring amidst the region of terror and uncertainties let loose by rapid industrialisation and unemployment.

Lemanshu Kumar in his paper entitled: ***Social Empowerment Through Wage Employment: a Case of MGNREGA in Sabarkantha District, Gujarat*** tried

to discuss about social empowerment through wage employment in the context of MGNREGA in Gujarat. A descriptive cum analytical method is followed to uphold the findings of the study.

In his paper entitled ***Traditional Forest Resource Management in Manipur: The Bond Between Nature and the Society***, Dinjangam Riamei tries to examine traditional forest resource management, the long established forest and subsequent use of forestland and their strong cultural links. He also examines the very close affinity with the forests which encompasses a wide spectrum of life

Kanaklata Konwar in her paper titled ***Peoples' Participation in Rural Development : A Study of Jorhat and Margherita Development Blocks Of Assam***, examines the extent of peoples' participation and involvement in different Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in the three villages of the Jorhat and Margherita Development Blocks of Assam.

In her paper, titled ***Dissenting Voices and Collective Actions: An Exploration Towards Theory-building***, Purnima Roy makes an attempt to examine the notion of collective action from a different perspectives keeping the community state relationship of the centre- stage.

Rajiv Thengal in his paper titled ***Telangana: An Analysis of its Emergence and the Causes***, tries to analyse the evolution of Telegana and causes that lead to its emergence. He has followed a descriptive cum analytical method to uphold the present study.

Gayatree Lahkar in her paper titled ***Education as a Tool for Women Empowerment in Rural Areas: An Analytical Study with Special Reference to Panitola Development Block, Dibrugarh***, asserts that Woman Empowerment is a global issue. In this context, education can play an active role. Women empowerment is closely related to education as it is the strong instrument for bringing change and development. Hence, in this paper, an attempt has been made to

analyse education as a tool for women empowerment in rural areas. For this study Panitola Development Block of Dibrugarh District is selected.

Jhuma Das in her paper entitled ***Negotiation is Better than Suppression to Minimize the Insurgency in Assam***, tries to focus the importance of negotiation to minimize the insurgency problems of Assam. It will also try to highlight the process of Peace-Talks and Negotiation must be preceded with the real objectives and with meaningful intentions.

In her paper entitled ***The Sculptures of Goddess Lakshmi of Ancient Assam***, Swadhinata Das makes an analysis about the origin and development of goddess Lakshmi and her presentation in the sculptural art of Assam. To undertake the research work the scholar has performed a thorough study of religious texts and makes a comparative study of images of Lakshmi of Assam and other places.

Munmi Gogoi in her paper entitled ***Impact of Primary Health Centre on Fertility: A Sociological Study***, makes an attempted to how Primary Health Centre that are running in Assam has a great effect on reducing fertility rate in village level. The improved educational status of women, their participation in public life and their social awareness are very closely linked with the reproductive and child health services.

Deepan Das  
(Editor)





# ETHICAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN MEDICAL SCIENCES

Niru Hazarika\*  
Tejprakash Sinha\*

## ABSTRACT

Medical professionals occupy a unique position in the human society as they deal with the ailing members of it and their decisions and performance of duties have immediate impact on the right to life of the patients. In India the patient population is increasing day by day and at the same time the situation of medical services is gravitated by the problems like unaccounted medical errors, medical negligence, involvement in unethical activities by the medical professionals etc. The ethical accountability in the medical services is much higher than that of other services available in a modern democracy. The term "accountability" involves the expectation of account giving behavior. It embraces ethical accountability in the perspective of ethical framework with the aims of safeguarding of human rights in broader sense.

**(Key Words:** ethics, autonomy, accountability, corruption, good governance, medical error.)

## Introduction

The term accountability involves either the expectation or assumption of account-giving behavior. This is at the heart of every service or the act of an individual. The term 'accountable' seems to have come to usage in the English language for the first time in 1583 and context was financial. Even to-day financial accountability is a part of

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public services. The other component of accountability, such as legal accountability, social accountability and ethical accountability did not get much space in the debate on accountability for a long time. Similarly, the term audit in public services had financial context only. However, today emphasis is given on social audit, academic audit etc widening the jurisdiction of it. Audit is closely related to accountability. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines 'accountable' as liable to be called to account, responsible to/for. New International Dictionary of the English language explains it as 'liable to be called on to render account'<sup>(1)</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a phenomenal growth of activities necessitated delegation of power or more dependence on policy making matters on the public servants, which provides more offspring in the existing rules and regulations inviting the need of accountability.<sup>(2)</sup>

In ethics and governance, accountability is answerability, liability and expectation of account giving. It also demands accounting. The concept of ethical accountability is a comprehensive one. Within an organization the principles and practices of ethical accountability aim to improve both the internal standard of individual conduct or group conduct as well as external factors.<sup>(3)</sup> Everyone has to keep accounts of his or her own tasks as a member of any profession. It requires analysis of duty of a person. Duty is a composite term. It consists of certain tasks. Every task has its financial, legal and moral implications. A scientific analysis of a job/duty helps ensuring accountability by the concerned authority of the personnel within the organization. It is essential for ethical audit.

Closely connected to it is moral responsibility which is nothing but the status of morally deserving praise, blame, reward, or punishment for an act or omission. In accordance with one's moral obligations. People who have moral responsibility for an action are called moral agents. <sup>(4)</sup>

The ethical responsibility or accountability in the medical services is much higher than that of other services available in a modern democracy, especially in contemporary India as it is in the process of development in certain areas. There are many reasons of it. Some of them are -the medical service providers, especially the physicians have the privilege of having highest degree of autonomy so far as the treatment of the patients is concerned; medical services deal directly with the basic

human right i.e. right to life of an individual; these services always meet the ailing section of the nation; the patients surrender themselves completely to the physicians, which generally happens once a patient is put on the operation table; the physicians constitute one of the custodians of the nation's security with the emergence of man's health as a new area within the non-conventional concept of human security. Dr. R.P.Sapru in his paper, *The Conflict of Ethics and Social Justice in Developing Countries* presented in an international Conference on Health Policies : Ethics and Human Values stated, "It is no denying a fact that the evolution of societal forms of living throughout the animal world has been an innate response to the compulsions of self-preservation. However, unlike rest of the animal world, the human attribute of reason has permitted our species to break the biological barriers and subjugate, to some extent, nature to human will. This has opened up several dimensions for societal development within the human species far beyond those found in the rest of the animal world. Even to-day self-preservation is the basis of social living." He indicated two major components of self-preservation – security and sound health.<sup>(5)</sup>

Even in the ancient world, in every civilization, there was science of medicine which played a significant role in the process of human security. Every great civilization tried to devise a scheme by which ailments could be controlled and prevented. India also had that. In the ancient days, our systems of medicine and surgery were not deficient. Radhakrishnan mentioned in this context, "The other day I was reading a book, *The Story of Medicine*, and the author, Dr.Kenneth Walker, makes out that it is wonderful to know how so many different surgical operations were devised by the ancient Indians including what is now called Rhinoplasty. They used to take a flap of the forehead and stick it to the nose to correct its deficiencies. That kind of plastic surgery was employed in our country in the ancient days. Many things were devised; many surgical operations performed. But, unfortunately, as in many other spheres of our activity, our development got arrested. It came to a standstill. People who were practicing these things were content merely repeating what had been handed down to them, but were not making any progress, with the result, Ayurveda fell on evil days".<sup>(6)</sup>

India has also a long history in the field of higher education. The

world's first University was established in Takshila or Taxila or Takshashila (now in Pakistan) in 700 BC. It was an important Vedic/Hindu and Buddhist Centre of learning. More than 10,500 students from all over the world studied here. The campus accommodated students who came from as far as Babylonia, Greece, Arabia and other places. The University was specialized in the study of medicine. Panini, the famous Sanskrit grammarian, Kautilya (Chanakya) and Charaka, the famous physician of ancient India and Chandragupta Maurya were the products of the University.<sup>(7)</sup> The medical practitioners in India are making appreciable contribution towards human security since ancient time. They could command faith of the patients with their expertness as well as dedicated service.

The comprehensiveness of jurisdiction of medicine is reflected in the Sir William Hunter's observations on Hindu medicine and surgery in ancient India as, "Indian medicine' he writes," dealt with the whole area of the science. It described the structure of the body, its organs, ligaments, muscles, vessels and tissues.....Much attention was devoted to hygiene, regimen of the body, and diet.....They conducted operations in the abdomen and uterus, cured hernia, fistula, piles.....and were dexterous in the extraction of foreign substances from the body. A special branch of surgery was devoted to rhinoplasty (operation for improving deformed ears and noses) ."<sup>(8)</sup>

With the rapid increase of patient population in modern India medical practitioners of the country have to bear a very heavy responsibility of responding to the most basic need of human beings - health of a large group of people with diverse diseases. Recently in a special research paper published in the Lancet Oncology Journal indicated that every year 10 lakh Indians are diagnosed with cancer and another 6 to 7 lakh die of it. And it is feared that, by 2035 these numbers may double to 17 lakh deaths per year. It is a serious threat to Indian economy as well as human resource.<sup>(9)</sup>The right to health and treatment has been universally acknowledged as one of the primary ingredients of the right to life.<sup>(10)</sup> Naturally, the practitioners occupy a unique position in the security of a nation.

.However, in course of time things change. The patients who had unquestionable faith on the doctors have started moving other way round.

Conflicts are arising between patients/ attendants and the doctors leading to violent behavior of the aggrieved parties. Medical errors, negligence, undue delay in treatment, strikes of the doctors, corruption etc. are taking place in the world of medicine in the country. Mention may also be made of what appears in the Times of India recently on medical errors. India is recording a whopping of 5.2 million injuries each year due to medical errors and adverse events. A landmark report by Ashish Jha, an Indian doctor, Professor of health policy and management at Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) has concluded that more than 43 million people are injured worldwide each year due to unsafe medical care. He said, "We find that millions of people around the world are hurt, disabled and sometimes even die as a result of medical errors".

HSPH researchers along with colleagues at the Patient Safety Programme of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the RTI International in Durban used data from more than 4,000 articles that have been published over the previous few decades that focused on adverse events in hospitals, as well as from epidemiologic studies commissioned by WHO aimed at estimating how much these events harmed patients.

They examined seven different adverse outcomes that can occur while patients are hospitalized - injuries due to medications, catheter-related urinary tract infections, catheter-related blood stream infections, hospital-acquired pneumonia, blood clots in veins, falls and bedsores. There are many other types of adverse events not examined in this study -such as the use of infected needles, tainted blood products, or counterfeit drugs etc.

The UN body said that surgery had become common, with one in 25 people undergoing it at any given time. China conducted the highest number of surgeries followed by Russia and India. In developing countries, the death rate was nearly 10% for a major surgery. Mortality from general an aesthesia affected one in every 150 patients while infections were reported 3% of surgeries with the mortality rate of 5%. Nearly 50% of the adverse effects of surgery were preventable<sup>(11)</sup>

What are the possible causes of errors ? One can easily assume certain common causes for it, such as, heavy work load, rush of patients, fatigue, absentmindedness, ill health, tension, conflicting situation,

disinterestedness, lack of concentration, lack of command over the subject, dissatisfaction with working conditions, forgetfulness, irritating behavior of the coworkers, frustration, shortage of time, too much disruption in the work process by higher authorities, nervousness, lack of stability of mind, hidden tendency to search for foul means of getting money, pressurization from the patient/attendant so on and so forth. All these are the common factors responsible for adverse events. These are also preventable events.

What are the ways to prevent preventable adverse events? Experience shows that laws of the country including the Constitution of India provide enough legal measures to ensure accountability of the physicians and service providers, but the new ways of malpractices are invented by the service providers and they use the gaps and flows of the laws for self defense for their unethical acts. It seems Medical Council of India recently issued a revised code of ethics urging doctors not to accept gifts from pharma companies. But pharma companies' hold over doctors and hospitals remains strong. What is needed here is self discipline and ethical values to be adhered by the medical service providers and people's awareness and their cooperation for successful implementation of the laws of the Government. The ethical accountability comes from the inner feeling or realization of human values.

However, young resident doctors of JJ Hospital, Mumbai demonstrated unprecedented example of realization of evil consequences of medical malpractices through self- discipline at a time when the movement launched by the Indians at the leadership of Anna Hazare in favour of introduction of Lok Pal Bill as a anti-corruption measure.

A group of five hundred resident doctors from Mumbai's four government hospitals joined Anna Hazare's anti-corruption campaign without a march, without raising slogans. Their protest was close in spirit to the Gandhian ideals that Anna Hazare swears. The doctors attached to GT, St George, Cama and JJ hospitals who were dejected after being denied permission to march to Azad Maidan and had approached JJ Hospital Dean for help, were given a lesson in becoming Anna Hazare themselves. He told them that instead of ruing not being

able to join the protestators, they should take an oath to become non—corrupt themselves.

Minutes later, they were being administered an eight-point oath where they swore, among other things, to discourage female foeticide, not to accept commissions from pharma companies and not to charge for referring patients to other doctors.

The impromptu oath ceremony took place at a ground outside Dr.Lahane’s office after the post graduate doctors were disallowed to march to Azad Maidan to express solidarity with Anna Hazarae. “They were dejected after they were denied permission to march to Azad Maidan. However the Dean decided to use the opportunity to tell them that the best way to kill corruption is to become non-corrupt and that a rally isn’t the only way to support Anna.

While the students were taken aback when the Dean, instead of helping them in securing police permissions, launched into a speech, they did appreciate the fact that the oath took them closer to this fight against corruption than a couple of hours at Azad Maidan would have.

A resident doctor of JJ hospital, who was among the 500 administered oath, said he now has an all-new perspective on the anti-corruption movement. “Suddenly I realize that this fight is just as much within as it is without. How will corruption grow if we all become incorruptible.” he said. <sup>(12)</sup>

Knowledge on the subject or the work to be handled is essential in any profession as well as in any human organization to serve effectively the society. This itself is a power, however, without the human power acquired through human qualities or control over the evils of mind of an individual the knowledge power cannot traveled towards service to humanity. Here is the need of ethical principles to direct or regulate the expert knowledge for the benefit of the people as a whole. The realization of the inner power or human power by at least groups of 500 young doctors at the leadership of DrLahane is really highly appreciable. This was repeatedly expressed and practiced in India during freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and his ideas are good lessons for maintaining self-control or self-discipline. It is needed to reduce adverse events in the medical services for the safeguard of ailing

population of the country.

It is argued today very frequently by different groups of people that in the days of science and technology ethical or moral principles have no value. These are the days of competition, said by several Indian parents of the children, while asking them about their school going children whenever we meet them in work place or in any other public places. Even the social relationships are curtailed by the parents to the barest minimum so that their children can remain in the queue to compete with fellow students. Here the question arises as to the utility of the expert knowledge of the children. While welcoming them to the human society to be benefitted by their expert knowledge peoples' expectation is not fulfilled in many cases. So doubt arises in the mind of a man as to what extent the expertness on a particular subject works as a driving force to liberate a man or woman to work hard for the humanity. Can a man without human qualities serve the humanity? Can a selfish man understand the sentiment of a man of sacrifice? It is easy to appreciate a good singer, a dedicated teacher or an efficient physician without being a singer, teacher or doctor respectively, but the appreciator may be totally failure when he or she is in the practical field. Here emerges the significance of Hippocratic Oath of the doctors and the need of ethical codes. With the progress of science and technology its importance is increasing instead of decreasing. Like many other international efforts, WMA Declaration of Tokyo expressed it explicitly in its 173<sup>rd</sup> Council session at France, the preamble of which goes as:

“It is the privilege of the physician to practice medicine in the service of humanity, to preserve and restore boldly and mental health without distinction as to persons, to comfort and so to ease the suffering of his or her patients. The utmost respect for human life is to be maintained even under threat, and no use made of any medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity. ...”

The declaration 1 says that the physician shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offense of which the victim of such procedures is suspected, accused or guilty and whatever the victim's beliefs or motives, and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife. The declaration 2. Says that the physician shall



not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge to facilitate the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or to diminish the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.<sup>(13)</sup>

M. Ruthnaswamy, in his book titled, *Principles and Practices of Public Administration*” discussed the qualities of the administrators which are applicable even to physicians. Truthfulness, honesty, trustworthiness, conformity to the moral standards of civilized society, physical soundness, a fair measure of education is required for every expert or professional. Love for Knowledge: A physician must have knowledge of the facts. But he should not be mere slave of facts and this knowledge should not be acquired from books, official documents, learned reviews and newspapers and other printed works but from conversation with patients and attendants. The study of the people, their way of life, their separate groupings, as physicians, their relationship with the colleagues, subordinates and superiors and others are necessary. Devotion to detail is another quality to be possessed by him. *Reason and Objectivity*: The service of the state requires the physician to consider the family interest next to the state’s interest which is possible through honest and efficient service to the patients. “Reason”, said Richelieu, “ought to animate and cause the action of those that are in employment of public affairs.” *Ability to anticipate events* is another quality of the physician. He should not wait till things become dangerous or worst. *Mastery over the art of expression*: Ability to write clearly, intelligently, precisely and economically is expected of everybody in office and in every profession. *Character*: “There is greater need of character in administration than in war”, said Napoleon. *Self-control*: Self-control is a very essential quality of physicians. *Application*: Application is more a moral than an intellectual quality. Not incessant work but attachment to one’s own in spirit, in thought, in affection was what Richelieu meant by application. However, in certain services special qualities are required, for example, for police, courage, quickness of thought, an eye on detail and a reliable memory in addition to physical strength and agility are necessary.<sup>(14)</sup>

The motto of service to humanity in the medical services has a close relevance to Gandhi’s ideas on humanism. Gandhi’s freedom was inward freedom of an individual. Human activism must be based on

moral principles and these actions are always voluntary in nature. Morality cannot exist in any task performed out of compulsion. Any action directed by fear or by coercion cannot be called moral.<sup>(15)</sup>

As regards the freedom of the physicians to take decision on the treatment of patients one may refer what Gandhi thought of freedom of individuals. To him individual is free to speak the truth, not free to lie, free to serve, not to exploit, free to sacrifice himself but not free to kill or injure.”<sup>(16)</sup>

The ethical aspect of medical sciences is gaining importance day by day. Before the introduction of modern medicine by the British in India there existed traditional medicine. The term “traditional medicine” refers to ways of protecting and restoring health that existed before the arrival of modern medicine. As the term implies, these approaches to health belong to the traditions of each country, and have been handed over down from generation to generation. Traditional systems generally have had to meet the needs of the local communities for many centuries. China and India, for example, have developed very sophisticated systems such as acupuncture and ayurvedic medicine. In practice, the term “traditional medicine” refers to the following components : acupuncture, traditional birth attendants, mental healers and herbal medicine.<sup>(17)</sup>

Western medicine was introduced in India in eighteenth century, principally to serve the British military and civil population. Medical services were subsequently made available to a very small segment of the local population. The colonial character of health services profoundly affected almost all aspects.

In England the organized medicine first asserted itself for control over the entry of new doctors and then to have registration of practitioners so that the unqualified “quacks” were weeded out of the medical practice. The doctors led a strong movement, lobbied in the Parliament, gave evidence before the Parliamentary Committees and inspired politicians to pass laws to give monopoly over the medical care. In 1858, when the Medical Act creating General Medical Council was passed by the British Parliament the medical profession attained a national and legal status. The Act gave monopoly to practice medicine by the registered doctors and gave to the profession to lay down standards for admission and examination for new entrants.

Thus it was about two hundred years back that professionalized medicine consolidated itself as a group legally and formally recognized by the society. However, it must be admitted that no society can give a blanket authority and monopoly power to professionals without demanding adequate safeguards in return. This made the code of ethics an important vehicle for both internal regulation and discipline expected of medical practitioners and for the safeguard of patient's and thus society's interest. The legalization of medical profession therefore went hand in hand with the legalization of the internal regulation through the code of medical ethics. An ethical code which was hitherto a voluntary or moral guideline for the medical practitioners, got converted at this juncture of history into a legal code for appropriate ethical conduct for doctors.

The legalization of medical profession and the code of ethics in England gave rise to similar developments in other parts of the World. Within few decades, Europe and North America adopted similar legislation, and the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Medical Council Acts were passed in various provinces of India too.<sup>(18)</sup>

J.Denis Derbyshire and David T. Patterson expressed the inerasable need of public accountability for all the time. With increase of Government involvement in almost all facets of man's life, the need has been accentuated. Every development in a service contains in-built accountability. While looking into the legal framework of the medical profession in terms of rights, responsibilities and accountability one has to keep in mind that the people expect a doctor to exercise his professional rights and obligations reasonably. Circumstances or situation may be an excuse for him or her to exercise discretion to provide medical treatment unreasonably, irresponsibly or arbitrarily. Service to humanity and discretion on the basis of religion, nationality, race, party politics, social standing do not go together. On the otherhand unreasonable onerous burden of responsibility should not be entrusted to the doctors.<sup>(19)</sup> Under such situation sense of self-worth and human dignity disappear.

“ Respect for human dignity implies commitment to creating conditions under which individuals can develop a sense of self-worth and security. True dignity comes with an assurance of one's ability to rise to the challenges of human situations. Such assurance is unlikely to

be fostered in people who have to live with the threat of violence and injustice, with bad governance and instability or with poverty and disease.”, said Aung San Su Ky, Winner of Nobel Peace prize.<sup>(20)</sup>

With the progress of science and technology and the process of modernization of society new areas of unethical activities, distortion of social and human values are emerging. There is an urgent need to explore new devices to plug the ethical accountability gaps. Here mention may be made of the statement of objects and reasons of forwarded by the Minister KapilSibal on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2010 on “The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010” which go as - “1. There has been an unprecedented growth in higher education in recent years, of which the growth of higher professional education, especially technical and medical education has been mainly through private participation. The current national policy supported by several judicial pronouncements is against commercialization of higher education, though the policy encourages private ‘non—profit’ participation with surplus revenues to be ploughed back for growth and development of institutions. 2. There is public concern that technical and medical institutions, and universities should not resort to unfair practices, such as, charging of capitation fee and demanding donations for admitting students, not issuing receipts in respect of payments made by or on behalf of students, admission to professional programmes of study through non-transparent and questionable admission processes, low quality delivery of education services and false claims of quality of such services through misleading advertisements, engagement of unqualified or ineligible teaching faculty, forcible withholding of certificates and other documents of the students.” These contain lot of ethical flavor on the services to be provided by the technical and medical education.

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# THE THEME OF VIOLENCE IN THE SHORT STORIES OF TEMSULA AO

Ritashree Kaur\*

## ABSTRACT

*Ethnographic fiction is the main form of writing that emerges from the North-East Region of India and women writers have contributed immensely to this body of literature. The fire of insurgency has for long engulfed this strategic region for the last half a century or more making it one of the most disturbed regions. Of course, life in the North-East is not all bleak, tragic or violent. There is the serenity of the mountains, streams, and the immense beauty of its forests and above all 'hope' in the human spirit. Here, in this paper I have tried to emphasize on the writings of Temsula Ao. Temsula Ao's collection of short stories in "These Hills Called Home: Stories from A War Zone" deals with insurgency in Nagaland, fired by the right to self-determination of the Naga people. The stories capture the voices of the common Naga people who are trapped in the struggle between the state and the Naga insurgency groups. Both 'space' and 'identity' have become fluid for the people in the midst of such a situation. Temsula Ao, the author has also questioned the notion of 'nationalism' in the context of Nagaland. Another collection of her short stories "Laburnum For My Head" have mythical as well as modern overtones. In one of her stories 'The Last Song' (from "These Hills Called Home: Stories From A War Zone" ) Temsula Ao has examined the nature of 'violence' against the womenfolk in periods of tension. There was lack of adequate laws and proper judicial system, to first of all protect the womenfolk. My paper will try to unravel the various notions of 'violence,' 'space,' 'the question of identity' and other such related issues in the writings of Temsula Ao.*

**(Key words:** 'Violence,' 'trauma', 'identity,' 'space,' and 'nationalism'.)

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The North East India is one of the most diversified regions in the country featuring a mosaic of cultural and linguistic variations with distinctive identities. The region is traditionally inhabited by a large number of ethnic groups and thus well known for its multi-ethnic setting. In the Nagaland perspective the Naga people consist of many identities, with as many as 14 officially recognized Naga tribes and two Non-Naga tribes, wherein, ethnic prides are boasted but at the same time they all are mutually engaged in forging and reinforcing the common Naga identity and culture. The tribal people's aspirations to 'self determination' and 'assertion' to have full control over their resources have led to the armed conflict situation in the North East Region. Moreover, when there prevails an atmosphere in a region where people feel 'oppressed' the demand for 'sovereignty' comes up. The conflict is not just between the Centre and the State but also between the states and other communities, ethnic, or tribal groups. In short, the conflict is multilayered, multidirectional and very complex. The various movements in the North East Region have all to do with 'identity' where the survival instinct is the strongest and the most basic one. The various movements are essentially manifestations of extreme frustration and in a deep quest for dignity, self respect and preservation of their 'self- identities.' The North Eastern Region has gone through many turbulent years and that these aspects have found expression in the works of many writers. Writers across the states of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura are deeply concerned about the brutalization of their societies by the daily experience of human rights violation and the maiming of the psyche of the people, by the trauma caused by violence. Indira Goswami's *The Journey*, Arupa Patangia Kalita's powerful novel *Felanee* and short stories like 'Someday, Sometime Numoli', Sebastian Zumvu's story 'Son of the Soil' (about a young boy caught by the army for pretending to be an insurgent in order to extort money), Temsula Ao's *These Hills Called Home: Stories From a War Zone* (a vivid depiction of what happened in Nagaland in the 1960s and 1970s), Bimabati Thiyam Ongbi's story 'He's Still Alive', Dhruvajyoti Bora's trilogy on the insurgency, Rita Chaudhury's novel *Ei Samay Sei Samay* on the Assam agitation, to name but a few, have dealt with these themes in terrifying detail. However, life in North-East is not all bleak, tragic or violent. There is serenity of the mountains, streams, and the immense beauty of its forest and above all 'hope' in the human spirit.



Thus, the writers of the North-East Region depict their perceptions of the traumatic experience of people living in the midst of terror and fear and yet cherishing ‘hopes’ that human values will triumph some day and a new dawn of peace would emerge out of this trial of fire. Ethnographic fiction is the main form of writing that emerges from the North Eastern Region of India and women writers have contributed immensely to this body of literature. Here, in this paper, I have tried to emphasize on the writings of Temsula Ao, in her collection of short stories in “These Hills called Home: Stories from a War Zone” and also from another collection of her short stories “Laburnum For my Head”. In these stories, Temsula Ao writes about her own people, the Naga people-their emotions, traditions and beliefs. However the dominant theme in the collection of short stories happens to be that of ‘violence’ perpetrated by various militant outfits and by the armed forces in their counter insurgency operations. The change which came after the outbreak of the war between the Naga underground army and the Indian Government forces completely transformed the cultural ethos of the people , bringing in significant changes in what was considered the ‘Naga way of life.’

A thorough reading of the stories clearly reveals that while an overwhelming majority of the stories reflect on the theme of violence , yet there are quite a few which deals sensitively with the theme of ‘human endurance’ and the beauty of relationship in the midst of terror and violence .

Temsula Ao, the Naga Padma Shree awardee (2007), in the North East Women Writers meet (held in Dimapur,14 & 15 Sept.2012) said, “recollecting, inclusion, inversion and re-interpretation of the past were also a way of ensuring the cultural survival of the people, which might provide new artistic and theoretical framework for explorations of ancient oral or folk literature.”

More than half a century of bloodshed has marked the history of the Naga people who live in the troubled northeastern region of India. Their struggle for an independent Nagaland and their continuing search for identity provide the backdrop for the collection of stories in “These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone.”

Describing how ordinary people cope with violence, how they

negotiate power and force, seek and find safe spaces and live their lives in the midst of terror, Temsula Ao, the author, has portrayed a way of life under threat from the forces of modernization and war. No one- the young, the old, the militant with his gun, the ordinary housewife, the young woman who sings even as she is being raped-is left untouched by the violence. Economical and unadorned, the stories bring alive the poignant and bewildering experiences of people caught in a spiral of violence. In doing so, they speak movingly of the issues that lie in their heart-the issues of 'home,' 'nation,' 'nationality,' and 'identity.'

In the introductory pages (*Lest We Forget*) of "These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone," the author, has mentioned that she has endeavored to re-visit the life of these people whose pain has so far gone unmentioned and unacknowledged. According to her, these stories however, are not about 'historical facts'; nor are they about condemnation, justice or justification of the events which raged through the land like a wildfire half a century ago. On the contrary, what the stories are trying to say is that in such situations of conflict, there are no winners, only victims and the results can be measured only in human terms. For the victims, the trauma goes beyond the realm of just the physical maiming and loss of life, their very humanity is assaulted and violated, and the onslaught leaves the survivors scarred both in mind and soul. The implication of this mindset is that violence cannot provide any solution.

For decades together women of the North East Region have remarkably stood the test of time enduring with perseverance in mobilizing the society to fight unhealthy forces with dignity. We get an insight into this element in the very first story "*The Jungle Major*" of "These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone". The story actually describes about the role played by a Naga women Khatila, to save her husband, herself and her village from an adverse situation. The beautiful but simple village woman with her presence of mind foiled a meticulously planned 'operation' of the mighty Indian army and thus saved not only her husband, but the entire village. The following lines reveal her sense of happiness at the initiative that she has taken:

*"Only after the entire search party left the village could Khatila relax and she was never move grateful than or that particular morning for the ugliness of her husband which had saved not only them but the entire village."* ("These Hills called Home: Stories from a War Zone," Pg. 7).

Moreover, the story also reveals the power of the Indian Army that would lead to untold violation to not only an individual's right to life but also to the entire village as a whole.

*“Had he been killed or captured that morning the entire village would have been punished for harboring a notorious rebel and not informing the government forces about his presence in the village”. (“These Hills called Home: Stories from a War Zone”, Pg 7).*

In yet another story, ‘Soaba’ which is the second story of this collection (“These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone”) reveals the spirit of many rural youth for whom the wave of dissidence and open rebellion was heady wine and they abandoned family, careers and even permanent jobs, to join the hand of nationalist and to liberate the homeland from forces which they believed, were inimical to their aspirations to be counted among the free nations of the world. It was at the this stage that a new vocabulary also began to creep into the everyday language of the people and words like ‘convoy’, ‘grouping’, ‘curfew’ and ‘situation’ began to acquire sinister dimensions as a result of the conflict that was taking place between the government and the underground armies . ‘Curfew’ a word that did not exist earlier in the people’s vocabulary, became a dreaded fact of life for the people living in the region of turmoil.

It was the most humiliating insult that was inflicted on the Naga psyche by forcibly uprooting them from the soil of their origin and confining them in an alien environment, and furthermore denying them access to their fields, restricting them from their routine activities and most importantly, demonstrating to them that the ‘freedom’ they enjoyed could so easily be robbed at gunpoint by the invading army.

‘Soaba’ is a powerful story which brings to light how the state exerts its right to inflict violence on the Naga people through the predicament of the protagonist Soaba.

There was no one to mourn Soaba’s tragic death except a heart wounded woman, Supiba, who in spite of the wretchedness of her own life’s had tried to give him a certain measure of love, protection and care. Supiba’s role once again embraces the idea of women as a ‘caregiver’ and ‘nurturer’ equating them with ‘mother earth’ and ‘tolerance.’ But

inspite of all Supiba's concern and affectionate care everything proved inadequate when it came to protect Soaba from the senseless death brought on him by her own husband.

The objective of the Armed Forces might be to maintain peace and order. However there have been innumerable incidents of gross 'misuse of power' resulting in violation of human rights due to unaccounted power vested in the security personal.

In times of armed conflict and militant upsprings, violence increased with each passing day and thus the situation turned up to be more and more complex. A level of militarization engulfed the North East Region under the garb of insurgency and counter insurgency, and in the process women were assaulted, humiliated, raped and murdered during conflicts which were not of their making. The 'singing beauty', Apenyo in *'The Last Song'* became a victim of such a situation. She sang on, oblivious of the situation and as a result the worst was that happened to her. In this story, the author has examined the nature of 'violence' against the womenfolk in periods of tension. There was lack of adequate laws and proper judicial system, to first of all protect the womenfolk. The young girl whose last song died with her last breath lived on in the souls of those who survived the darkest day of the village.

Some other stories from "These Hills Called Home: Stories From A War Zone", such as *'The Curfew Man'*, *'Shadows'* and *'An Old Man Remembers'* bears the element of violence and hints about the turbulent period of bloodshed and tears that make up the history of the Nagas.

The second volume of Temsula Ao's short stories "Laburnum For my Head" has mythical as well as modern overtones. The stories depict a deep understanding of the human condition.

The story *'A Simple Question'* (from "Laburnum For my Head," pg 81) describes about Imdongla and her husband Tekeba, whose responsibility as a gaonburah of the locality was to inform the government about the activities of the rebels. Further, the gaonburah's were under tremendous pressure from the underground forces because every move they made was monitored from close quarters. There were instances when certain elders suspected of being with the government had been summarily executed. For the gaonburah it was an extremely untenable

situation. The story, also describes about the collection of taxes from the villagers. In the beginning it (the tax) was Re1/collected from every household to pay for the travel expenses of the rebel leader going to foreign lands to plead for Naga independence from India .But as the years went by, the demands grew and reluctance or protest was to be faced by severe beatings, not only of the person involved but of the gaonburah's and the elders as well. Moreover, villagers who persistently resisted the setting up of army camps would be forced out of their villages, their houses and their granaries would be burnt and they would be relocated along with those other villagers who did not obey or follow their instructions, in a grouping zone and would be kept in fenced in areas and were not allowed to cultivate their fields. Moreover, their movements were always monitored and thus were under constant surveillance. Further, the story also describes about Imdongla's boldness, her courage as a Naga woman and her presence of mind to tackle difficult situations. Her sense of quickness to get rid her husband when he was taken by a group of soldiers to the army camp on condition that he and the elders of the village had been providing supplies, i.e. aid of different kinds, to the underground brothers, is praiseworthy. Imdongla said to the captain:

*“Look at them, aren't they like your own fathers? How would you feel if your fathers were punished for acting out of fear? Fear of you Indian soldiers and fear of mongrels of the jungle (“Laburnum for my Head,” P 87).*

But what affected him (the captain) most was one single question that Imdongla had repeatedly asked: *‘What do you want from us? For the first time in his tenure in the hills, the apparently simple woman had made him see the impossible situation faced by the villagers. The captain abruptly, turned to his adjutant and told him to release Tekeba and to escort the couple beyond the perimeter of the camp.*

*“The petty thievery which would normally have been ignored, once again reminded him how a coarse and illiterate village woman had managed to unsettle his military confidence by challenging the validity of his own presence in this alien terrain”. (“Laburnum for my Head,” Pg 87).*

The story *‘Sonny’* describes a situation of turmoil not only among

the conflicting forces, but also about the bitter and violent rivalries among the different groups of freedom fighters, which often resulted in senseless death of leaders and cadres alike, creating a new sense of terror in the minds of the general public. Sonny was entering a twilight zone in the struggle for freedom where one could not identify the real enemy anymore because the conflict was no longer only of armed resistance against an identifiable adversary. It had now also become an ideological battlefield within the resistance movement itself, posing new dangers from fellow national workers supposedly pursuing a common goal and thus Sonny became a victim of his own convictions when the assassins pumped bullets into a fellow fighter's bosom.

Sonny had abandoned the prospects of a bright future as a constitutional lawyer to join the movement. His nationalistic passion was more important than anything else. He was living in a totally different environment filled with the daily hazards of living in primitive conditions and at the same time coping with danger from the superior forces of the government as well as threats from rival groups.

After all people like Sonny were humans. For the so-called elite of the towns, the success of the movement meant setting up an independent country where the inequalities and injustices of the repressive 'occupation' forces would be eliminated. Not only that, but many lent their support with an eye to personal gains in the new set-up. However for the rural people, it was simply seen as an opportunity to return to the utopian state of 'self -rule' before the alien rulers had come and overturned their ancient way of life.

Thus from the above analysis it can be ascertained that while some remained untouched by the flames, many others got transformed into beings almost unrecognizable, even to themselves. Nagaland's story of the struggle for 'self-determination' started with high idealism and romantic notions of fervent nationalism, but it somehow narrowed into a stage of disappointment and disillusionment. The Naga people stuck in the common cause –'sovereignty,' which has been so close to their heart and the 'reality' which falls horribly short of what was promised. What is lost is too deep and too irrevocable to be catalogued .In the face of such loss, the writings of Temsula Ao, in her collection of short stories "These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone" and "Laburnum for

my Head” tough, wise, smart and bitter, yet shot through with a thin lyrical vein of elegy.

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# IN THE QUEUE OF QUEST FOR REVIVAL: KAMATAPUR MOVEMENT

Dhananjoy Biswas\*

## ABSTRACT

The Northeast India, usually prefer to say as the homeland of various ethnic groups and a composite platform of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious region of India. Assam, being the melting pot of Austric, Mongoloid, Dravidian and Aryan stocks who have entered Assam at different periods of history have significantly contributed in making the region more heterogeneous. Interestingly, the ethnic groups belonging to different stocks, despite having their own language, culture, customs and tradition and belief have contributed their respective shares towards the growth and development of a great Assamese society. Eventually, those ethnic groups who used to view themselves as integral part of Assamese society, are now following the path of familiar pattern of cultural revivalism which is manifested itself in various demands of such autonomy movement. Under this background, Assam has been facing various kinds of ethnic identity based movement over several decades. In this connection, the Kamatapur Movement carrying out by the Koch-Rajbangshi people of Assam is a significant one who are struggling for a separate Kamatapur state, S.T. (P) status and other socio-cultural demands since 1990s. So, the present paper tries to deal with the 'Kamamtapur Movement' in the context of ethnic identity movement in the contemporary politics of Assam.

**(Key Words:** Ethnic groups, Ethnic Identity, Kamatapur Movement and Koch-Rajbangshi Community.)

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## **Introduction**

In the eve of globalization, reviving own identity have become a universal ethnic character of every ethnic groups. It is observed that the intensity of such of identity based assertion is so acute in those areas where multi-ethnic groups exist within a composite political boundary. The Northeast India is a suitable example of such multi-lingual and multi-cultural region. Therefore, rise of various kind of identity assertion in this region is not an exceptional matter in the politics of North-East India. Assam, being a homeland of different multi-ethnic groups, has been experienced with facing adverse ethnic assertion over several decades. In the process of their ethnic identity assertion, different ethnic groups have come forward with different demands. Some of them are stressing for recognition of ST (P), some other are demanding separate state, while certain ethnic groups arguing for sovereign state beyond the Indian Union. The reason behind such ethnic assertion lies in the age old deprivation, exploitation, injustice, and other socio-economic backwardness. Since, the Ahom period, the caste Hindus of Assam became politically powerful, economically dominant and socially advanced in comparison to other ethnic groups of Assam. Similarly, during the British period also the upper caste Assamese people had occupied important and dominant position in the colonial government and commercial undertaking. After independence, the mainstream Assamese people continue to enjoy the privileged status and on the other hand the tribal and mongoloid communities remain socially, economically, politically and educationally backward and unable to grasp any meaningful position in the administration of government of Assam.<sup>(1)</sup> Against this background, the emerging educated elites of different ethnic groups consciously or unconsciously began to realize that until and unless they organize their respective communities on the basis of their distinct identity and linguistic-cultural traits, their socio-economic and political backwardness would not be removed. Under this feeling various ethnic groups began to form different organizations such as Ahom Association (1893), All Bodo Chatra Sanmilan (1918), Koch-Rajbangshi Sanmilan (1912), and Mattak-Moran Sanmilan (1937) and so on. Its needs to be mentioned that even after more than half a century of independence of India, the mainstream Assamese people fail to give them confidence for the fulfillment of their ethnic aspiration and hopes. So, like the other ethnic groups of Assam,

the Koch-Rajbangshi people of Assam begin to feel that they are being deprived from legitimate share of political power and their history, culture, economic backwardness are totally ignored. Under this feeling the leaders of that community begin to realize that until and unless the community could mobilize and organize on the ethnic line their long pending problem could not be solved. As a result of that realization the Koch-Rajbangshi people of Assam has adopted a democratic movement to fight against the Government of Assam in the name of 'Kamatapur Movement' to rejuvenate their history, culture and identity.

### **Who are Koch-Rajbangshis?**

The Koch-Rajbangshis are the indigenous people of Assam inhabiting mainly undivided Goalpara district of Assam and six districts of North Bengal. Historically speaking, the Koches are one of the many tribes of the Tibeto-Burman Linguistic Group and racially the Tibeto-Burman (Bodo-Kachari) people, and have been residing in Assam and West Bengal as an indigenous or ethnic group, since time is immemorial.<sup>(2)</sup> The Koches are the branch of the Tibeto-Burman people or of a greater family called Indo-Mongoloid; therefore, they are akin to the Kacharies, Tipperas, Garos, Rabhas, etc<sup>(3)</sup>. Generally, the people belonging to this community possess all the characteristics of four human streams i.e. Austric, Dravidian, Mongoloid and Aryan. But majority of scholars views that the Koch-Rajbangshi are belonging to Dravidian origin. Historian, Sir Gaits views that they are the mixture of both Mongoloid and Dravidian but Mongoloid features are pre-dominant<sup>4</sup>. According to Risley, the Rajbangshis are originally Kochs, and of Dravidian origin<sup>(5)</sup>. Although they have connected with all cultures such as Austric, Dravidian, Mongoloid and Aryan but finally they have accepted the Aryan culture, when they have converted to Hinduism. There is the controversy regarding the origin of this community. The Koches in undivided Goalpara district, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Rongpur and Dinajpur district of West Bengal is known as 'Rajbabangshi.' The word 'Rajbangshi' derived from the Sanskrit that means people belong to "royal race or descendants of the king. However, they were also known as 'Koch.' Mythologically, it is belief that the word 'Koch' origin form the fact that during the Pashuram's 'trip of Khsatriya destruction' (*khsatriya nidhan yatra*), the kshatriya took shelter in the 'lap' of Goddess Kamakhya Devi.<sup>(6)</sup> From that time

onwards the Khsatriyas identifies themselves as 'Koch-Rajbangshi' instead of 'Khsatriya'. Historians are also of the opinion that the ancestor of Hariya Mandal are called 'Koch' because they have come from the valley of 'Kochi' river and with the increased of population some of them migrated to the valley

The Koch people generally trace their genealogy from the person known as Hariya Mandal, a resident of Chkangram (present Kokrajhar district) who was a Koch. He was recognized as the Mandal (Head) of twelve leading families of Maches (or Koches). Gait observes that the word 'Koch' is a term of some ambiguity. In Assam it has become the name of a Hindu caste, into which are received the converts to Hinduism from the ranks of the Kachari, Lalung, Mikir and other tribes; and as the process of conversion is still continuing, the number of persons described as Koch is increasingly rapidly. In North Bengal and undivided Goalpara, on the other hand, the term 'Koch' has been abandoned for appellation 'Rajbongsi', which denotes a tribe not a caste, whose anthological origin has remained a matter of controversy.<sup>(8)</sup>

### **Kamatapur Movement**

The word 'Kamatapur' or 'Kamatapuris' is a vague term so far present time is concerned. At present there is no place and community which are officially known as 'Kamtapur' and 'Kamatapuris' respectively. Despite of the fact, the Koch-Rajbangshi people of Assam and North Bengal claimed themselves as Kamatapuris and the areas which were ruled by different Koch kings at different period of history is considered by them as 'Kamatapur' The autonomy movement launched by the Koch-Rajbangshi people of Assam for a separate Kamatapur state and recognition of Scheduled Tribe (P) status and other socio-cultural demands for the protection of their ethnic identity and more especially for the revival of their ancient territory is known as Kamatapur movement. The people belonging to Koch-Rajbangshi community called themselves as Kamatapuris and their struggle for their ethnic autonomy is generally referred as 'Kamatapur Movement.' The Koch-Rajbangshi people of Assam have been continuing their struggle against the government of India and Assam to revive their ancient Kamatapuri territory since 1990s particularly with the formation of All Koch Rajbangshi Students'Union (AKRSU).

## Genesis of Kamatapur Movement

The present Kamatapur Movement is not a sudden product. The genesis of Kamatapur Movement lies in the historical deprivation and marginalization of their identity. There are a numbers of causes behind the rise of Kamatapuri uprising. Some of them are as below:

**Firstly**, as per the history of Assam, before the British rule in India, the Koch-King Maharaja Nara Narayan of Cooch Behar captured all the small states of entire North Eastern India in 16<sup>th</sup> century and defended the North Eastern Border of India from foreign aggression in dignified way and protect all the small states of North Eastern India under the territory of India. The entire region was ruled by different Koch King in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**Secondly**, the proposed area of Greater Cooch Behar or Kamatapur State was not the part of West Bengal and Assam. The Kamatapur state had been shared by the West Bengal and Assam after the Independence of India. After gaining the independence, Cooch Behar State merged with Indian Dominion on 12<sup>th</sup> Sep, 1949 on the basis of a agreement on 28<sup>th</sup> Aug, 1949 and which was adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> Nov, 1949 as a “C” category State in the Indian Constitution.

**Thirdly**, when, as the result of agreement Cooch Behar came to Indian Dominion, people of not only erstwhile kingdom but whole of the areas regardless of their caste and creed were jubilant as they saw a ray of hope in making their homeland into a full fledged state of Indian Republic. On the same line the then Prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the then Deputy Prime Minister as well as Home Minister Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel assured the people of the state that their political and socio-economical aspiration would be fulfilled after joining with Indian Dominion. But due to the political conspiracy of the then Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy declared Cooch Behar State the “C” category state as a district of West Bengal in 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1950. He was under the suspicion that the creation of separate Cooch Behar state would definitely takes away the other districts of its own areas, which would further dismiss the size of West Bengal or Assam without taking any mended of the people of the area in 1956. The leaders of Koch-Rajbangshi blamed that this kind of degradation of Cooch Behar

State is a breach of trust, anti commitment, anti treaties, unlawful, unconstitutional and a conspiracy.

**Fourthly**, the language, literature, culture of the people of the area is different from the language, literature, culture of the people of West Bengal and Assam. Presently the indigenous people (Koch-Rajbangshi) of that area have lost their historical glory, prosperity and happiness of the contrary they are facing tragedy of suppression, oppression, repression, domination and endless exploitation in all aspects of their life.

**Fifthly**, economic conditions of Koch-Rajbangshi people have been deteriorating day by day. Their inhabiting areas are still remaining backward and underdeveloped. The proposed Kamatapur area is predominantly rural with over 80% of the population residing in the rural areas. Paddy, Wheat, Master crops etc are the major food grain grown in this region. Moreover, Tea, jute are the important commercially crops of India are produced in this region. But in fact that in spite of the wealth and varieties of its natural resources like forest, river etc this region has remain industrially backward.

**Lastly**, the intellectuals belong to this community belief that it is true that the policy makers and decision takers don't want to know the genuine of their problems. They are also reluctant to listen and understand about the killing, suppression, oppression, discrimination and exploitation of the indigenous people of the area is being carried out in the name of democracy. They are also in the position to argue that the law and order situation of that area is continuously deteriorating day by day. The indigenous people of the area have been extremely suffering for getting justice and of legal and constitutional rights of India.<sup>9</sup>

From the above points, it is vivid that the illegal merger of Koch-Rajbangshi's homeland i.e. Cooch Behar state or Kamatapur State with West Bengal as a district have remained the central argument of Kamatapur movement. However, the vulnerable economic condition of the Koch-Rajbangshi people in the post independent era add new dimension in the emergence of Kamatapur movement. Moreover, regional underdevelopment, negligence of ruling power, and the sense of cultural and linguistic reorganization and their history are providing oxygen in the

in the fire of Kamatapur movement.

### **Demands of Koch-Rajbangshis**

By considering above all these factors the Koch-Rajbangshis of Assam has been carrying out a democratic movement in the name of Kamatapur movement with a dozen of demands. As per the memorandum, submitted by various Koch-Rajbangshi organizations such as Koch- Rajbangshi Sahitya Sabh, All Koch Rajbangshi Students' Union, Greater Cooch Behar Peoples' Association (WB), Greater Cooch Behar Democratic Party (WB), Kamatapur People's Party (WB), Koch Rajbangshi Sahitya Sabha, All Assam Koch Rajbangshi Sanmilani, Chilarai Sena, All Koch Rajbangshi Mohila Samiti etc under the banner of Separate State Demand Committee (SSDC) to the Governmnet of India as well as Assam shows a numbers of demands. Some of their demands can be noted as below-

(1) Demand for the formation of a separate Kamatapur state comprising six districts of North Bengal namely- Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North Dinajpur and South Dinajpur and Malda and some districts of Assam namely- Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Marigaon, Darrang, Sonitpur up to Lakhimpur District of Assam which they once had to loss.



*(The proposed political map of Kamatapur State submitted to the Prime Minister of India and Chief Minister of Assam, AKRSU)<sup>(10)</sup>*

(2) Rescheduling of Koch-Rajbangshi community of Assam as Schedule Tribes (P) status which was declared in 1996 through a

## Presidential Ordinance

(3) Inclusion of Kamatapuri or Koch-Rajbangshi language under the Eight Schedule of Indian Constitution and to recognize the language as state language of Assam.

(4) Introduce the Central Government scheme to educate the children of Kamatapur people in the mother tongue and that should be introduced under Central supervision.

(5) To restore their previous history and culture with all round development of the region.

(6) Propagation of the kamatapuri language and culture through state controlled radio as well as All India Radio and television.

(7) Providing Governmental aids for the development of Koch-Rajbangshi language and culture.

(8) Reservation of seats for them in educational and technical intuitions and reserved quota for recruitment both in governmental as well as non-governmental sectors for their higher education.

(9) Recognition of Vishwa Mahabir Chilarai's birthday on Maghi Purnima as state holiday to Government of West Bengal and Assam and also to name a portion of National Highway (Siliguri to Cooch Behar) in memory of this Hero of Kamatapur.

(10) Kamatapuris also demanding for the payment of statutory minimum wages foe agricultural and other sectors, increase in the prices of minor forest produce collected by them. They also demands for the improvement of life standard of Kamatapuris or Rajbangshis by providing electricity, drinking water supply, fast communications, adequate educational and health facilities and should have the rights to land and forest resources.

(11) Koch-Rajbangshis leaders also demands for the establishment of "Maharaja Naranarayan Cultural Complex and Research Centre" in the undivided Goalpara District. They have argued that Koch-Rajbangshis has a rich language and cultural heritage. But due to lack of patronage from the government and the civil societies, the Koch-Rajbangshi has lost their old prestigious culture and today is at the verge of extinction. So, in order to preserve, develop and spread the rich cultural heritage of

the Koch-Rajbangshis, they have been demanding to establish MNCCRC institution in the undivided Goalpara district.

(12) They have demanded to the Indian government to provide the highest Navy Award in the name of General Chilarai to show gratitude to this greatest pioneer of Indian Naval Warfare. It is because, Chilarai was the great Koch Army General who, for the first time in India to raise its own Navy to fight against the foreign aggression<sup>(11)</sup>.

Although, they have articulated about various demands but their major demands remain the separate Kamatapur state, recognition of Scheduled Tribes (P) and inclusion of Rajbangshi language into the Eight scheduled of Indian constitution.

### **Results of Kamatapur Movement**

Although the leaders of Kamatapur movement have been carrying out the democratic movement with a dozen of demands in a peaceful way under the banner of All Koch Rajbangshi Students' Union since 1990s but they have not been succeed in achieving their goals in its totality. The state government has not given any importance towards their problem. The leaders of this movement meet the Chief Minister of Assam in several times to consider the Kamtapur issue but the state government is showing less interest to resolve their problems rather asking them to justify their demands. Similarly, 'The Separate State Demand Committee' (SSDC) under the leadership of Biswajit Roy visits Sonia Gandhi; Chair Person of UPA Government in several times, but the central Government is also reluctant to listen their problems. Neither the state government nor the central government have response the Kamatapur issue with greater emphasized. Of course, it is in the 27<sup>th</sup> January of 1996 the Koch-Rajbangshis were granted Scheduled Tribe (P) status at the behest of congress government at the centre through a Presidential Ordinance, but latter on it was not passed in Parliament. In 2010 the current state government promised to grant the Scheduled Tribe (P) status to the Koch-Rajbangshi community which was mentioned in the election manifesto. But even after fulfilling all the criterions set by the government and state expert committee, the issue of the Koch-Rajbangshis is still lying unattended.

The Assam Government is keeping the movement under law and



order situation. The Government has been trying to suppress the democratic movement by using lathicharge, teargas, police and paramilitary and other coercive powers. The state government is very active in arresting and jailing the leaders of Koch-Rajbangshi community. The youths belonging to this community are being arrested without any prior information on false charges. According to police that the youths are arrested due to the secret nexus with the underground outfit namely Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO). Sometimes the innocent people including the simple farmers and students are also arrested as KLO workers. In the recent kidnapping and murdering of agricultural engineer Godapani Pathak on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the Director General of Police of Assam and the Chief Minister of Assam blamed that KLO was involved in the abduction of Gadapani Pathak. In this connection the security forces arrested six KLO militants in Bongaigaon and Dhubri districts of Assam. The government has no positive response to this movement.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, the glorified royal history of Koch dynasty founded by Biswa Singha in 1523 A.D. came to an end with the agreement made by the last Koch king Jagaddipendra Narayan with the Government of India on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1949. According to which the Cooch Behar State was merged with the Indian Union and placed as a district of West Bengal on 1<sup>st</sup> January of 1950. But before this agreement the Government of India recognized the Cooch Behar state as a “C” category state. But later on due to the political conspiracy this “C” category state was adjusted as a district of West Bengal. This breach of commitment of the Government of India makes the Kamatapuris angry, disappointment and full of distrust. If the homeland of the Koch-Rajbangshis would have been handled in a proper way during its integration with the Indian Union, than most probably the present Kamatapur uprising would not be emerged in the post independent India. Thus, the long pending demand of Greater Cooch Behar or Kamatapur State is historically proper, geographically desirable, economically essential, constitutionally correct and legally justified. By considering these factors, the intellectuals of this community put this illegal merger of Cooch Behar State with the West Bengal as a central argument for losing their identity, glorified history, culture and legacies. Therefore, formation of the Kamatapur state is the only way through which the dignity and socio-cultural identity of the

Kamatapuris will be protected and colonial exploitation and negligence will come to an end. But it is equally important to consider the Kamatapur issue both from the perspective of Kamatapuris as well as from the perspective of Government of India to reduce the Kamatapur tension.

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# URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ITS PROBLEMS IN INDIA

Rumita Boro\*

## ABSTRACT

*There is a rapid growth of urbanization across the world. Presently more than half of world population (56%) lives in urban areas and by 2050 it is expected that 66 per cent of world population will live in urban areas. In case of India the growth of urbanization has slowly rise in comparison to other developing countries. However, the present trends of urbanization in India have posed unpredicted change in the living standard of people. This newly growth of urbanization mainly occurs in smaller cities and towns which does not have the capacity to feed up such growing population. People are migrating from rural to urban with the expectation of having better facilities, better health care and education facilities, good governance and effective services. But the present urban cause more bad than good. The people of urban suffer more problem than the rural. Poverty, crime, corruption, slum, sanitation, pollution, over population are the major problems of urban dwellers of India that makes enormous stress on our environment. The rapid growth of cities causes a large number of challenges including insufficient power supply, bad and poor water supply, poor housing, disease and sickness, lack of sanitation and sewage facilities, inadequate nutrition, unreliable public transportation system, and limited access to adequate medical treatment and education facilities in cities. But unfortunately, India is still in dilemma whether it is the village or the city who determine the future of India. So, the paper attempts to understand the magnitude of urban problems suffered by the urban society.*

**(Key words :** Urbanization, Migration and Urban problems.)

## Introduction

Historically, migration of people from one place to another place is a common human nature. In most of the third world countries people migrates from rural to urban areas mostly for economic purpose. In other

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word, the economic factor alone plays a vital role behind the extensive migration. Like the other third world countries, Indian people migrates from rural to urban areas for economic or personal gain such as in search of better job opportunities and some are in search of seeking well standard of life. Poverty is an important factor of mass migration. The migrated people are basically the poor, farmers and the unemployed youth poor that transits India from rural India to slum India. This increased trend of migration of people from rural to towns has given a new shape of India. It is expected that by 2030, 68 Indian cities will each have more than one million inhabitants, and six megacities, more than ten million each. Current urbanization is causing more bad than good. Rapid urbanization in India leads to the creation of slums, propping living standard in urban areas and causing serious environmental damage. Urban development appears as a burning problem of India. However, it is related with development. Urban problems have become so acute since every nation wants to be developed, modernized and industrialized. So urbanization is not a problem itself but problem lies with its process and consequences.

### **Meaning of Urbanization**

Urbanization generally refers to physical growth of urban areas as a result of rural migration and sometimes due to suburban concentration into cities, particularly the very largest. It is closely related with modernization, industrialization and sociological process of rationalization. Urbanization can be described as a specific condition at a set time i.e., the promotion of total population or areas of cities or towns. Urbanization is the movement of people from rural to urban areas resulting in increased proportions of a population that resides in urban rather than rural places. Urbanization is not a one way process rather it involves in two way process. It denotes not only the movement of people from villages to cities and changes from agricultural occupation to business, trade, services and profession, but it also brings change in the migrants' attitude, belief, and behavior patterns. Here it is worth to clarify the concept of urbanization with urban and urbanism.

Urban: - The term 'urban' is closely related with two concepts i.e., 'sociology' and 'demography'. From the demographical perspective the term 'urban' encompasses the size of population, density of population

and nature of work of the majority of the adult males. Sociologically speaking, urban refers to heterogeneity, impersonality, interdependence and the quality of life. The difference between urban and rural areas lies in social relationship and values. In urban societies impersonal and secondary relations are predominant and competitive nature in social relationships and often conduct formal behaviour. Theodorson has defined urban community “as a community with a high population density, a predominance of non-agricultural occupation, a high degree of specialization resulting in a complex division of labour and a formalized system of local government. It is also characterized by a prevalence of impersonal secondary relation and dependence on formal social control.” Urban societies generally have large heterogeneous population, closed contact with other societies through trade, membership, communication etc. People desire to organize behavior rationally towards given goals as oppose to following traditional standards and norms.

**Urbanism:** Urbanism is a way of life. It reflects an organization of society in terms of a complex division of labour, high level of technology, high mobility, interdependence of its members in fulfilling economic functions and impersonality in social relationship.

**Characteristics of Urbanism:** The meaning of urbanism can be understood in the light of its character. The fundamental characteristics of urbanism are given below:

**Transiency:** Urban people very often forget their old relatives and develop relations with new people. Since urban people do not develop too much relation with their neighbor’s members of the social groups, so they do not bother for leaving new places. They maintain very short relation with their neighbors.

**Superficiality:** An urban person has the limited number of persons with whom they interact and conduct impersonal and formal relations with other. People meet each other in highly segmental rules. They are dependent on more people for the satisfaction of their life needs.

**Anonymity:** Urbanites do not know each other intimately. They always maintain certain distance with their neighbouring and friend circle. Personal mutual acquaintshp between the inhabitants is not

found in towns and cities.

**Individualism:** Generally in urban society people are complex and selfish in nature. People give more importance to their own vested interest. They have less social collective attitude in comparison to rural people. They always think about their personal benefits and lead an individualistic life.

**Heterogeneity of Population:** Due to migration of people from different places different backgrounds and different cultures composed heterogeneity in cities. This mixture of people affects the working of informal controls mores and institution and reliance on formally designed mechanism for regulating the behaviour of individuals and groups.

**Specialization of function and behaviour:** Specialization in profession and function is the most important characteristic of urbanism. Doctor, Engineer, Professor, Businessmen, Lawyer, bureaucrats, factories workers, teachers, clerk, and police are the different profession of cities. They maintain a different life pattern, different behaviour and different philosophy of life based on their profession. The heterogeneity and the large size of population of the city are responsible for the development of specialization in profession and behaviour. However, specialization enables an individual to participate in diverse opportunities to act, to express opinion and to develop personality.

**Standardization of Behaviour:** The urban life necessitates an individual to standardize his behaviour which ultimately helps him and other to understand each other and make interaction comfortable.

### **Major problems of urban areas**

We found that urban people occupied various kinds of profession and profess a variety of faith, belief, belonging to various communities, castes, sub-castes and hailing from different regions of a country and from many foreign countries. They speak different language, wear different dress and eat differently, follow variety of customs, and traditions, practice different types of rituals at the time of marriage, death and other social and cultural festivals. The heterogeneity of cities makes the urban life more complex. There are numerous problems of different magnitudes such as congestion, misuse of urban land, the acute shortage of house, water supply, electricity, traffic congestion on the narrow and

winding roads, unsatisfactory health and medical services, lack of modern industrial development, and lack of civic amenities. It is interesting to note that the urban problems are the manmade problems which can be analyzed in the following angles.

**1. Overgrowing population:** The overgrowing population is the common urban problem of every urban society. It is mainly caused due to uncontrolled natural increase of population, flow of migration from the rural areas to the cities and expansion engulfing villages between the censuses periods are some of the main cause of rapid growth of population in cities. The overgrowing population in cities is not only a problem itself but it is the generators of other problems in urban areas. It is the prime source of environmental degradation. The overgrowing population in cities is responsible for the crisis of education and health facilities, housing and slum problems that demoralize the well standard of social life.

**2. Traffic Congestion and Transportation:** The rapid growth of population in towns and tremendous increase in the volume of vehicular traffic, mainly automobiles are the main cause of traffic congestion in India. The overall transportation and traffic picture in Indian cities is unsatisfactory. Particularly, the increase number of scooters, motorcycles, tempos, mopeds, and cars make the traffic problems worse. In metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta people have to spend extra one or two hours to get into a bus, which means leaving the house two hours in advance in the morning and to reach their place of work and home two hours in late in the evening. The heavy traffic congestion is nothing else but wasted of time and energy in vain.

**3. Housing and Slums problems:** Shortage of housing space is a common but serious urban problem in all cities of India. The way people spend their life in slum areas is like the hell of the present birth. There is no such suitable example of poverty that slum dweller reflects in their daily life. They have no space for sleep, sanitation, no water, adequate food. The excessive people lives in single house and unhealthy condition in slums areas result in suffering from illness and various kinds of diseases. They do not have the basic needs to live as a human being and thus they lead a dark life. But still the Government of India has failed to

take innovative measures to improve the living standard of the slum people.

4. **Misuse of Land:** Misuse of land is a common feature of urban India. Land is use without considering its bearing capabilities. In the one hand people are living in slum areas due to lack of housing land, on the other hand huge areas of land have been occupied by a few rich persons in most of the town. In most of the towns and cities some places people are lacking for adequate land for housing while the land mafia using the land for their personal gains.

5. **Sanitation:** Lack of proper sanitation is anther serious problem of urban India. The problem of sanitation is related with the problem of shortage of land. This problem is more intensive in slum areas. Because of poor sanitation condition and water contamination, a large number of children die every year in India.

6. **Pollution:** Urban areas are the major polluters of the environment. All the sources of pollution are prevailing in cities. Cities caused all kinds of pollutions. It causes the sound pollution as in cities large number of vehicles, cars market places and industries are there. Again over growing population causes the soil pollution, air pollution and water pollution. An urban industry pollutes the atmosphere with smoke and toxic gases from its chimneys. The areas recording higher level of air pollution affects the children below five years and people above fifty years age.

7. **Power Shortage:** The use of electric gadgets has increased very much in cities. It is because of from transportation to office maintenance all are depended on electricity. The establishment of new industries and the expansion of old industries have also increasingly depended on electricity. However, most of the states are not in the position to generate adequate power what they needed. As a result they remain depended on the neighboring states who produce more power. Conflict over power supply between two or more states often creates power crisis for people in the cities.

8. **Water Supply and Drainage:** Very often city dwellers suffer from artificial shortage of water supply. In most of the big cities, in the



name of entertainment water is being misuse for a particular section of people that results shortage of water in cities. For example, cities like Chennai, Hyderabad, Rajkot, Ajmer, and Udaipur get water from the municipality for less than an hour a day. Many small towns have no main water supply at all and are depended on tube wells. Like the water crisis, the situation of drainage in cities is equally bad. One of the best known facts in India is that there is not a single city which is fully sewered. Because of the lack of drainage system, large pools of stagnant water can be seen in every city even in summer months. The absence of drainage creates artificial flood in these cities.

**9. Crowding and Depersonalization:** Crowding and people's apathy to other's problems is another headache of city life. In cities the problem of overcrowding is not only seen in market or public places but also it is seen in home. Overcrowding in home takes place due to the living of six or seven persons in a single room. It encourages deviant behavior, riots, alcoholism, spreads diseases, and creates the condition of mental illness. People become apathy and indifference. They do not want to involve in other person's affairs. Some people take interest in case of molestation, assaults, and even murder but they always tries to play the role of silent observer.

**10. Crime and Communal Violence:** During the recent decades the numbers of crime and communal violence have been increased in urban India that adversely affects the urban productivity and economic growth. The increased crime attributed largely to two factors, i.e., loosing social control in the context of overall changing composition of the city's population and the widening social gap between the rich and the poor. In the case of communal violence, it can be observed that within various layer of urban India's social fabric that there is a good deal of potential for communal conflict and violence

**11. Corruption:** Corruption is a common phenomenon in all over India. Corruption is rampant in all urban centres. In recent years corruption has expanded to every walk of life. It becomes a way of life in urban centre. The calm acceptance and regular practice of corrupt activities by individual has made it to gain the status of an institutional practice in urban centre.

## Causes of Urban Problems

By analyzing the nature of urban problems in India we can identify the causes of urban problems in India.

1. **Migration:** Rural people with the expectation of getting better job opportunities and other gains migrate to cities and towns. The condition of extreme poverty and unemployment compels the rural poor to migrate into cities and towns. The migrated people stress on the supply of goods and services that creates crisis of foods and other necessities. The entrance of rural poor into city depletes the sources of revenue. Now-a-days due to over population in urban areas rich people are shifting to sub-urban areas. This movement of the rich persons causes financial loss also to the cities.

2. **Industrial Growth:** Rural people begin to make their entry to the cities due to the growth of small, middle and big industries in large scale mostly in big cities. The growth of industries, factories and multinational companies generally offers additional job opportunities to the unemployed youth. Usually the unemployed youth and the poor come in cities in search of better jobs and employment opportunities.

3. **Apathy of the Government:** The administrative mismanagement of cities is also responsible for the miserable condition of the city dwellers of India. Municipal authority has not kept pace with city growth, either spatially or in terms of management infrastructure. The government is incapable and gives less interest and will to plan for urban future. There is also no skill and capability to manage existing urban system. The state government also put many restrictions on local governments in raising necessary funds for dealing with particular urban problems.

4. **Defective Town Planning:** The administrators and planners also equally responsible for present urban problems. The Planning Commissioner does not address the issue of urbanization with sincerely and accepts it as a natural one. In fact a number of National Commission on Urbanization had expressed a feeling that very little is being done in our country to plan the growth of the city in a proper way.

5. **Vested Interest Forces:** The last cause of urban problems is the vested interest forces that work against the common people and infavoure

of private commercial interest and benefits. The common city dwellers cannot influence in the decision making process but it is the urban elites who influence the decision making process through power and money. By virtue of their money power they influence the decision making process so that they can gain their interest no matter how many people are affecting by the process.

### **Effects of Urbanization in Society**

The urbanization has immense adverse effect on Indian society. The chief effects are given below:

1. **Lack of Social Security:** Urban people do not have common goals and interest. Very often people involve in clash with each other to meet their self interest and even sometimes people indulge in murder. Moreover, in cities professional goondas are there who commit offences against payment. People are ready to do anything for their individual profits. The urban people can do anything for money and self-interest. In other word urban people do not have social security in their daily life.

2. **Lack of Spirit of Tolerance:** In cities people are from various background and profession. They do not have anything to share commonly. They have different practice, belief and customs so they have little tolerance among them. In cities there are very few common bonds. Particularly, different religion and culture separates them from each other.

3. **Class Struggle:** As a result of vast disparity between rich and poor there is bitterness and frustration among the poor who are exploited by the vested interest. Therefore, trade-union, worker union, labour association, NGOs very often adopts strikes and noisy procession for pursuing their interest. Various people from various class involves in class struggle for protecting their class interest.

4. **Family Disorganization:** City is inhabited by different caste, race, religious and cultural people that offers the space of many points of contact among them. In cities the old people very often faces the question of reasonability of tradition and customs of their groups from the youth. The opportunity of meeting of different people paves the way of exchanging their ideas about their life, the family ties and other customs. Thus, the young people begin to breaks the orthodoxy of their family that results in the disorganization of family.

5. **Division of Labour:** The increased division of labour in the cities mainly occurs due to the heterogeneity of population. New industries are set up in order to meet the different needs and requirements of different groups of cities which necessitate the excessive division of labour. This excessive division of labour creates disturbance in promoting integrity among them and maintaining balance relationship among different groups and individuals becomes more problematic.

### **Solution of Urban Problems**

Since urban problems are the burning problem of India, so it needs to be addressed properly. It is impossible to root out the urban problems but we can reduce the intensity of the problems. The measures are suggested as below:

1. **Systematic Development of Urban Centre:** since urban problem raise mainly due to unsystematic development of cities and towns so proper attention is need to give on systematic development of the urban centres. The planning and policy ought to be designed urban oriented so that the programmes can address the urban problems properly.

2. **Rural Development:** Rural development is a proper strategy to stop rural migration to urban centres. Majority of people migrates to cities for the purpose of getting better job or employment opportunity. So if we emphasize on rural development that can generate employment opportunities and other services such as health care centres, educational institutions than flew of rural migration can be stopped. IRDP, NREP, JRY, MGNREGA are some of the rural developmental agencies and schemes attempted to create job opportunities for rural people and development. So the government needs to initiate such employment guarantee schemes for rural development and job opportunities.

3. **Regional Planning along with City Planning:** urban problems rise due to inappropriate city planning. Very often the government emphasizes on city planning but not for regional planning. Regional planning is more suitable in dealing with urban problems as city planning is a temporary solution. For example, instead of providing houses to slums dwellers in cities rather it can be stopped through regional planning

which may provide attractive employment, the pace of growth of population in cities could be checked.

**4. Encouraging Industries to Move to Backward Areas:** Generally industries are built in centre areas of the cities. If the industries are built in backward areas the people of these backward areas would not move to the main cities. This policy also helps in the regional development of the backward areas.

**5. Encouraging Private Transport:** When the transport is handled by the state employees, it has been noticed that they tend to use the buses callously. Privately operate mini city bus and tempo services will charge a little more fare but commuters would not mind paying in view of the better services. This will reduce traffic problems in urban areas.

**6. Amendment of Building Construction Acts:** The Government of India has passed a numbers of acts regarding the construction of building and houses in cities but not followed in practice. So these laws have to be enforced adequately. More especially, acts related to house rent have to be amended. It is the Maharashtra that has taken initiative in amending the Rent Control Act which made thousand of houses available for rent. The similar step should be followed by the other states.

### **Conclusion**

In the conclusion, it can be commented that urbanization is a social problems which has political and economic implication. The issue of urbanization should be given special importance in the national developmental programmes. Urban development programmes needs to place in mainstream development planning. However, for proper urban planning and its implementation requires co-ordination in all level of governments, public sector, private sector and NGOs. The problems of urbanization can never be solved until urban planning is modified and radical measures are taken. The urban planning should not be based on profit motive for a few. The land, technology and money should be used for the welfare of the common people and not for the particular segment of people. For that the urban people have to be politically active and able to mobilize the urban masses to agitate for a sustainable urban society.

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# URBANIZATION AND CHANGES OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO TOWNS IN ASSAM

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## ABSTRACT

Social institutions are regarded as the backbone of any kind of human society. It satisfies the basic human needs and thus it is necessary for the survival of human society. Usually, the family, marriage, economy, religion, polity, education are the basic social institutions of society. Social institutions are inter-related system of social roles and norms organized about the satisfaction of important social needs and functions. The social roles and norms of social institution have to be defined as the proper and expected behavior towards the fulfillment of particular social needs. The social institutions are normative pattern of inter-related organizations that are all concerned with particular functional requirements and hence it is a share of common needs which must be fulfilled. The needs are to be regarded as primary needs for the existence of the society. Social institutions are like wheels on which human society goes to desired destination. Although, the social institutions are stable and permanent but changes in institution take place as slowly and gradually. In this regard, we have found that many socio-economic factors are responsible for the change of social institutions. In this paper, an attempt has been made that urbanization is a very crucial and dominant factor for undergoing changes in present day social institutions. Therefore, the researcher tries to highlight the changes in certain social institutions due to the impact of urbanization.

**(Key Words :** Urbanization, Social institution, etc.)

## Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing tendency towards the change in all spheres of society, especially in the social institutions. Each and every society has their structure of its own but our society is always

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changing. It is a universal feature or law of nature. Therefore, we can imagine that society can not remain in static order. It is truer that society composed as a vast part of nature and therefore the reality of social life is associated with the reality of nature's change. In our country especially in Assam, the social processes are subjected to change in many ways and in fact that have been under going changes since Independence. Basically changes have been touching and stressing on social economic, political, educational, religious lives of the urban people. Society, in brief is and ever changing phenomenon, growing, decaying, renewing and suffering best modifications in the course of time. Social and natural changes are to involve in alteration of the nature and functioning of social forms or process themselves. Changes are to be observed naturally as well as socially. The natural changes are occurring due to the geographical situation, population settlement and ecological fabrics. The climate condition, natural resources, physical locations and other natural disorders are occurring changes in society. On the other hand due to the force of population movement from one place to another has been carrying changes towards the urban society. Increase and decrease in the size of human population through birth, death, migration and displacement can be posing a serious challenge towards the institutional as well ecological changes. Modern industrial and urban growth, means of transport and communication, using of hyper mass-media and computer technology etc. have affected on our social environment. It can not be ignored that there are many pre-dominant factors behind the process of change which are powerfully enlighten towards our living society.

The rapid growth of urbanization and advancement of new technology has been changing the human settlements of the Earth. Urbanization is a very dominant factor for change in all spheres of social life. It has already transformed the style of mankind (Bose – 1971-2001). Urbanization has induced as the greater mobility from traditional villages to modern urban centers. The reasons for such changes are traceable due to the advancement of science and technology, i.e. industrialization vs. urbanization. That is why, more and more peoples have lived in urban centres. So, it may be noted that urbanization has plays a vital role in bringing out changes in society from one step to another. It has played a major role in the development of human life and it has penetrated the



social life of the people. Urbanization has transfed the society from traditional mode of living to modern living. It has led to unrest the existing social order and it looked for new social, cultural and psychological forms of behaviour. Therefore, urbanization is regarded as one of the responsible sociological factor for change in social lives of the urban dwellers in cities or towns.

### **Objectives of the paper**

The objective of this paper is to examine the nature of changes in social institutions i.e. family, marriage, caste, education, politics and religion of urban dwellers.

### **Field and Methodology**

The domain of the studied paper relates to urbanization and its impact on institutional changes in Tinsukia and Tezpur towns of Assam. The present paper has been focused about the institutional changes which are occurring due to the process of urbanization. The field of the present study relates with two selected headquarter towns from two different districts i.e. Tinsukia and Sonitpur of Assam. The town Tinsukia, the district head quarter of Tinsukia and it has consist of 15 municipal wards. The town has consists of 10096 households and the total population is 116322. And the town Tezpur is the district headquarter of Sonitpur district and it consists of 19 wards having 17808 households. The population size of the town is 100477.

For the purpose of the study, we have selected three municipal wards from each of the selected towns. The study has comprised of 600 (six) hundred respondents. Among the six hundred respondents we have differently selected 300 (three) hundred respondents from each of the towns and these three hundred respondents were sub divided into three municipal wards (one core ward, one middle ward and one periphery ward of the each town). Both of the towns and their wards are composite of different castes, races, religions, linguistic and ethnic groups. We have identified the sample units from each selected ward of the town on the basis of purposively and randomly and all the respondents were regarded as the head of the household of the present studied paper.

The simple reason for selecting the wards are that the variation of

urban functions from the core of the city to its periphery in terms of population composition, commercial and occupational activities, residences, establishment of small and major industries, slum areas, land values and the variety of other increasing urban activities.

### **Discussion**

Family is an universal social institution and also the basic social units of each and every society. Family is an example of primary group because it regulates the face to face relation among the family members. It has common residence, socio-economic cooperation and also the formal system of reproduction. Therefore, as a social institution, it has definite structural and functional requirements. The institution of family is always rendered to be the most stable and enduring. Traditionally, Indian family structure is joint in nature. But, due to the modern social forces i.e. urbanization is evident in change of family structure and function. Several studies have proved that urbanization is a significant factor which disintegrated the traditional joint family system, especially in Assam. Now a day there is a trend towards the development of nuclear family with the emerging process of urbanization. Therefore, the urban families structurally and functionally differ from the rural families. The nuclear families in urban areas are much smaller than the non urban nuclear or joint families. The small sizes of nuclear families are preferred as an ideal or model family in urban life as well as rural life also.

Our empirical verification also shows the nature of respondent's family structure. It was found that in Tezpur town, 79.6% and in Tinsukia town 86% of respondents are belonging to nuclear type of family. Besides, in Tezpur town, 20.3% and in Tinsukia town 14% of respondents have still remained in the joint family. We have found that majority of respondents are belonging from nuclear nature of family. In this context, we may say that the growth of cities and towns and wide spread of urban centers i.e. the process of urbanization has been changing the family in urban as well as rural societies also. A host of interrelated factors such as economic, educational, demographic, legal factors have been associated with urbanization process and affected the family patterns of India, especially in Assam. Marriage is also an important and universal social institution of any kind of society. As a social institution, it provides a recognized form of entering into a relatively enduring heterosexual

relationship for bearing and rearing of children. Thus, it is primarily the way of regulating the human reproduction. In case of urban societies, the chief aim of marriage is not only the procreation but also companionship where economic, social, emotional and psychological supports are equally emphasized. Urbanization is such a dominant factor which enlightens the change in traditional marriage system. Our study also focused that how changes have been taken place in the system of marriage due to the process of urbanization and treated as a significant factor of transformation which brings out the change in traditional marriage system. We have found in our study that majority of respondents viewed that i.e. 83.3% of Tezpur town and 85.6% of respondents of Tinsukia town are positively emphasized the changes in marriage institution due to the process of urbanization. On the other hand, a small number of respondents of the two towns have been negatively viewed regarding the changes of marriage institution. Basically, the changes are to be found in the institution of marriage such as in inter caste marriage, in selection procedure of life partner, in traditional marriage rules and rituals etc.

Economy is a principal sub-system of society and it is also a basic social institution like family, marriage etc. Urbanization represents the movements of population to towns and cities and increase in the proportion of population engaged in the secondary and tertiary sectors of economy and which were occurring the changes in the style of living. It stresses on the change of occupation, i.e. from the agriculture base occupation to non – agricultural base occupations. Our study has also tried to empirically prove that in Tezpur town, we have found 87% of respondent and in Tinsukia town 93% of respondents are engaged with secondary or tertiary mode of occupations. We have also found that a poor number of respondents are still engaged with primary occupations. So, it may be noted that the process of urbanization has been related with economic changes of individuals in urban as well as rural areas also.

Caste is one of the significant social institutions of India because Indian society is traditionally caste oriented society. The caste system in India especially in Assam has appeared at first sight to be fixed and immobile. It is a close system of Indian Society and found to be plastic

and fluent. It has guided the whole life of the Indian people from his birth to till death. It is a prominent example of close social stratification but in contemporary period, disintegration of caste is one of the principal features of Indian society. In this regard, urbanization is treated as the responsible and significant factor for the changes of caste system. Due to the advent of urban centre and emerging new classes are pushing to the background of caste system. Rapid growth of urbanization, development in the means of communication, political and social awakening, an establishment of democratic state have removed the most rigidity and conservative ideas from the caste system. These were pushing towards the transformation of rigid cases into modern classes. From our study, it is found that 72.6% respondents of Tezpur town and 81.6% respondents of Tinsukia town have given their views regarding the changes of caste system. Besides, a less number of respondents views are falling into negative way regarding to the changes of caste system due to urbanization. In Tezpur town, the frequency level of percentage is 27.3% and in Tinsukia town it is 18.3%. From the basis of the empirical data, we may say that rapid growth of cities and wide spread of urban culture has been considerably changing the traditional function of caste system in present day society and which create mobile and flexible social environment between different caste peoples.

Politics is a sub-system and also a social institution of society. In traditional social set-up the political power and authorities were coordinated with tradition and birth oriented framework. Many societies has been passing and maintaining the political orders with respect of caste statuses and heredity links etc. But, due to the impact of modern forces i.e. urbanization, certain changes have been witnessed in the political sphere of society. Today, our political system aims to secure to all citizens on social, economic, political, liberty of thoughts as well as expression, hope of actions and new ideas also. With this regard, urbanization is the major social force towards the enlightenment of democratic politics and the voting behavior of people. Urban peoples are very much rational than the rural peoples therefore they have logically choices the political parties as well as candidates and casting their valuable votes with their rational, scientific ideas and psychological orders. It is found from our study that a great number of respondents have to be participating with national political parties like Congress (I), BJP etc. In

Tezpur town, the percentage is 57.6% and in Tinsukia town, it is 65.6. Besides, in Tezpur town 29.6% and in Tinsukia towns 24.6% of respondents have participated with regional political parties as like AGP and other. On the other hand 12.6% respondents of Tezpur town and 9.6% respondents of Tinsukia town are participate with other political parties. So it may state from our study that urbanization is one of the powerful force of political mobilization and political socialization of people in urban as well as rural societies.

Education is one of the most popular and powerful social institution of present day society. It is also a strong agency of social change and development. Education is such type of social institution which transmitting the knowledge by whether formal or informal methods. Traditionally, Indian education system had depended upon the Brahmins and other upper castes. In that time education was not free to achieve for all peoples of the Indian Society. But, due to the spread of modern education, it has been breaking the traditional rules and thoughts of education system. Today modern education is the out come of western ideas and thoughts therefore the emergence of new nations and growth of urbanization has concurrent with the spread of modern education formal and universal curriculum for all the peoples of society. On the basis of our empirical data, we have found that the majority of the respondents viewed as urbanization is one of the significant force of changing the education system. Where, nationalization, globalization and privatization has been coming in the field of education. With this regard in Tezpur town the frequency level percentage is 83.6% and in Tinsukia town, it is 92.6%. Besides, a very small number of respondents have negatively viewed towards to the educational changes. The percentages are in Tezpur town, 16.3% and in Tinsukia town is 7.3%. So, we could assume from our empirical study that urbanization is one of the focal causes of educational changes in urban as well as rural societies.

Religion is also a very powerful social institution of each and every society. It involves a set of symbols invoking the feelings which are linked with certain beliefs of supernatural power. Religion is traditionally spread in all societies like rural, tribal, urban and industrial societies of India. But due to the contemporary forces i.e. Urbanization, which is responsible for weakening the faith, ideology and culture of religion. Urbanization has brought about the changes in traditional religious beliefs and practice,

which disintegrated the social relations among the people. The religious beliefs and practices are continued among the rural and urban people. While, researcher put a question to his respondents and know about the changing of religious mentality among the town people due to the force of urbanization. In this regard, we have found certain empirical findings. On the basis of the findings, 58% of Tinsukia town and 53.6% respondents of Tezpur town have given their views regarding the changes of religious mentality among the urban people because we have found that urban peoples are becoming as less orthodox than the rural peoples. In the same way, a less number of respondents viewed that urbanization has not significantly changes the religious mentality of town people. The percentages are 46.3% of Tezpur town and 42% of Tinsukia town have to be found.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

Change within a system is very gradual and marginal and it involves and adjust within a system itself. Such changes are caused by individual members of society who have deviated from its traditional ways. The change of any system, it involves a more radical change and such changes are the creation of new institution within the system. Social change of the system involves the entire society's parting from old traditions and embracing new acceptable norms and expectation of universal behaviors. Therefore, we may say that the traditional system of society is duly altered and changed. In brief, social change may be the result of some external forces or it may be the result of change within the system. In our study, it was found that majority of respondents in both of the towns were constitute the nuclear type of family and it is the result of urbanization. Out of 300 respondents in each of the towns, 79.6% of Tezpur town and 86% of Tinsukia town were found in our investigation. In case of urban society, the chief aim of marriage is not only reproduction but also companionship between married couple and it is the pattern of urban way of life. It was found that majority of respondents i.e. in Tezpur 80.3% and in Tinsukia 85.6% viewed that urbanization has brought changes in marriage system of the towns. I have already mentioned earlier that urban occupations are secondary and tertiary in nature because these types of occupations are based on nonagricultural mode, where service, commerce and trade etc. are to be existed. Our study also focused that majority of

respondents are engaged with secondary and tertiary type economic system. We have found that 87% of respondents of Tezpur town and 93% respondents of Tinsukia town are related with secondary and tertiary occupations. Caste is one of the fixed and immobile social institution of Indian society but due to the advent of urban centres, it has been becoming more flexible in present day situation. It was observed from our study that majority of respondents in both of the town i.e. 72.6% of Tezpur town and 81.6% of Tinsukia town are viewed as the impact of rapid urbanization has undergo the changes of caste system in due process. Politics is also as an important social institution and it also a common sub system of each and every society. But the political participation and voting behavior of urban people has also undergoing changes due to the process of urbanization. In our study we have observed that majority of respondents in both of the towns i.e. 57.6% of Tezpur town and 65.6% of Tinsukia towns are participated with different national level political parties. Education is a very powerful instrument of social and natural change in the present day society. Urbanization is the very significant factor of educational change in towns and rural areas. It is also revealed from our study that majority of respondents were educated indifferent educational levels of standard. But, a large number of respondents i.e. 83.6% of Tezpur and 92.6% Tinsukia are observed that rapid educational changes are occurring due to the process of urbanization, Religion is a universal social institution of any kind of society but it is also to be changes in due process of urbanization. Our study also find out that majority of respondents in both of the towns i.e. 53.6% of Tezpur and 58% of Tinsukia town were viewed as urbanization has changed the institution of religion and religious mentality of town peoples.

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# JAN LOKPAL BILL: AN ANTI CORRUPTION DRAFT AS A MEANS OF COMBATING CORRUPTION

Sikha Dutta\*

## ABSTRACT

In philosophical, theological or moral discussions, corruption is spiritual or moral impurity or deviation from an ideal. In economics corruption is payment for services or material which the recipient is not due under law. This may be called bribery, kickback or in the Middle East, baksheesh. In Govt. it is when an elected representative makes decisions that are influenced by vested interest rather than their own personal or party ideological beliefs. The word corrupt (middle English, from Latin *corruptus*, past participle of *corrumpere*, to abuse or destroy: *cam* – intensive pref and *rumpere*, to break) when used as an adjective. Literally means “utterly broken”.

Political corruption is the abuse of public power, office or resources by elected govt. official for personal gain e.g. by extortion soliciting or offering bribes. It can also take the form of office holders maintaining themselves in office by purchasing votes by enacting laws which use tax-payers money. A *Lokpal* is a proposed ombudsman (legal representative) in India. The word has been derived from the Sanskrit words “loka” (people) and “pala” (protector / caretaker). So the word *Lokpal* means “caretaker of people”. The present paper is an attempt to focus the features of *Jan Lokpal Bill* and its action in the present society.

**(Key words :** Jan Lokpal, Political Corruption.)

## History of Lokpal Bill

The concept of a constitutional ombudsman was first proposed by Law Minister Ashok Kumar Sen in parliament in the early 1960s. The first Jan Lokpal Bill was proposed by Mr. Shanti Bhusan in 1968 and passed in the 4<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha in 1969 but could not get through the Rajya

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Sabha, because of obvious reasons. Subsequently, lokpal bills were introduced in 1971, 1977, and 1985 again by Asok Kumar Sen when serving as Law Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi Cabinet, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005 and in 2008, yet they were never passed 42 years after its first introduction, the Lokpal bill is still pending in India.

The Lokpal Bill provides for filling complaints of corruption against the Prime Minister, other ministers and MPs with the ombudsman. The Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) while recommending the constitution of lokpal was convinced that such an institution was justified not only removing the sense of injustice from the minds of deeply affected citizens but also necessary to instill public confidence in the efficiency of the administrative machinery. Following this, the Lokpal Bill was for the first time presented, during the fourth Lok Sabha in 1968 and was passed there in 1969.

However, while it was pending in the Rajya Sabha, the Lok Sabha was dissolved and so the bill was not passed at that time. The bill was revived several times in the subsequent years, most recently in 2008. Each time, after the bill was introduced to the house, it was referred to some committee for improvements – a joint committee of parliament or a departmental standing committee of the Home Ministry and before the govt. could like a final stand on the issue, the house was dissolved again. Several conspicuous flaws have been cited in the recent draft of the Lokpal Bill. The basic idea of the lokpal is borrowed from the office of ombudsman which has Administrative Reforms Committee of a lokpal at the centre, of and *lokayukta* (s) in the states.

Anna Hazare fought for this bill to get passed and it did on Dec 27, 2011 around 9:30 with modification (proposed as Jan Lokpal Bill). However Hazare, his team and other political parties claim that Lokpal Bill passed in weak and would not serve its intended purpose. So the proposed bill by the ruling Congress party is yet to get acceptance from the Rajya Sabha. As of December 29, 2011, the bill has been deferred to the next parliamentary session amid lots of drama and disruption by the IJP, RJD and SP parties. The media at large and opposition parties have denied the situation to be staged.

### **Jan Lokpal Bill**

Jan Lokpal Bill (Citizens Ombudsman Bill) is a draft anti-corruption bill drawn up by prominent Civil society activities seeking the

appointment of a Jana Lokpal, an independent body that would investigate corruption cases, complete the investigation within a year and envisages trial in the case getting over in the next one year.

Drafted by Justice Santosh Hegde (former Supreme Court Judge and former lokayukta of Karnataka), Prashanta Bhusan (Supreme Court Lawyers) and Arvind Kejriwal (RTI activist) the draft bill envisages a system where a corrupt persons found guilty would go to jail within two years of the complaint made and his ill gotten wealth being confiscated. It also seeks power to the Jan lokpal to prosecute politician and bureaucrats without government permission.

Retired IPS officer Kiran Bedi and other known people like Anna Hazare, Swami Agnivesh, Sri Sri Ravi Sankar and Mallika Sarabhai are also part of the movement called 'India Against Corruption'. Its website describes the movement as "an expression of collective anger of people of India Against Corruption." It goes on to state: "We have all come together to force/request/persuade/pressurize the Govt. to enact the Jan Lokpal Bill. We feel that if this bill were enacted it would create an effective deterrence against corruption. Anna Hazare, an anti corruption crusader began a fast unto death, demanding that this bill drafted by the civil society, adopted the website of India against corruption movement calls the lokpal bill of the Government an "eyewash" and has on it a critique of that Government bill. It also lists the difference between the bills drafted by the Government and civil society.

### **Features of the Jan Lokpal Bill**

1. An institution called Lokpal at the centre and Lokayukta in each state will be set up.
2. Like Supreme Court and Election Commission, they will be completely independent of the Governments. No Minister or Bureaucrat will be able to influence their investigation.
3. Cases against corrupt people will not linger on for years any more. Investigation in any case will have to be completed in one year. Trial should be completed in next one year so that the corrupt politician, officer or judge is sent to jail within two years.

4. The loss that a corrupt person caused to the Government will be recovered at the time of conviction.
5. If any work of any citizen is not done in prescribed time in any Government office, Lokpal will impose financial penalty on guilty officers, which will be given as compensation to the complainant.
6. So you could approach Lokpal if your ration card or passport or voter card is not being made or if police is not registering your case or any other work is not being done in prescribed time. Lokpal will have to get it done in a month's time. You could also report any case of corruption to lokpal like ration being siphoned off. Lokpal will have to complete its investigation in a year, trial will be over in next one year and the guilty will go to jail within two years.
7. But won't the Government appoint corrupt and weak people as Lokpal members? That won't be possible because its members will be selected by judges, citizens and constitutional authorities and not by politicians, through a completely transparent and participatory process.
8. If some officer in Lokpal becomes corrupt the entire functioning of Lokpal / Loka yukta will be completely transparent. Any complaint against any Officer of Lokpal shall be investigated and the other officer dismissed within two months.
9. It will be happen to existing anti-corruption agencies that CVC, departmental vigilance and anti corruption branch of CBI will be merged into lokpal. Lokpal will have complete powers and machinery to independently investigated and prosecute any officer, judge or politician.
10. It will be the duty of the Lokpal to provide protection to those who are being victimized for raising their voice against corruption.

### **Fundamental Duties**

1. To judge the cases and make jurisdictions against corruption cases with the Lokpal.

2. To judge the case whether a case is legal or whether a fake complaint has been made.
3. To potentially impose fines on a fake complaint or even a short span of jail time, if the case is not proved to be legally true.

### **Why corruption is so rampant in India?**

There are several reasons. First certain traditional practices of paying bribes to public officials may have created a tolerance of corruption in our society. In many Govt. offices such as the Registrars' office, it has been normal practices to pay bribes Political parties have openly distributed cash and goods to voters during election time. Once such practices are widespread, it is difficult to root them out, Second, since many Govt. services are monopolistic in nature it becomes easy for corrupt officials to extract money from those who seek the services. Third, when decisions are made without transparency, it becomes easy for public officials to favour those who are willing to give them bribes. Fourth when those in authority are unwilling or unable to monitor the actions and performance of those working under them, corruption becomes a low risk activity. Fifth political parties need large funds for fighting elections. There is little accountability and transparency in the collection and use of these funds, creating in the process enormous scope for black money and corruption.

So far, we have talked about corruption in government, meaning, and the abuse of public power for private gain. But corruption in the private sector is also a serious problem and needs to be dealt with. In fact, the two are often linked to avoid tax, many persons and business firms which are engaged in real estate and other transactions in cash, create unaccounted money in the process. Many firms generate black money through partially accounted purchases and sales. Businessman need to create black money in order to make political donations or to win contracts. It encourages them to siphon off some of their funds from business, thus evading taxation and deceiving their shareholders. We have here a vicious circle that is difficult to break and that perpetuates corruption and abuse of power all around.

### **Major Gaps and Remedies**

There are four major gaps in the public service arena that breed

corruption and hence need to be rectified. First, there is a lack of information that makes it difficult for citizens to know what they should do to access services, and what they are entitled to once they gain access. Next, there is a one-sided agreement a citizen must enter into with the service provider. The latter will insist on the citizen paying the fee, providing the needed documents and other terms, but does not promise to deliver a predictable service or benefit. The citizen cannot hold the provider accountable for time deadlines, quality and standards of service, or penalty in case of failure. The third is the lack of grievance redress when problems arise. The government can terminate a service or penalize the citizen if she/he fails to comply with the rules. But it does not provide the latter with a credible grievance redress mechanism to respond to his/ her complaints. Finally, there is reluctance on the part of public officials to listen to the voice of the people, especially the poor. Though the government has control over its services and makes the rules, it seldom monitors the actual delivery of its services. Under these conditions, corruption tends to thrive. Influential citizens may make their voice heard. Some others pay bribes and get what they need from the government. But the vast majority of people do not get their entitlements in full.

What are the remedies? Empowering people with the information they need about their entitlements, rights and remedies is the first step. The government has taken some halting steps in this direction, but needs to do much more. A more balanced and transparent contract between citizens and service providers is the next step. The government has to allocate more resources and install more robust systems if this remedy is to work. Putting in place effective grievance redress mechanisms, and using new technologies where appropriate, is the third requirement. Several experiments are underway in this arena. Replication of the best among those on a large scale is the obvious answer. Furthermore, all governments and their service providers must periodically gather systematic feedback from citizens on their services and programmes and use the findings to continuously improve their quality and reduce corruption.

Finally, there should be swift and severe penalties for those found guilty of corruption. Today, corruption is a low-risk activity. Our judicial system is slow, and very few are caught and punished in a way there has

a deterrent effect on others. A strong Lokpal institution could make a difference. It remains to be seen whether the proposed bill will in-fact live up to this expectation.

Treating the symptoms of corruption will not result in the eradication of this evil. Black money is an example of a symptom. Remedies such as an amnesty scheme to legitimize black money, or bringing back some black money from Swiss banks or other tax havens may create a sense of fear among the corrupt for some time. But if the root causes of corruption are not dealt with, new ways of creating and hiding back money will be found. Similarly, a Lokpal may investigate cases against the prime minister or other top public officials. This, however, is like tackling the problem after the damage has been done. What is urgently needed is the political will to implement the wider set of reforms discussed above. Prevention is better than cure.

Civil society has an important role to play in this context. It can exert pressure on the government to control corruption. It can monitor areas in which public and private sector corruption is rampant and can engage in educating citizens to resist corruption. It can present plans and reforms that can reduce the scope for corruption and monitor government actions in the public areas. Anna Hazare has played this role in his recent encounters with the government. Civil society movements, however, should be clear about role in this process. They cannot claim to be representing all people. Representative institutions already exist. Civil society should strive to represent actionable ideas and influence and energize these institutions of governance to control corruption.

### **Conclusion**

Most of the common people who stood behind Anna's Draft Lokpal Bill still natively believe that the said bill faithfully caters to the promises dished out in the Recommendations of Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and a brochure attached there to 'Salient feature of Jan Lokpal Bill'. But if they juxtapose the text of the Draft Bill to the said promises, they are sure to feel disillusioned may betrayed beyond redemption. Precisely speaking the promise was made for a single bill to give birth to both Lokpal at centre and Lokayukta in states, not two separate bills one for

the centre and another for each state. This very promise had also categorically figured in course of the recommendations made in the maiden meeting. The said meeting had put forward its concluding recommendation as follows: “It would be desirable if the Government of India provides for the institution of Lokayukta and Lokpal through an amendment to the constitution.”

Ironically, it is one of the founding fathers of Jan Lokpal Bill Justice Santosh Hegde himself, who confessed to the media other day at Bangalore, “The Lokpal (ombudsman) Bill will only help fight corruption at the centre and not in states where the magnitude of graft is alarming and accounts for almost 90 percent of corruption in the country encountered by the common man”. (Times of India, Bhubaneswar, p. 7, dated 16 April, 2011). It won’t be out of place here to throw back the poser to Justice Hegde himself and other founding luminaries – when, by whom and under which circumstances the original mandate of Jan Lokpal Bill to set up ‘a single, apex, independent and effective anti-corruption agency’ comprising Lokpal at Centre and Lokayukta at state level was drastically scaled down to a highly truncated Bill vouching for a minuscule Lokpal at the Centre? More importantly, Mr. Anna Hazare, who is so to say the icon of the Jan Lokpal Bill owes an instant reply on this count to the whole nation, which stood in solidarity with his fast-unto-death dreaming that they got at last the panacea for a just, delivering and corruption-free India through Jan Lokpal Bill.

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# HOW CAN THE ENVIRONMENT OF ASSAM BE PROTECTED FROM GETTING POLLUTED : AN ANALYSIS

**Nabashruti Paul\***

## **ABSTRACT**

Environment is an aggregate of all the external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of an organism by various kinds of pollution of air, water, land etc. Today environment protection has become a global issue. Since the proclamation of the right of the people to a clean environment by the UN conference on Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972 the Government of India as well as the state Governments are taking various measures to control pollution. In this study, attempt has been taken to find out the possible solutions of preventing the environment of Assam from pollution. The main objective of the study is to analyze the meaning of the environment pollution, its impact on human life and to find out the solution of environment pollution in Assam. In this study descriptive method has been followed and materials are collected from secondary sources like books, journals, news papers, articles etc.

**(Key words :** Environment, Pollution, Biosphere etc.)

## **Introduction**

At present, the word “environment” carries special significance and attention. In fact, everyone talks about it. Scientists are also very much concerned about it, as the present state in of our environment is not congenial. Human beings are responsible for spoiling it. If human beings continue to interfere with nature, their lives on the earth will be

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at stake. In the mean time, some places of the World have experienced adverse climatic changes and variations. This has created problems in agriculture, industry and other aspects of the life. Hence, our effort for sustaining a wholesome environment has become order of the day. Now-a- days all sections of the people right from a humble farmer to a production engineer have become very conscious regarding the environment. All the governments of the World have become serious about preserving the environment .The UNO helps the nations of the World with men as well as money in order to improve the deteriorating environment. Besides these, nature loving NGO's also have enough of contribution.

Our environment now faces a number of problems besides the fury of nature since the creation of the biosphere. Earthquakes, volcanoes, excessive as well as meager rainfall, cyclones, soil erosion etc are the natural problems. Earthquakes may change land reforms ad courses of rivers. Moreover, smokes and ashes due to the volcanic eruption may make the Sun invisible for days together harming flora and fauna. The excessive rainfall causes floods as well as inundation etc. Again, lack of adequate rainfall causes droughts. In the hilly regions, soil erosion is a threat to the environment. But the harm caused to the environment by the human beings is much more serious than that of caused by the anomalies in the nature.

Thus, environment pollution can be defined as, "The addition of the constituents to water, air or land, which adversely alter the natural quality of the environment." The pollution of air, water, and soil in Assam has become a subject of great concern to any discerning citizen. The emission from the industries and automobiles, and garbage accumulation in the urban areas have posed a great problem for the environment of Assam. Oil drilling , refineries, petro chemical industries and coal mining have Assam an environmentally polluted state in spite of its industrialization being in a low key.

### **Causes of environment pollution in Assam**

The environment pollution is a matter of concern for Assam also. It is the result of many causes. Some of the causes are discussed below.

(1) **Air pollution** : In Assam air is also getting polluted. The natural

resources of air pollution are volcanic eruptions releasing poisonous gases like  $\text{SO}_2$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{S}$ ,  $\text{CO}_2$ , etc. All these are releasing in the air, making it foul and injuries to health. Forest fires and reactions between natural gas emissions also constitute a source of air pollution. Moreover, in Assam also manmade sources such as increase in pollution, deforestation, burning of fossil fuels and fire, emissions from vehicles, rapid industrialization, agricultural activities, wars are also the major causes of air pollution. Compared to the manmade air pollution, the air pollution due to the natural causes is very significant. It is estimated that automobiles are also responsible for heavy air pollution in Assam.

(2) **Water pollution** : Water is the most essential natural resource for the survival of all living organisms. But its quality is threatened by numerous sources of pollution. Experts are of the view that in Assam 75% of water pollution is caused by sewage, domestic wastes, and food processing plants. The industrial effluents when discharged through sewage system poison the biological purification mechanism of sewage treatment and pose pollution. Besides these, plant nutrients, farm wastes, fertilizers drainage from silage soil erosion also create water pollution. In Assam also the industrial pollutants sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides form sulfuric acid and nitric acid respectively in the atmosphere and hydrofluoric acid mix with rain making it acidic. The acidic rain falling on lakes and ponds destroy the normal life and leads to damages to forests, crops, human health etc. The principal type of industries which contribute to water pollution in Assam are chemical and pharmaceuticals, coal washeries, soaps, detergents , paper, cement, fertilizers etc.

(3) **Soil pollution or land pollution** : Solid waste like garbage, rubbish materials like plastics, glasses, fibers, leaves and other discarded manufactured products particularly in the urban areas of Assam contribute to soil pollution. Moreover, in Assam also modern agricultural products and the practices also pollute the soil to a large extent. Today with the advancement of the agro-technology, huge quantities of fertilizers soil conditioning agents are employed to increase the crop yield and leads to land pollution in Assam. In many agricultural lands have now excessive amounts of fertilizers and animal's wastes are used also posing soil pollution problem. Besides these, because of unplanned construction of the roads, railways lines and lack of proper drainage systems in Assam

land pollution is increasing day by day.

(4) **Noise pollution** : At present noise pollution proves to be a curse for all of us. It is no less harmful than air or water pollution. Train, buses, motor cars, three wheelers, two wheelers, jet-crafts are the sources of the noise on roads and sky. The factories, generators, grindings mills etc are the sources of industrial noise. The Construction activities for the buildings roads, bridges etc. also produce tremendous noise. The loudly played radios, TV's etc may become the major sources of noise pollution. The loudspeakers used in the festivals as well as in public meetings affect the people of the locality by its sounds. Noise beyond the level of 25 to 45 decibels disturbs peace of mind, health, comfort and if it ranges from 45 to 80 decibels it may even disturb the digestive system. It may be responsible for the rise of blood pressure, heart trouble, fatic etc.

Thus, the pollution is usually brought about by the addition of waste products of human activity to the environment. The pollution has an effect on the human life. The effects are–

1. Sewage is an excellent medium for the growth of pathogenic bacteria, viruses and protozoa which harm the human being.
2. The dusts from cement plants, stone crushers, lime kilns etc are creating problem for breathing system.
3. Industrial effluent causes death, cellular degeneration in brain which results in coma.
4. The thermal pollution leads to reduction in dissolved oxygen, undesirable changes in algal population.
5. Radioactive pollutants lead to serious skin cancer, breast cancer, leukemia, DNA breakage. It causes genetic disorder, blood abnormalities in higher animals including man.
6. Due to water pollution the diseases like cholera, dysentery, hepatitis, typhoid etc suffered by the people.
7. The heaps of biomedical wastes from the hospitals and the nursing homes too are the breeding grounds of various deadly diseases.

Thus, it is very clear that the pollution (air, water, land, noise) affects us severely. It also affects animal's. Because of pollution some of the animals can not survive for a long time.

Because of the above mentioned reasons the government of India has enacted a number of acts to prevent the pollution so that the people can be safe guarded. These acts are–

1. Indian Forest Act (1927)
2. The wild Life (protection) Act (1972)
3. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974.
4. The Forest (Conservation) Act 1980
5. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution ) Act 1981
6. The Environment (Protection) Act 1986.
7. The Public Liability Insurance Act 1991.
8. The National Environmental Tribunal Act 1995.
9. The National Environment Appellate Authority Act 1997.
10. National Forest Policy 1988
11. National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment Development Act 1992.
12. Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution 1992.

### **Possible solutions for preventing the environment pollution in Assam**

*The environment* pollution is a very serious matter. So, there is a need to tackle the problem with sincerity. Otherwise, a day will come when not only the animal but *Human beings also will not be able to live*. Possible solutions are provided to prevent the environment pollution in Assam.

(1) **.General awareness:** Environment pollution is very harmful. So, general awareness is the most essential to prevent the environment pollution and people can be made aware regarding environment pollution through films, newspapers , radio, TV and other mass media.

(2) **Suggestion from the expert bodies:** No industry can be setup

unless its location is approved by the expert bodies like State Pollution Control Board. In that case the general public will not suffer from pollution (air, water, land).

(3) **Plantation:** In Assam also there should be green belts. Plantation of trees adds to the beauty of Assam and will make the environment pleasant.

4 .The Government agencies, research organizations and boards like Central Pollution Control and State Pollution Control boards have furnished tolerable limits of all deleterious gases, chemicals, particles, dusts in the air. If some industries emit them in amounts crossing those prescribed limits, the statutory powers vested on the State Pollution Control Boards in India can close down such erring industries.

5. The Government of India has enacted a number of acts to prevent the environment pollution. If these acts are properly implemented by the State Pollution Control Boards may go a long way in saving the environment from pollution.

6. Since the beginning of the twentieth century use of mercury has been increasing rapidly as it is required especially in paper and electronic industries. It is needed for a few other industries too. Of course the present trend is to minimize the use of mercury.

7. In the urban areas, collection bins are meant to contain both non- recyclable and recyclable wastes and a large portion of the waste is deposited outside the bins, such a practice is detrimental to health. So, there should be separate compartment in a bin for non-recyclable and recyclable solid waste. In the urban areas of India, the amount of recyclable materials constitutes a very large portion of total garbage. The recycling of these materials will be profitable.

8 .The need for proper management of the urban solid waste or garbage. So to say should be seriously realized by the government .The Central Pollution Control Board, the State Pollution Control Board, the Ministry of works and housing and the urban Affairs should be very active in this respect.

9. To control the environment pollution the present high rate of population growth must be arrested. This can be done by intensifying

family planning programmes and also by stopping the infiltration of the people from the neighboring countries to Assam.

10.Noise created by automobiles can be reduced by banning blowing of horns and permitting only such vehicles with a good body and efficient silencer. Moreover, restrictions on heavy vehicles to play on certain routes during the peak hours of traffic will also reduce the adverse effects of noise pollution of Assam.

### Conclusion

In the conclusion I would like to say that the environment pollution has become a matter of great concern for Assam also. So, everyone should take initiative to save the environment of Assam from getting polluted and should lay emphasis on creating as well as maintaining pollution free zone so that everyone can lead a happy and disease free life. In preventing pollution no one should depend upon other for preventing the environment pollution and no one should blame another one for polluting the environment. In fact, all the organizations, people, government both central government and state government should join their hands to prevent the environment pollution as well as for keeping the environment of Assam clean.

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# INSURGENCY AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EAST INDIA

Yugal Jyoti Gogoi\*

## ABSTRACT

The North-East India comprises of eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and the state of Sikkim. This region is surrounded by international border and linked to the mainstream India with a narrow corridor. This region is rich in minerals and forest wealth with a rich heritage not only in the life and culture but also in flora and fauna. This region has the highest concentration of ethnic groups in India having their own culture, custom and tradition. This area is also a land of various insurgent groups. Except Sikkim all the states often face insurgent activities since independence. The insurgency has a deep, wide and complex impact on society, development and politics of the region. It leads to internal displacement of the population. It has become a barrier in the path of development.

**(Key words :** Insurgency, Development, Northeast.)

## Introduction

The Northeast region of India comprises of eight states namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. This region covering the area of 262,230 km<sup>2</sup> by of hills and plains and is bordered by China, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh. This region is connected to the rest of India by a strip of land, as narrow as 14 miles (23km) known as the Siliguri corridor. The population of this region is approximately 40 million (2011 census) which represent 3.1% of total Indian population. After the independence this region has witnessed so many problems and insurgency problem is

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one of them. Except Sikkim, all the seven states often face insurgent activities since independence. At present insurgent activity is actively present in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland in Northeast India. The region has as many 30 armed insurgent organizations operating and fighting against the Indian state including the demand of total independence from India while others call for a restructuring of the states. The insurgency has a deep, wide and complex impact on society, development and politics of the region. It leads to internal displacement of the population. It has become a barrier in the path of development. Kidnapping, extortion, killing, bandh, strikes, curfew etc hampered the development works in the region.

### **Methodology**

The data have been collected for this paper from secondary sources, such as books, journals, magazines and internet etc.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- a) To make an in-depth analysis of the concept of insurgency.
- b) To examine the causes of insurgency groups in North-East India.
- c) To Analyse the affects of insurgency to the development of this region.

### **Meaning of Insurgency**

The literary meaning of insurgency is rebellion. It is an act of revolt. It is a armed rebellion against a constituted authority. Insurgency is mainly concerned with the occupation of a territory or enjoying political power. It is an unconstitutional movement that is launched against the constitutional authority. In the words of V.K. Anand, “insurgency can be described as a compositively progressive, extra-constitutional and variegated struggle against the established political authority. It is launched and continued by consciously mobilized indigenious groups for the fulfillment of certain conceptual goals such as political freedom, and socio-economic transformation. Being a deliberate creation that aims at the rectification of incompatibilities, insurgency is a means to an end and generally quite different from revolution which is primarily an occurrence spotlighting the syndrome of unbearable conditions and

involving open mass participation.”<sup>1</sup> From this definition we can say that it is a struggle against the established authority; it is a struggle of the indigenous people, it is a struggle for the fulfillment of certain goals that manifest emancipation.

It is very difficult to differentiate between insurgency and terrorism. Because the boundary line between terrorism and insurgency are very thin. Insurgency is confined within the national boundary and it is directed against one's own government. On the other hand, terrorism can cross over the national boundary and it may be directed one's own or other countries. Insurgency is generally operated with the support of a section of the local people, whereas terrorism may or may not have that support.

### **Causes of insurgency in the North –East India**

The reasons of insurgency in the north-east states are differed from states to states. The specific reasons of insurgency in the North-east India are-

1. **Nagaland** : Nagaland is the mother of all the insurgent of the North-east India. Under the leadership of Phizo, The Naga National council (NNC) was the first insurgency group in Nagaland. NNC was further been spelt into national Socialist council of Nagaland (NSCN). NSCN again split into two factions- NSCN (Isaac-Muivah) and NSCN (Khaplang). The main reason of the movement has been to have a great Nagaland as a sovereign state comprising all the areas where Nagas traditionally lived. This covers parts of other states and also parts of Myanmar.

2. **Assam** : Assam has also witnessed insurgency since early eighties. The main insurgent group of Assam is United Liberation front of Assam (ULFA), which was emerged in April 1979 as a protest against the illegal migrants. The illegal migrants became a threat to the identity of the ethnic people of Assam. At the time of Assam accord 1985 ULFA emphasize its basic objective that is “Liberate Assam from Indian colonial rule and form a sovereign, socialist Assam”. Except this the another factors of insurgency in Assam are – a) Feeling of negligence by the Centre (Mahi aair soku), b) Economic deprivation and outflow of natural resources, c) Corruption of the Government machinery. Another insurgent group

of Assam is NDFB. In 1988, they started a cultural movement which has taken the form of political movement in course of time. The organization fight to get a sovereign Boldoland north of the Brahmaputra River. It was very active during the 1990's. The NDFB is allied with the National Socialist council of Nagaland (IM). Since the time of emerging NDFB has been taken numbers of violent measures for fulfilling their demand.

3. **Arunachal Pradesh** : Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF) is the insurgent group of this state which was emergent in 2001. Their main demand is independent Arunachal Pradesh. It is liked to mention that the problem of insurgency in Arunachal Pradesh is comparatively low.

4. **Manipur** : There are so many insurgent groups in Manipur. Some of them are Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), people's Revolutionary party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) formed in 1977 led by R.K. Tulachandra, Kangleipak communists party (KCP) formed in 1980, Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), peoples United Liberation Front (PULF) etc. The main causes of armed insurgency in Manipur are: a) Economic backwardness, (b) Growing unemployment among the youth, c) Corruption among the civil servants. In this state the insurgent groups are running a parallel government influencing the government decisions. Some time they interfere in issues like awarding contracts, supply orders and appointments in government service.

5. **Tripura** : The main insurgent groups of Tripura are- Tribal National Volunteers (TNV), All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTE) and National Liberation Force of Tripura (NFLT). In Tripura the insurgency problem is mainly related to the issue of immigrants. The position of tribal majority in the state had become reversed following a large scale influx of the people from East Bengal and after partition, from East Pakistan (Bangladesh). As a result the indigenous people of Tripura became minority in their own land. The main factors of insurgency in Tripura are- a) Aspiration for preserving tribal identity, tribal script and language. b) Negligence of the state government to the tribal interest. c) Corruption of Civil servants.

6. **Mizoram** : The insurgent group of Mizoram, the Mizo National Front (MNF) which was established in 1960 under the leadership of Laldenga to provide relief to the famine affected people in Mizoram. The

local people were not satisfied with the reliefs provided by state government as well a central government. As a result they demand secession from Assam and started the ‘Operation Tericho’ in 1966. Under the Prime Minister of Rajiv Gandhi, the Mizoram Accord 1986 was signed and a separate statehood was granted to Mizoram. The main causes of insurgency in Mizoram were –a) Gross neglect the state government, b) Economic backwardness.

### **Insurgency as a Barrier to Development**

The insurgency problem in North East is responsible for slow economic development in this region in different ways.

- (i). Sound Infrastructure which is the backbone of an economic development is still not fully maintained in this region. Due to insurgency lots of money is spent on maintaining law and order and social welfare activities get affected. And the private sector is also afraid to invest money in this region because of insurgency and law and order problem
- (ii). Tourism industry: if anyone wants to see natural beauty then a visit to north east India is must. There is a vast scope of enlarging tourism industry in this region. But due to insurgency problem the people of the other parts of India afraid to come in this region. They have a wrong conception that majority of the people of this region are insurgent.
- (iii). ‘Bandh’ call: There is the loss of production due to the frequent “Bandh” called by the various insurgency groups and other organizations. Along with transportation sector, industry, Banking, Education, Tourism etc are badly affected by ‘Bandh’ call. The insurgents of North-East called bandh on 15<sup>th</sup> August and 26<sup>th</sup> January almost every year. Again when militants killed civilians without any reasons, Bandhs are also called by different organization in order to condemn the brutal attacks of militants.<sup>2</sup> Though the education is the fundamental right of every people, but students in insurgency affected areas cannot go to school for days because of various bandhs called by insurgents groups.
- (iv). Since the private sector is reluctant to visit in this region

due to insurgency, the scope of opening employment avenues for huge number of unemployment youth is dampening. In the present global scenario it could have been possible for this region to explore and utilize the resources available. But in presence of the problem of insurgency it does not happen in this region.

- (v). Insurgency drains the economic resources of the state as it compels that state to invest in the maintenance of additional paramilitary forces that are deployed for law and order. So it is an additional economic burden on the states.
- (vi). This is followed by certain ecological problems that surface because of jungle clearness activities adopted by displaced people who clear jungles for their survival. The problem is aggravated as forest official do not pay heed to these unwarranted activities.
- (vii). Bureaucrats play an important role for the development of the society. For administrative efficiency the government must be capable of maintain law and order situation, so that it can carry the process of economic development very smoothly. But it becomes a hard task on the part of the government of the northeast regions mainly of Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur due to insurgent activities.
- (viii). India lives in rural area”, so until and unless a rural area is not developed we cannot established as a developed state .but insurgency problem creates a major hamper to the process of rural development. The government workers the businessmen do not want to go the rural areas in fear of extortion, abduction or death.
- (ix). Petroleum and Tea industry are the two most important industries of the northeast India which has been contributed a lot to the development of this region. It is significant to note that insurgent groups target these industries as that believed that central government uses these industries to exploit the common masses. That’s why they often attack these industries by exploring pipelines and kidnapping the

higher official of these industries. These attacks have a negative impact on the development of this region.

### **Suggestions and conclusion**

The following suggestions are put forward in order to solve the problem–

- (i). The Government must give attention to the insurgency problem. The separate violence will continue if the state does not address the burning problem of the northeast region. The government should be special emphasize to reconstruction of society that has been hindered by insurgency problem through the basic economic, social and humanitarian needs.
- (ii). In order to control insurgency and violence in this region, public awareness program is very much important
- (iii). The Government should take the requisite step to generate employment opportunities among the youths.
- (iv). Government should encourage open debate and discussion on the insurgency issues of the northeast region.
- (v). The voter identity card should be issued and verified to all the citizens in order to stop flow immigration problem in the region.
- (vi). Government should discuss with the neighbouring countries not to supply weapons to the insurgent groups and not to provide shelter and finance.

This region ethnically has a separate identity and it cannot match with other parts of India. Therefore Indian governments should take some steps which satisfied the needs of the people. No problem can be solved by the violence. Proper understanding of the violence is very much important to solve the problem. Regarding this north east region- the government and insurgents should come forward for finding a better solution of this insurgency problem. We all of know that, natural beauty of this region is the gift of God. So it is duty of every person, government and insurgents to save and protect our beauty.

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# THE ROLE OF GAON SABHA IN PANCHYAT ADMINISTRATION

Mayuri Dutta\*

## ABSTRACT

Gaon Sabha plays a vital role in panchayat administration. It is the active participation of people in the affairs of village governance. The three-tier of Panchayati Raj Institutions at the village, block and district level do not provide for direct democracy<sup>(1)</sup>. Gaon Sabha is the only forum which can ensure direct democracy. The historic 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 (hereinafter 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA, 1992) laid stress on the revival of Gaon Sabha for strengthening democracy at the village level.

In the above context, the concern of the present paper is to examine how far Gaon Sabha has been successful in realising the goal of participatory democracy. The paper has been divided into two parts. While the part – I deals briefly with the evolution of the concept of Gaon Sabha in the post-independence period, its importance and objectives and the position of Gaon Sabha under the 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA, 1992, the part – II examines the operational aspects of Gaon Sabha with regard to participatory democracy.

**(Key Words :** Participatory Democracy, Panchayati Raj, Gaon Sabha, Political education, Empowerment, People's Participation.)

## Part - I

The Gaon Sabha is not a new concept to the people of rural India. It existed in Indian villages from times immemorial and provided ample scope to the people to participate in the democratic process. However, the modern concept of Gaon Sabha has been derived from the ancient and customary practice of Gaon Panchayats during our National Movement for Independence.<sup>(2)</sup> **Gandhiji** gave the first exposition of the participatory approach in governance for development. He stated : '*people*

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*are the roots, the state is the fruit . . . . . democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the top and that it has to be worked from below by the people of every village*’. **J. L. Nehru** fully supported Gandhi in this proposition. Nehru stated ‘*Democracy at the top could not be a success unless it was built on this foundation from below*’.<sup>(3)</sup> Infact every great leader who believe in democracy wanted it from below. Under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru, Indian National Congress passed resolutions in 1909 and 1010 for the revival of local Panchayats endowed with real powers.<sup>(4)</sup>

After Independence, the concept of Gaon Sabha was first mooted in the recommendation of the Congress Village Panchayat Committee in 1950 to the effect that all the adults of the village should constitute the Gaon Sabha and that the village Panchayat elected by the Gaon Sabha will function as its executive.<sup>(5)</sup> Subsequently the concept of Gaon Sabha as something more than an electorate was mooted in the first Local Self-Government Minister’s Conference held at Simla in 1954.<sup>(6)</sup> This Conference suggested that frequent meetings of the entire village should be called by the Panchayat and the number of such meetings should be atleast two in each year. Similarly in the second and third meetings of the Central Council of Local Self-Government, the role of Gaon Sabha was emphasized, though considerable importance was attached to Panchayats. In its fifth meeting the Council recommended the recognition of Gaon Sabha as a legal entity in order to ensure greater contact between the electorate and the elected. It was of the view that an elected body like panchayat can take decisions for mobilizing human effort; but if such decisions are taken after full consultation with the general electorate, the efficiency of implementation will be far better. The Council in its sixth meeting reiterated that contact between electorate and the Gaon Panchayats must be frequent and purposeful. The Gaon Sabha should meet as frequently as possible to formulate the plans and programmes for the whole year, approve the budget and review the progress of the work from time to time.

The Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation was of the opinion that the Gaon Sabha did not develop into an institution capable of exerting effective influence on the village panchayat.<sup>(7)</sup> The Balwantray Mehta Committee also did not mention about Gaon Sabha in

the section on democratic decentralization.<sup>(8)</sup> So, the Ministry set up the Diwakar-Committee in 1963 to (i) study the working of Gaon Sabha – Gram panchayat and the Panchayat Samiti with special reference to the extent to which the Gram Panchayat is influenced in its policies and decisions by the views and mandate of the Gaon Sabha and extent to which Gaon Sabha is involved in the implementation of programme and (ii) to suggest measures necessary to ensure that the Gaon Sabha is built up as the base of Panchayati Raj.<sup>(9)</sup>

The Diwakar – Committee having studied the working, opined that the Gaon Sabha could serve to strengthen the Panchayati Raj but felt that it did not perform function effectively because of various reasons. The committee has not stressed the need of conferment of greater powers on Gaon Sabha through legislation but has recommended go-slow policy. However, it emphasized the importance of Gaon Sabha as it provides the element of direct democracy.<sup>(10)</sup> Thus, Diwakar Committee Report is perhaps the first formal published government document covering various aspects of Gaon Sabha from empirical point of view.

Thus, it appears that the concept of Gaon Sabha has evolved through a historical process. The concept has also received approval from some other political thinkers. Joy Prakash Narayan observed that Gaon Sabha signifies village democracy and it provides scope for direct government and direct democracy. The relationship between Panchayat and Gaon Sabha is like the relationship of between Cabinet and Assembly. **S. K. Dey**, the architect of Community Development and Panchayati Raj felt that ‘Panchayati Raj as we now visualize will, therefore, mean progressive increase in competence from the ground upwards and corresponding transfer of responsibilities from the centre to ground’.<sup>(11)</sup> Thus, it will bring about a complete link-up of our people from the Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha.

### **Importance of Gaon Sabha**

**Firstly**, the Gaon Sabha is considered as the soul of the village panchayat. It plays an important role in identifying the local needs, prioritizing the needs, identifying the beneficiaries and planning local specific programmes for the community.

**Secondly**, Gaon Sabha plays an active role in strengthening the

democratic process at the grass-root level in various ways, such as, inculcate the community spirit, increase political awareness, strengthen development orientation, educate rural people in administration and enable weaker-sections to assert their point of view. Thus, Gaon Sabha will pave the way for social change in rural society.

**Thirdly**, Gaon Sabha also empowers and enthuses the rural people in true sense of the term. It aims to bring the decision-making authorities closure to the people at grass-roots level. The local people can freely discuss and decide to manage their own affairs. In this process, the local people may feel elevated by their involvement in every big or small matters. Thus, it provides psychological satisfaction to them.

**Fourthly**, Gaon Sabha provides political education to the villagers. With the help of Gaon Sabha even the common villagers get an opportunity to experience how democratic institution work. Here people can learn their responsibilities towards the society. It will also provide education to the villagers regarding exercising control on the working of village panchayat.

**Fifthly**, it is through the institution of Gaon Sabha that people's participation can be increased in development activities like opening of schools, hospitals, construction of roads etc. etc. As the local people discuss together and take decisions they would extend maximum co-operation for the success of the plans and programmes.

**Sixthly**, it is through the Gaon Sabha that the local available resources can be mobilized. An effective Gaon Sabha can better channelizes the scarce resources. Looking to the local needs Gaon Sabha can decide to utilize the resources for the maximum benefit of the people.

**Seventhly**, the Gaon Sabha helps to mould good relationship between the panchayat functionaries and the rural people.

Thus, the Gaon Sabha can be regarded as the double edged weapon. On the one hand it gives people of each village an opportunity to air their grievances directly and to scrutinise within limits the activities and finances of their Panchayats. On the other hand, it gives the panchayat an opportunity to share the difficulties and problems directly with the people of each village so that their co-operation and involvement could be enlisted.

## **Objectives of Gaon Sabha**

In brief, objectives of Gaon Sabhas are as follows :

1. To create awareness, increase people's participation and promote transparency and accountability;
2. To reflect the voice of the people in the identification of local needs, prioritizing the needs, identification of beneficiaries for various rural development programmes and planning location specific programmes for the community'
3. To provide opportunity to all the people willing and capable to participate in the development process;
4. To activate the democratic process at the grass-roots level;
5. To mould a good relationship between the panchayat functionaries and the rural people.

## **Gaon Sabha and 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA, 1992**

Considering the importance of Gaon Sabha, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 emphasised strengthening of Gaon Sabha. The Act for the first time provided a Statutory imperative for the establishment of Gaon Sabha in rural India. In order to provide the Gaon Sabha a key place in the overall system of Panchayati Raj, specific outline has been provided in the 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA, 1992 through Article 143(B) which reads as follows:

“Gram Sabha’ means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral roles relating to village comprised within the area of panchayat at the village level. It’s role has been laid down in Article 243 (A) which states’ ‘A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a state may, by law, provide.” Thus, the Gaon Sabha has become a Constitutional reality vested with specific powers and functions. Further, to give impetus to the institutions the year 1999-2000 has been declared as the year of ‘Gaon Sabha’.

In conformity with the mandatory provision of the Amendment, all State Governments have made provision for Gaon Sabha in their

respective Panchayati Raj Acts. This was a major step in the legal empowerment of Gaon Sabha. However, the scope and functions of the Gaon Sabha vary from one state Act to another. But it has generally been conceived as the primary body in the activities which are concerned with the planning and development of their area.

### **Part – II**

Participatory democracy is the type of democracy where people assemble at a place and directly participate in all the deliberations. There is no provision for participation through representatives. People's participation is the backbone of participatory democracy. In present time direct participation is possible only through Gaon Sabha.

The concept of participatory democracy or people's participation gained more momentum after the passing of 73<sup>rd</sup> CAA, 1992. However, the success of participatory democracy depends to a great extent on effective functioning of Panchayat system. It is a fact that in the post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment era, the Panchayat Acts in various states make provisions for strengthening of Gaon Sabha. It is relevant to mention here that frequency of ordinary meeting of Gaon Sabha in various states ranges from 1-4 in a year so that people can participate in such meetings. Further, in most of the state's Panchayat Acts, it has been provided that the agenda of Gaon Sabha meetings should be served at least 7-15 days ahead so that people can attend such meetings with preparation. Regarding quorum it may be noted that in majority of the states quorum for holding Gaon Sabha meetings require presence of one-tenth of the members or hundred members. Moreover, a wide variety of functions have been assigned to Gaon Sabha including socio-economic planning for the area and approval of the list of beneficiaries for various rural development programmes.

However, empirical studies conducted in various states reveal that in reality the performance of Gaon Sabha are not satisfactory. It has been pointed out that Gaon Sabha meetings are not held as per provisions of the Panchayat Acts in different states. Besides, agenda for such meetings are not widely circulated in the panchayat area with date, time, venue and issues to be discussed. It is to be noted that attendance in Gaon Sabha meetings is very poor. Common people are not interested to attend such

meetings. The rural women are busy with rearing children, cleaning homes and cooking meals. The participation of backward communities is very nominal. It has been alleged by the common people that matters are confined to president, ward members, their relatives and party members. It can be said that Gaon Sabha fails to reach the heart of the common people. Thus, participatory democracy through Gaon Sabha appears to be more theoretical than practical. It seems that Gaon Sabha is a mere consultative body. There is no legal obligation on the part of the panchayat to oblige the recommendations of Gaon Sabha and this has made Gaon Sabha meaningless. It can be concluded that mere passing of an Act cannot change the existing situation. There is need for will, cooperation, sacrifice and commitment of those who are at the helm of affairs and people should be taken into confidence for realising participatory democracy.

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# KAMALA MARKANDAYA'S THEME : HUNGER AND DEGRADATION IN RURAL INDIA

**Bijoya Mech\***

Kamala Markandaya is considered to be one of the finest and distinguished post Independence Indian English novelists. She was born in 1924 into an affluent and aristocratic Brahmin family of South India. She won international fame and recognition with the publication of her very first novel, "Nectar in a Sieve" in 1954. In 1974, she was awarded the Asian prize for "Two Virgins". K.R.S. Iyengar, whose works on Indian English literature were pioneers in the field of Indian English criticism, says that "She represents the "great tradition" of women novelists established by Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf"<sup>(1)</sup>. This observation is, perhaps, the result of his enthusiasm for establishing a link between English and Indian English literature.

Markandaya is an impressive explorer of human consciousness and of the twists of intimate inter – personal relations, caught in the whirlpool of disparate and divergent cultures. She is also a pioneer of Diaspora writing – a well established genre today. In comparison to her fiction, the fictional output of other women novelists is rather meagre. Thus from this point of view she is outstanding.

Nayantara Sahgal, herself a distinguished novelist says, "But among the Indian authors I have read – I haven't read all their books – I am very partial to Kamala Markandaya"<sup>(2)</sup>. "A New York Times" reviewer has even hazarded the opinion that Kamala Markandaya is "Probably the finest Indian novelist writing...to day."<sup>(3)</sup>

Markandaya started writing novels when India was just at the threshold of newly – won freedom. Poverty, hunger and starvation were everywhere due to communal disturbances. Industrialization and urbanization were eroding the very basis of rural India. It goes to Markandaya's credit that she uses fiction as a vehicle for communicating her vision of life.

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This paper is an attempt to have a close look at her novel “Nectar in a Sieve” where she successfully deals with hunger and degradation in rural India.

The title “Nectar in a Sieve” (1954) is taken from Coleridge’s famous lines which Kamala Markandaya has used as the motto of her novel of rural India. “Work without hope draw nectar in a Sieve, and Hope without an object cannot live”<sup>4</sup> and the novel is an enactment of these lines. “Nectar” in the novel is the idyllic poetic aspect of life in the countryside. The villagers have inner peace and tranquility, even though they may lack the material comfort which is possible in more sophisticated societies. They may be poor, but they have the nectar of spiritual peace and tranquility.

“Nectar in a Sieve” is not the story of Nathan and Rukmani alone. They represent thousands of innocent poor farmers living amidst the reign of terror and uncertainties let loose by rapid industrialization and unemployment. Rukmani, a peasant woman, is the main character of the novel, whose life is totally shattered by the various factors of her life. Kamala Markandaya shows how the hostility of Nature and rapid industrialization led her and her family to hunger and degradation. Through this theme Markandaya depicts the life of labour and uncertainty lived by the tenant – farmers. When their harvest fails owing to natural calamities, the farmers face not only starvation but also poverty that forces them to sell their things to pay the rent. Rukmani and Nathan are forced to leave their land as the result of industrialization. Rukmani once said:

This home my husband had built for me with his own hands in the time he was waiting for me; brought me to it with a pride which I, used to better living, had so very nicely crushed. In it we had lain together, and our children had been born. This hut with all its memories was to be taken from us, for it stood on land that belonged to another. And the land itself by which we lived. It is cruel thing I thought. They do know what they do to us. (p.135)

Rukmani’s words reflect the injured feelings and helplessness of thousands of Indian poor peasants confronted with the new industrial growth. They fall victim to hunger and degradation. Markandaya does not blame human beings alone for the pitiable condition of poor peasants. Nature to a large extent is also responsible for leading them to hunger. Poor people of villages are entirely dependent on Nature. Despite poverty, Rukmani and

Nathan live happily in their small mud hut and their small paddy field. There was food in plenty and they ate well.

The early part of their married life was untouched by worries and cares, love and affection crowned their domestic life. But after having many children, there arises financial imbalances in the family. This is clear in her own words: “They may live in our midst but I can never accept them, for they lay their hands upon us and we are all turned from tilling to barter, and hoard our silver since we cannot spend it, and see our children go without the food that children gorge, and it is only in the hope that one day things will be as they were that we have done these things.” (p.28) The available supply of food has to be shared by so many hungry mouths, and there is not enough left for each of them.

Children grew in age and body, and Nathan’s financial condition went from bad to worse. The emergence of industrialization in the form of a tannery by the side of the village increased the prices of necessary commodities and Nathan’s family found it more difficult to manage its affairs, nevertheless, they pinned their hopes on the possibility of getting employment in the tannery. Ira, their daughter’s marriage was a further blow to the economic condition of the family. Nathan’s family came under debt, and both Rukmani and Nathan helplessly drew nectar in a sieve.

Arjun and Thambi, their sons began working at the tannery. With their money, the family began to live well once again. Rukmani stored away half a bag of rice, two measures of dal and nearly a pound of chillies. But due to a strike in the tannery, Arjun and Thambi are terminated from their services, and they leave home for Ceylon in quest of jobs. One by one their four sons left home, and Rukmani and Nathan remained together to share the bitterness of hunger.

The only members of the family, who could not bid farewell to domestic life were Nathan and Rukmani. At last, they decide to go to the city in search of their son, Murugan but could not find him. Other trials are in for them, they become stone breakers and they even save some money.

The life of this aged couple in the city is a moving image not only of indigence but of heroism in the midst of desperation which is the lot of the underprivileged in India. The experience of hardship purifies and redefines them. They learn a lot from the young orphan boy Puli to face boldly the hard facts of life and existence. This vision expands Rukmani’s consciousness to face hardships. But before they can return to their village,

Nathan dies of overwork, exhaustion and starvation leaving Rukmani forlorn. She, with the help of Puli, came back to her village, where she finds peace at last. Now Rukmani plays the roles with a profound sense of responsibility. Nathan dies because he had lost all hope when he lost his land. Rukmani lives because she is rooted in her children, and they are the objects of her hope. It is for them that she continues to live and work hopefully. She holds the nectar of peace much longer than her husband.

But the cruelest blow struck at their innocent heads by Nature. The life of an Indian peasant is entirely dependent on the vagaries of Nature. Future is always uncertain and unsecure. This is the tragedy of rural life in India. In the great epics some hostile supernatural force, some demon giant, works against the hero and is the cause of tragedy and suffering. Here it is Nature which works against Nathan and Rukmani, despite their heroic struggle against the forces of destruction. Nature attacks them first in the form of flood. It rains for several days and paddy crops are drowned in water. Rukmani says:

*“It was as if nothing had ever been but rain, and the water pitilessly found every hole in the thatched roof to come in, dripping on to the already damp floor...but Nathan and I watched with heavy hearts while the water rose and the tender green of paddy field sank under and was lost”.* (p.39)

There left no food for them. They face starvation, hunger and drought. The savings they save is spent in paying the dues to the landlord and hunger, nothing but hunger, is dominant. Rukmani says that during drought the condition of human beings becomes like wild animals who wonders in search of food and eats whatever rubbish they gets. Sometimes they are forced to eat grass to satisfy their hunger:

For hunger is a curious thing: at first it is with you all the time, waking and sleeping and in your dreams, and your belly cries out insistently, and there is a gnawing and pain as is your very vitals were being devoured, and you must stop it at any cost, and ... so that you think of food many times a day and each time terrible sickness assails you, and because you know this, you try to avoid the thought, but you cannot, it is with you.(p.87)

Markandaya has portrayed hunger very effectively and with pitiless realism. She makes her readers realize the true meaning of “Hunger and Starvation” and this is one of her remarkable qualities which distinguishes

her from other Indian English novelists. Markandaya lived in South Indian villages and shared the sufferings of villagers as independent observer. This enables her to portray the real picture of hunger. The village where Rukmani and Nathan live has not been given any name, and its locale has been kept vague and indistinct. This is so because it symbolizes rural India, and Nathan and Rukmani symbolize the Indian farmer and their tragedy is the tragedy of rural India.

Hunger drives Kunthi and Ira to prostitution. Awe, starvation and frustration are the characteristic feelings which dominate the villages. It is “fear of the dark future; fear of the sharpness of hunger; fear of the blackness of death.” (p.79)

Rukmani and her family bear the physical and spiritual pangs of indigence and degradation poignantly and they move back and forth in life. Rukmani who loses her husband at the end contemplates that he will come back to her life again: “Sometimes at night I think that my husband is with me again, coming gently through the mists, and we are tranquil together. Then morning comes, the wavery grey turns to gold, there is a stirring within as the sleepers awake, and softly departs.” (p.1) The story of the novel begins where it ends. So, Madhusudan Prasad says, “Nectar in a Sieve’ has a circular structure.”<sup>(5)</sup>

In the novel we find that people of that time when this novel was written, suffered from poverty, hunger and communal disturbances. Landlordism, industrialization and urbanization were destroying the very basis of rural life. R.K. Srivastava says, “Nectar in a Sieve” deals mainly with tragic issues of life – hunger, pain and separation – the tone throughout the novel is reflective and philosophical as if Rukmani were indirectly accusing the heavenly powers on her Karma for ill – plight.”<sup>(6)</sup>

Rukmani considers the tannery as the main source of her family’s tragedy. Through Rukmani, the narrator of the novel, Kamala Markandaya presents a powerful criticism of Industrialism and its intrusion upon the placid rhythm and calm beauty of the village which is symbolic of rural India. Industrialism ruins Rukmani’s family as well as her village. The encroachment of industry causes the decay of natural beauty, plays havoc with village economy, uproots a tenant – farmer and brings in social degradation and the loss of traditional and human values. The traditional rural India is overtaken by a change of far reaching consequences. Coming of the tannery is the beginning of this change in the life of Rukmani and her village.

The tannery is a symbol of modernity and Rukmani opposes its advent from the beginning. It spoils the natural beauty of the country side. In its presentation of the problems of rural society arising from industrialization, Kamala Markandaya's novel recalls Prem Chand's Hindi novel, "Rangbhoomi", whose story resembles that of "Nectar in a Sieve". It depicts the rural community in its tragic suffering and shameful poverty.

In "Nectar in a Sieve", the tannery is indeed the root cause of the tragedy to which Nathan, Rukmani, Arjun, Thambi, Ira and Raja fall victims. It is the tannery that uproots them from their soil. A.V. Krishna Rao says, "Nathan and Rukmani are representative of the thousands of uprooted peasants under an industrial economy."<sup>(7)</sup> The village traders make a virtue of the tannery crowd and the prices go very high. Thus, Kamala Markandaya presents a vivid and realistic picture of the industrialization causing hunger and degradation.

Kamala Markandaya established that Poverty, Hunger and Starvation can lead to disintegration of family followed by innumerable sufferings. It is hunger and starvation which leads ultimately to degradation in rural India.

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# **SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH WAGE EMPLOYMENT A CASE OF MGNREGA: SABARKANTHA DISTRICT, GUJARAT**

**Lemanshu Kumar\***

## **Introduction**

The preamble of the constitution of India secure to all its citizens: social, economic and political JUSTICE and EQUALITY of status and of opportunity. Article 23 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights that states that “everyone has a right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable condition of work and to protection against unemployment (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN, 1948). Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act should be seen in this context, as an effort to achieve the goal of preamble and Directive Principle of State Policy of the Indian constitution.

There have been continuous efforts to transform the traditional villages, through schemes like Community Development Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme, TRYSEM, Jawhar Rojgar Yojna, Operation Blackboard, National Literacy Mission, Integrated Child Development Programme, and Balwadi Nutrition programme, Indira Awas Yojana, etc. By the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment of the constitution Panchayati Raj Institutions have been established at village, block and district levels for democratic decentralisation and devolution of power to the people. Despite all these endeavours, rural unemployment has remained one of the critical issues of rural development. Taking into consideration the limitation of earlier rural employment programmers, in the year 2005 central Government took a historic decision to enact MGNREGA, which is the largest employment programmes in the world ensuring one step ahead towards guaranteeing the right to work. It came into force in February 2006 (starting from 200 backward rural districts) and subsequently expanded to all rural districts in April 2008. It marks a

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paradigm shift from all precedent wage employment programmes.

### **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act**

This programme under MGNREGA Act (2005) provides a statutory guarantee and a right-based framework for wage employment. The main objective of this act is the creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor for fighting rural poverty.

The MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. It is a “Demand Driven” and “entitlement-based” scheme. The work entitlement of ‘100 days per household per year’, which may be shared between different adult members of the same household, is given to all those rural households which are willing to do public unskilled work at minimum wage rate applicable to agriculture worker in that state.

Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, may apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat after due verification will issue a Job Card. The Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under MGNREGA and is free of cost. The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application. A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen. The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates. Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the States. Work should ordinarily be provided within 5 km radius of the village. In case work is provided beyond 5 km, extra wages of 10% are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses. Wages are to be paid according to the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural labourers in the State, unless the Centre notifies a wage rate which will not be less than Rs. 60/ per day. Equal wages will

be provided to both men and women. Wages are to be paid according to piece rate or daily rate. Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case.

According to the Act, at least one-third beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme. Work site facilities such as crèche, drinking water, shade have to be provided. The shelf of projects for a village will be recommended by the gram sabha and approved by the zilla panchayat. At least 50% of works will be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution Permissible works predominantly include water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development works etc. A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained. No contractors and machinery is allowed. The Central Government bears the 100 percent wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 percent of the material cost including the wages of skilled and semi skilled workers. Social Audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha. Grievance redressal mechanisms have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process. All accounts and records relating to the Scheme should be available for public scrutiny.

### **Background of the study**

Even if the programme looks very strong because it has legal back up, proper understanding of its implementation is required in order to assess the success of the programme at village level. This will further strengthen the programme towards making it more participatory. A proper ground checking itself can correct the missing links, because the ground reality would be varied from place to place. This study seeks to focus on social empowerment through MGNREGA in a Village taking case study of Dantral, Sabarkantha District of Gujarat.

### **Objectives and Research Questions of the study**

Following are the main objectives of the study:

1. To understand MGNREGA in building Social capital, empowerment of women and weaker section of the society.
2. To examine the role and effectiveness of PRIs in implementing MGNREGA.
3. To Study the process of strengthening the democracy at grass



root level through MGNREGA.

The research questions to be addressed to attain the objectives are:

1. To understand the impacts of implementation MGNREGA- In building Social capital, empowerment of women and uplifting weaker section of the society.
  - What is the role of MGNREGA in reducing out migration?
  - How much is the asset creation through MGNREGA in the rural households?
  - What is the effect of MGNREGA in improving the livelihood in study area?
  - What is the Role of MGNREGA in empowering the women/weaker section of the society?
2. To examine the role and effectiveness of PRIs in implementing MGNREGA.
  - How PRI functionaries are being operated in the selected area?
3. To Study the process of strengthening the democracy at grass root level through MGNREGA.
  - How is the participatory approach of the people?
  - How social audit is being conducted in the village?

### **Methodology of the Study**

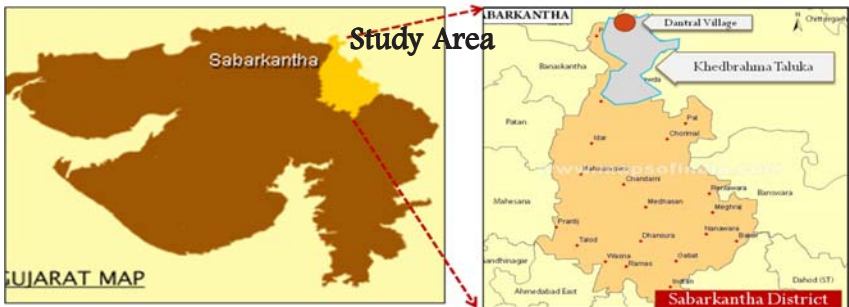
In order to meet the set objectives, literatures related to rural employment, approaches to solve the rural unemployment, need for an employment generation programme, impacts of the programmes etc were studied. The background study also included the literature review of MGNREGA, its structure, guidelines, functions and implementation process. Then the database required was identified and a set of primary and secondary data has been collected. The process of data analysis

involved two steps- 1) On the basis of secondary data an analysis of employment generation, at District, Taluka and Village level has been done; 2) on the basis of the provision of minimum 100 days work in a household, one village has been selected for primary survey to analyse the impacts of implementation MGNREGA and examine the role and effectiveness of PRIs in implementing MGNREGA.

### Study Area Selection

The selection of the site area was based on the following consideration:-

- Sabarkantha is one of the most backward district in the country, it gets BRG fund from Central Government, and this district comes under the Planning Commission's 100 poorest district of India.
- This district was covered under first phase of MGNREGA.
- It is a tribal district.
- Dominance of agricultural workers in the workforce in this area.

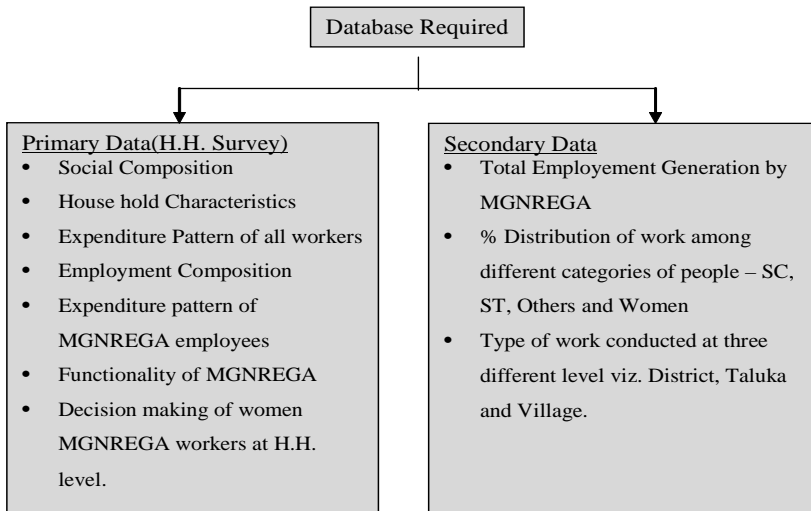


### Data Collection Approach

#### Primary Survey and Analysis

A pilot survey had been conducted to understand the site and 10 HH surveyed to find the issues and to modify questionnaire. A survey of

100 households (through which completed at least 100 days of work under MGNREGA in this financial year) from the selected village has been done using a comprehensive questionnaire to the envisaged objectives. Because there is no further sub-classification of the surveyed population, the Random sampling technique is used for the selection of household. Focus group discussion of women workers in selected village was also conducted.



### Secondary Data collection

List of beneficiaries were collected from government office which was further processed into different categories of MGNAREGA workers. Collection of secondary data regarding year wise social capital created, type of work conducted at District, Taluka and Village panchyat were

INDICATOR
1. Employment generation at District,Taluka and Village level
2. Person days generate at District,Taluka level and Village level
3. Type of Work Conducted at District, Taluka and Village Level
Source: <a href="http://ruraldev.gujarat.gov.in/nrega.html">http://ruraldev.gujarat.gov.in/nrega.html</a> ,
Date accessed- 25 <sup>th</sup> march 2012

collected from District, Taluka and Village level office. Following are the database collected from secondary sources.

### **Scope and limitation**

Wage employment programmes and its positive and negative impacts have always been a topic of research in social sector. MNREG Act's importance in the social upheaval of people Below Poverty Line can be studied with the varying scope. Its long term implication in the Indian budget and economy, impact on extremely poor people like SCs, ST, land less people and other weaker section of the society can be studied.

The main limitation of the study is the data availability in time frame, because MGNREG Act is in the beginning stage and data is only available for the last three or four years. Other limitations is regarding language and cultural aspect due to which proper exchange of information is difficult, especially with female workers. Generalisation by using Primary Survey may lead to wrong interpretations. Time constraints, scattered settlement due to hilly region and lack of human resources lead to the limiting of Sample households at 100.

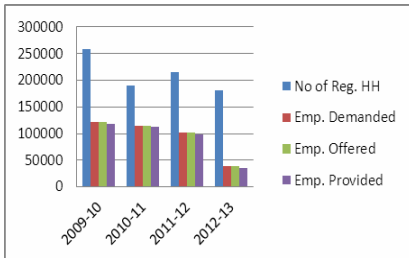
### **MGNREGA implementation and its implication in Study area**

Out of total 100 primary surveys, 72% were male respondents and 28% were female respondents, because of the communication problem. To understand the implementation effect of the programme those workers surveyed who have worked a longer period of time under the programme for 2-3 consecutive financial years. The household characteristics show a fairly good gender equality with 49% female population at the village level. The effect of the liberal tribal culture which is also seen in work participation rate with 49% female work population. The entire population is Hindu and 67% population falls under the working age group, of which 92% population is actually engaged in work. Nearly 98% population has attained not more primary education which means the work as population is largely unskilled. In terms of economic conditions 85% population are BPL card holders with assets like less than an acre of land, one or two livestock, bicycles etc. Their expenditure pattern shows that their income majorly goes to the basic consumptions and not in aspects like education, health, savings etc. These unskilled labours migrate out to nearby towns and cities in

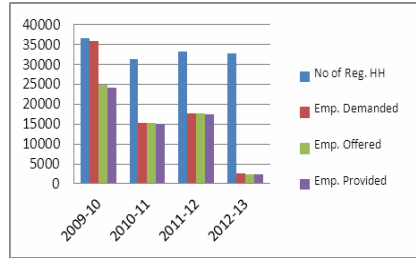
search of seasonal works which give them a very temporary life.

**MGNREGA Implementation in terms of Employment Generation:**

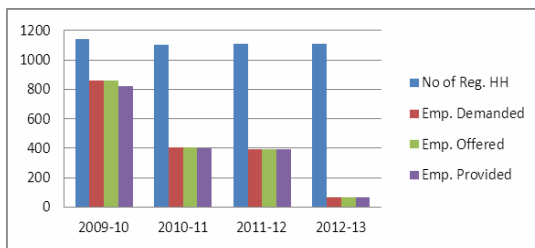
Employment generation at the village level



Employment generation at the Taluke level



Employment generation at the village level

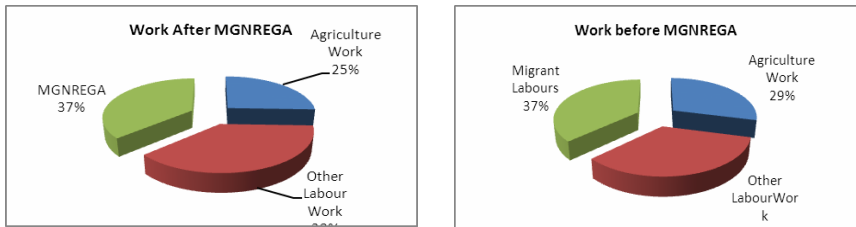


A distinct observation regarding employment generation is that employment demanded is generally half the number of total registration. This is the trend at all the district, taluka and village level. Employment offered nearly meets the 100% of employment demanded which indicates the fulfilment of the government’s commitment towards employment provision. However, not 100% people accept the job offer primarily due to higher wage rate outside. It is has also been observed that women have been major beneficial of this programme as person/days work generated for women is more than 50%, which outnumber males in all the years of implementation.

**Impact of MGNREGA at the Village and Villagers**

**Effect on the Weaker Section:** It is evident from the graphs that 37% of the total income is generated MGNREGA works. This show significant reliability of villagers on MGNREGA employment scheme. Because of durable asset like Pond, Reservoir, Well, Road created by

MGNREGA, now people are also doing agricultural activities, and they produce wheat, corn, cotton etc.



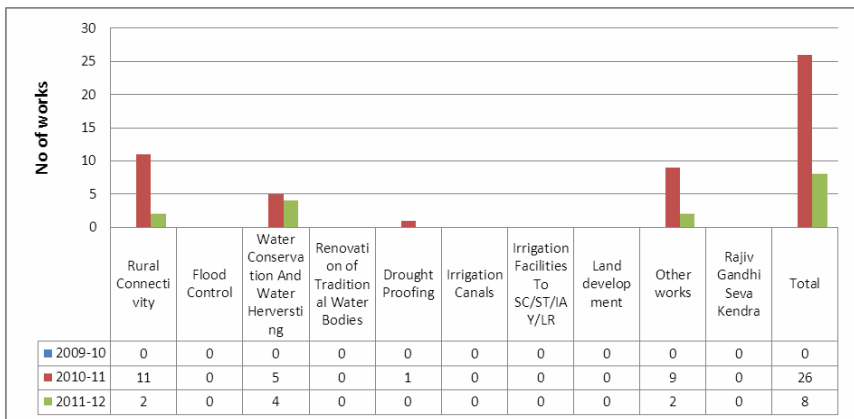
People before implementing MGNREGA used to migrate in Mount Abu, Palanpur and Himatnagar and its percentage was higher (27%) than the other agriculture and labour works. But this trend has been changing and as stated earlier, they are now engaged mainly in MGNREGA work (37%) and agricultural activities (25%). Because of creation of durable assets like the source of irrigation now people are focussing on agriculture activity and they have started doing multiple cropping in place of mono cropping as it can be seen from their changed income pattern in which agricultural income is highest. This is the direct positive effect of the created durable assets in their area.

Earlier these migrant workers had to spend their lives in a temporary shelter. So, there was no stability in their lives. This trend has been changing gradually as now people are getting work nearby their home (as per MGNREGA provision worker will get work within the five km from their village). So there came stability in their lives because of this. These durable assets which are working as infrastructure are bringing a revolution in their socio-economic life.

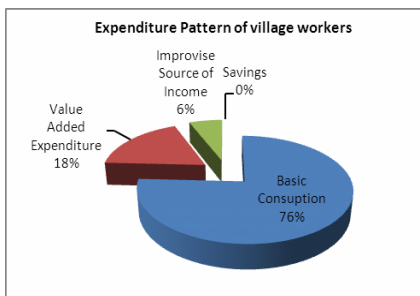
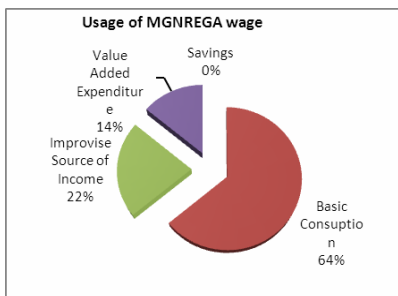
All the labourers who are working under MGNREGA have either a bank account or a post office account. This means that there has been increasing inclusion of the rural sect in the financial system, thereby leading to the overall development. Here it can be seen that 64% of MGNREGA workers have a bank account and 36% workers have a post office account. The aim NABARD of covering everyone in either post office or bank account by 2015, has been gradually succeeding through this employment programme. This will help in promoting financial savings in future, if not immediately in the study area.

**Building Social Capital:**

**Type of Work Conducted at Village Level**



The above graph shows the relevance of MGNREGA works to the village requirements. Given the poor water situation in the village and the dismal condition of irrigation facilities, agriculture has suffered a lot. Water harvesting structures are of greatest need. Thus, according to local residents, wells are the most needed structures locally, followed by roads and then ponds. So, the amount of construction is distributed in line with these needs. It was mentioned by locals that construction of water harvesting structures under MGNREGA to collect water has been very significant. Such works should definitely be taken up in the future as well.

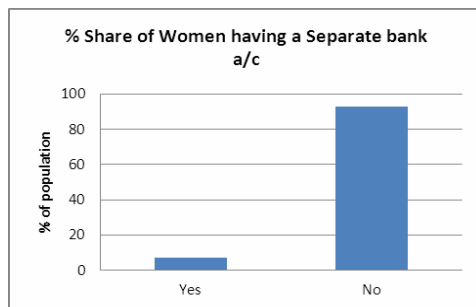


The expenditure pattern of MGNREGA wage reveals that the percentage share of basic consumption is lesser (64%) than the other wages (76%). Also, expenditure in improving source of income accounts

to 22% from the MGNREGA wage as against only 6% from the other wages. This means MGNREGA has remarkable contribution in improving the sources of income for the villagers residing there. Still it has a long way to go ahead as the expenditure share is nil in case of savings and only 14% for value added expenditures like education and health.

**Gender Empowerment:** The role of women in overall decision making is not very active. Though gender equality is better than the state and the district level in terms of sex ratio, yet it lags behind in case of decision making in family and financial matters. The primary survey results show that approx 80 % women participate in decision making about their children’s education. Education is a very important factor in which 20% women do not have any role in decision making. This will also have a negative affect on female literacy.

In the financial matters of the family, inclusion of women is remarkably low. As revealed by the survey that in the village only 5 % approx women have separate a/c of their own. But it is hoped that this condition will improve now because, as per the new guide lines there



should be separate bank accounts of husband and wife.

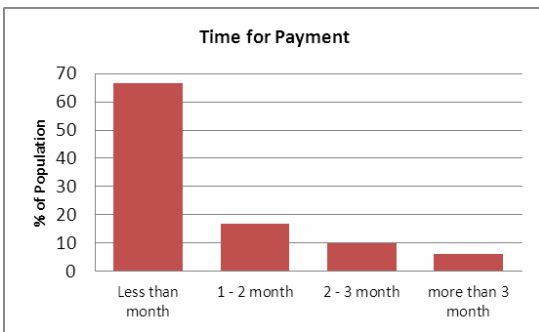
In case of joint a/c, money is generally withdrawal by male members and also used by them. This is again a confirmation of the fact that women do not have an active role in decision making regarding money matters, even if they have a joint bank account

**Role of PRI through Functionality of MGNREGA**

People who are working in MGNREGA work have not very clear

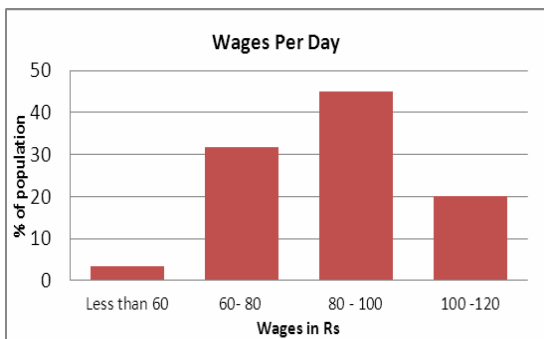


idea about this Act, so if they do not get payment on time, they do not complain. As per the MGNREGA guideline the Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight but it is not being followed. Late



payment is a very common issue and sometimes it takes several months. This reveals about the inefficient role of PRIs.

Also, in the case of the study area, people from village Dantral need to travel approx 50 km to get their payment. Earlier they used to get their payment by Mate or Gangmen but now they have to spend Rs.70-80 and one whole day to get their payment. Since provision implemented for separate account, women are facing much more problem compare to male member because women also have to travel 100 km for their payment.

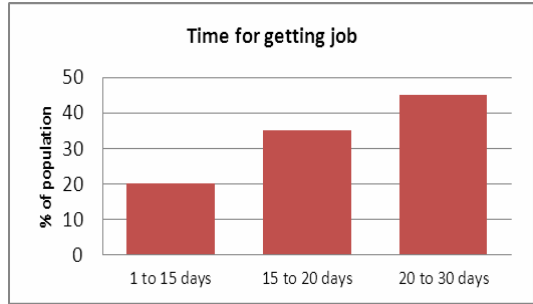


Survey confirms to the general observation that villagers are not very satisfied with the amount of wages they are being paid, and many of them feel that they are being underpaid as

compared to the work they render in terms of hours. Total 45% workers get the wage between Rs. 80 to 100, 32% workers get between Rs. 60 to 80 and 20% workers get between Rs. 100 to 120, but 3 % people get below Rs. 60. The workers stated that this variation in wage is dependent on engineer’s measurement of the work. During the survey it was found that average working hours are 8 in a day. Some people have left MGNREGA out of discontentment, complaining of very less wage, as

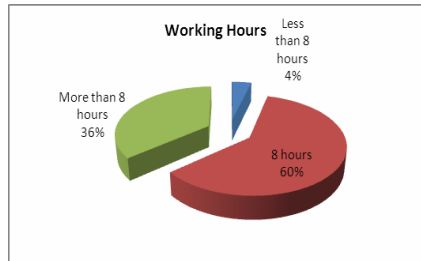
sometimes they worked for the whole day or 8 hours but they got paid only Rs. 40 or 50.

According to the MGNREGA guidelines, workers should get a job within one week of registration and it should not exceed at the most a period of fort night. But the survey results are showing that on ground levels MGNREGA is



functioning very inefficiently. 45% workers are getting jobs after 20-30 days, 35% are getting after 15-20 days and 20% are getting in between 1-15 days. This scenario is way far from the ideal.

It has been found that on an average, labourers work for 8 hours, constituting 60% of the total, 36% work for more than 8 hours and only 4% work for less than 8 hours a day. The payment of wages should be according to the working hours of work delivered. However, this is not happening in the real ground.



Facilities provided at work sites are minimal. Drinking water is available at almost all sites (95%) where as other facilities like first aid and shade are not present even at half the sites. Creche facilities are not present at all work sites because women having infant babies do not go for works or they don't carry their babies to the work sites, hence there is no requirement of creche facilities.

To sum up the impacts of implementation of MGNREGA, it can be concluded that the role of PRIs has not been up to the mark in terms of wages paid to the labours, on time payment, job allocation time period, information, number of working days etc. But it has shown some remarkable positive impacts on the village such as employment generation has increased, migration rate has reduced thereby leading a stable life of

labours, improvement in family income, increasing agricultural activities due to new supporting facilities like irrigation, water conservation etc, increasing enrolment in schools and so on. Thus, this programme is definitely helping in making a move towards the development of rural poor but the far more sincere efforts and supervisions are required to achieve its goals.

### **Findings and conclusion**

The findings of the implementation of MGNREGA in the village, it's on ground functions, role of PRIs and people's participation etc are summarized below:-

- Looking at the general level of awareness among the respondents in the village, it was found that while the overall awareness about the MGNREGA programme was very high, knowledge about the provisions of the act was a mixed response as respondents knew about the minimum wage and the number of days of employment that can be availed under the act but very few know about the application for work, unemployment allowance, grievance redress mechanism, etc.
- MGNREGA Act has helped people in various ways. It has helped villagers to increase the work days in a year and also in the improvements in the family income. But it has not helped them to crate much savings in the form of money or other household assets. Money received as wage has been spent mainly for household needs, health needs and educating their children.
- Most of the people consider it only as a subsistence labour. So that it cannot be considered as a permanent solution to remove the poverty. Income generation alone cannot help in situation where, the price of household commodities are sky rocketing, however workers are using the income on food, education of their children; with income from MGNREGA work, many workers have started sending their children to school.
- Migration to the Himatnagar, Mount Abu and Palanpur areas

has been reduced but it has not been stopped yet because wage rate in other labour work is high as compared to MGNREGA wage rate. Informal interviews and Focus group discussion reveal that people perceive the potential of MGNREGA in reducing migration to be substantial. Many respondents stated that if full 100 days of employment were available in the village they would prefer to stay in the village.

- However, a lot of people feel that 100 days per family is not sufficient. If each member in a family of 5 works under MGNREGA, then they can only work for 20 days in a year which is not sufficient to pass through the entire lean season. So they need to migrate to work in the rest of the season.
- The study shows some really positive results regarding participation of people in preparation of annual plans. The village prepares annual plans in which the gram sabha involves all in the preparation. The past plans gave preference to mainly water conservation works, road construction and drought proofing works as evident from the data analysis. This is a very important step towards ensuring that, the assets created under MGNREGA are suitable to local needs and everyone in the village understands about the nature and reasons for the works being taken up. At the end of the day it also renders the work with a sense of ownership as the villagers are now working on activities that they want.
- MGNREGA has had a positive impact on agriculture in the district through improved access to irrigation. Prior to the NREGA, sources for irrigation were very few and therefore, only one crop was sown during the Rabi season. But, post MGNREGA, with the construction of ponds, tanks and with land irrigation facilities, agricultural productivity has shown a marked improvement. A number of ST households in the study reported cultivation of a second crop during kharif season along with crop cultivation during Rabi season. A number of households have even diversified into vegetables. This work was furthered under MGNREGA with most ponds

having been constructed on panchayat land; the wells have been constructed on private land. Also, maintenance of old structures has been carried out under MGNREGA.

- Before the implementation of this act there was no stability in the lives of migrant labours. This trend has been changing gradually as now people are getting work nearby their home (as per MGNREGA provision worker will get work within the five km from their village). So there came stability in their life because of this. The durable assets created which is working as infrastructure is bringing a revolution in their socio-economic life.
- Females are participating in MGNREGA work. There has been an increase in the household income due to female work participation. According to the new provision of payment, there should be separate accounts of husband and wife which would be very good for women empowerment as the husband will not be able to withdraw and use money as per their desire now.
- MGNREGA programme has been an effective tool for financial inclusion of disadvantaged section of the societies as it involves those people in the banking system for money transaction and usage of its functions for their benefits.

### **Conclusion**

MGNREGA is people's act. Its effective implementation depends on people participation and effective programme implementation. The MGNREGA is already making a difference to the lives of people. Overall effects that are being seen, like migration has reduced, so their children are now being enrolled in school, both men and women working together so their income is double and thereby villagers are investing towards a better quality life. At a broader level financial inclusion of rural poor is a great achievement of this programme. Women are getting involved in the process of decision making, economic activities and becoming more independent, thereby creating a way for social evolution.

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# TRADITIONAL FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN MANIPUR: THE BOND BETWEEN NATURE AND THE SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

The paper examines the traditional forest resources management, the long established of forest and subsequent use of forestland and their strong cultural linkes. Also examines the very close affinity with the forests which encompasses a wide spectrum of life (food, medicine, shelter, housing, agricultural implements, musical instruments). Further, a comprehensive studies on 'bond between Nature and the Society' of Manipur are detailed.

**(Keywords:** Traditional forest management, Urungba Loishang)

## Introduction

The Manipur forest covers an area of 20,084 sq. km. Geographically, Manipur is divided into two main relief features, the oval shaped central plain at an elevation of 792.4 mtr. (2600 ft.) above the sea level and the surrounding mountains which cover the 92 percent of the total geographical area of Manipur. Forests are the home for the Tribes, who live in or near the forest areas. Forests provided them their sustenance in the form of minor forest produce, water, grazing grounds and habit for shifting cultivation. Since time immemorial, the tribal communities of India and Manipur in particular have an integral and close knit relationship with the forests and they have been dependent on the forests for livelihoods and existence. The relationship was with mutually beneficial and one sided.

In this study, traditional forest management refers broadly to the

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organization and control of, access to and utilization of trees, woodlots, natural forests, and associated resources, including the benefits derived from them or from their productive or extractive. The objective of the study is to examine the historical relationship of man and the bond between the forest and the society of Manipur.

In Manipur the forests were not directly controlled nor scientifically managed and conserved the forests produces. However, the forests were managed under the forest department Urungba Loishang which consists of a various forest officers. The indigenous knowledge which is of a blend of locally rooted and exogenous knowledge crafted to suit local situations.

### **Pre-Colonial Forest**

Forest resource has a profound influence on the economy and as well the environment.<sup>1</sup> Forestry in India is different to that of any other country.<sup>2</sup> Every kind of climate and every type of vegetation from, the alpine forests of the Himalayas to the tropical evergreen forests of the West Coast, from the desert forests of Sind and the Punjab to the bamboo clad hills which form the eastern most frontier between India and Burma.<sup>3</sup>

The Manipur state lies between latitudes 23.80°N to 25.68°N and longitudes 93.03°E to 94.78°E. It is one of the border States in the North-Eastern part of India, bounded by Nagaland on the north, Assam on the west and Mizoram on the south and along the east it shares a 398 Km. long international boundary with Myanmar. Manipur forests abound in varieties of plants, animals and mineral resources, characteristics of any tropical rain forest areas. The entire forests of Manipur are included in the Himalayan system:

- i) Moist Tropical Forests (Tropical wet evergreen forests, Tropical seal evergreen forests, Tropical moist deciduous forests and Littoral and swamp forests)
- ii) Dry Tropical Forests (Tropical dry deciduous forests, Tropical thorn forests and Tropical dry evergreen forests)
- iii) Montane Sub-tropical Forests (Montane Sub-tropical Forests (Sub-tropical broad-leaved hill forests, Sub-tropical pine forests and Sub-tropical dry evergreen forests)

- iv) Montane Temperature Forests (Montane wet temperature forests Himalayan moist temperature forests and Himalayan dry temperature forests) and
- v) Sub-alpine Forests (Sub-alpine forests, Moist alpine scrub and Dry alpine scrub).

Nature endowed the people of Manipur from the distant past with the quality of soil and climate suitable for a wide variety of crops, fruits and vegetables. Forest resources have a profound influence on the economy and as well the environment of Manipur. The socio-economic activities of man are greatly influenced by forest and forest resources. The human economy without plants and animals is quite unthinkable. Forestry, particularly wood and fuel, play an important role mostly for the hill people and it occupies a central position, for, they depended on it as their living.

Forest, the most chief living resources, providing wood for cooking, timber for construction, cellulose and pulp for the production of pepper, etc. Besides, the most important roles which fewer are visible to the common man is the ecological role of forests, that they influence the wind, temperature, humidity, soil and water. The most important common resources (common resource is any resource that is subject to individual use but not to individual ownership). It may be used by a number of persons, either by open access or under some arrangement of community or group management.

### **Forest Department and Officers**

The state under the Maharajas or kings of Manipur (pre-colonial period) the state neither controlled nor scientifically managed the forests land and no records of collecting revenue from the forests. However, besides the absent of scientific forest management system, traditionally the kings of Manipur appointed a number of staffs of various categories of forest to keep a records of different forest produces in the state during the pre-British rule.

Forest Management means the organization and control of an enterprise or undertaking. In this study, forest management refers broadly to the organization and control of, access to and utilization of trees, woodlots, plantations and natural forests, and associated resources,

including the benefits derived from them or from their productive, extractive or industrial enterprises.

They need forests and preserve them not only for future fields but also to gather food, hunting game and collect medicinal plants, building materials, etc. The indigenous knowledge is a blend of locally rooted and exogenous knowledge crafted to suit local situations that the kings of the Manipur established the forest department called (**Urungba Loishang**). The Manipur state under native rule has the department of forest supervised the Urungba Loishang by the *Urungpurel Achouba* (Chief Forest Officer). He was assisted by three officials—i) the *Umang-loi Hanjaba*, ii) the *Umangloi Hidang* and iii) the *Khoirungba*.

The duty of *Umangloi Hanjaba* controlled and fixed the quality of trees and bamboos. He would keep a record of the places where valuable trees and bamboo grew in different forest of Manipur. The *Umangloi Hanjaba* was the authority in charge of issuing permission for cutting trees and bamboo.<sup>4</sup>

The *Umangloi Hidang* was an assistant to the *Umangloi Hanjaba*. He had to see that the orders of his superior officer were duly executed.

The *Khoirungba* was to prepare schemes for reading revenue from honey and wax.<sup>5</sup> He was assisted by a number of men whose main function was to search for bee hives.

The *Urungba Loishang* was in charge of an officer, *Umangloi Hanjaba*. He was also designated as *Urung-purel* (Chief Forest Officer). Under the *Umangloi Hanjaba* there were five officers—*Imingloi Hanjaba*, *Khoi-rongba*, *Hiru-Hinao Lakpa*, *Urungba Paishuba* and *Phen-dei Urungba*.<sup>6</sup>

The *Imingloi Hanjaba* kept records of the kind and qualities of trees growing in the forest. The *Khoirungba* was in charge of bees, honey and wax. He searched for bee-hives in the forest and took honey for the use of the Raja. The *Hiru-Hinao Lakpa* was responsible for providing the State with such articles as ivory, tiger's teeth, hides and nails, deer and the like, tortoise and oysters. He had to select trees for making boats.

The office of *Urungba Paishuba* had to bore the surface of drums, to design *Khamen-chatpa*, to make *Kairel Kaijao*, to make looms, couches,

wooden sandals, *Kaptreng* (cotton-squeezing instruments), hockey-ball, holders of axe, spade and sword.<sup>7</sup> When these things were made, they were given to the office of *Phendel Urungba* for polishing.

However, besides the above mentioned forest departments and officers, the hill tribal were slim difference from the valley managed the forest by the “community” or the people living in one place, considered as a whole also ownership of land and forests is regulated by the chiefs. The communal entity is a readily definable sodality existing within a larger community) forest management were practiced in hill tribal area, here, decisions are made on the basis of communal (e.g. lineage, clan or caste) or community (village-or Panchayat-based) decision making however this is not always the case.

The hills tribals were much more close affinity with the forests than the valley people, which encompasses a wide spectrum of life including food, medicine, shelter, housing, agricultural implements, musical instruments besides having a strong culturally linked as forest is the treasures of a large variety of food. The relationship of forest and the people of tribals North East India observed, “close observers of the traditional practices of the hill dwellers particularly of North East India in respect of forests would be able to cite innumerable instances of how the hill dwelling communities not only protect their forests but also nurture the same.” Roy Burman (1986:167). Some scholars go further and say that there is a symbiotic relationship between the tribals and their forests. What this means is that their relationship is not unilateral but that the tribals depend on the forest and the forest in its turn depends on them for its preservation and continuity (Deeny and Fernandes 1992:49).

Forest products such as timbers, bamboo shoots, fruits and mushrooms have provided the villagers with an alternative source of economic activity besides supple meeting their basic requirements of food.

The traditional economy has essentially remained a forest based economy till today. A majority of industries in Manipur were the forest based. Industries like carpentry, cane and bamboo work, broomstick making, firewood etc. were obtained the raw materials from the forest,

which provides employment opportunities to a large section of the rural people who work in the forests. The nature nourished them from the forest produce since time immemorial, which provided them abundantly:

### **Agriculture (Food, Drinks and Smoking)**

Agriculture is the backbone economy of Manipur State. About 84% of the total population of Manipur depends on agriculture (National Geographical Society of India, *A Regional Geography*, Varanasi: 1971). A major portion of the State's domestic product is contributed by agricultural sector and provides employment to about 63.95 percent of the working force in Manipur<sup>8</sup> and it constitutes a main occupation of the people of Manipur State is agriculture. They depend more or less upon natural (forest) resources of various types from which they extract their livelihood. Forest and agriculture are the major resources of the tribes, in which resources of agriculture form the key parts for their livelihood as well as for commercial activities. Forests of hills enriches in natural resource is the mainstay of economy of the people.<sup>9</sup>

The method of Jhum cultivation otherwise called 'Pamlou' in Manipur was widely found practiced. This agricultural system is characterised by rotation of fields rather than crops, by short period of cropping alternating with long fallow periods and clearing by means of slash & burn. The operation of jhum cultivation is associated with systematic processes like selecting the forested hilly land, clearing the forested tract by cutting down the jungles, burning the dried forest into ashes, worship and sacrifice, dibbling and sowing of seeds, weeding, watching and protecting the crops, harvesting, threshing and storing. That since time immemorial, the natural (forest) resources nursed the tribals of the hills. Hitherto, the forest lands were utilised for cultivation of various crops such as paddy, millets, chilies, beans, cottons, indigenous fruits and vegetables.<sup>10</sup>

The gourd is widely used for water pot made from a hollowed out, and bamboo cylinder and wooden pot for keeping water and liquor and drinks. The staple food is rice, which is cooked in earthen pots or in bamboo tubes, a fashion of great popularity. The food of jungle products which are of edible are found plenty in varieties and in great number, as to supplement a rice when it compel to do so (insufficiency of rice).

The young shoots of the bamboo were consumed as staple food which possess a crisp and delicate flavour, a ground orchid which is rather devoid of flavour but is harmless, and the wild tomato, the fruit of which is quite small with excellent. The small bamboo tube containing is use for drinking like juice, tea etc.<sup>11</sup>

A large variety of non-timber-forest (minor forest) products are used habitually by the people in Manipur to supplement their daily food requirements. These include tubers, fruits, roots, wild edible plants, mushroom, bamboo shoot, creepers, species etc. Many people especially the rural of the hilly areas were survived solely depend their food items which found from the forest.

Also a particular bark of tree was used as an ingredient for making a wine locally call which mostly prepare by the hill people. Leaves (betel leaves) were also ate for chewing paan and the tobacco. And different kind of nuts found from the forest was make use of for food item and for intoxicated used. Jungle herbs were used for flavouring, use the leaves of the datura plant, stramonium, which accounts for the strength of their brew. The tobacco juice is prepared in a kind of hookah filled with water, made of bamboo among the Nagas and of clay or bamboo among the Kookies.<sup>12</sup>

### **Household Utility**

The plaited bamboo and cane mats as bed for sleeping spreading on the bare boards of the house. A conical shape tapering at the bottom are also generally used to store the paddy a with a bamboo cover to protect the contents of the basket from rain. Paddy is husked in a wooden mortar by means of a heavy wooden pestle. A bamboo sieve is used for sifting the husked rice, a winnowing fan being applied to separate the husk. A large carpet made up of a bamboo is widely in use to expose to the sun for drying up. The neatly plaited cane baskets jar and of wooden were carefully to keep in used for storing even the costly treasures.

Firewood is the main energy source in the rural areas and considered to be the most important resource for every household of the people of Manipur. The forests of the hill traditionally recognized as tribal property and were left free for the use of them since time memorial. Since of a long past the hill people found in Manipur got cooked only by

depending on this firewood.

Fodder is another important forest product on which the households are dependent. The twigs, branches of most of the forest species and the bushes and other wastes are collected from the forest and used for fuel purpose by the household in and near the forests. Firewood and charcoal are indispensable sources of energy used in every household for cooking, heating and drying purposes. The un-burnt trees of from the jhum (slash and burn) fields are generally used for charcoal preparation.

And the other non-timber forest product like broomshrubs, bamboo-shoots, wild plants and herbs, fruits, cinnamon, pepper, ginger etc. were getting from the forest.

### **Medicine**

Since time immemorial the people of Manipur are known for their unique knowledge about plants wealth and herbals drugs in curing diseases. The nature itself provides for the people in the forest a considerable resource of medicinal plants and herbs on which how traditionally depending for treating of various diseases. Forest wisdom has enabled them to live in harmony with nature and learnt thing from the sighs of nature much from the forest.

The ancient lore of herbal medicine which found to be very effective remedies for various sicknesses jungle herb is used for curing, dysentery and in order to procure abortion.<sup>13</sup> Mostly the rural folk of hilly people have long practiced this aged herbal lore and developed the system of folk medicine into a tradition, which continues even today. And their land are abounding a large varieties of medicinal value plants that cured by drinking the tree leaves, roots, barks of tree etc. they used medicinally the bark of tree, which from its taste they name 'bitter tree' and all of them cure their wounds and bruises, by application of the leaves of plants having healing properties.<sup>14</sup>

Their remarkable traits, ability to predict diseases from elements of nature and to differentiate between edible and wild plants is notable. Much of this ancient wisdom is today the result of oral tradition. They endorsed the knowledge and wisdom which unveiling the mysteries of life through their oral tradition handed down from generation to another.

## **Clothing and Dying**

The tribal made their cloth from tree-bark by removing the skins of the plants and made a cloth of a plant, which they use for bedding and as blankets. With the process of thrashing them gently and leave it in water for a partial fermentation. It is finally thrashed against a stone slab to remove the organic fleshes out of the fibrous tissue of the bark. The vascular bundles with their tissues in all these plants have a good network, which looks like a woven cloth indeed.

Juice of the wild indigo is used to give a black or dark blue dye, and a bark which gives red colour shading to terracotta. The hill people manufactured or know how the method of dying cloths with different colours (black, green, yellow or orange shades) from the bark of jungle trees with their simple primitive nature.<sup>15</sup> However, the yellow dye was common which they got from the barks of jungle trees.<sup>16</sup>

## **Hunting and Fishing**

Most of the hill tribes of Manipur take much time in hunting in the hills occupied by them. The hunting of animals was performed in the luxuriant jungles of lofty ranges among the comparatively open hills of the valley of Manipur. Different kind of wild animals were hunt which endowed for them by the nature for their food items mostly of hill the jungle. This game of hunting has been perform mostly in the dry season, but rarely managed to happen in the rainy season too. Hunting were done in large numbers by men turning out to drive from ravines into more open space or less thick jungle where it can be chased by the dogs and speared or shot.<sup>17</sup> They also set traps for game.

Fishing were undergo in the lower reaches of the hill rivers, for the upper waters are too shallow and the current too swift for much to be done there.<sup>18</sup> A long bamboos (of twenty to twenty-five feet in length), were caught by hand or taken in small nets by waded down the pool in an echelon formation, driving the fish into the shallows.<sup>19</sup> The nets were made of twine, woven of bark fiber, which is very strong and resists the water. Generally, fishing is done in a specific season that it prohibits during the cultivating season, from the time of sowing to the harvest home, a regulation which rests on the usual vague sanction attached to



so many gennas.

In many occasion they use poison, especially in a smaller streams. The poison used is of tree bark and a vine, and stupefies the fish of those who were float on the top of the water. Nature provides them no ill effects on those who eat the fish thus captured by poisoning.

### **Religion and Musical Instruments**

The earth is honored and worshiped as mother goddess by the Manipur people. They believed God is present in nature, on the hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, etc. man forms an integral part of this natural environment. Thus there is an inseparable relationship between God and Man and the objects of Nature. Especially the tribal believe, they sanctify nature and all its elements as gifts from God.

Preservation of forests as sacred groves has been existent since time immemorial amongst the tribal. People are mostly governed by their belief systems in conserving these forests. The existence of the guardian spirit in these forests is a belief that has existed since time immemorial.

Bamboos play a very important role in the socio-economics. And it was used by the people to protect them from all pains and sorrows which may occur due to attack of evil spirits and devils. The people used to make some offerings to the bamboos as customary rite on the New Year day with a belief that the bamboos can substitute the members of the family to bear all the sorrows and calamity that may come during the year to come Thadou-kuki.<sup>20</sup> Amongst the tribal community believes, when an aged bamboo started acquiring a diverging bunch of leaves at the tip instead of the usual arrangement, it was considered as a sign of the death of a member in the family and the four are to be used in the customary funeral rites of the dead body.<sup>21</sup> When a bamboo flowers in the residential area, it is believed that the head of the family may die. Hence the people used to clear these flowering bamboos. For making house gate, poles with five internodes are employed, while the transverse structure is made of seven internodes. The belief is that the structure so made would prevent the bad effects of the evil spirits, inside the house campus.

Manipur state studded with a number of long standing Tirthas (sacred places) such as Nongmaiching, Hiyang-thang, Nungjeng and

Mondum, Ingourok and Koubru where people go for worshipping the local deities.<sup>22</sup> Mostly among the communities they believe as some spirits from the forests have been the site of rituals, taboos and ceremonies, where social moral values were passed on to the younger generation. They also believe that the guardian spirit of is present in these forest suggests the spirit take care and protects the people from sickness, pain and invasion by enemies. There are some common rituals held every year in the groves and forest which bring to light the deep sense of reverence that the people have had towards the forests. Offerings of animals or birds, fruits and other items were offered to the Goddess.

Besides timber, forest provides for the people for making musical instruments drum, and blowing instruments like flute and some stringed Musical Instruments made of bamboo and wood etc. It is from the reign of Khuyoi Tompok the maharaja the drum was first introduced in Manipur, which made out of a hollowed log with cattle's skin which produced sound of a drum.

### **Conclusion**

The ecological wisdom of the hill people is solidly based on "experience" and they depend on this knowledge to fulfill most of their day-to-day needs (their economy). The following examples throw light on the use of such forest knowledge in understanding what happens in the natural surroundings e.g. the flowering of bamboo is a sign that famine is close at hand because it would attract rats that would then be detrimental to farming and cultivation. When tender leaves start growing on trees, it is indicative that fishes are multiplying in rivers and seas.

Mostly for the hilly people the forest is a well-cherished home, a game sanctuary and also an abode of worship, around which his social, cultural, livelihood, medicines, and get relax at leisure and their religious activities revolved. As said, they live with the nature and nature live with them. The strong bond created between the tribal and the environments (nature) also lead one to believe that the forest, which is a vital component of the environment, is the very source of life. The tribal customarily believes, the earth with all its bounty is referred (land, forest and rivers) and do not separate these elements of the mother and the earth as separate entities. It believes for sure, every food items consumed by the tribal

were from the forest's produces. The vicissitudes and the changes that take place in the forests and other natural system around them were understood by the people. They utilize their knowledge and experience to operate locally rather try to overcome the natural processes associated with the year round growing season and rapid succession that result from the high rain fall and high temperature of the region.

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# PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF JORHAT AND MARGHERITA DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS OF ASSAM

**Kanaklata Konwar\***

## ABSTRACT

In this paper an attempt has been made to examine the extent of peoples' participation and involvement in different Rural Development Programme (RDPs) in the three villages of the Jorhat and Margherita Development Blocks of Assam. A descriptive cum analytical method is followed to uphold the findings of the present study.

**(Keywords:** Participatory Democracy, Gram Sabha)

Peoples' participation means direct involvement of the people in various activities and not indirect involvement through their representatives. This is because in the existing socio-economic and political structure of the society, in most of the developing countries the representatives of the people are likely to represent the interest of the richer section of the society rather than the poor and weaker people who live in rural areas. The successful implementation of Rural Development Programme is not possible without active participation of rural people. But in a vast country like India direct participation of people in the rural development programme is possible only at the grass root level through Gram Sabha.

Democracy is said to be a government of the people and as such peoples' participation in administration is the first requisite condition both for the survival and success of democracy. In a country like India, which is striving hard to bring socio-economic changes through democratic process, practical involvement of people in administration is considered to be highly essential. Dealing with the thesis of '*Participatory Democracy*' Joy Prakash

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Narayan said that ‘unless people realized that they, not the government can realize to take the country forward, no matter what amount of money spent on plan, the goal will not be achieved’.<sup>1</sup>

Peoples’ participation in democratic process is indispensable for decentralization of power. Government is the proposer, pioneer and promoter of various rural development programmes. But the real performance of such programmes entirely depends on the people concerned. Constant participation of people in the affairs of administration makes them realize that the government belongs to them and this sense of belongingness and commitments accounts for its success. As a result of the awareness, they come forward to co-operate with the various activities undertaken by the government. In fact, participation of people is highly essential in the implementation of all kinds of development programmes particularly for achieving the objectives in a more efficient and effective manner such as assessment of ongoing programmes, suggestive measures for further development, preparation of plans and programmes, decision making at local level and the role of different non-government groups. A large number of people can participate only in a democratic form of government which provides sufficient opportunities for the people to take active part in every aspect of governmental activities. Strictly speaking, peoples are the back-bone of democracy. Successful working of a democratic system depends on the extent of which the people have a voice in the management of public affairs. Participation of people increases the degree of their political awareness, interest and also train them for understanding democratic values. Thus, it may be reiterated that successful and effective implementation of any rural development programmes highly depends on people’s participation. The importance and necessity of people’s participation in rural development programmes began to be increased in recent years. It has been now realized that successful implementation without the involvement of mass people is impossible. The basic reasons of the failure of earlier rural development programmes such as *Community Development Programme (CDP)*, *National Extension Service (NES)*, *Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP)* etc. was the poor participation of rural people and absence of their representatives at the planning and executing stages.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is evident that lack of participation of substantial number of rural population is a serious problem in successful implementation of *Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)*. It has been

observed that the programmes which are financially under the control of the government is short-lived unless people participate in them actively and continuously.<sup>3</sup> Thus it can be said that without people's participation at different stages of implementation of RDPs cannot be ensured. Rural development programmes are directly linked with the poor rural people. However, under the existing social system equal participation of poor masses of the rural areas in the process of development can be regarded as gradual process. The process of people's participation can be accelerated only when the poor rural majority become conscious of the rights and privileges and build up faith and confidence in themselves through united strength to achieve justice for themselves in sharing of benefits of development. The active participation, involvement and control of people in the development process can give rise to a socio-political system more conducive to the attainment of economic development along with a greater degree of social justice.<sup>4</sup>

Peoples' participation can be understood in terms of the following four senses :

- (1) Participation in decision making
- (2) Participation in implementation.
- (3) Participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects.
- (4) Participation in sharing the benefits of development.<sup>5</sup>

From the above it can be observed that when people began to participate in all aspects of development process, namely decision making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and benefit sharing, other objectives of the new development strategy are also likely to be fulfilled. It is in the sense that people's participation in planning and implementation of development programmes and projects leads to the selection of right type of projects which benefit them directly and also create more gainful employment.

The above meaning of peoples' participation has been accepted by many scholars and thus peoples' participation mean direct involvement of people in every aspect of government activities such as decision-making, administration, legislation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and



sharing of benefits.

People's participation is very much essential for the smooth and successful implementation of RDPs. It is believed that the rural people know their needs better than the government officials associated with the implementation of Rural Development Programmes at the State, District and block levels. So the rural people can be considered as the real master of the solution of their problems. Moreover, it is not possible to develop and channelize the local resources without the involvement of local leaders and the people. This will also prevent the hijacking of benefits by richer section of people of the community.

It has always been feeling that *Panchayati Raj Institutions* (PRIs) are the most effective agencies for democratic decentralization which could be equipped with adequate powers and responsibilities so that they could formulate and implement programmes of economic development through peoples' participation. The constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1992 is a significant step towards direction of translating this concept in to reality.<sup>6</sup>

The peoples' participation includes different specific forms of activities. It is the process of Rural Development Programmes in which the people can participate directly or indirectly in various ways. Direct participation includes active membership in organization, taking up leadership positions and getting involved in projects. Indirect participation means helping the programmes and projects of the organizations by making available the necessary resources and assisting the concerned officials and leaders for making it successful.

According to UNESCO document, participation is a collective sustained activity for the purpose of achieving some common objectives, specially a non-equitable distribution of the benefit of development.<sup>7</sup> The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 1979 stressed that participation is the form of empowering people which means people get the power to influence the decisions in respect of planning and implementation. Peoples' participation has to go hand in hand with human development.<sup>8</sup>

## **Importance of Peoples' Participation in Rural Development Programme**

In order to ascertain successful implementation of Rural Development Programmes peoples' participation is highly indispensable.

Effective participation of people generates a sense of responsibility towards rural development and provides them scope for actual sharing in the decision making and implementation of Rural Development Programmes. The co-operation between the people and implementing agencies of Rural Development Programmes is very essential. People are the builders of their villages where the implementing agencies are the assisting agents. For effective functioning of rural development, involvement of local leaders and the people with the help of developmental organizations is must. Because, for effective implementation of Rural Development Programmes, it is necessary for identifying families, maintaining link with financial institutions, supplying inputs, organizing marketing, facilitating and repayment of loans in one proper manner. These functions require considerable initiative and participation of the people.<sup>9</sup>

Without effective peoples' participation, it would not be possible to make Rural Development a peoples programme. Therefore, peoples' participation and involvement is highly essential for effective delivery of services and proper implementation of Rural Development Programmes. Rural people have to be motivated and persuaded to participate in the developmental activities. It is important to note that peoples' participation has to be encouraged owing to the fact that the rural people know better about their needs than Government Officials working at different level – Block, District and State. So the rural people who would be benefitted from Rural Development Programmes are the best judges for the solution of their problems.

Thus from the above observation it can be assumed that people's participation means direct involvement of people and not indirect involvement through their representatives.

### **Objectives of the Peoples' Participation**

The basic objectives of the Rural Development Programmes are to secure the fullest development of material and human resources of rural

areas on an area basis and to develop the local leadership and self-governing institutions. The focal idea is to raise the rural community to higher levels of living with the active participation which form a basic approach to Rural Development Programmes.<sup>10</sup>

The following are the main objectives of peoples' participation :

- (1) The success of Rural Development Programmes depends upon better planning and implementation and hence better planning and implementation of Rural Development Programmes is the main objective.
- (2) Mobilization of additional resources required for Rural Development Programmes.
- (3) Empowering the people, particularly the poor and needy to play an effective role in rural development.<sup>11</sup>
- (4) Making implementing agencies aware of the problems of the community at large and ensures efficient and smooth implementation of various development programmes in that locality.<sup>12</sup>

### **Participation in Gram Sabha**

Gram Sabha provides scope to all adult people of a village in its Jurisdiction who belong to various communities and groups. It is the Gram Sabha where the rural poor, the women and the marginalized people get an opportunity to effectively participate in decision making that affect their lives. There is no doubt that Gram Sabha helps to develop participatory process at the grass-root level. It can serve as a useful purpose in promoting transparency and accountability at local level. Since it comprises the entire electorate to whom all elected functionaries are accountable, it is expected that its effective functioning would enhance the quality of local governance. But participation in Gram Sabha meetings is by and large not satisfactory. It is because the influential people, political leaders and functionaries mostly dominated the process of decision. As the common village people are socially, politically and economically dependent upon the local rural elites, usually do not like to say anything against them in the meetings. They attend the meeting only as the listener instead of raising their own voice and asserting view points.

Effective planning and implementation at the grass-root level may be possible only when majority of the members could participate in the planning and implementing process. But now it has been observed that more than half of women member usually remain outside the Gram Sabha meetings either due to the hindrance from their male family members or due to other customary compulsions. In case of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other marginalized rural people who are found less interested to attend the Gram Sabha meetings because they could not realize the importance of such meetings and simply feel that they lose one day wage by attending the meeting.

### **Forms of Peoples' Participation**

Usually there are two forms of participation–

(i) **Formal participation** and (ii) **Informal participation**. Formal participation means direct involvement of people in development process. But it has been observed that the officials associated with decision making and policy making do not like to invite the common people to sit together with them. From this angle participation of people can be said to be informal. In an informal participation, the officials responsible for planning and decision making hold informal discussions with the common people to understand their views and perceptions relating to the problems of rural development. Informal means through which people can participate includes media discussions, consultations and public meetings. However, in practice there is no participation of poor rural people in any kind of decision making process at the village level, district level, state level and national level.<sup>13</sup> The rich people of the local area always used to come forward to take active part in the schemes and they influences the decisions to get the lion's share of benefit. In the present years people are getting an opportunity to involve directly in the rural development process because of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment. This Amendment provides for strengthening the Gram Sabha at the grass-root level. Now the rural people are in a position to discuss and scrutinize various problems among themselves which are their bare necessities. Thus, the effective implementation of Rural Development Programmes not only depends on the functionaries of Rural Development but also on participation of people of the rural areas.

In order to find out the extent of peoples' participation in the Rural

Development Programmes at the block level, it is considered desirable to study the perception of rural people in their problems.

Peoples' awareness and consciousness to their problems and their sense of responsibility in solving those problems can be considered as one of the important indicators of peoples' participation in Rural Development Programmes. Thus with a view to examining the level of peoples' participation in rural development activities in the context of Jorhat and Margherita Development Blocks the following sample have been drawn. On the basis of importance two villages one each from Jorhat and Margherita development blocks have been selected. From *Jorhat Development Block* (JDB), Kumar Koibartta and from Margherita Makumpathar village is selected. A total of 110 respondents have been selected for detailed study of which 50 from Kumar Koibatta and 60 from Makumpathar village. The participation of rural people in Rural Development Programmes is examined from the point of view of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and sharing of benefits.

However, in order to understand the extent of peoples' participation in Rural Development Programmes and their perceptions on the rural problems certain questions were put to the respondents and replies of the respondents are shown in tables 4.1 – 4.8 below.

**Table – 1.1**  
**What is your basic problems?**

Sl. No.	Problems	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar
1	Agriculture	Medium	Medium
2	Water Supply	Medium	Low
3	Roads & Communication	High	Low
4	Flood	Medium	Medium
5	Education	Medium	Medium
6	Health	Low	High
7	Electricity	Medium	Medium
8	Unemployment	High	High

The table 1.1 above reveals that all the respondents identified the

basic rural problems of their locality. From this it can be assumed that the respondents are quite aware of their problems. The problems have been put to them one after another to rate them whether High, Medium and Low intensity. The respondents of Kumar Koibartta identified roads and communication and unemployment are their main problems. On the other hand the respondents of Makumpathar identified health and unemployment are their main problems.

Agriculture, water supply, flood and electricity have been identified as medium and health as low by the respondents of Kumar Koibartta while the respondents of Makumpathar regarded agriculture, flood, education and electricity as medium and road and communication as low.

This was followed by another question in a bid to ascertain the participation of respondents in the preparation of Rural Development Programmes and reply of the respondents reflects in the following table 1.2.

**Table – 1.2**

**Do you participate in the preparation of Rural Development Programmes?**

Reply	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar	Total
Yes	15 (30%)	33 (55%)	48 (43.7%)
No	35 (70%)	27 (45%)	62 (56.3%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

The above table 1.2 reveals that out of the total respondents of the two selected villages 43.7 per cent, replied positively and 56.3 per cent replied in negative. The respondents who replied positively stated that they have participated through various means including the Gram Sabha meetings in the local problems such as construction of drains, roads, bridges, construction of market shed, school buildings etc. The respondents replied negatively stated that they are poor people and they are working as daily wage labour. So, they can not spare time to devote in the Rural Development Programmes.

Another question was put to the respondents to know about their feeling in solving the rural problems and the reply of the respondents is shown in table 4.3 below.

**Table – 1.3**

**Do you feel your responsibility of solving the rural problems ?**

Reply	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar	Total
Yes	18 (36%)	25	43 (41%)
No	22 (44%)	29	51 (48%)
Indifferent	10 (20%)	6	16 (10%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

The above table 1.3 reveals that 41 per cent of respondents feel about their responsibility in solving the rural problems while a majority of the respondents i.e. 48 per cent were not aware of their responsibility. Again 10 per cent of the respondents expressed their indifferences to the local problems.

In order to comprehend the awareness of the respondents regarding implementation of Rural Development Problems a question was asked i.e. are you aware of the implementation of Rural Development Programmes in your area? The reply of the respondents is shown in table 4.4 below :

**Table – 1.4**

**Distribution of Respondents' according to their view**

Reply	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar	Total
Yes	27 (54%)	29 (48.4%)	56 (48%)
No	13 (26%)	31 (51.6%)	44 (42%)
Indifferent	10 (20%)	--	10 (9%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

The table 1.4 indicate that majority of respondents i.e., 48 per cent respondents expressed their awareness about the implementation of Rural Development Programmes in their areas while 42 per cent respondents were not aware and the rest 10 per cent were remained indifferent to the programmes implemented in their respective area.

Monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes are very important for the effective implementation of RDPs. So the respondents were asked to understand how they have participated in the monitoring and evaluation of the RDPs. The table 4.5 shows the distribution of respondent's view of monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes.

**Table – 1.5**

**Distribution of Respondents' view on monitoring and evaluation of RDPs.**

Reply	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar	Total
Yes	5 (10%)	4 (6.6%)	9 (8.1%)
No	45 (90%)	56 (93.4%)	101 (91.9%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

From the table 1.5 it is observed that a large majority of the respondents did not participate in monitoring and evaluation of Rural Development Programmes, the percentage of which is 91.0 per cent. Only a few i.e. 8.1 per cent of the respondents participated. When the reason was asked to the respondents about non-participation in the monitoring and evaluation of RDPs they have responded that they were neither approached nor informed about the implementation of Rural Development Programmes. From this it can be said that the officials connected with the implementation of RDPs did not take initiative to make the people aware of the implementation of the RDPs which goes against the basic objective



of the Rural Development Programmes.

Participation of rural people in sharing of benefit can also be considered very important for their all round development. Since peoples' participation in benefit sharing means equal distribution and sharing of benefits of development, it may be looked as the heart of the new development strategy.

With a view to understanding the sharing of benefits from the Rural Development Programmes by the respondents a question was asked to them and the reply of the respondents placed in table 1.6 below :

**Table – 1.6**

**Distribution of Respondents' in sharing of benefits from Rural Development Programmes**

<b>Reply</b>	<b>Kumar Koibartta</b>	<b>Makum Pathar</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	20 (40%)	21 (35%)	41 (37.3%)
No	23 (46%)	39 (65%)	62 (56.7%)
Indifferent	7 (14%)	---	7 (6%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

The table 1.6 above reveals that only 37.3 per cent respondents shared the benefit from the services of rural development programme while a large majority i.e. 56.7 per cent respondents did not enjoy the benefits and 6 per cent respondents were found indifferent to the question. When asked the respondents about the reason of not deriving any benefits they have said that they are reluctant to participate in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes because of rampant corruption, unwanted political interference, nepotism and favouritism of the political leaders and the officials of the Rural Development department. Furthermore, ignorance, object poverty economic backwardness, political unawareness, indifferent attitude of the officials and NGOs to organize awareness camp among the impoverished rural people are some of the major reasons that can be added here in this regard. Thus it can be stated that lack of active

people's participation of rural people deprives them of enjoying the benefits though a number of RDPs have been implemented by the Government.

In order to know the attitude of the rural development authorities towards increasing interest of the rural people to participate in the implementation of the RDPs another supplementary question was asked to the respondents i.e., do you see any kind of measure is taken by the implementing agencies of Rural Development Programmes to enhance the interest of the rural people to participate in Rural Development Programmes? The reply of the respondents depicts in table 4.7 below :

**Table – 1.7**

**Distribution of respondents' view on the initiative of the Rural Development Authorities to increase the interest of the rural people in RDPs.**

Reply	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar	Total
Yes	14 (28%)	28 (46.63%)	42 (38.40%)
No	28 (56%)	32 (53.37%)	60 (54.40%)
Indifferent	8 (16%)	-----	8 (7.20%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

The Table 1.7 above shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 54.40 per cent viewed that rural development authorities were not taking any interest to hike the degree of the participation of rural people. Only 38.40 per cent replied positively to the question while 7.20 per cent respondents remained indifferent to the question. Respondents who replied negatively said that rural development authorities did not organize any awareness camp, meetings to increase the participation of rural people. Indeed, they were not aware of Rural Development Programmes. Thus, it can be said that as the rural people are backward it is all the more necessary on the part of the implementing agencies of RDPs to take initiative for motivating the rural people to take part in rural

development activities.

However, in order to know the views of respondents regarding the performance of the Rural Development Authorities another question was asked i.e. how far the rural development authority is successful in implementing the RDPs and the reply of the respondents has been displayed in table 4.8 below :

**Table – 1.8**

**Distribution of respondents’ view on the successful implementation of RDPs.**

Reply	Kumar Koibartta	Makumpathar	Total
Satisfactory	21 (42%)	9 (15%)	30 (27.2%)
Not Satisfactory	29 (58%)	51 (85%)	80 (72.8%)
Total	50 (100%)	60 (100%)	110 (100%)

The table 1.8 reveals that a large majority of the rural people of both the two sample villages replied negatively i.e. they have not satisfied with the performance of rural development authorities. Only 27.2 per cent respondents of the two villages under study replied positively i.e. they have satisfied with the performance of the rural development agencies. The respondents who have not satisfied with the working of the rural development authority said that they have not seen any measure taken by the authority to mobilize rural people for direct participation and involvement of the rural people. They further said that the rural development authority has not under taking measure because of the fear of losing chances of misutilization of fund. But when inquired from the officials about the allegation they have said they do not have adequate staff to organize awareness camp, public meetings etc. to keep the people informed about RDPs or other matters which stand against the guidelines of the Rural Development Programmes.

From the above observation it is found that the respondents of the two sample villages of the Jorhat and Margherita development blocks have clear perception about the basic problems and wants to solve them. But due to low level of education and ignorancy the economic hardship of the rural people they are to look upon the rural development authorities for the solution of their problems. So in this regard it can be suggested that Rural Development Agencies should come forward to mobilize the rural people to participate in the implementation of RDPs. But the reality is that there is a wide gap between the two sides and this stands as a big hindrance in rural development. The officials are always reluctant to visit the houses of the poor villagers. Instead they used to visit the houses of the richer section of people of the villages and discuss with them on some issues in their favour neglecting the poor rural masses. Even the visits of the Village Level Workers are not found regular although they are statutorily supposed to keep close contact with the poor and ignorant villagers and the beneficiaries. On the other hand, the poor and ignorant villagers always hesitate to meet the officials for the solution of their problems. Thus it was observed that participation in rural development programmes are spontaneous only among the socio-economically affluent section of the rural people and as such major share of benefits goes to this section of people. But successful implementation of Rural Development Programmes mostly depends upon the participation and involvement of all sections of people inclusive of the poor and exploited section of rural people. Otherwise the Rural Development Programmes can not be a peoples' programme and most unlikely to be successful. So there is a need to make all scrupulous efforts to increase the participation of people in Rural Development activities. But it would not be possible unless people feel that Rural Development Programmes are their own programmse and they would be benefited out of these programmes through active participation. For this purpose, the programmes are to be prepared according to the needs of the poor rural people. Thus, it can be said that the basic criteria through which peoples' participation can be ensured is the generation of awareness and the promotion of motivation among the rural people. But the truth is that till date no such serious efforts seem to have been taken up by the rural development authorities to set up institutions at local level for disseminating and sharing of information, generation of awareness and motivation to provide a scope to the rural people to express their views on the RDPs meant for their socio-economic development. As a result of this, a myriad number of people of the rural areas would obviously remain indifferent to the Rural Development Programmes supposed to be implemented in their areas.

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# DISSENTING VOICES AND COLLECTIVE ACTIONS: AN EXPLORATION TOWARDS THEORY-BUILDING

Purnima Roy\*

## ABSTRACT

Collective action has been conceptualized as “shared intention” by Michael Bratman in an excellent discussion, published in *Ethics* in 1993. The notion of ‘collective action’ has been a central theme of politico-social discourse. Scholars like Keith Dowding (1996), Mancur Olson (1965), Margaret Gilbert (1989), Russel Hardin (1982), Elinar Ostrom (1990), Todd Sandler (1992), John Searke (1990), R. Meizon-Dick and M. diGregorio (2004), N. Stern (2007) and others have highlighted different dimensions of the concept of collective action both in theory and in operation. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to examine the notion from a different perspective, keeping the community state relationship of the centre- stage.

**(Keywords:** Collective action, Social Movement, Community-State relationship)

There cannot be any doubt that collective action is an expression of “shared intention” by those who participate in this process. But to understand the concept in this way may suffer from what may be termed as “order simplification of a very complex social phenomenon”. The central point of debate arises from at least three questions:

- a) Whose intentions?
- b) Whose share?
- c) What is the level of participation?

Coming to the first one: Collective action is based on common

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intention; but can there be any such “common” in a situation which is marked by so many “uncommon features”?

Closely following this comes the second one: who are the persons in process? Can they have their own share? Will they be provided with the space they are entitled to?

Last but not least, is the question relating to the level and extent of participation by the participating people. These and many other issues demand thorough discussion before one can arrive of a satisfactory position in conceptualizing the core idea of collective action.

The issue of collective action vis-a-vis organized social movements can be seen from a wider perspective. Basically, any discussion on social movements revolves round three basic questions:

- a) What are social movements?
- b) Why are social movements important?
- c) Which is the sociological (as well as) political implications of social movements?

In this respect, social movements can be explained in relation to collective action. It has been very correctly observed:

“Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprise seeking to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on the one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living. The career of a social movement depicts the emergence of a new order of life.”

The use of the term ‘collective enterprise’ denotes a very important aspect of collective action and its relationship with social movements. It appears to be a set of well formulated plan of actions by the agents engaged in such “enterprise”. Two other ideas that he develops are of equal importance: “a sense of dissatisfaction” with “the form of life.” The reference to “the establishment of a new form of life is important, assumedly, in order to distinguish movements from “forms of collective action’. There are opinions among the scholars which do not subscribe to the idea that there is a direct link between dissatisfaction and the emergence of a movement as a manifestation of collective action. One

should also note the use of the term ‘career’ in Blumer’s construction of ideas. It appears to be “the symbolic interactionist tradition to which (Blumer) belongs. It indicates that movements follow a temporal trajectory, that they do indeed ‘more’ or change”.

From this position, one can hold the view what Blumer suggests is nothing but change in the existing social order. But it will lead one to another very important yet complex issue - the issue of ‘exclusiveness’ and ‘inclusiveness’. In order to provide a broad definition, the following observation has defined this aspect from a far more wider perspective:

“Social movements are ...best conceived of as temporary public spaces, as moments of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities, and even ideals.”

In order to explain the notion of ‘temporariness’ as highlighted by Eyerman and Jamison, a third definition has been advanced where the emphasis shifted from absolute temporariness to relative durability of such movements:

“Contentions politics occurs when ordinary people, often in league with more influential citizens, join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents .... When backed by dense social networks and galvanized by culturally resonant, action-oriented symbols, contentions politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents. The result is the social movement.”

The phrase “sustained interaction with opponents” by Tarrow seems to have a specific meaning in the context of social movement. It is aimed at making a distinction between social movements from a single type protest movement. The distinction between these two is concerned essentially with the notion of ‘durability’. In order to contextualize the concept in terms of time specificity, Tarrow brings a number of concepts within his construction. These include social networks, cultural elements in the form of ideas, identities and ideals. He wants to suggest that these have ‘a direct function within the context of struggle’. But the use of elites, authorities and opponents who are confronted in the struggle leaves a space for controversy. It becomes sometimes to concretise these notions as “many contemporary movements struggle against more abstract targets, which are not easily identified ....” e.g. ‘institutionalized racism’ or ‘patriarchy’. Such targets are always embodied, often in the behavior of



specific agents, but they do not always assume the form of an ‘opponent’. Many contemporary movements involve at least a partial focus upon the complicity of their own participants in unacceptable states of affairs ....”

This brings one to the very basic and fundamental question regarding the nature of such organized movements: is it correct to say that all movements aim at bringing about change through the means of protest? Blumar suggests that some movements contain within themselves a little more than a “cultural drift.” Tarrow is right when he holds that there may be protests without movements in a particular contextual setting.

Thus what Tarrow uses as “shared beliefs and solidarity” among the people appears to be very much relevant for any understanding of the nature and content of a social movement. It has been very aptly described by Crossley when he holds:

“Members of any movement, in order to qualify as such, must assumedly subscribe to a set of beliefs which are distinct from those of wider population and sufficiently homogeneous for us to describe them as those of a single movement.”

**Again,** he holds :

“Furthermore, those who subscribe to those beliefs must feel some degree of affinity with others who do so, relative to those who don’t, at least if they hold those beliefs with any degree of passion. Nevertheless, as the aforementioned notion of public spheres suggests, movements may be sites of argument and internal disagreement.”

Social movements, thus understood, raise a number of issues which are important from many diversions - social, economic, political, cultural and the like. In this respect, the observation by Neil Smelser appears to be very comprehensive as it seeks to touch upon the ‘basics’ of social movements:

“Movements and protests occur with regularity. They clusture in time; they cluster in certain cultural areas; they occur with greater frequency amongst certain social groupings .... This skewing in time and place invites explanation: why do collective episodes occur where they do, when they do, and in the ways they do?”

This collective behavior approach has projected a good number of theoretical as well as conceptual foundations of social movements. Rossley has summarized this when he says that collective behavior approach:

Portrays movement emergence as a *reflex response* to *grievances, deprivations*, anomie, structural strains or other forms of hardships.

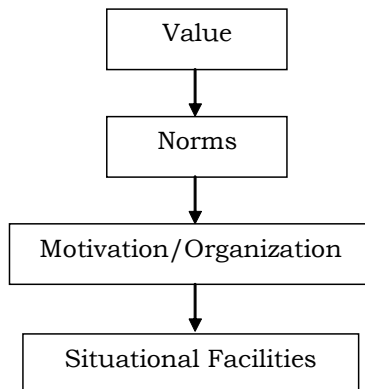
Portrays the protests and movements triggered by those hardships as irrational psychological responses; manifestations of mob psychology or collective hysteria;

Portrays those who become involved in these mobs as (previously) isolated individuals who are often not very well integrated into society;

Lumps social movements together with other assorted forms of collective behavior, such as fashions, crazes, panics, without any due consideration for their distinctness and properly political nature.

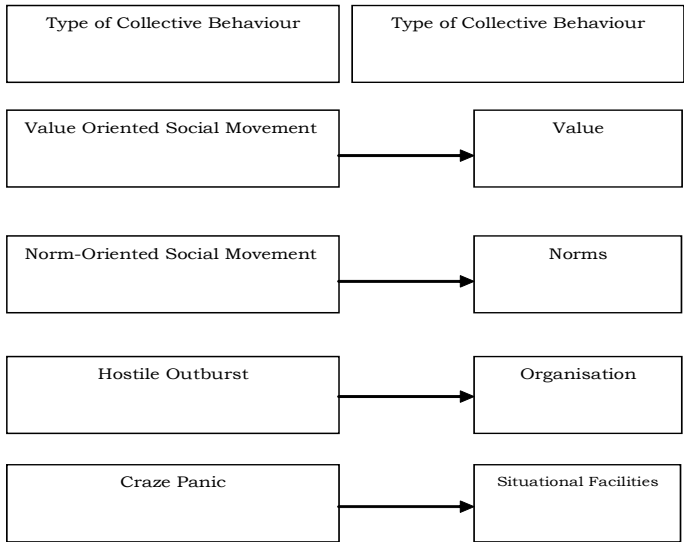
Neil Smelser's value added approach to the study of collective behavior has added a new dimension as it includes 'value' as not only as a component unit but a deforming force in understanding the nature of social movements. Smelser has developed 'models' for analyzing this aspect, taking 'hierarchy' as the key factor in this process. It can be understood in the presentation of the following:

**Model-I:**



Again is another model, he has shown the nature of interconnectedness among a set of factors that determine, to a large extent, the nature of collective behavior and the type of influence it exerts on the system as a whole.

**Model-II:**



An attempt has been made by Crossley to improve upon these two models and to find out what ‘new’ elements have been included in the old one as developed by Smelser. The following model by Crossley clearly shows this trend:-

**Model-III**

Smelser's Concept	The 'New' version
Structural Conduciveness	Political Opportunities (Tarrow)
Structural Strain	Generally Ignored
Growth and Spread of Generalised Belief	Frames Grievance Interpretation Cognitive Liberation Insurgent Consciousness and Deligitimation
Participatory Factors	Suggenly Imposed Grievances
Mobilizing of Participants or Action	Resource Mobilization Networks Communication Channels
Operation of Social Control	Social Control, Media.

The present discussion may be concluded in the light of the basic foundations of what is popularly known as New Social Movements. It is generally admitted that New Social Movements as an organized force have the key elements of culture, identity and social fragmentation. It has been very correctly held:

“The new social movements call into question, for more directly than their predecessors did, the values of culture and society, with a view to having these values rest directly upon intellectual and ethical convictions .... [They] tend to oscillate between an ethics based on convictions .... and a logic of efficacy.”

The importance of culture at socio-political level has also been highlighted by Carol Mueller when he captures the ‘constructionist perspective’ of the concept:

“The resurgent of social psychology of social movements begins with three elements: a re-conceptualization of the actor, the extension of the central role of micro-mobilization in face to face interaction within a variety of group contexts, and the specification of the meaning generating oppositional elements within socio-political cultures of varying levels of temporal extensity, formality and instrumental appropriation.”

Following Mueller, it can be said that the basic components of social movements include, among other, the following:

1. Variable contexts of social interaction;
2. Formation and transformation of the symbolic contents of movements;
3. The larger socio-political environment;
4. Societal norms and cultural values; and
5. The nature of institutional practices.

Here comes the question of controlling such movements by the public. The term “communal activity” by Russell Dalton seeks to capture this central issue in social movements where there may be the “shift of control” to the public:

“Most communal activities involve group efforts to deal with social or community problems ... communal participation takes place largely outside the electoral setting and takes a partisan focus. Because the parameters of participation are not defined by election, a relatively high level of political sophistication and initiative is required of communal activities. Citizens define their own issue agenda, the method of influencing policy makers and the timing of influence. The issue might be as broad as nuclear disarmament or as narrow as the policies of local school district—citizens, not elites, decide. The control over the framework of participation means that communal activities can convey more information and exert more political pressure than the public’s circumscribed participation in campaigns. In short, the communal mode shifts control of participation to the public and thereby increases citizen influence in the political process.”

Thus Dalton has put emphasis on the following elements in understanding the nature and method of group activities in a democracy:

1. Citizen Politics;
2. Flexible and locally autonomous sub-groups;
3. Participatory structure of the community.

He has also identified the elements in the process of group activities as

1. Public issue;
2. Grievance interpretation;
3. Open dialogues;
4. Ideological justification;
5. Action mobilization; and
6. Group solidarity.

That vast and substantial changes in this sphere have taken place over the centuries which by replacing the earlier ‘cluster formation’ have created a new type of community formation and new types of group activities have captured the attention of Giddens when he remarked:

“In the present day, the destruction of local community, in the

developed societies, has reached its apogee. Little traditions which either survived or were actively created, during earlier phases of social development have increasingly succumbed to forces of cultural evacuation .... The dissolution of local community, such as it used to be, is not the same as the disappearance of local life or local practices. Place, however, becomes increasingly reshaped in terms of distant influences drawn upon in the local arena. Thus, local customs that continue to exist tend to develop altered meanings. They become either relics or habits.”

The present discussion on the popular perception, participation and preparation for a new social order can be understood in the light of what Giddens has argued in the following passage. It refers to radical engagement (of the people) for a potential future social transformation. A new emphasis has been placed on this aspect of social change where collective enterprise seems to be of urgent importance. To quote him:

“As modes of radical engagement having pervasive importance in modern social life social movements provides significance guidelines to potential future transformation. For those who have associated modernity above all with either capitalism or individualism, the labour movement is the social movement par excellence .... Standing as the ‘vanguard of history’ .... To be sure, capitalism remains a class system, and the struggles of labour movements are still relevant to what might lie ‘beyond’ it.”

Now it becomes evident that assertions whether micro or macro, general or specific, unidimensional or multi-dimensional - all lead to some form of social transformation. Whether such a position is based on nonnative - theoretical basis will remain a subject of debate. There may be a common point where all might agree: the nature of inter subjective social relationship mediated through dialogues may go a long way in bringing about social transformation where collective claims can find adequate space for future change or advancement as the situation will demand.

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# TELANGANA: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS EMERGENCE AND THE CAUSES

**Rajiv Thengal\***

## **ABSTRACT**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2014 Telangana becomes a newly emerging state of India. In February 2014, Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 bill was passed by the parliament of India for the formation of Telangana state. Before independence of India the present Telangana state was a feudal state of Hyderabad which was ruled by Nizam. The State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was not in favour of an immediate merger of Telangana region with Andhra state, despite their common Telugu language. Despite the historical differences between the Andhra and Telangana, there are lots of factors which lead to the creation of Telangana state. The objective of the paper is to analyse the various causes of the emergence of the Telangana state. Historical cum descriptive methods have been used to write the paper.

## **Introduction**

The Constitution of India declares India as the 'Union of States' which now consists of 29 states and 7 Union territories. Article 3 of the Constitution of India gives Union Government the power to change the name, territory of states and to create new states. There were four types of states in post- independence India. There were nine Part A states, eight Part B states, ten Part C states and Part D Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Part A states were the former governors' provinces of British India. Part B states were former princely states or group of princely states. Part C states included both the former chief commissioners' provinces and princely states. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands was under chief

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commissioner during British rule. In December 1953, government of India constituted the States Reorganisation Commission headed by Fazal Ali to reorganise the states. The Commission submitted a report on September 30, 1955 recommending the reorganisation of India's states. Accordingly, the parliament enacted The States Reorganisation Act of 1956 and amended the constitution. The Act restructured the state boundaries. It eliminated the distinction between Part A, Part B, Part C and Part D states. Further, there emerged 14 states and seven union territories after the implementation of this Act. These states were reorganized on linguistic principle. The principle, continued to be asserted in mass agitation and in 1960 Bombay was divided into Maharashtra and Gujarat. Punjab was divided into Punjab and Haryana in 1966 by the same principle. Status of Himachal Pradesh changed from union territory to state in 1971. The status of Sikkim changed from protectorate to state in 1975. Goa, Daman and Diu union territory split into Goa state and Daman and Diu union territory in 1987.

Reorganisation of North-East India started with the Nagaland. Naga Hills District and the Tuensang Division centrally administered area became Nagaland state in 1963. The demand of All Party Hills Leader Council (APHLC), moved the central government to pass the North-East Areas (Reorganisation) Act in 1971. Meghalaya became a full-fledged state and the union territory of Manipur was made a state by the Act. Tripura, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were made union territories by the Act. Tripura attained full statehood in 1972. Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh became state in 1986 and 1987 respectively. Three new states Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand were created in November 2000 by the Acts of parliament on the basis of economic backwardness and discriminatory treatment of the political elites of the parent states. On 2 June, 2014 Telangana becomes 29 state of India. In February 2014, Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 bill was passed by the parliament of India for the formation of Telangana state.

### **Historical Background of Telangana**

Before independence of India the present Telangana state was a feudal state of Hyderabad which was ruled by Nizam. On the other hand, the people of the Andhra region were a part of the Madras presidency under British rule. The Government of India annexed Hyderabad state

on 17th September 1948, in an operation by the Indian Army called operation polo. In December 1953, the States Reorganisation Commission was appointed to study the creation of states on linguistic basis. The State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was not in favour of an immediate merger of Telangana region with Andhra state, despite their common Telugu language. The Commission proposed that the Telangana region be constituted as a separate state after the 1961 general elections, if resolution could be passed in the Telangana state assembly with a two-thirds majority. But the then Chief Minister of Hyderabad state, Burgula Ramkrishna Rao supported the Congress Party's central leadership decision to merge Teangana and Andhra despite opposition in Telangana. Andhra state assembly passed a resolution on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1955 to provide safeguards to Telangana. The Telangana leaders did not believe the safeguards would work. Between 1969 and 1972, the state witnessed two separate movements- 'Jai Telangana' and 'Jai Andhra'. The Telangana leaders accused Andhra leaders of flouting the gentlemen's agreement. Andhra leaders retailed by saying the 'Mulki' policy was discrimination against them.

### **Causes Leading to the Creation of Telangana State**

Despite the historical differences between the Andhra and Telangana, there are lots of factors which lead to the creation of Telangana state.

**Language and Culture:** In the movement for Telangana, language has again become a contentious issue. Telangana people have argued that their dialect, if not language, differs substantially from that of Andhra region, connoting a separate cultural identity. Further they say that people from Coastal Andhra ridicule the Telangna Telugu as inferior and pass derogatory comments. The language spoken in Coastal Andhra is considered as "Standard Language" while Telangana language is condemned as "Ordinary Dialect". It is claimed that cultural domination by Coastal Andhra has affected the development of distinctive Telangana culture with lack of respect for Telangana writers, poets, artists and other literacy figures. The following grievances have been voiced: funds are refused to Telangana literary organisations. Telangana writers never became a part of mainstream Telugu literature. The recent compilation of poetry in Telangana reflects the growing unease of Telangana poets

with the discriminatory and humiliating approach of the literary partisans from Coastal Andhra. Coastal Andhra elites and the ruling classes show a negative attitude towards the folk art of Telangana.

Again, it is claimed that festivals like Bathukamma, Bonalu, Dashera, Deepavali, Holi, Peera, Pandunga (Muslim festival), Jataras (festival of tribals and Dalits) are celebrated in Telangana but not in Coastal Andhra and not given recognition in the state. Rituals followed in marriages are also not the same between the regions. It is argued that “the style of clothing and colours favoured in the two regions is different and Coastal Andhra people look down upon Telangana peoples “clothing style and eating habits and compare them in public with tribal people. People in Telangana villages worship Gods like Pochamma, yellamma, Maaremma, Mallamma, Mysamma, Uradamma, Andalamma, Beerappa etc. The Coastal Andhra people laugh at these names as they are “local” names unlike the Gods in Coastal Andhra who have Sanskrit names. Telanganites have pointed out that the media, which is dominated by the other regions unfailingly represents them in a poor light lowering their self esteem and making them feel like second class citizens in their own state. Hence, the demand for Telangana in the current phase of the agitation is being presented as a demand for self-rule to protect its cultural identity, self-respect and to escape the “Yoke” of Andhra-Seema regions.

**Issue of Development:** One of the major grievances of the people of Telangana is regarding allocation and utilization of river waters. The discrimination has been done against Telangana in the distribution of river waters; inadequate mechanisms to address inter regional disputes over river water sharing and water use and part diversion of river Godavari to Coastal Andhra and river Krishna to Rayalaseema to the detriment of the Telangana region. It has been alleged that injustice has been done to Telangana in the implementation of various projects. Another allegation is that unviable projects were formulated for Telangana like Ichampalli Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme etc. which were unlikely to succeed. The Polavaram project has been planned to benefit Coastal Andhra at the cost of Telangana.

Issues have also been raised about neglect of tanks, pointing out that the area irrigated by tanks in Telangana has gone down from 12 lakh acres to 5 lakh acres compelling the farmers to depend on ground

water for their survival. Telangana groups have argued that while canal irrigation is with public investment, ground water development is with the farmers own resources which are impoverishing the farmers of Telangana, even leading to suicides in some cases. Some groups have pointed out that despite the largest catchment area amongst the three regions of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana has less irrigated land than Coastal Andhra and that, if a separate Telangana is created the waters of Krishna and Godavari will be better utilized for agricultural production and creation of employment opportunities.

Health infrastructure in the state has grown at a slow pace and therefore the per capita availability of many facilities has stagnated or increased marginally. The government health facilities (Hospital Beds and Doctors) per lakh population are the highest in Rayalaseema region followed by Coastal Andhra region. Although, Telangana region, particularly excluding Hyderabad, is behind in these respects.

**Discrimination in Political Power-Sharing:** Telangana groups have alleged discrimination in access to political power in the state. They argue that several agreements and promises made and beginning with those in the Gentlemen's Agreement have not been adhered to. As a consequence, Telangana leaders' voice has not been adequately represented in political decision-making and this has resulted in a lack of decisions in favour of the region. Lack of political voice has led to neglect and discrimination of the region by the more powerful Seema-Andhra side.

**Educational Backwardness and Discrimination:** The government has discriminated against the region by providing a huge chunk of aid to private colleges (junior as well as Degree) in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema with very little to the private colleges in Telangana. A clarification was sought by the committee about the basis for deciding grants to private colleges. The response from the Higher Education Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh is given in Appendix 3.16. It confirms that the aid to the private colleges in Telangana is much less than that in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. Another issue brought up here is regarding the distribution of the location of the state universities/institution facilities region-wise. While state level institutions are spread out in many districts of Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema, in Telangana region they are located only in the capital city Hyderabad. It is pointed

out that JNTU originally proposed to be located in Warangal was shifted to Hyderabad and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University located in Nalgonda district was also shifted within two months to Hyderabad. The reason given was that state level universities should be located in the state capital; however, this principle was not followed in the case of many state level universities/institutions that were started in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions. The new IIT was proposed to be setup in the temple town of Basar in Adilabad district but later shifted to Medak district near Hyderabad. It is asserted that indirect benefits in terms of employment and development of the area around a state level institute/university are denied to the 9 districts of Telangana while 4 state level institutions have been located in one town (Tirupati) of district Chittoor in Rayalaseema region. It is stated that there are four government medical colleges for the four districts in Rayalseema, whereas there are only two medical colleges for the 9 districts in Telangana (excluding Hyderabad) and as a result, even students with a high rank cannot get a seat. Telangana students have complained that pass marks for English are 35 while it is only 18 for Hindi in the school leaving examination. Also, the marks obtained in English are included in calculating the overall percentage, but the Hindi marks are not included.

### **Towards the Telangana State**

The Telangana movement restarted in the 1990's by the K. Chandrashekar Rao popularly known as KCR. He quit Telugu Desam Party for the cause of separate Telangana state and founded Telangana Rashtra Samithi in 2001. A strong feeling was gaining ground in Telangana that it was being exploited and that the region's surplus was being transferred to finance development in the rest of the state. In 2004 election, YS Rajasekhara Reddy joined hands with KCR, promising a separate Telangana. But YSR got cold feet and backtracked, triggering resignations of TRS MLAs. KCR quit his Union Ministry post. It gained further momentum when in November 2009 TRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao started a fast-unto death, demanding that the congress party introduce a Telangana bill in parliament. Student's organisations, employee unions, and various organisations joined the movement. General strikes shut down Telangana on 6 and 7 December. In an all party meeting on December 7, all major Opposition parties

extended their support for a separate state for Telangana. The resultant massive protest in the region forced Union Minister of Home Affairs P. Chidambaram to announce that the Indian government would start the process of forming a separate Telangana state. KCR ended his 11-day fast. Pro-Telangana supporters celebrated the central government decision, while those from the Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema protested. Due to protests in the Seema-Andhra region, on 23 December the Government of India announced that no action on Telangana would be taken until a consensus was reached by all parties. Rallies, hunger strikes and suicides continued throughout Telangana to protest against the delay in bifurcation the state. The all-party Telangana Joint Action Committee (JAC) started relay hunger strikes and threatened the resignations of all legislators on 28 January, demanding that the centre spell out its intentions and create a timetable for change. So, the government announced the five-member Srikrishna Committee on Telangana that would look into the issue. Then after the SKC's report on February 17, 2011 non-cooperation movement was started and it last for 16 days which was participated by 300,000 government employees and caused Rs 8 billion per day in revenue to government. In February and March, Assembly session was boycotted for weeks and parliament session was disrupted for several days by Telangana representatives. These all fastened the Telangana movement and compelled the Central government to create the Telangana state very soon.

### **Conclusion**

So, the Indian union of states basically reorganised on the basis of language, geographical location and common history of the people and on the basis of economic backwardness. The people of Telangana had several concerns. There are historical differences between the Andhra and Telangana region. The region had a less-developed economy than Andhra, but with a larger revenue base (mostly because it taxed rather than prohibited alcoholic beverages), which people of Telangana feared might be diverted for use in Andhra. They feared that planned irrigation projects on Krishna and Godavari rivers would not benefit Telangana proportionately, even though people of Telangana controlled the headwaters of the rivers. It was feared that the people of Andhra, who had access to higher standards of education under the British rule, would

have an unfair advantage in seeking government and educational jobs. On these issues, Telangana Rashtra Samithi mobilises the people and ultimately achieved their dream of Telangana state. society.

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# **EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR WOMAN EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL AREAS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PANITOLA DEVELOPMENT BLOCK, DIBRUGARH**

**Gayatree Lahkar\***

## **ABSTRACT**

Woman Empowerment is a global issue. At present, it is not only the most popular slogan of the contemporary age but it is also the need of the hour. Rural Women constitute nearly 77% of total female population in our country but in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, rural women are being denied of their rights in the family, economic world, social activities, political fields etc. In this context, education can play an active role. Women empowerment is closely related to education as it is the strong instrument for bringing change and development. Hence, in this paper, an attempt has been made to analyse education as a tool for women empowerment in rural areas. For this study Panitola Development Block of Dibrugarh District is selected.

## **Introduction**

Woman Empowerment is a global issue at present; it is not only the most popular slogan of the contemporary age but it is also the need of the hour. Empowerment of women means equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, with a positive self-esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation. The empowered should be able to participate in decision –making process as well as to contribute in developmental activities of the country.

Stromquist (1995) has identified four clear components of empowerment. They are cognitive psychological, economic and political.

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According to him,

- The cognitive component refers to women's understanding of their conditions of subordination and the causes of such conditions at both micro and macro levels of society.
- The psychological component includes the development of findings that women can act at personal and social levels to improve their condition as well as the formation of the belief that they can succeed in their change efforts.
- The economic component of empowerment requires that women be able to engage in a production activity that will allow them some degree of financial autonomy, no matter how small and hard to obtain at the beginning.
- The political component of empowerment entails the ability to analyse the surrounding environment in political and social terms, it is also means the ability to organics and mobilise for social change.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, women empowerment is a process and it includes the following components:

- (i) Prohibition of gender discrimination thought and practice.
- (ii) Equal opportunities for using society's resources.
- (iii) Economical independence.
- (iv) Participation in decision-making process
- (v) Practical consciousness and participation.

India's heart resides in its villages. About 70% population of India resides in rural areas where rural women constitute nearly 77% of total female population in our country. Women have been neglected throughout the years in every field like social, cultural, economic, political and decision making, and when it comes to rural women, the negligence is in greater quantity.

Education is a milestone for women empowerment. It can grow awareness among rural women folks. Women's backwardness depends mainly on the percentage of illiteracy. Man and women are the two wheels

of the cart of society, the cart cannot run properly, if one of the wheels is defective. So, along with men, women should get adequate and equal status in family's decision making process, economical independency, political status, educational provisions etc. In this context of women empowerment, education can play a vital role.

Underlying the importance of women's education, The Indian University Education Commission (1947-1948) said that, "There cannot be an educated people without educated women, if general education is to be limited to men or women, the opportunity should be given to women, for them it would most surely be passed on to the next generation". But after the six decades of India's independence the present literacy rate of India is only 74.04%, where 82.14% is male literate and 65.46% is female literate as per the 2011 census. On January 2012, female literacy rate in rural areas is 58.75%, in comparison to 79.92% in urban areas.<sup>2</sup>

So, it shows the picture of educational backwardness of rural women in comparison to urban women, which acts as an obstacle for women empowerment in rural areas.

The benefits of women education for empowerment in rural area can be broadly categorized as follows:

- As women rise, there health will improve, like-wise population growth will be controllable.
- Women education will increase women's participation in the labour force and their contributions in the labour force will increase national income.
- Women education will increase the decision making capacity of women in all spheres of their life.
- Women education will make women politically conscious and to participate actively in political affairs.

Keeping in few of the significance of education as a tool for women empowerment in rural areas, the rural women of Panitola Development Block of Dibrugarh District are selected for this study. For assessing the role of education as a tool for women empowerment in rural areas,

Dewdhai and Luhali villages are selected for study which is within a distance of average 7 to 8 km. from Panitola Development Block.

**Objectives** : The objectives of the paper are to assess –

- 1) The condition of women empowerment in rural area.
- 2) The interrelationship between education and women empowerment.
- 3) To provide suggestions for development of women empowerment through education in rural areas.

### **Methodology**

*Method* : In this study descriptive method has been adopted. This study is based on both primary and secondary data.

*Population* : The present study is comprises of the complete target group that is all the rural women of Panitola Development Block of Dibrugarh District.

*Sample* : From the population, the researchers selected 180 respondents representing the population through purposive sampling.

### **Tools and techniques used for data collections**

- 1) Interview schedule –In this study, Interview is adopted as a tool for data collection in order to gain depth and details responses of the respondents.
- 2) Personal observation has also been done on rural women of Panitola Development Block.
- 3) Different journals, magazines, books and internet is also used to get data on women empowerment and education in rural areas.

### **Result and discussion**

After conducting the study on Education as a tool for women empowerment in rural areas in Panitola Development Block, the investigator collect data, analyzed and find out the results of the study like as –

**Table-I**  
**Educational status of the Respondents (above 18 years)**

Educational qualification	Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	69	38.33
Under matric	30	16.67
H.S.L.C.	38	21.11
H.S.S.L.C. / H.S.	30	16.67
Graduate	11	6.11
Post-Graduate	02	1.11
Total	180	

Above data given in the table indicates that among the respondents 38.33% are illiterate, 16.67% are under metric, 21.11% are H.S.L.C. passed, 16.67% are H.S.S.L.C. / H.S passed, 6.11% are Graduate and only 1.11% are Post-graduate rural women in the particular region.

**Table-II**  
**Economic status of the Respondents**

Educational qualification	Occupation			
	Service	Business	SHG Involvement	Daily wage earner
Illiterate				20
Under matric			10	
H.S.L.C.			19	
H.S.S.L.C.	7	5		
Graduate	4			
Post-Graduate	2			

Table –II indicates the economical status of women among the illiterate women 28.98% are economically independent. They are either involved in daily-wage earner as char women or as labours in MGNREGA scheme.

Among the under-matric women respondents 33.33% are involved with self-helped groups and 50% of HSLC passed women are involved with self-helped-groups(SHG). 40% of HSSLC passed women are involved in service and business, whereas 36.36% of graduate women and 100% Post-graduate women are service-holders. The percentage of women's economic conditions that only higher educated women are more economically empowered in comparison to others because they are service-holders but the daily wage-earners, labours, SHG's members are less economically empowered the main factor behind this is education because it is education that empowers women to get knowledge and utilize it to the optimum level for not only their self-sufficiency but also for the welfare and progress of society and nation too.

**Table-III****Political Consciousness of the Respondents**

Educational qualification	Political Consciousness		
	Universal adult franchise	Contest in election	Involvement in politics due to inducement
Illiterate	69	-	69
Under matric	30	-	30
H.S.L.C.	38	-	38
H.S.S.L.C.	30	-	15
Graduate	11	2	-
Post-Graduate	2	-	-

Table –III indicate the political consciousness of women .The table shows that though 100% illiterate and under-matric and HSLC passed women participate in universal adult franchise process but they have no political consciousness even they involved in partly politics due to inducement but 50% of HSSLC passed women involved in political activities due to inducement. But the scenario is completely reverse in case of the highly educated women because graduate and post-graduate women are not involved in political affairs due to any inducement they are politically conscious even among the graduate women 18.18% are contested in panchayatiraj election and one of them is now the member of the panchayat for two terms also.

**Table-IV****Involvement of women in decision making process**

Educational qualification	Participation in family decision making process
Illiterate	10
Under matric	10
H.S.L.C.	15
H.S.S.L.C.	30
Graduate	11
Post-Graduate	2

Table IV indicates the participation of women in their family decision making process. Above table shows that only 14.49% of illiterate, 33.33% of under-matric, 39.47% of HSLC passed women participate in decision making process of their families where 100% of HSSLC, 100% of graduate and 100% of post-graduate women actively participate in every decision making process of their families. So, this indicates that educated women have the capacity to take decisions.

**Suggestions for improvement**

Though this study is a micro level study, but by observing the educational scenario and women empowerment, following suggestions are put forward for strengthening women empowerment in rural areas.

- Women empowerment is closely related to education. It can develop self-confidence among women by providing different knowledge and skills regarding concerned fields. So, Right to Education (RTE) Act should be implemented properly in rural areas. For motivating rural girls for higher education universities should arrange seminars and extension lectures in girls' schools of such areas.
- Economic empowerment is the key for all kind of empowerment. If a woman is not economically independent, she will have to depend on others. So, for economic empowerment also education is needed. Education is the strong instrument for Human resource development. Hence, for economic empowerment, educational programmes in rural areas should be organized and rural women should encourage to assess the interrelationship between education and economic empowerment.

- Women empowerment includes political consciousness also. Education acts an important role in awaking women on political consciousness. It provides knowledge to women regarding democracy, State administration, party politics, election, political issues etc. By education rural women can also utilize their own judgementis selection of their representatives also.
- Decision making denotes the capacity to show one’s judgement in different spheres. In rural areas women get less opportunity in decision making process and this is more visible among illiterates and semi-literates so, education can help women to get adequate knowledge and participate in decision making process of their families. Hence, in rural areas women’s should encourage for education to develop their inherent potentialities and talents.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be sum-up that education is the key which opens the door of knowledge for the both men and women. Education is the basic need in rural areas where women are lagging behind in educational field and education can be an effective tool for women empowerment to acquire required knowledge of different spheres of life to perform better. So, in rural areas education should be given top most priority for achieving women empowerment.

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# NEGOTIATION IS BETTER THAN SUPPRESSION TO MINIMIZE THE INSURGENCY IN ASSAM

Jhuma Das\*

## ABSTRACT

The State of Assam has been seriously affected by armed insurgency over the last one and a half decades with various insurgent groups like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Dima Halim Daogah (DHD), United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and many other insurgent groups waging a low intensity war against the lawfully established government. The birth of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) in 1979 marked the beginning of insurgency in Assam. When the insurgency problems in Assam took the most violent turn and started to target civilians to fulfill their demands and the situation was out of control. The Government of Assam and Government of India started to ban most of the insurgent groups in Assam and also launched some of the Counter- Insurgency Operations. But these operations could not able to bring the end of the insurgency problems in Assam. Insurgents continued their operations and also targeting the civilians, important public property resources, ministers and military and police forces. The failure to bring peace in Assam has made both the Central and State Governments to realize that "violence against violence will not be the correct measure to resolve the insurgency problems in Assam". At the same time, both the Union and State Governments had taken many peace initiatives and negotiations for the insurgent groups which

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would encourage them to come forward for talks and to leave the way of violence.

This Paper will try to focus the importance of negotiation to minimize the insurgency problems of Assam. It will also try to highlight that the process of Peace-Talks and Negotiation must be preceded with the real objectives and with meaningful intentions.

**(Key Words:** Insurgency, Assam, Negotiation, Peace- Talks, Anti-Talk, Pro-Talk and Factions.)

### **Insurgency**

If there is a rebellion against a recognized authority and those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents then the rebellion is an insurgency. Insurgents are people, possibly part of a group, who rebel against a recognized authority such as a Government. Insurgents can act singly or be part of an insurgent group with similar goals attempting to destabilize a recognized power. If one strongest group is removed from the system another group will rise to replace the previous strongest group. If a group is broken it does not split in half but instead shatters into multiple pieces. There is direct competition amongst insurgent groups for both resources and media exposure. Autonomous groups act in a co-ordinate fashion as a result of the competition that exists between them. Now-a-days connection occurs between them with the help of internet; cell phones etc. and is not dominated by geographic connections. The fundamentalist structure and dynamics of insurgent groups is largely independent of religious, political, ideological or geographic differences. Insurgencies are easy to make and hard to stop. Only a few ingredients need to combine to create an insurgency; like oxygen and fire, they are very common and mix all too often.

#### **Some important Demands of the Insurgent Groups**

1. To challenge the existing Govt. for control of all or a portion of its territory or force political concessions in sharing political power.
2. Demand for the separate independent Nations.
3. Demand for the separate states.

4. Demand for the regional autonomy.
5. Demand for the greater regional autonomy for within a particular region.
6. Demand for the solving of the immigration from the neighbouring countries and other states.
7. Demand for the use of the natural resources of the region only by the local communities.
8. To maintain the ethnic identity, language and culture of their region.

### **Important Causes Responsible for the Rise of Insurgency**

1. The failure of the Govt. to produce an equal balance between all the regions of a nation.
2. The economic backwardness within a region.
3. The rising unemployment and illiteracy problems.
4. Ethnic conflict based on language and culture.
5. Scarcity of important resources for the local communities.
6. Immigration from the neighbouring countries.
7. Poorly developed transport and communication links.
8. Corruption among the local politicians and elites.
9. Support from the neighbouring states to raise the insurgent groups morally and materially.

### **Important Tactics used by the Insurgent Groups**

1. The techniques of the Guerilla Warfare.
2. Bomb explosions in the crowded areas.
3. Sending Extortion Notes to big businessmen, tea planters, industrialists and Govt. officials.
4. Kidnapping as a major source for generating funds.
5. Murder of the famous personalities to create terror and pressure on the Govt.
6. Conducting robberies to gather funds.
7. Destruction of the public and private properties.

8. Using the support of the local populations to maintain their settlements in the camps.
9. Keeping the links with the insurgent groups of the neighbouring countries to maintain their hideouts.
10. Tactical understanding with the insurgent groups of the region to gain informations and other moral and material supports.

### **The Background of Insurgency in Assam**

Insurgency is a burning problem of Assam. The State of Assam has been seriously affected by armed insurgency over the last one and a half decades with various insurgent groups like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Dima Halim Daogah (DHD), United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and many other insurgent groups waging a low intensity war against the lawfully established government. The birth of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) in 1979 marked the beginning of insurgency in Assam. Though the ULFA was founded on April 7<sup>th</sup> 1979, it came to be noticed as a nascent- armed organization only in late 1983, when it commenced a series of political assassinations and audacious bank robberies, often abortive. At the same time, the Movement against the "Outsiders", (1979-1985) was going on in Assam. The people of Assam suspected that there were huge numbers of illegal Bengali Muslim settlers from Bangladesh. The people of Assam also felt that unless these foreign nationals were detected and deported they would reduce the indigenous Assamese into minority. At this stage, many other secessionist insurgent outfits appeared on the scene in Assam. Simultaneously, other ethnic groups in Assam have sprouted their own secessionist – insurgent organizations like the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) for the Bodos, United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) among the Karbis, Dima Halim Daogah (DHD) among the Dimasas and many other such insurgent groups.

The Insurgency in Assam has been time to time mushroomed and developed with the help of some of the neighbouring countries. Some developments like influence of China, the resurgence of insurgent movements with the support from Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence markets to North- East India. The use of territories of Bangladesh, Bhutan,

Myanmar and China sometimes provided safe haven for them and continues their operations from outside the Indian Territory.

### Different types of insurgent groups in assam

SL NO	PROSCRIBED INSURGENT GROUPS	SL NO	ACTIVE INSURGENT GROUPS	SL NO	INACTIVE INSURGENT GROUPS
1	National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)	1	Adivasi Cobra Force (ACF)	1	Adam Sena (AS)
2	United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)	2	All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA)	2	Adivasi Security Force (ASF)
3	United Liberation Front of Barak Valley (ULFBV)	3	Black Widow (BW)	3	Barak Valley Youth Liberation Front (BVLVYF)
		4	Dima Halim Daogah (DHD)	4	Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT)
		5	Hmar People's Convention-Democracy (HPC-D)	5	Karbi National Volunteers (KNV)
		6	Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO)	6	Karbi People's Front (KPF)
		7	Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF)	7	Kock-Rajbongshi Liberation Organization (KRLO)
		8	Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA)	8	Muslim Tiger Force (MTF)
		9	United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS)	9	Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam (MULFA)
				10	People's United Liberation Front (PULF)
				11	Rabha National Security Force (RNSF)
				12	Tiwa National Revolutionary Force (TNRF)
				13	United Liberation Militia of Assam (ULMA)
				14	United Muslim Liberation Front of Assam (UMLFA)

*Source- South Asia Terrorism Portal, Institute for Conflict Management*

### What are Peace-talks?

Peace-Talks are conferences or series of discussions aimed at ending hostilities. The purpose of the Peace-Talks is to expand the space for discussion about building peace and resolving conflicts. The Peace-Talks aims to change perceptions about peace and to make the issue of peace more understandable and accessible to the parties involved in the process. The Peace-Talks bring the different speakers from different parties to share their personal stories, ideas, problems, grievances and practical solution to resolve conflicts. Peace-Talks encourages to stop hostilities or surrender, in which an army or insurgent group or terrorist

group agrees to give up arms or a ceasefire in which the parties may agree to temporarily or permanently stop fighting.

### **The Importance of the Peace-talks**

1. Peace-Talks try to stop the initiation of new conflicts.
2. Peace-Talks try to stop the escalation of the existing conflicts.
3. Peace-Talks helps to reduce conflict or makes it less, rather than more intense.
4. Peace-Talks also help to resolve future conflicts and complaints.
5. Peace-Talks help for complete settlements or resolution of the conflicts.
6. Peace-Talks help for the peaceful resolution of public grievances before they become a source of conflict in a society.

### **The Beginning Stages of Peace-talks with the Insurgent Groups in Assam and their Outcomes**

When the insurgency problems in Assam took the most violent turn and started to target civilians to fulfill their demands and the situation was out of control. The Government of Assam and Government of India started to ban most of the insurgent groups in Assam and also launched some of the Counter- Insurgency Operations. The Operation Bajrang was the first military operation launched against ULFA on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1990. Some other prominent Counter-Insurgency Operations like Operation Rhino-I on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1991 and the Operation Rhino-II in 2006. These Counter-Insurgency Operations forced many militants to surrender in Assam. But these operations could not able to bring the end of the insurgency problems in Assam. Insurgents continued their operations and also targeting the civilians, important public property resources, ministers and military and police forces.

### **The Peace Talks**

The failure to bring peace in Assam has made both the Central

and State Governments to realize that “violence against violence will not be the correct measure to resolve the insurgency problems in Assam”. At the same time, both the Union and State Governments had taken many peace initiatives and negotiations for the insurgent groups which would encourage them to come forward for talks and to leave the way of violence. The first peace talks with ULFA were held on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1992 in New Delhi with late Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. Many attempts of peace talks were arranged like talks between ULFA appointed People’s Consultative Group (PCG) and the Government of India on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 in New Delhi and another round of peace talks was organized with ULFA on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2006. The NDFB, on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004, announced a six month long unilateral ceasefire. The move was not reciprocated by the Government and Security Forces Operations continued against the outfit. At the end of the ceasefire period, the outfit further extended the truce. Meanwhile, the Assam Govt. released Govinda Basumatary, the arrested General Secretary, to open a channel of communication with the outfit’s top leadership reportedly based in Bangladesh. Several discussions between the outfit’s leadership and representatives of the Union Govt. and Govt. of Assam were held in different parts of the state and New Delhi. It ultimately resulted in the signing of a tripartite ceasefire agreement on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at New Delhi. Another militant Bodo group of Assam known as Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2003, renounced violence and 2641 cadres of the outfit surrendered along with arms and ammunitions at Kokrajhar, marking an end to seven years of insurgency from 1996. A Memorandum of Settlement for the creation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) reached at a tripartite meeting held in New Delhi on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2003 between the representatives of Union Govt, Assam Govt and a BLT Delegation. The main provisions of the MoS, relate to the creation of BTC, an autonomous self governing body within the state of Assam and under the provisions of the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution of India. A ceasefire agreement was signed between Dima Halim Daogah (DHD) leadership and the Union Govt on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2003 and the agreement was periodically extended. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2004, a six- member DHD delegation led by ‘Chairman’ Dilip Nunsia met Union Minister Shivraj Patil in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum demanding a separate homeland for the Dimasas Tribals. The United People’s Solidarity (UPDS)

held six rounds of peace talks with the State and Union Govt between 2002 and 2006. But the outfit pulled out of the talks complaining of lack of progress on its core demands. Another militant group the Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF) declared unilateral ceasefire for two months from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The ceasefire was again extended for 15 more days. But after that, it withdrew the unilateral ceasefire stating that the centre was not interested initiating talks with it. It had also submitted an 11- point Charter of demands to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. On 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2007, the Mizoram Government initiates negotiations with the Hmar People's Convention-Democracy (HPC-D). The Govt. is to send representatives to the outfit, which operates in Mizoram, Manipur and Assam's Cachar and North Cachar Hills Districts to evaluate its demands. The HPC-D asked for involvement of the Union Govt. in peace talks between the outfit and the Mizoram Govt. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Black Widow (BW) Chairman Jewel Garlossa was arrested in Bangalore with two of his aides. After his arrest BW announced a unilateral ceasefire for three months from their side. On 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2009, BW was banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1965. After these developments, BW showed interest in coming for talks. Government took the active interest in talks and on July month 2010, Centre's interlocutor P.C. Haldar met both Niranjan Hojai and Jewel Garlossa and other representatives where a thorough discussion on the Charter of demand took place. On 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2001, the Adivasi Cobra Force (ACF), signed a ceasefire agreement with the Govt. of India and the ceasefire has been periodically extended by Govt of India since July 2004.

### **The Outcome of these Peace Talks**

The Peace Talks between the Insurgent Groups of Assam, the Govt. of Assam and the Union Govt. of India has brought a lot of surrenders by the militants on the basis of some of their pre-conditions. Most of the militant groups in Assam came to the table of talks by demanding their security of lives, livelihoods, demanding to end the secret killings of their members and to enjoy a normal life of citizens in Assam. They also put forwarded their agenda to both the Central and State Governments. But these peace talks were not successful to end the insurgent violence in Assam. After the peace talks the insurgent violence's like- bomb

explosions, kidnapping, murders, explosion of public property resources, targeting of army personnel and extortion drives are going on in Assam. The repeated incidents of violence's prove that the peace talks are not completely successful.

While the Civil Society Groups in the state including the student's organizations such as All Assam Student Union (AASU), Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP), literary organizations including the Assam Sahitya Sabha (ASS) have periodically attempted to get involved in the peace process. But ULFA's recalcitrant attitude has created problems. Prominent personalities like singer Late Bhupen Hazarika and Social Activist Late Mamonirasam Goswami's attempts were not much successful. Public organizations like Assam Public Works (APW) have been seen as pro-govt. and their activities have been limited to creating public awareness against ULFA Violence. On the other hand, ULFA propped up bodies like the People's Consultative Group (PCG) and the People's Committee for Peace Initiatives in Assam too has not been totally acceptable to the govt. for their pro-ULFA outlook. But on the other hand, contribution of the community-based Organizations in bringing Bodo Insurgency to a close has been more successful. The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), The Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) and The Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) have played crucial roles in bringing both the BLT and the NDFB to the negotiating table.

Most of the insurgent groups in Assam believe that these peace talks are only formalities to bring them on the discussion tables. The Assam Govt. and the Union Govt. neither understand their demands nor their complicated problems which they are facing in their day-to-day life. Besides that Govt. does not paid any attention to their demand charters. Most of the insurgent groups believe that peace process is very slow in nature and many militants withdraw from the peace process due to its slow nature. The 'Designated Camps' which were built by the Govt. to locate the surrendered militants were not suitable for living. The 'Designated Camps' are not hygienic and no future agenda of their life was settled by the Govt. As a result, many surrendered militants returned from the pro-talk factions to the anti-talk factions of the insurgent groups. They joined the violent moves and started to take active part in different insurgent activities like bomb explosions, extortion drives, kidnappings,



targeting civilians etc. They blamed the Govt. completely for the failure of these peace talks. But not only the Govt. but also the insurgent groups and their adamant demands are also responsible for the failure of the peace talks. As for example, the main demand of ULFA is “Sovereign Asom” which is out of the preview of the Indian Constitution and neither the Central Govt. nor the State Govt. are ready to accept this demand of ULFA and it proves as a big obstacle for the peace talks.

### **The Present Situation of the Peace Talks and their Outcomes in Assam**

The insurgency problems of Assam remain alive after several attempts of peace talks. The prominent insurgent groups- ULFA and NDFB, made their base in the neighbouring countries of India like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal. The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), The Bangladeshi Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and the Maoist Forces of Nepal became the helping hand for the insurgent groups of Assam. The insurgents became more strengthened and active in Assam. The incident of the 2008 serial explosions in Assam proves the strength of the two main insurgent groups-ULFA & NDFB. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008 serial blasts rocked Assam where claiming at least 66 lives while more than 350 others were injured. Although ULFA & NDFB denied their involvement but later on many evidences proved their involvement in those serial blasts.

### **The Peace Talks**

The situation does not remain same for long time on June 24<sup>th</sup> 2008, the Alfa and Charlie companies of the ULFA's Myanmar based 28<sup>th</sup> battalion declared a unilateral ceasefire and came over-ground seeking a negotiated settlement to their three-decade-old problem. They declared that they would have no link with the ULFA and they would be called as “Pro-Talk ULFA Faction”. They also gave up the demand of Sovereignty and they want to work towards achieving greater autonomy for Assam. They also submitted a Charter of demands containing 18 demands to the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh through Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. The first round of formal talks with Pro-Talk faction of ULFA was held on October 29<sup>th</sup> 2009, in Guwahati, Assam.

After the Awami League formed the Govt. in December 2008, it

started taking action against all militant outfits of India operating from within its territory. Their efforts bore fruits towards the end of 2009 with the arrests of top leaders of the ULFA. On November 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, ULFA's "Foreign Secretary" Sashdhar Choudhury and "Finance Secretary" Chitraban Hazarika were handed over to the Indian authorities. Within a month of their arrests, on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009, ULFA's "Chairman" Arabinda Rajkhowa and "Deputy- Commander-in- Chief" Raju Baruah were arrested in Bangladesh and on 4<sup>th</sup> December handed over to the Indian authorities. These arrests have weakened the outfit to a great extent and Paresh Baruah ULFA's Commander-in-Chief" is the sole remaining top leader in the outfit. This time the State Govt., in order to facilitate the peace talks with ULFA, have started not objecting to the bail pleas of the jailed ULFA leaders. This has paved the way for their release and already all the top leaders of the ULFA are out of jail. This included "Chairman" Arabinda Rajkhowa, "Vice-Chairman" Pradip Gogoi, "Publicity Chief" Mithinga Daimary, "Deputy-Commandar-in-Chief" Raju Baruah, "Finance Secretary" Chitraban Hazarika, "Foreign Secretary" Sashadhar Chouhduary, "Cultural Secretary" Pranati Deka and "Political Ideologue" Bhimkanta Buragohain . This attempt really opened the gateway for peace talks. But very soon a rift developed between the released leaders and anti-talk faction of ULFA leading by only "Commander-in-Chief" Paresh Baruah and other cadres, who were against of the peace-talks and commented not to give up the demand for a 'Sovereign Asom'.

But the Govt. of Assam and New Delhi decided to continue the peace process without the presence of Paresh Baruah and the other cadres of the anti-talk faction of ULFA. After a lot of discussions between the Assam Govt. and New Delhi, a formal round of peace talks between the pro-talk faction of ULFA was held on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2011, with a seven member co-ordination committee was set up to fix modalities and oversee a couple of critical aspects, even as the centre insisted on non-interference from the pro-talk group with any military operations against Paresh Baruah faction. The two parties played an important role to initiate the discussions between the ULFA leaders and the Govt. of Assam and New Delhi were- Sanmilita Jatiya Abhibartan (SJA) headed by prominent intellectual of Assam Dr. Hiren Gohain and P.C. Halder, the centre appointed interlocutor who consulted with the ULFA leaders and other insurgent group leaders and mediated between them and also between

the govt. of Assam & New Delhi. But these rounds of Peace talks although opened the gate of peaceful negotiations but did not brought satisfactory results. Recently, another round of peace talks was held on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, between a six member delegation of pro-talk leaders led by ‘Chairman’ Arabinda Rajkhowa held over ninety minutes discussion with Union Home Secretary, R.K.Singh. The tripartite talks were also attended by officials of the State Govt., centre interlocutor P.C. Halder and Joint Secretary (North East), Shambhu Singh. Assam Govt. was represented by State Home Secretary. The deliberations mainly centered round the issue of illegal influx from across the border and threats of identity crisis being faced by the indigenous people of Assam. The pro-talk faction also discussed about the flood problem of Assam. They requested for creation of legislative council with representatives from district council under the sixth schedule. They also demanded Schedule Tribe status for some ethnic groups in Assam.

The anti-talk faction of NDFB received a big blow when its leader Ranjan Daimary was arrested in Bangladesh and later handed over to Indian Authorities on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2010. During interrogation he confessed that the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2008, serial blasts in Assam, was conducted under his express instructions. He was ready for peace talks and would be able to make his commanders and cadres surrender if New Delhi was keen for negotiations. But the faction is still carrying on its subversive activities in some parts of Assam. At present, The Bodo National Conference (BNC) is demanding the release of Ranjan Daimary from jail. They met with Union Home Minister on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 and declared that without the release of Daimary formal peace talks could not start. The govt. of India is also hoping to start the peace process with NDFB soon. Although NDFB ‘Chairman’ Ranjan Daimary is ready for the formal peace talks but the ‘Commander-in-Chief’ I.K. Sangbijit who is still in Myanmar, is maintaining a tough stand on the issue of talks with the Govt. of India. The Govt. is of the view that all members of the outfit should come forward to join the peace talks. The Govt. highlighted the Daimary- Sangbijit rift is the main reason of delay for the fruitful peace talks.

Another militant outfit of Assam UPDS also held a round of peace talks with the Central and the State Govts. In New Delhi on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010, where three sides approved a draft accord paving the

way for the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). On 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2012, the representatives of the Assam Advasi Peace Movement met with the Chief Minister and expressed the willingness of militant group AANLA for peace talks and briefed their demand charter and hoped Govt. will involve its interlocutor P.C. Halder to mediated between the AANLA leaders and the Govt. The Assam Adivasi Peace Movement also expressed their hope of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Govt.

On 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2012, the Centre and the Assam Govt. signed a pact with both the anti-talk and pro-talk faction of the DHD. The Formal Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) was signed by Dilip Nunsia and Jewel Garlossa on behalf of the DHD and Joint Secretary (North-East) Shambhu Singh and Principal Secretary Home and Political, Shri Sailesh on behalf of the State Govt. This is a remarkable because both the anti-talk and pro-talk factions were involved in the peace process. The anti-talk faction that is DHD (J) the outfit of Jewel Garlossa which signed the peace agreement will be formally disbanded from 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2021. Some leaders of the outfit also expressed their desires to join politics.

At present, most of prominent insurgent groups of Assam are in cease-fire with the Govt. They – are pro-talk faction of ULFA, UPDS, DHD and BW, pro-talk faction of NDFB, ACF and BLT. As many as 2680 cadres of these groups are in various designated camps in the state. However, peace talks have not yet gained full momentum with all these groups except DHD.

### **The Outcomes of the Present Situation of the Peace Talks**

This period of peace talks is successful to bring lesser the level of insurgent violence in Assam in comparison with the earlier period. Although the pro-talk factions came on the negotiation tables with the positive mind to leave the way of violence but still the anti-talk factions are left to develop the positive attitude towards peace process and trust on the Parliamentary Democracy and also on the decisions of the Govt. But it is neither easy for the Govt. nor for the insurgent groups to adopt such procedure through which a decades old insurgency will end completely. Besides this, the arrests of the main insurgent leaders of different groups specially ULFA and NDFB leaders further weakened the base of the insurgent groups in Assam. The successful divide and

rule between the pro-talk and anti-talk factions of the major groups and their leaders and the constant pressure from the side of the Govt. to join the peace talks specially the pro-talk leaders who were released from jail or on the bail, is also one of the reasons to scale down the meter of insurgent violence in Assam. The positions of the anti-talk faction of ULFA became weak as soon as all the prominent leaders were arrested and agreed to sit with the Govt. on the negotiation table. Especially the financial condition and cadre strength of the anti-talk faction of ULFA and NDFB became very weak and it is one of major reason for the decline of the insurgent violence in Assam. The recent tripartite talks between the Govt. and pro-talk faction of ULFA which was arranged on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, and these talks are held when Assam was suffering from severe flood problem. The significant aspect of these talks was certainly the out-of-box approach of both the ULFA leaders and the Govt. representatives. The anti-talk faction of ULFA led by Paresh Baruah is still remained out of the peace talks and still stubborn on the demand of sovereignty. People of Assam feel these talks are meaningless and what Assam will ultimately get from these much-hypes talks. It became a challenge for both pro-talk ULFA leaders and the Govt. to make the talk process meaningful attempt. So, this time ULFA decided to change the strategy of talks by considering the interests of the people of Assam and forwarding the dialogue process within framework of Indian Constitution. The peace talk's agenda has 12 demands that included – Amendment of the Constitution to protect the rights of the indigenous people of Assam, Government's help to bring its 'General Secretary', Anup Chetia from Bangladesh, report on missing ULFA leaders and cadres and some other demands. The talks also pointed out the most core issue like flood problem of Assam and legitimate in nature. Although the Govt. and ULFA peace talks are on the right track but we have to wait in future to see the real effects of it.

The Govt. has achieved another great victory after signing a Peace Agreement with another militant group of Assam that is DHD on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2012, where both the anti-talk and pro-talk factions both came forward to sign the agreement and the anti-talk faction of DHD is going to be formally banned soon. But another group NDFB which is still conflict between the group leaders regarding the joining of the peace process and internal splits within it are some big obstacles for peace process

between the Govt. and the NDFB. Some other insurgent groups like AANLA also demanding the peace talks and active involvement of the Govt. to solve the problems of the Adivasi Communities in Assam.

If the Govt. of Assam and New Delhi really want to reduce the insurgency violence in Assam, and DHD also with other insurgent groups of Assam. The main challenge before the Govt. is to bring the anti- talk factions of these groups on the negotiation table. But whatever may be in these phase the peace talks are more effective than in comparison with the earlier phase and also successful to reduce the numbers of violence. Although the anti-talk factions are sometimes involve in violence's especially in collection of extortion demands mainly for the shortage of money to run their groups.

### **Conclusion**

Insurgency is a deep rooted problem of Assam. Of course the solution of this problem is not easy. The Govt. of India and Assam both applied different measures from time to time to tackle up with the insurgent problems. They applied very strict measures to control the situation by enforcing many Counter- Insurgency Operations in Assam. They are successful to kill many militants and force many of them to surrender but not successful to decrease the moral and material strength of the militant groups rather they got the support of the local citizens during the Counter- Insurgency Operations to make their base more strong in different parts of Assam. As they gave the assurance to the local citizens that they are the sons of the soil and fighting for the rights of them and also for the status of their homeland. After that by understanding the needs of the situation the Govt. started peace talks with the insurgent groups of Assam. But the first stage of the peace talks was not so effective because both insurgent groups and the Govt. were very adamant to their own conditions. Most of the peace talks were not meaningful and only mere formalities. Most of the insurgent groups are claiming separate states and even 'sovereign Assam' which is out of per view of the Indian Constitution. Most of the insurgent groups came on the negotiation table but those were only dialogues and they believed that Govt. was only involved in the formalities and there was no real eagerness to solve their problems. But in the present situation, due to the strong divide and rule between the pro-talk factions of the big and major

insurgent groups of Assam like ULFA and NDFB and the arrest of their major leaders from Bangladesh has challenged their strength. Especially, the bail orders of all major leaders of the ULFA has motivated them to take part on negotiation and think about the demand of 'sovereign Assam'. By looking this situation, the NDFB and some other insurgent groups are also interested to involve in the meaningful peace talks. So, the success of the peace talks depends on the prevailing context and situation of the financial conditions and cadre strength of these groups and also correct planning and strategy of the Central and State Governments. Although at present Govt. is able to proceed the peace process in correct way with ULFA and DHD, but we cannot predict the future of these peace talks until and unless some critical problems related to insurgency in Assam like- Sub-Nationalism, Politics and Violence to prove ethnic supremacy of different groups which made Assam a fragmented society. Insurgency in Assam has deep links with these problems. So, Govt. also should think about the meaningful solution of those problems which are related with the insurgency problems in Assam. But we should remember the value of negotiated settlements in democracy which were many times successful in India and even in North-East. The best example is Mizoram, because Mizoram witnessed a decade of insurgency movement followed by Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga. But the Peace Agreement of 1986 turned the situation in the state and at present Mizoram is one of the most peaceful places in the North-East region. It has also taken big strides in literacy and development. Assam also needs this kind of step for its development and it is only possible through by following the way of peace and it should be realize by the insurgent groups and also the Govt. of Assam and India. Then the organization of peace talks between the insurgent groups and Govt. will really become successful to reduce the insurgency problems of Assam.

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# **THE SCULPTURES OF GODDESS LAKÚMÎ OF ANCIENT ASSAM**

Swadhinata Das \*

## **ABSTRACT**

To get the idea of art and architecture of Ancient Assam, the study of sculptural art is essential. The iconographical representations of divine elements give us the knowledge about religious believe and practices followed by the society. In Ancient Assam both Hinduism and Buddhism was followed by the people. The sculptural art of Assam provides number of Hindu and Buddhist goddesses. But the numbers of Hindu goddesses are significantly more than the number of the Buddhist female deities, which indicates that Hinduism was more popular. Among the all Hindu goddesses has Lakúmî occupied an important place, because she is the goddess of wealth, prosperity and beauty and also the wife of Lord Vinshnu. A good number of images of goddess Lakúmî have been found in Assam. In this paper the researcher studies about the origin and development of goddess Lakúmî and her presentation in the sculptural art of Assam. To undertake the research work the scholar has performed a thorough study of religious texts and makes a comparative study of images of Lakúmî of Assam and other places.

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Ancient Assam is known by different names in the Epic, Purânòic and early historical literature. In the Epics, the Mahâbhârata and the Râmâyana, it is mentioned as Prâggyotisà. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta (4<sup>th</sup> Century CE.) and the early Purânòas mention the region of ancient Assam as Kâmarûpa. In some of the Classical Sanskrit literary works like Raghuvamœa of Kalidasa, Yadavaprakûa of Vaijayanti, Kâvya Mimamsa of Rajasekhara, etc., the names of Kâmarûpa and Prâggyotisà are mentioned most evidently.

The Yogini Tantra traces the frontiers of Kâmarûpa thus:-

*...nepâlasya kancòanadrim brâhmaputrasya sangamam  
kâratoyam samarabhya yâvad dikkaravasinim  
uttarasyam kanjangiròiha kâratoya tu paúçòime  
tirthaeresthòa dikúunadî purvasyam girikanyake  
dakœinòe brâhmaputrasya lakúyah sangamavâhî  
kâmarûpa iti khyâtah sarvasastreúu niúçòitah....*<sup>1</sup>

The verse means “From the mountain Kañçòana in Nepal up to the confluence of the Brahmaputra, from Kâratoya to Dikkaravasini the northern limit is the mountain Kañja, in west the Kâratoya, in the east Dikúu- O daughter of mountains, in the south the confluence of the Lakòœa with the Brahmaputra; this is the territory which all treaties called by the name Kâmarûpa.”<sup>2</sup> Thus according to description given above the Kâmarûpa region included roughly the Brahmaputra valley, partial regions of Bhutan, Rangpur and Cooch Bihar.<sup>3</sup>

The sculptural art of Assam provides number of Hindu and Buddhist goddesses. But the numbers of Hindu goddesses are significantly more than the number of the Buddhist female deities. In addition some images are recovered which are other than Hindu or Buddhist in nature and usually devoted by followers of both religions. The Hindu goddesses whose images in prominence are discovered from Assam are Lakúmî, Sarasvatî, Durgâ, Varâhî, Brahmâni, Kâlî, Umâ-maheúwara, Còamunòdòâ,

Vaikunòtòha-Vaisònòavî, and Tripurâ-Bhairavi. The Buddhist goddess Tara and Còunòdòa are also found concisely in art of Assam. In Assam a significant number of goddesses of semi Divine natures like are Manasâ, Apsarâ, River Goddesses, are also discovered. In Assam both Vaishnavite and Saivite goddesses are found in prominence.

Among all the sculptures of Hindu Goddesses, Lakúmî occupies an important place in Assam. Though a few numbers of sculptures of goddess Lakúmî have been found in Assam they are very unique and different in nature. In this paper the images of Lakúmî are discussed in details.

Lakúmî is one of the important goddess in Hinduism. She is also known as Úrî. She is the wife of god Visònòu. Lakúmî and Visònòu appear in various incarnations of Visònòu as husband and wife. In Hinduism Visònòu is considered as the supreme lord, god of world and the god of gods-Janârdana, so he has to be descended amongst mankind in various shapes and so does his coadjutor Úrî. Thus, in Hari's (Visònòu) dwarf incarnation Lakúmî appeared from water floating of the lotus and became famous as Padmâ or Kamalâ; when he was born as Râma (Paraúurâma) of the race of Bhròigu, she was Dhâriini-the earth; in the Râma avatar she was Sîtâ and when he was Kròisònòa, she was Rukmini and in this way she associated with him in all his descents, in same form and same ways whatever character it pleases Visònòu to assume.<sup>4</sup> In Veda, Lakúmî is presented as the wife of Varuna or of the Sun. According to some sources she is said to have issued from Prajâpati, like Sarasvatî.

In Visònòu Purâna two contradictory accounts related to the origin of Lakúmî are found.<sup>5</sup> In the first account it is said that Çeri was the daughter of Bhròigu and Khyâti. The divinities Dhâtòr and Vdhâtòr also were born to Bhròigu and they all resided in *Swarga*. But they left their home because of the sage Durvâsâ's curse and started live in *Kshirsagar*. As a daughter of Bhròigu, she is known as Bhârgavî. The other account of the origin of Lakúmî is related to *Samudra Manthan*, commenced among devas and asuras. The reason behind this was amròta, the divine nectar that grants immortality, which could only be obtained by churning, the *Kúîrsâgar* (ocean of Milk). The *devas* (gods) and *asuras* (demons) both sought immortality and decided to churn the Kúîrsâgar. For churning the

river Visòndu took the form of *Kârma*- the tortoise to place the mountain (Monthara Parvata) and used *Vâsuki*, the great serpent for churning the ocean. During that time alone with a host of divine celestial object Lakúmî also emerged. She was the daughter of king (Varuna) of the milky ocean. Other sources say that Lakúmî is the daughter of Kubera. When she came in front of the gods each of them wanted her as his wife, because of her growing and radiant beauty. *Úiva* was the first one who claimed her as wife. But Lakúmî rejected him because *Úiva* had already seized the moon and Lakúmî finally selected Visòndu. It is said that this rejection was the reason that *Æiva* was hurt badly and that led him to catch the poison vomited of the serpent in his mouth.

Lakúmî or *Úrî* regarded as the goddess of love, beauty and prosperity. She is described as white as *còampaka* flower. She is also represented as a beautiful golden woman, and iconographically she is shown usually sitting or standing on a lotus (as her symbol). She has four arms, but in general she is presented as the ideal of feminine beauty with two hands only. Lakshsmî's *vâhana* is owl. The lotus shown with Lakúmî symbolizes the fertile growth of organic life. Usually Lakshsmî is worshipped in conjunction with her husband Visòndu, when he sleeping on the coils of the serpent *Æsòdanâga* and she is offering her devotion to him by messaging his feet; or seated beside him on a lotus or riding with him on *Garudda*. This appearance is generally known as Lakúmî - *Nârâyandà*.

Lakúmî is considered as the feminine energy of Supreme Being and mother of the World. Though image of independent form of goddess Lakúmî is rare, but the *Agni Purâna* describes an independent form of the said goddess having two hands with a lotus in right hand and *úrîphala* (bilva fruit-bilva is wood apple, commonly known as bell) in left hand. The *Úrî-úukta* describes *bilvâ* as the distinctive tree of *Úrî* or Lakúmî, it fruit being said to ward off evil. In her *Mahâlakúmî* form, she carries a rosary, *paraúu*, *gadâ*, arrows, the thunder bolt, lotus, bow, *kamadalu*, *danòdòà*, *æakti*, sword, *carama*, bell, a pot full of liquored, *úûla*, noose and *sudaræana*. In her *Mahâlakúmî* form she seats on a red lotus and her skin colour is red as the rising sun.<sup>6</sup>

In her secondary manifestation she is considered as Asòtòa Lakúmî - a group of eight secondary manifestations of Lakúmî, who provide eight sources of wealth and thus represent the powers of Úrî Lakúmî -

1. Âdi Lakúmî - The first manifestation of Lakúmî
2. Dhyâni Lakúmî - Granary wealth
3. Dhairya Lakúmî - Wealth of courage
4. Gâja Lakúmî - Elephant symbol of wealth
5. Santâna Lakúmî - Wealth of continuity progeny
6. Vijaya Lakúmî - Wealth of victory
7. Vidyâ Lakúmî - Wealth of knowledge and education
8. Dhana Lakúmî - Monetary wealth

In sculptural art of Assam generally images of Gâja-Lakúmî or Abhisòekha-Lakúmî are profoundly found. Here goddess is lustrated by two elephants. In VisòndudharmotTârâ the description of Gâja-Lakúmî is given, where she is sitting on lotus and hold lotuses in her hands. She is said to be bathed by water from pitchers held by elephants in trunks. Same description is given in Matsya Purâna also, only difference is that it prescribed *padma* and *úriphâla* in left and right hands of goddess Lakúmî.<sup>7</sup>

An image of Gâja-Lakúmî of 8<sup>th</sup> Century CE was found in Sibsagar, which is now preserved in Assam State Museum. The image is carved on a block of basalt. The goddess is shown seated on *padmâ in lalitâsana* (left leg on seat and right leg pendent). She has two hands and both of them are partly damaged. Perhaps the right hand is in *varadâ* with a fruit on palm and holds a lotus by stalk in the left hand. It is a frontal representation of Gâja-Lakúmî. The goddess has a beautiful appearance. She wears *karanòdòa mukutòa*, *kanthahâra*, *valayas*, *keyûras*, *kunòdòalas*, and *katòivastra* as *paridhâna*. The face of the deity is slightly mutilated. Her breasts are well shaped and waist is slender. There are two standing elephants near her head who pour water on her with their trunk. Both elephants stand on

two *padmâs* of which the *mròndâlas* are held by the hands of the deity below. The right side elephant is badly damaged (**Plate 1**).

Three images of Gâja-Lakúmî are explored from Maudnga or Devasthan. All images are depicted on the *æirapatòtòì* of a ruined temple. Here the goddess is seated in *padmâsana* and her both hands are extended and rested on the knees. The image is a small one and not well carved, so the *âyûdhas* and the ornamentation of the deity are not clear. Two elephants are seen giving ablution to the goddess from sides. The other two images of Devasthan are quite similar with preceding one, only differences are noticed in hand postures (**Plate 2**). In one image goddess is in *pranòâma mudrà*. Her *mukutòâ* and *kanthahâra* are distinct nicely. There are two elephants in claiming position in both sides. They carry two *kalacæas* in their trunk to pour water on her head. In another image the goddess holds a *padmâ* in her right hand and her left hand is in *varadâ*. Her *mukutòâ*, *kunòdòâla*, *kankana* and *keyûras* are seen in image. The elephants are standing on *padmâ* and up their trunk to salute her (**Plate 3**). All these images are belonged to 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century CE. The next image of the deity is found in Mahamayathan of Karbi Anglog district. Here the goddess is similar with the goddess of Devasthan, who seated in *padmâsana* attitude with extended hands. Both images carry the similar feature (**Plate 4**). At Cole Park, Tezpur, a small figure of a deity is seen, seated on a *padma* in the *lalitâsana*. Her hands are rested on knees and they seem not to hold any *âyudha*. The deity is decorated with a *karanòdòâ mukutòâ* and *kunòdòâlas*. Other ornamentations of the body are indistinct. The elephants standing at the shoulder level of the deity on either side pour water on her with their raised trunk.

Two different types of images of Gâja-Lakúmî are recovered from Jogijan area of Nagaon. Among them one is a terracotta image, which is preserved in Assam State Museum, belonged to 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century CE. Here the deity is seated in *lalitâsana* attitude. Her two hands are in *abhaya mudrà*. She wears *mukutòâ*, *kunòdòâlas*, *kanthahâra* and her lower garment touches her knee only. Body structure of the goddess is not natural; her facial features and expression is not normal. The elephants as usual pour water on her with *kalashas* and they are standing at the shoulder level (**Plate 5**). The second image is carved on a stone slab. She is quite



similar with others, only difference is noticed in hands. Here her one hand is in *varadâ* and the other is broken but it seems to be in *abhaya* pose (**Plate 6**).

Images of Lakúmî without the motif of Gajalakúmî are also noticed in Assam. In Pandunath, Guwahati a standing Lakúmî in *tribhanga* pose is seen. She has two hands. In one hand she holds *kamalâ* and she holds her drapery with her left hand. The deity is decorated with *mukutôa*, *kunôddôalas*, *valayas*, *kanthahâra*, *ekahâra* and *katôivastra*. Her waist is a slender one. Though the face is mutilated, it is beautifully carved sculpture (**Plate 7**). The second image of Lakúmî is found in Kamakhya. The sitting goddess is shown with four hands. In upper two hands she carries *kamalâ* and *ghatô* or *kalacœa*. Her lower right hand is placed to earth and the lower left hand rests near the breasts. The *mukutôa*, *kunôddôalas*, *valayas*, *keyûras* of goddess are distinct (**Plate 8**). At Mahamayathan she is carved sitting on *padma* in *lalitâsana*. Carved with four hands, she holds *úakti* in her right upper hand and *trirânta* in upper left. Her left lower hand is resting on her knee and her right lower hand is mutilated which makes it difficult to find what she holds. She is wearing *mukutôa*, *kunôddôala*, *keyûras*, *hâra* and *katôivastra* (**Plate 9**). Many images of Lakúmî are found from Malinithan. These images are almost same in nature. They have two hands and each hand rises up to her face level. The goddess is in *padmâsana*. They use *mukutôa*, *kunôddôala*, *keyûras*, *kanthhâra*, *ekahâra* and *katôivastra*, which are distinct. Her lower garment is ankle length. But the facial expression is not matched with their physical presentation. In both sides two *padmâ* s are noticed (**Plate 10** and **11**). A miniature image of Lakúmî preserved in Assam State Museum shows Lakúmî in *lalitâsana* pose on *padmâ*. In right hands she holds a *bilvaphalâ* and her left hand rests on her knees. She wears all kinds of *alankâras*. Along with her goddess Pârvatî also sits in *padmâsana* on a bloomed lotus. The *prabhâvalî* has two circles. Right behind the two images flanking a *Kalpa-vrôksôa* is noticed.

Lakúmî as a consort of Visònou is seen in many images from Assam. Here she is seen at one side of Visònou along with Sarasvatî on the other side. The sizes of female deities are smaller than the size of Visònou. In this type of presentation she is standing in *tribhanga* on *padmâ*

to the right side of the god. She holds a *còâmara* in her right hand and keeps her left hand in *katòyâvalambita* posture. To the left of Visòndu, goddess Sarasvatî or Pushtòi is carved standing on the same attitude as Lakúmî on a *padma*. She holds a *vinòâ* with her both hands. Both these figures look young and have all the *alankarâ* and *vastras*. In many places of Assam a good number of these type of sculptures are found, like Kawaimari, Hatisung-Gedavari, Gojpuria of Nagaon District, Barpeta, Mongoldoi, Hojai, Sualkuchi, Kahilipara (Guwahati) etc (**Plate 12, 13, 14 and 15**). In Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Bangladesh the images of Visòndu and his consorts are depicted in same way as presented in Assam.

Only one Image of Lakúmî -Nârâyanò is found in Assam. A small bronze image of Lakúmî -Nârâyanò is preserved in Assam State Museum. This image was found from Kâcòumârî of Sibsagar district. The time period of the image is 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century. Here Visòndu is carved with four hands and Lakúmî with two. Visòndu holds *æmkha*, *còakra*, *gadâ* and *padma* in his hands. He sits in *lalitâsana* posture, below his seat there is Garuda-Visòndu's *vâhana*. The god wears *kirîtò-mukutò*, *hâra*, *katòivastra*, *nûpura* etc. the goddess seems to be sited in *lalitâsana* pose near Visòndu. She touches Visòndu by her right hand; her left hand is near her belly. She is decorated with as usual ornaments (**Plate 16**).

The images of Gâja-Lakúmî of Assam are resemble with the images of Bihar, Kiching<sup>8</sup>, Orissa, Gangârapur, Dinajpur (Bengal)<sup>9</sup> etc, as far the sitting posture of the deity and standing poses of the elephants are concerned. In some images of Gâja-Lakúmî of outside Assam are in standing postures alone with their attendants, which is rare in Assam, but the elephants are depicted in same way. The images of four handed Lakúmî have some similarities with the image of Pratihâra of Central India belong to 9<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

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### List of Plates

1. Gajâlakúmî, 8<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Sibsagar, Assam State Museum.
2. Gajâlakúmî, 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Devasthan, Nagaon.
3. Gajâlakúmî, 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Devasthan, Nagaon.
4. Gajâlakúmî, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Mahamayathan, Karbi Anglong.
5. Gajâlakúmî, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Jogijan, Nagoan, Assam State Museum.
6. Gajâlakúmî, 10<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Jogijan, Hojai.
7. Lakúmî, 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Pandunath, Guwahati.
8. Lakúmî, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Kamakhya, Guwahati.

9. Mahalakúmî, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Mahamayathan, Karbi Anglong.
10. Lakúmî, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Malinithan, Arunachal Pradesh.
11. Lakúmî, 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Malinithan, Arunachal Pradesh.
12. Visòndu, 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Siddhesvar Mukti dham, Nagaon.
13. Visòndu, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Barpeta, Assam State Museum.
14. Visòndu, 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Odalbakra, Kahilipara, Assam State Museum.
15. Visòndu, 9<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Urvasi Island, Guwahati.
16. Lakúmî-Narayân, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Kachamari, Sivsagar, Assam State Museum.





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# IMPACT OF PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE ON FERTILITY: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

Munmi Gogoi\*

## ABSTRACT

Several direct and indirect measures of fertility are used to convert births into trends for making demographic comparison easier in India. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse Primary Health Centre that are running in Assam has a great effect on reducing fertility rate in village level. The improved educational status of women, their participation in public life and their social awareness are very closely linked with the reproductive and child health services.

**(Key words:** Fertility, Public Health Centre, Demography)

## Introduction

In India, the rapid growth of population, partly due to the declining mortality rate has become a cause for serious concern and anxiety. It adversely affects the means of subsistence and the social conditions of living of the people in society. Indian as well as state government has taken some programs aiming to reduce the trends of fertility to an optimum level. Through this paper an attempt has been made about the changing effect of the fertility due to the Primary Health Center which is situated in the Pac mile which attracts the people of Alisinga Uriamguri village and in what way it is able to fulfill the needs of the people regarding the health. The study is carried out to one village and tries to see how much people are aware of the PHC which is situated nearby. And on the other hand it is also tried to give a brief description about the PHC and it facilities which are available for the villagers. It is very important to understand the conditions of the people who are situated nearby in order

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to understand their fertility rate and their health. So, the study will also give a brief description about the government schemes which are available and how it attracts the people and affecting the fertility of this specific village.

According to Dutta and Bawari ( 2007) they define that Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being which is essential for leading a productive life, and it is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. And they talked about the Primary Health Center that it is the first contact point between village community and the medical officer. It is to provide an integrated curative and preventive health care to the rural population with emphasis on preventive and promotive aspects of health care.

According to Ehsanul Haq, Fertility is one of the most important contributory factors of population growth. In terms of live birth, the fertility trend is an index of the actual reproductive performance of the society. It shows the actual number of children born to a woman.

Haq also talked about Population influencing policy where Family Planning Approach includes measures like time-capsule, contraceptives, sterilization, abortion etc. to control birth rate.

### **Statement of the problem:**

It is believed that Primary Health Centers provide lot of facilities to the people of rural areas in relation to health. The study has been done to look into the working of the Primary Health Centre of Pac mile and what are the provisions available for fertility issues and whether the measures introduced by the Government are effectively implemented or not. This is to be analyzed in relation to the nearby village named Alishinga Uriamguri.

### **Universe of the study:**

The study covers the Primary Health Centre of Panchmile and the nearby village named Alisinga-Uriamguri. The study is conducted in the southern part of the village where population is heterogeneous having Hindu Bengali and Bengali Muslim community.Total population of the village is four thousand two hundred fifty seven (according to 2001 census). Southern part covers approximately 100 households out of



which 30 households were selected as respondents.

### **Objective:**

To study the role of the PHC of Panchmile and how it is catering the needs of the nearby Alishiga Uriamguri village people mainly in relation to the fertility.

### **Methods of data collection:**

Both primary and secondary data is used for collection of data for the study. Primary data is collected through unstructured interview and purposive sampling and secondary data is collected from articles and books.

### **Primary health center profile of pachmile:**

The Primary Health Centre of Panchmile opens from 7 am till 6 pm. There are 3 doctors appointed along with it 1 compounder, 3 ANM workers and 7 ASHA workers. The Primary Health Centre covers 7 villages under it. The number of daily visiting patient in the Primary Health Centre is above 170. The Primary Health Centre has only 3 delivery beds available for patients. The delivery time is restricted from 8 am to 2 pm. The per month delivery reaches around 90 in 2013. There has been a decline in the rate of delivery this year in relation to the last two years recorded figures, which are-in 2011 it was above 160, in 2012 it was above 120 and in 2013 it is around 90. The Primary Health Centre caters around 90000 populations against 30000 which lead to deterioration of the service quality.

### **Findings of the study:**

The village that has taken up for study comprises of Hindu Bengalis and Bengali Muslims community. The village is a mix village in nature. Both these communities have a good relationship. When it is asked them about whether they visit the nearby Primary Health Centre and receive any facilities from it. It is seen that most of the people are aware of the Primary Health Centre. They know what is going on in the PHC and about the condition of that. It is seen that the Bengali Muslims are more aware of the Primary Health Centre and they try to avail the facilities from the PHC. That is why, it can be said that class differentiation is

present in the village as a particular class of the village opts for Tezpur Civil Hospital and other private nursing homes for treatment. Maximum no. of people from Muslim community visit PHC for delivery. Among them have high fertility than the Hindu Bengalis. There are some reasons for giving birth in PHC when looked at carefully. Now government of India has provided the policy of “Health for All” where free medical treatment in terms of birth, death, injury or other illness in the hospital. In case of the birth, lots of facilities are provided to the new born baby as well as mother. They are more interested and attracted to giving birth in the PHC because of the Provision of Government facilities like

**Free transport facilities like 108 and Adoroni :** 108 is used to bring the patient like pregnant women carefully to the PHC without any harm in the health. Again Adoroni is another vehicle is used to carry the patient and companion from PHC to home with free of cost. These are always available in the PHC.

**Financial aid for the mother of rupees 1400 :** That is another factor attracting people towards PHC. The pregnant women when deliver the baby in any government hospital, she is given 1400 rupees individually by cash/ cheque as financial aid.

**During the 9<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy the mother gets rupees 1000 :** When a lady gets pregnant, during the 9<sup>th</sup> month she is given 1000 rupees. But for getting that money, the ASHA worker has to register her as a pregnant patient.

**Rupees 5000 for girl child:** There is another provision that if a girl child is born, 5000 rupees is deposited in her name, which gets matured at her age of 18.

**Women Horlicks:** Women Horlicks is also provided after delivery by the mother so that she gets some amount of additional nutrition after delivery.

When the Primary Health Centre and its nurses are asked about the pregnancy cases as well as the facilities provided in the PHC to the patients then it is clearly come to know that the PHC do not take the risk of a patient’s 1<sup>st</sup> delivery. It is very hard to success/handle the cases if there is any emergency case happen because of the lack of proper instrument and advance technology .That is why they generally refer

such cases to Civil Hospital or other private hospital. But they always keep a record about that.

Again if it is turned to see the families in the village, though Government provided various direct measures to control the overpopulation such as condoms, oral contraceptives, vasectomy, copper-T etc, oral contraceptives are preferred by the family members especially men or husbands over any other measure. They are reluctant to use condoms, copper -T, vasectomy etc kind of things. They always force to their wives to use birth control pills which generally effect the female body. Besides this it is also come up that most of the pregnant women suffer from anemia because of the lack of protein, low blood, malnutrition etc. Their economic condition is not good, some families are facing pathetic conditions and in that condition it is very difficult to have proper food. So they suffer from anemia and other infectious disease which affect to the new born baby's health, hence again in that circumstance maternal as well as infant mortality are happened.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the research highlight some areas which need to be critically examined before adding any conclusion. The National Health Plan (1983) proposes the establishment of Primary Health Centers (PHC) for every 30,000 rural populations in the plains, and one PHC for every 20,000 population in hilly, tribal and backward areas (Dutta. I; Bawari.S; 2007). But the PHC which is covered in this study caters more than 90000 populations, as a result of which the quality of service has been compromised. Along with it, the available facilities of the PHC are not even well enough to provide service to the population. Hence most of its visitors come from economically backward classes who cannot afford to access better health care services in private hospitals, nursing homes etc.

As it has already showed in the findings that like the other parts of the state, different policies and programs has been implemented to control maternal and infant mortality rates, under NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) through the PHC. All those policies and schemes are successful in lowering down the maternal and infant mortality rate but on the other hand fertility rate is seemed to be increased but again according to the data of the PHC, in last three years, average cases of childbirth per month has been declining, but again this fieldwork in the village indicates the

opposite. Such contradictions can lead us to two different directions. First, fertility rate is actually declining as recorded in data of the PHC and secondly, it is increasing in actual but many of them took place outside PHC and hence not included in the record and hence data recorded in the PHC is not indicating actual reality. A detailed and thorough study including all the stakeholders comes under that particular PHC can only lead to certain conclusion about inclining or declining of fertility.

In case of those schemes and programs which provide financial aids during pregnancy and after childbirth if the child is born in the PHC, at the beginning those were successful in changing the attitude of the people especially the rural poor population towards PHC, and to great extent was successful in motivating them to access facilities of the PHC. The money factor worked more in this regard than other facilities as people are getting something than nothing. But during the field work it has come to focus that the presence of middle person for getting those aids has been made the issue more critical as those middle persons has been exploiting the people by taking shares from the aids, taking the advantage of their illiteracy, unawareness etc. All these started altering people's perception about the whole system of primary health care. On the one hand facilities are not well enough in the PHC for safe delivery but people still preferred PHC just because of the financial aids but on the other hand getting those aids is becoming tougher day by day, as a result people again started to prefer traditional way of childbirth at home and such instance came to focus during the time of fieldwork in the Alisinga Uriamguri village.

People are aware of the measures of population influencing policies but it is only awareness. Family planning measures, such as use of contraceptives, are not effectively implemented among the respondents. There are still many misconceptions about the nature and effectiveness of contraceptives among the respondents. For instance, oral contraceptives are mostly preferred than other measures. Such misconception or women preference can be due to the patriarchal mindset of the society that only women should adopt such measures or due to the belief that sexuality of men will be reduced after adopting such measures or due to the lack of awareness that men can also be a part of the family planning process.

On the other hand, among the Bengali Muslim community, the process of childbirth is treated as divine, god-gifted who again hinders smooth implementation of family planning. Early marriage, polygamy etc. are some other factors which also help in increasing fertility among them which again stand as an obstacle in the way of family planning.

At the end it is like to conclude that the government is implementing various policies and measures to control population growth, no doubt it is reaching the grass root level but the effective implementation is somewhere missing and which cannot be achieved without educating the people. The village mentality and the mindset need to be radically changed. The change in the mentality depend on the degree of the exposure to the media and contact with outside group as well as access to education.

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# THE BODOS: THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF THEIR SOCIETY IN DIFFERENT ASPECTS

Indrani Saha\*

## ABSTRACT

The Bodos are one of the earliest aboriginals of Assam and are one of the major plain tribes in the North-East, with many sub-groups among them. They are of Chino –Tibetan origin and known as Mongoloid. They prefer to live a simple and peaceful life in close association with nature. Although they had their own kingdom and political past, it was subdued to some extent, in comparison to the wider political perspective of the North –East.

The period of Renaissance dawned in the Bodo society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But its speed was very lazy due to their preferences for a secure distance from the so called modern and urban lives. The gradual transformations of the Bodo society in the different fields since the pre-colonial period to the modern times have been passing through different ups and downs and along with this, the Bodo people have been experiencing tremendous changes ranging from different socio-economic, culturo- political and lingo-religious fields.

In this present paper, an attempt has been made to analyze the different phases of transformations of the Bodo society in the different periods of time. Not only this, but the major causes and consequences of these gradual changes of the Bodos society have also been highlighted in this paper.

**(Key Words:** The Bodos, transformations of the society.)

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## **Introduction**

The Boros, also known as Bodo are an ethnic and linguistic aboriginal group of the Brahmaputra valley in the northeast part of India. The Bodos are one of the composite parts of the greater Assamese society form a major tribe of lower Assam. Historically the great Bodos were known as the Mech. The Bodo tribes are supposed to be the earliest and most popular plain tribes of the land. They are scattered in all parts of Assam, in some parts of North Bengal as well as East Bengal, but largely found in the four districts of B.T.A.D area viz., Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Baksa, Chirang. They bear distinct cultural trends which mark them separately. The Bodos represent one of the largest ethnic and linguistic groups of Northeast India.

Before acquiring the present socio-political identity through the formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council, the Bodo people had passed through different stages of stress and strain. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman speaking Indo-Mongoloid tribes of North East India. Linguistically, the Garos, the Rabhas, the Tiwas, the Dimasas, the Hajongs, the Sonowals, the Deuris, the Boroks of Tripura and many other cognate tribes are part of this Bodo race.[Goswami (2012) p.89]

In order to maintain their own identity the Bodo peoples have been struggling since long. But it must be admitted the fact that the primitive Bodo society and their culture have been experiencing different types of changes with the passage of time. In the present study, an attempt has been made to analyze the different types of changes of the Bodo society that have been taking place in the social, political, economic and cultural fields before and after the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

## **Objective of the Study**

There must have some definite and clear objectives of all the research papers. Objectives are the basic and core part of research work, upon which the analysis of a whole paper depends. The main objectives of this paper are as follows–

1. To highlight the major socio-political, economic and cultural changes that have been taking place in the Bodo society.
2. To analyze the factors which are mainly responsible for the

gradual changes among the Bodos.

3. To find out the main consequences for the transformations of the Bodo society.

### **Methodology**

The study is completely analytical in nature. The study is based on both Primary and Secondary data. The Primary data have been collected from field study and for that very purpose the direct interview method has been used. For the sample, random sampling techniques have been used for the study. Not only this, but the primary data have also been taken from the various Government Report , Statistical Reports, Statistical Handbook of Assam and Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council 2010 etc. The Secondary data are drawn from various books, articles, news papers etc.

### **The changing status of the Bodo society in various aspects**

The different aspects of gradual changes that have been taking place in the Bodo society since long, have been classified into various categories viz., Social dimension, Religious dimension, Economic dimension, Cultural dimension and Political dimension.

So far as the social dimension of the Bodo society is concerned, it is found that the Bodo people are the culturally rich ethnic community of the state as well as the largest aborigines of Assam belonging to the Tibeto- Burman race. “It is also found that the Bodo people had their own kingdom in some areas of Assam up to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But due to historic ups and downs in the socio-political and economic domains of Assam, especially for the dictatorship of the British colonial rulers, this community had lost their powers and status.” [Pegu (2004) p.90] At that time most of the tribals were totally agro-based and the economic policies formulated by the British rulers proved to be harmful for the agricultural development of the backward Bodo population. With the passage of time, the Bodo peoples could realize the repressive policies of the British and naturally a sense of resentment had been grown up among them. Then they realized the necessity of education, which became instrumental in the emergence of a Bodo educated class and which made their people conscious of the backwardness of their community at large. With the inception of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many changes took place among the Bodo



society. “The bitter past experiences of the British repression and exploitation changed the mindset of the Bodo population. As a result, the nascent educated Bodo elite felt the need of socio-economic and political organizations so as to bring the whole Bodo community under the same umbrella.” [Haokip (2012) p.49]

From the primitive age to the modern, religion has been playing a very important role in moulding the socio-economic life of the Bodo people. The social institution of the Bodos are interwoven and interrelated with their religion, and in the traditional agrarian society, every sphere of life of a Boro man or woman, is guided by rites and rituals of his religion. “Religion has also played a dominant role in changing their social pattern and status, economy, mode of living and way of thinking and it has led to achieving higher education and modernization of their society.” [Brahma (2006) p.1] From the religious dimension of the Bodos, it is found that the new socio-political movement of the Bodo people was initiated with the commencement of the Brahma Dharma movement by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma. “As a matter of fact, Gurudev realized the need of unifying the whole Bodo community into a single socio-religious identity as essential for the unity of the Bodos. So, Gurudev left no stone unturned to spread Brahma Dharma as a socio-religious identity of the Bodos. Many new socio-political ideologies had been established by the first preacher of Brahma movement.” [Brahma (2008) p.240] With the introduction of different reformative policies by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, the progress of Bodo society in all directions had started with a new enthusiastic manner. As a result, a new socio-economic and political upheaval took place in the Bodo society.

Again, from the economic perspective it is found that the flow of illegal migrants had created a severe problem in the lands of the tribal peoples of Assam only because of the Sadullah’s pro-Muslim policy under the pretext of ‘Grow More Food’. “Again, because of the failure of Line System, which was introduced for separating the lands of the tribal and non-tribal people of Assam, thousands of Bodo people were rendered landless. It eventually hampered the socio-economic growth of the agro-based Bodo community of Assam.” [Narzary(2000) p.46] The Bodo community faced many difficulties due to the lack of improved agricultural facilities. Not only this, but due to lack of proper inputs and

technologies, some other traditional activities of the community like weaving, dairy farming, fisheries, poultry, piggery, duckery, horticulture etc. had not been developed in the expected way. So, for the development of the traditional women based weaving business, some weaving industries in small scales have come into existence, as some Bodo women entrepreneurs or self-help groups have come forward with industrial zeal.

The cultural changes have taken place in the Bodo society since Independence with the formation of the Boro Literary Club (BLC) on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1950 at Dhubri. Subsequently, the language movement was started with the formation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) in 1952. “As a part of the background of the genesis of the BSS, it may be said that a group of Bodo intellectuals realized the necessity for the development of Bodo language and literature for twin grounds—firstly, the Bodos did not have cohesional institutions to learn their language rather they were bound to study in Assamese or Bengali language in schools and colleges. Secondly, Bodo language was not accorded the official recognition as a subject of study.” [Prakask (2006) p.689] Many prominent Bodo personalities struggled for long time for popularizing the language and finally the Bodo language got the recognition as an associate state official language of Assam and has been introduced as one of the subjects of study in schools, colleges and even at the university level. The key objective of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was to play a vanguard role in awakening and fostering self-respect and identity consciousness among the Bodos in the decades to come. The formation of the BSS not only makes the Bodo people morally strong but also contributes a lot towards the political movement too.

In effect the political movement for separate homeland of the Bodos has taken a new dynamic shape with the formation of the both the All Assam Students’ Union (ABSU) and the first Bodo political party viz., the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) in the 1967. “With this, a lot of political ups and downs took place in the Bodo society like the demand of separate Union Territory for the Bodos in the name of ‘Udayachal’, formation of the coalition government of PTCA in alliance of the Assam Government after 1978 ALA election etc. But at that time the ideological clash between the PTCA and PTCA(P) on the issues of

‘Udayachal’ and ‘Autonomous Region’ distracted the other leaders of the Bodo community from their principal aim and thus hampered squarely development of the community.”[Brahma (2006) p.139]

With the formation of some other organizations in the name of the United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF), The United Bodo Nationalist Liberation Front (UBNLF) etc. the movement of separate homeland issue became more and more complicated. At that time, the new ABSU leader Upendra Nath Brahma took the initiative to spearhead the movement in the right direction and to represent their demand of separate state ‘Bodoland’ in front of the Central Govt. In another development an ally of ABSU namely the All Bodo People’s Action Committee (BPAC) was formed to muster the support and participation of all sections of the Bodo society irrespective of their political affiliations. “Eventually with the initiative and representation of U.N.Brahma, the Bodoland Automous Council (BAC) was formed on 20<sup>th</sup> February,1993 between the Central Government, the State Government, the members of ABSU and the BPAC.” [Bhahma (2006) p.140]

The study also reveals that after the formation of the BAC another problem surfaced on the issue of demarcation of BAC area. The issue was mainly raised by the non- Bodo peoples because of their insecurity feeling. The non-tribal people living in the periphery of the BAC strongly made a demand seeking exclusion of non-tribal areas from the proposed Bodoland areas. At the same time a section of Bodo people started to feel that without adopting violent means their declared dreams could not be fulfilled. As a result, the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) came into existence and started using militant and violent activities in support of their demand for separate Bodoland outside Indian Territory. At that time, the ABSU and a newly formed militant outfit BLT jointly steered the movement in the right track. After a long run, the violent movement, with the sacrifice of many lives and destruction of property, finally on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2003, a Memorandum of Settlement was signed between the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the BLT, for the formation of the BTAD. Aftermath of the formation of the BTAD like the holding of two successful BTC elections in 2005 and 2010, the formation of the Coalition Govt. in Assam with the support of BPF party after 2006 and 2011 ALA elections were the primary achievements.

## Conclusion

From the above discussion it has been witnessed that the Bodo society has been experiencing tremendous changes ranging from different socio-economic, cultural- political, linguistic-religious transformation. The above analysis also shows that the different kinds of changes have been taken place in this society because of the different reasons like the growing consciousness of the people about their identity, the socio-economic problems, the issue of tribal land rights, language and culture, education, unemployment, and the political aspirations of the Bodos etc. In fact this present study helps us to understand the gradual development of the community and the emergence of Bodo nationalism. With this, an enthusiastic Bodo middle class has been emerged out with some revised ideologies and knowledge. As a consequence, they had launched a series of agitational plans to assert their rights and liberties in the society and while doing so many of their brethren lost their lives. Most importantly their movements and struggles gave birth to many new ideas leading to the creation of separate Bodoland in the constitutional framework of India. And finally with some revitalized objectives, on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2003, the long awaited BTC had been formed under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of Indian Constitution.

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**Manuals And Hand Books :**

1. *Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council 2010*.
2. *Statistical Handbook of Assam 2011*.



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