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EDITORIAL

Anthropology of Memories, Reconstruction and Relocation

RAJAT KANTI DAS

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In April, 2016 I made a trip to Bangladesh, during which I planned to go to my ancestral village of Manikpur in the District of Sylhet. I once visited the village before partition when I was only six years of age and I still carry with me some of the memories which seem to have entered into my existence. I along with my mother went to Manikpur on the occasion of my uncle's marriage. My uncle stayed back even after partition and did not make any attempt to come to India to settle down here. There could be two reasons for it. Firstly, he might have thought that it was his moral duty to look after our house and landed property in the absence of my father who remained in India all through his career as a doctor. Secondly, he was probably not prepared to take a leap towards a future full of ifs and buts, which would signal a shift from agriculture-based, tradition-oriented resource control to a non-traditional way of resource acquisition in a new situation. Incidentally, that was the usual trend those days when at least one son in the family had to shoulder the responsibility of looking after the house and property. In the process his education also suffered. It was not always a conscious choice, but I had a feeling that my uncle prepared himself mentally to take up the role. He had little inclination for pursuing a professional career. Probably my grandfather realised that among the two sons the younger one was ideally suited for this job and he groomed him accordingly. But my uncle did not live long after partition and after his death the responsibility to look after the children fell on my aunt. With four children she was all at sea. People surrounding her at that time, including the father of the present owner of our house and property, convinced her that it would be imprudent on her part to leave the village at that stage. She might have gained the impression that with whatever little was remaining within her easy reach, she would be able to live and bring up the children. The Muslim gentleman, who had unofficially taken control of our house, probably had his own calculation. He could realise that she might continue in this way for some time, but ultimately the pressure of living in an alien situation would be too much for her to withstand. During all these years she had little contact with my father, for whom also it was far from easy to go to the village and settle the matter amicably. The situation was getting worst day by day. Ultimately, my aunt had to relent and out of desperation she gave her accent to transfer of property. She with her children came to India and continued staying with us.

So, I was quite apprehensive before the visit whether the present owner of our house, the younger son of the person who first took possession of it, would be prepared to receive me. I am glad that I was proved wrong. But before that let me describe the image of the house and the surroundings that I have been carrying with me in my memory all these years. It was a big mud-walled house

with a courtyard in front, which was surrounded by a granary on one side, and a cow shed in one corner. On three sides there was a rich collection of coconut, mango, guava, black berry and other fruit-bearing trees. A variety of flowering plants added to the rich vegetation of the gardens. The picture of my joining such small adventures initiated by my cousins as catching dragon flies and running after butterflies in the garden is still vivid in my memory. The house of my cousins was just by our side. Their father was a paternal kin of my father. There were ponds in front and back with stairways leading to the edge of the water. It was rainy season during my stay in the village and we experienced frequent spells of rain. I remember of a day when the ponds overflowed and boats had to be brought into our house for communication. The point at the river bank (*ghat*) meant for ferrying people across the river Kushiara was only a few km. away. But for the calls given by the passengers and high-pitched tonal responses of the boatman, the place was otherwise a lonely one. The day we reached Manikpur by a boat was really discouraging for me, which had a dampening effect on all my enthusiasm. A rainy evening and darkness gradually spreading in was certainly not the ideal situation for a small boy to keep his interest alive. We set our feet with the support of relatives and helpers equipped with kerosene lamps, torch lights and umbrellas. Mud was so thick that it was at times unbearable. With croaking of frogs all around and darkness spilling all over, the place wore a mysterious look. After a few days, I got used to the condition and stopped complaining. My mother, who was brought up in a town, had also difficulties in adjustment, but I am pretty certain that she never expressed it to anybody. There was the road of the District Board, which was not tarred and on which hardly any vehicle plied. On maximum occasions people used to go on foot. My aunt after marriage came in a pillion, which was quite an occasion for me to remember. In case of any urgency of visiting the District town of Sylhet, one had to go to the Sub-divisional town for catching the bus, which I understand was not that regular. In any case, it was unthinkable to return from Sylhet on the same day. My great grandfather, it was said, used to go to Sylhet on horseback to attend court cases involving land issues, which was almost a regular phenomenon. From the road a narrow irregular path made its way through bushes, paddy fields dotted with a few houses of our land tenants (*proja*) to our house. With hardly anybody in sight, I used to move up and down the path up to some distance looking for something curious in and around. Manikpur in my childhood memory occupies a place if not for any other reason, but because there was something refreshing and natural about it. The memory is still as lively as ever. Might be my memories could not give the total picture of the village. For a small boy of six years, who had stayed in the village for a limited period at a time when outwardly there was no disturbance, it was not possible to know about the complexities of human relations. Conflict, communal tension were something beyond his comprehension. Realisation came much later and I had to take a relook at Manikpur at an extended frame of reference.

After almost seven decades one would naturally expect drastic changes in the physical setting and living pattern of the people. Indeed, life has changed, sometimes beyond recognition, but any assessment of change has to be done in proper perspective. That was the period of pre-partition uncertainties. Communal tension, which had been growing for quite some time, had just come into the open in the form of sporadic incidents of communal violence. People were apprehensive of something serious to happen. Partition opened the floodgate. Communal violence had reached an unprecedented height, forcing people, particularly Hindus, to migrate. The migrants included those who had been actually affected in terms of loss of men and property, those who had been pressurised and forced to leave, and those who were apprehensive that misfortune would ultimately befall on them. During those days Manikpur did not see much of communal violence in the form of burning of houses, brutal killings of men, women and children, raping or kidnapping women though there were not many Hindu families in the area. In the absence of big *zamindars* in this part land-based activities were determined by '*proja-raiyat*' (land tenant – landlord) relations. Muslims in and around Manikpur were mostly land tenants, who used to maintain good, amicable relation with the Hindu land owners and in the absence of leaders fanning communal passion they themselves were not prepared to go for any extreme step, or they might have thought that it was not necessary. Building up tension by occasional display of anger and communal passion would be enough to sustain pressure on the Hindu families. Moreover, as the place was very near to the border with India, there was a possibility that violence here would be met with immediate repercussion. Although communal violence does not follow any logic or logical pattern, rarely does the centre of communal violence immediately shift to the periphery, unless there is an urgent need for that. Was Manikpur different in any specific way? Although the area was Muslim dominated, there were Hindu villages too. After partition Manikpur also saw exodus of Hindus. Those Hindu families who stayed back lived in constant fear and apprehension. They could see how fast the faces had been changing before their eyes. There were occasions when my aunt passed sleepless nights. Most of the families of the neighbouring village Brahmangram, which was a Hindu village and some of whom were closely related to us, left much before, realising that the future did not hold much promise for them. They were educated and economically well off and could therefore make alternative arrangement. As a matter of fact, they had already established themselves in India much before partition came into effect. In spite of the situation of uncertainty prevailing at that time, some families preferred to remain here. Retaining hold over the ancestral property might not be the only motivating force behind their decision to stay back. The property built up in India was not always sufficient to meet the demands of all the brothers. It could never match their ancestral property in East Bengal in terms of size and valuation. Moreover, it was too much to expect that the joint family structure could be continued unabated and without any

schism in the new situation. Partition was a big blow not only in terms of material loss, but also in terms of erosion of values. Once the consolidation of authority was established, the Muslims also started taking a somewhat tolerant attitude towards the remaining Hindu families. In some cases, they even supported their cause. Md. Siraj, the present owner of our house and a senior advocate in the Sylhet Court, told me how Late Jagan Purkayastha, a resident of Brahmangram and who was also related to me, could become the Chairman in the Union in spite of the fact that Hindus accounted for only 20% of the population. He had to mobilise Muslim support to make him return. Brahmangram, which was once a flourishing village with plenty of activities, is now a pale shadow of its earlier self. Lack of zeal on the part of few Hindu inhabitants to go for large scale changes in their houses, their guarded and cautious replies, low key conversation gave me the impression that all was not that well. In the present Bangladesh, there were, of course, Hindus, who were economically quite sound, whose children were well established in U.S.A., Canada, U.K. and even India. Some of them had regular communication with friends and relatives in India. The number of Hindu boys and girls holding government positions, and of those serving in banks and private companies was not negligible. Some of them were engaged in business. Yet, their commitment or loyalty to Bangladesh, the country of their origin, was not always above question. A girl, who was in a government job, told me in private that very often her loyalty to Bangladesh was questioned, although she took pride in her Bangladesh identity, lost no opportunity to vociferously support the Bangladesh cricket team on all occasions, could never think of any other country better than Bangladesh. Casting aspersions on her loyalty pained her. One is reminded of the predicament of the Hindu Head Master of "Shankhachil", a film jointly produced by the two countries of Bangladesh and India. He was charged with his biased preference of India over Bangladesh for the treatment of the ailing girl Rupsha, the daughter of his colleague Badal Chowdhury. In the film the girl ultimately died in a hospital in India. When it was suggested to the Head Master that he should better leave for the country of his preference, indicating India, he could only exclaim, "Where to go ? This is my country."

During my visit Siraj made every arrangement for my comfort. I felt as if I was the owner of the house. He considered me as the predecessor (*agrabarti*) and himself as the follower (*porabarti*). There was a veiled suggestion of continuity. At that moment, I did not like to bother myself with the question whether the expression was genuine or not. His elder brother, who was a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and who has taken possession of my cousin's house, contacted me a number of times and shared with me some of my family details. During our communication with each other, he used the connotation "your house" as a good gesture. I was too carried away to find any motive behind the gesture. A girl in the family, when told that the house was well taken care of, replied that it was all because of our '*dua*' (grace) they

could live in the house. It gave me a feeling of satisfaction. There was another side of the picture. Outwardly, one might get the impression that, barring some incidents here and there, everything was seemingly alright. But an underground tension seemed to have gripped the Hindus, particularly those who were economically well off and educationally accomplished. A disturbing trend was that the progressive section of Muslim population with radical ideas came under direct attack from the extremist elements who were almost out in the open. The killing of bloggers bears testimony to that. A visit to the Dhaka Ramkrishna Mission was the first opportunity for me to get a feel of the inner tension prevailing in the society. The evening I went to the Mission to meet the Maharaj, there were only few visitors. We sought the blessings of *Maharaj*, who almost immediately initiated a discussion on the present state of intolerance, extremism and religious fundamentalism trying to raise its ugly head among a section of the population in Bangladesh. Just on that day a blogger in the name of Nizamuddin, who was a Law student of Dhaka's Jagannath University, was brutally hacked to death in front of the University in broad daylight by persons who were obviously against those who stand for liberal values and oppose religious fundamentalism. Incidentally, such a group has been quite active in Bangladesh for some time. The *Maharaj* referred to an article which had appeared in a local Newspaper on that very day. The writer was critical of the present state of affairs prevailing in Bangladesh. Toeing the line of arguments advanced by the writer, the *Maharaj* also thought that the only way for Bangladesh to come out of this sorry state of affairs was to follow the path of secularism and adhere to the socialist principle of having equal opportunities. As he saw it, the intellectuals in this case had a special role to play. A gentleman, who was among the visitors, remarked that in Bangladesh there were not many intellectuals who had a fearless mind and independent thinking. They were actually 'pseudo-intellectuals' who could hardly exude any confidence in the minds of others, nor could they give an impression that they had the capacity to follow a progressive liberal course. They were actually victims of the present difficult situation plagued with mistrust, revenge and intolerance. "It will be too much to expect from them", he candidly remarked. Bangladesh of today has changed and progressed much, but difficult times have remained, though in a different form. A new setting, a new set of people, new priorities, but the stigma continues and with it the tension and uncertainties persist. The childhood memory of Manikpur is one of the bright spots in my life and my last visit to Bangladesh was not without such bright spots. It may be possible to find a link between the two, in spite of the fact that there is a time gap of more than six decades.

[Note : The purpose of this "Narrative" in the 'EDITORIAL' column, unusual though, is only to draw attention of our readers to an area of anthropology which may be easily identified with. Properly organised, personal memories, recollections, reflections may provide important anthropological insight. If there is any added compulsion discernible, it is my emotional attachment to a place with ancestral connections. -Editor]

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Measuring an ocean in little drops: Encountering the intellectual depth of Surajit Chandra Sinha

R.K. BHATTACHARYA

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Abstract : In the course of this talk I shall be presenting gleanings from the body of Dr. Surajit Chandra Sinha's works as well as give a thumb sketch of his personality. I shall attempt to highlight only a few areas of his interest - his understanding of changing social scenario expressed in his work on the Bhumij tribe in the pre-independence period; in the analysis of tribes as components in the making of Indian civilization; in establishing tribes and peasants as viable social categories in the Indian context and studying religion and its impact on a rural society in America. I shall briefly speak about Dr. Sinha's last leg of life spent in Santiniketan when he with his wife started an informal school, *Mela-meshar pathsala* for the neighbourhood children who could not attend formal school. This, in a way is an extension of a scholar in the community, fulfilling Rabindranath's expectations of the privileged and educated to do so.

Key words : Bhumij, Tribe, Peasant, Caste, Indian Civilization, Social Change, Religion

I feel very honoured and privileged and I thank the Indian Anthropological Society for inviting me to deliver the 2nd Memorial Lecture on Dr. Surajit Chandra Sinha before this august gathering of scholars and researchers.

Dr. Sinha was the eldest son of Maharaja Bhupendra Chandra Sinha of Susang in Mymensingh born on August 1, 1926. He attended the Ballygunge Government High School and later graduated with Geology (Hons.) from the Presidency College. He quickly changed his academic allegiance from Geology to Anthropology and got his Masters in Anthropology from the University of Calcutta. His doctorate degree was awarded by the North-Western University, USA on the topic, 'The acculturation of the Bhumij of Manbhum: A study in social cultural formation and ethnic integration'.

Dr. Sinha's natural talent played a pivotal role in his choice of the discipline of Anthropology. As an undergraduate student of Geology he had occasion to visit Kathikund (erstwhile Katikund) in the Santal Parganas. This gave him an early opportunity to meet the Santals as well as observe their seemingly carefree life. He carried the memory of this first encounter all through his life mentioning it sometimes to his research scholars. His father had once told me that he observed Surajit as a young boy quickly pick up friendship with the Garo chief when he accompanied him on a hunting expedition in the Garo Hills.

A tall, handsome man with a wide forehead and a prominent nose, thick crop of hair not always of conventional length, Surajit Sinha had a deep rich voice and wore an innocent expression. He was not usually bothered about maintaining the conventions of so-called polite society and with his childlike persona managed to convey a sense of charm. The stories of his pranks are legendary; his students grew up on them and over time fresh stories and anecdotes surface even today. He would go to alarming lengths to play his practical jokes on strangers and it was his innocent appearance that earned him his reprieve from them.

Dr. Surajit Chandra Sinha was a person of such rare academic calibre that he created a deep impact in whichever institution he had been attached to right from the beginning of his professional life. Also, in going through the publications of his early years we find a mature, confident and deeply insightful scientist who does not falter in his craft.

Sinha's approach to anthropology was from the standpoint of a holistic study i.e., studying the relationship between man's biological and cultural properties. This tradition of holistic study of human beings was inculcated in the Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta where Sinha was a post-graduate student and thus was acquainted early with the advantages of this approach. During discussions with his research scholars he mentioned the benefits of the perspective of the holistic approach. However, it may be mentioned that today the discipline of anthropology is compartmentalized and the holistic approach is not unduly stressed. Only time will tell if this will impart an incremental value to the discipline; the trend is global. Contemporary studies in anthropology are multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary in nature while we are yet to debate the trend of bypassing the multifarious origins of the discipline – prehistory, physical anthropology and cultural anthropology.

II

One of the areas of interest in Surajit Sinha's early phase of academic career was expressed in detail in his paper, 'State formation and Rajput myth in tribal Central India' (1962: 35-80). The work was a result of intensive fieldwork based on primary ethnographic data from the Bhumij tribe of Barabhum in the former district of Manbhum, Bihar, presently Purulia District, West Bengal. Quality of fieldwork can be assessed from the clear and detailed descriptions; this in the parlance of the present day is known as 'thick description' (for details see Geertz, 1973: 6). This paper was preceded by, 'Bhumij-Kshatriya social movement in south Manbhum' (1959: 9-32) in which Dr. Sinha probed into the psyche of the Bhumij faced with the option of becoming Kshatriya or availing the benefits of reservation for tribes in free India.

Dr. Sinha found members of the affluent section of the Bhumij aspiring for the status of Rajput Kshatriya in which endeavour they were supported by

the Brahmans who were given generous land grants. For example, he noted 'as many as forty-seven villages in Barabhum were presented to Brahmans as *Brahmottar* and *Debottar* grants' (1962 : 53). Besides, patronage to the Brahmans was maintained through the creation of various orders of priestly offices: Kula Purohit, Kula Guru, Chakravarti, Deogharies, Sabha Pandit and Grahacharya (ibid). The support given to the Bhumij by the Brahmans in gaining the status of Rajput Kshatriya was through the means of 1) 'fictitious genealogy establishing mythical connection with illustrious Rajput clans of north-western India'; and 2) 'creation of a flattering and miraculous myth of origin' (ibid: 42).

Surajit Sinha observed enthusiasm for Sanskritization among the elite Bhumij in regard to ritual display of the right kind. He wrote, 'This involves positive action like observing typical Brahmanical rites of passage under the guidance of priests, such as, initiation with sacred thread, observance of Vedic rituals in marriage and funeral rites, maintenance of Hindu idols and temples and associated festivals like Durga puja... and introducing taboos such as avoidance of 'degrading' foods like beef, pork and chicken, restriction of freedom of women folk in movement and in forms of marriage avoidance of the traditional practices of widow remarriage, levirate, and marriage by elopement' (ibid: 51). He also wrote, 'In spite of their enthusiasm for Sanskritization of their rituals these zemindars [Bhumij rulers] continue to lend support to the worship of old tribal gods in their own territories...' (ibid: 58).

Dr. Sinha looked deep into the secular face of life as detailed in the following lines, 'The palace, which is also described as garh or fort is bound on all sides by high walls. Within the compound itself there is a large tank where queens used to enjoy bathing unobserved by outsiders. Among the many rooms in the palace are: the coronation room... (*patghar*),... personal rooms, audience room or *vaitthakkhana*, office room (*kacharimela*), room for each of the queens, a room ... to retire alone ... and so on. Among ... servants were the *Duaries* (gatekeepers), *Telmakhani* (oil massager), *Dhuti kochani* (one who dresses the *dhuti* cloth), *khaoa* (food-taster as a precaution against poisoning), etc.' (ibid: 54). Finally he wrote on the subjects' expectations regarding their rulers – '... should be courageous, powerful, romantic, gorgeous and whimsical; ... befitting the standards of the true 'Rajput'... be deeply devoted to the gods... a generous protector...' (ibid).

This is to highlight a part of the text where Surajit Sinha noted his findings based on his first-hand field data. The text abounds with such details on clan and territory; territorial organization, etc. This is an attempt on my part to bring to light both the quantum and quality of the ethnographic details he presented.

Dr. Sinha maintained that the reasons behind social and political mobility of the Bhumij were their persistent efforts in patronizing Brahmans and maintaining a 'regal' lifestyle with the strategic backing of economic and

political power among the elite section of the Bhumij (ibid: 51). The emergence of kingship of the Bhumij of Barabhum in the erstwhile Manbhum has been compared by Dr. Sinha with cases of such emergence in other adjoining parts of the country inhabited by tribes like the Bhumij in the estates of Manbhum (ibid: 38); Mundas in Choto Nagpur; and the Gonds in Central India. Among these tribes the latter is linguistically Dravidian speaking, while the Bhumij and Mundas speak Bengali and Mundari/Kherwari respectively; in spite of the linguistic variations the emergence of kingship seems to be common. The comparison was made on the basis of secondary sources he collected from a wide variety of writings spread over a long period of time; ranging from the works of Layall (1875: 203-264), to the works of Stephen Fuchs (1960). I highlight Dr. Sinha's meticulous attention to both primary and secondary sources in establishing his points of contention.

Dr. Sinha used Kroeber's idea of 'stimulus diffusion' (1948: 368-370) to explain the phenomenon of this unusual spread of Rajput model of state formation (Sinha-1962 : 71). He also ascribed to the theories of social evolution of Morgan (1878) and Maine (1888: 72-74) for understanding the principles of transition from clan to territory among the tribes he studied (ibid: 73). Finally, in the context of this Tribe-Rajput continuum in comprehending the cultural transformation of tribes in India, Dr. Sinha emphasized that the tribes should not be studied as ethnic isolates interacting with limited ethnic groups, rather the tribes were to be studied within 'a wide spatial framework...[having] considerable historical continuity' (ibid: 79). He envisaged that this approach would stimulate researchers to study the distinct orthogenetic and heterogenetic phases of cultural transformation of the tribes in India.

Of the many papers Dr. Sinha wrote, I have chosen to particularly focus on one of his early writings, 'State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India', his presidential address in the section of Anthropology and Archaeology in the 49th session of the Indian Science Congress, 1962 that he delivered at the age of 38. This paper in addition to its many notable aspects happens to contain the central theme of his doctoral thesis. Dr. Sinha's major endeavour throughout his career had been to study and comprehend Indian civilization from the point of view of the varied (orthogenetic and heterogenetic) constituent components of the composite Indian society. He, right from his early days took care to include the tribes in the representation of the composite society of India. He demonstrated that it was possible to widen the civilizational discourse if the appropriate context and time span were included in the analysis. This paper gives us a wide sweep in terms of ethnographic details and analysis of the social-cultural transformation of ethnic groups in India.

III

Dr. Sinha's article, 'Tribal cultures of peninsular India as a dimension of little tradition in the study of Indian civilization: a preliminary statement' (1957: 93-118) was written from an evolutionary standpoint (ibid: 97). In this

article he posited that the genesis of Indian civilization started with the tribes for which reason he chose to see tribes from a long-range perspective of history. In order to probe into this idea he examined the socio-cultural systems at different levels of synchronic integration and found that though the overall characteristics of the socio-cultural system of tribes were distinguishable from those of the dominant components of the civilization, i.e., peasants, there were significant elements of continuity between the two kinds of social and cultural systems of the tribes and peasants (ibid: 95). Thus, he reasoned that the significant elements of continuity between the little and great traditions were as noticeable as their distinctions. Using physical anthropological data collected by Hutton (1931), Guha (1937) and Sarkar (1954: 19), Dr. Sinha came to the conclusion that India's primary civilization was laid long before the Aryan intrusion (1957: 101) – he believed that the great tradition of Indian civilization emerged through a prolonged interaction among little traditions of communities belonging to Dravidian and Mundari linguistic stocks, obviously leaving spaces for the little traditions to continue.

Dr. Sinha succeeded in demonstrating the orthogenetic development of Indian civilization from a cultural base of tribes belonging to little traditions and he pointed out the vital elements of continuity between the cultures of tribes and peasants.

Dr. Sinha initially saw different social categories like tribes and peasants situated at 'two idealized evolutionary levels of socio-cultural integration' comparable to the evolutionary model; later in his article, 'Rethinking about Tribes and Indian Civilization' (1973: 99-108), he reconsidered the lineal evolutionary transformation of tribes; instead, he changed his opinion about the tribes as 'dependent historic structures of Indian civilization' (ibid: 107). In the context of study of Indian civilization, this goes beyond Durkheim's categorization of tribe solely as segmentary system.

IV

In the paper, 'Tribe-Caste and Tribe-Peasant Continua in Central India', Dr. Sinha explored the categories of tribe, peasant and caste against the backdrop of Indian civilization (1965: 57-83). He focused on the systematic progression in social structure and cultural pattern of each of the three categories from the point of view of their integration in the great tradition of India and its civilization (ibid: 57). Besides, he also wanted to ascertain the transformation of communities 'from isolated tribal pole to the caste and peasant involving a progression towards ethnic heterogeneity in social interaction, role specialization, and social stratification and in enlargement and diversification in the networks of relationship with civilizational centres' (ibid.). That is to say, Dr. Sinha saw the communities of tribe, caste and peasant as placed on a continuum, one end of which was 'tribe-caste' while the other being 'tribe-peasant' and he used the analogy of the continuum to explain the processes of transformation by which tribes could transform into either caste

or are absorbed among the peasants. From this also emerges another concern of Dr. Sinha – that of understanding the alchemy of the Indian civilization or the reactions between its various constituents. Dr. Sinha closely examined the extent to which the categories of tribe and caste organized themselves in terms of their demography and social structural features (ibid: 77). According to him, the tribes living in ecological isolation often in uni-ethnic settlements bolstered a strong in-group sentiment by which they could view their cultures as autonomous with reference to those of other groups and consequently remain disconnected from the composite society (ibid: 61,62). He pointed out that societies of tribes were homogenous as they were devoid of structural stratification other than role specialization by age, sex and kinship (ibid: 61). According to Dr. Sinha caste societies in contrast, were typically connected with other groups, were heterogenous and stratified in terms of internal divisions as castes and classes (ibid: 62). Besides, they were characterized by the following social structural features: multi-ethnic residence, inter-ethnic participation in an economy involving occupational specialization, polarization of lay and elite cultures with elaboration of cultural ideals among the elite, and hierarchic view of social relations based on belief and practice of purity-pollution (ibid). He further noted that the peasant category possessed most of the above characteristics of the castes; for instance, settlement-wise, peasants presented themselves as communities living in multi-caste villages having extensive territorial affiliations and network of diverse relationships through which multiple centres of cultural excellence were developed and maintained (ibid). Dr. Sinha's depiction of distinctive features of peasants reminds us of Kroeber's succinct statement regarding peasants as 'part societies with part cultures' (Kroeber, 1967: 284).

I feel that the above three discussed articles, 'State formation and Rajput Myth...', 'Tribal Culture of Peninsular India...', and 'Tribe-caste and tribe-peasant continua...' be read in the light of his very early paper, 'Evolutionism re-considered' (1955: 1-18) where he showed that social and cultural transformation could be profitably understood using the concept of social cultural evolution (ibid: 18). However, as I have already mentioned, Dr. Sinha in the course of his academic evolution moved away from this line of reasoning, instead, he chose to perceive the transformation of communities as consequences of dependent historic structures.

V

Dr. Sinha in his study of religion and its impact on a rural society in America, published as 'Fieldwork Report: Religion in an affluent society' (1966: 189-195), presented a detailed and lucid report on ethnography of a small American town in a rural setting where he lived and worked for a little over three and half months. His field experience was quite different from that of his earlier work with tribes of central India. In the American village he found many local intellectuals among priests, doctors, lawyers, educated farmers,

school teachers, and journalists who reflectively thought and participated in the analysis of structures and processes of their community life along with Dr. Sinha. Among the various classes of informants he included some of the children between the ages of 7 to 9 years who played with his daughter (five and a half years old) and this indeed was a striking inclusion. Some of the insights from this paper are: 'Farming is practically free of religious or esoteric customs' (ibid: 194); 'religious upbringing does not *directly* cause any major deflection from common American course' (ibid:193) and 'various nationalistic voluntary associations join forces with the churches to impress upon the people that they are indeed the citizens of the most prosperous and civilized nation in the world. With prosperity, democracy, freedom, and Christian ethics they are convinced that they have the best of everything. Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Whites and Negroes, share this with equal conviction' (ibid.). I may say here that this perception must have changed now as have some of the terms.

VI

Tagore, Gandhi and Nirmal Bose inspired Dr. Sinha; he endeavoured to continually enrich himself by extending himself in the life of his surroundings. While serving as Upacharya, Visva-Bharati Dr. Sinha drew up a detailed project proposal, *Rarh Parikalpana* (1979), to study the various aspects of the Rarh region with experts from various disciplines so as to form a picture of the resource base of the region in the light of its history and contemporaneity. Almost all the departments of Visva-Bharati participated in this project. Towards the end of his tenure he launched *Paribrajak Mandali*, the objectives of which were to enthuse and encourage people from the weaker sections to develop confidence in their knowledge, wisdom and expertise. This was an attempt to forge links of communication between scholars and commoners having creative potential. I still remember Dr. Sinha introducing Mahadev, the poet rickshaw puller to Dr. Uma Shankar Joshi the then Acharya, Visva-Bharati as one poet to another; also introducing Jivan Dalui as an upcoming sculptor to Satyajit Ray who helped in arranging for an exhibition of Jivan's works in Kolkata. Dr. Sinha spent the last leg of his life in his ancestral home in Shyambati, Santiniketan. He with his wife, Dr. Purnima Sinha, started an informal school, *Mela meshar pathshala* (Sinha, Purnima, n.d.) in their house for the children of the locality who were not attending regular school. Thus children of various ages would come to their house every morning to have classes in a variety of subjects and themes; along with this they would sing, dance and paint. Each of them was free to display their talents and interests without facing any judgemental attitude on the part of Dr. Sinha or Dr. Mrs. Sinha. Both conveyed to the children their enjoyment of life and the need of pursuing their interests. The children started blossoming in a short span of time and soon they were a part of the Sinha household. Some of the children had to return to their former way of life, however, even today they appear to be richer for their experience and happily recollect their time spent with them.

I once again thank the Indian Anthropological Society for giving me this opportunity to formally pay my respects to Dr. Sinha.

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Bilateral asymmetry in non metric tooth crown traits in a Sri Lankan aboriginal Vedda population of Anuradhapura

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Abstract: Asymmetry is the measured deviation of both left and right sides of the same shape. The pattern of bilateral dental asymmetry is not similar in different prehistoric, historic and contemporary populations. These patterns are important in finding reliable population markers in the dentitions of different world populations and in determining the taxonomic value of dental traits. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the pattern of bilateral asymmetry in non-metric tooth crown traits in a Sri Lankan aboriginal Vedda population of Anuradhapura. Fifty dental plaster casts of Anuradhapura Vedda aged 16-40 years were used. A three generation pedigree from each subject was taken to confirm his or her population group. The frequencies of occurrence of 17 tooth crown traits of the left and right side of the dentition of each individual cast were observed and recorded. The Arizona State University Dental Anthropology System was adopted for classification of the 17 traits. In this study, a binary record system was employed, grouping all grade expressions in to either “presence” (1) or “absence” (0) categories. With this record, the Molto’s Bilateral Index (BI) was calculated. The BI measures asymmetrical tendency of a trait by dividing all bilateral by the sum of bilateral and unilateral presence. The result shows that all the analytical traits present high bilateral symmetry and low level of asymmetry, except mandibular first molar protostylid which showed comparatively low level symmetry and high level asymmetry. The results signify the importance of studying bilateral asymmetry for assignment of taxonomic and population value of non-metric dental traits.

Key words : Bilateral asymmetry, non-metric dental traits, Anuradhapura Vedda, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Bilateral symmetry is the antimeric repetition of the size and shape of a structure. From morphological point of view, symmetry morphological, symmetry can be defined as the structure divided by a point into two or more parts exactly similar in size and shape and in position relative to the dividing point (Adams and Niswander, 1967, Potter and Nance 1976). Asymmetry is the measured deviation of both left and right sides of the same shape (Bollini et al.,2009). Van Valen (1962) grouped deviations from perfect symmetry in an organism into three categories: (1) directional asymmetry, or those traits that may or may not be normally symmetrical but they show a definite right

side or left side bias (for example; form of the mammalian heart) (•ädzińska, 2003) (2) antisymmetry, or when one side of a character is larger than the other (for example; right and left handedness); this phenomenon shows a bimodal frequency distribution within a population (Moller and Swaddle, 1997) and (3) fluctuating asymmetry. The term fluctuating asymmetry was defined as differences in bilaterally symmetrical structures due to developmental accidents (Van Valen, 1962). However, fluctuating asymmetry consists of random deviations from perfect symmetry in populations of organisms. It is a measure of developmental disturbance, which reflects population's average state of adaptation and coadaptation. Moreover, it increases under both environmental and genetic stress, though responses are often inconsistent (Graham et al., 2010). The same phenomenon was regarded as "developmental noise" by Waddington (Waddington, 1957). These bilateral structures theoretically should develop as mirror images of each other, since it is assumed that the genetic information for both sides is the same (Adams and Niswander, 1967). However, fluctuating asymmetry may be caused by either extrinsic or intrinsic factors which are usually given the collective term stress. The degree of asymmetry is assumed to be proportional to the magnitude of local developmental disturbances (Harris and Nweeia, 1980). Susceptibility to such interferences is presumably determined by the genetic architecture of the individual (Albert and Green, 1999). Meanwhile, genomes relatively resistant to these fluctuations are considered to be buffered against the stresses of development and are thus more stable (Mather, 1953).

Observation of bilateral asymmetry expression in human dental non-metric traits has been used in anthropology as a measure of population heritability (Baume and Crawford, 1979, Garn et al., 1966, Staley and Green, 1971). Suarez found greater magnitude of fluctuating dental asymmetry in the permanent dentition of the Neanderthal man as compared to a sample of modern Ohio whites (Suarez, 1974). He postulated that Neanderthals might have been a highly inbred population. This claim has been contested by Doyle and Johnston on the basis of their study of inbred samples of Eskimo and Pueblo populations who were found to exhibit dental variance of equal magnitude to that of Neanderthals (Doyle and Johnston, 1977). Keiser and Groenveld (1988) recorded significantly high dental asymmetry in South African Blacks in comparison with South African Caucasoids and Paraguayan Lengua Indians and ascribed this asymmetry to the high disease and malnutrition burden and decreased individual buffering ability in South African Blacks. Dental asymmetry in the Ticuna Indians of Colombia have shown considerably greater fluctuating dental asymmetry than that in contemporary technologically advanced groups in Colombia (Harris and Nweeia, 1980). Keiser et al. (1986) have investigated the fluctuating dental symmetry in a Lengua Indian population in Paraguay and concluded that even in a relatively stress free population, there exist some individuals who are less well canalized than others (Keiser et al., 1986). They have further noted

that when a population is subjected to elevated levels of parasitic and nutritional stress, the number of less well canalized individuals increases significantly. In a study concerning the invariable bilateralism of Carabelli's trait, Meredith and Hixon (1954) reported that nearly 13% of their sample exhibited expression of the trait on just one side of the dental arch. Meanwhile, small side differences in trait expressions were reported by Wood and Green (1969) who compared bilateralism of seven morphological traits in premolars of twins.

It is understood that the pattern of bilateral dental asymmetry is not similar in different prehistoric, historic and contemporary world populations. It is also evident that these patterns are important in finding reliable population markers in the dentitions of different world populations and determining the taxonomic value of dental traits (Bollini et al., 2009). However, to the best of our knowledge bilateral dental asymmetry is not reported in the literature for any of the Sri Lankan populations. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the pattern of bilateral asymmetry in non-metric tooth crown traits in a Sri Lankan aboriginal Vedda population of Anuradhapura. We expect such data sets to be of importance in finding reliable population markers in the dentition of Anuradhapura Vedda of Sri Lanka and help postulating the affinities of aboriginal Vedda in Sri Lanka with other world populations which continues to be poorly understood.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

About the Sample

Anuradhapura Veddas, the selected population group in the present study speak Sinhala, profess Buddhism and subsist by cultivation. Physical characteristics of Anuradhapura Veddas have similarities to Sinhalese population but some of them have short broad faces (Mesocephalic to Brachycephalic), broad noses (akin to platyrrhine) and their color is similar as other Veddas. It is not well known how long the Veddas in this area (Anuradhapura) have been settled. It is believed that ancestors of Anuradhapura Vedda used to practice hunting and gathering and collecting honey. However, presently, they only collect honey and practise agriculture (Brow, 1978).

In the present study, we used a sample of fifty dental plaster casts from Anuradhapura Vedda, aged 16 – 40 years. These casts were from "Kukulewa" village in Kahatagasdigiliya divisional secretariat of Anuradhapura District, Sri Lanka (Figure 1). A three generation pedigree from each subject was taken to confirm his or her population group. Individuals having normal occlusion (anatomical occlusion) were selected as subjects. A normal occlusion is defined as a condition in which each arch is bilaterally symmetrical, the anterior maxillary segment is slightly larger than the corresponding mandibular segment and each maxillary tooth contact its corresponding mandibular antagonist and its distal neighbor (Nelson and Ash, 2010). Teeth

were selected for observation if morphologically normal, noticeably not affected by attrition, caries, or restorations, and fully erupted to the occlusal plane. Dental impressions were taken using standard perforated trays and alginate impression material. Observations were made on the casts (hard plaster), which were made immediately in order to minimize the effects of distortion.



Figure 1. *The location of Vedda settlements in Sri Lanka*
(The location studied is in bold and underlined)

The frequency of occurrence of 17 tooth crown traits of left and right side of the dentition of each individual were recorded (Table 1). The Arizona State University Dental Anthropology System was adopted for classification of the 17 traits (Turner et al., 1991). We combined male and female samples in the present study as no statistically significant difference was observed in the trait expression between males and females.

If a trait is considered in terms of presence (P) or absence (A), antemeris can exhibit PP, PA, AP and AA phenotypes. Concordance is derived from $PP + AA / \text{total paired observations}$ for symmetric cases while percentage of asymmetric cases is computed as $PA + AP / \text{total paired observations}$ (Scott and Turner, 1997).

In this study, a binary record system was employed, grouping all grade expressions in to either “presence” (1) or “absence” (0) categories (Rodriguez – Florez and Colantonio, 2008)(Table 1). With this record, the Molto’s Bilateral Index (BI) was calculated using

$$BI = (bp / bp + up) \times 100$$

The BI measures asymmetrical tendency of a trait by dividing all bilateral presences by the sum of bilateral (bp) and unilateral presences (up). According to Tocheri (2002), an index value greater than 50% shows a positive bilateral symmetric tendency of the traits.

Table 1 *Observational method used in this study*

Trait	Tooth	Grades	Trait Presence	Trait Absence
Winging	UI1	1-3	1-2	3
Shoveling	UI1	0-6	3-6	0-2
Double-shoveling	UI1	0-6	2-6	0-1
Interruption groove	UI2	0-Med	M,D,MD,Med	0
Tuberculumdentale	UI2	0-6	1-6	0
Distal accessory ridge	UC	0-5	2-5	0-1
Lingual cusp variation	LP2	0-9	1-9	0
Cusp of Carabelli	UM1	0-7	2-7	0-1
Cusp 5	UM1	0-5	1-5	0
Hypocone	UM2	0-5	2-5	0-1
Cusp number	LM2	4,5	4	5
Y groove pattern	LM2	Y, +, X	Y	+, X
Deflecting wrinkle	LM1	0-3	3	0-2
Protostylid	LM1	0-8	1-8	0
Cusp 6	LM1	0-5	1-5	0
Cusp 7	LM1	0-5	1-5	0
Distal trigonid ridge	LM1	0-1	1	0

RESULTS

The result shows that all the analyzed traits present very high tendency of bilateral symmetry and low tendency of asymmetry (BI of 80% to 100%). However, the mandibular first molar protostylid (BI of 65%) shows comparatively low tendency of symmetry and high tendency of asymmetry (Table 2). None of studied traits presented BI values below 60% and therefore, shows tendency or positive bilateral symmetry for the traits.

Table 2 *Bilateral index values calculated in this study*

Trait	Tooth	N	BP		UP		BI
			K	%	K	%	
Winging	U11	50	48	96.0	2	4.0	96
Shoveling	U11	49	49	100	0	0	100
Double-shoveling	U11	50	50	100	0	0	100
Interruption groove	UI2	49	45	91.8	4	8.2	91.8
Tuberculumdentale	UI2	50	44	82.0	9	18.0	82
Distal accessory ridge	UC	50	49	98.0	1	2.0	98
Lingual cusp variation	LP2	49	44	89.8	5	10.2	89.8
Cusp of Carabelli	UM1	48	41	85.4	7	14.6	85.4
Cusp 5	UM1	50	50	100	0	0	100
Hypocone	UM2	48	48	100	0	0	100
Cusp number	LM2	48	44	91.7	4	8.3	91.7
Y groove pattern	LM2	47	47	100	0	0	100
Deflecting wrinkle	LM1	46	46	100	0	0	100
Protostylid	LM1	46	30	65.2	16	34.8	65.2
Cusp 6	LM1	48	48	100	0	0	100
Cusp 7	LM1	48	48	100	0	0	100
Distal trigonid ridge	LM1	47	46	97.9	1	2.1	97.9

BP=bilateral presence, UP = unilateral presence, n = total teeth observed, k = total teeth with trait presence.

DISCUSSION

The evidence of the origin of people of Sri Lanka is somewhat obscure. The earliest inhabitants were probably the ancestors of the Veddas (Wickramasinghe, 2002). This community have effectively lost their identity because of the dominance of Sinhalese (Indo European speakers) and Tamil (Dravidian speakers) populations who perhaps arrived in Sri Lanka, around 2500 years ago from northeastern India (presently west Bengal) and around 2100 years ago from southern India (presently Tamil Nadu), respectively (Codrington, 1926). This is further confirmed by Studies conducted by Kennedy (1974) and later by Peris et al. (2011) that there is a biological historic continuum with the Vedda connecting with early occupation at Batadomba Lena (31000 – 13000BP) and other site [Belilena, Kitulgala (30000-9000 BP), Bellabanpalassa (6500 BP) and the Pahiyangala caves]

where Mesolithic remains have been excavated in Sri Lanka such as Belilena, Kitulgala (30000 – 9000 BP), Bellanbandipalassa (6500 BP) and the Pahiyangala caves. These are now the earliest known sites from where remains of anatomically modern humans from south Asia have been unearthed. However, still there is no concrete evidence to prove the origin of Veddas in the island.

It is assumed that there is a high degree of genetic control over the expression of dental trait expressions (Berry, 1976). With the assumed model of multifactorial inheritance, trait expression is due to interaction among a number of genes at different loci that interplay with environmental factors to produce the phenotypic expression of that trait. It is supposed that various genes have different contributions to phenotypic variation but they have an additive effect on the trait in question (Lauc et al., 2003). Dental asymmetry has generally been thought to be an indicator of developmental instability in humans and other animals. The comparatively high frequency of bilateral asymmetry for dental traits could indicate its greater sensitivity to environmental stressors (Rodriguez-Florez and Colantonio, 2007). “Environmental stresses (both prenatal and postnatal) may be caused by numerous factors such as nutritional deficiencies, limitation in the physical habitat, or patterns of disease. These are not easily separated from genetic considerations but are usually described by demographic variables such as fertility, morbidity, and mortality” (Bailit et al., 1970). Dental fluctuating asymmetry was greater in the populations living under the least favorable environmental conditions and that can be used as an indirect measure of population fitness (Bailit et al., 1970).

Out of the seventeen traits observed in the present sample of Anuradhapura Veddas of Sri Lanka, sixteen showed BI values more than 80% (range from 82% to 100%). Thus, these traits can be considered as reliable markers with high taxonomic value. For this study group, mandibular first molar protostylid showed a BI value of only 65% suggesting that this trait has weak genetic control and can be easily influenced by environmental stresses. It also shows the low taxonomic reliability of this trait for biological comparison in the dentition of the Anuradhapura Veddas in Sri Lanka. The bilateral expression of these traits could also represent an environmental impact that could influence the phenetic component in the total sample. Of the traits studied, shoveling and double shoveling of I^1 , Cusp 5 of M^1 , Hypocone of M^2 , Y groove pattern of M_2 , Deflecting wrinkle, Cusp 6, Cusp 7 of M_1 had the highest BI value of 100% and Winging of I^1 , Distal trigonidridge of M_1 and distal accessory ridge of Upper Canine had higher values of 95%, 98% and 97.1%, respectively. These characteristics support their reliability for use in phenetic intergroup comparisons.

Our findings provide control elements in an intra- and inter-sample interpretation. As mentioned by Brothwell (1967), the phenomenon of

increasing world contact, immigration, and interbreeding between previously more isolated communities can produce new forms that enrich the variation observed in the human dentition. Baillet al. (1970) have mentioned various values of metric fluctuating dental asymmetry in human populations. Some studies carried out in six human pre-conquest samples from Colombia show different dental asymmetry values (BI from 33% to 100%) for shovel shape I¹, distal accessory ridge Upper Canine, marginal ridges P¹, and Carabelli's trait on M¹ (Rodriguez-Florez and Colantonio, 2007, 2008). A similar study carried out in 13 pre-conquest samples from Argentina using 44 dental non-metric traits of permanent dentition showed high bilateral symmetry ranging from BI value 92% - 100%. Therefore, the authors conclude from this study that all the traits investigated could be used as reliable markers with high taxonomic value for the sample. According to Brothwell (1967), comparisons between different samples can help us to learn about the process of biological origins of dental variation and about the differences in their population and geographic expressions. Therefore, the result of the present study is significant to figure out the origin and migration of aboriginal Vedda in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, records on bilateral asymmetry of south and east Asian populations are very scanty in the literature. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research in this area across different populations in order to carry out a meaningful comparison. In conclusion, these results show the importance of analysis of bilateral asymmetry for assignment of taxonomic and population value of non-metric dental traits.

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Euthanasia among the Idu Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh: Understanding Issues and Concerns of a Frontier Tribe

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Abstract: In the present paper, the authors bring an account of the historical and cultural aspects of euthanasia as existed among the Idu Mishmi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. It addresses the practical issue of management in which the family members of the victim had to make difficult decisions when faced with a person expressing a wish to die. Focusing on case studies on different forms of euthanasia the paper has tried to understand how, when and why an Idu Mishmi desire for such distinct form of dying. An attempt has also been made to extract how the attitudes toward such practice have varied over time and space. Perhaps, in the entire northeast India, the Idu Mishmis are the only tribal group which practiced euthanasia in its own uniquely rudimentary form much before it came to be known to the modern world.

Key words : Euthanasia, Misi-muh, Idu Mishmi

Derived from the Greek terms *eu* meaning good, and *thanos* meaning death, euthanasia is the act of bringing death to another person in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy. It is generally defined as the intentional killing by act or by omission of a dependent human being for removing his or her suffering (Prabhu, et. al 2013). According to the dictionary euthanasia means, 'a gentle and easy death', but it is now used to refer to the killing of those who are incurably ill and in great pain or distress, for the sake of those killed, and in order to spare them further suffering or distress (Singer, 1993:175). Euthanasia has historically been a common practice in many societies, it remains one of the most controversial topics today (Polacek, 2013). It came to be used in the last decade of the 20th century to mean a death that is perpetrated or accelerated with the help of medicine. The practice has drawn increased attention and discussion in recent decades as a result of advances in medicine and technology and a growing interest in human rights (Kyriaki, et.al. 2005:96).

The definition of euthanasia as well as the interpretation of the terms like "good death", "dying with dignity", "physician assisted suicide", etc has been scrutinized ethically and critically and still has remained one of the biggest controversies of this decade (Bamgbose, 2004). For example, defining euthanasia as good death is not adequate because to die a natural death after spending many years on earth is equally conceived by many cultures as good death. Thus, the word euthanasia is ambiguous and better not to be defined but described. Such definitions, at the same time, are also not adequate because they often exclude the forms of euthanasia such as voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary euthanasia.

Attempts have been made by many to classify euthanasia on the basis of the consent and on the basis of the action. On the basis of consent, that is, whether the patient is consenting or capable of consenting to death, we can differentiate euthanasia into three types – voluntary, non-voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. Voluntary euthanasia is when the person themselves feels their life is not worth living and thus request by the sufferer for euthanasia. Involuntary euthanasia is that when the competent person is not consulted and is against the will of the patient. Non voluntary is that when the person is not competent to decide for themselves, for example, the person is demented. According to the way the euthanasia is practiced, it is further classified into active and passive euthanasia. Active euthanasia entails the use of lethal substances or forces to kill a person, e.g. a lethal injection given to a person with terminal cancer who is in terrible agony. Passive euthanasia entails withholding of medical treatment for continuance of life, e.g. withholding of antibiotics where without giving it a patient is likely to die, or removing the heart, lung machine, from a patient in coma (Prabhu and Kalita, 2013:47-48). However, passive euthanasia is no longer used as an expression especially in the dutch standard definition of euthanasia, because it is not considered euthanasia. What is required is the intention to end life. Cases in which there is no patient's request are also not considered to be euthanasia (Haves, 2001: 507).

Over the years, euthanasia has been a subject of much debate. The topic holds interest for a large number of stakeholders including physicians, anesthetists, surgeons, nursing personnel, ancillary healthcare staff, legal experts, theologians, journalists, community leaders and public at large, apart from psychiatrists (Punnoose and Sarkar, 2014). It is also argued on the ground that every human being has a right to life, and a number of international human rights instruments assert this right to life. For example, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), the United Nations Charter (1945), European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom (1950), American Convention on Human Rights (1969) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (1981) are some of the instruments which explicitly and implicitly prohibit the unlawful taking of life. As a general principle of law, they stand for the protection of life (Bamgbose, 2004). Therefore, it seems that the debate on euthanasia from multidimensional perspective will continue to grow and for now it is certainly a difficult task to draw a general consensus for and against the act of euthanasia. Also a considerable number of studies concerning physicians' attitudes and practices regarding euthanasia and physician- assisted suicide have been carried out across the world. Since almost none of these studies have a common design, international comparison of factual findings is problematic. There can be little doubt that much of the trouble is due to inappropriate and too vague definitions of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide in many studies (Materstvedt and Kaasa, 2002).

Globally, countries like Netherlands became the first country in Europe to legalize euthanasia. Nevertheless, this was not legalised without strict conditions guiding it. It was followed by Belgian in 2002. In 1997 Oregon became the first state in the United States to decriminalize physician-assisted suicide.

Until recent, attempt to commit suicide under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) 309 was a criminal offence and was punishable by imprisonment or fine. However, in its recent decision, the Government of India has decided to repeal the said section noting that attempt to suicide may be regarded more as a manifestation of a diseased condition of mind, deserving treatment and care rather than punishment (The Times of India, dated 10th Dec' 2014 issue). On the other hand, under the current Indian laws, euthanasia amounts to homicide by the physician and suicide by the patient. However, there are many who support for the legalization of euthanasia. For instance, recently, a constitution bench of 5 Justices of the Supreme Court of India has issued a notice to states and union territories suggesting for a country wide debate on the matter of passive euthanasia. This was in response to a plea by Common Cause, a non-governmental organization which called for allowing voluntary withdrawal of life support for persons with terminal diseases (Punnoose and Sarkar, 2014). Following this notice, in the Arunachal Pradesh State Legislative Assembly, the issue was raised by some legislature for a debate but it was not accepted by the State Government considering euthanasia as a century old issue (The Arunachal Times, dated 30th July, 2014 issue). Another example is of Aruna Shaunbaug versus King Edward Memorial hospital case in the Supreme Court of India in March 2011 (Prabhu and Kalita, 2013). Many bills proposing this action have been introduced in the Indian Parliament, but these have not been accepted. It must be admitted that passive euthanasia is being practised in India without it being legalized (Verma et al., 1999: 28).

It is against such backdrops that the present paper seeks to look at the prevalence of the practice of euthanasia among the Idu Mishmi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh – one of the eighth Northeastern states of the Indian Federation. The authors bring an account of the historical and cultural aspects of euthanasia as existed among the Idu Mishmi⁹ tribe of Arunachal Pradesh until recently. It addresses the practical issue of management in which the family members of the victim had to make difficult decisions when faced with a person expressing a wish to die. Focusing on the case study of different form of live burial, the paper has tried to understand how, when and why an Idu Mishmi desires for such distinct form of dying. The paper has also tried to extract how the attitudes toward these practices have varied over time and space. This will also reflect broader social system, people's attitude towards death. Perhaps, in the entire northeast India, the Idu Mishmis are the only tribal group which practiced euthanasia in its own uniquely rudimentary form much before it came to be known to the modern world.

LOCATING THE TRIBE

The Mishmi tribe of Arunachal is divided into three sub groups: Taraon Mishmi, Kaman Mishmi, and Idu Mishmi.¹ Out of these, the Idu Mishmis are chiefly located in Lower Dibang Valley, Dibang Valley and Lohit Districts of Arunachal Pradesh, some of them also inhabit East and Upper Siang Districts of the state.” Culturally speaking, Idus are quiet distinct from rest of the two Mishmi sub groups which is reflected in various aspects of their day to day life and social structure as well as value systems. However, their dialect has very close affinity with that of the Taraon Mishmi. Idu Mishmis are popularly known as the Chulikata Mishmis because of their distinct hair style. It is widely believed that this nomenclature was bestowed upon them by the people from the plains with whom Idus have traditionally shared trade relations (Bhattacharjee 1983:13).

The practice of euthanasia (*Misi-muh* in the local parlance) among the Idus is widely recalled and recounted by them. In sharp contrast to the modern-day practice which is couched in medical and legal lingo, euthanasia enjoyed social sanction amongst the Mishmis on entirely practical considerations. In one such widely reported case, a certain *Pwiti Mepo* of *Engalin* village volunteered to be put to death. Sick of his illness, he requested his son and other family members to do the needful. A small stone house (*Ju*) was constructed with no ventilation which acted as a death chamber. After performing the necessary self-funeral rites and rituals, *Mepo* walked into the stone house and eventually died of suffocation.² The occurrence of the same incident is also noted in Baruah’s study. Baruah locates the above incident in Ahui Valley in 1948 wherein *Pietyi Mepo* had volunteered for an end to his life. Before embracing death, Baruah mentions, *Mepo* had summoned all his close relatives over a feast as per the custom in order to see them all for one last time. Soon after the relatives left, *Mepo* entered into the stone structure, erected for the purpose of causing his death, never to walk out of it (Baruah, 1960:57).

Baruah also records four other unrelated cases of infanticides in his study. However, these incidents were largely related to adultery among the Idu Mishmi. As he observes, “adultery is viewed with great abhorrence and a woman is severely punished for it. It is considered dishonour for a girl to have an illegitimate child. So to avoid social castigation and disgrace, the child is put to death immediately after it is born. Of the four infanticide cases in the last twelve years, about which I have detailed information, one child was strangled, one buried alive, the third was abandoned in the jungle, and the fourth child was killed with drugs in the womb” (Baruah, 1960: 64). Although Baruah puts all the four cases under the blanket category of infanticide, the nature of each specific act could be seen as very different from the others, leading to very different outcomes. While the first case represents the classic case of murder, the second and third incidents characterize the act of involuntary euthanasia wherein the infants were buried and abandoned alive obviously without their

consent. The issue of obtaining prior consent was simply out of question given the age of the victims. The fourth case, however, was a typical example of abortion.

Prevalence of euthanasia among the *Idu Mishmis* has also been documented by other scholars. Bhattacharjee, for example, records the practice of burying a person alive in extreme cases of sufferings from incurable diseases. However, this would happen only after exhausting all possibilities of curing the diseased person by the Shaman (*Igu*). The final step would precede all the rituals of offering supper and drinks before accompanying the concerned person to the grave (Bhattacharjee, 1983:138).

All the three dominant types of euthanasia i.e. voluntary, non-voluntary and involuntary were found to be prevalent amongst the *Idu Mishmis*. Voluntary type include cases in which the concerned person invariably suffered from certain incurable diseases (at least in those days) like leprosy (*chede*),³ cancer (*wa*), swelling of body (*Asha Agisi*), epilepsy (*Emo*), etc. Most of these diseases were conventionally linked to *evil* forces. Most of the non-voluntary cases of euthanasia included those people who suffered from certain abnormalities (*Atho/Kapa*), paralysis (*Ikhibi/asapucheyala*), tuberculosis (*Ithri*), etc, while involuntary euthanasia comprised of those who had become some kind of a burden, owing to the terminal nature of their illness, on those who were the caretakers but who had to helplessly assist involuntary euthanasia. The method used in assisting euthanasia among the *Idu Mishmis* is in sync with the prescribed custom of disposition of the dead among them. Since the dead has to be buried as per the prevailing custom, the same method is followed also in the case of assisting euthanasia. It is done in two distinct ways: one, in which a grave (*Bro*) is dug, and in the second case a stone structure in the shape of a small room (*Ju*) is erected on the ground which is then plastered with mud in order to block any passage of air. In the course of fieldwork, the prevalence of some thirty six cases of different forms of euthanasia was traced among the *Idu Mishmi* community. For the purpose of this paper, we zero in on only five of these of which two each are voluntary and non voluntary while last one is the case of involuntary euthanasia. These incidents occurred between the 1940s and 1970s in the Rango and Awahali villages of Lower Dibang Valley and East Siang Districts of Arunachal Pradesh.⁴ In presenting these incidents below, we have taken utmost care to reproduce them verbatim as narrated to us by the interviewees. This is done as a conscious decision in order to avoid interfering with the flow of the narration. Hence, the reproductions below are being presented in the first person.

CASES OF VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA

Case No. 1

I was 27 years old when I witnessed the second incident of unnatural death in my life. It relates to the case of a 65 year old woman, Jeelo Umpe of Rango village, whose unnatural funeral was arranged by her relatives on her

persistent requests to put an end to her sufferings. It probably occurred 6 to 7 years after the 1950 earthquake which had badly devastated the region. Jeelo was a widow with a dumb daughter who was nearly half her age at the time of the incident. She was suffering from a form of edema, locally called *Asha Agisi*, for the last two years. Her situation had deteriorated to the extent that she had slipped into a permanently vegetative state. She could not even lie down owing to intolerable pain, as her body had swelled beyond imagination. The only way she could somehow manage to keep herself alive was by the way of sitting in a constant posture at one given place with her hands holding a rope tied to the raft overhead. It was not at all easy for her to sit in this posture all through the day and night, as it was excruciatingly painful and became unbearable after some time. She prepared her mind to quit. Feeling absolutely hopeless about any possibility of recovery, she started pleading her relatives to kill her so that she could get liberated from the day-to-day torture that she had to undergo. At last, her persistence paid off with the relatives agreeing to give in to her request/demand.

Accordingly, a female Shaman (*Igu*) named *Meli Molo* was summoned from *Amili* village to perform the last ceremonial rituals. On the opening day of the two-day funeral ceremony, Jeelo herself supervised all the arrangements, requesting her relatives to make sure that everything was in place. The second day afternoon witnessed some protest from her dumb daughter who did not want her mother to die like this. However, given the fact that Jeelo herself was having bouts of emotional outbursts, requesting everybody to bring an end to her sufferings, the relatives had no option but to ignore her daughter's protests. After all the rituals were carried out, Jeelo was carefully wrapped in a blanket (*Badu*) and was taken to the burial ground. She was then gently laid down in the grave. Following the prevailing customs, different items supposedly required to live even after death was put in the grave alongside her body. Finally, Jeelo was made unconscious through the performance of a ritual called *Agra-Lati* which is similar to *Dirge* chant whereby, as per the belief, the soul of the person is overpowered to facilitate smooth burial. This is a ritual which is followed in all instances of euthanasia among the Idu Mishmis.⁵

Case No.2

This relates to the case of Tudu Mimi of Rango village who was put to death in the late 1970s. He was just about 26 years old then. Orphaned by the death of his parents at a very young age, he was brought up by one of his uncles, Anati Mimi. Tudu was suffering from Leprosy (*chede-che*). Except the face, his entire body had swelled with blisters leading to unbearable pain. The same status continued for almost three months. His situation worsened so much that he could barely move his body. More than wanting to put an end to his personal sufferings, Tudu believed that if he were to die a natural death he might pass the disease on to the other members in the family. Scared of such a prospect, he earnestly urged his uncle and others in the family to bury him alive.

Once his request was conceded, he became actively involved in overseeing the entire process of arranging his own funeral. He personally chose Khukta Mimi from Elope village to act as the Shaman for the funeral. Since I was myself a witness to the whole episode, I clearly remember how fearless Tudu was and relished his own funeral feast with much delight and contentment. What really struck me about him was his level of self-confidence and clarity about life which he summarized thus, "I do not know anybody amongst my ancestors who wished to have food and drink with me. Not even my father or mother, let alone other relatives. Hence I wish to have my last supper with you all here on this last day of my life. I do not want much to be offered to me in my grave as I will die soon after I am buried". With such kind of philosophy, he truly enjoyed his food and drinks with others around him. After the feast got over, Khukta Mimi carried Tudu on his back to the grave in a large size basket (*Aagra*) which was especially knitted for the purpose⁶. As soon as the basket was lowered down, Tudu himself walked out of it and lied down on the bed inside the grave. Lying on the bed inside the burial, he repeatedly pleaded not to offer much to him as he is soon going to die, and he would not consume anything thereafter. However, he was offered some food and drinks as per the ritual before his burial was roofed with mud and boulders. No *Agra Lati* was performed in this case which is usually done in order to make the person unconscious before he/she is buried.⁷

CASES OF NON- VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA

Case No.1

It was my first experience of witnessing the incident of somebody being put to death alive. I was so very much amazed that it took me a while to understand its long-term implications. As far as I can recall, it happened exactly about two years before the Rango Village was hit by an earthquake in 1950. Gali Umpe, who was married to Akhola Mimi with a son Bano and two daughters Dumaye and Emimeh, was physically challenged. Given her inability to reason out what is good or bad for her, she could not decide for herself as to what should be done with her.⁸ Her condition demanded that she be looked after all the time by a caretaker from amongst the family members. Given her state of affairs, she was never left alone owing to the fear that she might unintentionally and unknowingly harm herself or others. On many occasions, she was prevented from causing self-harm and/or injury to others. Once she threw burning firewood onto the *Apo*,⁹ where domestic articles like baskets are kept. It could have completely burnt the house if it had not caught the attention of a family member. Sometimes she would defecate on the same plate she had had her meal on minutes before. On one occasion, she removed the skull of a wild animal hung from the wall, and consumed it after roasting it in the fire.¹⁰ Her acts led to increasing frustration and an overwhelming sense of hopelessness amongst the family members, not knowing what to do

and how to make her calm herself down. After much deliberation and soul-searching, it was decided that it might be a better idea to help her die.

Resultantly, Ami Elapra, a female shaman from Ebuli village, was called upon for performing the funeral rituals. While Gali Umpe witnessed all the funeral-related activities on the first day, she could not make sense of it at all owing to her mental state. On being taken to burial the next day, she thought that she was being shifted to a new house where she would have to live in seclusion. I vividly remember her uttering these words angrily, "If I am made to live all by myself in a separate house, I can very well do so. What do they think?" After reaching the burial ground, she walked into the grave and lied down on the bed continuing to repeat what she had said while being carried to the funeral site. Unable to comprehend the chanting of *Anja* (dirge chant) by her husband in the background, she queried, "*Aw eseya ni tro.. tro.. tro.. lazi ba*" (who is making sound like *tro tro tro*). On being told it was her husband, she remarked, "*oh! Akhola mo wela bala ne lazi we do*" (oh! Akhola is reciting it so sympathetically!). Finally, the funeral ritual came to an end with the chanting of *Agra lati* by her husband, which made her unconscious before being buried in the grave.¹¹

Case No.2

This was my first experience of witnessing somebody being put to death before actually dying. It relates to Mupi Mimi from Rango village who was in her late twenties and unmarried at the time of the incident. She had lost her mother as well as two younger brothers while she was a young child. Emiyu, her younger sister, was alive at the time she was put to death.

Mupi was born a normal child and was all fine until she became sick at a much later stage and developed some problem because of which she started behaving abnormally. She would often play with fire at great risk to herself and others. She once ate the skulls of wild animals after roasting it in the fire, an act which is actually considered a taboo for females. She was prone to committing such acts while she was alone at home. Her sickness continued for almost a year, eventually turning her into a vegetative state. Owing to her illness, she could barely move herself and had to remain constantly stationed in one place. Her father could not bear the sufferings of her daughter and decided in consultation with other members of the family to bring an end to her day-to-day angst and pain. Accordingly, Khuka Mimi, a male shaman from Elope Village was summoned to arrange her funeral with a view to putting an end to her life in order to ease her of her sufferings once and for all.

This decision was initially not disclosed to others from the village. Hearing the howl and cry at her home, the villagers assumed that Mupi was finally dead. Ignorant of the actual plan, I too believed that Mupi was dead and I went and sat beside her body in order to perform dirge (*Anja*) as is usually the custom during funeral. I was completely shocked when I realized that Mupi was

stealthily holding my right arm. I remember how I pulled myself back almost screaming in disbelief as to how could a dead person suddenly wake up to hold somebody's hand! I got back to normal state only on being told about the actual reality. Till then I had no idea whatsoever was going on. I had absolutely no idea about the existence of such method of putting a live person to death. However, once the funeral process started and people started gathering, the real motive behind arranging the funeral was revealed to everyone. Since Mupi could not have been a part of the decision-making process about the end of her own life given her mental state, it was her father who had to take the final call with a view to bringing an end to her sufferings. Once the decision was taken, others could only join, as per the existing norms, in accomplishing the act in a peaceful manner.

Although Mupi was a witness to all the arrangements being carried out like gathering of the people, chanting of rituals (*dirge*), and preparation of food and drinks, she could not fathom the underlying motive behind it, as she was in a semi-conscious state. On the second (final) day of the funeral, the *dirge* chant (*Anja*) was performed by her father in the presence of the shaman, Khuka Mimi, before burying her in the grave.¹²

A case of Involuntary Euthanasia

This relates to the case of 60 year old Gimiya Mito, a deaf and dumb woman from Awahali village of East Siang district, who was otherwise quite sturdy and full of life. She along with other women agriculturalists from her village had once gone to the field in the early morning, as is the usual practice, for harvesting millet. Suddenly, Gimiya had bouts of diarrhea, making her so weak in the process that she could not even get up from the place till the evening. Her friends did try to help her, but to no avail. Initially, Gimiya kept assuring her friends that she would soon get alright and then she will collect and carry bamboo shoots and fire-woods for all. However, her situation deteriorated considerably owing to severe dehydration. To this, her friends got angry considering her as useless and slothful and there was no sign of recovery. Not knowing what to do, her friends decided to bury her alive. They went ahead with the process of live burial without bothering to performing funeral rituals which is otherwise invariably always followed by the Mishmis. They dug a grave and laid her down and covered it with mud and boulders. To this day, the women folk of Awahali village in particular are sometimes jestingly referred to as 'undertaker of live burial of men', as informed by the informant.¹³

POPULAR PERCEPTION OF EUTHANASIA

Even though the term 'euthanasia' was unknown to most of its practitioners, the actually existing practice of putting out somebody's life while alive was very much in sync with what the modern term has come to signify in contemporary times. In line with the modern definition, the actual practice of

the act in the universe of this study was very much in accordance with the principle of 'mercy killing'. The trigger for effecting euthanasia under the voluntary category was clearly the concerned person himself. It was only on the basis of a manifest request or plea from the sufferer that a subsequent decision to take recourse to what is today called euthanasia was taken by others in the family. Even in the cases of non-voluntary euthanasia covered in this study, the prime motivational factor was a general concern amongst the family members to cut short the lingering angst and suffering of the person. Other factors like lack of adequate medical aid and prevailing myths about the nature of the specific disease or illness one was inflicted with served only as retrospective or secondary explanations.

Based on in-depth interviews with a cross-section of people amongst the Idu-Mishmis cutting across age, gender, educational and occupational backgrounds, this section seeks to highlight the differing perceptions of people on the current raging debates on euthanasia. Interestingly and predictably, a majority of the interviewees had never heard the modern technical jargon, 'euthanasia', even though they had very definitive views on the efficacy of the practice which some of them had firsthand experience of witnessing at some point of time in their lifetimes.

An overwhelming majority of the elderly interviewees held very positive views about the practice, as they invariably empathized with those who were suffering from long-term incurable diseases.¹⁴ As is evident from the observation of Jinge Mega, a 70 year old woman, who had been witness to several cases of voluntary euthanasia:

"It is pitiful to see someone suffering endlessly from some prolonged incurable disease with absolutely no hope of recovery. What does one do in such a situation? It is better to concede to the plea of the sufferer to ease him/her of unending sufferings".

Such a view is representative of the general perceptions amongst the older people, as several women interviewees like Debiya Mili, Kiche Linggi, Timiya Mihi and many more all in the age group of 70 plus held similar views. The views of their male counterparts like Diko Miwu and Emuko Miwu from Maroli village in Dibang Valley District in the same age group were no different, as they echoed the same sentiments of helplessness and unending sufferings. Recalling his father's direct involvement in five different incidents of voluntary euthanasia as an *Igu*, Diko Miwu shared his father's observation,

"... when people themselves are asking to be buried alive owing to their unbearable anguish resulting from unending suffering, how could I shy away from performing my duty?"

Their approval of the method adopted to put an end to the prolonged sufferings of people could perhaps be out of a deep-seated realization, given their own precarious old age-related problems, that it is perhaps better to embrace death than to suffer endlessly. The level of attendance in the funeral

could also be seen as an indicator about the general social acceptability of the practice. Barring a few cases, most of the euthanasia-linked funerals invariably attracted a huge gathering, as the co-villagers not only approved of such a practice, but also extended all possible help in arranging them. Such unstinted support is clearly a reflection of not only the shared worldview, but also of the much-needed unconditional compassion with the sufferer and emotional support to the family under duress.

Low level of attendance in a euthanasia-linked funeral is also popularly viewed, on the other hand, as an indicator of its unpopularity and social disapproval. As is evident from the testimony of Anoko Mega, a shaman from Cheta village, who was summoned to perform the death ritual of Sumi Menjo of Anaya village.

“I was not aware of the fact that the person I was summoned to perform funeral rituals of was still alive. I was told that the person was dead. I got to know about it only when I was half-way through with the rituals. Even though I did express my reluctance to continue, I could not stop the process, as Sumi Menjo’s elder son requested me to do so. Poor attendance by the villagers in the funeral clearly revealed that there were many others like me who disagreed with the practice of killing somebody before natural death”.

Another Shaman, Sipa Melo, from Aleney village located in Dri Valley of Dibang Valley District voiced strong reservations about its popularity and social acceptability,

“Such cases of unnatural death did not enjoy social sanction, as the decision to put an end to somebody’s life was kept a closely guarded secret. Apart from the affected person who volunteered to die, only a few very close members of the family were involved in taking the final decision. In cases where the concerned person was not in a position to take an informed decision, it was invariably decided by a few core members of the family. Nobody else from the clan or the village was ever consulted. Moreover, the prevailing myth among the Idus that ‘evil’ disease (*Khinu Hembe*) like leprosy, epilepsy, tuberculosis, swelling, etc. could spread like an epidemic further contributed towards maintaining the veil of secrecy shrouding such a practice”.

In sharp contrast to the perceptions of the older generation which invariably, albeit with rare exceptions, approved of the traditional modes of ‘euthanasia’ on grounds of mercy killing; the younger generation does not approve the practice in modern times and tend to look at the older practice more as a kind of necessary evil. Historical marginalization and geographical isolation of the region are seen as the major contributing factors for the prevalence of such practices by the younger generation.¹⁵ As Sunil Mow, a practicing *Idu* advocate, eloquently observed;

“Most of the cases took place in the absence of medical and legal establishment in the region and were largely influenced and supported under the *Idu* socio-cultural dimensions. But in the modern days, there are plenty

of agents through which people's perception could be changed against misconception of diseases like leprosy and tuberculosis which were the root cause and are considered evil and untreatable by the Idu people. Now there are medical camps, resettlement camps, etc, in many parts of the nation where people with leprosy disease could be transported and could get medical treatment. If there is any case of euthanasia among the Idus in recent time than that must have been kept in secret or not publicized at large. Otherwise serious criminal case may be initiated against those persons who are involved in assisting such form of death even if it is voluntary".

It is important to note that in case of non-voluntary and involuntary euthanasia, the act of 'mercy killing' is kept as a closely guarded secret with only the very close family members being a party to the decision making process. Others – from outside the family – have no clue about what is actually happening, and they participate in the funeral procession as they would ordinarily do.¹⁶ The reason behind maintaining a veil of secrecy about such cases is that unlike the case of voluntary euthanasia, the motivating factor here is not mercy killing, but the back-breaking burden of caretaking of a person who happens to be in a vegetative state with no hope of ever recuperating from his/her present status. Poor material conditions may often combine with heavy emotional drain on the part of the caretakers in thus reaching a decision to get rid of the concerned person in order not only to relieve the sufferer but also equally those who have been hopelessly taking care at times for years together. The relatively old age of the sufferers along with the nature of incurable diseases (at least in those days) were other contributing factors in taking recourse to such extreme measures.¹⁷

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While the prevalence of the practice of live burial among the Idu Mishmis in the past may not tantamount to the modern practice of euthanasia, it would certainly not be out of place to assert that what they actually practiced was indeed very close to the modern practice, albeit in its own rudimentary form.¹⁸ To draw a parallel between the two would thus not only be fallacious but overstretching the case a bit too far. What, however, does remain common between the two is the broader concern – to ease the last turbulent and trying days of the sufferer by facilitating untimely death.

Idu Mishmis stand out in terms of being the only known community in India which practiced an ingenious form of live burial. However, along with the practice, the role of the performers of the same – the Idus who held iconic status in the traditional worldview dominated by evil spirits (*khinus*) – is also on decline today.¹⁹

Contestations over ethico-legal issues are increasingly becoming sharper with the younger educated class raising several important questions about the efficacy of such a practice in modern times. Amidst a raging debate in

India, as in other parts of the world, whether or not to allow a terminally sick person the right to die with dignity; the traditional Idu experiences do impel us to ask if they were not wiser than the modern-day skeptics!

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END NOTES

1. Both the terminology "Idu" and "Mishmi" have no concrete and specific meaning in Idu language. Baruah (1960, p 98) mentioned that "the word Idu, ..., is most probably a distortion of the word Midu which means inhabitant of Idu valley and is the name for only one section of the people". It is here to mention that Idus may be categorized into three groups as per their dialectic variation and in few word meaning which are Mindri, Mithu and Midu. Most of the Mindri speaking Idus inhabits the present Upper Dibang Valley District around Dri and Mathu river valley. The Mithu inhabits on both side of the Ithun river valley. The Midu speaking Idus are mainly found in lower foot hills and lower valleys of Mishmi Hills. So most probably, Midu speaking Idus of lower foot hills and valleys first came in contact with outsiders and only from their dialectic nomenclature "Midu" the term 'Idu' was coined to designate the tribe. As I put it Mithu speaking Idus inhabits Ithun Valley, Baruah (ibid, p 11) designated the same Idus of Ithun valley as Bebejiyas, again the term which has no concrete meaning and origin in Idu language. And for the term 'Mishmi', Bhattacharjee (1983, p 13) suggested that there is no clarity of origin of the term though largely believed that it has been coined by the people of plains of Assam to designate the tribe. Further, one may find that Idus refer themselves as Kera-A. Here Kera is believed to be a name of ancestral forefather and A stands for children and thereby meaning children of Kera.

2. Notes and Queries, Man in India, The Anthropological Survey of India, pp 81-82

3. For the leprosy (Chede), the Idus had no medicine to cure. Even these day people in the interior places perceive leprosy as evil, communicable and incurable disease. Sometimes lepers are disposed off from the main dwelling to a separate hut at the periphery of village boundary. For example, Mecho Mimi of Anaya village was a leper who was transported to temporary hut adjacent to his main residence. Eventually, he died of leprosy naturally and after his death the hut was burnt down in an attempt to eradicate the disease completely. After the dead of a leper (by any means) his/her all belongings are burn down to ash along with the house where the victim took his last breath.

4. As the introduction of education is recent development in the region people have no written record, particularly date of any incidences of euthanasia. Though some recent cases (three to five decades back) are still fresh in memory of some elderly Idus but that too have no any written records. On the other hand, Idus prescribe it taboo in uttering

name and sometime even incidence of dead person. Such belief have helped in fading the memory of such incidences. It is here, therefore, the age of the informants, of their parents and the year of the great earthquake in the region i.e. 1950 were taken roughly in calculating the year of the incidence. Sometimes season as per traditional agricultural calendar is also used in calculating the month of the incidence.

5.The information collected from Jinje Mega, Age-80+, Sex- Female, Village- Ashali, Roing and Ango Mimi, Age-90+, Sex-Male, Village- Ashali, Roing.

6.It is said that wherever Khuka Mimi, the shaman, perform funeral ritual in case of the person died of leprosy he used to carry the person alone, may be dead or alive, to the burial place. As per the Idu's perception it is the tutorial spirit of the shaman (dron) who directs him and give power to do so.

7.The information collected from Jinje Mega, Age-80+, Sex- Female, Village- Ashali, Roing and Ango Mimi, Age-90+, Sex-Male, Village- Ashali, Roing.

8.As per the information the victim was not mentally retarded during her early age but later on reaching her old age she started activities abnormally which assured people that her mental status was not normal and considered her to be mad lady.

9.The third shelf of the three layered shelves above the fireplace found in every traditional Idu mishmi households.

10.Eating of wild animal meat is a strict taboo for the Idu women and they never take it. For the male, eating of such meat is followed by taboos which may last for two to three days.

11.The information collected from Jinje Mega, Age-80+, Sex- Female, Village- Ashali, Roing, Ango Mimi, Age-90+, Sex-Male, Village- Ashali, Roing and Akusi kechee, Age-55+, Sex-Female, Village Ashali, Roing.

12.The information collected from Jinje Mega, Age-80+, Sex- Female, Village- Ashali, Roing and Debia Mili, age 70+, Village-Ashali, Roing.

13.Information collected from lete Kichu Lingi, female, aged 100+ of Abali village, Roing. Note: There are reports of at least four cases of involuntary live-burials among the Idu Mishmi where the victims were forcefully buried alive by the kin members due to varied reasons. In this section, only one case may be briefly discussed

14.Notion mostly held by the elderly Idus like Shri Limu Meme, Age-60+ of Kebali Village, Shri Ango Mimi, Age-80+, Smti Jinje Mega, Age 70, Smti Akusi Keche Age-60+, Shri Andro Elapra Age 65+, Smti Dibia Mili, Age70+, Smti Junta Mene, Age 55+, Smti Pema Meto, Age 45+ of Ashali Village, Roing.

15.Views provided by Sumo Lingi, male 50+ of Mayu village, Lower Dibang valley district and Thuti Mili, male 45+ of Ashali village, Lower Dibang valley district.

16.The case of Mupi Mimi is an example which was even not known to informant Smti Jinge Mega who at that time was a participant of the funeral ceremony.

17. See list of the victims in the Appendix-I.

18.In order to have an idea of the complex healing mechanism and perception of diseases by the shamans in Idu Mishmi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh one can see article by Sarit K. Chaudhuri (2008) presented in the 20th ECMSAS in Manchester University, UK from 8th to 11th July on 'Igu of the Idu Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh: Relocating Indigenous Healers and Healing Traditions of a Frontier Tribe of North East India' in the panel on Disease, Possession and Healing in South Asia convened by F.F.Ferrari and P. Srinivasan.

19. In spite of the dominance of the institution of shamanism in village life this institution

is gradually losing its past popularity because of multiple reasons. The number of shamans are reduced to a great extent. In order to have a critical discourse on the plight of the Igu or shamans of the Idu Mishmis, read Chaudhuri's (2008) article on the Plight of the Igu: Notes on Shamanism among the Idu Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh.

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Appendix-1

Sl. No	Name	Age	Sex	Year	Type	Cause	Village
1	Sundu Melo	70+	Male	1954-55	Voluntary	Normal, only hand fracture	Cheya
2	Ayungi Melo	80+	Male	Mid 1960s	Voluntary	Normal-old age-succeeded after 2 nd attempt.	Achuli
3	Selo Mena,	60+	Male	Late 1960s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Atali
4	Amphi Mili,	60+	Female	Mid 1960s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Aloso
5	Sumi Menjo,	60+	Female	1997-98	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Anaya
6	Ronli Mega	60+	Female	Mid 1970s	Non -Volun	Leprosy (Chedi) and Abnormality (Asameh)	Mihundo
7	Ledra Ekru,	60+	Male	1984-85	Voluntary	Disease (not specified)	Wanli
8	Embro Mito	50+	Female	1970s	Voluntary	Normal	Aruli
9	Gimiya Mito	60+	Female	1960s	Involuntary	Dysentery and Dumb and Deft	Awahali
10	Pwiti Mepo	60+	Male	1940s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Engali
11	Leya Umbrey	25+	Female	1970s	Involuntary	NA	Chepe
12	Lache Mili	50+	Female	1970s		Disease (not Specified)	Egiyee
13	Ami Apralo	70+	Female	1980s	Involuntary	Old age	Atili
14	Mare Mili	30+	Male	1980s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Aneli
15	Rundi Apralo	80+	Male	1970s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Akuli
16	Rongo Dele	50+	Male	1960s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Ethoro
17	Unae Aaloyu	60+	Male	1970s	Voluntary	NA	Akoli
18	Hatata Mepo	60+	Male	1980s	Voluntary	Normal	Engali
19	Lukhu Mito	50+	Male	1960s		NA	Eyinli
20	Lape Umbrey	60+	Male	1960s	Voluntary	Epilepsy disease	Epungu
21	Gali Umpe	60+	Female	1947-48	Non- Volun	Mentally retarded	Rango
22	Tudu Mimi	25+	Male	1977-78	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Rango
23	Mupi Mimi	60+	Female	1975-76	Non-Volun	Mentally retarded	Rango
24	Jelo Umpe	60+	Female	1956-57	Voluntary	Swelling of body (Asha Agisi)	Rango
25	Mitu Mepo	60+	Male	1970s		NA	Engali
26	Lamane Melo	40+	Female	1970s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Achuli
27	Goma Dele	50+	Male	1960s		NA	Elope
28	Kadu Mega	60+	Male	1960s		NA	Taloni
29	Khusa Mimi	40+	Male	1970s		NA	Kronli
30	Muya Mimi	70+	Female	1970s	Involuntary	Mentally retarded	Anaya
31	Amili Tacho	60+	Female	1985-86	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Maroli
32	Anjo Miwu	60+	Male	1940s		Leprosy (Chedi)	Maroli
33	Ahu Miwu	60+	Male	1940s		NA	Maroli
34	Iluru Mihu	50+	Female	1960s	Voluntary	Leprosy (Chedi)	Mihundo
35	Dandrime Lingi	50+	Male	1970s		NA	Awahali
36	KoremeLingi	50+	Male	1960s	Voluntary	Epilepsy (Emo)	Awahali

Source: Field work (2007-2010)

Appendix - II

Key Informants interviewed listed below:

- A. Jinje Mega, Female, age 70+, Debiya Mili, Female, age 70+, Ango Mimi, Male, age-80+, Andro Elapra, Male, age 65+, Akusi Kechee, Female, age 60+, Timiya Mihu, Female, age 40+ of Ashali village, Lower Dibang Valley, AP.
- B. Diko Miwu, Male, age 70+, Emuko Miwu, Male, age 50+ of Maroli Village, Dibang Valley District, AP.
- C. Sipa Melo, Male, age 45+ of Aleney village, Dibang Valley District, AP.
- D. Kichu Lingi, Female, age 100+ of Abali Village, Lower Dibang Valley, AP.
- E. Gula Lingi, Male, age 70+, Mikhita Mene, Female, age 60+ of Iduli Village, Lower Dibang Valley, AP.
- F. Anoko Mega, Male, age 50+ of Cheta Village, Lower Dibang Valley, AP.
- G. Omane Mito, Male, age 60+, Yiene Meto, Male, age 50+, Dalukha Mene, Male, age 50+ of Mayu Village, Lower Dibang Valley, AP.

The Discipline of Anthropology in the Contemporary World: Recent Dilemmas, Ongoing Dialectics and the Challenges Ahead

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Abstract: This paper attempts to redraw the disciplinary boundary of anthropology as this discipline is facing dilemmas due to versatile social and cultural context and the speedy changes, occurred as a result of globalization. In fact, during this current phase of new-liberal economy the very diverse anthropological context incorporates not only the triumph of new-liberal economy, but also the existence of indigenous culture in many parts of the world. And we also see the simultaneous presence of traditional life and livelihood in many modern economies. Consequently, current anthropologists encounter difficulties while they search for a proper definition of anthropology and thereby, some of them intend to outreach the traditional understandings of this discipline by taking into account the ongoing happenings and diversities of the contemporary world. Given this situation, the most recurring question is, whether (or not) it is realistic and even possible to ignore the classical understandings of the discipline. In this ground along with the analysis of different anthropological literature some primary and secondary data (collected and written by anthropologists) have been interpreted in this paper for an understanding of the disciplinary boundary of anthropology during this contemporary age of globalization.

Key words : Anthropology, globalization, disciplinary boundary, cosmopolitanism, native, power dimension.

INTRODUCTION

Albeit the searching for a proper definition of anthropology is not new, but during this current phase of new-liberal economy, understanding of anthropology is not an easy question. This question is difficult on the ground that at present we have to encounter a very diverse social and cultural context if we want to answer the said question. In fact, the very diverse anthropological context incorporates not only the triumph of new-liberal economy, but also the existence of indigenous culture in many parts of the world. And we also see the simultaneous presence of traditional life and livelihood in many modern economies because of the 'articulation of modes of production' (Rey, 1975; Meillassoux, 1981) within the same state boundaries. Still, this is the most recurring question and current anthropologists intend to outreach the traditional understandings of this discipline by taking into account the ongoing happenings and diversities of the contemporary world.

In this context one question may arise, which is, is it realistic and even possible to ignore the classical understandings of this discipline? Telling it differently, can we, the post-colonial anthropologists, ignore totally the colonial legacy of this discipline? If a segment of anthropology really exists under the

umbrella concept of ‘post-colonialism’, then who will be the members? In another word, who is ‘other’ and who is ‘self’ in today’s anthropology when the so-called ‘natives’ are enriching themselves by achieving PhD degrees in anthropology? Is it possible to draw a boundary between Western/First World and non-Western/Third World anthropologists? And on what basis this kind of inclusion and exclusion occurs within the same disciplinary boundary? Given this situation, let us now review the following examples firstly and then will proceed for the understanding of anthropology during this contemporary age of globalization.

EXAMPLE ONE

“In Jorge Amado’s novel *Tent of Miracles* (1971), that self-taught, streetwise ethnographer of Bahia life, Pedro Archanjo, is breakfasting on yams and couscous when he happens to come across a blue-eyed, wheat-blond girl, Kirsi, who has just come ashore from a Swedish cargo ship. The ship toots for its lost passenger, then leaves without her, and Archanjo tells her that if the two of them make a man-child together, he will be the smartest and bravest man there ever was; either king of Scandinavia or president of Brazil. If the child would be a girl, on the other hand, there would be nobody to match her for beauty and grace.” (Hannerz: 2000:2)

Anthropological Interpretation

The above example is the description of an encounter between two people, named Kirsi and Pedro. However, the aforesaid example not only illustrates the encounter of two individuals, but also explores the encounter of different races, continents, and cultures. The example actually was quoted from Hannerz (2000), who was trying to grasp the nature and keywords in ‘transnational anthropology’. According to him, during these days, the ongoing happenings, pains and pleasures (mentioned as ‘comfortable intimacy’) of village life are not sought after. Instead, our focus is on the cultural distance between ‘ship and shore’. Along with this we also debate how to minimize that distance, said he.

Mentioning the frequently offered contexts resulted from globalization and transnationality, he identified some major themes of today’s anthropology. ‘Flux’, ‘mobility’, ‘recombination’ and ‘emergence’ are referred by him as the favored themes for our thinking about culture in today’s globalized world. For him, at present, boundaries are not really maintained, but are more often ‘interestingly crossed’. In this ‘cosmopolitan’ world we will find inhabitants as ‘creoles’ and ‘hybrids’ and communities as diasporas. Thereby, we need to look for the ‘test sites of theory’.

In this regard pursuing Hannerz’s discussion, if we concentrate on the contemporary Bangladeshi situation (Sultana, 2008) or the situation of the Chinese Diasporas (Zhou, 1992), we can observe that migration and settlement of people across the state border has become a reality. At present these migrants

not only form ethnic-enclave ('Bangla-Bazaar' of Bangladeshis or the 'China-Town' of the Chinese Diasporas) to survive in the foreign social-settings, but also maintain "transnational liaisons" (Zhou and Kim, 2001) to their kith and keen (*'kutum' and 'deshi bhai-berador'* in Bengali and *'Zi ji ren'* in Chinese language). They maintain transnational networks because of transnational liabilities and also being motivated by the 'long-distance nationalist sentiment' (Schiller and Fouran, 2001).

Based on these transnational networks that happen to develop within different countries of the world, these migrants thereafter, remain connected with different parts of the world simultaneously. Depending on the modern information and communication technology moreover, a regular flow of migrants, ideas, money, information and commodities can be noticed not only among the co-ethnic (country-men) members, but also along the cross-cultural/inter-ethnic (pluri-national) lines, situated in different parts of the world. Consequently, cosmopolitanism becomes a part of the everyday lifestyle of the common people whether they stay at home or abroad. In other words, current people are global citizens and their situations need to be interpreted by taking into account the global context either they situated in a mud-house of the so-called Third-World countries or in the First-World, the self-proclaimed center of knowledge, prosperity and development.

It is furthermore important to mention that during this 'age of migration', the practice of mass migration not only expedites the formation of ethnic enclaves in foreign social settings, but also creates 'new politics of belonging' and identity crisis among the newly developed residences and their residents. Along with their diasporic identities, these people, such as, Mexicans, Tamil Indians, Haitians or even Bangladeshis in the United Kingdom, United States or Canada always feel one thing, which is, 'where is home'. Under these circumstances what would be the field or unit of analysis for anthropological research? Since the members of these diasporas belong to more than one countries simultaneously, so in what way 'native' can be defined? Are we criticizing 'Western'/'European' orientalist discourses in anthropology where essentialist understanding about 'others' and 'natives' are emphasized upon? Is 'indigenizing' (Sinha, 2005:137) necessary to alter the hegemonic relationship between 'self'/'Western' and 'other'/'non-Western' anthropology and anthropologists? The situation also reminds me the following statement: "The traditional practice of going out into the 'field', finding a community to study and writing an interpretative account of that society based on ethnographic insights becomes increasingly untenable if the society in question has no unified or bounded centre, and if our unit of study no longer even approximates the social reality as it is lived and experienced by our ethnographic subjects. Anthropology has yet to develop a new methodological tool-bag to cope with the complexity of this increasingly fluid 'new world order'" (Ahmed and Shore, 1995:21).

EXAMPLE TWO

“Alma was born in the small village of Cacahuatpec in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. While she was still in primary school, her father sacrificed to buy her a sewing machine, in the hopes that as a seamstress she could escape a long heritage of poverty. However, she married young to a subsistence farmer who could barely eke out enough corn and beans from the wasted land to feed his family and almost immediately she began to have children, ultimately seven. At age 32, leaving her husband behind to continue to struggle on the paltry plot of land, she took her children and moved to Tijuana to join a sister-in-law who was part of a kin-based network in that border city.

After a couple of months working as a maid, Alma crossed the border illegally. In Long Beach, near Los Angeles, she was able to put her abilities as a seamstress to work in a small clothing factory, run by Cubans that hired undocumented aliens. This and other similar jobs allowed her to enroll her children in school and to send money to her husband who had now moved to Tijuana and was living with her eldest son. After many trips back and forth across the border, periodically being caught by immigration and deported, she resettled in Tijuana and found work in one of the *maquiladoras* there. The *maquiladoras* or *maquilas* are border factories owned by or closely affiliated with U.S. businesses and devoted to production for export to the United States. They mainly employ young single women willing to work for a few years at tedious, low-pay assembly jobs. Since the clothing *maquilas* require skilled labor, Alma was able to find jobs that paid enough to support her family, including an unemployed husband, and to send her children to school.” (Prieto, 1997: 66-70)

Anthropological interpretation

The above mentioned case was collected by Lewellen (2002) from Norma Iglesias Prieto’s ‘Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora’, where along with many other women Alma’s case was described. Having read Alma’s case one thing may come to our mind, which is, what is so special about this case? Why are we discussing such a common story of a Third-World woman? Actually these questions are the result of our common-sense knowledge about social world that we take for granted almost unconsciously. However, if we carefully interpret this case we will observe that the story of Alma raises a fundamental question and greatest challenge towards cultural anthropology.

According to Lewellen, throughout most of the 20th century, tradition-bound, community-based ‘indigenous people’ has been the subject of anthropological research. In contrast to that our case Alma is a modern woman who belongs to different worlds concurrently and efficiently. She is a woman, mother, wife, family-head, housekeeper, subsistence peasant, internal migrant, transnational migrant, skilled laborer, entrepreneur, Mexican and Mestizo. At home she plays her gendered role on the parched fields of Cacahuatpec

and abroad among the skyscrapers in Los Angeles, she is working as a seamstress in a small clothing factory becoming part of the global economy. She is employed in a sector created by the 1965 Border Industrialization Program and reinforced by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), mentioned by the author.

Though she grew up in a small village culture where she maintains ties of kinship in line with the kinship pattern of that area, she has to move in the large cities of United States and Mexico. Unlike most other women studied by the anthropologists, she is playing roles as the head and principle earner of her family. In her case the unit and subject of anthropological research cannot be identified easily as she belongs to multiple places simultaneously. Her roles are also very diverse. She is upbringing her children based on her own income and decision, which is very unlikely in the traditional family system discussed in the anthropological literature. For an example, Barnard and Spencer (1998: 223) defines family in the following way,

“.....the family is identified as those kin and affine who live together in the same dwelling, share a common hearth, and jointly participate in production and consumption.”

Likewise, Engles (1884) provided with an evolutionary scheme of the family and described that from the very beginning a gendered division of labor was persisted.¹ Mentioning this kind of division of labor as ‘natural’ and ‘egalitarian’, he said that initially both the domestic and external domain was given higher value. In other words, no sector was more prestigious than the other. In those days women used to look after the domestic sphere and children and taking care of the outside domain was the responsibility of men, said he. This type of egalitarian relationship was demolished through the development of the patriarchal family and ownership of private property. Women’s labor in the domestic sector was thus undervalued and her sexuality was also started to be controlled by men from then on, described by Engles.

However, in the case of Alma neither we can see that the members of the family are sharing the same hearth (‘chula’ in Bengali) by living together under the same roof, nor we can find the practice of traditional gendered division of labor. In the same way, if we question whether she passes her village culture to her children we find a negative reply. Her children were first educated in the United States and they were fluent speakers in English. She and her children are also not identifying themselves with the Mexican nation-state.

In this context, if we explore anthropological views on culture we may notice usually it means values, customs, belief, morals, habits, art of a given society that are acquired by men and women as members.²

And they pass it from one generation to next generation by learning, practicing and sharing. But Alma and her children are already bilingual and bicultural and they are not the followers of their traditional village culture.

The question is, are they 'hybrid'? Instead of selecting their community life in a village, do we need to select urban areas for anthropological field researches? If we really select urban areas as units of fieldwork, then their community life in the village areas will be ignored; but we have seen their presence both in the rural and urban life. In what way this type of multiplicity and diversity can be studied in anthropology? Are there any options in classical anthropology to deal with these issues and confusions? These questions will be dealt with under the following sub-headings.

GENERAL IDEAS ABOUT ANTHROPOLOGY

The definitions that are depicted in different textbooks of anthropology generally identify this discipline as the study of human being, human society and culture irrespective of their place and time. In other words, anthropology is the comparative study of human society and culture throughout all the time and places. For more than sixty or seventy years this discipline has also been defined as the study of so-called 'primitive', 'exotic' or 'tribal' people. Anthropology studies human being pursuing holistic approach or anthropology is the intensive study of human society and culture can be found in different literature. The aforesaid notions can also be found if we review following definitions that are described in different anthropological textbooks.

According to Hunter and Whitten (1976:12), "this discipline may be defined as the systematic study of the nature of human beings."

According to Nanda (1994: 5), the writer of an anthropological text titled 'Cultural Anthropology', "anthropology is the comparative study of human societies and cultures. The aim of anthropology is to describe, analyze, and explain the different ways of life, or cultures, through which human groups, or societies, have adapted to their environments."

Haviland (1999: 5) defines anthropology as "the study of humankind everywhere, throughout time, seeks to produce reliable knowledge about people and their behavior, both about what makes them different and what they all share in common."

Consequently, while we define anthropology mentioning that this discipline attempts to understand human diversity, we intend to mean that the learning of anthropology is useful for living and working in today's world. Thereby, this discipline provides us with that window where both the urban and rural areas of Alma's life (discussed previously) can be considered as the research units. Putting it differently, since this discipline increasingly means interacting with people from many different cultural backgrounds and nations, so by gathering anthropological knowledge one may develop holistic outlook and keen insights that may have immense value in rectifying ethnocentric (biased) development models. For an instance, the four field approaches in anthropology, such as, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, anthropological linguistics and archaeology enable us learn other cultures

along with our own (society and culture). Like erstwhile anthropologists, current anthropologists, thereby, explain why there exist diversities and differences among different cultures in today's globalized world, while an enormous effort is taken for a unique global culture. To have a deeper insight of how this holistic outlook and diverse knowledge is gained through the discipline of anthropology let us explain the main branches and the methods of anthropological research below.

THE FOUR FIELD APPROACHES

The four field approaches, like physical or biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, anthropological linguistics and archaeology are emphasized upon in the American anthropology. In fact, no human society can be studied holistically if these approaches are not followed properly, is a wide-known belief and practice in American anthropology (Barnard, 1998:25). The British trend is different from the American one, where anthropology is defined as 'social anthropology'. Even some of the British anthropologists like to consider anthropology as a branch of social science or sociology (Mair, 1972:1). Let us now illustrate the major ideas about these four major branches in anthropology.

Physical Anthropology

The branch of anthropology which studies humankind pursuing a biological perspective is called physical or biological anthropology. It explores the processes of human adaptation and evolution over time and spaces. Depending on the fossil record, paleontologists trace human evolution. Biological anthropologists are also interested in the cultural evolution of human-being and they believe and argue with examples that both of these evolutions are interlinked. For example, following the path of biological evolution, human beings get their biological structure and human brain that enable their cultural adaption with the environment. Cultural adaptation expedites the process of biological adaptation on the ground that it "frees humans from the relatively slow process of biological adaptation. Populations can invent, or adopt from other societies, new ways of dealing with problems on an almost immediate basis (Nanda, 1994: 9)."

Along with the living human groups, their racial features as well as the pattern of biological diversity, resulted through geographic patterns, the studies of living nonhuman primates, like monkeys, apes etc are also conducted by the physical anthropologists. In fact, being primates humans have their own evolutionary history and share a more common trait with the nonhuman primates than with other living groups. Thus, the studies of nonhuman primates enable biological anthropologists understand human biological foundations. Likewise, applying the approaches of physical anthropology, researchers can identify the causes of recent outbreak of different life-threatening diseases like 'aids', cancer, diabetics, high blood pressure etc. Based on that data physical anthropologists can argue why people of the

contemporary world are facing these kinds of health hazards that were totally absent in the so-called primitive or hunter-gatherer societies. In this case, anthropologists may compare the life-style and livelihood patterns of different communities and societies throughout all the time and places and also come out with the probable suggestions for the contemporary world.

Cultural Anthropology

Cultural anthropology is the study of human society and culture. It deals with the human behavior of a particular group or society. This branch shows how human culture is learned and shared by the members of a particular group and in what way it is transmitted from one generation to next generation. By studying different cultures it also explores how culture has changed over time and space. This on the other hand guides us to predict or even control the speed and flow of cultural change. By asking different types of questions like, “is religion universal?” or “what kinds of marriage and family system prevail in different societies?” cultural anthropologists attempt to discover both the specific and universal cultural pattern.

It argues that human beings develop a particular form of culture to adapt to a particular environment. In this sense cultural anthropologists study the origin, development and the diversity of different culture irrespective of time and people. In this ground cultural anthropologists pursue ‘cultural relativist’³ approach that explores both the ways and causes of differences and diversities within different cultures at the synchronic and diachronic levels. These differences, in fact, are viewed in this discipline as a resource that may facilitate us to open new paths of opportunities. These resources also broaden our world views based on what we may introduce newer ways of thinking and nurture multidimensional hubs of knowledge. All these things are worthwhile for achieving a sustainable development at the local, national and global levels. In other words, by learning cultural anthropology, people can become familiar with a wide range of behaviors, beliefs, customs, institutions and values of the world population that not only assist them to be more culturally sensitive and flexible, but also assist them identify themselves as “thrice-born” (Nanda, 1994:19).

The term “thrice-born” was mentioned actually by a renowned anthropologist M.N. Srinivas. A person’s birth into his original, particular culture is defined by him as “first-born”. While a researcher visits other cultures for fieldwork and is able to perceive the rules, regulations and meanings of other cultures, it can be defined as “second-born”, said he. A person becomes worthy of third birth only after his return from field work. In this context, his world view has been changed and upgraded to that parameter so that he is able to see his native land and culture from a different viewpoint. In another word, his familiar culture has turned into an “exotic” one once he returns to his original, particular culture from field research.

Anthropological Linguistics

This branch of anthropology deals with the study of language and its variation irrespective of time and space. In studying languages of different communities it follows cultural relativist approach. In what way human languages have been developed, how it is learned and transferred from one generation to another generation and in what way different kinds of changes have been occurred in different languages, all these issues are investigated and studied by the linguistic anthropologists. Along with analysis of the organization of human mind and thought expressed through language, it also explores the relationship between language and other parts of a particular culture.

Archaeology

Anthropological archaeology is sometimes mentioned as the 'past tense of cultural anthropology' (Renfrew and Bahn, 1991). In fact, archaeology explores material remains to study past societies and culture. For this, archaeologists collect material remains like pottery, tools, garbage and many other things of the past societies and reconstruct human behavior and culture of that particular time and place by analyzing these. Archaeology thus adds a major time dimension to our understanding of culture. Along with the description of the artifacts of prehistoric societies, they also interpret and explain these data to know about a particular culture, its ritual, belief system and human behavior that produced them.

Consequently, while we say that anthropologists study human society and culture from a holistic perspective, we intend to mean the integration and application of four-field approaches in understanding of a particular society and culture. In other words, the four field approaches are pursued by the researchers while they conduct field research within a particular community. Field research, in fact, is an important part of this discipline. All anthropologists, thereby, learn different research skills and approaches that enable them conduct intensive ethnographic field research. Anthropologists, for an example, try to do field research by equipping themselves with 'rapport building', 'emic' ('native's point of view') and 'etic' approaches, cultural relativism, 'micro level study', 'participant's observation' method, 'key-informant technique' and many others. Pursuing these techniques and approaches, anthropologists attempt to collect intensive data, analyze that to identify important details, and relate those particulars to a larger issue. And this is how anthropologists provides us with a "thick description"⁴ (Geertz, 1973) of a particular culture. The question, as always, is the application of 'participant observation' method enough to provide us with these kinds of data? In this context, let us explain the trajectories of anthropological field research below.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL FIELD RESEARCH

If you want to understand what a science is, you should look in the first instance not at its theories or its findings, and certainly not at what its apologists say about it; you should look at what the practitioners of it do⁵.

In point of fact, while we mention about classical anthropological field researches, exploration of the 'participant observation method', demands a particular attention. Since this method is identified as one of the hallmark or pillars of anthropological research, it needs to be defined properly. Likewise, we need to define 'ethnography' that is closely related to participant observation method. So, during field research, when a researcher studies and observes the lives of the community under study by participating in their daily life and livelihood, it can be called 'participant observation' method. Bronislaw Malinowski, who developed 'functionalist' theory (1944) in anthropology by conducting field research among the Trobriand Islanders of New Guinea, suggested for the participant observation method (Nanda, 1994:37). He advised us for an intensive fieldwork. To develop a sound ethnographic report, a researcher needs to have a long-term participatory fieldwork experience and to view things from native's/other's point of view, "exactly as they are," said he. He also highlighted to stay with the people being studied for at least a year or two. After that an intensive period is again needed to develop a written account of the lives of the community under study. This written report is called ethnography (Nanda, 1994: 11).

However, we have already raised the point of relevance of traditional anthropological field research methods, particularly the role of participant observation method in understanding and analyzing current world situation. Putting it differently, since the traditional subjects, like the so-called 'primitive' and 'savage' peoples are almost disappearing and do not remain relatively unchanged by time as is always portrayed in traditional anthropological literature, what will be 'object' of anthropological field research? What is the relevance of the discipline of anthropology and its knowledge in the contemporary world? Let us thereby, concentrate on this topic.

Indeed, Malinowski (1967) mentioned the importance of a long-term participatory fieldwork to develop an ethnographic account of native. The readers are the members of middle-class and university-graduated Western audience (Ahmed, 1995:19). These natives were also described as 'tribal people' or sometimes as 'other cultures' that used to live an unchanging "simple life" in remote areas. Even after a year or two years fieldwork experience within the native, followed by an intensive period for writing up one's ethnographic notes into a fieldwork monograph, the essence of their life could be grasped as it was during fieldwork, argued by the functionalist theorists. And in this way, anthropologists became "undisputed expert" of a certain community.

Having observed the said facts let us now ask whether or not we have seen these types of unchanged cultural landscapes around ourselves in this

age of globalization. In fact, the question actually reminds us the previous examples (example one and two) where we have observed a hybrid world, ever-changing realities that even raise a big question towards the so-called reasonably unchanged world of classical anthropology. Likewise, did the fields or so-called subjects of traditional anthropology always remain tradition-bound and relatively unchanged? Or was not it the problem of 'ethnographic lenses' where the content was confined as "now and there" dislocating it from the outside world (Marcus, 1986: 166-167)?

Consequently, instead of concentrating upon this endless ambiguity, current anthropologists may turn their analytical gaze towards self-societies, reflexivity, and hybridism along with the literary analysis of ethnographic texts. They are no longer interested in playing role as the "reluctant anthropologists" in the development arena (Edelman and Haugerud, 2005:44), rather converting into "involved anthropologists" (Gardner and David Lewis, 2005:356), they communicate with the wider audience while keeping themselves careful about the underlying politics and problems of the capitalist world. In fact, given the changing circumstances, if this discipline does not re-evaluate its classical subject-matter it will convert into a marginalized discipline. This discipline, thereby, develops new domains and methods of enquiry that are in line with the contemporary socio-cultural realities. Anthropologists, now-a-days engage themselves with the contentious issues and problems of wider public concern, for example, they become involved into the war crisis, indigenous movements, health and security issues, politics in the corporate world etc.

In addition to that exploration of the relationship between anthropology and development is of immense value not only for this reason that the term 'development' is coined at least more than two times in the foregoing paragraphs, but more importantly, development, both in the applied and academic/theoretical senses, was central in the formation of today's anthropology (Ferguson, 2005:140-150). In another word, the concept, practice and politics relating to development achieved highest priority in the discipline of anthropology since late nineteenth century evolutionary anthropology to present day's critical anthropology. Let us thereby explore the complex relationship between anthropology and development below.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

In fact, while in Morgan (1877) or Tylor's (1871) evolutionary theories 'development' appears in the guise of 'social evolution', the idea, practice and debate regarding development can be found in many forms in the theoretical foundation of this discipline. For example, in the early twentieth century, American relativist and culture historian Franz Boas and his students refuted the evolutionary schemes of nineteenth-century theorists mentioning its empirical adequacy. In this context, a relativist idea of progress and development was emphasized upon both in the United States and in Britain.

Not only had they developed a devastating criticism of “speculative evolutionism” (Ferguson, 2005), but also raised different questions, such as, ‘from whose point of view could one society be seen as “higher” than another, after all?’ Referring to the ethnocentricity of evolutionary theories, they suggested that every single society needs to be understood “in its own terms”. Depending on an intensive field research, anthropologists moreover needed to discover the many possible ways that were pursued upon to meet human “social and psychological needs” (Malinowski, 1944), or as one “pattern of culture” (Benedict), one “design for living” (Kluckhohn) among others, said they.

However, the mid-twentieth-century relativist approaches (whether Boasian/American or functionalist/British) could not deny at least one old evolutionist idea, which was, different societies were to be conceived as “discrete individuals”. Likewise, within the post-evolutionist approaches, the grand binary distinction between primitive and modern societies remained as usual. Like nineteenth century evolutionary theorists, they also accepted that anthropologists’ primary specialization would remain the study of primitive societies. However, denying the evolutionist theorists, these newer approaches did not rank and place different primitive societies against each other. Instead, all were then considered equally valid mentioning that those societies needed to be studied highlighting their own individual contexts and perspectives. In this context, while in some cases the study of ‘whole culture patterns’ (US) were focused on, in some other cases functioning systems (UK) were identified as the sole objects to be studied.

Through most of the twentieth century an idea of non-evolutionist anthropology developed. And still, the study of “small populations” who “remain faithful to their traditional way of life,” were defined as the central subject-matter of this newer field of anthropology. Telling it differently, a kind of “evolutionary dualism” (Ferguson, 2005:143) persisted still then, where a concept mentioning the clear-cut division between a developed, modern “us” and a not-yet-developed, primitive “them”, can be noticed. Ferguson’s write-up is praiseworthy in this regard. According to him,

“The idea of an evolutionarily primitive state, prior to the contaminations of “develop- ment,” remains remarkably central to a certain idea of both what anthropologists study, and to whom they owe their political loyalties (Ferguson, 2005:142)”.

But, is it really possible to draw a boundary between ‘us’/‘self’ and ‘them’ / ‘other’ in today’s globalized world? In this context we may again refer to example one and two from our previous discussion. We have seen the fluidity of state boundary, multiple identities and various role models of people and the associated tensions. And we have also raised the issue that in today’s globalized world it is very difficult to discover an authentic ‘native’ or a ‘not-yet-developed’ zone which is waiting to welcome the ‘self’. As we said already

the issue is problematic on the ground that it not only draws our attention towards the relationship between anthropology and development, but also raises the topic of 'international development'. This issue is discussed below.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In fact, there exists a critical relationship between anthropology and development that takes a severe form and demands a dynamic outlook when the question of international development comes in front. As a matter of fact, after the Second World War and the end of colonialism, a new era started. This new era internationalized questions of economic growth, poverty, and inequality and a special focus was given towards the ex-colonies. Targeting the Third World, many national and international agencies were developed.

Since these national and international aid agencies' special focus was "exotic" and traditional people (of the ex-colonies), anthropologists received special attention because of her/his disciplinary background. As we know and have discussed already that in the very beginning the so-called 'native'/ 'tribe' and the people of ex-colonies were defined as the communities to be studied solely by the anthropologists. In fact, the role of anthropologists, particularly for the development of the underdeveloped, were highly emphasized on the ground that utilizing anthropologists' critical insights on the local people, the donor agencies may have deeper insights of their targeted population. Later on, these will be implemented in development policy, planning and action.

However, apart from this type of applied/engaged roles, anthropologists also face criticism as 'reluctant anthropologists'. Being skeptical of the claims of international development agencies, they remain aloof and face criticism. Instead of taking part, these reluctant anthropologists criticize that claims to development is nothing but an attempt to disguise "neo-colonial" (ethnocentric, Western neo-imperialism) exploitation of the previous colonies. These donor agencies actually enhance global capitalism in the name of development, said these reluctant anthropologists. In other words, they criticize those anthropologists who continue their consultancy with the international aid agencies. They criticize governments as well for not becoming critical towards the ongoing political economy that actually takes global capitalism a step ahead.

Actually, the role of anthropologists as unconscious consultants and or as reluctant anthropologists deserves criticism on the ground that both of these roles undermine the very basic premise of the discipline. The approach of 'holism', 'emic', 'etic' as well as the anthropological research methods, for an example, 'participant observation' method may guide us for an intensive research on development. In this context, the role of anthropology and anthropologist can be revitalized by constructing and analyzing problems and reflecting on the wider social, cultural and political context of development.

This will thereby enable us to remain objective by critically engaging with the dilemmas of power and knowledge that shape the aid system⁶. By exploring the intended and unintended consequences of development initiatives and introducing a better understanding about the development agencies, anthropology can open up an impulsive capability. Thereafter, anthropologists will concentrate not only on producing and disseminating knowledge on development problems, but also they will try for new policy recommendations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the very beginning, redrawing the disciplinary boundary of anthropology is mentioned as one of the central objectives of this paper.^{vii} This point is raised on the ground that ongoing speedy changes and the versatile social and cultural context, happened through globalization, stimulate debates and challenges towards this discipline. For an instance, current anthropologists encounter the instantaneous presence of indigenous culture as well as traditional life and livelihood in many modern economies, while they also observe the triumph of new-liberal economy along with the global flows of migrants, ideas, technologies, information, money, commodities and many other things in the co-ethnic and inter-ethnic (pluri-national) lines. Having observed how cosmopolitanism converts common people into global citizens by entering into their everyday life-style, current anthropologists argue that the local situations cannot be separated from the global context, whether they situated in a mud-house of the so-called Third-World countries or in the First-World.

In other words, at present there is no bounded unit and no unified field/area of study. Current people are creoles, cultures are hybrid and people have multiple identities that also create newer forms of crisis, tensions and politics at the transnational and global levels. Consequently, anthropologists raise question whether (or not) they will intend to outreach the traditional understandings of this discipline. Likewise, they want to know many other related questions. Such as, who is 'other' and who is 'self' in today's anthropology? In what way natives can be defined? Is 'indigenizing' necessary to alter the hegemonic relationship? Is it possible to draw a boundary between Western/First World and non-Western/Third World anthropologists? And what would be the probable criteria for a possible inclusion and exclusion under the same umbrella? Emphasizing on the ongoing happenings and diversities, moreover, they ask whether (or not) it is realistic and even possible to ignore the classical understandings of the discipline.

Telling it differently, given the versatile global context and the associated dilemmas and dialectics, resulted through articulation of modes of production along with the existence of indigenous life and livelihood in various part of the world on the one hand and on the other, the ever-increasing blurred identities, mixed ethnicities and pluri-national landscapes, this paper raises

three central objectives. The objectives are, firstly, to observe and perceive the nature of current anthropological context, secondly, to verify whether (or not) it is possible to outreach the classical understandings of the discipline and thirdly, to ask whether (or not) we need to redraw the disciplinary boundary. While the first objective is already described in the erstwhile paragraphs by summarizing our findings from the previous segments, let us focus on the two other objectives below.

As it is argued that as a holistic and intensive account of human society and its culture, the discipline of anthropology needs to emphasize on the diverse socio-cultural realities and the associated context, current anthropologists, thereby, face different kind of dilemmas, which are, what would be the best way to observe into and study the ongoing happenings and diversities of the contemporary world? Is it necessary to outreach the classical concepts, theories, methods and understandings of this discipline to focus on the current changes and complexities? Or, will they develop a newer form/branch or segment in the discipline of anthropology without incorporating its historical roots? Or, do they just need to broaden and redraw the boundary of the discipline to keep pace with the recent changes?

As a matter of fact, each and every discipline has its own disciplinary history, context and the characteristics based on what its ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations are developed, matured and also nurtured. Consequently, if a certain discipline does not hold of its distinct typologies, feathers, methods and theories in keeping pace with the recent changes and dilemmas, it may be lost totally by the flow of time. And at the same time, it also needs to update itself by remaining in line with the contemporary situations; but this does mean that its disciplinary characteristics, theory or history should be altered totally. That means, being responsive to the recent changes, each and every discipline may upgrade itself by extending and redrawing its syllabus, methods and boundary, while keeping its classical root and features intact.

In fact, the beauty and strength of anthropology lies on its unique approaches, concepts, theories and methods for what anthropologists were appointed by different individuals, donor-organizations, states or international authorities, whatever it is in the applied or in the academic sense. The colonial legacy, the difference between so-called 'native'/'non-Western' and 'self'/'Western', writing ethnographic accounts of a certain bounded community or the earlier theories (such as, evolutionary theory, theories of functionalism or structural functionalism etc and many others), actually represents the specific feature of a certain time, its ideology and context that shapes the very nature of the discipline's ontology, epistemology and methodology. Thereby, it is next to impossible to outreach the classical understandings, methods, theories or the history of the discipline. Rather, these may enable current anthropologists provide with a better understanding of human society and culture. Being

informed and skeptical about the previous drawbacks (such as, this discipline is blamed 'as the child of imperialism') of the discipline, current anthropologists may be more careful in doing their jobs. Applying its unique research methods, theories and approaches, they may wish to come out with a better output, truly fruitful for human society and its culture.

Thereby, this paper is not in line with the second objective; rather it underscores for the necessity of the classical understandings of the discipline. Along with it, current paper also argues for a revised disciplinary boundary, rightly designed to encounter the recent dilemmas and changes, happened due to the versatile global context and speedy changes. Regarding this if we focus on of the arguments of Kearney (1995: 547, 548, 552) we may notice several examples, where this author discusses in what way recent changes, such as, non-local context and global influences can be dealt with in today's anthropology. For an example, Kearney (1995: 552) explores the new dimensions of urban spaces and argues for the "polycentric approaches". Following some other urban sociologists and anthropologists, Kearney also observes the recent disintegration and complexities of rural-urban relationships or between center and peripheries. He, thereby, emphasizes on the re-conceptualization of the spaces. According to him, because of the recent pattern of financial flows, transnational migration and "new international division of labor", at present, spaces cannot be understood as "bounded centers" (1995: 552). He continues, not only spaces cannot be separated between rural and urban areas or between center and periphery, but also each and every space encounter non-local influences incessantly. Consequently, to perceive this type of multidimensionality, a newer form of qualitative understanding of spaces deems to be very influential to this author.

Kearney's line of argument can be a fruitful way-out for the current paper to solve some of the puzzles, raised earlier. As has been asked, who is 'other' and who is 'self' in today's anthropology? In what way natives can be defined? Is indigenizing necessary in today's anthropology? In fact, because of the multiple pattern of integration between different zones, spaces and its beings, previous borderlines between so-called 'native' and 'self' have been collapsed. Likewise, it is very difficult to find out an authentic culture and indigenous life that is totally successful in avoiding the global influences. In the same way, both the so-called local and global knowledge crisscrosses and influences each other. This paper, therefore, necessitates and argues for the re-drawn boundary of anthropology. In other words, spaces and its contents are not unique and we, thereby, need to develop a multidimensional understanding of spaces following the arguments of Kearney.

However, pursuing his views while we explore the newer forms of mixtures and influences, we also need to keep in mind the power dimension. This dimension may have immense value in locating and measuring the different patterns of survival strategies, developed by the so-called indigenous

communities, trans-migrants and global diasporas in many parts of the world. In fact, it is true that we live in an ever-increasing cosmopolitan world, but it is also true that the intensity and ratio of 'acculturation' does not occur in a unique and parallel manner. It has different zigzags, crisscrosses, formulas and speeds that reflect the local and global inequalities and diversities. The discipline of anthropology, thereby, may re-draw its disciplinary boundary by incorporating these realities as one of the significant areas of research and investigation. Based on these empirical findings, current anthropologists may wish to develop a non-essentialist disciplinary identity, which will be the main challenge for the discipline of anthropology during this age of globalization.

ENDNOTES

1. The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.
 2. E. B. Tylor has defined culture in this way, "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1871, 1:1).
 3. The concept of 'cultural relativism' was introduced by Franz Boas and his associates. According to this concept, each culture needs to be viewed and evaluated in line with its own context and logic. For this, anthropologists need to conduct intensive field research and collect data pursuing the approaches of the insiders or the inhabitants of a particular area. Telling it differently, instead of collecting data and viewing one culture from the researcher's or outsider's point of view, each culture needs to be understood from the perspectives of its participants.
 4. "One of the key terms in Clifford Geertz's anthropological theory is that of "Thick Description". Following Ryle, Geertz holds that anthropology's task is that of explaining cultures through thick description which specifies many details, conceptual structures and meanings, and which is opposed to "thin description" which is a factual account without any interpretation. Thin description for Geertz is not only an insufficient account of an aspect of a culture; it is also a misleading one. According to Geertz, an ethnographer must present a thick description which is composed not only of facts but also of commentary, interpretation and interpretations of those comments and interpretations. His task is to extract meaning structures that make up a culture, and for this Geertz believes that a factual account will not suffice for these meaning structures are complexly layered one on top and into each other so that each fact might be subjected to intercrossing interpretations which ethnography should study.
- In "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" Geertz outlines four parameters for an adequate "thick description" and a study of culture:
1. "Interpretive study: since anthropology is a semiotic endeavor, cultural analysis should be an interpretive practice which traces the manner in which meaning is ascribed. The raw observational material collected by an ethnographer is not sufficient if we are to achieve a thick description of a culture.
 2. The subject of interpretation is the flow of social discourse. Interpretive ethnography according to Geertz should produce the codes required for decoding social events.
 3. Interpretation deals with extrovert expressions. Data collection and interpretation are limited to what local informants can tell us. Therefore the thickest of descriptions can only be based on extrovert expressions of culture.

4. Ethnographic description is microscopic. According to Geertz, ethnographic findings describe local behaviors and truths as serve as an ethnographical miniature. We always view specific and contextualized happenings, and these make up the thick description," in <http://culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.com/2012/05/clifford-geertzs-thick-description.html>.

5. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

6. Moncrieffe and Eyben, 2007.

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Livelihood and Migration of a Marine Fishing Community

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Abstract: The study details the reasons for migration and occupational shift among marine fisher community of Vadabaliya of Annavaram village in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh in search of livelihood. Ten years ago, Annavaram was a thriving village with abundant marine resources. At present, this village is devoid of fish resources of the open sea due to rise of toxic pollution levels by the nearby pharma company. The main focus of the paper is to show how the toxic pollutants released by a pharma company have brought adverse affect on the life of a traditional fishing community in a coastal Andhra Pradesh village. As a consequence of this pollution, the catch declined and people had to move to other occupations and to migrate to the other areas for livelihood. The community becomes an 'ecological refugee'. Besides being factor to occupational shift, the loss of traditional livelihood has also adversely affected their cultural life as noticed with regard to traditional knowledge and oral traditions. The paper suggest a regional approach for the livelihood of Annavaram villagers who no longer dependant on fishing activities.

Key words : Migration, Resources, Livelihood, Pollution, Disempowerment

INTRODUCTION

Both marine and in-land fishing depend upon naturally available resources which collected or hunted by individually and collectively. Fishing activity and economy is understood by different aspects such as it is simple collection, intensive hunting in the sea waters, rivers, dams and large scale ponds. Further, fishing is associated with caste based occupation, for some other groups it is a seasonal pursuit. Full time specialized fishing communities particularly marine fishing communities possess specialized skill set, technology and indigenious knowledge system of their environment. Acheson (1981) describes fishing societies and their economy across the world shapes their social organisation in tune with environment and ecological adaptation. The significance of marine fishing communities with regard to their economic contribution and culture in Indian society by (Mukherjee,1970; Mathur,1978; Choudhary,1980; Kurien,2000) have portrayed how the fishing artisanal communities played important role in supplementing to the national economy. Like in other parts of India, marine fishing communities in Andhra Pradesh are also caste based occupational group spread over the coastal areas from Nellore district to Srikakulam districts of the state. Studies by (Suryanarayana,1977; Andhra University Technical Cell, 1978; Bay of Bengal Programme,1987; Vivekanand,et al.,1997) have highlighted the geographical distribution and socio economic conditionsof marine fishing communities of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh.

The objective of this study was to investigate how the change in the livelihood pattern of a group of fishing community affected the socio-cultural life of this community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Annaram village is located 15 km east of Tagarapavalasa town of BheemiliMandal of Visakhapatnam district. This village lies between the latitudes of 17° 30', 17° 45' and 83° 15', 83° 20' of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. The entire village comprise of Vadabaliya caste which is a traditional marine fishing community. There is another fishing community 'Jalari' in the Visakhapatnam district. Both Vadabaliya and Jalari caste groups have a symbiotic relationship with ocean eco system.

Vadabaliya/ Vodabaliya is also called as Vada, Vadde, Oda and Odabaliya in some areas. The name Vadabaliya is derived from their traditional occupation i.e., working on ships in olden times. The word "Vada/Voda" in telugu meaning "ship". Few Oriya groups in the neighbouring coastal districts engaged in fishing activity are also referred as Vadde or Ode in Coastal Andhra. As per Census of India (2011), Annaram is a large village with total of 607 families comprising 2665 of which 1315 are males while 1350 are females. It is interesting to know that the average sex ratio of Annaram village is 1027 which is higher than the state of Andhra Pradesh. The literacy rate was very low (20 percent) as very few villagers could study up to 8th class. At present, sixteen boys and forty one girls are going to the nearby primary and upper primary school.

The data were collected periodically during the year 2015-2016. As the study is empirical in nature, qualitative aspects are highlighted in the ethnographic endeavour. The data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focussed group discussions. The sample includes the village elders, women, youth and women Self Help Group leaders.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Traditional Economic Activities of the Vadabaliya

It was reported by the fishers of Annaram village that till ten years ago, fish abundant in sea water. The villagers reported that they never sailed out to distant places, as there was availability of copious fish stocks. Even fishers from neighbouring villages used to catch fish in this village 'Revu'(territorial waters). This is an indication that the fishing community of this village were economically comfortable, as the fish catch was sufficient for both domestic consumption and market sale. As fishing is a traditional caste based occupation, most of them were engaged in fishing activity based on division of labour. Hence, livelihood was never a problem and it was an integral part of their culture. Besides fishing activity, some families in these villages grew

and sell coconuts, as the western part of the village has some good agricultural patches. According to Chambers and Conway, (1992) a livelihood is only sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base. In case of this village, families have maintained this natural base without any over exploitation. Firth(1946) illustrates the relationship between the Malay fishermen society and their economy and social structure. Change in economy leads to change in the social structure, particularly with the marine fishing communities.

Setting Up of Divis Pharma

Divis Laboratories Limited produce bulk material for the pharma companies. These products are exported to all parts of the world. The Unit-2 plant at Visakhapatnm is located at Chippada village which is one kilometre from Annavaram village. Before starting up the Divis Pharma company unit at Chippada village, the government functionaries had not taken enough care in safeguarding the livelihoods of the nearby villages and the potential environmental hazards that the company can introduce, and thereby damaging the surrounding marine ecosystem. This was a hasty policy taken up the Government functionaries. Although there was resistance from the villagers during that time, yet the concerns of the villagers were not fully considered.

The Unit II plant initially started with four production blocks with a total capacity of 745 M3 (converted as cubic meters to volume) reaction volume in 2003. The site stretches on a 314 acre land and a quarter of the land is covered with plantation. This was operated as a Domestic Traffic Unit (DTA) till the year 2006. In the year 2006 the DTA unit was converted to 100% export unit. The production capacity was also increased to six blocks with a 1068 M3 reaction volume.

According to the expansion plans of the pharma company as the company cruising with profits, Divis Pharma Company had come out with extending its social responsibility to the neighbouring villages, including Annavaram village. Divis Pharma Company had offered employment to the eligible people who can fit into the company operations. As most of the villagers are illiterate, they could not offer jobs to the unqualified. Only few men and women are engaged in this company in non-manual jobs. Apart from the employment opportunities extended, the pharma company have extended loans for the fishermen for buying nets. But this could not ameliorate their economic status as the fish catch has depleted over time.

Divis Pharma Company had extended its corporate social responsibility in funding wooden furniture for the local primary and high school. The company also offered uniform for school going children with their company logo on the tie. To facilitate educational needs of the village children, they have appointed limited 'Vidya Volunteers' to help the government school

teachers in their workload. A filtering unit of drinking water has been installed in the village. To minimize the air pollution levels, the company planted trees all along the road side with their company logo. Notwithstanding all these developmental works the company is causing severe damage by discharging toxic pollutants into the nearby seawaters which overshadows the company's community development projects. The company justifies that the volume of toxic release into the sea is low. However, there was no thorough investigation by the government authorities on the quantity of chemical release into the sea water and its effects on the marine ecology. Local politicians are aware of the problem. They were approached by the villagers many times, but there was no substantive policy guidelines to tackle this problem. Additionally, there is public health issue as the villagers are suffering from some health problems. Cases of respiratory problems, dry cough, common fevers, skin rashes and hair loss were reported.

Change in subsistence activity- occupational mobility and migration

In the span of ten years, Annavaram village has transformed to a large extent with regard to its economy. Large scale fishing activity has completely been replaced by handful of elderly men who simply preoccupy themselves with small scale fishing nets trying to catch small fish. This marine eco system has been adversely affected by the 'Divis' pharma company which has destroyed the breeding, nursery, feeding and growth of marine fish resources by releasing toxic chemical pollutants into the sea waters.

With the depletion of fish catch, the villagers started to look out for jobs in and around Visakhapatnam city. Describing the migration patterns among fishing communities, Rajan (2002) identifies two dimensions of mobility/migration being time and direction. Time mobility could be inter-generational and intra-generational, while directional mobility may be vertical, horizontal and spatial. For some fishermen it is the expansion of work space, for others it is a longer period in connection with the occupation. The Inter-generational mobility is understood in terms of occupation of the parents and their children. In Annavaram village, there is clear indication, as youth have taken up jobs other than fishing. Intra- generational mobility, has also been observed among the study community. Traditionally the fishermen hunt fish for their own consumption and selling; but now they have shifted to non-fishing activities. It is found that this mobility is understood in terms of horizontal, as some youth were engaged as labourers in high end fishing trawlers as labourers. Along the vertical line, few of them have taken up jobs in Middle Eastern countries.

Reports by Afolayan, (2004) and Fregene, (2009) describes that fishing communities in Africa migrate for variety of fish resources to improve their economy. According to Tawari (2002:2), "a migrant fisherman is one who leaves his natural community and moves from one habitation to another in fulfilment

of his occupation. He moves in search of fish as dictated by the type of fish required, the movement of the tide and season of the year". Sheela and Rao (2012) while tracing the fishing technology of Jalari community of Visakhapatnam city states that Jalari's are fully occupied with fishing activities, their migration to other fields of work is rather difficult.

However, the fisherman community of Annavaram village do not fall in any of these categories; they have simply stopped their fishing activity and joined in petty jobs in the neighbouring urban areas. Only few of them joined as helpers in the fishing trawlers. The main reason for this migration is ascribed to the pharma industrial operation and sea water pollution that has severely damaged the resource base for these villagers. In this context, the concept of 'ecological refugee' (Gadgil and Guha 1995) is most befitting for this community. The fishermen are forced to leave their natural habitats to eke out their livelihood elsewhere. Thus, the villagers become refugees in their natural surrounding due to the chemical waste released by the company into the sea water.

When the 'Divis' company began its operations, it started dumping the chemical waste into the village sea shore. The dumping unit is a permanent built structure just 500 meters from the village into the sea. This dumping unit not only releases the toxic materials into the sea shore but it also releases toxic gases along with the material. Villagers expressed that this toxic material has totally destroyed the sea weed and other nutrients which are useful for the multiplication of fish. Since the sea water got mixed with the toxic pollutants, there is no growth of fish in these water since the company has intensified its production. Madhu(2016) reports about how pollution has made the youth of Annavaram village to migrate to urban areas. An average of 150 male youth have been engaged as labourers in fishing trawlers, aqua companies and other fishing related activities near Visakhapatnam and Paradip(Odisha) ports. These youth are engaged as contract labourers who sail out for one month to two months to catch fish for private trawlers. Around 20-25 youth have migrated to Middle Eastern countries as daily wage workers in the construction companies.

'Loss of culture' – material culture, indigenous knowledge and oral tradition

It is clearly noticed in many marine fishing communities as the division of labour is marked, it is always the men who go to catch fish, while women are involved in fish segregation, processing and marketing of the fishcatch. Women take the additional responsibility in drying the fish, as there is a demand for dry fish in the market. Apart from the role played in fishing economy, women take care of the household activities and even control the economic aspects of the family. This process has made women to take control of their lives particularly economic matters which made them more independent and confident in their daily lives. It is also a general perception among other caste communities that fisherwomen have good negotiation skills as they are

engaged in selling fish in markets. There are studies (Kalavathi, 1985 and Ramachandra, 2003) that observe that in most of the southern states of India, the role of women in fishing economy is clearly seen, where as in many parts of Northern India, women do not take part in fish processing and marketing.

Given the economic security and livelihood pattern of these women in this village, the recent changes in the fishing activity has severely affected their livelihood pattern leading to disempowerment of their social status. Few able bodied elderly women have joined the 'Divis' company as daily wage labourers. The functioning of Self Help Groups (SHG's) could not bring any substantial gains to them as the fisherwomen do not have any specific skill.

Migration to urban areas has witnessed an increase in the differentiation in social class and religious affiliations. Some of them started to build new houses which clearly depicts the housing pattern different from the ones that they had before migration. As the village was self-sufficient and practicing their cultural ethos and religious practices, migration and culture contacts with outside village have brought some changes. For example, some families are practicing 'Ayyappa' and 'Bahvani' religious rituals and few of them have embraced Christianity. These are the new religious practices being witnessed in this village; and it may be ascribed as resultant of migration.

The high level of pollution, as observed these days were not present before. So, the stock of fish was abundant. The villagers also used to have various types of fishing nets. Now they are left with the semi-circle '*Alivala*' which is cast by 40 people just by standing on the shores of the sea waters, and '*Darivala*' tied to a small catamaran, as it sweeps the floating fish in the nearby sea waters of the village. The unused different types of nets to catch big size fish, prawns, and crabs have become defunct and has incurred huge loss for the villagers.

Impact on oral tradition

Fishing community's ethos are inextricably intertwined with the ecological aspects of their culture. Nuckolls (1996) explains about Jalari fishing community's knowledge and desire as they are inseparable in the religious mythology and divinatory system. Not only the kinship systems and folklore of these communities centre around their habitations and economy, but there is also incorporation of larger Hindu mythological relationships. Vadabaliya has variety of folktales and mythical stories which are connected to everyday life and the wider cosmic life. In the recent times, the few elderly people who remember these oral historical knowledge is going to end soon, as there are only five elderly people remaining in this village. They expressed that there was the tradition of passing these songs and tales during the fishing activity both on the sea and off the sea. In present times, as youth are working outside, there was no fishing activity and cultural transmission of the traditional knowledge. The same is also with the case of elderly women who expressed

that young girls are not exposed to the cultural moorings of the society. Most of the villagers opined that very soon the distinct Vadabalija cultural identity will get diluted and will become like any other working class category.

On the question of revivalism, it was understood that only through the fishing activity the oral traditions are passed on, as the fishing activity is lengthy and laborious, the only way to beat it out is to share their cultural wisdom with the other members in general and younger generation in particular. On the other hand, village rituals that were celebrated with pomp and gaiety for many days in a calendar year are losing their vitality, as most of the villagers are unable to spend more days in the village due to their occupation outside the village. The important village deity rituals have become more or less restricted to time and expenditure. This phenomenon can be attributed to economic reasons; during the past when fishing activity was at its peak, villagers used to celebrate these festivals of their household deities by staying inside the village itself.

CONCLUSION

Establishment of certain industries and construction of new ports on the sea coastal line has become a problem for the local fishing communities. The operation of Divis Pharma Company in the outskirts of Annavaram village has largely impacted the traditional fishing economy. Since chemical waste is expelled into the sea, the marine ecosystem has been transformed, affecting the quantity and quality of fish catch. Annavaram villagers have a perceived anxiety that in the times to come the traditional fishing cultures may become extinct due to the unplanned and hasty policies taken with regard to the establishment of pharma company. Though the mega corporate projects cannot be avoided as they may have some intrinsic value for rest of the communities, the neo liberal projects should come out with specific alternatives to livelihoods, to compensate lost fishing livelihoods of Annavaram village. Both the private company and the district administration need to impart skill based training who have potential to work in the company. There is a need to train the youth both boys and girls in technical aspects related to the company, as the pharma industry need more technical personnel than general employees.

A thorough identification of need based employment is required to chart the future course of action to compensate the lost livelihoods. Economic independence and decision-making are the characteristic features of women in this village, although women do not hold any job outside Annavaram village, the roles they play within the families are of utmost importance. As most of the men have migrated to different places in search of jobs, they become particularly dependant on women to take care of the family and various aspects of social life. As fisherwomen have direct role in fish marketing, they are good at marketing skills, negotiation ability, preparation of dry fish and fish bone powder. Women who are disempowered must be given financial support to

start self-employment activities which suit their abilities and capabilities. The pharma company does many welfare services in the village, but these activities outweigh the damage it has caused to the livelihood of the people living in around the village. We should adopt a balanced policy of ecological and social cost evaluation in the impact assessment of such projects.

With the present scenario at Annavaram village, it is difficult to retain the youth of this village to stop from migrating to other places, but the administrators, NGO's and concerned agencies should prepare policy guidelines to mitigate their migration and offer suitable livelihood opportunities around their native habitats. An integrated approach without uprooting the traditional occupation is essential for safeguarding fishing community's livelihood.

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Exploring the Trend of Girls' Education among *Lepchas* in Lingee: A Village in Sikkim

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Abstract: Sikkim has made steady and significant progress in educational sector and has been able to bridge the gender gap in literacy in the state and among Scheduled Tribe communities to a considerable extent. This improvement is evidently reflected in the marked improvement in the literacy rate of the state and Scheduled Tribes as well for both for male and female. The paper intends to unravel how has the Lepcha tribe responded to the educational expansion in terms of girls' education in Lingee-a village in South Sikkim. Based on enrolment and observation drawn from interview in the fieldwork, the paper observed that although the problem of retention and drop outs are still observed in high school level, the community began to show the traces of change in terms of perception towards girls' education in the village.

Key words : Lepcha, Scheduled Tribes, Education, Enrolment, Cultural Capital

INTRODUCTION

With a population of more than 10.2 crores, India has the single largest tribal population in the world comprising 8.6 per cent of the total population of the country (Census 2011). The Scheduled Tribes (STs) population represents one of the most economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups in India having various forms of deprivation and poor human development indicator. This is manifested in low literacy rates (59 percent) of ST as against 74 percent of overall literacy rate (2011 Census) of the country. ST women are further deprived with lower literacy rate of 49.4 percent as against 68.5 percent for male with a considerable gender gap of 19 percent. Despite various policies of protective discrimination for the Scheduled Tribes, low literacy rate of ST population in general and tribal women in particular is one major area of deprivation and concern even today.

Sikkim witnessed steady progress and developmental initiatives in recent times. The state ranked among top five states that recorded maximum acceleration in Human Development Index (HDI) (Sikkim Human Development Report 2014: xxv). Educational sector has always received the top priority of the state government. There has been a substantial increase in the educational infrastructure to meet the goal of universalization of elementary education. This is clearly reflected in the marked improvement of the literacy rate of the state and that of STs as well. With a literacy rate of 79.7 percent (2011 Census, as against 82.20 percent of state), Scheduled Tribes population in Sikkim is conspicuously better placed than all India literacy of ST. The figure shows a marked improvement from 67.1 percent in 2001. The literacy rate of ST male

and female stands at respective figure of 85.0 and 74.3 percent with a gender gap of 10.7 percent as against 10.8 percent of state average. The difference between the literacy rate of total STs and overall population is only 2.5 percent while the difference in female literacy rate of the overall population and ST women is just 2.1 percent. (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2013). This evidently reflects that ST communities are almost at par with the other communities in terms of literacy rate with a very negligible difference.

Sikkim among the states has the highest gender ratio i.e. the number of Scheduled Tribe girls per 100 ST in all classes and the state recorded the highest GPI in the upper primary classes. There are 102 girls in Classes I-V, 127 girls in Classes VI-VIII, 108 girls in classes I-VIII, 128 girls in classes IX-X and 125 ST girls in classes IX-XII per 100 boys (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Bureau of Planning, Monitoring and Statistics, 2012). Thus, the representation of girls in school education among ST depicts an encouraging scenario in Sikkim, which basically substantiates that the communities have responded positively in terms of literacy achievement. Against this backdrop, the underlying theme of the paper is, broadly, to explore the trend of girls' education among Lepcha tribe in Lingee, a village located in South District of Sikkim. The study attempts to assess how the community in the rural Sikkim responded to the educational opportunities that have been expanded in the state. The study is based on analysis of school enrolment in Lingee Senior Secondary School, census figure, socio-economic census and information obtained from interaction with the Lepcha graduates, teachers and community leaders, which are analyzed to examine the trend of girls' education.

ESSENCE OF GIRLS' EDUCATION

Girls' education is widely acknowledged as a medium of empowerment and means of achieving human development objectives. It has immense transformative power to make socio-economic changes and facilitating one to live a life of dignity and honour. The importance of girls education in the development of a community is unquestionable and is regarded as an indicator of the level of development of any community and nation that determines the status of any social group. The benefits of education can be linked not only to the individuals and their families but it is directly interrelated to the development of a community. Basic education for girls confers them greater power and enables them to have genuine choices over the kinds of lives they wish to lead.

Education shapes identities and individual lifestyles and it is essentially a component of culture of a community. A community historically moves from illiteracy to literacy and education. When education becomes an integral part of shared culture, it becomes self-generating and can influence the life, ideology and above all culture of a community (Roy: 15). An educated woman

can immensely contribute to the process of culture formation of the community. Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" also reinforces the idea and restates that the parents provide children with cultural capital, which is translated into advantages in educational terms. What is necessary for educational success is a whole set of cultural behavior. The legitimation of this cultural capital is crucial to its effectiveness as a source of power and success (Wallace and Wolf, 2008:113.114). The possession of cultural capital takes the forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that a person has, which are instrumental in achieving higher status in society. Parents provide their children with cultural capital by transmitting the attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in educational system.

The significance of girls' education has been highlighted by various convention and programmes both at international and national levels. Article 28 of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) affirms Right to Primary Education as a basic right of children. (UNICEF, 1990). The world's Declaration on Education For All, Jomtien, 1990 was an important milestone in the march towards universal elementary education and girls' access to basic education (UNESCO,2013-14). The World Education Forum (UNESCO, 2000) further restated the need for quality education for girls as one of the best investments of any society and accentuated the need of extending basic education to girls and bridging the gender gaps as of immense importance (ibid: 90). However, despite lot of initiatives and the considerable progress, disparity and exclusion of girls in education continues to be the issues in developing nations. The problem is deeply embedded in the socio-economic and cultural milieu of the particular community. To address this situation, the enactment of 93rd Amendment, 2001 of the constitution made the Right to Education a Fundamental Right in India. Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA) and now the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shikshya Abhiyan (RMSA) a nation-wide programme of Indian government for Universalisation of elementary and secondary education also emphasised on bridging all gender and social category gaps at both levels. The enactment of Right of Children to free and compulsory education Act, 2009 is another landmark that stressed that every child of the age of six to fourteen years have the right to free and compulsory education till the completion of his or her elementary education.

LEPCHAS IN SIKKIM

In Sikkim Lepchas and the Bhutias were notified as Scheduled Tribes by virtue of Sikkim Scheduled Tribe Order, 1978 (Notification No.18 (3) Home/75 Dated 06.07.1978, Government of Sikkim). The scheduled Tribe (ST) population in the state comprises 20.6 percent of total population of state (2001 Census).The inclusion of Tamang and Limboo communities in the ST category in 2002 enhanced the ST population percentage to 33.8 in 2011. The Lepchas, are widely recognized as the earliest inhabitant or autochthons of Sikkim (Risley, 1894: 27). As per State Socio- Economic Census, 2006 (SSEC) the

community comprises 7.78 percent of total population of state. Originally the nature worshippers, Lepchas are predominantly Buddhist, although a section are found to be converted into Christianity. At present 85.14 per cent Lepchas are Buddhist, 12.76 percent are Christians and 2.10 percent are Hindus (Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2006 : 361). In order to address the problem of relative backwardness of the community, Lepchas have been granted the status of Primitive Tribe Group (PTG) by the State Government in 2006 (Notification No 3 (54)PA/518/2006 Dated 18.11.2006, Government of Sikkim) and that has been the basis of protective policy for the community in the state. The state has the provision for 20 % reservation for Bhutia- Lepcha (BL) and another 5 % reservation for PTG status, which is exclusively given for Lepchas in all government vacancies.

LOCATING LEPCHAS IN EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO OF SIKKIM

For understanding the relative position of Lepchas, an assessment of literacy rate of Lepchas and Bhutias, two predominant ST communities in the state is justifiable as these two communities have been in ST category since 1978. In 1981, the literacy rate of the Lepchas was 34 per which was same as the State's literacy rate but much lower than Bhutias (65.7 percent). In 1991, the figure declined to 30.18 per cent for the community while in case of the Bhutias, it went up to 70 per cent (Department of Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare, 2008). The district-wise literacy rate of the Lepchas in 2001 shows that the percentage varies in between 40.16 percent in West Sikkim to 59 percent in East District. The South District where the field study area is located had literacy rate of 58 percent among the community (ibid). The sex-wise literacy rate of the Lepchas also shows the wide gender disparity with 65 percent for male and 35 percent for Female in 1981. The highest gender disparity of 40% was noticed in the North and West districts in 1981. Despite the fact that Lepcha social structure is presumed to be more egalitarian with apparent no gender discrimination, the disparity could largely be attributed to economic backwardness, engagement of girl child in household activities and agriculture, lack of educational achievement among the parents which largely determines the possession of cultural capital of a family. This results in lack of awareness and motivation that widely affect the educational achievement of the children and more of the girls as elsewhere in India, the gender relations in Lepcha society is also deeply imbedded in a patriarchal social structure which largely accounts to low value attached to girls' education.

A close analysis of educational level among the Lepchas in 1991, reveals a pyramidal structure with wider base at primary level with 47.3 percent and the percentage goes on decreasing in higher level of education. The Junior High level accounts to 30.34 percent of total literates. The percentage of the community declined sharply in the next educational levels of secondary and senior secondary level which accounts to 14.60 percent and 4.14 percent

respectively. Only 2.58 percent of Lepchas were graduates while only 1.03 percent reached Post-Graduation level.

The SSEC 2006 records a much improved picture of literacy rate for Lepchas with 80.77 percent which is equal to state average of 80.66 percent as against 81.09 percent for the Bhutias (Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2006: 84). The female literacy rate of Lepchas has jumped to 75.59 percent which however is lower than the male counterpart (85.76 percent). The corresponding figure for the Bhutias stands at 75.03 percent for females and 86.88 percent for males. Despite the improvement in literacy scenario, the distribution of population within the community by level of education reveals that Lepchas are yet to be at par with Bhutias in terms of higher level of education. For example, the frequency of Bhutias who have attained education up to Junior, Secondary and Senior Secondary levels (16.28 percentage, 10.43 percent, 6.27 percentage) are higher compared to those from the Lepcha community (15.32 percent, 7.87 percent, 4.07 percent). However, more number of Lepchas have attained primary level education than the Bhutias. While 2.33 percent of Lepchas has Graduate level education, and the figure for Bhutias stands at 4.55 percent. Similarly, less number of Lepchas (0.63 percent) could complete post graduate and professional courses compared to the Bhutias (5.41 percent). The literacy scenario in various education level therefore reveals that the percentage of Lepchas is relatively lower than Bhutias, except in the primary level (ibid.:90).

The literacy scenario in Census (2011) makes a striking revelation. While the literacy rate of Lepchas shows further improvement to 82.1 percent, the figure for Bhutias shows a marginal decline to 80.4 percent as compared to SSEC, 2006 record. The gender-wise break up of literacy rate also shows a higher percentage of Lepcha women (77.4 percent) as against 75.1 percent for the Bhutia women (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2013:174). The gender gap in literacy among Lepchas has considerably come down to 4.7 % in 2011.

About the village

The village Lingee, under Lingee Sokpay Gram Panchayt Unit (GPU) falls under Ravangla Subdivision of South District of Sikkim. Located at a distance of nearly 55 Kms from Gangtok, the GPU has a total population of 2258, the male female ratio stands at 53:47 (Directorate of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2006). The Scheduled Tribe population comprises 34.32 percent of total population of GPU. The largest concentration of Lepcha population of South District is found in this GPU and accounts to 26.35 percent of total population. The literacy rate of the GPU stands at 79.51 percent (ibid.).

Lingee Senior Secondary School which is located at the heart of Lepcha inhabited village, is the hub of high school education in the area and the only school that has been fulfilling the need of Secondary and Senior Secondary School education. Established in 1955, the school was upgraded to Secondary level in the year 1982 and Senior secondary school in 2013. At present the

school has nine government schools (four Junior High Schools and five primary schools) and four private feeder schools, from where the school acquires students for Secondary and Senior Secondary sections. Hence, the analysis of enrolment of Lingee Senior Secondary School adequately reflects the trend of school education in the village.

ENROLMENT IN LINGEE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A careful analysis of school enrolment provides some interesting revelation. The community-wise and stage-wise enrolment in Lingee Secondary School is presented in Tables 1 & 2. The enrolment evidently reflects the trend of education among the Lepcha community. During the last 10 years (2004-2013), the enrolment of Lepcha students at primary level depicts an encouraging scenario, either proportionate or more than their population ratio. The percentage varies between the highest of 50 percent in 2004 to 26.5 percent in 2010 and exceeds 40 percent in between 2004-2008. The declining percentage of Lepcha enrolment in Primary section has been observed since 2009, when it is recorded as 29.1 of total primary enrolment, which was again enhanced to 44 percent in 2013. In spite of the presence of private schools and the emerging trend of sending the children to private schools in the village, the enrolment at Primary school level in Lingee Senior Secondary reflects a healthy trend with relatively higher percentage of the Lepchas students than non-Lepchas. The growing trend of sending children in two private schools in the locality explains the decreased percentage of Lepchas in Lingee Senior Secondary School at the primary level in recent times.

The enrolment pattern reveals an interesting observation. The percentage of Lepcha students which shows a wider base at primary level goes on tapering as the level increases reflecting the problem of retention and drop out rates of Lepcha students after completion of primary level. The trend was almost similar during the last ten years from 2004-2013. While the percentage shows a decline in Class VI-VIII level, the share further declined in secondary level. In Class VI-VIII, the percentage varies between the lowest of 17.9 percent in 2009 to the highest of 43.29 percent in 2006. The enrolment further goes down in class IX-X level where the lowest percentage was recorded with 14.75 percent in the year 2004 to the highest of 25 percent in the year 2010. Taking all levels together, the percentage of Lepcha students varies between the lowest of 23 percent in 2009 to the highest of 39.27 percent in 2006. However, even the lowest figure of total Lepcha enrolment is only marginally lower than their population ratio in the village.

The gender-wise break-up of enrolment shows a positive trend for Lepcha girls. The percentage of girls in the primary and middle school level (Junior High School level in Sikkim) is at par or even better than the Lepcha boys, reflecting the gender equality in these levels. However, when it comes to Secondary section, the number of Lepcha girls dwindles compared to the trend

Table 1. Community wise & Stage-wise enrolment in Lingee Secondary School : 2009-2013

Year	Level	Lepcha			Other STs			Non ST			Total		Grand Total & Percentage
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	% Boys	Girls	Total%	Boys	Girls	
2013	I-V	27	24	51	08	08	16	17	21	38	52	52	104
	%			(49.0)			(15.4)			(36.5)			(100.0)
	VI-VIII	23	22	45	11	03	14	33	33	66	67	58	125
	%			(36.0)			(11.2)			(52.8)			(100.0)
	IX-X	15	20	35	04	09	13	64	57	121	83	86	169
	%			(20.7)			(7.7)			(71.6)			(100.0)
	Total	65	66	131	23	20	43	114	111	225	202	196	398
	%			(32.9)			(10.8)			(56.5)			(100.0)
2012	I-V	24	19	43	07	07	14	26	32	58	56	58	114
	%			(37.7)			(12.2)			(50.8)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	20	20	40	06	06	12	37	38	75	63	64	127
	%			(31.5)			(9.4)			(59.05)			(100.0)
	IX-X	12	19	31	11	08	19	63	58	121	84	85	169
	%			(18.3)			(11.2)			(71.5)			(100.0)
	Total	56	58	114	24	21	45	126	128	254	203	207*	410
	%			(27.8)			(10.9)			(61.9)			(100.0)
2011	I-V	21	21	42	12	12	24	30	33	63	61	66	127
	%			(33)			(18.8)			(49.6)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	19	16	35	09	10	19	41	46	87	69	72	141
	%			(24.8)			(13.4)			(61.7)			(100.0)
	IX-X	15	23	38	04	08	12	67	54	121	86	85	171
	%			(22.2)			(7.01)			(70.7)			(100.0)
	Total	55	60	115	25	30	55	138	133	271	216	223*	439
	%			(26.1)			(12.5)			(61.7)			(100.0)
2010	I-V	18	16	34	13	11	24	30	40	70	61	67	128
	%			(26.5)			(18.7)			(54.6)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	17	19	36	06	06	12	41	43	84	64	68	132
	%			(27.2)			(9.0)			(63.6)			(100.0)
	IX-X	12	24	36	04	07	11	49	45	94	65	76	141
	%			(25.5)			(7.8)			(66.6)			(100.0)
	Total	47	59	106	23	24	47	120	128	248	190	211*	401
	%			(26.4)			(11.7)			(61.8)			(100.0)
2009	I-V	21	19	40	12	12	24	34	39	73	67	70	137
	%			(29.9)			(17.5)			(53.2)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	05	14	19	04	06	10	35	38	73	44	58	102
	%			(17.9)			(9.4)			(68.8)			(100.0)
	IX-X	09	12	21	03	06	09	39	41	80	51	59	110
	%			(19.1)			(8.1)			(72.7)			(100.0)
	Total	35	45	80	19	24	43	108	118	226	162	187*	349
	%			(22.9)			(12.3)			(64.7)			(100.0)

* Girl students exceed boy students in total

* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Source : Office of the Principal, Lingee Senior Secondary School, 2013

Table 2: Community- wise & Stage-wise enrolment in Lingee Secondary School : 2005- 2008.

Year	Level	Lepcha			Other STs			Non ST			Total		Grand Total & Percentage
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	
2008	I-V	35	41	76	18	12	30	35	30	65	88	83	171
	%			(44.44)			(17.54)			(38.01)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	13	25	38	02	09	11	18	35	53	33	69	102
	%			(37.25)			(10.78)			(50.98)			(100.0)
2007	IX-X	12	06	18	02	04	06	32	35	67	46	45	91
	%			(19.78)			(6.59)			(73.62)			(100.0)
	Total	60	72	132	22	25	47	85	100	185	167	197*	364
	%			(36.46)			(12.91)			(50.82)			(100.0)
2006	I-V	34	37	71	16	10	26	39	30	69	89	77	166
	%			(42.77)			(15.66)			(41.56)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	15	28	43	03	08	11	20	27	47	38	63	101
	%			(42.57)			(10.89)			(46.53)			(100.0)
2005	IX-X	07	05	12	04	03	07	14	24	38	25	32	57
	%			(21.05)			(12.28)			(66.66)			(100.0)
	Total	56	70	126	23	21	44	73	81	154	152	172*	324
	%			(38.88)			(13.58)			(47.53)			(100.0)
2004	I-V	36	38	74	17	10	27	31	25	56	84	73	157
	%			(47.13)			(17.19)			(35.66)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	15	27	42	04	08	12	14	29	43	33	64	97
	%			(43.29)			(12.37)			(44.32)			(100.0)
2003	IX-X	07	07	14	04	-	04	24	35	59	35	42	77
	%			(18.18)			(5.19)			(76.62)			(100.0)
	Total	58	72	130	25	18	43	69	89	158	152	179*	331
	%			(39.27)			(12.99)			(47.73)			(100.0)
2002	I-V	31	50	81	10	14	24	29	34	63	70	98	168
	%			(48.21)			(14.28)			(37.5)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	13	12	25	06	07	13	17	29	46	36	48	84
	%			(29.76)			(15.47)			(54.76)			(100.0)
2001	IX-X	04	05	09	02	01	03	18	25	43	24	31	55
	%			(16.36)			(5.45)			(78.18)			(100.0)
	Total	48	67	115	18	22	40	64	88	152	130	177*	307
	%			(37.45)			(13.02)			(49.51)			(100.0)
2000	I-V	41	59	100	14	15	29	34	35	69	89	109	198
	%			(50.50)			(14.64)			(34.84)			(100.0)
	VI-VII	13	13	26	07	07	14	18	31	49	38	51	89
	%			(29.21)			(15.73)			(55.05)			(100.0)
1999	IX-X	04	05	09	02	01	03	21	28	49	27	34	61
	%			(14.75)			(4.91)			(80.32)			(100.0)
	Total	58	77	135	23	23	46	73	94	157	154	194*	348
	%			(38.79)			(13.21)			(45.11)			(100.0)

* Girl students exceed boy students in total.

* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Source : Office of the Principal, Lingee Senior Secondary School, 2013

at the lower level. The figure substantiates the high dropout rates among the community both for the boys and girls. The overall scenario of Lepcha girl students shows that their percentage is equitable or even better than the boys at all levels. On the whole, the girl students exceeds the boy students throughout even in secondary section (Class IX-X), except in 2007 and 2008 when percentage of girls is faintly lower than the boys. The trend amply reflects that the gender disparity in terms of schooling is not manifested among Lepcha community even in this rural setting. The lower representation of community at higher level of schooling is a feature of the community itself and not restricted to girls only.

A gender wise breakup of the total school enrolment shows that girls' enrolment exceeds the boys throughout the last twelve years. The trend is similar among the Lepchas. The enrolment patterns corroborates to the fact even though most of the students are first generation learners, the impact of developmental initiatives of the state government in the sphere of education, the implementation of *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*, the implementation of Right to Education shows its impact in terms of girls' schooling. However, this remote village still needs the intervention for improving the retention ratio of Lepcha students in higher school level which evidently will have manifestation in higher education. Once the higher schooling and education becomes a practice, it obviously opens the door for the change in value, perception and approach to life which will be shared by the community as a whole. Once this practice becomes a shared culture, it will be an instrument of transformation for the tribal communities in this rural set up of Himalayan state.

Reflecting on the causes of low retention rate and high drop- out rates among the Lepchas boys and girls, the interaction with the teachers and locals highlighted that many of them are either the first or second generation learners and the fact largely accounts to the sheer absence of the 'cultural capital' in the family and community. This results in lack of motivation and encouragement which otherwise would have facilitated the children to continue their higher level of schooling. The possession of cultural capital in the form of education, knowledge and skill by the community would have been helpful in creating the appropriate ambiance at home, neighborhood and society, which is lacking among many children. The awareness would have been instrumental in translating and motivating the Lepcha children in terms of educational success. Despite this, the enrolment trend evidently reflects that the momentum to take the benefit of spread of education has been initiated in a fair manner at least at the primary school level. This goes legitimately with the objective of SSA in achieving Universalization of Elementary Education and the Right to Education for children. Once the practice takes firm root, it will reinforce the motivation for both girls and boys among the Lepchas in this rural set up and open door to go for higher education.

Performance of Lepcha Students in All India Secondary School Examination (AISSE)

Government Senior Secondary School, Lingee School was upgraded as the Secondary School in 1982 and is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The board conducts the AISSE at the Secondary level. The first batch of students appeared for AISSE in the year 1984. The result since the inception was poor with very low pass percentage. However, since 1997, the school began to improve its performance significantly and since then the pass percentage has been 100 percent except in 1998 and 2008. Around 12.8 percent of the students could not get through the examination (Table 3).

Table 3 presents the Lepcha & Non- Lepcha breakup of the total passed out students at AISSE for 30 years since its up-gradation as the Secondary School. The data reveals a wide community wise disparity among the passed out students. Out of the total 769 students appeared since 1984 to 2013, only 106 (13.7 percent) students who passed out were from Lepcha community. This is evidently a very low percentage for Lepcha community. Unfortunately, within a period of 12 years, there were no Lepcha students who passed the examination.

The gender-wise break of the passed out students reveals better performance of the Lepcha girls accounting to 59 percent of the compared to 40.6 percent of boys indicating no gender biasness among the community in terms of education. Although the communities representation among the pass out students is relatively low, the trend after 2009 shows a remarkably improved scenario among the Lepcha Community. Nevertheless, the percentage of passed out Lepcha students till 2008 was evidently low, consisted of only 30 students that accounts to 6.8 percent out of total 441 students appeared till then. The pass out percentage of Lepchas till year 2013 shows an improved percentage to almost 14 percent, which obviously is much lower than the non-Lepcha community. This reveals that in spite of having educational infrastructure in the village for more than 55 years, the village is not in a position to boast much about the achievement of Lepchas in terms of secondary education which is the gateway for higher education. The gender disparity though is not pronounced in terms of education, the problem of lack of community culture in terms of education is very much reflected in low representation of not only the girls but also that of the boys. However, the representation of Lepcha girls among pass out candidates has drastically improved after 2009, which indicates a positive change among the community in recent years. In addition, one optimistic trend revealed from the observation and field experience that in tune to SSA and RTE for UEE, the trend of sending children to school has begun adequately among the community with no exception of girl child. This is also substantiated by high enrolment ratio in primary section as reflected in Tables 1 & 2. In addition to these, considerable

Table: 3: Community-wise Passed out students in AISSE from Lingee Secondary School.

Sl No	Year	Non-Lepchas			Lepchas			Total Failed	Total appeared
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total		
1	1984	01	02	03	-	-	-	13	16
2	1985	05	04	09	01	01	02	05	16
3	1986	02	01	03	-	-	-	16	19
4	1987	04	-	04	-	-	-	02	06
5	1988	02	-	02	-	-	-	09	11
6	1989	08	04	12	-	01	01	06	19
7	1990	06	01	07	01	-	01	03	11
8	1991	08	01	09	01	-	01	01	11
9	1992	03	04	07	01	-	01	10	18
10	1993	11	02	13	01	-	01	01	15
11	1994	19	06	25	-	01	01	15	41
12	1995	10	07	17	-	-	-	03	20
13	1996	13	05	18	-	01	01	04	23
14	1997	07	07	14	-	01	01	00	15
15	1998	08	05	13	01	-	01	10	24
16	1999	07	05	12	-	-	-	00	12
17	2000	11	09	20	01	01	02	00	22
18	2001	07	09	16	01	-	01	00	17
19	2002	08	01	09	01	01	02	00	11
20	2003	09	01	10	-	01	01	00	11
21	2004	09	04	13	02	01	03	00	16
22	2005	09	05	14	01	02	03	00	17
23	2006	05	08	13	01	-	01	00	14
24	2007	16	15	31	01	02	03	00	34
25	2008	07	11	18	01	02	03	01	22
	Total	195	117	312(70.7)	15	15	30(6.8)	99(22.4)	441(100)
%		(62.5)	(37.5)	(100)	(50)	(50)	(100)		
26	2009	19	12	31	05	03	08	00	39
27	2010	26	26	52	04	11	15	00	67
28	2011	17	20	37	04	11	15	00	52
29	2012	36	31	67	07	13	20	00	87
30	2013	35	30	65	08	10	18	00	83
Total	328	236	564 (73.3)	43	63	106 (13.7)	99	(12.8)	769
		(58.2)	(41.8)	(100.00)	(40.6)	(59.4)	(100)		

Source : Office of the Principal, Lingee Senior Secondary School, 2014, December

* Pass percentage also includes students who passed out appearing compartmental examination

* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

number of Lepcha students are studying in various feeder schools in the locality like Karjee Junior High School, Badamtam Primary School, and private schools like St. Peters and Venus School in the GPU.

Scenario in Higher Education and Service

Table 4 shows an emerging trend in attaining higher education and service among the members of the Lepcha community. At present, there are twenty one Lepcha students studying in B.A, B.Sc, B.Com (Honours) in various colleges

of Sikkim and one boy student pursuing MCA course. Among those who completed graduation and are not yet employed are four (2 males and 2 females). Interestingly after 2010, the community participation in regular post graduate course is also conspicuous as now the village can boast of six Masters Degree holders, out of which three girls and one boy have successfully completed the course. Here also, girls outnumbered the boys. Out of thirty two Lepcha students pursuing bachelors, technical and professional degree in various colleges, eighteen are female while fourteen are male. The trend adequately reflects that girls in the village are gradually breaking the glass ceiling and the gender stereotype, which will definitely contribute and integrate this aspect in collective culture of the community. This also reflects no gender biasness among the community in terms of education, which is an evolving culture in recent years.

Among those who are in service sector, many are working as Primary Teacher (PT), Graduate Teacher (GT), Post Graduate Teacher (PGT) and Lepcha Language teachers in government schools. Teaching is the most widely opted service among the community and out of 17 who are employed, 16 are teachers working in various government schools in Sikkim, while one male is a dentist. The observation highlighted that the community is gradually picking up momentum in terms of higher education which enables them to enjoy the state extended benefits and reservation in service for the community.

Table 4: *Lepchas in higher education and Service*

Category	Boys	Girls	Total
BA, BSc, B.com (Undergoing)	09	12	21
BA, BSc, B.com (Completed)	02	02	04
MA	02	04	06
MCA (Undergoing)	01	-	01
	14	18	32
Service			
Teachers in Government school	09	07	16
Doctor (Dentist)	01	-	01

Source : Field Work, November, 2015

UNDERSTANDING LEPCHAS' PERCEPTIONS ON GIRLS EDUCATION

In recent time, the community began to witness change in their awareness level and perspective responding positively towards educational opportunities extended in the state. Various initiatives and implementation of state and centrally sponsored government schemes like free text-books, exercise books, uniforms, raincoat, shoes and shocks, school bags and mid day meal programmes up to elementary school level with an objective of UEE has its impact among the Lepchas . The state government's provision of financial incentive and scholarships to students for pursuing higher education has been reflected in the changing educational scenario of the community. Two

Lepcha students from the locality have been selected for Honourable Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship Scheme and have been studying in reputed public schools like Pinegrove School in Hilmachal Pradesh and St. Xavier's Pakyong, Sikkim. Moreover, educational degree as an eligibility criteria for employment market, both government and private has been the incentive for many Lepchas. The change in perception and attitude towards girls education can be reflected in the opinion of few respondents.

Forty years old Songmit Lepcha who is educated up to class X and also served as the Panchayat President of the GPU in the past feels that the illiteracy among older generation, poverty and age old customs like consumption of alcohol are the factors for the low educational status among the Lepchas. The age old system of consumption of '*Chi*' (fermented millet beer), makes them using the cereals for that purpose instead of using for productive purpose. These factors collectively resulted in lack of awareness which apparently has affected the aspirations for higher education among the Lepcha in the past. However, Mrs. Songmit feels that the new generation have realized the importance of education and have become aware of need for education and is now moving in right direction. She feels that women need to be economically self reliant for which awareness and opportunities are required. If women are to be empowered, education is the only instrument that gives the women due status and helps her to exploit her capabilities. She categorically believes that should not be any gender bias in imparting education. The girls of the community are responding positively towards educational initiatives undertaken by the state government.¹

51 year old Mrs Normit Lepcha who studied up to primary level, set an example in the community by educating all her five children. Her husband is just literate and both of them takes overall responsibilities of the household. Apart from the farming in their five acres of land, her supplementary income includes income from her small stationary shop, cattle rearing and piggyery. She is the first woman in the community to send her daughter to college. Now, she is the proud mother of two daughters and one son all having MA degree and another son studying MCA. One of her daughter being the first women graduate in the village, and two of her son and daughters have have successfully completed postgraduate course as regular students from Sikkim Central University.¹

Premit Lepcha, a 28 year old young girl working as a Lepcha Language teacher in a government school is the daughter of Mrs. Normit Lepcha. Being the first Lepcha women graduate, she is obviously proud of her achievement. Keen on upgrading herself education wise, she completed her MA from Indira Gandhi National Open University. Brought up among five children, her schooling and college days were not without problems. It was the sheer hard work and struggle of her parents, she has come up to the expectations of every one and she gives all these credit to her parents. Giving her opinion on girls'

education, she feels that there should not be any discrimination. She has been discriminated by her parents for her education. Commenting on the importance of education, she said it provided her the doorway for being self-reliant, to be economically independent and in overall it helped her to be confident and empowered. In general, education helped her to achieve inter-generational mobility, provided better opportunities, elevated her status, helped to earn respect and dignity in society. She feels that poverty, poor family background, illiteracy of older generation, carefree nature of the community are the factors responsible for low achievement of education among the Lepchas. However, she feels that among the recent generation, things are apparently changing with the right initiative of state government, the community is responding positively in terms of education.¹

Her younger sister Pemjamit Lepcha is also a proud girl to be the first to attend University at M. Com level. She is highly motivated, ambitious and wants to pursue academics. She feels that education has brought respect and dignity in her life.

Similar perceptions were revealed in personal interview with other members of the community, community leaders and teachers. Although the pace of change is slow, the change has begun to be manifested and the perception towards girls' education has undeniably observed change.

The discussion revealed various barriers pertaining to socio-cultural, economic, psychological nature accountable for the slow trend of education among the Lepcha community in the recent past. The socio-culturally sanctioned practices like consumption of 'Chi' (fermented millet beer), alcoholism, carefree nature and lifestyles; poverty and economic backwardness due to uncertain agricultural production on the hilly terrain, in the recent past were widely regarded by the respondents as major factors hindering the educational achievement. Since majority are first or second generation learners, there is sheer absence of cultural capital among the community resulting in lack of motivation and awareness among the parents; which could have otherwise contributed in creating proper study culture at home for children. This results in poor performance, high detention and repetition rates which largely explains the causes of high drop rates of the students. The practice of keeping children at home to assist in domestic chores, to look after their young siblings, agricultural operations have been reported for low representation of Lepcha students especially the girls in the past. All these factors tend to have a psychological impact on the children and hinders the cognitive development of the child thus affecting the educational performance.

However, the growing awareness and realization has been noticed among the community for sending both girls and boys for higher level of education. The realization that educational achievement widens the scope of employment opportunities and occupational mobility, can contribute to enhancement of social status has been observed amply during the interaction with the teacher,

parents and community leaders, The discussion also revealed the changed perception and support for both boys and girls education. Provided the performance of the girl child is encouraging the community does not much reflect the gender biasness and equally support the girls' education. This evolving awareness bias is lot to do with the continuous effort of the state government in extending educational opportunities among all sections in the state. The growing number of enrolment in both government and private school, the increasing inclination for sending the girls' to higher education indicates the changing attitude of the people regarding the education in general and girls' education in particular. The trend of sending the girls to the under graduate courses has been started and there are considerable number of Lepcha girls and boys, who are studying at various colleges of Sikkim. Seven Lepcha woman employed as teachers is one motivating factor for more Lepcha girls to continue their higher education. This also boosted up the morale of the whole Lepcha community to send their girl child for education which will bring them respect, honour, dignity as well as improve their economic status.

CONCLUSION

The study adequately highlights that the community began to witness changes in the perception on education of girl child. The awareness that educational achievement widens the scope of employment opportunities, enable occupational mobility, enhancement of social status and acts as an empowering medium has been realized by the community. Even though, the drop out rates and retention problems were still observed in high school education, the community shows signs of motivations for higher education. This is reflected by the emerging trend of girls attending the professional and university courses even though fewer in number. The few girls attending higher level of education can be the motivation for others. Once the trend is established in the community, it will be reflected in the socio- cultural values and practices; ingrained in the community level as the culture, thus facilitates the reproduction of cultural capital that becomes a shared culture of the community. The momentum has begun and the Lepcha society in Lingee shows the sign of imbibing the new cultural values that will facilitate education for the children in general and girls in particular that will enhance the socio- economic status of this tribal community in this remote tribal village.

END NOTES

1. Personal Interview, December, 2014

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

[On August 1, 2016 D N Dhanagare, a noted sociologist of India, wrote the following letter addressed to Professor Rajat Kanti Das, at present The Editor of JIAS, in connection with the "Review" of his book entitled "The Writings of D N Dhanagare" (The Orient Black Swan, 2014) in the Journal of Indian Anthropological Society]

Dear Professor Rajat K, Das,

A review of my book mentioned above had appeared in *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*, written by you, was published in the journal's Vol. 49 No.1 (March 2014) about which I was totally unaware. When we met briefly at the Prof Ramakrishna Mukherjee Memorial Seminar cum Lecture series in I.S.I Kolkata, held in March 2016 you were kind enough to inform me about the same. Soon after our meeting, I got a copy of the journal's issue on return to Pune. Many thanks for your kind follow up action. Please forgive me for this inordinately delayed response.

There were a couple of tragedies among my relatives and hence the delay. Kindly excuse me.

Let me say how I feel beholden by the extensive note you have taken while reviewing my book. Your couple of points of criticism are fair and I have taken note of the same. You are right in saying that social anthropology has been tagged by me with a strong sociology orientation and doing so I tend to sidetrack the basic concerns of biology and culture in the development of the science of anthropology (page 153). Just to clarify my position, without appearing to be ignoring biology and culture, I was simply focusing on the strong impact of sociology- theory and practice on anthropology as practised today. In doing so my attention was perhaps centered on M N Srinivas + Andre Beteille and the way social anthropology (structural functionalism of A R Radcliffe Brown) identified itself with sociology as it shaped itself in the Delhi School of Economics. I do admit that from G S Ghurye down to Iravati Karve, D.N. Majumdar and Surjit Sinha biology and cultural aspects were emphasized both in teaching and research.

While commenting on the way discourses and dialogues held in reducing the gap between sciences, I have mentioned: philosophy, political science and Anthropology on one side and sociology, economics, history, women studies (on the other) (see page 154). You have very rightly pointed out why such a classification? I admit. There was no intention to suggest this as a twofold classification. Instead of writing all these social sciences in one go, they were written just in a style of expression; or it could have been my subconscious choice as I find myself working close with economics, history and women studies that I chose that expression.

Hope a copy of this review has been sent to my publisher Orient Blackswan. Do let me know. Nonetheless meeting you in ISI was a rich bonus of my visit to Kolkata this time.

With warm regards,

D.N. Dhanagare

August 01, 2016

BOOK REVIEW

Migration and Human Variation- Chumki Piplai, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2014. ISBN 8183244602, Price :Rs. 750; Pages: 209.

The book under review is based on the author's Ph.D. thesis in Anthropology of the University of Calcutta. The book is based on migration of migrated tea garden labourers, namely Oraons and Tamangs. Migration is a difficult concept to define because it includes people who move for different reasons across different spaces. Demographers lack a single, operational definition for migration because it occurs under different conditions. The causes of migration are related to the specific contexts in which they take place. The 'Push' and 'Pull' model is worth to explain the causes, which consists of economic (opportunities for better job, income), cultural (marriage, employment, education), political (security and safety), environmental (famine, draught, flood, etc) differentials. However, tea garden labourers migrated in the Jalpaiguri tea gardens from two major streams, one in 1891 from Nepal and adjoining Darjeeling district and other was from Chotanagpur region. Labour contractors were recruited to ensure regular supply of labourers, who persuaded or forced the tribal people from backward areas to migrate to the tea plantations. After joining the tea gardens as labourers, they settled permanently at the Dooars region of Jalpaiguri District.

In the book, the effect of migration has been reviewed very nicely, but the literature is very old. It would have been better to include some recent literature to enrich the knowledge of the readers. Literature review comprised of areas that includes demography, physical growth, adult body dimension, haematology and blood pressure. Here the author has carefully raised the issue of adaptive responses and barriers to adaptation like sociocultural, length of stay of the migrants in the new place, effect of acculturation, etc. The objectives of the study have been framed in the knowledge gap detected in the Indian context. The primary focus was to identify the biological changes of the migrants, which might be attributed to adaptation (due to change of physical environment) and secondly to test the possibility that the changes might not be due to acculturation or coincidental.

Material and Methods section covers the history of tea industry in Jalpaiguri district, detail description of the places where the migrated population settled, history of studied population group and the rationale of selecting the area and population. The study population were Oraon tea garden labourers (migrant), Tamang tea garden labourers (migrant) and Oraons of Chota Nagpur (presently Jharkhand) as sedente group. Study design have been described in accordance with the objectives of the study, therefore, in order to identify the effect of physical environment, comparisons between sedente and migrant groups were inevitable in respect of the biological variables. Again the migrant group was also compared with another migrant group settled in the similar physical environment so as to identify the change that have taken place uniformly due to change of habitat or may be the changes are not uniform on both the migrant groups. Detail description of the method of data collection and variables considered for the study have been provided.

Chapter 3, demography begins with some basic demographic parameters like population structure, fertility, mortality, family planning practices, etc. Each of these parameters are affected by migration. Because migration occurs under different circumstances, the demographic implications for receiver populations is not the same in all the cases. For example, when large number of people migrate to another place, infrastructure problems may arise. So, all migrants cannot be analyzed with the same theoretical framework. Apart from its spatial dimension, migration also implies the disruption of work, social life, and other patterns. Besides, multiple migration have

important implications and affects population structure. The author has tried to show such effects with fertility, mortality, marriage patterns, selection intensity, etc. in both the migrant population groups and compared those with the sedente group. Some of the parameters like fertility and mortality have been shown on the basis of family income of the migrant groups.

Physical growth of children is a dynamic and evolving process. It is neither unitary nor something that moves along in a straight line. Rather, multiple forces interact in concert with a child's individual attributes, to shape his or her physical, cognitive, social and emotional maturation. Children and adolescents have age and stage-related developmental needs, vulnerabilities and capacities. The author has made it clear that migrant children are shorter and lighter than the sedentes. Both the migrant groups showed similar trend of growth curves in earlier ages but diverge in later ages; the issues can be thought as the consequence of socio-economic, nutritional and genetic factors. The circumstances and events that characterise children's experience as a result of mass movements and forced displacement can be described as an accumulation of risk. This accumulation creates a continuum of effect throughout all phases of the children's experience, from emergency response to eventual repatriation and reintegration. The consequences for children are not uniform. They are a function of age and gender, and the availability of social structures and networks that normally serve a protective function. Considering the physical body dimension of adults- Tamangs show the adaptive responses to colder region and which is different from the Oraons. It indicates that the genetic, socio-economic, nutritional factors have made such a different adaptive responses on the populations. However, the study have noted that the adaptive responses in physical body dimension were more noticeable in females than males.

Haematological traits and blood pressure have been presented in Chapter 5. The summary data pertaining to hemoglobin (Hb%), packed cell volume(PCV) and blood pressure of all the groups have been presented nicely in the table along with graphical presentation. There were very little difference in hemoglobin level or packed cell volume between migrant or sedente group. However, blood pressure data indicates some kind of difference, which may be due to the effect of urbanization.

In sum the author tried to see the effect of migration with conventional method of comparison between migrants and sedentes and observed the effect on infant mortality and some anthropometric traits. It would have been better to see the socioeconomic status and health condition of the study population simultaneously. It has often been documented that the health of migrants deteriorated rapidly due to socioeconomic status, poor working condition, lower salaries, risk of work related injuries as well as limited access to health care services (because of poor communication skill). Therefore migrants continue working despite bad health condition. Given this perspective, this fresh view makes the read of this book very worthwhile.

Biological Anthropology Unit
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Subrata K. Roy



OBITUARY

Professor Sameera Maiti

(1 November,1972- 29 March, 2016)

Dr. Sameera Maiti was a Professor of Anthropology at Sikkim Central University, Sikkim. She was born in Nagpur (Maharashtra) on 1st of November 1972, and completed her education in Lucknow. She did her graduation from Avadh Girls' Degree College, a very reputed college in Lucknow with Anthropology as one of her subjects. Sameera and I met in 1993 when both of us took admission in the postgraduate course in Anthropology. She opted for Social Anthropology as her special paper and secured highest marks in the postgraduate final examinations, for which she was awarded a gold medal.

Initially she joined the Department of Anthropology, Lucknow University in the capacity of a part time lecturer. Later, she became a full time lecturer in the Department. Sameera has bagged many honours and accolades in her short span of her illustrious career. She had the honor of becoming a National Fellow in Arts, Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Sangeet Natak Academy), Government of India in 2003; in the year 2004 she joined Queens University in Belfast, United Kingdom as Charles Wallace Visiting Fellow. She was also the National Associate at Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla from 2010 onwards. In 2011 she joined Oxford University as Commonwealth Staff Fellow.

Sameera reached the pinnacle of professional career when she was appointed Professor of Anthropology in Sikkim Central University on 30.06.2014. This was followed by her appointment as the Head of the Department and Dean of Human Sciences, a designation she held till the time of her passing away.

Her research interests included Anthropology of arts, marginalized and indigenous cultures, gender issues in tribal and rural areas and demography. Besides a comprehensive and in-depth study on the Tharus, she also did research on the Bhotias of Utrtrakhand and Karens of Andaman islands.

She published her thesis in the form of a book entitled "The Tharu: Their Art and Craft", published by Northern Book Center in 2004. The book received wide recognition from the academia.

She was an admirer of arts and crafts and was bestowed with rare artistic flair, which helped her gain such an astute insight in the till then unknown world of crafts of Tharus. Her book gave an inexhaustible account of the Tharu arts and crafts which was carefully and laboriously elaborated by the numerous black and white photographs, maps, drawings and illustrations. One of her suggestions was to find a way to market and popularize these products and to help the tribal community.

Her research paper titled “The Price of Progress: The Dying Arts” among the Karen of Andaman islands, India was presented at an international conference at Queens University, Belfast. Later this paper got published as a chapter in the book edited by Dr. Maruska Svasek titled “ Moving subjects, moving objects transnationalism, cultural Production and emotions”. This paper is an invaluable contribution in the field of Social anthropology where she describes the dynamic relationship between emotion and art in a critical manner in order to augur the impact of this dynamics on the protection of cultural heritage. The core study offers a fascinating account of the interplay of emotions, arts and the politics of tribal relations.

Sameera wrote another exemplary paper on the Bhotia tribe, titled “Question of Rights: A case study of the Bhotia of Uttarakhand (India), published in the journal Anthropology in Action. In 2006, her paper titled “Continuity and Change: Social Institutions of the Tolcha Bhotia was published in the edited book “Scheduled Tribes and Development” by Serial Publications, New Delhi.

The sheer magnitude of her research work in such a short span of time truly shows her passion for the subject of Anthropology. She will always be remembered for her research work on areas that remained unexplored.

She was respected and loved by all, be it her coworkers, students, staff or her friends. She had great respect for her teachers who helped to shape her career and personality. She was an amicable, social and jovial person who took time out of her busy schedule to keep in touch with her friends from around the world. As a friend she was an extremely genuine, lovable and concerned person who was ever ready to listen to any problems and give instant suggestions. I received so many phone calls from her students who had so much to share. So many occasions were repeated down the memory lane.

A true lover of art and natural beauty she was bestowed with tremendous artistic talent. She really enjoyed working in Sikkim and found the weather so thrilling that sometimes she just gave me a call to describe the beautiful rains and vast panorama of nature which she could see from the window of her room. She was naturally gifted with a brilliant mind, keen and sharp observation skills. She was extremely laborious, disciplined, organized and kept herself updated with regards to the discipline. She had an undying enthusiasm to learn and better one’s own knowledge and to live each moment of life to the fullest.

One of the most admirable qualities about her was her dedication towards work and students. Her ever smiling face and willingness to assist her students has left an everlasting impression on their lives. “Come hell or high water, one could be sure that if it’s her class, it will be taken”. During my visit to Sikkim in September 2014, I found her so dedicated, giving personal attention to the smallest needs of her department.

Mortal men forget that we are dust and shall ultimately return to dust. All things great and small with utmost might have to yield and submit to that divine call which is inevitable. Thus so, a dear friend bid adieu to the world on 29th march, 2016, finally resigning herself to the almighty. In the last few months preceding her death, her final words on public platform proved to be quite prophetic. “He is the best of all judges and in him do I put my trust”.

Such was her faith in god that even after fighting a long battle with cancer, she never once complained about it to anyone. She would just smile and say that god is kind. All is fine. It was this unshakeable faith in almighty that even in her worst times of physical and mental agony, she somewhere from inside, found the strength to smile. Although death laid its icy hands on her but still her memories continue to radiate that warmth which will keep her alive in our hearts till it is time for us to depart ourselves.

One of the hardest things for me, as her friend is to mention her family. It was simultaneously her biggest strength and weakness. She leaves behind her ailing parents, an elder brother and a younger sister. She was devoted to her family and every decision of her life, major or minor was taken with the thought of how it would impact her family.

She may have gone but her legacy will go on forever in the form of her students who will strive to be like her in work. The anthropology fraternity will miss her forever.

Dr. Shashi Bhatia
Department of Anthropology
Lucknow University

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