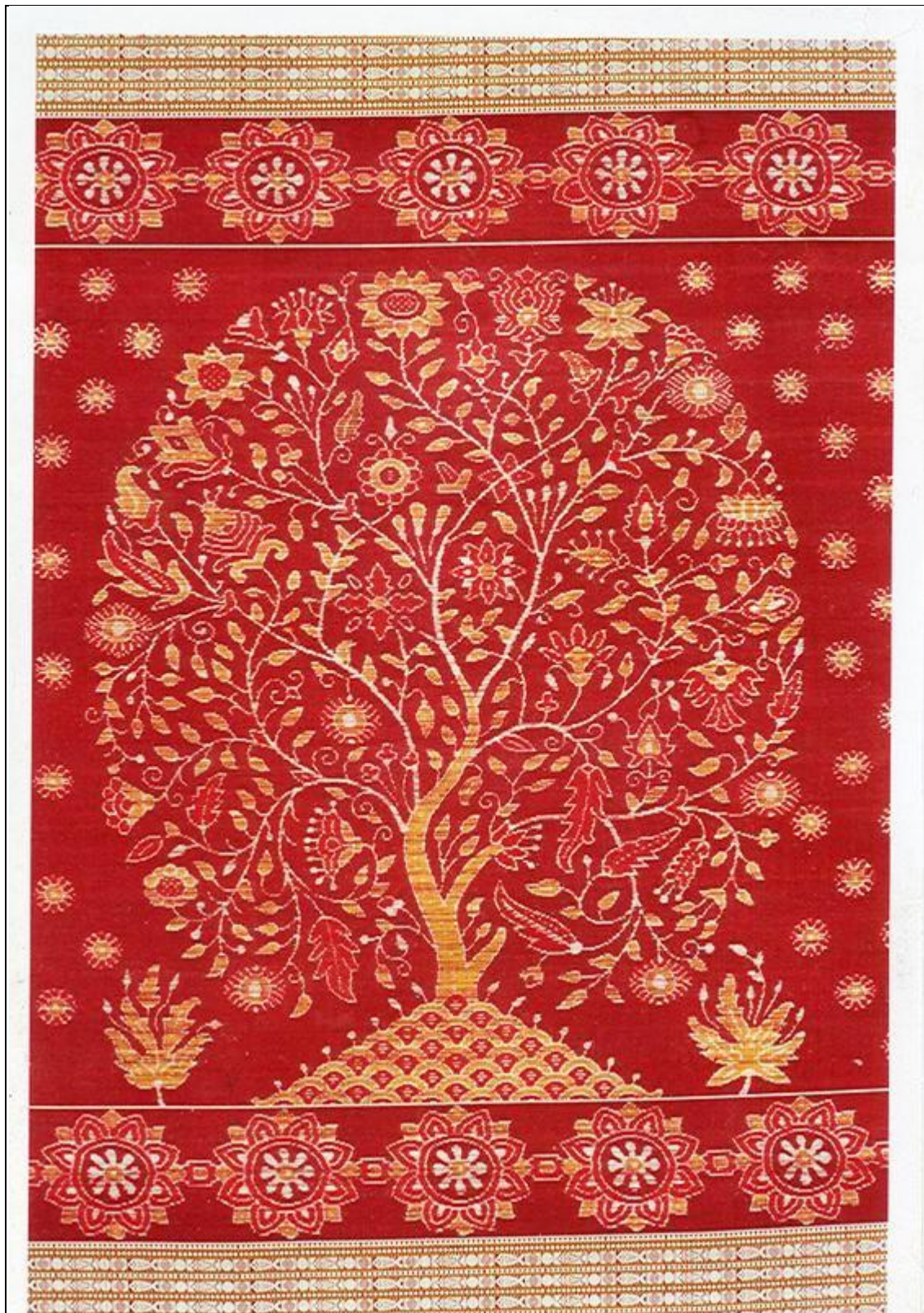


Lokaratna



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Lokaratna is an international e-journal of Folklore Foundation; India collaborated with World Oral Literature Project, Cambridge University. Folklore Foundation has an international repute of bringing out digital journal disseminated in more than 70 universities and institutes around the globe. The purpose of the journal is to explore the rich cultural heritage of Odisha in particular and interdisciplinary search in general, for a wider readership. Any scholar across the globe interested to contribute on any aspect of folklore and allied areas is welcome. This volume represents the articles on culture, folklore, education, and language pedagogy.

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From The Desk of the Editor-In-Chief

Human knowledge expressed in the philosophy, aesthetics, literature, drama and arts had dominated the history through the ages. Now a time has come where individual human freedom has shrieked with the marketization of the globe where culture, literature and arts have also been a valuable good. In 1080 Chittaranjan Das, a great thinker of our time had written, "Almost all over the world at present, as people are becoming more and more aware of the gods that have failed them, the heroic in them are searching for alternatives, an alternative in science and technology, alternatives in political and economic patterns, and also an alternative in education. Man everywhere has never been so rude and ruthless in throwing away the old idols as he is now. It seems there is going to be a total leap, a decision in the direction of the vertical."(Chittaranjan Das, *Searching for an Alternative*, 1980, P. 14)

Inter-creation of the divine to human and human to divine turns the history of time. Human divinity with aesthetics helped to see the invisible within for a quest for the transcendental. What are that idea and thought that could survive the earth, human values and aesthetics that bring happiness to the human society?

At this juncture, writers and researchers taking an interest in the study of landscape, river, mountain, nature and the nativity connected to the collective memory locate one's individuality with the togetherness. Folklore and language with their roots in the earth and life have the esoteric knowledge to fulfil the unfulfilledness of the human society with harmony. Nature act and human captures it through imagination, memory, and creativity manifested in words and visuals.

Now, scholars are engaged in the field study and explore the orality of the knowledge from the diverse spaces of this country to connect the literature with the memory, history and identity. I wish that in future, *Lokaratna* will come up with more assurance in the field of literature , folklore and language.

I am thankful to Dr Anand Mahanand and the team of editors for the task to bring the ideas and thoughts of the scholars, new and celebrated together in a platform that is thriving with creativity and innovation.

Mahendra Kumar Mishra

From The Desk of the Executive Editor



Cultural Representations and Folk Narratives

“Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced” (Stuart Hall 2010, p.1)

Culture is understood as something best that has been thought and said in a society. It is expressed in the forms of narratives such as songs, tales, art, paintings, music, literature, and world-view and so on. India is a store house of such narratives. We have abundance of such forms that have been part of our living traditions since time immemorial. It will take ages for us to explore and understand them. Nevertheless, some efforts have been made in the past to explore such narratives by way of translation, documentation and commentary by some erudite scholars like Verrier Elwin, Alan Dundes and A. K. Ramanujan, and so on. Their works give us access to such valuable resources of our culture. However, such explorations should not be studied on the face value but read critically. The critical reading will help us explore many more things that lie beyond the surface level of meaning.

The primary focus of many articles in this volume of *Lokaratna* has been representation. For instance, Koutuk Dutta in his article “Romantic Sensibility in the Works of

Verrier Elwin: A Study” defines romanticism and describes the tenets of romantic sensibilities and places Verrier Elwin’s works in the light of romantic sensibility. Indranil Acharya and Moumita Dutta in their article “Magic Meets Mundaneness: A Re-reading of Thakurmar Jhuli” study a collections of tales that has been popular since the Swadeshi movement. They argue that these narratives are not just entertaining stories for children but are repository of historical, economic, ethnographical and cultural knowledge. Priyadarshini Mishra’s article “Gender and Culture of the Dongria Kondh of Odisha: A Preliminary Assessment” describes the role of women in shaping the folklore of the country. The article titled “Shadow Plays in Karnataka” by Basavaraj Naikar gives a historical account of shadow play and argues that it has its origin in India. It also describes the art form that is prevalent in Karnataka and elaborates its various aspects. Rashmi Das’s article “Kohinoor Theatre of Assam” explores the history of mobile theatre of Assam and studies features that are very specific to it. Arpeeta Sharma’s article “Breaking of the “Bahadur”: Reading the song Bir Gorkhai within the Context of the 2007 Gorkhaland Movement” studies the song “Bir Gorkhai” and highlights how the song gave an alternative image of the Gorkha people as opposed to the popular image of bahadur or chowkidar”. Sandeep Chattaraj studies the neglected historicity and representation of the indigenous communities of West Bengal such as Kharia Sabar, Malpaharia and Lodha etc in his article “Decolonizing the Indigenous Identity: Rewriting the History and Identity of Indigenous People Living in Jangal Mahal of West Bengal”. Sudeshna Chanda and Sharmila Chotaray in their article “Soap Opera and Its Audience Reception: A Review of Shifting Paradigms’ explore the shifting paradigms of media theory with special reference to soap opera and study how feminism has uplifted the interpretation of the women genre soap. Nancy Yadav discusses the Bonda myths and relates them to Ramakatha by bringing in oral and ritual gestures and religious beliefs in her article “Construction of

Bonda Identity: Manifestation of Ramakatha within Indigenous Bonda Myths”. Kaushik Das’s article, “The Supernatural Beings of Water: A Discourse in the Koch Folk Religious Beliefs” discusses the role water plays as represented in the folk narratives of Koch community of Assam. Samiksha Patnaik’s article, “Nature and women in Caribbean colonies: in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*” makes a comparison between women colony. It discusses how women are treated as site of imperialism in their own homeland. Abhijit das and Somak Mandal in their article titled, “Exploring *Teetash Ekti Nadir Naam*: A Reading in Linguistic Anthropology” discusses the trials and tribulations of a marginalized tribal community named “Malo” through the reading of Advaita Malla Burman’s novel which is treated as an anthropological document of the said community. Suman bantawa’s article, “Folk Medicines in Vogue in Nepalese Folk Community” discusses the system and classification of natural folk medicines in Nepalese community vis-a-vis sociocultural transactions. Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty’s article “Evolution of Language and Identity of English Narratives in Postmodern India: An Eclectic Study” throws light on the evolution and continuity of Indian novels in English in post-colonial era highlighting different dominant concerns. Priyambada Pal’s article titled “Language against the Truth – A Critical Discourse Analysis of Arundhati Roy’s Polemics” foregrounds the relationship between language and truth in the light of Arundhati Roy’s writing by doing a Critical Discours Analysis (CDA).

The pedagogy section of the volume too has some important reflections on teaching language. Prof. Anvita Abbi’s article “Hegemony of One Language as a Tool of Subjugation” highlights the struggle of minority languages and marginalized societies keeping their identities alive before the hegemony of the dominant language(s). Revathi Srinivas and P. Sunama Patro in their article “Effects of Repetition on Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition”

discuss the role and function of repetition in vocabulary acquisition. Sanjay Gulati, Seema Singh and Akanksha Gupta in their article “Community knowledge in Schools Storytelling Festival, Story Mapping and Village Mapping in Chhattishgarh” discuss how integration of learners’ knowledge of their own community, traditions and beliefs through story telling could help learning by engaging the listener and story-teller. Nivedita Vijay Bedadur in her article titled “A Culturally Sensitive Pedagogical Model for the Multilingual Context of English Language Teaching in India” suggests an alternative model of language teaching. This issue also includes a report of a state-level seminar on “Inclusive Approach to Education of Tribal Children” organised by SCERT, Chhattishgarh and ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth. It is hoped that readers will get insights and ideas about inclusive education and its benefits from this report.

In addition to the above we have a book review on Anand Mahanand’s latest book *Oral Traditions of the Indian Tribes* reviewed by KBS Krishna. We are happy to include a conversation with Professor Julu Sen, carried out by Shravasti Chakravarty where we find insights about teaching, mentoring and supervision of research. The Khazana section has a few folktales compiled by Subhasis Nanda and Yumnam Sapha Wangam Apanthoi M.

We are thankful to all our contributors for their contributions and thank the board of editors for reviewing the articles. Wish you happy reading!

Anand Mahanand
Executive Editor, *Lokaratna*

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Folklore

Romantic Sensibility in the Works of Verrier Elwin: A Study

Koutuk Dutta

The awakening of sensibility is the most radical change that comes over the English literary scene about the middle of the 18th century. Sensibility during the 18th century was extended to mean the capacity for pure emotion, sensitiveness generally in the face of external nature and the readiness to feel for the poor and the suffering.

Traditional romanticism emphasizes that works of art and literature are to be judged on the basis of impression they produce and not with reference to any rules. It is impressionistic and individualistic, and freedom of inquiry is its keynote. It is concerned with the fundamentals, such as the nature of work and its functions, and not merely with the problems of style, diction or literary genres. The commonly held assumptions about man, God and society, were breaking down, and the Romanticists were thrown back on their own reactions and responses to the facts of life. Reason had failed to answer the fundamental questions about the mystery of life, and so stress shifted to emotion and imagination as safer guides to truth. Pleasure rather than instruction become the end or function of art. Simplicity was emphasized both in theme and treatment. Romanticists have chosen various aspects of humble and rustic life for a number of reasons. The reasons are a) in humble and rustic life feelings are freely and frankly expressed, b) in rustic life feelings are simpler, and so are expressed more accurately and forcefully c) the manners of the rustics are not sophisticated. They are simple and so more conducive to an understanding of human nature and d) in rustic life, human passions are connected with the grand and noble objects of nature, and so they are nobler and permanent.

Poetics and Romanticism

Romanticism aims at truth to nature at the faithful reproduction of reality. This faithful adherence to nature and reality is modified only by one consideration that of giving pleasure. Pleasure is an acknowledgement of the beauty of the universe and of the worth and dignity of man. This function can be performed only by one who looks at the world with love. Pleasure is the basic principle of life and nature. It is through pleasure that man knows feels, lives and moves. We sympathize only because sympathy gives pleasure; sympathy with those in pain and suffering causes inner satisfaction. Knowledge of reality, of essential truths, can be acquired only through sympathy. It is only when our soul is in sympathy with the soul of nature that we see into the heart of things.

Knowledge of truth is a source of spiritual pleasure. The Romanticists study the elemental nature of man, in his elementary instincts and impulses. They study man in his ordinary life. They study the actions and reactions of man and nature through which man acquires a host of ideas and sensations, convictions and deductions. This knowledge they acquire through his sympathy with the objects of nature, and it always results in an "over the balance of pleasure." Romantic truth can be shared by all because it results from the perception of the basic principles of life, i.e. the fact of the unity of nature and man and all other forms of life. Romanticists pierce surface appearances and reach the soul that lies beneath. And because he is a man of greater sensibility, the truth which he discovers is charged with his feelings and emotions. That is why Wordsworth defines poetry as "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." The truth of the Romanticist can be shared by all because it is the realization of basic laws which have always been the same in all ages and countries, "he sings a song in which all can join, and which can please all."

A Romanticist is, therefore, is a general benefactor, a genial friend and companion. It is the message of love and unity that the poet brings, and he seeks to bind all making in ties of mutual love and affection. Nature everywhere speaks to him of the essential oneness of all, the perception of this truth excites him emotionally, and he expresses his own emotions and sensations in his work of art. Therefore, his appeal is not merely to the

intellect, but also to the heart of man. In one of the celebrated passages of 'The Excursion' Wordsworth writes that poetry (literature) has its value and significance in framing models, "to improve the scheme of man's existence and re-cast the world."

Romanticism is an exclusive term. It is impossible to find a definition that equally applies to the Romanticism of all ages and countries; moreover, we cannot even fix upon definition that covers the works of all the romantic poets of an age. The Romantic Movement, says W. J. Long, "was marked and is always marked by a strong reaction and protest against the bondage of rule and custom which in science and theology as well as in literature, generally tend to fetter the free human spirit." Romanticists revolted against all types of social and religious authority. So Victor Hugo rightly defines Romanticism as "liberalism in literature."

Elwin and Romanticism

Is Verrier Elwin Romanticist? If he is a Romanticist then what are the significant romantic elements that pervade his literary oeuvre? And if he is not a Romanticist then what romantic elements are not found in Elwinian discourse? These are the most baffling questions. Three distinct elements of Romanticism have been chosen as the parameters of observing Elwinian discourse.

i) Romanticism as a revolt against social authority:

The Romanticists were all crusaders. They revolted against the customs and conventions that fettered man and hindered the free and full development of his personality. They were greatly influenced by the French Revolution (1789) which sent a thrill of fresh life through the whole civilized world and seemed to bring in an era of realized democratic ideals of liberty, brotherhood and the rights of man. In the beginning, the revolution kindled in Wordsworth a wonderful humanitarian zeal and beautiful dreams of progress and perfection, he eulogistically wrote:

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very heaven.”

Verrier Elwin was also a born crusader. Leonard Schiff, once a member of Christa Sheva Sangh said,

Verrier’s whole concern was, in one sense, a series of unconscious ways of rebelling against a dominant mother, a powerful Evangelical; each stage of his life was one step further away from his mother. (Guha, 13)

In the summer of 1926 Verrier Elwin was awarded a First in his Theology finals. It now appeared, as one of his friends was to write, that Verrier had ‘the world at his feet. Behind him was a brilliant career, before him golden opportunities of service and preferment. He was offered the Vice-Principal’s job at his fathers’ old seminary, Wycliffe Hall. He joined, playing for time and for pleasing his mother. In August another option came to him. He attended a conference at Swarwick where J. C. Winslow a man of great charm and charisma, was looking for young men to tack back with him. In 1927 he arrived India to join J. C. Winslow's, Christa Seva Sangha. Now it is worth nothing – why did Elwin choose Winslow’s experiment, an unknown quantity, over the tried and honourable paths laid before him by Green and Dix? In his memories, Verrier wrote that he decided on India as –

the act of preparation that from my family somebody should go to give instead of to get, to serve with the poorest people instead of ruling them, to become one with the country that we had helped to dominate and subdue. This idea became sufficiently important to break up my Oxford career and was the driving force carried me through many difficult years in India. (Guha, 29)

Not yet thirty, Verrier had already forsaken a comfortable career in England for an uncertain life overseas; cast his lot with a small, struggling sect rather than rest securely within the folds of the Anglican Church; and gone on to become a camp follower and occasional overthrow of the British empire. In 1932 Elwin Kranjia comes up with a scattered collection of hamlets set in a wooded valley in the district of Mandla. Verrier’s

book 'Truth about India' was written in his few weeks in the village and published in London.

This publication drew attention once again to the chasm separating British precept from colonial practice. The 'champions of liberty', he remarked, had turned the subcontinent 'into a vast prison-house.' Instead of forcing 'our alien, unwarranted, extravagant, irresponsible rule upon India by the sword', the British should take heed of Gandhi's 'message of friendliness and hope' and depart before they were thrown out. (Guha, 67)

Like an ardent advocate of Romanticism, Verrier Elwin revolted against the social authority. In his time 'British Raj' was the social authority of India, and they tried their best to curb Elwin's effort. It is amply illustrated in the following lines of Guha.

The home secretary thought 'Elwin's presence among the Gonds in present circumstances could hardly fail to be a disturbing influence and probably the cause of the trouble.' The priest, he remarked, was 'a highly strung neurotic young man who believes he has a mission in India.' Unlike Emerson, the Chief Secretary of the Central Provinces had not yet met Elwin, but after a close study of the Bombay, Secret proceedings decided he did not want him in his territory. He warned the commissioner of the Jabalpur division that 'Elwin is a young man with plenty of brains and is also capable of great self-denial and means well apparently, but is neurotic and imbued with that form of charity which sees well only in him and those who play upon his vanity. (Guha, 67)

Like Byron, Elwin was a born rebel. He mercilessly attacked all the hypocrisies and all the moral commonplaces of English society. He even boldly ridiculed the religious beliefs that were founded on falsehood. He revolted against all forms of exploitation and oppression. This spirit of Romanticism is testified in his own inimitable words.

The struggle from conventional religion into freedom was very hard and, sensitive to other people's opinion as I was at that time; I dreaded opening my letters when I was in Karanjia. The hatred and jealousy I encountered distressed me and cast a cloud only my

happiness. You cannot give yourself to a cause without opening the door to pain, and I have often been desperately worried, unable to sleep at night, over the tribes and their fate; whenever a friend went to jail or was deprived of his forest rights in hunting or fishing, or lost his land, it upset me intensely. The enemies of the tribal people became my enemies, and it was all the worse because so often I was powerless to help. (Elwin, 49)

ii) Romanticism as Renaissance of Wonder:

Theodore Watts-Dunton defines Romanticism as "the renaissance of wonder". This definition comes very close to Pater's famous definition of Romanticism as "the addition of strangeness to beauty". "The desire of beauty", says Pater, "being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty that constitutes the romantic temper." In other words, Pater defines Romanticist as consisting in "a subtle sense of mystery, an exuberant intellectual curiosity, and an instinct for the elemental simplicities of life.' The phrase "the Renaissance of Wonder" means that Romanticism consists in the reawakening of the sense of childlike wonder at the sight of the common, familiar objects of nature and life. This sense of wonder characterized in Elizabethan literature was also amply illustrated in Elwinian discourse. To him, the objects of life and nature had been covered with the film of familiarity, and they did not care to see through this film of familiarity into the mystery that marked behind it. Like the Romanticists, Elwin scraped this film with the result that the familiar objects appeared a glow with a celestial light – the light that was never on land and sea. The strangeness of the familiar things struck him with child-like wonder. Elwin studied the Saoras over seven years. In his famous autobiography, *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin* he very frankly confessed his Renaissance of Wonder:

The beauty of the country was almost overwhelming. When I was younger, I had a feeling for nature akin to that of the young Wordsworth. Natural beauty haunted me like a passion. It was a need for any interest 'unborrowed from the eye.'

But I think that from the very beginning of my time in tribal India I moved on to Wordsworth's further stage of oftentimes hearing the still, sad music of humanity against the background of nature. This was particularly true of my years in Bastar.

Later, in NEFA among the northern mountains, their mystery and grandeur disturbed me with the sense of the universal presence, 'the joy of elevated thoughts', of which Wordsworth writes again. But in the Saora Hills, the appeal of nature was largely sensuous. It was, it is true, always a setting for human beings and yet its impact was almost physical. I ached for it, and when I had to leave it, it was always with a very heavy heart. (Elwin, 99)

The sylvan atmosphere of Saora hills captivated his heart and spelled bound him. So we find his spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings:

What sacrifice could there possibly be in living in the beauty of the Saora hills or in the heart warming atmosphere of Patangarh? There has never been a moment of sacrifice in my life; for everything I have given I have been repaid tenfold, and of myself I can say:

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry stay,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills." (Elwin, 103)

Medievalism was conducive to the sense of wonder and mystery. It was because the Romanticists thought that they saw in medievalism a richer inspiration for the mysterious forces they felt about them that they turned from modern conditions of life towards the folklore and legendary wealth of the Middle Ages. Like the Romanticists, Verrier Elwin seeks the unknown or half known remote areas because in the over charged atmosphere of these landscapes are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty to be won by strong imagination. The second volume of specimens of the Oral Literature of Mahakoshal contains a selection of the folk-songs of the aboriginal population of the Maikal Hills. In the introduction of the Folk-songs of the Maikal Hills, Elwin recounted his serious concern for the preservation of decaying tribal songs.

The beauty of the countryside, the charm of the climate, the friendliness of the people is reflected in the songs. Their poetry is often very beautiful both in form and

content, image and symbol. It is impossible to reproduce in a foreign tongue the often delicate artistry of the originals. But some attempt must be made to do so before this remarkable oral literature passes from the world in the face of the spread of education and the decay of the tribes. (Elwin, 190)

The sense wonder was also effectively produced by the revival of interest in the wild and savage aspects of nature, the supernatural and the mystic outlook. The supernatural world has ever been the world of wonder and mystery, and as such Coleridge, the high priest of Romanticism was enamoured of it. The mystery, the strangeness, the weirdness of the supernatural cast a strange spell on the imagination of Coleridge. Like Coleridge Elwin's imagination worked most vigorously when it called up the mysterious vision of the unseen world. He thought the supernatural world to be more real than the one he lived in bodily. Even the natural phenomena seemed to him to teem with wonder and mystery as much as the supernatural. In his collection of events, he not only reveals the wonder and mystery of the supernatural world but also transforms the familiar, common objects of nature and life into the strangest of things. Elwin's 'The Religion of an Indian Tribe' is a rich store house of mysterious supernatural images. Reference of 'other-world of invisible', 'black-magic', 'tutelary girl', 'spirits' and 'sorcerers' are very common in the discussion of tribal religious practices. Elwin describes that, "The Buyya is a village official who performs the office of priest in most of Gannjam villages .His special function is to maintain the cult of the 'sadru-shrines' and to guard the village lands against the interference of hostile-spirits and sorcerers." (Elwin, 165)

There is a mingling of natural and supernatural in the description of Elwin:

When a new priest is to be appointed, a shaman is called and he, falling into a trance, asks the gods and ancestors whether the proposed candidate is acceptable to them. If they agree, the shaman summons the ghost of the last priest to hold office in the village. (Elwin, 166)

Moreover Elwin's 'Myths of Middle India' is fraught with and based on supernatural events and figures. Elwin collected the following Gond myth from Banjar, Mandla District, and this myth creates a sense of mysterious feeling among the readers.

During Gura married Lohakat-Loharin. The twelve Mata sisters went on tour searching for witches, magicians and wizards of every kind. One day they came to Lohakat Loharin, and said to her, 'Sow the Jawara quickly'. She got bamboo and made baskets, filled them with earth and sowed the grain for Jawara. After eight days it was time for Atwahi. One day that they took the baskets to the river the Mata began to tremble with anger. 'You must make a sacrifice to me' she cried.

Lohakat said to her husband, 'you make a goat, and I will make a young she-goat.' She cut off her tongue and made Dangun do the same, and with their tongues, they made the goats and sacrificed them to the Mata. The Mata was pleased and said; "now you may go all over the world and devour human beings, for you have pleased me by making these goats. Since then there have been goats in the world for the protection of human beings against witches and gods. For whoever offers a goat to the gods is safe. (Elwin, 244)

Like the great Romanticists, Verrier Elwin was amorous of the Medievalism because this is a storehouse of wonder – mystery, magic, chivalry, love which cause wonder.

But there is a clear mark of difference between Elwin's treatment of wonder and mystery and that of Coleridge. Coleridge's greatest contribution to English Romanticism is perhaps his recreation of the medieval atmosphere of wonder and mystery. The 'Ancient Mariner' is wrought with the colour and glamour of the Middle Ages. But Elwin never recreates the mystery or magic but recounted the strangeness and remoteness the mysterious events. Elwin's description has a magical spell to represent the unreal as real. It is unmistakably represented in his famous autobiography –

Once, travelling in the Sherdukpen country, as I was going along a lovely wooded valley, my pony suddenly leapt into the air for no apparent reason and hurled me to the

ground. I was smoking at the time, and everyone was impressed by the fact that I kept my cigar in position and alight. I came down rather heavily, but nothing was broken, though I got an enormous bruise on my rump and had to be carried to the nearest outpost. When I asked what had frightened the pony, the Sherdukpens beamingly explained that there was a ghost living in the tree under which I passed and that he usually threw people off horses when they went below it.

‘But you might have warned me; I complained, ‘No’ they said, ‘we wanted to see whether he would dare to frighten you just like anyone else.

Later it was suggested that the place should be named ‘Elwin's Fall’, but I discouraged the kindly thought for fear that it might be misconstrued. (Elwin, 264)

iii) Romanticism as “Return to Nature”

The expression "Return to Nature" is derived from Rousseau who used it as a political and philosophical dictum intended to revive the concept of ‘noble savage’ and to glorify simplicity in living. It means a return to the external world of sights and sounds – the world of trees, hills, dales, mountains, birds, woods, etc. as well as the elemental simplicities of life uncontaminated by the sophisticated urban civilization – the life of the people who live in the lap of nature. It also signified the return to natural liberty by snapping man-made chains (oppressive customs and conventions). A similar note of reverence towards nature is resounded in the followings words of Verrier Elwin which is printed in his autobiography.

Sometimes people write about the sacrifice I made in going into tribal India. But that is certainly not a virtue I can claim. What sacrifice could there possibly be in living in the beauty of the Saora hills or in the heart-warming atmosphere of Patangarh? There has never been a moment of sacrifice in my life; for everything I have given I have been repaid tenfold. (Elwin, 265)

From his Oxford days, Elwin like to read Wordsworth. Like Wordsworth, Elwin loved intensely though his attitude to nature was different from Wordsworth. Wordsworth looks beyond the colour of the flowers, the Outline Mountains, the beauty of the clouds,

to the divine spirit that breath through them. But in Elwin's love of nature, there is no meditative musing, little sense of mystery, but there is a very lively sense of wonder and delight in the energizing glories of nature. For him, nature is a place of escape from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife. 'The spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling' is recorded in his own inimitable words.

There is first the beauty of the countryside – the distant mountains white with snow, the nearer hills dressed in pine, Oak and fir; the smell of pines; the waterfalls and streams; the banks carpeted with wild strawberries; the great displays of rhododendrons and a score of other multicoloured flowers. The journey over the Sela is unforgettable; haunted, mysterious, remote; the great pass gives the authentic thrill – distance and height are forgotten in wonder. And as you descend, there are the flowers. If there is a paradise in NEFA, this is it; this is it, this is it. (Elwin, 266)

This highly poetic description of countryside reminds us of the Byronic expression:

“There is pleasure in the pathless woods
There is rapture on the lonely shore,
There is a society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea and music in its roar.” (Devy, 124)

Like Byron, Elwin is also a dauntless champion of natural liberty and made whole-hearted effort to emancipate man from the shackles of tyranny. So Elwin was more Byronic than Wordsworthian in his principle.

Some of the earliest stirrings of the Romantic movement are conventionally traced back to the mid-18th century interest in folklore which arose in Germany ... with Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm collecting popular fairy tales and other scholars like Johann Gottfried Von Herder studying folk songs and in England with Joseph Addison and Richard Steele treating old ballads as if they were high poetry. These activities set the tone for one aspect of Romanticism. There was a belief that products of the uncultivated popular imagination could equal or even surpass the educated court poets and composers who had previously

monopolized the attention of scholars and connoisseurs. Verrier Elwin's uncommon interest for the aboriginal poetry and folksongs is a clear mark of his romantic spirit. In 1940s Elwin visited Maikal Hills which was a lovely mountain at the extreme eastern end of the Satpura Range. During his visit, he has documented the bulk of folk songs. These songs are printed in 'Folk-songs of the Maikal Hills', (1994). He himself discloses his interest in the folk-songs,

We have confined ourselves for the present to the aboriginal poetry of the area, for this forms a clearly defined block of literature still little influenced from outside, still preserving much of its freshness and beauty. (Elwin, 189)

Of all the emotions celebrated by the Romantics, the most popular was love. Although the great Romantic works often center on terror or rage, the motive force behind these passions is most often a relationship between a pair of lovers. It was the Romantics who first celebrated romantic love as the natural birthright of every human being. The most exalted of human sentiments, and the necessary foundation of a successful marriage. The theme of love is resounded in Elwin's collection of folk-songs.

You go to the cow's resting-place
And bring the scraps of dung
Get a new wife
And she will prepare your ghursi. (Elwin, 192)

In this folk song, there is the suggestion that the new wife will prepare the ghursi is itself an intimate and romantic thought, for to prepare the fire for the lover is to arouse the fire of love. The instinct of 'love' is very profoundly established in Elwin's famous book 'The Muria and Their Ghotul'. The ghotul is very literally a night club. Love is involuntary. Brain science tells us it is a drive like a thirst. But we think that romance is one of the three basic brain systems that evolved for mating and reproduction. Elwin very carefully documented the disciplined ghotul life which provided sincere training for the Youngers to guide their adolescent romance Elwin had spent a hundred evenings in all parts of the

Muria area with the chelik and motiari and had found, on the whole, remarkable similarity of custom. The sense of romantic wooing is manifested in his description.

Then, at last, the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and girls who are tired after the long days work at home and they lie down at once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts... (Elwin, 125)

Elwin documented how the girls go to massage the obelisk and combed. When a number of girls saw it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise reminded Elwin of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled, Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks. Elwin very ironically described his feelings – “It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule. The sex drive or lust – the craving for sexual gratification evolved to enable us to seek a range of potential mating partners. It is also an important ingredient of romantic love. This sex drive as a mark of Romanticism is sufficiently manifested in the following words of Elwin.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of ‘catch hold of her breasts!’ or ‘How big are her breasts?’ In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy’s arms and rubs his chest and stomach. (Elwin, 131)

Indian art is not an adjunct of religion and metaphysics but belongs in the traditional scheme of knowledge to the realm of Dance, Dramaturgy (Natyasastra) and Poetics (Alamkarasastra) revealing and communicating the major moods and emotion of man (rasas). According to Natyasastra (dramaturgy) of Bharat, “Rasa (literally, flavor, relish) is the seed and fruit of the arts.” The arts generate and consolidate moods,

sentiments, and emotions freed from the fluctuations of fleeting desires and impulses, focus and diffuse these in the minds and hearts of the people. Sylvain Levi, commenting on the Indian theater, observes:

“Indian genius produced a new art, the symbol and summary of which is the word *rasa*, and which can be condensed in one brief formula: the poet does not express, but he suggests.”

That suggestion is the soul of artistic interpretation is emphasized by the classical Indian theory of *Dhvani* expounded by Anandavardhana. It is very worth noting that Verrier Elwin’s narrative is more suggestive than euro-centric expressions of concrete or the sensory world. Description of resistance and protest works as the vehicle of *Rasa* in his writings. Sarojini Naidu, A. K. Ramanujan, Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das and other Indo-Anglian geniuses left a deep impression of Indian suggestiveness in their works. Verrier Elwin’s discourse is fraught with this kind of Indian-suggestiveness. So every page of his essay emits the emotional, romantic aroma which is less expressive but much suggestive.

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Magic meets Mundaneness – A Re-reading of *Thakurmar Jhuli*

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Abstract

Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder anthologised the tales of *Thakurmar Jhuli* in the backdrop of Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. Since then it has remained one of the most favourite children's classics and has been under many scholarly studies for assorted materials evident inside the tales. This book is the treasure trove of information and facts regarding the socio-economic and cultural pattern of the then Bengal. The stories might entertain the children and the adults alike for its fantastical appeal and heroic ideals. But they are in reality, more than what they appear to be in respect to the realistic components carefully concealed under the garb of magic and fantasy. Historical, ethnological, social, economic, cultural, and political and possibly many additional perspectives of reading might excavate the hidden materials lying quietly in *Thakurmar Jhuli*. This study is an attempt to search for the factual instances found in the tales who essentially take the readers to the shore beyond 'seven seas and thirteen rivers' in 'once upon a time'.

Keywords: Magic, Fantasy, Realism, Mundaneness, Children.

"Fantasy begins with seriously entertaining the impossible... Reality does depend upon what one views as probable or even as possible" (Morse, 1)

Fantasy and realism apparently seem to be two conflicting terms which can never come into contact with each other without having some disagreeable essence lending to art and thereby bringing about complete disharmony and chaos. Realism, by its very name, seems to be stimulating our cognitive ability and demands a respectable position in art and literature being a veritable medium of the portrayal of life. On the other hand, fantasy with its pejorative implications is relegated to a very dismal nook of the

bookshelves and derogated as being mere 'children's literature' which itself bears a stamp of either enthusiasm or embarrassment.

Fantasy literature, in Peter Hunt's observation in *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction*, has a dual status-

Fantasy literature is either taken seriously (and enthusiastically), or seriously rejected. It is the root of all literature, an area of advanced literary experimentation, and essential to our mental health; or it is regressive, and associated with self-indulgent catharsis on the part of the writers; or it is linked to a ritualistic, epic, dehumanized world of predetermination and out of tune with post-romantic sensitivity: or it symbolizes the random world of the postmodern. (Hunt, 15)

However, fantasy has somewhat regained its prized status nowadays in world literature being applied in the art in deliberate fashion and having been experimented with varied modes extensively and therefore, is unable to be dismissed by the literary experts the way it has been during much of the twentieth century. Diametrically opposite as the two terms 'realism' and 'fantasy' may appear to the readers at first glance, they are in reality not to be separated from each other without causing some harm to the very intricate manipulation of these twins in the text. Their intertwining characteristics need proper examination for a better understanding of the underlying structural scheme of the two.

Let us consider what Fyodor Dostoevsky has to opine on fantasy in art

"The fantastic must be so close to the real that you almost have to believe in it."
(Scanian, 133)

And here is another valued opinion on fantasy in fiction by Manlove, "A fiction is evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms". (Manlove.C.N, ix)

Fantasy, as a literary coinage might have been relatively new as a genre, nevertheless, it has been in actual use in literature and various forms of art from time immemorial when only an oral culture pervaded human civilization, the element of fantasy can be traced in every niche of our cultural existence from folk tales, fairy tales,

mythologies and all sorts of folk art. India has been presumed to be the very fount of the folk tales (Jacobs, preface) which are abundantly found in every region of the country and Bengal proves to be in possession of an immensely resourceful reservoir of this age-old tradition of storytelling.

Stories especially of fantastical in nature are reserved for children in particular, as their credulous minds are more receptive to the imaginary and somewhat improbable characters and situations. Bengal has seen children in every house tugging hard at the corner of the sareeⁱ of grandmother demanding stories and this desire is fulfilled gladly by the eldest member (grandmothers in most cases) of the house. From there has come to the title *Thakurmarⁱⁱ Jhuliⁱⁱⁱ* in Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder's time-honoured classic for children who have ever since served by its indefatigable beckoning of magic and on the other hand have been widely informed of our culture of bygone eras.

Thakurmar Jhuli being published in the very midst of Swadeshi Movement^{iv} in Bengal in 1907 became somewhat of a flag bearer of our old traditional values deeply rooted in our indigenous culture and in a way, resurrected Bengali folk tales from obvious oblivion. Though Lal Behari Day had already published his *Folk-Tales of Bengal* in 1883, nothing could be compared with *Thakurmar Jhuli* in regard to its popularity. The Bengali intelligentsia became overtly enthusiastic about its worth in Bengali culture, and it was readily accepted as one of the foremost of Swadeshi products in the literary history of Bengal. Rabindranath unequivocally prized Dakshinaranjan's effort to collect the stories and willingly penned the preface to the collection. In his words:

Can there be anything more quintessentially indigenous than *Thakurmar Jhuli* in our country...However; I would like to offer my gratitude to Dakshiranjan babu! In transcribing the oral tales of the grandmothers into printed words, he has amazingly succeeded in retaining the flavour of the original while managing to keep the tales fresh and evergreen. (Majumdar: xi,xiii)

Rai Saheb Dineshchandra Sen aided Mitra Majumder greatly in publishing his *Thakurmar Jhuli* from a renowned publisher at a time when his collection of folk tales had

been ridiculed by the publishers he visited for print. After its abundant praise from every quarter of Bengali people, Dineshchandra himself highly approved of the tales in his *The Folk-Literature of Bengal* in respect to its native authenticity :

...It is not affected by any pedantry or scholarship in classic literature or any modern propagandism...He is in love with the tales as they are related by the rural people of the lower Gangetic valley and gives a faithful version of what he has heard. (Sen, 195)

Equally jubilant seemed Aurobindo Ghosh in his appreciation for *Thakurmar Jhuli* :
The book has marked out an epoch in our literature....This is sure to give him a prominent place in the rank of prominent poets and writers- Bandemataram. (D. M. Majumder, [5])

Thakurmar Jhuli, though nowadays has been relegated to the children's classics section in Bengali literature and has been endowed with little respect in regard to its heralding a very significant genre in the first decade of the twentieth century, it has been attracting scholar's attention in an increasing rate regarding the multifarious facets it holds to the society of Bengal.

Talking birds and animals, prince defeating horde of demons singlehandedly, princess possessing unearthly beauty, witches playing havoc in the kingdom, and opulence and splendor of every kind with most astonishing details that enthralls the readers in *Thakurmar Jhuli* may have indeed something more to offer beneath the layers of grandeur and magnificence of magic and fantasy. As fantasy cohabits with reality, we are unable to overlook the 'realistic' elements in predominantly fantastic tales and this fantasy.

Children in this era hardly can indulge in such paradisaal pleasure of listening enraptured to the stories of 'rupakatha'^v uttered by the old grandmother with her high deftness in the storytelling ability. Her employment of proper inflection, caricature and imaginary imitation of fantastic situation and characters inevitably cast the magic spell on the young minds that have the power to transport them immediately to the land of farthest regions possibly known by any living being. The young minds, years back, had no trouble locating the fairyland across the seven seas and thirteen rivers, nor did they question the imaginary existence of bengama and bengami^{vi}, suka and sari^{vii} who would help the heroes of the tales to expedite their adventures. And so substantial was their fear

of the evils that they had to gasp in horror in the description of the witch's radish like teeth and big colossal ears. Winged horse, magic mountains, flying asp, jewel enthroned snake, bird of gold, diamond trees, a sea of milk, a river of pearly fluid and anything and everything that could be conceived in mind, had a particular expression in the stories uttered by the grandmother. Such was the thrill and delight of the stories that no late-evening could be thought of spending in activities other than weaving dreamland through the stories.

Alas! Those days are gone. We are living now in the cyber-world with everything digitized. Fantasy is currently not a matter of smoky dreams, but of virtually real and visibly existing fact on the tiny screen of the television. Gone is the unlimited expanse of the mind as also the infinite possibility of creative ability of the children. 'Wonder' is not the word to be found in the dictionary of the children, they too are bored with the technological feats around them. Much joy is lost from their childhood, and much damage is done to their originality when stereotyped images appearing on the screen constrict their originaive capability. So now is the time to revive their enthusiasm in tales like *Thakurmar Jhuli* which is the product of the very soil from which they themselves have also sprung.

Tales in *Thakurmar Jhuli* can very well be kept aside for mere children. However, the facts that emerge to the adults if scrutinized carefully may yield results that in fact are quite unsettling. From the very motive of indoctrination in order to abide by the set rules, to follow the existing arrangement, to serve the authority with utmost humility, appropriation of gender roles and to standardize the prevalent class structure can be found with a profoundly destabilizing agent of subversion, revolt and protest of various kinds in the apparently innocuous frame of the stories. Nevertheless, many a real life situations and objects as well are to be found scattered throughout the stories which enhance and confirm our knowledge of bygone eras and systems prevalent in the society.

A very popular sea vessel named 'mayurpankhi'^{viii} was not some figment of fantasy; ships like mayurpankhi, Sukapankhi^{ix} were very much real in Bengal's history when the mercantile communities used to go in the sea voyage with fashionable ships having the

face of a peacock or other birds on the prows of it (Sen, 65). And now we know that peacock was introduced to countries like Babylon and another western part of Europe by no other than sea-faring Indians. In the tale 'Kolabati Rajkanye' we have not only the mention of the two ships but have illustrations of them as well. In the same story, we find reference to *shil-nora*^x, a traditional grinding stone which still can be found in every home of Bengal primarily for grinding and pasting spices.

In 'Kanchanmala and Kankanmala', we see how the day of harvest was being celebrated by making and distributing typical Bengali sweet meats called *pithe-puli*^{xi} with its variety in shape, style, size, taste and name like *chandrapuli*, *mohanbansi*, *kheermurali*, *chandanpata*, *aske pithe*, *chaske pithe*^{xii} etc. . This mouth-watering delicacy in Bengali society is a highly relished dish still now. However, the reference to the dish goes much deeper than mere names when we find that food-items too had certain class division. High-class women were more proficient in culinary ability than that of the lower class, and this becomes very prominent when we see that the fake queen who should have been the maid-servant failed to make superior pitches as the real queen did. Bengali women still decorate the floor with Alpana^{xiii} on auspicious days. They decorate the floor with coloured rice powder drawing patterns, symbols, signs of prosperity and health etc. like the queen in the story 'Kanchanmala and Kankanmala' did while the usurper was unable to show her skill as she belonged to the lower rung of the ladder in the society. These little acts show how certain expertise over certain arts held sway over one's birth and lineage.

Polygamy in the Bengali society had been a prevalent practice at the time, as we find many of the tales like 'Sheet-Bashanta', 'Neelkamal and Lalkamal', 'Princess Kolaboti', 'Saat Bhai Champa' had referenced to more than one wives and this added to the heightening of the tension in the stories as the financially unsecured queens hankered after the king's attention trying to banish the rivals procuring any evil means that might work for their purpose. The co-wives are seen all the time engaged in fighting, bickering and putting tantrums in the palace maddening the king and sometimes tricking him by vile ways. Their lack of peacefulness and instability of minds can be attributed to the deep-rooted patriarchy in the social system where a queen is requisite only to produce male-heir to keep the royal line unbroken or they might go out of favour.

Infertility appears to be a common syndrome to be plaguing the society high and low. While queens in the stories like 'Kolabati Rajkanye' or 'Saat Bhai Champa' had failed to produce any child during the early part of the story causing the king immensely depressed, we find in the shack of the wood-cutter in the story 'Der Anguley' the poor man had had the same trouble. However, one question lurks behind is why a woman is always marked as infertile effacing any possibility of a deficiency in the male characters. If seven queens fail to produce any heir by one king, naturally the doubt falls upon the king. However, patriarchal structure happens to be limiting our sights within a very comfortable periphery. The clutch of patriarchy did not spare the field of education, while the two brothers in 'Kiranmala' were given lessons in scriptures and philosophy, the sister had to learn only the domestic chores, ironically enough it was she who rescued her brothers by her courage, determination, fearlessness and wit.

Though all the stories in *Thakurmar Jhuli* except the animal and humorous stories are centered on the unlimited wealth of the royal family and their manner of living in luxury, we happen to be peeping into the hut of poor people once in a while when unfortunate queens in the tales were sent into exile. In 'Kiranmala', when the king volunteered to find out the condition of his subjects, he eavesdropped on the conversation between the poor sisters whose sole wish was to eat well. Later, in the story, the king banished his once beloved queen with ultimate humiliation by mounting her on a donkey in the tonsured head after which incident the queen left the country and lived across the river in a most hapless state. In 'Saat Bhai Champa', the youngest queen was reduced to the status of a rag-picker clothed in tatters until she was reinstated in the end. In 'Kolabati Rajkanye' two younger queens were left to live in misery, one selling cow dung cakes^{xiv} and the other working as a cleaning maid. Juxtaposed with this are the descriptions of the luxury of the palace indwellers, how their leisure hours were being spent on hunting, gossiping, relaxing under the care of innumerable maid-servants etc. Precious gems, stones, pieces of jewellery had abundant mentions along with the coveted metals like gold and silver which were used even in making beds, hulls, oars, plates and goblets etc. On propitious days or on days when the king seemed to be boundlessly happy, he gave away the jewels to the subjects who were more than eager to have them.

Very naturally there are references to princess surpassing any beautiful woman on this earth, and they usually possessed long rain-cloud hairs, fair skin and enticingly pretty face descriptions with which we are quite familiar from the matrimonial columns of the newspaper even till today.

Curiously, the tales of *Thakurmar Jhuli* did not reserve any place for divine intervention or inspiration either. The characters had to pay for their mistakes or reap the excellent fortune sowed by their courage, love and wisdom. There is hardly any mention of any name of gods and goddesses from Hindu pantheon or from other religion. The single thrust has been put on the action and motive of the characters. Princes are shown as incredibly courageous to gain victory over the witches, demons and khokkas^{xv} only after which have they entitled some kingdom or a greatly aspired hand of a princess. The fathers-in-law seem to be very willing to offer the prince his kingdom or half of it as dowry on the day of marriage with his daughter. Queens are measured on the scale of goodness by their piety, submissiveness and conforming to set customs against which are they either rewarded or punished. Kings too are not spared; they have to live in misery or sometimes in destitution for their gullibility, foolishness and lack of wisdom. To sum up, people are shown in the tales without wearing any garb of supernatural ability endowed by some favouring deity, slightly their inner worth and strength- physical, mental and moral is being very much emphasized.

Therefore, though we find many fantastic elements strewn across the tales, the real-life details can hardly be overlooked. Both magic and mundaneness are so woven into the stories that their relationship appears to be inseparable, instead of labeling it as a mere children's fantasy we need to look beyond the surface structure so that we can become conscious of the varied sketches of real life as well as amuse ourselves with the magic-sip from the enchanted goblets.

Notes:

¹ South Asian female garment

¹ Grandmother in Bengali

¹ Bag in Bengali

¹ Anti-partition movement in Bengal which had had its genesis in 1905 and continued up to 1911

¹ "They are simple tales in which the super-human element predominates" D.C Sen
1920: 232

¹ Imaginary birds

¹ Mythological bird

¹ Large sea vessel with a decorative peacock in its prow

¹ Shape of the bird Suka on the prow of the ship

¹ Shil-- a large flat pentagonal stone with a pitted surface and nora--a small black pestle-shaped stone

¹ Type of cake made of rice flour, vegetables, jaggery, coconut, syrup etc. and extensively found in Bangladesh and India; associated with the harvest festival known as '*nabanna*' in Bengal

¹ Types of authentic Bengali sweets and pithes

¹ Colourful motifs and sacred painting made on the floor by a paste made of rice powder and have religious significance in Bengal

¹ Traditionally used as fuel in India

¹ Small demons

Gender and Culture of the Dongria Kondhs of Odisha: A Preliminary Assessment

Priyadarshini Mishra

Introduction

Tribal people constitute about 8.8% of the total population of India. Their contribution in shaping Indian culture through their language, tradition, customs, and integrated worldview cannot be ignored. Their rich cultural and human value system contains the powers of maintaining the artistic bio diversity thereby keeping the globe ecologically sound. But unfortunate they are underestimated, misjudged, and historically marginalized. Their land, folklore and heritage, which are established in more eco-socio-religious life through oral tradition are yet to be recognized in the new cultural domain.

Historically, some token measures have been taken to incorporate their languages and cultures in the mainstream culture. But the reality always rests on Women plays a significant role in shaping the folklore of her community, but as she is in private domain, she is deprived of the authority over folklore and power, and thus, the social inequality persists in culture. Role of women in constructing the folklore is not recognized correctly. Till today the voices of women in defining folklore have also been unheard regarding understanding the cultural from the holistic point of view

Orissa Scenario from Tribal Context

The state of Orissa in eastern India is predominantly rural. The majority (85 percent) of its 36.8 million people live in rural areas, and nearly half the population live below the poverty line.¹ Of the 698 Scheduled Tribes listed by the government, 62 live in Orissa and form about 22 percent of the state's population. There are 52 scheduled tribes in Orissa out of which 13 scheduled tribes are enumerated as endangered.

They are Lanjia Saura, Lodha, Dongria Kondh, Kutia Kondh, Didayi, Bhunjia , Paudi Bhuiyan, Bonda, Juang, and Makdia.

The state has experienced a phenomenal expansion of its elementary education system. While the literacy rate has improved by 14.6 percentage points (higher than the National improvement of 13 percentage points), female literacy has increased by 16.2 percent between 1991 and 2001, higher than the average 15 percent increase across India. Alongside, 96.13 percent of schoolchildren in Orissa have access to a primary school within walking distance of one km (against the national average of 93.03 percent), and 91.73 percent of school children in Orissa have access to an upper primary school within a distance of 3 kms (against the national average of 87.91 percent). But in spite of these physical facilities, the literacy rate of the tribal in Orissa is challenging. Moreover the quality of education in schools is a significant challenge.

The state of Orissa has 62 scheduled tribes which constitute about 23 percent of the total state population. Majority of them are concentrated in 17 districts of the state. The tribal people of Orissa can be divided ethno-linguistically into (a) the Austric Language Group, (b) the Dravidian language Group and (c) the Indo-Aryan language group. Their distinct language and culture, customs and worldview are different from the mainstream culture.

Table – I

Tribal Literacy in Orissa

	India			Orissa			ap
	P	M	F	P	M	F	
	ersons	ale	emale	ersons	ale	emale	
1991	9.60	0.65	8.19	7.10			8.09
2001	7.10	9.17	4.76	7.37	1.48	3.37	1.71

(Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03)^{xvi}

The literacy rate of Orissa in 2001 is 63.08(75.36 males and 50.51 female), and the tribal literacy rate is below the state average. Over a period of ten years, the growth of literacy among the tribal is 26 %. According to the Census of India, the literacy rate among tribal people in Orissa is 37.37. Of the literates, males constitute 51% and females 23.47%.

The total literacy rate of the state is 63.00 out of which male literacy rate is 73.00 and female literacy is 51.00. The overall gap of literacy is 38%, in which the gap in male literacy is 41.25 %, and the gap in female literacy is 54%.

While tribal literacy in Orissa was 9.46 in 1971, it was 13.96 in 1981. Again it increased to 27.10 in 1991, and during 2001 it was 37.37. This indicates the slow progress in literacy among tribal people in Orissa over the last three decades. At this rate how long Orissa will take to achieve 100% literacy is anybody's guess.

In Orissa, the issue of gender inequality is quite visible regarding providing opportunity, professional/ instructional frame work, and also in disseminating knowledge base for the empowerment of women. Although the female literacy in the State is 51 %, the high disparity which ranges from less than 40 % to 73 % between KBK districts and the developed districts like Khordha and Jagatsingpur is a matter of grave concern. A further concern is that women literacy of some Blocks in KBK districts is even less than 10 % despite several initiatives being taken up by the State and the Central Government during the past 50 years.

The objective of the Study

The primary objective of the paper is to identify the oral tradition of the Dongria Kondh of undivided Kalahandi and Rayagada and explore their cultural practices such as rites and rituals related to forest and mountains to understand the symbiotic relation of nature, man and culture. It is essential to know how they are transformed from forest culture to agriculture and what the cultural symbols are (rites, rituals, oral traditions, myths). Dongria Kondh women create and maintain their cultural expressions contributing

to the culture for sustenance. It is essential to know their prime role in restoring their oral culture. Dongria Kondh people adjust to the new situation when they feel endangered by external interventions, and they maintain their cultural practices. They adopt the cultural change in their life, and they recreate culture to adjust to their everyday life.

The Dongria Kondh tribe are located in the western Rayagada and eastern Kalahandi constitutes the geographical region of Niamgiri Mountain range. The Rayagada district has two micro projects called Dongria Kondh Development Agency, one is in Chatikona, and another is in Parsali in Kalyansingh pur Block covering 34 villages. Besides the range of Dongria Kondh stretches away from Bisam katak in Rayagada district to Lanjigarh in Kalahandi. Thus they form a culture area / linguistic area in the geographical region cutting across the political boundary. Dongria Kondh earns their livelihood from the forest, and Niamgiri mountain range is their primary source of livelihood. They consider the mountain Niamgiri as their culture hero also as the first progenitor. Lots of myths and legends are found in the locality about the greatness of the king Niam giri who is symbolized as the mountain god. Thus the whole landscape has become sacred in the epistemic domain of Dongria Kondh.

Why The Dongria Kondhs are Endangered

A community feels endangered when he thinks that they are threatened by natural calamity, industrialization, deforestation and displacement. Dongria Kondh is threatened by two mega forces, one is deforestation of their natural habitat, and another is eroding the forest for bauxite and alumina by undermining the mountain. This made them endangered.

Some Dongria Kondh in the proposed locality is about 10000, and their concern against the external intervention for the industrialization is that " no amount of money can compensate for the damage to their sacred mountain and the forests they depend on." "We are deeply connected with the mountain. It is home to our God Niyamraja. Tribal people felt that they are endangered due to industrialization. So they say, "We will not allow the company to mine our land, our sacred place. Any compensation they offer is worthless to us."

They have vowed to "fight to the death rather than leave their sacred home".
 "Even if you kill us we will not give Niamgiri," said one tribal member Jairam.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7548953.stm

Unfortunately, no such efforts have ever been made by any scholar to understand the basics of Dongria culture from their oral narratives. Hence this will be the first of its kind in documenting their oral tradition.

Three Blocks will be covered for the study. One is Lanjigarh Block of Kalahandi district, and two other Blocks are Bisamkatak and Muniguda Blocks of Rayagada district. The Dongria Kondh Development Agency of Rayagada will be covered under Bisamkatak Block though the districts are divided these blocks politically from the distinct culture area of the Dongria Kondhs.

The tribal dominance of the two districts is given below to enumerate the kind of social composition. Both the districts have the substantial tribal population, but the significant tribes in these two districts are Kondhs.

The Kondhs of Kalahandi and Rayagada has a long history of struggle. The land was known as "Kondhandesh". Major Campbell (1853-) called this land as Kondhistan. Over a period of last 50 years, these two districts have not achieved a much in respect of literacy due to their language diversities and poor economic condition. The present literacy rate shows how these two districts constitute the lowest literacy districts out of seven in the Census of India 2001.

Table - II
 Population and Literacy of ST /SC in Rayagada and Kalahandi district

Distri ct	otal popn	%S T po	% SC po	Tota l Liter	% literacy ST	% literacy SC

		pn.	pn.	acy					
				Total	Total	male	female	Total	female
Rayagada	31109	6.61	3.86	6.15	0.23	1.16	0.07	5.18	1.03
Kalahandi	335494	9.03	7.17	5.94	6.17	1.70	7.15	7.12	0.80
State				3.08	7.37	1.48	3.37	5.53	0.33

Source Census of India 2001

Rayagada is above 23 % lower, and Kalahandi is 28 % lower in comparison to the state average of women literacy of Orissa which is 51.70.



District map of Kalahandi and Rayagada

Observation

1. The universe and nature are the sources of survival. The Dongria Kondh community adapt to the nature of their every day sustenance. Their association with

nature creates a culture in their social behaviour. They construct their social memory and cultural symbols to attach meaning of life from the natural resources.

2. The Dongria Kondh people have their epistemology and ontology which is esoteric and have a deep meaning with the nature about their philosophy of life. This is manifested in their oral tradition, rites and rituals, fairs and festivals, customs and performances, music and dances and beyond.

3. The intervention of the territory of Dongria Kondh for exploitation of natural resources erodes their culture and belief system. The loss of nature leads to the loss of culture, and the epistemology is disrupted. Thus the ecology of man and nature is also disrupted.

4. Understanding the culture of Dongria Kondh and situating the alternatives to sustain the nature and culture through other devices can help them in adapting the new social order for their better life as well as maintain their cultural world view can prevent them from the loss of culture.

5. Cultural revitalization and regeneration can support the Dongria Kondh to apply their culture to new social order and adapt to change with new cultural symbols. If Dongria Kondh get new identity in new social order, they can adapt the change and compensate the loss of their culture.

6. Women as the creator of culture have a vision about nature and environment which influence their everyday life. This also helps them construct their epistemology.

No culture is static. It is dynamic and changes with the change of society. Modernization, industrialization, westernization and deforestation affect the traditional life of the tradition-bound tribal people and this creates a conflict in their realities with ideology. This affects the external world.

The objective of the study is to understand the culture of Dongria Kondh from tradition point of view and the changes that are coming in their way in the form of modernization, deforestation and industrialization. Folklore as a means of cultural symbols and as a mode of communication captures the collective memory of the community. Thus, along with the changes that have been occurring in the life of Dongria Kondh can be obtained through documentation and analyzed to understand that how the Dongria Kondh have adapted to tradition and change and how their cultural symbols have captured these changes in their oral tradition and other expressions of culture.

Culture from Gender lens

The concept of culture in a tribal community is defined by many anthropologists. But the construction of culture from a gender point of view is an unexplored area of cultural studies. The concepts of gender and folklore are intertwined; Gender differences and inequalities have a significant impact on people's lives and interactions; Gender and gender roles are an essential factor in our lives. We carry assumptions and expectations derived from our ideas about gender. But in tribal society, it is evident that gender role is based on male, female equity.

The tribal community of India in general and Orissa, in particular, have the social customs of maintaining gender balance and gender equality in many aspects of life. Women are freer than the men to take a decision, handle the market economy and create household productions. They create culture. But they are not counted when the study of culture is discussed. Whether it is verbal or non verbal art tradition, women play a significant role in constructing culture.

Folklore of the Dongria Kondh

Folklore as a means of communication and knowledge and a mode of thought has enriched the human knowledge with its colourful expression but has not been respected by half of the globe considering that the non literates have no education or knowledge. Fortunately, the whole world is now looking at the disadvantaged to give them their voices and folklore as a discipline has contributed a lot to establish the voice of many and

has broken the myth. Moreover, the hidden traditional knowledge that is still in the practices of the people have-not been captured for which National Knowledge Commission has taken steps to document them for a better sustained world maintaining the equilibrium with nature and animals. Culture, as a mode of understanding the nature of the human being and treatment of animal world, needs to be maintained to take further steps for social development.

Our endeavor in this regard in Orissa is that, as though we are in Orissa we can't say that we are outside the globe. Instead without us, there can be no globe. So our air and earth, our land and water, our nature and folklore are most important to us to frame our won globe. What we see from our childhood that the geography of our villages is changing, forest disappear, nature eroded, and our precious memory is also lost.

Now we live in a world (may it be as small as our village) which has influenced us with its change. But we have not been able to capture the tradition on which we have our authority.

Their genres of folklore are

I. Oral Tradition:

1. Oral tales(animal tales, nature tales, social and individual tales, tales about the ghost , underworld, etiological tales etc.)
2. Oral songs, songs related to rites and rituals, work songs , lullabies, forest songs, play songs, marriage songs, love songs
3. Oral Narratives : legends, myths,(creation myth, the origin of the Kondhs, the origin of Niamgiri mountain, oral epics on the Kondh culture heroes) myths about the forests
4. Kondh sayings : riddles and proverbs

II Kondh Customs and Beliefs:

- a. Rites: Family rites (birth, puberty, marriage, death and invocation of ancestor spirit)
- b. Rituals :(calenderer, forest ritual, rituals for gods and goddesses)
- c. Festivals: annual festivals in the panch – locality with 12 villages. Festivals nominated to vegetations. Festivals nominated to particular God or Goddess.

III. Village Culture:

Space management, housing pattern, water harvesting system, social organization, sacred centers, grave yard, agriculture and forest management

IV. Performance:

Music and Dance, musical instruments, type of dances, type of social congregation

V. Cultural Change:

Social change due to deforestation, modernization influence of other interventions like industrialization, Cultural change and subsistence.

How to Conduct Field work

The study of folklore has changed over time. Previously scholars believed that the subjects (texts or culture) were decaying or disappearing, but now we consider folklore and folklore as efficient and meaningful processes within our present reality.

Fieldwork connects folklorists to the community and provides contextual knowledge for textual analysis. Fieldwork is at the root of significant conceptual changes in folklore

- Scholars used to use folklore texts to prove their theories (not understanding them on their terms)
- Many folklorists used to focus mostly on documenting, collecting, classifying, and cataloguing information (not synthesizing)

Today we try to focus upon the present realities of cultural forms and processes, using fieldwork to attempt a perspective based on "insider" discourse and practice (understanding it as much as possible from the perspective of members of the culture)

Performance (the dominant theory used within folklore studies today).

Goals of Performance Theory:

- Provide a complete context by which to understand the people and their cultural productions equally
- Attend to the artfulness of given performance event (and how that art is represented as text)

- Allow for the blending of social and aesthetic impulses of folklore and represents an affirmative understanding of culture.

Based on the preliminary data, the research scholars can make some assessment in different genres of Dongria Folklore and write monographs and articles.

Briefly, in the absence of a qualitative research approach and methods, the above discussion may help the scholars to delve in to the domain of tribal folklore which is not yet denigrated and survived for its unique linguistic features which are unaffected by the inner group and also by the external connections.

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Shadow Plays in Karnataka

Basavaraj Naikar

Origin

Shadow Play of Leather-Puppet Play is believed to have originated in India and migrated to other countries of the world. "Hindu kings conquered Java in the first century A.D. and ruled for 1,500 years. During this long period, Javanese life became hinduized. Malay-Polynesian deities, which had counterparts in the Hindu pantheon, took on the corresponding Hindu names, and the shadow plays figures henceforth showed them dressed in the Indian *dhoti*. When there were no such Hindu counterparts for the Malay-Polynesian deities, these deities retained their Malay-Polynesian character, and their shadow play figures continued showing them dressed in the Malay-Polynesian *sarong*. In the course of time, the number of shadow play figures was increased by the addition of characters taken from Hindu mythology."¹ This kind of folk theatre is said to have been prevalent in India even before the beginning of the Christian era. There are said to be references to the Shadow Plays in Sanskrit as well as regional literature. For example, there are said to be references to the Shadow Play in Kautilya's the *Artha Sastra*, Vyasa's the *Mahabharata* (1500 sloka), Harshavardhana's *Naisadha Charitre* (XVIII, 13) mentions that King Nala invited the Puppet-Players and arranged a puppet-show in the Hall of Entertainment (*Pramoda Bhavana*). Rajasekhara, a Kannada poet of 11th century mentions in the fifth Act of his play *Bala Ramayana* that there was a puppet-players, who was playing the puppet s of Sita and her maidservant Sindhurika and that Ravana mistook the puppet-Sita to be the real one and touched it only to be disappointed. Gunadhya's *Kathasaritsagara* of the 12th century mentions how Somaprabha, the daughter of Silparaja presented her friend Kalyanasena with a box of puppets. Ratnakaravarni's *Bharatesa Vaibhava* points out the presence of puppet-players among the visitors to Emperor Bharata's court. There are references to the Shadow Play in the *vacanas* of *saranas*, who lived in the twelfth century Karnataka and in the *kirtanas* of Kanakadasa in sixteenth-

century Karnataka. Cennabasava, one of such *saranas*, refers the Shadow Plays or Leather-Puppet plays in one of his *vacanas*. Kaliketa Bommayya, another *Sarana* of the same galaxy is said to have been a *killiketa*, i.e. professional shadow-play artist.

There was said to be a *virakta* called Santa, the puppet-player (Gombeyadisuva kayakada Santa) during the reign of Emperor Srikrishnadevaraya (1419-1446). Kanakadasa, one of the famous Haridasas of the same period refers to the puppet-play by saying that the whole cosmos is engaged in a puppet-play.

There is a reference to 'Kalaketa' in *Basava Purana*, which is interpreted variously by different scholars. Dr L.Basavaraju (in his Preface to *Sivadasa Gitanjali*, p.38) opines that the Kalaketa Bommayya used to entertain the devotees by performing the role of Virabhadra and conduct the *dasoha* out of the money collected through his *kayaka*. But there is no clear reference to any Shadow Play here.

There are references to Shadow Plays in Dhanapala's *Tilaka Manjari*, Vidyaranya's *Pancadasa*, Palkurike Somanath's *Panditaradhya's Carita* and the *kirtanas* of Kanakadasa and Purandaradasa.

The Shadow Theatre enjoyed royal patronage during the reign of Rastrakutas, Kadambas, Calukyas and Hoysalas, especially that of Vijayanagara Emperors.

The Indians believe in the divine origin of all arts. In spite of such romantic belief by people in general, the scholars have continued to debate whether the Shadow Play preceded the Puppet Play or vice versa or whether the puppet theatre preceded the human theatre.

Evolution of Shadow Theatre

Shadow Play happens to be one of the best forms of folk art. Being a professional art, it has employed all the techniques of attracting the popular attention to itself. One may notice a sort of evolution in the history of this art. Two phases could be deciphered in

its evolution. In the first phase, the sheer and figural cutouts were employed. Then as years went by, the cut out puppets were made to move their limbs like hands and legs. Later the theme, technique and music of *yaksagana* were incorporated into the shadow play. In the second phase, the shadow play was based on ballads (*lavanis*) and epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Both the forms of shadow play are luckily prevalent in Karnataka, although it is very difficult to decide which of them preceded the other. Whether one form was the logical consequence of the other or both of them grew simultaneously yet independently are to be researched.

How?

One is curious to know as to how the Shadow Play must have come into existence in India. The picturesqueness and multicoloured nature of the Shadow Play help us to establish some connection between the folk-paintings, which preceded this theatre. For example, in ancient India, People had the habit of getting the walls of caves and temples painted; or getting woven picturesque clothes and gifting them away to temples; or getting the pictures of favourite gods painted on wooden boards. Similarly, they had the habit of getting a series of pictures connected with a single theme drawn or painted on a roll of cloth and exhibiting them to the public on proper occasions. Such practice could be seen in Vedic, Jain and Buddhist traditions. (Chilvin Norris, a French scholar opines that '*Patakatha*' or 'Canvas Story' is older than the Sanskrit Drama. A Jain *Purana* entitled *Kuvalayamala* mentions the fact that a Jain monk used to offer his religious discourses with the help of a roll of pictures. Similarly, there are references to '*Patacitra*' or 'Canvas Picture' in Buddhist literature and to '*Yama Pata*' in Sanskrit *Puranas*).

The Jain volume of palm leaves entitled *Mahadhavala* is modelled after the folk painting and drawing. There are references to '*citrapata*' (canvas of pictures) in the Old Kannada prose work, *Vaddaradhane* by Sivakotyacarya and Pampa's *Adipurana*. In the *Mahabharata*, there has been a tradition for centuries of entertaining people during the Navaratri festival with the help of a canvas of pictures and to the accompaniment of *Bhagavata-Vina*. The nomadic community of Rajasthan called '*Thakurs*' has cultivated this art as a hereditary one. The '*Garoda*' people of Gujarat employ a scroll of pictures called

'Bapuji ki Padacitra saruli' to propagate the heroism of their kings and the greatness of the Jain *tirthankaras*. Similarly, the roll of pictures measuring three feet in width and thirty feet in length are said to be available in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh (especially Telangana area).

Killiketas

The directors of leather-puppet plays are called '*killiketas*' in Belgaum, Dharwad, Bijapur and Bellary districts and '*katabas*' in Gulbarga district and '*Gomberamas*' or '*Chitra Marutis*' in old Mysore area. They are also called by different names like *Sillekyata*, *Katabujata*, *Kolukyata*, *Astrikyata*, *Kalikyata*, *Bundekyata*, etc. The members of *killiketa* community are the professional artists of this folk-theatre. The meaning of the word '*killiketas*' is interpreted variously. Some scholars guess that it must have been directed from '*kilu katha*' (vulgar story). The artists, who must be narrating low or vulgar stories originally must have later come under the influence of *Yaksagana Bayalatas* and taken to the narration of stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. H.K.Ranganath has illustrated this in his *The Karnataka Theatre*. The Puppet-Theatre is known by different names in different geographical locations of India. It is called *Kataputali* in Hindi, *Kalasutri Bihayi* in Marathi (Maharashtra), *Tolu Bommalata* in Telugu (Andhra Pradesh) *Killikyatarata*, *Gombi Ata* and *Gomberamara Ata* in Kannada (Old Mysore,) *Katabara Ata* in Bijapur and Gulbarga districts and as *Mandyana Ata* in some parts of Karnataka.

A correct historical picture of the tradition of Shadow Play is available in the *Gazetteer of Bombay* (Vol: XXIII) prepared in 1884, which contains some solid information about *killiketas* (Pp.196-201) According to it, *killiketas* were also called *katabas*, and the ancestor of *killiketas* happened to be a *ksatriya*, who accompanied the Pandavas during the latter's exile. According to Edgar Thurston, "The *Killikeyatas* are a Marathi-speaking people, who amuse villagers with their marionette shows in the Telugu and Canarese countries" (*Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. III, and Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1975.P.293). As S.M.Natesa Sastri says, "Their profession is enacting religious dramas before the village public (whence their name, meaning buffoon). The black *kambli* (blanket) is their screen, and any *mandapa* or village *chavadi*, or open house is their stage.

The night is the time for giving the performance. They carry with them pictures painted in colours on deer skins, which are well tanned, and made fine like parchment. The several parts of the picture representing the human or animal body are attached to each other by iron wires, and the parts are made to move by the assistance of thin bamboo splits, and thus the several actions and emotions are represented to the public, to the accompaniment of songs. Their pictures are in most cases very fairly painted, with variety and choice of colours. The stories chosen for representation are generally from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which they, however, call *Ravanyakatha* and *Pandavakatha* -- the stories of Ravana and the Pandavas" (*Indian Review*, VII, 1906, Quoted by Thurston, P.293).). Thurston further says that the dead of these *killikyatas* is buried in a seated posture and that some of their women are engaged as professional tattooers.

All the *killiketas* know Kannada and have no traditional story to prove that they migrated to Karnataka from Andhra Pradesh. It, therefore, means that they had settled down in Karnataka for long. They use a mixture of Kannada and Marathi at home. They follow a rule of their community that they must tour the country at least once in three months. However, if they cannot tour, they are expected at least to change their oven in the kitchen from one place to another. The men-folk go for fishing during the daytime but perform the Shadow Play during the nighttime. These *killiketas* possess lands in Bagilukote, Badami, Hunagund and other places gifted to them in the past. But they do not cultivate them by themselves. After the introduction of the Law of disarmament and Prohibition against Deforestation, the people of these areas invite and hire the *killiketas* to kill the pigs, which ruin the crops in the fields. The *killiketas* have many sub-sects among them, decided by their specific professions. They follow many rituals ranging from birth to death

An important piece of information given in the *Bombay Gazetteer* happens to be a *sannad* dated Fasali Year 930 (1520 or 1521 AD) given to the *killiketas* by the Second Sultan of Bijapur. Ismail, the Second Sultan of Adilshahi family of Bijapur, is said to have ruled from 1510 to 1534 AD. These historical facts prove that the Shadow Plays used to be performed by *killiketas* by 1520 AD. Since they had land grants, they must have had good

social status also. The *Gazetteer* mentions that there was no change in the life-style for the past two or three centuries. This takes their ancestry still further back.

The *Gazetteer* of Belgaum, published by the Old Bombay State, mentions (P.196) that *killiketas* have migrated in groups from Kolhapur and Satara of Maharashtra to Karnataka. The *Gazetteer* of Bijapur district mentions that their domestic language was Marathi with a mixture of Kannada.

The *Mysore Castes and Tribes* (1930.Pp.513-535) offers detailed information about the *killiketas*. It says that the *killiketas* used to get land grants from the rulers for their pleasant service. The book also refers to an interesting story about the ancestor of *killiketas*. The *killiketas* so runs the story were originally the agriculturists of Maharashtra. One of their women had maintained an illegal relation with a goldsmith called Kattare Kalachari. Even after the adultery was publicly known, she lived with him and bore seven sons to him. Consequently, she was excommunicated and did not know how to earn her livelihood. The lover, i.e. Kalachari, therefore, taught her the art of cutting the leather-puppets, singing and entertaining through which she could earn her livelihood. Thus they formed a caste of their own, joined in by their relatives also. Later they migrated group by group to the southern parts of the country like Karnataka.

Ancestry/Comparative Picture

Though one may guess the ancestry of the Shadow Play with the help of the word '*killiketas*' and their autobiographical information, one cannot fix a cutout date for its ancestry. Some scholars opine that there is evidence to prove that the Shadow Theatre was prevalent in Andhra Pradesh as early as the third century BC. It had reached its height during the reign of Satavahana, Pallava, Calukya, Kakatiya dynasties and during the reign of the Kings of Vijayanagara and Tanjavuru. It travelled to South East Asia along with the Indians, who migrated to those places through the coastal cities like Kalinga, Jeemani, Korangi and Vadre. But there can be another method of deciding its ancestry by comparing it with similar art found in Siam, Indo-China, Jawa and Bali. Though such plays are performed in these countries by Muslims, the themes happen to be Indian. This

theatre must have gone there at some point in history when they were ruled by the Emperors of South India. A Chola King bearing the title 'Gangaikonda' (perhaps Rajarajendra Chola, 1012-44.A.D.) is said to have ruled over these countries when the Shadow Theatre migrated there.

Some scholars conjecture that the Shadow Theatre must have migrated from the coast of Andhra Pradesh to Southeast Asia; that the Arabs must have taken it from Jawa to Arabia; and that it must have migrated from Arabia to Syria, Turkey and North Africa. They further opine that the ancient Indian saints and philosophers must have used the Shadow Plays for the propagation of religion and moral edification. Though this art developed into a means of entertainment later, it never gave up its basic didactic purpose. (Shyam Parmar: *Traditional Folk Media in India*, 1975).

The Stage

For the preparation of the leather puppet-stage, the puppeteer requires four bamboo poles for fixing in the earth at Four Corners and four bamboo poles for connecting them at the top corners. The three sides, except the front and top, are covered with a mat or with coconut fronds. Then a black blanket and a white *dhoti* are required for the performance of leather puppets. The stage is decorated with mango leaves, which is believed to be a sign of auspicious-ness.

The stage required for the performance of small leather-puppets by the puppeteer in a sitting position is generally of six feet in height and eight feet square. The front position of the stage is fixed with an immaculately white *dhoti* of three and a half feet width for a curtain. Below the *dhoti*, a black blanket of one and a half feet width is fixed.

The puppeteers sit inside the stage behind the black blanket, but they are not visible to the audience on account of the black curtain. A wick lamp or electric lamp is hung behind the puppeteers. When they hold the leather-puppets between the lamp and the white curtain, the puppets cast wonderful multi-coloured shadows on the white

curtain thereby creating a magical world for the audience. Most of the puppeteers including singers, instrumentalists and helpers belong to the same caste of *killiketas* and the same family.

But the stage required for the performance of life-size or bigger than life-size puppets is quite different from that of little puppets and resembles almost the stage of folk-theatre (*bayalata*). Whether the puppets are big or small, the puppeteer has to be an expert in handling the leather-puppets very dexterously. On the whole, the performance of small leather-puppets is said to be far more attractive than that of big ones. Such performances are sure to capture the attention of folk audiences.

The location for the stage or performance of the leather-puppets may be any place convenient to it. Referring to *killiketas* and their performances, S.M. Natesh Shastry says, "Their profession is enacting religious dramas before the village public. The black *kambali* is their screen, and any *mandapa* or village *chavadi* or open house is their stage. They carry with them pictures painted in colours and deer skins, which are well tanned and made fine like parchments" (*Indian Review*, VIII.1906). He has also referred to the way in which the different parts of the pictures are joined with thin wire and how the parts are made to move with the help of very thin sticks, how they exhibit their dexterity in controlling the puppets, how their singing was accompanied by instrumental music and how the themes were borrowed from epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

The maximum duration of a leather-puppet play or shadow play is of three hours. The puppeteer camps in a village for about a fortnight along with his troupe. From the first day of his camp, the people of different lanes of the village invite him (by offering him *vilya*) to perform the thematic events of their choice in the next few days. Thus both the puppeteer and the villagers schedule the calendar of performances carefully and see that there is no repetition of themes in that village. In fixing the dates of shows, both the parties take care to see that the series of performances follow some chronological order or a principle of thematic continuity. For example, the first show in a village depicts the theme of Kauravas poisoning Bhima; the second show would depict the chess play between Kauravas and Pandavas. The next show would depict the exile of Pandavas. The

next show would depict the killing of the demon Kamsa, and the last one would depict the war of Kuruksetra. Thus all these shows put together would offer an overview of the *Mahabharata*. Mr Keshappa of Kakanur village of Badami *taluka* of Bagalkot district can present the main episodes of the *Mahabharata* in twenty-one shows on twenty-one nights. Each play has a patch of humour for about fifteen to twenty minutes for the entertainment of people.

The number of camping days may range from fifteen to thirty days or even to a couple of months in different villages. On the last day, the puppeteer offers a free show in front of the village temple, as a mark of gratitude to his patrons, who have paid him in cash or kind for so many days. The next day he would leave the village along with his troupe for the next village.

Preparation and Painting of Leather-Puppets

The main substance with which the leather-puppets are made is the animal hide, especially that of deer or goat. But the general opinion of these artists is that deerskin is the best suited to this purpose on account of its transparency and durability. But in the border area between Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, even buffalo-hide is used for the preparation of big size, i.e. life-size puppets.

The leather-puppeteers used to get the deer skin mainly by hunting the animals. Sometimes the *gowdas*, i.e. village chiefs used to hunt the animals and donate their hides to puppeteers and ask them to prepare the puppets in memory of their (donors') ancestors. Sometimes they used to buy the animals hides and donate them to the puppeteers.

After acquiring the animal hide, the puppeteer has to take the responsibility of seasoning it, cutting it into required shapes and sizes and painting them appropriately. He has to follow a very careful method of seasoning the animal hide to make it transparent as well as durable. He would first soak the hide in water, and then scrape off the hairs and sundry it. Now the hide looks like a transparent paper or glass. Then he would carve the

outline of the required picture on it with a sharp bodkin-like instrument and cuts it off separately.

There are two types of leather-puppets: one, large puppets containing the figures of man, chariot, charioteer and weapons; two, own puppets whose hands, trunks, legs and hands are prepared separately and joined together to facilitate the easy movements of limbs.

Whether the puppets are comprehensive or individual, the method of preparing them is the same. The puppeteer has to carve the outlines very carefully and pierce tiny or relatively big holes to create the impression of ornaments (including even crests).

The next stage is about painting the puppets. The paints are also prepared by the puppeteers themselves. In the earlier days, such paints were prepared out of roots, leaves, barks and fruits of trees. But later, paints had to be bought from shops. The puppeteers have to select only the prominent and durable colours, which are bewitching to the eyes. The colours of red, black and yellow are used prominently. Though such colours painted on the leather-puppets may look rather dull, they look very attractive when they are held against the light. The painted puppets have dried the shade and never in the sunlight lest the colour should fade.

In the earlier days, the entire puppets used to be sewed to small bamboo sticks with the help of which the puppeteers used to play them. Here the entire puppets were to dance. The movement of limbs was not possible. But later more flexibility was introduced into the preparation of leather-puppets. Three parts of the body like neck; chest and waist are sewn to a bamboo stick to make them look erect. Then head, hands, thighs and legs are sewn with a string separately thereby facilitating their movements. If the puppets are small, the puppeteer has to sit behind the curtain and perform the play. If the puppets are of life-size, then he has to stand upright to perform the play.

The time when such flexible puppets came into existence is not known precisely. But it seems possible that there was some influence of string-puppets upon them. But these things cannot be proved on account of lack of evidence.

The proper preservation of these leather-puppets is also an art. The puppeteer has to see that the puppets do not grow dry or brittle. He has, therefore, to apply to them some liquid prepared by him out of roots and leaves. If properly preserved like this, the leather-puppets may last for more than hundred years. After the performance is over, the puppeteer keeps the puppets neatly arranged in a bamboo box called '*bavali*', which is held in high reverence by him.

The preparation of new leather-puppets is not an easy task. First of all, it is a very costly affair and the artists, who can paint these puppets, are not easily available. Therefore, the old puppets have to be used for the old themes. This is the opinion of Kakappa of Kakanur.

Text and Performance

There are no written texts for the leather-puppet performances. The themes are orally transmitted from generation to generation. These artists have a reverential attitude towards their art. Every New Moon Day and Full Moon Day, they offer *puja* to the leather-puppets. Similarly, at the beginning of each play, they offer prayers to Lord Ganesa and the village deity. After the prayer is over, the puppeteer explains the theme of the play briefly and prays to Lord Ganesa to ward off all the possible hindrances for the performance. (One may easily see the parallels between the leather-puppet shows and the *bayalatas*.) Then he thanks and praises all the people of the lane and their leaders, who have arranged the show with contributions from among themselves.

The literature of leather-puppet theatre is transmitted orally and hardly reduced to the written text. It consists of both prose and poetry. The puppeteer, who is a professional artist, knows his prose dialogues by heart. His eloquence is highly appreciable. The mastery of his voice, his ability to produce a variety of tones is

remarkable. He cannot achieve originality in his prose dialogues every day. The songs sung by him are mostly composed by others and borrowed by him to suit the needs of the theme. But he goes on adding to the humour of the play by learning new jokes, proverbs and sentences after the gap of a few months.

Sentiments

The sentiments of heroism (*vira*), pathos (*karuna*) and humour (*hasya*) are commonly depicted by the leather-puppet theatre. Whenever the feelings of the characters reach high intensity, the prose dialogues culminate into beautiful songs sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments thereby capturing the hearts of the audience. The humorous element is depicted through ironical and satirical remarks and sometimes through an absurd combination of thought and rhymes. Introducing humorous interludes right in the midst of the main theme is a characteristic feature of the leather-puppet performances. The humorous dialogues between the *killiketa* and his coquettish beloved, Bangarakka entertain the audience. Many times humour is tinged with obscenity. The puppet, i.e. *killiketa* attracts the attention of the audience with his peculiar shape, black complexion, snub-nose, thick lips, potbelly and crooked hands and legs.

Themes

Mythological themes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata* and other narratives are selected for leather-puppet performances. But nowadays even historical and social themes are depicted. The stories connected with mythical heroes and events like Vira Abhimanyu, Babhruvahana, Kichakavadha, Dashavatara, Parijata, Bhasmasura, Yayati, Rati-Kalyana, Girija-Kalyana, Sita-Swayanvara and Bhisma Vijaya etc. are depicted by the Shadow Plays. There is a common habit of exchanging themes between Shadow Plays and *Baayalata* folk plays. Some adventurous troupes have been able to present Shadow Play performances on the lives of Basaveswara and Mahatma Gandhi.

Nowadays Shadow-Theatre is used by the Government of Karnataka for the propagandistic purpose of popularising the Government politics and projects like literacy campaign, green revolution, health education, family planning and awareness about AIDS.

Language

The language employed by the puppeteer is neither the standard one nor the folk one, but a golden mean between the two. It is occasionally peppered with descriptive patches and figures of speech. The puppeteer does not care about the purity of language or thought. On the contrary, he can mix the profound with the profane, the ancient with the modern, the classical with the realistic, Sanskrit with English and so on for the sole purpose of entertaining the audience. The abundant use of abusive words like whoreson, son of a bitch, curses and proverbs are the common features of the language of Shadow Plays.

A distinct feature of the Shadow Plays of Hyderabad-Karnataka happens to be the regional variety of language used in them. The major language employed in them is Kannada, but it is always mixed with either Telugu or Marathi or even Urdu to attract the audiences of the border areas of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

Dialogues

The chief value of a leather-puppeteer lies in his (mono-actor like) ability to utter a variety of dialogues of different characters by producing a variety of tones according to the situation. The audience thinks that the dialogues of different characters are spoken by different people, but the fact is that it is only the puppeteer sitting behind the curtain, which produces a variety of sounds and tones -- like the heroic and the pathetic, the turbulent and the serene, the male and the female, the written and the colloquial, the old and the young.

While the puppeteer is speaking the dialogues from behind the curtain, the *tabla* (vertical drum) player sitting outside the curtain, will be responding to the former with his affirmative tags like 'yes, 'yes' and interrogative tags like 'What happened next?' and 'Is that so?'

Music

Music is an inevitable part of puppet theatre. But there cannot be a simple answer to the question as to what kind of music is employed in this theatre. On the whole, three kinds of music are employed by different troupes. Some troupes employ purely folk music; some, semi-folk music and some others, standard (or classical) music. In the early days, the members of back-chorus used to play *dholu* or *dholak*, but later *dholu* was replaced by the horizontal drum called *maddale* due to the influence of *bayalata* theatre. Similarly in the early days, they used to employ a drone-box called '*pavari*', but later on, it was replaced by the harmonium. But cymbals have continued to be employed in the present as in the past. A majority of puppeteers and members of back-choruses cannot afford to learn music systematically and rigorously due to their crushing poverty.

Superstitions

There are many religious, cultural and social superstitions attached to the leather-puppet theatre of Karnataka. Some people believe that they can get rains for their village by arranging a performance of the leather-puppet play. Some others believe that they can have the disease of their cattle cured by arranging a performance of such plays. Sometimes people used to get the leather-puppets of Rama, Sita or Krisna prepared and donated them to the director of puppet-theatre in memory of their elders or ancestors. The open praise of such donors by the director would elicit further donations by other donors.

Geographical Variations

The leather-puppet theatre is found in every part of Karnataka except the coastal and rainy belt of the State. It is a domestic art, and the puppets are multi-coloured. But the puppets of other States are only black and white.

The leather-puppets of northern Karnataka are not very big. They measure one and a half or two feet in height. The heroes represented by these puppets wear a cap, have a beard, hold a sword in hand and ride elephants or horses. There seems to have been the Muslim influence on the making of these puppets. The legs of these puppets are

not flexible but immovable. The entire puppets are made to dance. The puppet player sits behind the curtain whereas the interpreter sits outside and interprets the story to the audience. Women join as back-chorus to the other male singers.

The puppets of southern Karnataka are slightly bigger than those of the north (yet of middling size). The main feature of these puppets happens to be that the legs and hands of these puppets are flexible or movable. Therefore, the movements of such puppets are more dexterous and attractive than those of the immovable ones. Even the difficult actions like cutting the throat or other limbs (especially legs and hands) of the enemy can be shown through these puppets.

The leather-puppet theatre tradition of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka border is very different from that of interior Karnataka, in that the puppets of the former are of life-size in height and multi-coloured. This naturally requires a big stage and a good deal of ability on the part of the director, who cannot sit but has got to stand and control the puppets.

Troupes

Dr Shivaram Karanth suspected that there might not be more than four or five troupes of *killiteta* performers. But recent facts discovered by the folk scholars show that there are many troupes in Karnataka, which are not properly discovered, counted and recorded. According to present calculation, there are said to be about 300 troupes of leather-puppet performers and about twenty-five troupes of string-puppet performers in Karnataka.

Some of the troupes of leather-puppet performers are said to be found in the villages like Akkihebbala, Tyapenahalli (near Nagamangala), Kadabahalli (near Bellur), Markonahalli, Ketuhalli (near Ramanagar), Mudugere, Bommalatapuram, Belagallu (Bellary district) and Binkadakatti and some villages of Belgaum, Dharwad, Hassan, Mandya, Mysore and Gadag districts etc.

We may have a glimpse at some well-known leaders of leather-puppet troupes to know the variety of methods and manners of performances. For example, Gomberama Hombayya has a repertoire of more than thirty-three '*prasangas*' (thematic units or events') connected with the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. His troupe takes a series of five nights for the performance of a few select events of the *Mahabharata* story.

His troupe has about five hundred leather-puppets equally divided by his four sons. All the members of the family except children know the dialogues of all the characters to speak according to the contexts. They have got to get a curtain cloth of nine elbows - length only through begging. They decide the direction of the stage according to the astral time (*tithi*) and the theme of the play. Whenever the elderly man in the family cannot earn enough through such performances, his sons separate from him and start earning their livelihood from their independent performances. This is how the tradition has been kept up.

There is a family of *killiketas* in Gosabala village of Belgaum district, who have a land grant in recognition of their profession. They perform a leather-puppet play about the Pandavas on the day of Kartik.

Bharamappa and his family from Yadramanahalli performed an event of the *Ramayana* at the Kannada Department of Karnatak University, Dharwad in October 1984. The performance began with praise of Lord Ganesha, and Goddess Sharada followed by the meeting between Golla (milkman) and Gollati (milkmaid). This is the influence of the *sannata* (small-play) entitled *Sri Krisna Parijata*. There are also traces of the influence of the Jaina *Ramayana*. Bharamappa's domestic language is Marathi. He learnt the art from his maternal grandfather, maternal grandmother and uncle, Basappa of Morageri. He used to employ the leather-puppets belonging to his ancestors. The *shanubhoga* of the village had offered him a land grant in recognition of his art.

Bharamappa offers his interpretation of the folk-myth of Jokumaraswami. According to him, Kyatappa is born earlier than Jokumara. His wife Bangarakka is naked. Kyatappa has a tuft of hair on his head and is a hero in the village. *Killiketa* is a director.

Bharamappa has a right to perform his puppet-shows in thirty-three villages. He gets his gifts from the villagers during the harvesting season. While receiving these gifts from the farmers, he utters the good wishes in a set poetic style.

According to Bharamappa, *killiketas* are of two kinds: one, domestic and two, fishermen. They worship the domestic deities like Huligemma, Yallamma, Kolashanta, Tipperudraswami, Kotturesha, Maddanaswami and Goni Basappa etc. They worship the leather-puppets on the festival days of Dasara and Ugadi. According to Bharamappa, the troupes of leather-puppets are available in villages like Odakalagi (Kudligi taluka), Garaga (near Maremmanahalli), Anakunti (Ranebennur taluka) and Hatti (Mulgund taluka). Once Bharamappa visited Russia for arranging performances by his troupe.

The parents and grandparents of Sayabanna Satabara of Gulbarga used to perform leather-puppet plays, though he has not learnt this art formally. But he has donated more than a hundred leather-puppets to Gulbarga University for preservation in the folk museum. Sayabanna's ancestors hailed from Devanagaon of Bijapur district.

Shankara is a '*kataba*' from Uduchana village of Afzalpur taluka of Gulbarga district. He performs the leather-puppet plays like his father and uncle. His relatives stay in Salotagi village of Bijapur district and have thousands of leather-puppets in their possession

Bhimappa of Bommanakheda village of Chincholi taluka, Babu Kshetri and his son Rachu Kshetri and Maruti Uppar of Maindaragi village and Ramachandra of Karur village of Alanda taluka are well-known leather-puppet players.

Rachu Kshetri and Maruti Uppar of Maindaragi village have written a *sannata* (small-play) entitled *Arabara Ata*. Both of them happened to be good leather-puppet performers also. Whereas Rachu was an expert in singing, Maruti was an expert in playing *dappu* (small flat drum). They were also known for their creativity in adapting the *Arabara Ata* (A Play about Arabs) to the leather-puppet theatre and achieved great popularity by

giving performances of the same play in villages and towns like Madana-Hipparagi, Nimbaragi, Akkalakot and Maindaragi. Later the same theme was adapted to the *Gondaligya* narrative performances also. Both of them happened to be disciples of a Muslim saint called Gaibi Pir.

Once upon a time, Raichur district was known for leather-puppet theatre. Krishnappa of Kurdi village of Manvi taluka was an expert, leather-puppet performer. He is known as Sillikyata Krishnappa. Even in his advanced age, he has been performing and teaching his art to many disciples. In 1986, he was honoured with an Award by the Janapada and Yakshagana Academy of the Government of Karnataka

Similarly, Doddabalappa of Moranalli village of Koppala district and Doddabharamappa of Yadravi village of Hagaribommanahalli taluka of Bellary district was also honoured with Awards by the Janapada and Yakshagana Academy of the Government of Karnataka. It is a matter of pride for India that Doddabharamappa visited Germany and earned the appreciation of the German audience for his leather-puppet shows.

Belagallu Viranna happens to be an important shadow-puppeteer, who has settled in Bellary and who has continued this art through his family tradition. He has been awarded the Karnataka Rajyotsava Prasasti, Karnataka Janapada Academy Prasasti and Janapadasri Prasasti in recognition of his excellent performances of leather puppets all over Karnataka and even beyond the State.

Gunduraj is another leather-puppeteer, who has settled in Huvinahalli Kavali in Hassan district. He has been engaged in the preparation of puppets, singing in the back-chorus and playing the puppets in collaboration with his father Gombe Ramayya right from his fifth year. He has been giving thousands of performances of other arts like playing on the harmonium, *Harikatha* and *Bhagavata* recitals. He has been honoured with the Karnataka Janapada Academy Award and many awards from many cultural associations. He has leather-puppets in his possession, which are about three hundred years old.

These artists, Belagallu Viranna and Gunduraj, have been performing inside as well as outside Karnataka. The leather-puppets prepared by these artists have been exported to many foreign countries like Italy, England, America, Africa and Korea.

The Puppet Land of Bangalore and Ranga Putthali employ the puppets for the expression of dream element. Putthalika troupe of Kolkatta has adapted *Ali Baba and Hundred Thieves* to the leather-puppet theatre.

Need for Modernization

The leather-puppet theatre is neglected these days because of the onslaught of modern technological means of entertainment like film, television, radio, audio and video shows etc. The villagers, who have come under the influence of such modern media, do not show much interest in inviting the leather-puppet troupes to their villages. Some of the puppeteers have, therefore, been directing their art to propagandist programmes of the Government of Karnataka like family planning, pulse polio removal AIDs and cancer, rural development, national pension scheme and literacy etc. On the whole, the leather-puppet theatre is on the verge of death. The precious art can be preserved only with the entry of educated people into the world of folk art, encouragement by organizations dedicated to folklore and the public patronage for the folk-artists.

Encouragement

It is a matter of satisfaction to note that the Government of Karnataka has been recognizing the talent of leather-puppet performers and encouraging them with prestigious awards. The five major Universities in Karnataka (at Dharwad, Gulbarga, Mysore, Mangalore and Bangalore) have been showing a keen interest in the folklore studies. But the urgent need of the hour seems to be a willingness to introduce the practical training about the leather-puppet performance as a separate course in the post-graduate departments by appointing well-known artists in the field as it is done in the Universities of England, America, Canada and other European countries. Similarly, the Department of Kannada and Culture should create and maintain a database of all the artists (living and dead), their troupes and tools for the encouragement of further research in the field.

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Kohinoor Theatre of Assam: History and Its Evolution

Rashmi Das

Abstract

Mobile theatre of Assam, colloquially known as Bhramyaman theatre evolved in the early 1960s as a tool to entertain the lower middle class people in Kamrup district of Assam. As of now, the whole of Assam is entertained with this commercially viable and prevailing leisure form. Bhramyaman theatre is a fusion of drama and cinematic art form to entertain live. Although Bhramyaman theatre as a form abides close resemblance to folk theatre, it's more of a commercialised cinematic form now. It has undergone a major shift regarding the performances due to the changing nature of aesthetics and adapting technologies. This paper attempts to explore the evolution and growth of Kohinoor theatre, a dominant theatre group among the forty existing theatre groups in Assam.

Key Words

Assam, Bhramyaman, Jatra, Kohinoor, Commercialization.

Introduction

India, a country with diverse culture has various theatre forms like Jatras in Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Nautanki, Tamasha, Bhavai, Ramleela and many such forms. Theatre has always played a very significant part in the lives of common people. Kathryn Hansen (1993) argues that performances of Nautanki provide pretexts for fun, ground for play in the workaday lives of ordinary people. The plays bring all the communities together under one roof leaving all their odds and differences. They try to relate themselves to the acts. Even the performances are directed in a way that the common audience can connect to it. As Sharmila Rege (2002) talked about the Jalsa of Tamasha, in which the performance of Lavani has its roots in '*Gathasapatshati*' which is a collection of *Prakrit* verses composed by the masses. This performance showcases the everyday lived practices including their sexual life. The expression of the common desire of the common people is shown in acts.

Assam is the most diversified state in India due to the long term migratory flow, and for this reason, it presents a unique blend of ethnic and linguistic elements. Theatre tradition in Assam started long back when the state was under the influence of the Bengalis, and Bengali Jatras was the sole reason behind. Assam has a very flourishing tradition of performances, be it folk performances like *Bihu*, *Ojapali*, *Jhumur*, *Ali-Ai-Ligang*, *DeoDhani*, *Bagurumba* and *Bhaona* or classical tradition of *Satriya*. From ages, these traditions have pleased the people of Assam. Besides these traditional and folk performances, another dominant form which has made its mark in the cultural field of Assam is the Bhramyaman theatre. Of course, the folk performances do prevail, but they are mostly placed in the religious stratum. Bhramyaman theatre has lately played a noteworthy role in the entertainment of the Assamese people, and there is the diminishing popularity of the folk performances among the people of Assam. Interaction with the people of Assam gives us an idea about how much they are influenced by these performances and that might be one of the reasons behind the popularity. So, the popularity of Bhramyaman theatre brings in the urge to know the reason behind its eminence in Assam.

Origin of Bhramyaman theatre

Assam is situated in the extreme North Eastern Part of the country. The state is bounded by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh on the north, Nagaland and Manipur on the east, Mizoram and Meghalaya on the south and Bangladesh and West Bengal on the west. Assam has a very rich tradition of art and culture due to Vaishnavite culture over there, like the classical form Shatriya, Ankiya Nat and a religious tradition named Bhaona. Mobile theatre of Assam, colloquially known as the Bhramyaman theatre is a word which every household is familiar with. It is a major source of entertainment in both urban and rural areas of the state. They travel from one place to another in every nook and corner of Assam with a crew of about 75-125 members including cast and crew. They start their tour from mid-August and wind it up by April every year. They pitch their tents in open spaces and erect a makeshift auditorium with a seating capacity of 2000 people. They stage their plays at night (Paul, 2013).

In the year 1826, after the treaty of Yandaboo, the British were in control of the political power of Assam. At that time they were total strangers to the land of Assam and the people. So they appointed some people from the other provinces of India as interpreters. Those people could communicate well with the British, so the British appointed them in various administrative jobs. There were a large number of people recruited from Bengal, and under the influence of these men, the British administrators made Bengali as the language of the court and the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges of Assam in the year 1836 (Deka, 2009).

Later in 1873, the Assamese language was reintroduced in the schools and colleges and courts of Assam, but even then it was combined with East Bengal for some administrative advantages till 1911. At that time, some people from Assam, particularly from the priest class used to go to some interior parts of Bengal, and they got influenced by the cultural and social practices of Bengalis. Some educational institutions were under the Calcutta University, and then the students from Assam used to go to Calcutta for higher education. So, the people visiting Bengal frequently came in touch with the Bengali Jatras, and they got attracted and influenced by the Jatra form. They tried to develop this art form in their native places, and this is how Jatra started in Assam. The Bengali people staying in Assam took the initiative to perform Bengali Jatras in Assam. Initially, they used to perform it only during the religious celebrations, but gradually some native youths formed a new kind of makeshift theatre halls, and they started performing Bengali mixed Assamese plays (Kalita, 2011).

Jatra was the most important factor due to which the Bhramyaman theatre in Assam started. In the year 1930, Natyacharya Brajanath Sarma started a group named 'Assam Kohinoor Theatre Party'. This group performed everywhere in Assam from the north bank to the south bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra attracting thousands of spectators. In the year 1933, Brajanath Sarma for the first time introduced co-acting in theatre. At that period acting by any women was considered as an offence by the society. A perception existed in the society that theatre was something that was best suited for men and not women. The people in the society had a view that women who work in theatre are weak. The introduction of women onto the stage brought with it a variety of

changes to the theatre and also to the minds of the people. The immediate impact was increased interest by the public. Women on stage brought curiosity in the audience, and they were eager to see the woman on stage and the sensuality they brought with them. As time went on, the sensuality was of course there, but the powerful roles of the women were more loved by the audience. And from that point, their incredible acting skills has uplifted the status of Assamese theatre. In due course, there was an increase in the number of groups. They performed the plays under the influence of Jatra. Subsequently, in the year 1963, Achyut Lahkar with the help of his brother Sada Lahkar formed the Nataraj Theatre. This is how the first Bhramyaman theatre of Assam entirely separate from Jatra came into existence. There are around forty theatre groups in Assam at present. In this paper, I will be dealing with Kohinoor theatre which has proved to be the most successful group in the world of Bhramyaman theatre in Assam.

The legacy of Kohinoor Theatre: Origin and Evolution

In the year 1976, a new theatre group emerged and outshined its name in the history of Bhramyaman theatre of Assam. Ratan Lahkar and Krishna Roy were the ones who started Kohinoor theatre in Pathsala, a town in lower Assam. Kohinoor was such a group which gave importance to the cultural heritage of Assam. They started Kohinoor with a distinctive local style, based on folklore and mythology and were also highly influenced by the Bengali Jatras. Bengali Jatras which were being performed in Assam by the Bengali natives of Assam contained solely Bengali scripts. The proprietors though were influenced by the Bengali Jatras, but they had the contemplation of reinstating the Bengali scripts with Assamese ones. Therefore they used exclusively Assamese songs, dialect, dance and scripts. With the emergence of Kohinoor, however, things changed, and the traditional performance pattern of Bhramyaman was altered forever. In the history of Bhramyaman theatre, Kohinoor was the first group which was financially strong and independent. Initially, though Lahkar and Roy were not financially stable, and they were under immense pressure regarding the accomplishment of their initiative. However, people with strong financial and social background were there in support. They took a loan from Central Bank of India in Guwahati, and this paved the way to many other groups who were till then taking money from local people and paying a huge amount of interest (Figo & Patgiri, 2013).

Earlier, Bhramyaman theatre was considered rather undignified and was not patronised by the middle/upper-middle class or the affluent sections of society. The lower class people particularly of the Kamrup district were the main audience before Kohinoor came into existence. During its initial years, people from other parts of Assam had the impression that Bharamyaman was a local performance activity limited to only certain places in Lower Assam. Kohinoor broke through these orthodox images and popularised Bhramyaman theatre by introducing plays based on English classical novels, getting renowned novelists and litterateurs from Assam to write scripts. They also got trained people for designing the sets and modernizing it. Through this procedural and well planned strategy, it enabled a steady uprising in Assamese professional theatre. Kohinoor also pioneered the beginning of innovative techniques in production as well as in set design, costumes, lights and music.

The very familiar term now in theatre 'glamour' also came into existence with Kohinoor. Kohinoor was the first group which brought in stars from the Assamese film industry which turned out to be a worthy source of income for the actors. Lahkar recruited top grade movie actors like Prasanta Hazarika. Eventually, the people who were associated with drama and performance found a new and better medium of employment (Kalita, 2011).

Kohinoor's masterstroke 'Titanic'

Almost two decades after Titanic was made, the residents of Pathshala still gush about it without ever having watched the original film. This is because the 'Titanic' Pathshala loves isn't the record-breaking blockbuster by James Cameron. Perhaps it is a play adapted by the Kohinoor theatre group after a few months of the original Titanic film release. The local people in Assam still have the belief that *Titanic* has been lifted from their theatre. They made large sets which appeared to be realistic, particularly for the story of *Titanic*. During this time Ratan Lahkar managed to form a set that portrayed the crash of Titanic with the iceberg. The technicians of this group have spent almost Rs. 50,000 on building two stages side by side to create the illusion of an entire ship and Lahkar with his modernised techniques could create the sets of this maritime disaster

realistically even though there was no water. Ratan Lahkar when asked about the success and popularity of Kohinoor, he said that,

“We took local dramatic versions of the Titanic and Jurassic Park to remote villages across the state even before the movies arrived on Assamese screen from Hollywood. Such was the popularity of our production that when viewers in Pathsala watched Titanic in English on screen, they remarked that the movie had been lifted from the Kohinoor play” (Paul, 2013:24).

The whole of Assam was enthralled, and national media also came in the notice of this. In their September 1998 issue, India Today declared the Assamese version to be the winner stating: “After all, could Cameron recreate a maritime disaster without water?” It was Titanic that catapulted Pathshala’s Kohinoor Theatre to fame.

Trials and Tribulations

Along with success, they also had to face lot more difficulties like criticism and threatening, etc. In the year 2007, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) threatened the Bhramyaman theatre groups to stop doing shows and shut their groups permanently, branding them as a medium of “cheap popularity trying to ape Bollywood” (Bordoloi, 2007). Bhramyaman was in the midst of being called a medium of cheap popularity and a theatre mediating social values. A conviction formed that the theatre groups play more to the gallery rather than propagating social values. But on this Ratan Lahkar said that,

“Titanic was followed by a play on the life of ‘Kalaguru’ BishnuPrasad Rabha. He is a cultural icon of Assamese society and greatly admired. I produced a play on his life, but there were few takers. We have a business to run, and along with producing plays with social content, we have to make plays which pull crowds. The plays always have a message for the masses, even though it is wrapped in gimmicks (IANS, 2009).”

But the glamour and commercialization have brought a lot of simple changes in the field of Bhramyaman like the ramp a new addition to the stage, dance choreographers are recruited, but on the other hand, musicians have no demand these days. Pre-recorded songs by famous playback singers are used by almost all theatre groups today. Bhramyaman started with the essence of the live orchestra but it no longer exists now,

and due to this reason quite a lot of families have lost employment too. The tradition of dance drama is also fading. In an attempt to keep the tradition alive, some theatre groups lead the main play with a short dance drama.

Munin Barua, who is a National award-winning filmmaker, and has delivered Assamese blockbusters like *Hiya Diya Niya* (2000) and *Ramdhenu* (2011), forecasts a slow decline of Bhramyaman theatre sooner or later. Barua said that “The kind of plays I write, they don’t run anymore” (Kaushik, 2007). He also discussed the period when renowned writers like Bhabendranath Saikia and Arun Sharma used to write scripts for Bhramyaman which were deeply rooted in Assamese culture and also with a social message. But now the theatre groups only have bigger names and remakes of Bollywood and South Indian commercial movies. It has lost its essence and the touch of Assamese culture, and certainly, it is money that has led to this shift.

Travelling long: Kohinoor’s traverses

Kohinoor theatre has not just entertained the masses of Assam, but they have also chosen contemporary topics and personalities as themes. They have the unique record of bringing to life what even film makers think twice before venturing into, and they did it live on stage. In the contemporary times, Kohinoor has undergone tremendous changes. They came out of the traditional plays which were based on mythological and religious stories. They started adapting classical English plays, popular Assamese literature, Hindi blockbusters like *Sholay* and even Hollywood movies like *Titanic* and *Jurassic Park*. They are trying to adopt popular films largely and diverse itself.

The alliance of Kohinoor with National School of Drama ascertains the expansion and popularity of Bhramyaman nationwide. The National School of Drama and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts presented the Kohinoor Theatre Festival in New Delhi from 25 April to 29 April 2010. Anuradha Kapur, the then director of National School of Drama, said that Bhramyaman theatre of Assam is a one-of-its-kind institution, without ant parallel in the country, and even in the world. She added,

"One of the unique characteristics of the mobile theatre groups is that they not only entertain thousands of people who gather to watch them perform, they also

generate work and employment for hundreds of artistes and skilled workers and contribute to the development of the state. The demands of such a theatre regarding logistics, equipment, transport, housing and basic requirements are astounding, and that the Bhramyaman theatre has been able to meet these demands and sustain itself at such a scale is as inspiring as it is exiting for Theatrewallas. The enormous popularity and success of this theatre give an indication of the energies in the theatre of Assam today" (Kapur, 2010).

Kohinoor's growing popularity created new opportunities for the proprietors which led to the commercialization of theatre. They started profiting from the business of entertainment which contributed to the rapid spread of Kohinoor theatre. Perhaps the commercialization of the theatre was very necessary for its sustainment. Kohinoor has set a prototype and proved to be an inspiration to all the other groups in Assam which led to the formation of the huge and successful Bhramyaman theatre industry.

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Breaking of the 'bahadur': Reading the song *Bir Gorkhali* within the context of the 2007 Gorkhaland Movement

Arpeeta Sharma

Abstract

In 2007 Prashant Tamang won the Indian reality show Indian Idol which sparked a massive celebration in the region of Darjeeling and its sub-divisions in the state of West Bengal. After the win, a radio jockey commented that if Gorkhas (the identity that the people of the region recognize themselves with) start winning then the people will have to start guarding their own shops. This remark acted as a catalyst and sparked a massive protest in the region and resulted in the resurgence of the demand for Gorkhaland, a separate statehood within the Indian nation for the Nepali-speaking community in India. While the demand for Gorkhaland began in 1986, it subsided after the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), an autonomous administrative body for the region. In 2007, the demand for recognition re-emerged and a new phase of the movement came about. The image of the Gorkhas or Indian Gorkhas, as the people prefer to call themselves, can be read from two perspectives. The first being the image of the warrior and a proud part of the Indian armed forces and the second being the caricatured image of the *bahadur* that has often been seen re-iterated on the screen. In this paper, I would like to discuss one of the songs that gained popularity during the 2007 phase of the movement and how this song celebrates the image of the Gorkha warrior as opposed to the popularized and mocking image of the *bahadur* (chowkidar). The song, *Bir Gorkhali* was written and sung by an indigenous rock band, Mantra and was also performed by Prashant Tamang in Indian Idol. While the song was released before the movement took place, the significance of the song grew as the movement gained momentum. The paper would also look at the rise of Prashant Tamang, and how he became the representative of the Indian Gorkhas from the region. It also seeks to examine if this image can be read as becoming synonymous with the image of the Gorkha warrior. The paper presents a qualitative analysis of the lyrics of the song which becomes a text so as to understand

these two opposite images. Additionally, newspaper archives will be read so as to understand the resurgence of the movement and how the issue of the Gorkha identity became crucial during and post-Prashant Tamang's Indian Idol scenario.

Keywords: Resistance, Identity, Movement, Marginalization, History, and Gorkha.

Introduction:

The present paper intends to read on why does a song like *Bir Gorkhali* gained popularity during the second phase of the Gorkhaland movement in 2007. The paper reads the rise of this song within the context of the events taking place around that time. With the movement as its background, the song is analyzed not only in terms of its lyrics but also through the image created by song thereby breaking the stereotype of the Gorkha community in India. The two contrasting image of the Gorkha- the warrior and the *Chowkidar* are brought into the discussion through the song and the movement.

In 2007, an Indian reality show, Indian Idol announced Prashant Tamang, who hails from Darjeeling, as its winner. Tamang, who worked in Kolkata Police, soon became the face of the Indian Gorkha community in the course of the show and also became the catalyst for the resurgence of the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland in 2007. One of the songs that Tamang recreated was *Bir Gorkhali*, originally performed by a Nepali rock band from Darjeeling, Mantra.

The song *Bir Gorkhali* was first released in 2003 by the rock band Mantra. The song was a part of their first album and was also sung by Prashant Tamang on Indian Idol in 2007. The song later became a part of his album after he won the reality show. Two key instances took place when Tamang was in the show; first, he was dressed as a Gorkha guard or a *bahadur* for one of the episodes and second was a similar remark made by a Delhi based radio jockey on Tamang winning the show. With the rise of Tamang's popularity in the show, there was a massive support amongst the people in the region for his win. The show not only catapulted Tamang, who was working as a constable in the Kolkata Police, as the face of the region in a mainstream popularity show but was also seen as representing the Indian Gorkha community to the mainstream India.

As a result, the need for Tamang to win the show became a priority in the region. With Prashant Tamang fan club being opened to posters and banners being stuck all

through the region, the frenzy to vote for Tamang became crucial. While Tamang winning the competition was being rejoiced, the demand for statehood, which had simmered after the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in 1988, started gaining momentum. As a result, under a new leadership, the region witnessed the resurgence of the demand for Gorkhaland and the movement began in 2007.

While the song was never made specifically for the movement, it slowly became associated with it. The lyrics glorified the Gorkha identity and their strong military lineage which struck a chord with the people and the movement. One can understand the popularity of the song through its second rendition by Tamang for his album. Tamang, coming from a police background, singing the song as the face of the Indian Gorkha community in a mainstream show, added to the celebration of the community and its martial lineage.

Conceptual Framework

The two contrasting image of the Gorkha has been continuously at play within and outside the sphere of the movement. The caricaturization of the Gorkha as a *bahadur* in various commercial advertisements and films, shows a kind of loyalty expected to guard the house but cannot be elevated from the menial job. Chettri in her paper quotes Enloe's 'Gurkha syndrome', which speaks about the formation of a community, which is usually socially and politically marginalized, and labeling them as martial. She illustrates that due to lack of job opportunity one of the common choices for the community then is to join the military. As Enloe further elaborates, the description of the Gorkhas as loyal and happy had a patronizing undertone to it. The assumption of the hard-working Gorkha as a non-political being with a strong sense of loyalty but without a point of view can be read in terms of the construction of an identity of the community. One can read this in the line of the how the popular image of the people and the region has been passed on from the colonial era to the contemporary time.

This trickling down effect refers to how the construction of the colonial image of Gorkha is still being used to highlight the inability of the community to 'take care' of themselves and so the requirement of outsiders to take over the leadership role. Sharma

provides two examples to support the continuity of this construction. The first is a reference to Captain Herbert's description of the Lepchas as sturdy, hard-working people who needed to be trained under a strong leadership and the other is that of a colonial Bengali writer Hurry Mohan Sannial¹.

It is interesting to read how a book by a colonial Bengali writer described the region and its people, and how its repercussions are still visible in the present situation. One can read Sannial's book as a link between the English imagination and the Bengali imagination. Sannial describes the hill people as lazy and barbaric and so meeting cultured young men from Bengal would be beneficial to the people of the region. It needs to be understood that the people for whom this book was written were the educated and elite Bengali *bhadralok*, who were trying to 'emulate' their English counterparts. Therefore, Sannial's objective was to make Darjeeling a space for 'Bengali colonization and rejuvenation', in line with the colonial objective for the region. With the advent of the railways, Calcutta became much closer to Darjeeling which enabled the Bengali elite to follow the 'English path'. With the Bengali elite taking up lands in the region, which was once sought by the English to be more white-centric, made the gap between the two sections smaller. With the King of Burdwan and Coochbehar making the region their summer homes, many of the Indian elite moved to the region.

Reading the Text

It is crucial to critically analyze the lyrics of the song in order to understand its popularity and its association with the movement. The title suggests the celebration of the bravery of the Gorkhas. The song is about the present generation speaking about their heritage and their history. It is the son of the Gorkha who is speaking through the song telling the listeners about who he is and what makes a Gorkha identity. He sings praises about the bravery of the Gorkhas and says how the enemies are destroyed by them. The strength of the Gorkhas can be read in the leaves of history and the also heard from their

¹ Sannial, Hurry Mohan. Translated by Gargi Gupta, Shipra Bhattacharyya, and Aditi Roy Ghatek. (1880) 2009. *History of Darjeeling in Bengalee*. (Calcutta) Bath: Pagoda Tree Press. Cited in Sharma, Jayeeta (2016) "Producing Himalayan Darjeeling: Mobile People and Mountain Encounters," *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*: Vol. 35: No. 2, Article 12.

ancestors on how they have won the world. The song also humanizes the Gorkha as people who feel pain just like any other people. The song, therefore, tries to show this sentiment by reiterating the fact that while the community is known for its military prowess, they are not mechanical beings but are one that feels sadness.

The son of the Gorkha now sings about his rich culture of his home. He is a Gorkha who hails from the mountain. The region has its sunshine and rain and they have their own indigenous food. As a Gorkha youth and as a singer, the speaker works to bring in the community, the tradition and music and is proud of the unity amongst the people as he sings his songs in the mountains. As he celebrates the festivals of the community, it is the love for the land resonates deep within him. The love for the land can be read in reference to the love for home. The movement in its core is the demand for a separate home for the Indian Gorkhas within the Indian nation.

The song echoes with the word Gorkha all through. As the song does not follow the conventional nepali music, the heavy rock music sets the tone of primary audience. With the song made for the Indian Gorkha youth, the singer identifies himself with this image and sings about how he is the son of the Gorkha and the son of the soil and he celebrates his tradition and culture. The chorus of the song is *bir gorkhali* and the word *bir*, which means strong, is repeated all through the chorus. As he refers to the leaves of history so as to celebrate the victory of the Gorkhas, he also intends to cement the presence of the community in the Indian nation.

Analyzing the Text

The emphasis on the word break in the context of the song and its subsequent association with the movement refers to breaking of the stereotyping of a community, which has been relegated to the periphery. Therefore, what arises is the need to celebrate and historicize that identity. While the song has an obvious tone set towards the youth, the start of the second phase of the demand in 2007 catapulted it to a larger audience as it was adopted by the movement. This section will seek to understand why there is a need to acknowledge the identity of the Gorkhas and how the persistent accusations made

towards the community, in relation to the movement, about their ancestry, their loyalty and their home has led to the need to glorify the Gorkha identity in India.

The image created of the region and its people is closely linked to its colonial heritage. The formation of the region itself is a result of a colonial undertaking. Therefore, in order to understand how a song like *bir gorkhali* becomes closely associated with the movement that is primarily a demand for a separate 'home' for the Indian Gorkhas within the Indian nation. In line with this demand, the accusations made were almost always related to the migrant history of the people. From the 'funny' and 'loyal' Gorkha to the 'threatening' Gorkha, the relation of these two images can be linked to its colonial legacy.

Hutt argues that the sense of alienation and the discrimination faced by the Nepali community in India and Bhutan can be read as a reason for the political and ethnic conflict. He points out that while the West Bengal State produced various statistics showing the high number of resources put in the region for development, it should be noted that the people of the region occupy less of the higher level jobs, which are mostly taken by people coming from outside.

In order to understand the image reproduction of the Hills through the lens of tourism, it is important to look at the exchange of power that has taken place. One of the ways of engaging with this structure is through the lens of employment. The coming of the British forces to the region which eventually led to its acquisition as a medical retreat for the ailing English witnessed the formation of a new labour market in the region. Both the natives and the migrants were employed by the colonial officials. Their jobs ranged from being labourers to tea-garden workers. Employment in the army and in the English household was also taken up. One of the main arguments that Sharma seeks to engage with is the formation of the new class of cheap labour in the hills. This creation of a new class, which comprised both the migrants and the natives, led to a certain image construction of these people. As she refers to Captain Herbert's description of the natives, it clarifies his intention behind it. The reference to the Lepchas as sturdy, good-willed people who need to be trained for work further supports the idea of cheap labour needed by the British to work in the region. It is therefore interesting how this image has been continuously reproduced for the consumption of the outsiders. Amongst the oft-repeated

image used is that of the ever loyal *bahadur* and the other is that of the woman plucking tea-leaves with a basket on her back.

Conclusion

Recently an advertisement of an online retail site showed a man buy a shoe and teaching the *bahadur*, who was skeptical about online purchase how the product sold on this site is quality assured. The accented 'ji shaabji' with the Gorkha cap have become synonymous with the cartoonish rendition of the Gorkha *bahadur* or *chowkidar* in the mainstream media. From the portrayal of the *bahadur* by actors in movies to its portrayal in various commercials, the image of the *bahadur* has always been used to extract laughter. With his accented hindi and his role as a guard, he has always been the one who is ordered around by his 'master'. The obvious economic lower background is made evident by the class difference between the guard and the master.

The relationship between the constructed image(s) of the land (the region) with that of the image of its people is integral in understanding how one affects the other. The 'touristy' picture of the region which has been continuously reiterated recently in the West Bengal tourism ad, where tea and toy train are showcased and women are seen as smiling while picking the tea leaves, paints the same colonial image of the region as quaint hills, that was primarily used as a sanatorium. The indigenous, as well as migrants from the region who began their work as labourers, have moved upwards in the socio-economic ladder but the tag of the region and its people associated with tourism has added to the image of the Indian Gorkha.

The allegations made towards the people with regard to their migrant history and their allegiance to Nepal, thereby making the demand for statehood a threat to the Nation, has been continuously used to further marginalize the community. The constant reiteration of the colonial image of the region and its people has further reduced the position of the region as a wall-flower and that of the people as aiding to the image of the region as shown in the recent tourism advertisement of the State. Therefore, a song like *bir gorkhali* then becomes one of the means through which this image is being broken and a celebration of the region and the Indian Gorkha identity is made.

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Decolonizing the Indigenous Identity: Rewriting the History and Identity of Indigenous People Living in Jangal Mahal of West Bengal

Sandeep Chattaraj

Abstract

Jangal Mahal region of West Bengal has a large population of indigenous communities like Kharia Sabar, Malpaharia, and Lodha etc. But the most surprising fact is that these indigenous people do not have any separate and full-fledged history recorded as their own. They remain a minor part of the Bengali society. They do not have any scope to represent their cultural diversity even after seventy years of India's independence. The urgent need to rewrite the folk history and literature of these communities draws our attention to the root causes of their sheer neglect and apathy in the corridors of power. The causes may be discussed from two perspectives - one is linguistic and another is legal .

Keywords : Jangal Mahal, , Lodha Sabar, Kharia Sabar, Kora, Malpaharia.

I

Language, the medium of our expression is regarded by scholars as the most important part of human identity and culture. Language empowers a human being and gives him ample scope to speak about himself. A community lacking a definite language is sure to lose its existence over the ages. But the linguistic identity of indigenous people like Kora, Lodha Sabar, Kharia Sabar, Malpaharia etc. living in the Jangal Mahal of West Bengal is not recognized by scholars. Their languages are generally termed as dialect or mixed dialect - a corrupt and low form of the standard language. It is generally assumed by these colonial scholars that these tribes are barbarians and they lack any definite power of nurturing a distinct and rich language. Language is the harbinger of power. Snatching away language from a community indicates its consequent erasure from the domain of power. It will not be in any position to fight back against the ill influences of other cultures and

preserve its own. Grierson, the most eminent scholar who extensively researched over the languages of Bengal, expressed this tendency in his book *Linguistic Survey of Bengal*. All tribal languages in the book are denied language status. Instead, they are described either as dialect, or sub dialect or even mixed sub dialect.

Western Bengali has one sub dialect called Kheria thar , spoken by the wild tribes , who inhabit the hills in the south of Manbhum , and another called Malpaharia spoken in the centre of the Santal parganas . Another variety of the dialect called Saraki is spoken by the Jains of Lodhardaga ." (Grierson, 17)

The colonial mind set of the Western scholars prevented them from admitting the rich linguistic variety of these tribal communities. Grierson did not hesitate much before including all these tribal languages in the broad language family of Bengali - providing a limited space to them only after denying their separate linguistic identity. The colonial attitude of the scholars of interpreting aboriginal languages and cultures as stereotypical and simple led the scholars to overlook the linguistic varieties of these communities . That such aboriginal tribes can have separate, distinct languages was beyond their apprehension. The politics of boiling down all different cultures and languages to a single pot was helpful to the colonial rulers to govern a particular region by considering it having a single culture. The different tongues found in that area are deemed either as dialect or sub dialect, or a corrupt and polluted form of that main language. In page no. 78 of the same book we find the following passage -

The other mixed sub dialect is spoken by the aboriginal tribe of kherias who inhabit the hill in the south of Manbhum . The Kherias of Manbhum have abandoned their own tribal language , which belongs to the Munda family and speak a broken Bengali . A similar dialect is spoken by the Paharias of the same neighbourhood , and the form of speech is known either as Kheria thar or Paharia thar , according to the speakers. It is reported as spoken by 2760 people. Finally the Malpaharias of the centre of the Santal Parganas have like the Kherias , abandoned their own Dravidian tongue , and speaks a corrupt form of the language ." (Grierson,78)

It is clearly noticeable from the above passage that the colonial power was convinced of the language less condition of such tribes . Thar is a local term referring to such dialect as a corrupt or underdeveloped language generally used by animals as a medium of communication . In simple way thar is a language of the animals . So thar in that sense is not a language at all . As these tribes are illiterate and low witted (it is generally assumed by the scholars) , they lack the faculty of using any standard human language . By levelling down their language to the strata of animals, we attaching a subhuman (humans lacking any cultural component) identity without having any strength of creating and preventing any religion, culture and language.

In this case we should remember that some aboriginal tribes like Santal and Munda do not suffer from such neglect. Eminent missionaries and scholars recorded a large portion of their folk literature and they consequently become able to secure linguistic identities for themselves. Unlike Santal and Munda these tribes are small in number. This numerical status has been proved a major hindrance to them. The scholars judged the linguistic status of these communities depending solely upon their numerical strength. This is an instance of discrimination of aboriginal tribes and favouring one community while neglecting another. The politics of bringing all the aboriginal tribes under one stereotyped form has led to the degeneration and gradual merging of them into the larger tribes , and in few cases they are brought within the periphery of mainstream society as a less privileged section of it . As Santal and Munda have a strong hold over the region and they present themselves as potential threat to the Britishers, they are given separate identity and special nourishment. But Kheria, Malpaharia are brought into the sphere of Bengali language to deny their separate aboriginal identity. Now the question arises about the potentiality of these tribes after losing their language to preserve their own folk literature. We the scholars find it difficult to find significant item of written folk literature when the medium of literature itself is in poor state due to long term mal nourishment.

Instead of that, one cannot say that these don't have any literature of their own . Like other privileged tribes like Santali and Mundari, these tribes do have a small but significant bulk of oral literature. Small poems, songs, stories and riddles are part of their daily life. They recite, sing, and throw riddles while doing their domestic chords. Their

literature shows the strength and resourcefulness of their language. Here is a popular Lodha sabar song given below

This side mango ,that side jamun tree .

Flooded Khirai flows in between .

Oh God ! Let the flood be over.

*King will go to meet queen. (Prahlad Bhakta,67) *¹*

This short poem is collected from Prahlad Kumar Bhakta's book **LODHA SABAR JATIR SAMAJ JIBAN** . The author belongs to Lodha sabar community. He himself collected the poems from the people of his own community. It is needless to discuss about the literary merit of this poem and if we roam around the Lodha villages we can collect thousands of the like. A renowned social activist from Purulia Prasanta Rakshit collected Kheria poems and songs and published them in the book entitled **SABAR LOKGAN AND LOKKATHA**. A kora poem collected from Kora people of the region may be mentioned here.

Sun has risen ,

Lighted everywhere.

Why are you

Still asleep ?

When will the koras,

Become enlightened?

We the kora people,

Born in Kora family.

Cherise good things

And strive forward.

*Be proud to be kora. *²*

Kora people of Jangal Mahal have a typical crisis of sustaining their identity distinct from the Santals. Most of the scholars commit the error taking the Kora language as another distorted version of Santali. In the poem cited above, we find an urge of Kora people to establish their separate identity and become proud as Kora.

Such instances prove that these tribes do have languages that have potentiality of creating good literature. But due to lack of proper nourishment these languages are now

on the verge destruction and will lose their existence if treated in this way. To rewrite the history of their folk literature we need to revive their folk language first.

The term De notified Nomadic Tribe has a long history in making . The social category generally known as the de notified and nomadic tribes of India covers a population of approximately six crore . During the colonial rule , whoever opposed the British expansion was seen as a potential threat to them and was declared criminal .Meena Radhakrishnan in her book **DISHONOURED BY HISTORY :`COLONIAL TRIBES' AND BRITISH COLONIAL POLICY** told that one of the first attempts to formally declare some communities criminal came from the Punjab and the North West Provinces (NWP) , where itinerant communities also known as wandering tribes , were beginning to be deemed criminal by the middle of the nineteenth century. The police administration in these two provinces had been confining sections of these communities to specific areas and limiting their movements. The British establishment was unhappy with the disobedience of these self respecting tribes who fiercely protested against the destruction of forest area in the name of development by the colonizers, with a view to limit the creative genius of such tribes and control their oppressive nature. The British passed the criminal tribes act in 1871 in the Bombay province to suppress hereditary criminal sections of Indian society and prepared a list of criminal tribes. The caste system in the Indian scenario facilitated the exponents of this school to tag criminality to one's profession rather than genes. In 1911 the act was made effective in the whole country and the tribal communities of West Bengal like Lodha, Sabar, Malpaharia are tagged the criminal tribes title. With the help of this law these indigenous communities were kept in a restricted area under strict vigilance so that they might not be able to disturb the other communities of the society through their crimes. In that book she discussed that the idea of criminal tribes comes from the European conception of criminology which perceives crime as a genetic trait which passes from one generation to another through heredity. These disciplines in India addressed themselves to the study of particular sections of the Indian population, mostly indigenous tribal communities and itinerant groups, and contributed in a very substantial way to the conceptual outline of a criminal in the popular mind. By focusing on bizarre or exotic ritual aspects of the social lives of such communities, and at the same time also on their differential anthropometric measurements, these disciplines created categories of the

civilized and the barbaric individual. In the popular ethnographic literature of the period, a sketch was drawn of a criminal who possessed not just bizarre social customs, but a strange body and psyche as well which had criminality written all over. After independence the Criminal Tribes act was repealed in August 1949AD and all the former criminal tribes were formally de notified in 1952. But the act is succeeded by Habitual Offenders act in the same year and in 1961 Indian Government started releasing lists of such habitual offenders . According to the Habitual Offenders Act, a habitual offender is one who has been a victim of subjective and objective influences and has manifested a set practice in crime and also presents a danger to society in which he/she lives . Many laws and regulations in various states prohibit certain communities of people from traveling; others must register at police stations in the districts they pass through. If we compare all these acts before and after independence , we find that all the acts reflect nearly same attitude . The tribes who were once called criminal by the colonizers is now recognized officially as habitual offenders. Through these acts and the associated legal proceedings, these tribes were /are stigmatized and confined to a limited scope. Their free movements are restricted and they are made to live in perpetual fear of persecution. With these laws at the background the Budhan Sabar episode will be a burning example of how these tribes suffer at the hand of police even when they are innocent . Budhan Sabar , a resident of Purulia in West Bengal , died in the police custody in February 1998. Budhan was arrested on the complain of theft . While in reality Budhan did nothing and he was just buying a betel leaf in bazar for his wife . The police inspector Ashok Roy caught him by his collar and asked him his name . The moment Budhan revealed his Sabar identity , they took him to be a possible criminal and arrested him . The only reason behind his arrest was his being a member of sabar community .When Budhan repeatedly requested the policemen present there to release him as he was innocent , they hurled abusive languages towards him and tortured him to utmost degree . Their abuses showed that they were convinced enough about his crime as he was a born Sabar . In the chapter, "They must be guilty of something ": Myths of Criminalization 'of her book *Benign Bigotry :The Psychology of Subtle Prejudice* , Kristin J. Anderson has discussed at length the dynamics behind this tendency of labeling certain groups ,mostly ethnic minorities , with disparaging tags . According to her cognition at the individual level affects and is affected by procedures ,politics , laws , and engrained values inherent to the criminal justice system

.... people tend to attribute negative actions of out group members to dispositional rather than situational factors , whereas similar actions by ingroup members are more often assumed to be the result of situational factors . Another leading theorist Jagannath Pathey in his book 'Tribe Region and Nation in the Context of the Indian State' points out the tendency to create a homogeneous culture as a tool of nation building and consequential denial of minor , different cultures and keep them suppressed and victimized . The groups who do not represent the main stream Indian society are mostly kept out of circle as unimportant and criminal tribe . This led to the denial of diversity of cultures and valued systems of the peoples, and the creation of a single standardized pattern . It is sad to notice that the colonial attitude of regarding certain aboriginal tribes as criminals has been internalized by us and we still use it to force them to live in complete isolation and stigma . If the moral nature of a tribe being questioned , it would be difficult for it to come into the main sphere and have a healthy negotiation with other cultures . With its identity at crisis , the tribe will be at stake in nurturing and enriching its culture and history . G N Devy , a leading Anthropologist from Gujarat found a similar incident in Gujarat . In his book A Nomad Called Thief , he narrated a similar incident of the death of a person belonging to Chhara community when he was falsely accused of theft . The only difference is that he died not in the police custody but in the hands of some upper caste people . To enquire about the dead person he himself along with the eminent author and social activist Mahasweta Devi , visited the Chhara ghetto . He was surprised to find that the people belonging to that tribe are bound to live in the continual vigilance done by police and they , even after being highly educated , do not get job due to other people's distrust to them . The most shocking fact about the charas that he encountered was a M phil dissertation done by a scholar in Gujrat university . Chharas, the dissertation said , train their children , particularly girls , at a very young age to run liquor stocks , often smuggling them in balloons put inside their blouses. A chhara who works as a clerk in some government office carries his wife on his bicycle so that she can beg outside the office . Chharas were described as petty thieves . Exact amounts earned from these trades were mentioned . The dissertation also mentioned in its overview chapter the historical context of the chhara ghetto.

The death of Budhan Sabar is not an isolated incident . Such incidents happen all over India and the attempts to overcome such problems are also on their way . G N Devy , Mahasweta Devi Laxman Gaikward and other eminent activists formed The De notified and Nomadic tribes Rights Action Group to protest such incidents of legal persecution .

With the problems still isolating indigenou people from the main flow of society and limiting their natural growth a novel approach is needed to counter them . The Indigenou people should get back the necessary space to nurture their language and develop their literary skill. Recognition of their language on the official and academic level may increase the scope of research works upon these languages . Once they realise the potentiality of their language ,they will come up with the necessary initiatives to develop their history ,culture and literature. The most effective process of decolonizing their infamous identity is to bring them out of the stigma habitual offender. Social and political initiatives are needed to change this colonial mindset of calling the tribes as criminals.

Notes

*¹ Free translation has been done from its Bengali original by the writer of the article.

*² The Kora poem has been collected from Kanai Mudi, a Kora activist and social worker from Jungle Mahal region. A free translation into English has been done by the writer of the article

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Soap Opera and its Audience Reception: A Review of Shifting Paradigm

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SharmilaChhotaray

Abstract

As a women's genre soaps are commonly disdained as an inferior form of cultural representation. It gains scholarly attention only after the emergence of a feminist discourse on audience reception. Initially, media messages were considered as powerful enough to inject the intended messages directly into the consciousness of the masses. Hence it was viewed as a powerful cultural constructor considering audience as passive receivers. With the development of reception theory audience creativity, the social context of their active engagement and the possibility of multiple interpretations of media messages were acknowledged. This ideological shift from text to context went through several phases. In this backdrop, the present article intends to outline the shifting paradigm of media theories in the context of soap opera and also the ideological turns within the theoretical model of reception from linguistic to ethnographic analysis and the recent amalgamation of text and context, with special reference to Indian soap operas.

Key Words: *Reception study, Women's genre, Soap opera, Feminist theory.*

Introduction:

The impact of mass media as a means of cultural reconstruction is extremely crucial in present day scenario. The early approach of cultural studies on media representations was oriented towards the textual messages considering viewers as passive

receivers. Media theories were mostly intended towards identifying the impact of media messages in the construction of gender identities and inculcation of political and cultural values. But with the passage of time, the supremacy of textual messages was rejected in favour of an active audience, accepting their power of critical or oppositional reading.

Among the various programmes, soap operas are considered as women's genre because of its wide popularity and easy accessibility among the women of diversified socio-cultural background. It is assumed that its features like a women-centric storyline, multiple characters and complex plots, emphasis on relationships, thrust on problem-solving, home as settings, representation of powerful women and sensitive men and its mode of the telecast are compatible to the rhythms of women's lives and thereby preferred by the majority of women. Despite other's disapproval to this womanly pleasure women are highly passionate about this cultural form. Their preference cuts across the boundaries of age, class, communal or religious affiliation, profession, race, rural-urban residence, educational background and other socio-cultural heterogeneities. But in hegemonic discourse, it is disdained as a poor and unrealistic representation of some trivial issues. Consequently, the fans of soap and their viewing practices are assigned a lower status and also treated scornfully in contemporary humour and thereby soap operas were not given scholarly attention. With the development of feminist reception theory, the capacity of soap opera audience in self-definition and creation of meaning was given attention in academic discourse. An exploration of their reception pattern, rather than textual analysis of soap narratives, helps in understanding the ways women use these materials in making sense of their social life and relationships. Instead of criticising soaps for imparting conservative values women's pleasure and response to these soap operas and also the role of their discursive practices in the construction of meaning came into academic consideration with the gradual development of feminist theorising.

It has been found that the soaps of different countries reflect its socio-cultural specificity while maintaining its generic features. Its nature also changes over time. Indian soap operas reflect a noticeable shift due to its transition from national to private channels. These soaps are analysed with diversified perspectives by different scholars, but there is still a dearth of reception studies on soaps of private channels based on feminist

ethnographic method. Considering this background, the present paper deals with the following objectives:

- I. To identify the trajectory of reception theories;
- II. To highlight the shifting paradigm of feminist reception theories on soap operas;
- II. To reveal the current academic interests and general trends in Indian soap operas.

Genesis of Reception Study

The development of audience research for mass media can be distinguished into three different ideologies. The first tradition positioned audiences as mindless, naive consumers, vulnerable to political exploitation. This hypodermic model of media assumes every message has a direct and powerful stimulus to action that could elicit immediate action. Q.D. Leavis criticises popular fiction as an addiction leading to irresponsible thinking. Cinema and radio were being criticised for producing an illusion of actual life. The central issue of this "Effect Model" was manipulated the audience and strong effects or media imperialism which can be reflected in the works under Marxian tradition like Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjamin, Althusser etc. But all these theories lack a holistic analysis of communication process, including the production, presentation, content, viewing and process of interpretation.

These shortcomings lead to the development of Uses and Gratification Model which emphasis on 'what people do with media' rather than 'what the media do to people'. According to these theories, a different member of mass media audience may use and interpret any particular programme in a quite different way from how the communicator intended it and in quite different ways from other audiences. This model was criticised on the ground that utterances are to be examined as sociologically regulated both by the immediate social situation and by the surrounding socio-historical context. Critical arguments lead to a theoretical shift from uses and gratification model and the existing textual analysis of media to the third tradition, Media Reception studies

that recognize the influence of historical subjectivity and discursive practices of the audience in meaning-making.

Shifting Paradigm in Reception Theory:

The trajectory of reception studies went through three phases. It originated from Stuart Hall's semiotic analysis of encoding and decoding. The theory holds that social context of audience shapes their subjectivity and active engagement in decoding media messages which parallels that of constructing or encoding the message. So, media messages are polysemic, negotiable, and subject to multiple interpretations. Hall theorizes that people respond to messages in three ways: the 'dominant-hegemonic', the 'negotiated way', and the 'globally opposite' or oppositional way (Alasuutari, 2002). Italian semiotician Umberto Eco explains various codes and sub-codes and the socio-cultural circumstances that makes a message from which various possible sense can be attributed. Though they acknowledge the active role of the audience, they still anticipate strong limits on the process of decoding (Livingstone 2005, p.34).

As a remedy to this weakness, David Morley's work initiates the second trend in reception paradigm that leads to an 'ethnographic turn' as against the previous linguistic analysis. He emphasized the social dimensions of reading alongside the textual aspects, by investigating 'how factors like programme type, family position and cultural background interrelate to produce the dynamics of family viewing behaviour and responses' (Morley, 1986, p.17). It initiated a shift from media to the culture and communities that constitute media and audiences. They consider ethnography as the best means to unfold this social dimension as the method acknowledges the possibilities of multiple realities, people's capacity to actively interpret and change the stimuli.

Ethnographic model is also criticised for providing a partial explanation of audience interpretation. The recent theoretical paradigm, developed by Glasgow Media Group, confers equal emphasis on text and the context of reading as an element of everyday life. For them, audience can be heavily influenced by the textual ideology along with the social context that originates it. The works of Herb Schiller (1981), Michael Tracy (1998), Philo (1999), Kitzinger (1999) highlight that audiences may not be dominated by the cultural

norms but their mental world is shaped by their understanding of cultural messages. Even what we consider as an understanding generated from real life experience, is dependent on the interpretation offered by media in intense political interest. The influence of any message depends on its social currency, people's willingness to reiterate and the value of a specific story in a social context (Kitzinger, 1999) though sometimes text can take precedence over personal experience. This theoretical trend acknowledges that critical reading does not necessarily involve a rejection of message; also, diverse responses cannot be equated with diverse interpretation.

Feminist Discourse

Ethnographic analysis is more critical and political, and this political agenda is more of a feminist agenda. Encompassing Soap opera within an academic domain is an upshot of emergent feminist discourse. The feminist critiques reflect two distinct approaches in looking at this women's genre. Initially, the feminist thinkers perceive women's representation in soaps in a negative way that facilitates patriarchal hierarchy by perpetuating status quo and inculcating regressive values among its female viewers. But gradually the focus shifted towards the exploration, of the way women use these representations in response to their social positioning, and its political significance (M.E. Brown 1990).

Early feminists wonder about the feminine preference for such an oppressive cultural form. The attraction for a conservative and racist soap even by the women of a progressive and educated family background is viewed with extreme resentment. Touchman (1978) apprehend that the dearth of positive female portrayal on television would diminish female workforce participation. Laura Mulvey (2006) conceives popular cinema as a patriarchal political weapon. Its textual mechanisms place the audience in the inexorable position of a male voyeur of the objectified female body. Therefore, she argues in favour of 'the destruction of pleasure as a radical weapon'. Women's pleasure from the sexist messages of soaps was condemned by several feminist scholars. Though Modleski (1982) criticizes soaps for creating an imaginary world and deviating women from practical situations, she realizes the necessity of this diversion for women's adjustment in real life circumstances. The powerlessness of female characters

portrayed through irrepressible family conflict and women's inability in insulating the family members from tension and suffering despite huge sacrifices consoles the viewers for their inability to achieve their highest goal of maintaining family unity. She is often criticised for ultimately contradicting her own feminist goal as, instead of generating respect for female audiences, she stigmatizes them as hysterics (romance readers) or stereotypes them as housewives (soap opera).

Although feminist analysis of popular culture started with a critical position, disparaging female romance readers or audiences of soap opera, contemporary theorists are more interested in women's involvement and its dynamics. Instead of criticizing the genre they look for the sources of women's pleasure in watching soaps, and also the nature and causes of their involvement and identification (Ang, 1985; Modleski, 1982; Radway, 1984; Geraghty, 1991; Brown, 1994; Fiske, 1987; Mankekar, 1999; Chanda, 2003). They hold that fictions celebrate female solidarity based on shared position. These studies reveal that the particular gendered pleasures of soaps originate from the centrality of themes and values associated with private sphere. The predominance of female characters, their courageous and rational actions, the portrayal of sensitive and understanding male characters further facilitates the emotional attachment and identification of its female fans. The earlier feminist criticism of soaps for promoting political passivity and patriarchal inclination is denied by Len Ang (1985). As a postmodern theorist, she recognizes the polysemic nature of the text and therefore rejects the possibility of the universal law of interpretation. In "Watching Dallas" she explicates that viewing experience of soaps is always ambivalent and contradictory and therefore the pleasure seems to be an enigma. Janice Radway (1984) considers reading as both combative and compensatory' as it enables women to refuse their other directed social role and permits them to create a space for themselves and an imaginary world where their needs will be intensely felt and accepted. Extending beyond romance readers, the significance of interpretive community in the meaning-making is equally valid for the viewers of soap. Her postmodern view comprehends pleasure as a potential form of resistance against the patriarchal structure, not as a 'false consciousness'. Lisbet van Zoonen (1994) criticizes the feminist theories which charge media for female stereotyping or instigating men into the aggressive and violent act against women, for their inability to

explain the reasons of its popularity among diversified women. Thinkers like Gray emphasized on the ability of soaps in generating female bonding and focusing on their shared unique feminine culture. This celebration of female solidarity along with its potential for bringing social change through portrayal of unconventional issues is further highlighted by Gereghy (1991) With an analysis of viewers' engagement and distance she explains the way soap opera can perform the dual function of bringing the audience into a fictional world and standing them back with a dispassionate view. As a source of 'resistive pleasure,' Brown explores the significance of women's talk within 'fanship groups'. Like Geraghty, she also acknowledges soap's ability to bring change through feminine discursive practices. She argues that women's discourse does not naturalize the status quo, rather, it provides the space where they can speak from their subject positions. These major works tried to reveal the dynamics of women's pleasure, the influence of gender, age, class and other social factors in interpretation, its potential for generating women's discourse and the exercise of women's agency instead of accusing the genre of promoting oppressive, orthodox values.

Media Theories on Indian soaps

The Indian media studies also reflect a comparable paradigm shift though there is a dearth of ethnographic reception study focusing on the social aspects of reception. Some remarkable studies had been conducted on soaps of national television, but the nature of these soaps largely differs from the commercially structured soaps of private channels. Moreover, the studies on regional soaps, reflecting regional cultural specificity are very few.

One of the major contributions in reception study of Doordarshan soap operas is conducted by P. Mankekar (1999). These soaps aimed at perpetuating pan Indian national culture and particularly targeted at the middle-class audience. Even in these serials, she found the 'dominant ideology of gender, community and nation.' Still, it could not bring ideological closure. She conceives women as active consumers having the power of rejecting the dominant message. Women's agency is constructed through complex discursive practices, awareness about state intervention, censorship and program structuring, and historical subjectivity of the viewers. In her work on the private channels

(2004), she express the way contemporary K-serials^{xvii} constitute a backlash to the portrayal of independent women in the serials of late 90s. The political, economic and sociological context of the representation of gender and agency in K-serials is analysed by Santanu Chakrabarti (2012 and 2014). The study highlights on and the ongoing trend of remaking Indian nationalism under the ideology of Hindutva and more precisely Brahminical notion through such soaps. Though such construction may contain some empowering elements, it is still problematic in the sense that such empowerment is ultimately constricted and it ensures the obliteration of Muslim women. But Munshi (2010) does not consider the predominance of this Hindutva ideology in those serials as a deliberate political attempt though she finds that the production and narrative revolve around the 'Indianness'. These soap contents instigate a space for women's discussion and contestation. The endless suffering of women is not viewed as regressive; rather it is considered as opposition to patriarchal authority. Munshi's analysis of 'Tulsi' or 'Parvati's'^{xviii} struggle, as a struggle against evil, is questioned by Chakrabarty for its applicability within the domestic arena and between same-gendered positioning. The Hindutva model and its consequent complexities in censorship issues are discussed by Uma Chakravarty (2000) as well. It highlights how the market forces are creating a homogenised through the unreachable model of womanhood. In this regard, Aravind Rajgopal (2001) talks about the creation of 'retail Hindutva,' i.e., commoditization of ritual objects. In contrast to the possibilities of empowerment inherent in K-serials addressed by Munshi, Dasgupta et al., (2012) represent a regressive, gloomy picture of Indian soaps. They are also vocal about the one-sided representation of upper-class business personnel ignoring the lower class masses.

A good number of studies have been conducted highlighting the gender stereotyping or unconventional portrayal in Indian soaps and the emerging trend. Ipshita Chanda (2003) is more hopeful about the possibilities of a feminist orientation of audience response through the strategic use of popular media as these soaps contain a contradictory blend of tradition and modernity and provide space for contestation. Moon Jana (2016) in her case study on two soaps highlights the shifting interest in the unconventional portrayal of women that emphasis on the qualities of women and their role reversal. Contrary to Jana's conclusion Subhra Das (2010) finds no element of

'awakening and arousing public conscience for willful change in the society' in such soaps. Ahmed (2012) ascertains soap's ability to change mass behaviour by referring to the studies conducted on the impact of Indian soaps on the issues like population, women health, child education etc. Such an ethnographic study has been conducted by Kirk Johnson in rural Maharashtra that reveals that television can even alter the interpersonal relationship. Few contemporary scholars concentrate on the power of cable television on women's status in rural India which informs significant changes in women's attitude towards some social issues. Similarly, Z. Yousaf et al. (2014) have found a remarkable impact of Indian soap on the pattern of social interaction among the Pakistani female audience. Studies on regional soaps also acknowledge that the codification of female images is repetitive, stereotyped and regressive and alternatively, so-called modern women who are aggressive, scheming and often unfeminine, are portrayed as a villainess. They perform the dual function of making the audience captive and promoting patriarchy. But these studies fail to recognise the power of active reception. As against these, Moorti (2009) suggests that contemporary soaps have altered the formulaic depiction. Malhotra and Rogers (2000) recognize the increasing visibility of women in Indian television in post-liberalization era which is constructed around the interest of patriarchy.

Following Morley's ethnographic model of family viewing Priya Raghavan (2008) tries to explore the way K-serials 'forms a political space for viewers to forge and negotiate social meanings and thereby structures of social power'. The morality and challenge in soap content are admirable by the viewers within domestic space not in public sphere which exceeds its boundary of mere cultural or social towards a political one. A reception study conducted by S. Sahu (2010) highlights the existence of interpretive communities based on age, gender, caste, class, religion and region where gender plays a pivotal role. Such communities keep on overlapping with each other on different issues creating a complex dynamics of interpretation.

Analysis of Indian soaps with a transnational framework is conducted by Shehina Fazal (2009). It indicates a shifting trend of Indian soaps after liberalization period where women's representation in foregrounding of the family has replaced their earlier emancipation. The role of transnational television in defining, creating and maintaining the

identity of 'Indianness' is discussed by Melissa Butcher (2003). Attention has been paid on the effect of 'hybridity' regarding gender, nation and culture in television programming and audience reading or a westernized, hybrid, ambivalent conceptualization of gender, cultural values and nationhood with the privatisation of Indian television.

The appropriation of Western soaps in the Indian context is also accompanied by the analysis of the influences of Indian soaps on Pakistani viewers considering their wide popularity across the border. Besides these macro perspectives of global capitalism, cultural hegemony and Hindu revivalism, some micro-level projects are accomplished mainly from quantitative perspective aiming at the impact of soaps in changing outlook towards some crucial social issues on a regional level. Among this vast majority of work, only a few acknowledge the possibility of compliance, negotiation or subversion of encoded messages through audience interpretation with an in-depth qualitative audience study. The existence of interpretive community and their dynamics along with gender and social aspects of reception is also recognised here, though few of these lack qualitative orientation.

The above discussion outlines the trajectory of diversified theoretical trends and their shortcomings that lead to the development of reception theory. The dilemma reaches its final stage of theorising that acknowledges audience creativity shaped by their historical subjectivity, socio-cultural specificity and discursive practices. The modification within reception paradigm can be conceived as an outcome of the debate over the justifiability of complete rejection of textual influence in the construction of meaning. Hence with its maturation, both, sociological or textual determinism are discarded in favour of a synchronized analysis of the ideological influence of intended messages and the negotiation of meaning by its audience depending on their socio-cultural endowments. Studies on soap opera as a women's genre gain enormous impetus with the growing feminist theorizing. It reveals the pleasure and politics in women's reception and the ideological construct that imposes a limit on their conceptualization. In spite of a dearth of reception study on Indian soaps the latest theoretical trend intends to explore the ideology of construction and their implication to its audience of India and abroad. The entire discussion concludes that a totalising conceptualisation of audience reception

necessitates a connection between familial, local, regional, national and also trans-national aspects of communication. Instead of trivializing this genre attention should be paid in search of a more creative and liberating source of women's pleasure.

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Construction of Bonda Identity: Manifestation of Ramkatha within Indigenous Bonda Myths.

Nancy Yadav

Abstract

Myths and rituals are ways of expressing our collective identities and our identities as individuals. The cultural construction of our religious, ethnic, regional, national identities can be better understood by an exploration of the meaning of myths and rituals. The meaning and significance of myths and rituals transcend the temporal and spatial dimensions, and many find its most striking expression in indigenous mythological narratives. In this paper, I intend to explore the reflections of Ramkatha in the world of Bonda myth and rituals and their timeless qualities from a structuralist point of view. The perspective of Levis-Strauss allows us to theoretically explain myth by considering surface features of myth, such as its explanatory characters, under broad concepts. Dwelling upon the theory of the structure of myth, I will discuss the oral and ritual gestures and religious beliefs of Bonda tribe.

Keywords: Ramkatha, Bonda tribe, Indigenous Myth, Fiction, Ethnography.

Introduction

In the hills of Koraput of southern Orissa, the Bonda highlanders inhabit in the villages collectively known as Bonda Ghati. The nomenclature of Bonda tribals is given by the plains people, Bonda means 'naked', and because tribals appear semi-naked, they were named Bonda. I try to locate the geographical description of Koraput and its forest region we may find it falls under the mythic Dandkaranya² Forest of the epic Ramayana.

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<http://bharatdiscovery.org/india/%E0%A4%A6%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%A1%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%A3%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AF>. Web. 23 June 2016.

If we notice the present geography of the region, Dandakaranya forest today spreads across the three states, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh & Andhra Pradesh covering roughly an area of about 92200 sq km. The name Dandakaranya derives from an alleged identity with the 'Dandak forest' of the epic Valmiki's Ramayana³, where the demon Dandak held his sway. If we follow the Ramkatha, the banishment period of Lord Rama in the forest for fourteen years, the period spends in Dandakaranya forest is the longest. Rama decided to venture and roam in the frightening forest of Dandakaranya, which was spread over in a large territory. The forest itself had a myth propagated by people that even light could not enter easily. In Valmiki's Ramayana, the episode of 'Aranaya Kanda' begins with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana entering the Dandaka forest. The name Dandakaranya is formed by joining the two separate words Dandaka and Aranya according to a rule of Sanskrit grammar. Aranya means forest or a jungle. But Dandaka denotes many things: a person, a king, a demon, a plant, punishment, and the inhabitants of Dandakaranya. Dandakaranya is called 'the jungle of punishment'. During Treta and Dvapara Yugas, the word carried all the meanings. In modern times, Dandakaranya is roughly equivalent to a region spreading across Bastar-Koraput areas in the central-east part of India and measures about 36,000 square miles. Due to the Dense forest, the region is inhabited by many tribes. Bonda tribe is one of the tribes living in villages under Khairiput block of Malkangiri, Odissa.

In this paper, I have tried to examine the manifestation of Ramkatha in Bonda Folklore, its reception and reflection in ethnographic monograph and fiction. The study of Bonda mythology in this paper is based on the hypothesis that epic, myths, legends and rituals comprise suggestive events. These events serve some definite purposes to represent the true events of the cultural era in which it was conceived. I will examine the reception, re-writing and re-evaluation of Bonda myths of creation and social institution of the indigenous tribe through two texts, *Bondo Highlanders* by anthropologist Verrier Elwin and *The Primal Land* by novelist Pratibha Ray. Verrier Elwin's work *Bondo Highlanders* will

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<http://bharatdiscovery.org/india/%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AF%E0%A4%A>. Web. 23 June 2016.

provide us with the emic perspective of the bonda myth, whereas *The Primal land* will provide the etic point of view. Raymond Williams says that language is a powerful medium through which literary texts reflect the socio-cultural existence of people. An author is a mediator who explores and explains the social life of people. The analysis and reception of Ramkatha in Bonda myth recorded as ethnographic monograph and fiction will address critical questions grounding the perceived indigenous identity on the global platform.

Bondo Highlanders by Verrier Elwin is an ethnographic monograph which illustrates, translates, transcribes, the Bonda life. The traces of the myths flow from origin myths to variants of the myths. Elwin attempts to bring out the richness of tribal culture, carried in their myths and legends, and to establish its antiquity in the context of the Bonda indigenous civilisation of Orissa. The noticeable part of the book is that Elwin discusses the myths in relation to the ceremonial occasions, and rituals and in some, we may find the reflection of Ramkatha. The myths and the stories of Bonda women's shaven Heads and nudity reflect the customs peculiar to the tribe and is explained in the tribal setting of Bonda is a prominent myth which reflects characters of Rama and Sita. A reflection of Ramayana and Sita's curse may indicate some relations to the close proximity of Bonda tribe with Dome cast. The analysis of the integration of Bonda and Hindu myths and epics can probably point toward the perceived identity of Bonda in the non-tribal locale.

The Bondos have preserved and elaborated megalithic culture. The noticeable fact is that if Bondos follow megalithic culture, then how their myth reflects the manifestation of Ramkatha. Ethnographers who have studied the society of the Bonda tribe describe them as aggressive. The Bondas belong to a proto-Australoid group and speak 'Remo' language, which can be traced to the Munda group of Austric family. An enquiry of the indigenous myth will initiate understanding of what can the myths, and their re-telling tell us about aspects and appropriations of the epic Ramayana in the cultural milieu of Bonda tribe.

In "The Structural Study of Myth" Levi-Strauss discusses an alleged paradox in myths. Myths on one hand myths seem arbitrary they do not abide by any logic, and

anything can happen in a myth. On the other hand, Levi-Strauss notes that many different cultures present similar myths, a fact which does not sit well with the seemingly arbitrary nature of myths. According to Levi-Strauss, it is this contradiction that points the way in the direction of the warranted methodology for the study of myth. While content varies in myth, both across cultures and across times, the structure remains the same and stays the same in different cultures and times. The presence of Rama and Sita in Bonda legends is in question, from where do they come from and what do we make of them in relation to the Bonda myth? One possible reason may be accounted to the fact that they live in close proximity to Domb cast. The religious epic story may have been propagated by Domb cast and gradually had become the part of Bondo legends. The prominent legends where one can notice the presence of Rama and Sita are related to 'Sago Palm' and nudity of Bonda women. One can notice different versions of the myths from different Bonda villages.

The Wine

The Bondos have several myths and legends to account for the existence of the Palm tree and, sacred wine 'sago palm.' Elwin records the myth from Mudulipada village which closely shows characters of Rama and Sita.

While wandering in the jungle, Mahaprabhu used to dig up the roots and eat them. One day as he was digging, one of the roots broke, and some juice came out; Mahaprabhu liked the sweet flavour, and from then he used to camp by the tree and drink the juice. Sita grew impatient and went to find her husband. When Mahaprabhu saw her coming, he was afraid and ran away. Sita saw the palms and guessed that it was because of them her husband did not come to her. She got angry and kicked the roots away into the sea. She tugged at a tree with both hands, and it stretched out and went up into the air, very tall. When Mahaprabhu saw what she was doing, he ran back and caught hold of his wife, Sita cursed the tree: 'From today your juice will come from the top, not from your bottom.' (Elwin 53)

Sago Palm myth from Badapada village

When the earth was uninhabited, a boy and girl came from heaven, the girl conceived, at the time of delivery she sat under a sago palm tree. The man saw a deer, he chased and killed the deer and sat down to eat. Meanwhile, the woman gave birth to twins, a boy and girl. After delivery, she felt hungry and set to find the man. When she sighted the deer, she too sat down and consumed the remaining flesh. The man and woman both overate and died. Under the sago palm tree, the two children were crying for hunger.

The palm saw their distress and felt sorry for them. The root of the palm went to the ocean and did it service. The root of the palm went to the ocean and did it service. The ocean was pleased and said, 'what can I do for you?' The root told it about the hungry babies and the ocean poured water into the tree. This water climbed up the stem of the tree and dipped down from above into the mouths of the babies. So drinking, drinking they grew up. (Elwin 3)

Cloths and its Taboos

There is an absolute taboo on a Bonda woman wearing any other kind of cloth around her waist. The origin of prohibition is given in a number of slightly different stories, divided into three main cycles. In the first, the shaven heads and half-clad bodies are the result of a curse is the closest appropriation of Ramkatha. The curse is a penalty for laughing at a bathing goddess. The different tales have unnamed protagonists, but some of them have Rama, Sita and Lakshman, who are in exile and wandering in the forests of the Bondo hills.

The myth of curse cycle from Dumiripada

A woman of Mundlipada, the wife of the eldest of the first twelve brothers, went to fetch water at the kingu Bodak grove. The goddess of the spring was bathing, and her thin cloth clung to her body; the woman saw the breasts and laughed. When the goddess asked why, she replied, 'because your cloth looks thin as a spider's web.' The goddess said. 'This is not a spider web, but it is silk shining like the sun, and because you have mocked at the sun go live naked in the jungle!' As the goddess said this, the woman's hair shrivelled on her head and the cloth from her body. She hid in a hole beneath a rock." After coming

back from the hunt, the eldest brother of the twelve brothers searched for his wife and found her in the cave. The woman narrated the story, and the brothers went to Mahaprabhu, and the eldest wept before him. Wife of Mahaprabhu saw his tears, she then measured a bit of her own bark-cloth and gave it to the eldest brother and said, 'Your wife and all your women must wear this forever; otherwise your race will be destroyed.' (Elwin 63)

According to the structural analysis of Levi-Strauss, the "deep structure" of the myth should be the object of interest for anthropologists and the study of myth. Verrier Elwin also notes the deep structures in *Myths of Middle India*, he narrates possible origin and cultural milieu of the tribal myths, helping us to understand the reasoning behind certain mythical rituals and origins. He says that "Myths as it exists in the savage community, that is, in its primitive living form, is not merely a story told but a reality lived. It is not of the nature of fiction, such as we read today in the novel, but it is a living reality, believed to have once happened in primaeval times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies" (Elwin 7)

Levi-Strauss is concerned with is not the content of even the structure of a single myth, but rather the underlying structure which exists in groups of myths and even all myths. According to him the repetitions in myth as in oral literature is necessary to reveal the structure of myth. It reveals the existence of myth as the third level reflecting the flexibility and adaptability of my which can be manipulated without losing its basic shape. The repetition of the myths with alteration can be noticed in Bonda myth.

The version of myth from Mundlipada is modernized and the characters have been renamed notes Elwin.

Lakshman was accompanying Sita to her mother's house. They rested at the Kingu Bodak grove and rested there. "Lakshman prepared their food and Sita went to bathe. Her cloth clung to her body, and her breasts and swollen belly could be seen. Some women came from Mundlipada for water, and when they saw Sita they thought she was bathing naked, and they clapped their hands and laughed, for they were excited at seeing the wife

of such a great Raja bathing naked like themselves. When Lakshman heard them, he became furious and cursed them; be shaven above and naked below!" At once the hair was burnt from their heads and the cloth from their waists. They hid weeping among the stones around the spring. But Sita was sorry; she tore off the coloured border of her sari and gave it to them. 'Wear just this much,' she said. 'Weave it with your own hands. If you wear more than this, if you buy from the bazaar, your race will be destroyed.' (Elwin 64)

Gadaba tribals of Onagelu tell stories about neighbouring Bonda's from Andrahal also have some similar manifestation of Ramkatha.

Long ago the sister of Lakshman Mahaprabhu was sitting naked in front of her house, busy husking rice. She had thrown off her skirt and only had a scrap of cloth to wipe the sweat from her body as she worked. Presently Lakshman Mahaprabhu came along the path, carrying two mountains over his shoulders. From afar he saw his sister working naked, so he put down his load and shot a pellet at her as a warning of his approach. But she took no notice, so he fired an arrow. It stuck in the ground before her, but she still took no notice. At last Lakshman sent his dog and then she realizes that her brother was near at hand. She could not reach her skirt on time, so she jumped into the mortar holding her scrap of cloth in her hand. She went down the earth until she came up again at Kingu Bodak. As she went the earth sounded *dal-dal*. When Lakshman Mahaprabhu saw what had happened, he went in search of his sister. At Kingu Bodak he found her still below the ground and only her hair sticking out above it. He took hold of it to pull her out, and it came away in his hands. He threw it away, and it turned into thatching-grass. Then his sister appeared with no hair on her head and dressed nothing but the little scrap of cloth. She stood behind her brother, and he said, 'Because your head is shaven and you are wearing that tiny skirt, your children will be called Bondo.' (Elwin 66)

Levis Strauss reflects upon the nature of the relationship between Myth and ritual within the confines of one society and within the context of the beliefs and practices of the neighbouring societies. Myths as a manifestation of the popular stories like Ramkatha gradually becomes a part of the cultural symbols and rituals of the tribals. We can cite examples of the manifestation in origin myths, myths related to cultural practices, cultural

symbols, and daily utilities. In the ethnographic fiction, *The Primal Land* Pratibha Ray walk us through the origins of the myths.

Pratibha Ray through her novel *The Primal Land* reconstructs the socio-cultural myths, beliefs and rituals of the past and the present transformations of the bonda tribals. *The Primal Land* offers us a delineative ethnography of the bonda tribal by explaining the minute details of their custom and beliefs. We may presume that the folktales and appropriation of Ramayana epic in Bonda myth, represents the answers given by their imagination to the problem of the origin of things, and understand or link a story to answer how things came to be.

Pratibha Ray binds the myths similar to the myths noted by Elwin in the complex narrative of the ethnographic fiction. Chapter One dealing with the dwelling of Maharpuru in Nandpur village reflects some resemblance to the myth. The goddess ashamed of her brother seeing her naked hid in 'Sitakund Lake' notes Ray. In chapter five she narrates the reason for scantily dressing of Bonda women and curse by the goddess 'Sita Takrani.' She provides a novel reason for the dressing.

When the gods and goddess bestow rewards or hands out punishment, mortals must obey—there is no choice! The Bondunis had to bow to the goddess's curse: if they hadn't, the Bonda tribe would have disappeared, and the mountains grew bald. And who could doubt it? If the Bondunis had followed the Domb women and worn their garments long and wide, could they have toiled in the fields? They would have needed a change of clothing each day! And if they had worn their hair long they would have needed oil to tie it up—and time as well!(Ray 25)

In the narrative use of myth and oral folklore, the novel *The Primal Land* suggests that the tribal society consists of a number of narratives and discourses to serve different ideologies related to cultural values. If we look into the semiotics of cultural codes in the novel, we may see how the multiple uses of the tribal cultural values and beliefs are superimposed in their social setup. How myth and folklore operate as manifestation, underlying and suggestive code in understanding the tribal cultural views. Myth can

demonstrate human behaviour and social expectations, and thus it can be argued that myths grow from social norms or the social norms grow from myths. Understanding the underlying meanings of the myth in its own form explains a larger part of the social beliefs and customs of the tribal societies.

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The Supernatural Beings of Water: A Discourse in the Koch Folk Religious Beliefs

Kaushik Das

Abstract

The present paper attempts to discuss about the importance of 'water' and its belief systems related to the supernatural beings living in the water among the Koch community of Assam. Water plays a significant aspect in a particular culture and can be considered as the origin of a particular ideology that may govern the cultural belief system of the mundane folklife. In Assam, popularly known as the land of rivers, water plays a pioneering role in everyday life and beliefs of the folk. In Koch folk belief system, water is the home of various spirits or supernatural beings. It is the main element in the Koch creation myths also. Generally, in Koch culture water is considered as a purifying element and a healing object and is personified as god or goddess. However, Koch belief system also turned the water into the reason for one's destruction or ill health also. The spirits lived in the water body are portrays as a malevolent nature, and the construction of such images are carried with the oral narratives. So, to prevent such demonic works, many rituals and rites are observed to satisfy them. To understand the idea of water and various water bodies in a better way, the paper will try to look at the lore related to the spirits. The present paper, therefore, is an attempt to understand the beliefs, oral narratives and rituals and customs related to the water-related spirits that are collected in the Rajbongshi language. For that, the ritual practices related to the water deity/spirit is taken as an example for this paper to understand its goals.

Key Words: Koch, Folk Belief, Water Spirits, Oral Narrative.

Introduction

The article intends to look on the various beliefs, oral narratives and accounts of rituals related to water and the living supernatural beings collected from the field in

Rajbongshi language^{xix} that is prevalent among the Koch community of Assam. Koch community is one of the Mongoloid groups of Assam who are inhabitants of the western part of the then Goalpara region^{xx} of Assam. Historically, they are described as a section of Bodo group who has converted into Hinduism and left their original religion^{xxi}. However, the contemporary anthropologists and local scholars from the community strongly commented on their religious position as animistic and as spirit worshiper. Moreover, the influence of other neighbouring community's religious ideologies such as Bodo, Rabha, Assamese is very much visible among their cultural patterns. Looking at this issue from a folkloric perspective, the paper tries to understand the location of Koch religious ideologies and beliefs on the rituals and oral narratives related to water and various water-related spirits.

The study is a field-based ethnographic study done in Bongaigaon, Chirang and also in Kokrajhar districts of Assam to realise its objectives. It sheds light on water body related traditional beliefs and oral narratives of the Koches and seeks to explore how these beliefs and narratives further established various rituals and reinforced Koch's religious ideology, worldview and identity. For this purpose, I have interacted with both men and women from the community from different backgrounds such as farmers, housewives, young girls and boys, small vendors, teachers, and from different socio-economic strata. To read on this subject from a folklore perspective, my interaction was not only restricted to the interview method only but also a participant and non-participant observation methods are applied for a better understanding of the scenario.

Understanding of Water among the Koches

Water, as a natural resource, has a universal influence on various facets of human life. As a part of the supporting ecosystem, it helps an expressive culture to flourish with its agriculture, economy or industrial development. Apart from that, water can also be mentioned as the one element that lay a hand on the other spheres of cultural, ideological and religious values that are deeply rooted in the society. Speaking about the religious sphere where water holds a significant place, water is considered as a sacred element in different cultures and personified as gods or goddesses. Among the Koches also water plays a significant role in every religious as well as secular aspect. Koch is an agricultural

community that inhabits in the western part of the Assam, where rivers, ponds, lakes, streams everywhere and to survive they have to depend upon the water. So, the geographical positions build up their cultural behaviours which significantly reflect their worldview. The creation myth and the origin myth of the Koches also portray water as the primary element of construction. Even the name of the community, as it is said in the migration myths, comes from the river name Kosi.^{xxii} Moreover, the very saying '*paniye pranic pran'* (water is the life of every living being) among the Koches signifies the belief of life-giving nature of water.

One of the most important functions of water in Koch religious as well as in secular life is its uses as purifying and healing object. As P. S. Kanaka Durga has rightly mentioned in her article that "mostly, all religious behaviour begins and ends with a sacred/auspicious bath (*Mangala snana*) in holy waters/rivers (*tirtha snana*). Water is the medium through which all purificatory (*suddhi*) rituals associated with sacred chanting (*Punya Vachana*) takes place. The sacred and secular aspects of human life are intrinsically knitted to water and are overtly expressed both in elite and folk traditions of people across the cultures, especially in the Indian situation" (Kanaka Durga, 2004: 69). Like other Hindu religious behaviour, the Koch ritual life also started with a sacred bath being it human or the objects that are used in ritual which are accompanied with the belief that the bath will purify the object. But that is not the all. Through the data which has been collected from the field, it is clear that among the Koches the representation of water can be counted in two ways: as holy water with purifying capacity and as charmed water with the magical content that protects a human being.

Although, in the case of human being, the unclean stage does not remove completely with the bath. Rather, to take a vow or to sit in front of the deity a *xanti pani* or holy water (see pic. 1) is prepared and sprinkled over the devotee. In every ritual, be it is a life cycle ritual or a communal ritual the sacred bath and the holy water is a necessary ingredient, and no one is allowed in the ritual space without taking a bath. As an example, we can see this in the birth ritual of the Koches. As the belief goes, soon after the mother delivers the child the whole family is transferred into an impure stage known as *suwa* and separated from the social rituals which last for one month.



Pic.1: *Xanti-pani* (Holy water)



Pic. 2: *Jara-Pani* (Charmed Water)

The impure stage for the family is removed only when the mother and the child along with the family members offer a *puja*, where the *Oja* or *Adhikari* (traditional priest) sprinkled the holy water which is kept in front of the deity for the whole ritual time. But the family members, as well as the mother, have to go through a sacred bath before sitting for the *puja* and than the holy water which is kept near the deities in the *thanshali* (ritual ground) is sprinkled when they bow down in front of the ancestors and the family deity. Here, we can see the idea of holy or pure is nothing but as the construction of the belief system created by the society depending on its space and time. It is considered holy and pure only if it is kept nearby the worship place (*thanshali*) and the deities. The holy water is considered, in a sense, as the blessing of the deities/gods/ancestors which clean their souls and blessed with prosperity. It is rather, transferred as the mediator between God and human.

On the other hand, when water is attributed with the magical chants, it transformed into a guard that protects human being from any evil spirits. The beliefs and practices of magic^{xxiii} among most of the tribal communities of Assam are widespread. Most of the Koch beliefs in magic are related with the supernatural beings such as gods, spirits, ghosts who are believed to have the capacity to harm or cause illness. The Koch believes says that the evil spirits are very much fond of human blood. So, they attack the human being, whenever they get chance and suck the human blood. In order to prevent that attack, the Koches use *jara-pani* (charmed water) as the cure (see pic. 2). The person

who practices the magic is known as *ojā* and is believed to have the capacity to detect the problem and is considered as the experts in exorcising with these malignant beings.

The behaviour pattern of the Koches including both private and the public has been very influenced by the beliefs and practices of magic and sorcery. The magical influences in various means of their rituals, rites or activities such as the fertility of the soil, to ensure a good harvest, to live in harmony with nature and to control it has been reflected. The diseases and injuries created not because of the malignant gods, but because of the evil spells that are diagnosed and cured by the *Oja/Ojha/Odja* (traditional medicine man). They have the remedies for those diseases like fever, stomach ache, sprains, fractures etc believed to be because of the evil spells. Most common mode of treatment that is offered is *jara-pani* (charmed water).

So, in the Koch belief, the water in itself is not considered as sacred. Rather, the water gains its sacrality with either the attribution of a magical chant or blessings by the gods to gain the ability to make others sacred. Moreover, the attribution of other objects that are too considered as sacred brings the sacrality in water. So to make others sacred or pure, the water itself has to go for a purification process, and the dichotomy of sacred and profane in the Koch religious ideology is, thus, very much reflected through the water. The dichotomy of sacred-profane as forwarded by French sociologist Emile Durkheim, considered as the central character of a particular religion. As he said, "religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden' (Durkheim, 1912: 44). According to the theory presented by Durkheim, the sacred represented the interest of the group, especially the unity, which was embodied in sacred group symbols or totems. The profane, on the other hand, involved mundane individual concerns (Pals, 1996: 99). Water is not worshipped as being water or a natural object but is worshipped for being representation of something others. Water, for the Koches represents as the sacred symbol of inhabitants of many supernatural powers. The water represents as the manifestation of power and sacredness when it is connected with the fertility, good health, prosperity and even destruction and that is too controlled by some supernatural powers. In general, the notion of sacred-profane regarding water mostly can be depended, at least for the Koches, on the attribution of beliefs, myths and

rituals. The concept of water, therefore, among the Koches can be mentioned as the 'hierophany'. As Mercia Eliade, discussing the term mentioned that hierophany can be better explained as the manifestation of sacred. However, according to Mercia Eliade, the appearance of sacred in a hierophany does not eliminate its profane existence (Eliade, 1987: 313). Water, for the Koches, are, thus, becomes a fearful object and are worshipped while narratives and believes are constructed regarding as the place of supernatural beings and the medium of communication between the human and those spirits or gods.

Water Spirits and Oral Narratives:

Koch belief system represents water as the mediator between spirits/gods and human beings. It is said that water is the abode of various spiritual bodies. In mainland Indian mythologies, water bodies are represented both as benevolent nature that protects and nurtured a human being, and malevolent nature that destroys or causes harm to people. Although, the general view of the water is seen as a healing and purifying element, contrary to Indian ideology, Koch belief system represents the water bodies/spirits mostly as malevolent nature that causes harm or creates trouble to people. Thus, to protect the sanctity of the water where the malevolent spirits live, oral narratives are generated and rituals are accompanied to satisfy those spirits.

But, when there is a need to distinguish and differentiate the division between gods, spirits and ghosts, Koch distinction become faded. The list of the spirits and ghosts are quite huge, and there is a very thin line that differentiates the gods from the spirits and spirits from ghosts. The worshipping process of those spirits also constitutes a significant place as equal to the gods and goddesses. The term *Thakur* is used to designate the god, the term *deo/way* is used to designate to any supernatural being whether they are benevolent or malevolent without any discrimination and the term *bhoot* is used for ghosts and spirits. But most of the time, *deo/way* are also worshipped as deities, and the adjective *Thakur* remains with the Hindu deities only and some ghosts or spirits are also worshipped as *deo/way*. It is said that when a people dies his/her soul becomes ghost. But depending upon their deeds and time, they become *deo/way*. Although, the water spirits are named according to their inhabitants in river, pond, stream or lake; the categorization is preferably a tough job. Among the spirits and ghosts that exist in the Koch belief system,

the numbers of the malevolent spirits are significant and they can harm the people. Therefore, to restrict those spirits from doing harm and taking offences, they are offered *puja* and sacrifices.

The Koch notion of water spirits is always associated as the dweller of the water body and protects the living creatures and dead spirits in it. The difference to the Voltian and other Baltic-Finnish tradition which represents the water spirit as the patroness of fishing and mistress of underwater (Vastrik, 1999: 18), the Koch tradition does not portray as the same. Koches do not have a single spirit related to the water body. Instead, it is a cluster of the spirits related to the water. The water spirits of the Koches are represented as the male spirits that are malevolent and do harm to people if he gets chance. So, Koch people do not go alone near by a river or pond or stream alone at evening (*kal-xondhya*).^{xxiv}

The respect and fear towards the water body like a river, pond, lake etc. and the spirits that dwell in that water body, is very much reflected in the Koch behaviours. This gives birth to the prohibitions of spitting and urinating in the water bodies at any time. As the traditional belief says spitting and urinating in the water will disturb and displease the spirits, and in return, they will definitely harm the human. The attack of the water spirits can be identified through the symptoms like fear for water and want to go to the pond or lake for fishing at midnight. Moreover, among the Koches, in almost every ritual, water is carried from the nearest pond or lake for the sacred bath. But, before fetching water from a pond or lake, water is cut with an iron knife for three times. This is because Koch belief says water is the home of many evil spirits and when they fetch water in pots without cutting the water with a knife, spirits living on that water also comes with the water with that pot. So to clear the water from the spirits, they first cut the water with the iron knife.

Narratives that represents the water spirits as the human eater or demonic are very much common in Koch folklore. Most of these stories are concentrates on the spirits of the lakes or ponds. In most of these stories, the most common character that portrays a water spirit is its ability to change the gender, form and shape. It appears at evening time in the form of a human or animal, but that is too for a short period. And it is said that if

someone sees it, the spirit suddenly disappears and the victim feels cold. So the water spirit of the Koches, as a general supernatural power is perceived as an anthropomorphic being.

One of the anthropomorphic examples of water spirit is *Ghorabak* who is the most dreadful water spirit. He used to live in the water, and when people go for fishing at night, this spirit makes them his target. He is regarded as one of the scariest spirits. It is believed that he eats the head of the people and digs his body into the mud keeping his legs above. There are various kinds of beliefs exist related with *Ghorabak*. It is said that he has the ability of shapeshift and because of his ability to mimic the appearance and voice of any person, he used to call people by their name at midnight for once or twice. He requests the victim to go for fishing with him, and when he gets a chance, he eats him. Therefore, at midnight no one comes out from his or her house until and unless the call comes for three times. Moreover, the Koch belief says that one should not call someone by his/her name in the evening. This is because, the water spirit *ghorabak*, comes out from the water in the form of any animal and roam here and there. If he hears the name of someone, the very next night he will transform into his/her best friend and calls the victim to go to the lake or pond for fishing. If the victim agrees to go for fishing seeing his/her best friend, the *ghorabak* will kill the victim and eat the head. There are lots of stories of the water spirits exists among the Koches. A female resident of Patiladaha area of Bongaigaon district has mentioned a story that:^{xxv}

“One day, it was in the month of *Xaon* (Assamese month) when whole one week it rains, the nearby pond is full of water, and only from evening, it stops to rain. The father is a farmer, and the family have only one boy child who is about 28 years old. At midnight, suddenly, the mother hears a voice calling for his child’s name (*Xomu*) to go for fishing. The boy, at that time, was in a deep sleep, so he did not hear his friend’s voice. She recognizes that it was the nearby his son’s friend *Krishna*’s voice. Because it was in the midnight, she did not reply to the first call. Then for the second time, she heard the same sound calling for fishing. But she did not reply for the second time also. From that time no sound was heard by her. She became afraid a little bit and decided to ask *Krishna* in the morning if he came to their house at midnight or not. So in the very early morning, she

went to Krishan's house and asked her mother if Krishna comes to their house or not last night. But, Krishna's mother replied that he is not in the home for last two days as he went to his maternal uncle's home. Then she came to know that it was the water spirit '*ghorabak*' who transformed and mimic Krishna and because Xomu did not go for fishing last night he is safe."

The same characteristic also can be seen in another spirit named *joldeo* or *joldebota*. It is said that the *joldeo* can transform himself into any human form, both a male and female. The belief says that he basically targets the young boys. When a young boy goes to the river or lake in the noon or evening or midnight, *joldeo* transformed himself into a beautiful girl and called him into the water. And when the boy enters in the water, he kills the boy and eats him. One of the most common shapes of water spirit is its transformation into a beautiful woman who has long black hair, generally sitting nearby the lake over a stone either combing or lamenting is very much common in Koch ghostlores. The detail description of that woman gives her wearing pure white cotton *patani* (traditional dress) keeping a *sangli* (traditional tool to separate husk from rice, made from bamboo) with an earthen lamp. This form is said as *jol-kuwori* which is another form of *joldeo* and noticing of these anthropomorphic forms is considered often as an omen and it brings ill health and water accident and this started to cause harm to the people slowly. One story that was told by one young boy about his friend at the time of interview in Manikpur area of Bongaigaon district goes like this:^{xxvi}

In their village there is a boy named Prabhat, who always goes for fishing. One day as usual, he went for fishing. The pond was situated in an abundant area where people only go for cattle farming near by the pond. He returns from fishing before dark or evening around 7/8 p.m. However, that day he did not return on time. So, his family members got worried and sent his elder brother who is a teacher in local school by occupation to call him. After some time the elder brother brought him back scolding and reported to his family that on the shore of the pond he was sitting alone and was talking within himself. Family members did not worry about anything at that time. But when Prabhat told his mother that he was feeling cold in the mid-summer and see his different behaviour she felt something wired. As time passed, his behaviour became more obvious and wired. He

started to talk alone and smile; sometime went to courtyard alone at midnight and started to tell the family that he wanted to live in the underwater. Then her mother felt that he has seen the *jol-kuwori*.”

As it is already mentioned that there is no strict boundary in order to make a division between spirits and gods among the Koches, *Jokha* is one of that spirit that enjoys the status of the godlings.^{xxvii} He lives in water and basically represented through *jakhoi-khale*; the traditional bamboo fishing the fishing equipment (see pic. 3).



Pic. 3: Image of *Jokha*.

He is so important that he is often given a significant place in the shrines and even many families worship him as their family god. There are three kinds of *Jokha* exists, and they are *Kal Jokha*, *Boisnab Jokha* and *Dakini Jokha*. Among these three kinds the *Kal Jokha* is considered as the most powerful and he is offered sacrifices especially of pigeons. The *Jokha* is also believed in Assamese society in the name of *Jokh*, and he is believed to be a terrible spirit who “kills his victim by gnawing his vital parts. He assumes the form of a large buffalo and splashes the water with his horns.” (Rajkhowa, 1973: 04). Another spirit is worshipped in the rituals is *Kubir*. There is the place to say that the spirit *Kubir* of Koch beliefs may have its origin from Kuber, the god of wealth and treasure. But among the Koch people, this *Kubir* is considers as the evil one, and there are three kinds of *Kubir* can be found. Among which the one who lives in water is known as the *Jol-Kubir* have the most dreadful and malignant.

Perhaps, the most dreadful and dangerous male water spirit of the Koch folk religious life that is popular in the region is *Masan* or *Masna*^{xxviii}. Although, *Masan/Masna*

is a water spirit, this spirit that dwells almost everywhere including bamboo grove and cremation ground also. Masan is a water spirit that is considered as inferior to the God but superior to human being. According to folk belief, Masan is the offspring of the union of Kali and Dharma. According to the story,

“Once, goddess Kali went to have her bath along with her five sisters. In due course, god Dharma appeared there and took Kali into the fathom-deep of the water. They stayed there for seven days and nine nights. After they had a union, Kali became pregnant, and her womb swelled like the belly of a *Tepa mas* (pufferfish). Finally, Kali delivered a child named Masan. Then the umbilical cord is thrown into the water where the cord transformed into *kolmou* (water spinach) and it from that onwards it started to grow.”

It is said that because of that Koch people do not eat *tepa mas* as it resembles the pregnant Kali and *kolmou xaak* in the month of *Bhad* (August – September). There is a proverb that says:

Bhad maser kalmou sak jebe jan khai,

Masaner nari sey abayshey sobai.

(Those who eat *kalmou sak* in the month of *Bhad*, they will definitely eat the umbilical cord o *Masan*)

Again some said that *Jokha* (the male water spirit) and his wife *Jokhi* have two children. The male child is *Masan* and the female child is *Matri*. The leech is said to be a manifestation of *Masna* and hence if anyone gets frightened at the sight of an approaching leech and in consequence gets fever, a *pak* is done to propitiate *Masna*. This spirit is said to ride on a horse. It is said that *Māsān* has various species, out of which Charu Chandra Sanyal has identified sixteen types of *Māsān* and Girija Sankar Ray has described eighteen types of *Māsān*. But in the Kokrajhar area, it is believed that there are one hundred and twenty six types of *Māsān* exist. All of these water spirits get a place in the *Garja*^{xxix} ritual, but comparing to others *Masan*, *Jokha* and *Kubir* get a special place and worshipped in the same place as other minor deities.

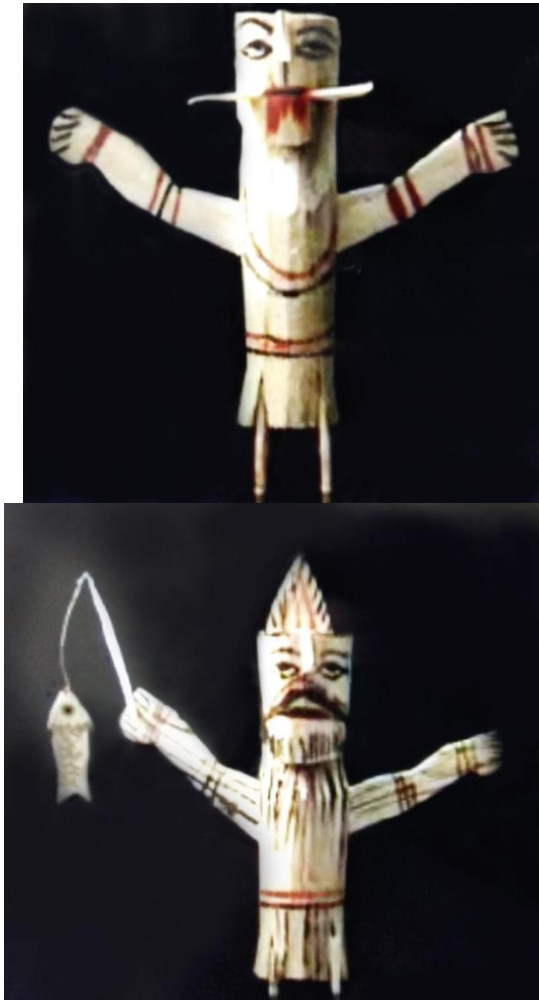
Illness, Healing and Rituals

The Koch folk tradition always depicts the water spirits as a malevolent nature and the creator of ill health. As Pramod Rajbongshi has mentioned that, “spirits are very malevolent in nature. They have their own world and don’t want any human interfere. If sometime we cross their boundary and disturb them, they will create problem to us. But they also like human blood and they attack us easily when we get scared and alone. So, we should not alone to a lonely place at certain time. Otherwise, they will create illness and suck up our blood.”^{xxx} Therefore, the idea of illness created by the spirits, either water or forest or land, is common in Koch folk religious beliefs and the general idea or symptoms for the attack of a water spirit is identified through dried up of the body, loose motion, vomiting, wish to go for fishing at night, eating prohibited food etc. Moreover, the symptom and its healing technique differ depending upon spirits to spirits. But the most common and typical procedure in order to heal the affected person is the use of *Ojhali/Ojali* (Exorcism) with the uses of *jara-pani* (charmed water) and then offerings are made to the spirits.

Masan can attack anyone despite the age and sex and catches those who urinate and excrete in the water and the also attacked woman who take bath in the river/pond/lake while menstruate. When a person is attacked or possessed by Masan, he/she develops certain symptoms in his body. The person starts to behave abnormally. He starts to eat burnt soil of oven, wood charcoal and burnt earth refuses by the potters after pot making. The person starts to dream about fishing at night and discharge urine and semen in sleep. He started to suffer from diarrhea, dysentery, indigestion, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, headache, and weakness in body. Slowly his belly started to swallow and become short tempered.

In order to remove the person from Masan, an *Oja* is called and he performed the ritual. For the ritual, a special idol has to be prepared depending upon the symptoms of the victim. The idol is prepared using only *sola* or *kuhila* (cork) which is coloured with red (from *sindoor* or vermillion) and black (prepared from burnt wood) (see the pic. 4). As per the belief no other material and colour should be used to prepare the idol. As per the ritual, “the afflicted person is seated on a wooden stool in front of him. The exorcist takes some mustard seed in his right hand, utters some incantations and passes his hand along

the right side of the diseased persons from head to foot. Then the mustard seeds are put into a bamboo cylinder. This is done thrice. The open mouth of the cylinder containing the mustard seeds is tightly closed with a rag and thrown away distance in a jungle. This removes the effect of the attack. It is said that the spirit of the *Masna* is absorbed by the mustard seeds.” (Sanyal, 1967:162-63).



Pic.4: Two different forms of *Masan* made with Cork (*Kuhila / Sola*).

If the *Oja* fails to heal the affected person, then a ritual is organized, and *pak* (worship) is performed where the family members collected necessary items for the *puja*. In the ritual, “one end of a bamboo stick is driven into a lump of sticky earth, and the cork image is fixed to another end. Flowers, basil and wood apple leaves are not required for this ceremony.”(ibid) But as a part of the ritual other items like milk, curd, flattened rice, ripped banana, sugar etc. are also accompanied the ritual. “The image is worshipped with burnt earth, charcoal, fries and roasts. The patient (affected person) is placed on the left side of the exorcist. A little water is taken in a metal cup; the exorcist utters incantations

and sprinkles the water on the person and the articles on the plantain leaf. The image and the articles on the plantain leaf are then packed up tightly and thrown away in the distant jungle. By this Masna leaves, the patient and the symptoms disappear immediately. The exorcist before coming to the worship protects himself by uttering some incantations in his own house, so that the Masna may not do him any harm on the way while going to his client's house. Before sitting for the *Pak* (worship), he utters other incantations again to protect himself further." (ibid)

It is said that *Masna/Masan* is very much fond of fried and burnt items. So to worship and satisfy him, burnt or half burnt pigeon, pork, duck etc are also offered. In some places, pig, goat, pigeon are sacrificed and rice beer are also offered to Masan. Moreover, as a precaution from Masan's attack, people used to offer him the first milk of the cow that gives new birth to the calf. The same belief and ritual are existed in the eastern part also, where people offer the first drop of milk to the water spirits. Each time, in the eastern part, when a new calf or a kid of goat is born, *ghorabak* and other water spirits are offered the first milk of that cow or goat in order protect them. Moreover, when a human is attacked by other water spirits, he is offered *dima-mala* (a necklace) made with duck egg near by the shore of the river or pond. In some places, few basil leaves are sewed in a cotton thread, and at the shore of a pond one bamboo stick is erected, where the basil necklace is placed. Then, a duck egg is slightly broken and placed the egg on the top of the stick so that the egg white will come out slowly and wet the whole cotton thread. After that, the worshipper requests him to protect them rather than harming them and return without looking the back.

Here once again we can see, in both cases, the parallel existence of magic and healing rites through offerings and sacrifices made in the ponds or streams located in the vicinity of the locality in the rituals and rites of the water spirits. So, magic plays an important part in the religious ritual of the Koches where spells or chants and sacrificial acts perform as the component of that ritual.

Conclusion

Thus, we can see that the cultural belief system is very much influenced by the surrounding environment and the nature of the survival of one's community. As Ivar Paulson, after observing the tradition of water spirits in Estonian folk religion has commented that according to the religious phenomenology the guardian spirits of fish, mother of waters and images of animate, personified bodies of water are relevant for the fisherman's ecotype. Further, he said that the demonic water spirits are but characteristic of the beliefs of agriculture and cattle-breeding people (Vastrik, 1999:32). The Koch religious tradition for the water spirits supports his idea. As the Koch community purely an agricultural based community and cattle breeding is also a part of their life, the images of water spirits are drawn purely as in demonic form; as mostly the harmful malevolent nature. The Koch belief emphasises the water spirit that mostly dwells on the ponds, streams or lakes rather than the rivers as the community itself prefer to dwell near the pond or stream or lake. Moreover, the offerings and sacrifices to the water spirits such as burnt fish, pork meat, pigeon, and duck egg etc. itself demonstrate its non-Aryan nature of beliefs. While the inclusion of basil leaf, banana, milk, curd, incense sticks etc. are the reflection of the Aryan practices with it. Moreover, the use of both Rajbongshi and Sanskrit language in chants and the relation of *Masan* and *Jokha* with Goddess Kali and Shiva is definitely reflected the process of Sanskritisation that shows the hybrid identity of its religious practices.

The folklore, generally associated with water spirits that shows the idea of a female patroness of fish that holds power to control the water and the living creatures in it, however, can be seen very much less among Koches. Preferably, the Koch beliefs do not say anyone single female, even male spirit also as the king of the water. The Koch water spirits are amphibian that leaves in both water and the land that fluctuate its places. And the critical condition is that it should be lonely and abundance. Moreover, the ritual practices are observed to protect and cure them of illness and not to harm them. Still, they are preserving the water lore generation wise mainly in the form of narratives, personal experiences, practices and beliefs that creates fear and describes the water spirits.

Notes:

¹In Assam, the Koch people primarily speak the Goalparia dialect of the Assamese language which is according to the community members is *Rajbanshi* or *Kamatapuri* language. There is a clear division of two forms of the dialect with local variations. These two broad dialectical patterns are the *Eastern Rajbanshi* – spoken in the eastern part of the Golapara region of both banks of the Brahmaputra river and the *Western Rajbanshi* – spoken on the western and south-western part. Grierson regarded the *Rajbanshi* language of the Western region as a variety and dialect of the Bengali language, where the rest is as an Assamese dialect

¹The Goalpara Region', here, represents the erstwhile Goalpara district which does no longer exist as a political entity but the name Goalpara retained its existence only through the old easternmost sub-division to a district. But the region "Goalpara" is still able to continue its designation that almost exactly covered by the then geographical area of the undivided district and represents a distinctive homogenous cultural pattern. The term *Goalpara* or *Goalpariya* is still deeply ensconced in the minds and discourse of the people of Assam, especially in various cultural contexts that people of this area try to associate themselves with the language, culture and old heritage of an 'undivided' Goalpara region.

¹Talking about the Bodo groups in Assam, scholar Birinchi Kumar Barua agrees that Koch community belong to a group of Bodo race and says, "The Bodo group of tribes includes the Koc, the Kachari, the Lalung, the Dimacha, the Garo, the Rabha, the Tipura, the Chutiya and the Maran" and "... build strong kingdoms and with various fortunes and under various tribal names – the Chutia, the Kachari, the Koc, etc...". (Barua, B. K. (1951). A Cultural History of Assam (Early Period) Vol. 1. Page:6-7). Scholar S. K. Chatterji described Koch as "Hinduised or Semi Hinduised Bodo people who have abandoned their original Tibeto-Burman speech and have adopted the Northern dialect of Bengali (which has a close affinity with Assamese)" (Chatterji, S. K. (2011). Kirata-Jana-Kriti. Page: 112.). Even Gait has already accepted this fact and commented, "in Assam proper it has become the name of a Hindu caste, into which are received the converts to Hinduism from the ranks of the Kachari, Lalung, Mikir and other tribes". Gait further stated that the population number of the Koches are increasing rapidly because of the process of conversion is still continuing.

¹ Although regarding the origin of the name of the community has other myths also, one myth says when they are migrated from the Tibet region, they have separated into two groups. One group settled down near the river Kosi, and other group settled down near the river Mesi. From that day onwards one group that settled down near Kosi river is known as Kosa or Koch (pronounced as Koss) and other group that settled near by the Mesi river is known as Mech (pronounced as Mess). In Goalpara region, these Mech/Mess people are also known as Bodo community).

¹ According to Hutton Webster, magic as a belief "... is the recognition of the existence of occult power, impersonal or only vaguely personal, mystically dangerous and not lightly to be approached, but capable of being channeled, controlled and directed by man. As a practice magic is the utilization of the power for public or private ends, which are good or bad, orthodox or heterodox, licit or illicit, according to the stimuli placed upon them by a particular society at a particular time." – see. Webster, Hutton. *Magic: A Sociological Study*, 1916, p. 55.

¹ *Kal xondhya*, literally means a deathly evening where *kal* means death and *xondhya* means evening and it is referred to that time of the day when it is neither day nor night (twilight). There is a belief also exists among the Koches regarding why members are restricted to go out in the twilight. According to the Koch belief system it is said that the spirits come out from their dwelling places at these time and roam here and there in search of human blood or souls and at that time their powers and deeds grows stronger. So, in order to prevent any accident causes by the evil spirits Koch people restricted themselves.

¹ Informant: Bimala Ray (52), Female, Borpara, Patiladaha, Bongaigaon.

¹ Informant: Amrit Ray (30), Male, Manikpur, Bongaigaon.

¹ According to the myth (Myth related to why Jokha is worshipped by the Koches) have to write.

¹ In the eastern part of undivided Goalpara district, especially in Bongaigaon, Abhayapuri, Bijni areas *Jokha* is known as *Jokh*, but his status is not as high as the *Jokha*.

¹ Although Masan is particularly a water spirit who is worshipped as a deity, yet it can be dwell in any place of the earth. It is said that the name *Masan/Masna* derived from the word 'mo' which means me and 'asan' which denotes to make easy or to make free; that means to say 'give relief from fear and diseases'. Another interpretation regarding its

name is said that the name comes from its function i.e. this is the spirit that helps to catch a good number fish in the pond or lake or river if he is happy, satisfy and his blessings are with the person. So, it is said that the spirit who helps in bringing a good catch of fish is known as *Masan*, i.e. 'mas' (fish) + 'aan' (bring).

¹ The actual meaning of the word *Gārjā* is not clear. But it is said the name of the deity *Gārjā* comes from the word *gāor rājā* i.e. the king of the village. Another meaning of the name of the deity *Gārjā* is said to come from the word 'ārjā' which means to earn. As *Gārjā* is worshipped to earn the blessings from the deity for a good health and wealth of the people and protection from the evil eyes, the ritual is termed *Gārjā*. *Gārjā pujā* is considered very much auspicious among the Koch people. The Koch people believe that by worshipping *Gārjā* will protect the family and the village from various evil powers that can create epidemics, diseases, natural calamities. *Gārjā* is the combination various gods and goddesses that are regularly propitiated by the Koches. Although it is very tough to identify the exact number and names of the *Gārjā* deities as the number and names of the deities are varied and fluctuated village to village. At the time of *Gārjā pujā*, various deities both benevolent and malevolent, spirits, ghosts, rivers, lakes, ponds, hills, stones etc are also worshipped. The deities are placed in the *Gārjā shāli* according to their status and are placed starting from the northern part to south serially.

¹ Informant: Pramod Rajbongshi (46), Nizdomoka, Barpetta.

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Nature and Women in Caribbean colonies: In Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Samiksha Pattnaik

Abstract

"[W]omen are the world's last colony"- says Kamla Bhasin, the eloquent campaigner for women's right and gender equality in India and South Asia in the Dec 2, 2012 issue of "The Hindu."

This comparison between colony and woman can be seen through a clearer lens from a study of Jean Rhys novel "Wide Sargasso Sea", which is set in post emancipation Jamaica. In a period characterized by rapid industrialization and colonization women took a secondary position and were identified with elements in nature and geographical landscapes that needed to be conquered and domesticated for personal and material benefits. White men wanted to explore new lands and rule over it by establishing colonies. With specific purpose of financial gains white men came to the Caribbean islands to exploit the natural resources and establish sugarcane industries. Drawing upon the binary of culture/ nature and man/ woman these early explorers and colonizers established parallels between women in the colonies and the natural landscapes of Caribbean islands in order to justify the need for domestication of both- nature and woman. Irrespective of the colour of their skin women too had to suffer the process of colonization. This paper shall attempt a study of how *Wide Sargasso Sea* projects the association of woman and nature and how they are exploited by a patriarchal order. It is one of the most hideous example of power exercised by men over women.

Key Words: Women, Nature, Ecofeminism, Exploitation, Patriarchy

Eco-femenism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of nature and the subordination and oppression of women. It is concerned with the connection between the domination of nature and domination of woman by a patriarchal society.

Jean Rhys is best known for her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a novel that gave her international acclaim after its publication in 1960s. This novel tells the story of Bertha Mason, the mad wife of Edward Rochester and also one of the mysterious characters in British literature 'the mad woman in the attic' in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Rhys' novel gave voice to Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre* and it lands itself to multiple interpretations from radically different critical perspectives formalism, post-colonial studies, feminism and recently eco-feminism.

Wide Sargasso Sea is a creative response to Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*. Rhys, by giving a voice to Brontë's heroine Bertha Mason, makes her the main character in *Wide Sargasso Sea* who tells her own story. Bertha Mason becomes Antoinette Cosway. The mad captive of Thornfield Hall is interpreted in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as the most hideous example of power exercised by men over women.

The novel projects the association of woman and nature and how they are exploited by a patriarchal order. It is the story of a white Creole woman called Antoinette Cosway living in the Caribbean at the time of colonialism, on a decaying plantation called Coulibri Estate in nineteenth century Jamaica. She is the daughter of a white plantation owner or ex-slave owner. After the death of her father, Mr. Alexander Cosway, his finances are left in ruins after the passage of the Emancipation Act 1833, which freed the black slaves and led the white slaves owners to bankruptcy. The collapse of the Caribbean Plantation economy in the 1830s turned the former Creole planters into economically and culturally disenfranchised minority. The creoles are considered as the "other" by the colonizers and also by the colonized. A Creole is a person of European descent living in the colonies for two or more generations. Most of these creoles are members of high society who held on to their wealth and social position in the colonies even after Emancipation Act was passed in 1833. They were members of the oldest and wealthiest families of Jamaica. But the family lost its social status after the collapse of Caribbean plantation during the post-emancipation period.

After emancipation has freed the slaves Antoinette's family left poverty stricken. In an effort to save her family from poverty and death, Antoinette's mother, Annette remarries an English man, Mr. Mason, who is a representative of the imperial patriarchal world after the death of her first husband, Mr. Cosway. But Mr. Mason, who is representative

of the imperial order, dominates Annette after her marriage and eventually she loses her sanity. Like her mother Antoinette also faces the same tragic fate. She too marries an Englishman, Rochester, who is equally domineering like Mr. Mason.

Rhys has used various symbols and images to describe this domination and exploitation of men over women. 'Garden' is the most important image that Rhys has used. His domination over his wife is presented through nature imagery that of the garden and the parrot. After their marriage Mr. Mason spends money on the estate, repairs it, which has grown wild after the death of Mr. Cosway. Which Antoinette describe as:

Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the bible - the tree of life grown there. But it had gone wild. The paths were overgrown and a smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell. Underneath the tree ferns, tall as forest tree ferns, the light was green... (6)

After the repair has done she gives the description of the garden again:

"Coulibri looked the same when I saw it again, although it was clean and tidy, no grass between the flagstones, no leaks."(14)

Mr. Mason not only repairs the garden but also he constructs the life of Annette and her family by marrying her. The garden of coulibri represents her state of mind after her husband's death, but Mr. Mason constructs it and makes it beautiful again. She is identified with garden, a piece of land that is considered to be planted and tilled. It is suggestive of Mr. Mason's dominance and control over his wife, in spite of his love for her. In nineteenth century women and nature were identified be controlled and with each other. The domination and exploitation of patriarchal world was not limited to women only but the British colonizers also exploited nature at the same time. They considered the land as woman, that can be explored, that can ruled over. White women were identified with fertile land. In this novel also there are a number of references to garden.

Another significant symbol of dominance is Annette's parrot Coco, a green parrot. The parrot always asks in French, '-qui est la? Qui est la?' which means 'who is there?' as Antoinette says he cannot talk very well and answer himself in patois 'che Coco, che Coco,' means 'dear Coco.' But Mr. Mason has clipped his wings and made it a prisoner in the house.

As a result, Coco cannot fly safely and falls on the fire during the mob's burning of Coulibri estate.

"He made an effort to fly down but his clipped wings failed him and he fell screeching. He was all on fire."(23)

The clipped wing of Coco, in a way symbolizes Annette's helplessness and lack of freedom in her own house. The basic question of human identity that the parrot asks becomes the questions of Annette and later of Antoinette as well. Antoinette describes her mother's cry:

"I heard my mother screaming 'qui est la? Qui est la?' then 'don't touch me. I'll will kill you if you touch me. Coward. Hypocrite. I'll kill you.' I'd put my hands over my ears, her screams were so loud and terrible." (25)

In addition to this symbol of parrot as an eco-feminist presentation of the power of patriarchy over nature and women, Rhys also provides a description of the Jamaican landscape to illustrate the ways in which Antoinette is associated with the nature. Rhys has presented the theme of dominance and dependence, ruling and being ruled through the relationship between the European men and powerless women. Just like her mother Antoinette also marries a domineering English husband and she becomes enslaved to the system of patriarchy. Antoinette is forced into marriage by her step father Mr. Mason and his son Richard. This marriage is more of a kind of business deal. Rochester is dominant in his own way over Antoinette, eventually turning her into a mad woman. According to Howells, Rochester belongs to that, "Patriarchal world where women are luxury items, to be bought, enjoyed and discarded."(34)

Rochester, according to the English law of primogeniture being the younger son does not inherit the property of his father. And thus, comes to the island to marry the Creole heiress, Antoinette and to acquire all her possession, her wealth and property. He identifies his wife with the landscape. Rochester's attitude to the windward island's natural environment is of the same mind set with which he views his wife Antoinette

It illustrates not only an association between women and nature but also the patriarchal desire to dominate both. This becomes clear in Rochester's words -

What an extreme green was all I could say..... Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flower too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near. And the woman is stronger. Her pleading expression annoys me “ (70).

The connection between nature and woman becomes more clear in the following words of Rochester-

‘A beautiful place wild, untouched, above all untouched, with an alien disturbing secret. I find myself think, what I see is nothing. I want what it hides- that is not nothing. ‘(54)

Antoinette here is compared to the Island that is sensuous, exotic and beautiful and having a secret loveliness which tempts and torments Rochester. Initially Rochester is overwhelmed by the wild beauty of his surrounding when he first arrives to the West Indies. But gradually he gets irritated with the extremity of color and the strangeness of the place. He wants to explore and control the landscape as he wants to control his wife but fails to do so. And his failure to do so is what makes him hate both his wife and the landscape-

“And I hated this place. I hated the mountains and hills, the river and the rain. I hated this sunsets of whatever color, I hated its beauty and its magic and the secret I would never know. I hated this indifference and the cruelty which is part of its loveliness. Above all I hated her for she belongs to the magic and loveliness.”

So it is this loveliness and its secret that torments Rochester and makes him exploit her, dominate her and rule over her. And he exercises his ownership over her by changing her name and calling her by different names and also taking her away to England, separating her from the landscape. Rochester’s cruelty is represented by Jean Rhys as a paradigm of male cruelty towards women. Thus *Wide Sargasso Sea* portrays a patriarchal society within white people, where women are considered as inferior and where male characters have ultimate control over their white wives financially and psychologically as seen in Mr. Mason over Annette and Rochester over Antoinette.

This exploitation is not limited to the white women only; the black women are also doubly exploited. The black woman were compared to the wilderness of nature, the wild side

of nature, the dark nature, they are like the unknown island, they were considered to be explored, to be discovered and to be ruled over.

The white men coming to the island always wanted to control that wilderness that the black women embody in themselves. Being a product of the oppressive patriarchal world Rochester is also not different. In his own way he dominates and exploits the servant girl Amelie, who is so “gay and natural” according to Rochester. First he makes love to her in the adjoining room of his wife’s bed room. And the next morning he says:

I had no wish to touch her and she knows it. . . . I told her that I was leaving the islands soon but before I left I wanted to give her a present. It was a large present but she took it with no thanks and no expression on her face. (90)

The black women are not only dominated by the white men, but also by the black men. Even if emancipation freed the black slaves but still they are not free in their own black world. It is shown in case of Christophine, Antoinette’s nurse and her friend. Christophine is the most powerful character in the novel yet dominated by her son.

Rhys has presented the exploitation of women through exploitation of nature or vice versa. The novel is set during a period when women and nature are identified with each other and viewed as “other”. Both the land and the women irrespective of white or black have to suffer in this process of colonization and its so called civilizing mission.

Wide Sargasso Sea not only challenges the British Empire but also exposes the marginalized conditions of women within the patriarchal society of the colonies. What Missy DehnKubitschek says seems true:

In her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys addresses women’s alienation by representing patriarchy as women’s Sargasso Sea. Like the apparently navigable but in fact treacherous ocean, patriarchy’s surface offers inviting opportunities but its real substance chokes all progress. (Kubitschek 2)

She presents the theme of domination and exploitation in her novel to describe and define wider race relations typical of West Indies where European born creoles are culturally marked and excluded as inferior and therefore as ‘other’. Moreover, Rhys is ironical about

the time, when the novel is set, nineteenth century, the Romantic Age of England. On one hand the British were of the idea of preserving nature and they romanticize nature and its beauty; poets like Wordsworth and Keats describe nature with all its beauty in their writings, even Wordsworth believes in the restoring the wilderness of nature. But at same time the colonizers were exploiting the nature in the colonies. So it's a kind of irony towards the hypocrisy of white men. On one side of the Sargasso Sea, nature is glorified while on the other side it is exploited in the hands of colonizers.

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Exploring *Teetash Ekti Nadir Naam*: A Reading in Linguistic Anthropology

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Somak Mandal

Abstract

Teetash Ekti Nadir Naam (Teetash, The Name of a River) by Advaita Malla Burman is a milestone in the history of Bengali literature as it delineates the unexplored but uncompromising life of the marginalised Malo community living on the banks of the river. The novel is considered as an authentic document of the tribal community's socio-cultural life which has not been touched by mainstream upper-caste urban centric Bengali literature. Our paper will analyse and establish how the novel qualifies as an ethnographic study documenting not only the distinct social and cultural identity but also the linguistic identity of the marginalised community. Our paper will critically focus on how language is used as the receptacle for the cultural material that contributes to the distinct identity of the Malo community. The novel positions itself against the mainstream urban literature by juxtaposing the socio-cultural milieu of the Malo people with that of the urban Bengalis and in this effort language is used as a tool to foreground the unique sociolinguistic characteristics of the community

Key words: linguistic anthropology, ethnography, dialect, identity, marginality

From the pre-historic period, it has been observed that water is key to the emergence of life. As the natural and continuous source of water, rivers occupy a central position. Human civilisations for thousands of years have sprung up on the banks of the great rivers, the Rhine, the Danube, the Nile, the Indus and so on. These river-centric civilisations are testimonies to human culture recording the progression of human society through history. The river Teetash in the eastern part of Bengal, now in Bangladesh, is no exception. The Teetash has been a receptacle for socio-cultural activities of human society living on its banks for years, and the story of the novel captures the continuous but dynamic human life of the Malo community, a marginalised tribal community. *Teetash Ekti Nadir Nam* (Teetash, The Name of a River) by Advaita Malla Burman is not just a novel nor only an ethnographic document; it is instead a literary expression of linguistic anthropology. The novelist as an ethnographer rather than just a novelist studies and critically describes the socio-cultural life and its interaction with the surrounding natural environment. The novelist delineates the life on the banks of the river not only with the sensibilities and insights of a novelist but also with the authenticity of rigorous field-work and the reliability of observer participation.

Linguistic Anthropology has been a significant field of academic research since the 1960s when renowned sociolinguist Dell Hymes set the paradigm for the interdisciplinary study of language and its socio-cultural use (Beals & Hiejer, 1971). One of the issues in the context of linguistic anthropology is the use of language in communication to retain and reinforce one's distinct socio-cultural identity. The linguistic anthropologist studies how one or two languages are indexical of one's identity which one wants to negotiate with in larger contexts. One approach in linguistic anthropology is ethnography (Brewer, 2010; Eriksen, 2010). „*Teetash Ekti Nadir Nam*“ is a classic example of literary ethnography. The novel describes the Malo tribal community living on the banks of the Teetash from time immemorial. The novel studies the ecology of the landscape and situates the tribal life in the landscape critically analysing peoples' socio-cultural life. The focus of the paper is to show how the novel as a document on linguistic anthropology highlights the linguistic medium being used by the marginalised community to retain and reinforce their socio-cultural identity.

The novel is rich with the materials of folk culture. Such elements of folk culture are significant from the perspectives of linguistic anthropology (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2008)

because they are the testament of the community life and living as it has been going on for years are contributing to the folk lores. The novel, „*Teetash Ekti Nadir Naam*“ quite adequately and critically describes the tribal life based on the socio-economic and religious landscape of the region. In the novel, for example, we find references to different rituals like „*Magh Mandaler Brata*“ which is observed by the unmarried women to celebrate the relation between the sun god, who presides over fertility and lord Krishna, who presides over love. Elsewhere in the novel, we find the chanting of local folksongs “Lao lao suruj thakur lao jhutar jol/ Mapia jukhia dibo sapta anchal” (Come to the cousin of the sun god and take my offering of water/ I will measure and give you all I have got)(p. 31). It is an address to the local deity „suruj thakur“ who is a close cousin of the sun god. The language used here is particularly significant as it is not standard Bengali used by the educated urban Bengalis. The non-standard dialect intersecting the novel which is otherwise written in conventional literary Bengali shows the distinct identity of the Malo tribe living on the banks of the Teetash. In the novel, as the novelist quite delicately holds before us the socio-economic landscape of the protagonists, we find the description of the material culture of the Malo community. This material culture is very important to prepare an ethnographic document for those people as Hicks (1996) says, "Material culture includes the sum or inventory of the technology and material artefacts of a human group, including those elements related to subsistence activities as well as those which are produced for ornamental, artistic or ritual purposes. The study of material culture is linked... to the anthropology of art, music, dance, symbolism and ritual and the anthropology of technological systems." (p.183). The material culture in the novel represents the Malo life which is deeply steeped in the fishing and farming activities. The different words, used in the novel referring to varying types of water bodies regarding their size and use resonate with the unmistakable fact of the importance of streams of water as the source of life for the people of the Malo community. The different words used are, *pushkorini* (a medium-size pond primarily used for drawing drinking water, sometimes small fishes are also caught for personal consumption), *beel* (a big natural water body which is primarily used for fishing), *khaal* (a rivulet which connects to the river and ensures a constant supply of fishes), *doba*, (a small and shallow pond where one can find small fishes), *khaana* (a typical dialectical word which means an area where water accumulates), *gaang* (another more colloquial word for the river) and *nodi* (the river, which is the principal source of water for all domestic and commercial use). The use of so many different words to refer to various sources of water is significant from the perspective of

linguistic anthropology as this lexical field efficiently creates the distinct landscape that shapes up the distinct life and The livelihood of the Malo community. From the point of view of linguistics anthropology, it is also interesting to note that the author uses the non-standard word (*khaana*) with dialectical connotation to create a world which is far away from the civilised centre of the town; a world which is unique with its labyrinth of rivers and rivulets; ponds and lakes; swamps and streams. Unlike English, Bengali has multiple words to mean water bodies with subtle but crucial differences, and it shows the centrality of water in the life of the Bengalis. The Malo community in the eastern part of Bengal is no exception. Their life revolves around water and their two principal sources of livelihood, fishing and farming are entirely dependent on water.

Fishing is presented as the activity the Malo community takes pride in. Like the rivers and ponds, fishing is central to their socio-economic and cultural identity. Fishes constitute the material culture of the community as we are introduced to many fish species in the novel. The names like *shingi*, *maagoor*, *ruj*, *kaatla*, *naandil*, *mrigel*, *punti*, *mourala* all constitute the material culture on which is based the ethno-linguistic dimension of the novel. The different breeds of the fish mentioned in the novel foreground the fact that fishing is not only a commercial activity for those people living on the banks of a maze of rivers but also an imagination; a romantic occupation that defines the identity and status of the society and the individual living in it. The novel not only mentions the names of different breeds of fishes but also presents a detailed description of the process of drying fish which assumes a ritualistic resonance in the Malo community which swears by the fish. The process is called „khola-baoa“ where both the men and women participate to dry the fresh catch from the river. This process is critical since it preserves the fish which can be consumed later and such preservation increases the market value of the fish as well. This kind of fish is called *shoontki* a delicacy among people from the eastern part of Bengal. Such words contribute to the interpretation of the story as a document of linguistic anthropology because, with the use of the word *shoontki*, the novel explores the identity of the people that is distinct from the people from the western part of Bengal where *shoontki* is considered too smelly.

To take the story further as an ethnographic study, the novelist describes the process of drying the fish „khola-baoa“, “*purushera macher jhuri dhoradhori koria aania tahaader paashe stoop korite thaake. Meyeder haat chole thik koler moto. Etoboro maachtake poloke*

ghuraia pete pithe golae teen poch dia gharer upar dia chunria mare, she maach jothashtane joro hoi. Aarek dol purush shekhan hoite nia dingite tole shukaibaar jonno. diner por din ei bhabe teen mash chole jai. ihake bole khola-baoa" (The men bring the baskets and dump the fishes in a heap. The women's hands move like machines. They flip a big fish with the blink of an eye and throw the fish back over their shoulder after giving three quick and sharp cuts on the neck, throat and belly of the fish. The fishes are stored in a particular place, and a group of men hoard them in a boat and take them away for drying. The process takes three months to complete. It is called khola-baoa) (pg. 55). This detailed stage by stage description of making *shoontki* is an crucial socio-economic material making the novel a significant ethnographic study. What this description foregrounds besides the overbearing presence of the fish in the lives of the Malo people is the participation of the women with an equal stake in the economic activity. This feature makes the Malo women significantly distinct from their upper caste sisters who prefer to stay indoors or to shy away from physical labour.

In spite of the women's whole-hearted participation in the socio-economic life, the Malo community is conventionally patriarchal, and the man is considered to be the principal bread-earner. A boy to qualify as a man must earn a living, and for that, he must go out fishing. The phrase *nao-jaal*(boat and fishing net) has been repeated in the novel throughout and portrayed as the essential and desired possession of a man who wants respect and position in the society. A Malo man owning *nao-jaal* is coveted by Malo women as the possession ensures the certainty of livelihood. Malo men who do not have a boat and a fishing net is often subjected to ridicule and derision as the wife of Subal, a middle aged man in the novel complains "*emon tulanya giristi kato din chalaiba! nao korba, jaal korba, saukari koira songsar chalaiba. ei kotha amar baaper kache tin satya koira tobe to amare bia korte parcho. swaran hoina keno?*"(How long will I have to run this poor household! You married me after making sincere promises to my father that you would own a boat, own fishing net, an earn enough for the household. Did you forget all that?)(p.34)

Besides fishing, farming occupies a central position both in the economic context and the scio-cultural context. In this respect, it will be interesting to mention that when Hindi and English has just one word, Bengali has three words to refer to three different stages of processing of rice. Hind uses the word *chawal*, and English uses the word „rice“ for both raw and cooked rice. Bengali uses two different words; *chaal* for raw uncooked rice and *bhaat* for

cooked rice. Hindi uses the word *fasal*, and English uses the word „paddy“ as a general term for crops of foodgrains, Bengali uses the word *dhaan* to refer to the rice crop exclusively. Such lexical field again used for the Malo community suggests the centrality of rice in their diet and socio-cultural milieu. Besides, the reference to rice, there are words which represent the typical vegetation in and around the landscape that develops on the banks of the *Teetash*. The names of the trees like, *taal* (palm), *naarikel* (coconut), *soopari* (beetel nut), *shorshe*

phool (mustard flowers) are not unfamiliar for average Bengali readers, but the names create a typical Bengali rural landscape which is serene and pristine. The Malo community at the beginning of the novel lives in the pristine countryside surrounded and blessed by the forces of nature with the river *Teetash* being the life source for the entire community. At the end of the novel, this pristine landscape gives way to a wasteland as the river dries up leaving the Malo people helpless and hungry. The *Teetash* dries up and with it disappears all the hopes and desires of hundreds of men and women.

The novel's position as an ethnographic study is further confirmed by its documentation of casteism which has been a harsh social reality of any Hindu society. The Malo community qualifies as scheduled tribe in the government policy and still, it cannot escape from the scourge of casteism which is a product of Brahminical discriminatory practice. A Malo woman compares her pre-marital bliss to a state of being a Brahmin and her present awful marital condition to a state being a low-caste fisherman. The woman says, "Aage chilam bramhoner maia kortaam shiber pooja, jaaluar sone koira prem kaati shoner suta re nachibe ei chilo"(I was a daughter of a Brahmin and I used to worship lord shiva, and now I am just spinning thread after falling in love with a fisherman, is this what my destiny has in store?) (p. 23). This rant of an average Malo woman subtly exposes the deep-seated casteism in the society and which the low-caste people are victims

From the point of view of linguistic anthropology, the liberal use of dialects in the novel draws our attention to the linguistic identity of the people living in the eastern part of Bengal hundreds of miles away from Kolkata which is the cultural epicentre of the region. As the term „dialect“ itself carries a message of marginalisation as opposed to the centrality of

the „standard language“ (Hudson, 2001; Trudgill, 1995), the dialect-speaking Malo community is positioned on the margins. The omniscient narrator narrates the story in standard Bengali which is, however, quite simple without ornamental rhetoric but, the characters from the Malo community always talk in their local dialect which has distinct phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic flavours. A malo woman says “*Poorush maanush dia ki hoibo. Tara brishtir paani-phonta, jhorlei shesh. Tara joarer jol. Tilek matro shukh dia nodir book shuishya nai.*” (Men are of no use. They are like rain-drops, they vanish as they appear. They are tidal water. They suck up the river just after providing momentary succour) (p. 126). This passage is distinct in its river and rain imagery which suggest these people’s proximity to natural forces. What is also significant is the use of a typical dialectical word like *tilek* meaning „a liitle“ which in standard Bengali will be *ektu*. More glaring differences come out if

We translate the passage into standard Bengali as follows “*Poorush die ki hobe. Tara brishtir joler phonta, jhorlei shesh. Tara joarer jol. Ektu matro shukh die nodir book shooshe nai.*” The differences are quite easy to spot on the phonological level (hoibo vs hobe) as the vowel sounds differ because the diphthong in Malo dialect is replaced by a monophthong in standard Bengali. On the morpho-syntactic level (paani-phonta vs brishtir joler phonta) the compound in Malo dialect is replaced in standard Bengali by the noun phrase (NP) which consists of the noun (phonta) and two possessives (brishti+ -r, jol+-er). Another significant point is the presence of the word *pani* in Malo dialect and the absence of it in standard Bengali. The word *pani*, which is used more commonly in the Muslim community is not acceptable in Sanskritised standard Bengali, but it is freely used in Malo dialect though Malos are Hindu by religion. *Brishtir paani-phonta* is an interesting example of code-mixing which is probably a result of „language contact“ as there are more exchanges between the low caste Malos and the Muslims than between the upper-caste Hindus and the Muslims.

The novel Teetash Ekti Nadir Naam by Advaita Malla Burman is a rich ethnographic document on the life and livelihood of the marginalised Malo community. The novel from the perspective of linguistic anthropology suggests that language has the potential to assert and establish a distinct identity both at the individual and community level. The words closely related to the landscape and all its natural forces create a singular world which is far away from the familiar landscape and yet, the world captures the universal human predicaments.

At the end of the novel, the river dries up, and fishing stops, the Malos disappear but, what may remain is their language that will be used to archive a human tale which is distinct yet familiar, unique yet universal.

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Folk Medicines in Vogue in Nepalese Folk Community

Suman Bantawa

Abstract

Folk medicines, at present, has been the subject of studies under the modern concept of the folklore. It exists vibrant in the culture of the entire ethnic race on earth. This tradition is found in the Nepalese community as well coming from generation to generation. This seminar paper is from folk medicines in vogue in the Nepalese society. In this context, i.e. in the studies of Nepalese folk medicines, firstly, the introduction regarding the development of Nepalese culture has been presented. Secondly, as per Don Yoder's classifications, the Nepalese folk medicines system is classified into two distinct parts- First, natural folk medicines and second, magicoreligious folk medicines. Under the natural folk medicines, the use of herbs and flesh has been discussed. Similarly, under the magicoreligious folk medicines, this system of mystic spells of Shamans, charms and sacrifices is stated. Under the natural folk medicinal tradition, the herbs of the Himalayan region and the flesh of some animals for the medical treatment have been discussed, and in the studies of the magico-religious folk medicines, the system of Shamanism and Sacrifices traditionally handed down from generations in Nepalese society has been discussed.

Keywords: Folk Medicine, Herb, Flesh, Shaman, Chant, Healing, Sorcerer, Spells, Sacrifice

Introduction of Nepalese culture

The Nepalese community-dwelling since time immemorial in the Eastern region of the Himalayas in the multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious nation. Nepalese community has its folk tradition. In the construction of this national symposium, the contributions of Rai, Limbu, Mangar, Bhutia, Sherpa, Tamang, Lepcha of Mongolian race and Bahun, Chhetri, Newar, Bhujel, Kami, Damai, Sarki of Aryan race and many different caste people can be seen. And here, their main source of living means are tea gardens, nurseries and farming. In this way, the people from different regions/race constructed a garden of all races where all

individual customs-culture and traditions also meet by which an autonomous folk tradition is developed. Due to this folk tradition varied creative endeavours can be seen in Nepalese languages, like Folk literature (folk stories, folk poems, folk songs), folk dance, folk dress, folk ornaments, folk arts, folk instruments, folk religion, folk behaviour, folk culture etc. which at present is seen in the holistic factor as Folklore.

Introduction to Folk Medicine

Folk medicine means the method of treatment acquired by the people and used for the people. The role of the experience of our illiterate ancestors and faith was more than science in its development, which is the result of experience since centuries and folk beliefs as per the words of Melike Kaplan.⁴ Hence, at present, the medicines and treatment provided by science instantly eradicate some diseases that come into human life. But, before the introduction of medical science, these ancestors had discovered the various kind of conventional medicines in order combat some diseases. Some of these medicines were natural herbs and plants and whereas some are based on the method of folk belief in Shamanism and also can be seen associated with sorcerer or spells, though it cannot be evaluated in terms of science yet it has been playing an important role for the welfare of the people since the time of creation, and this is a proven fact. In fact, such folk medicines and treatment are found to be famous all over the world. It is because of these reasons among the new disciplines, this method of folk treatment has also been in folk dialogue, by which the traditional folk medicine has been studied at present at the world level. And this kind of folk medicines has been found in our Nepalese community for centuries. In the process of learning folk medicines, as how many types of folk medicines that have been in practice in our lives can hardly be distinguished. Hence, in this regard, the folk medicines are classified as per the chapter entitled *Folk Medicine* in the book named **FOLKLORE AND FOLKLIFE AN INTRODUCTION** which was published in 1972 at Chicago. According to Yoder, Folk medicines can be divided into two parts.⁵ They are-

- A Natural Folk medicines
- B Magico-Religious Folk medicines

⁴ Serdar UGURUL (2011) 'Traditional Folk Medicine in the Turkish Folk culture' *TURKISH STUDIES- international Periodical For The Languages and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol.6/4 fall, TURKEY, p.319

⁵ Don Yoder, (1972) 'Folk Medicine' (edit) Richard M.Dorson, *FOLKLORE AND FOLKLIFE: AN INTRODUCTION*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, p.192.

(A) Natural folk medicine

By natural folk medicine we mean the treatment carried out by the herbs and plants found in nature. In this method, some ailments are treated by medicinal herbs. The use of this kind of herbs when seen customary, can be found since time immemorial. Before 5000 years the use of medicinal herbs by the Sumerians can be traced. In this way around 1000 BCE, Egyptians used garlic, opium, coriander, mint, etc.⁶ and also in 1900 BCE, the use of herbs as medicines can be found in Greece, India, Persia, Arab, China and all over the world. Some of the important ancient books written in this context are as follows- Theophrastus's '*Historia Plantarum*' (Greek) in 4th century BCE, '*Sushrut Sanhita*' (Indian) in 6th century BCE, Eber's '*Pepirus*' (Egypt) in 1550 BCE, and Pedanius Dioscorides's '*De Meteria Medica*' (European)⁷ which is assumed to be of 1st century BCE, likewise, the establishment of Medicinal centres based on herbs in Persia and Arabian countries could be traced around 9th century, which was called '*Bimarstan*' (Treatment Centres). Here, the medicinal herbs were imported abundantly from India and China. In this period only, some women could be seen who used sorcery and spells along with medicinal herbs for the treatment. But, later on, they were discarded as notorious and cunning women. Among them, a woman named Benedictine around 12th century BCE wrote a book titled '*Causes and Cures*' based on Folk Medicines. Before this, Abulcasis's '*The Book of Simple*', written in 936 BCE, Avicenna's '*The Canon of Medicine*', written in 1025 BCE, and Ibn al-Baytar's, '*Copers of Simple*' written around 1196-1248 etc. are assumed as the important achievements of the middle age. Looking from this point of view, the ages of 15th, 16th and 17th centuries is known as the great age of herbal medicines⁸. Then, after the commencement of modern period, the questions were raised on the effects of the medicines prepared from herbs. Hence, started the trend of seeing it on the private class. But before the advent of medical science, this medicinal herb and its uses prevalent since thousand of years is based on folk beliefs. Thus, according to David J Hofford Folk medicine is not considered as a false belief.⁹

(B) Magico- Religious Folk Medicines

Magico-Religious Folk medicines mean the treatment of diseases by Shamans and by uttering chants. In this especially the supernatural elements like witch, sorcerer and ghosts

⁶ 'Herbalism (jadi-buti chikitssa)'

<http://hi.wikipedia.org/s/txi>

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ David J Hofford, (1997) folk medicine' *FOLKLORE: an encyclopedia of beliefs, customs, tales music and art* (edit.) Thomas A. Green, California, Santa Barbara, p.544

etc. play an important role. These powers are always active to do evil on the earth. It is found that they spread various ailments in the simple lives of people. So, to defeat such supernatural evil power the only medium that could be seen in Shamans on whom we have our faith and beliefs because they have been providing a healthy resolution and spiritual powers to the society¹⁰. In fact, when we see in the context of folk medicines, it is found that the tradition of Shamans in Egypt, Iran, North Asia, South India and Celtic and Pagan Europe has been in practice since prehistoric age.¹¹ In Jeremy Norbai and Francis Huxley *Shaman through time 500 years on the path to knowledge*, the incident of a traveller historian from Spain, Gonzalo Fernandez who on his travelogue has written about seeing a Shaman using tobacco while performing rituals to spirits and ghosts in Hispaniola (modern Haiti) in 1532 CE, has been traced.¹² It was Russian father Avvakum Petrovich in his autobiography published in 1672 introduced this ritual to the whole world for the first time.¹³ In this way the Shaman tradition in various caste and communities worldwide can be seen, likewise even in Nepalese community, this tradition is prevalent since ages. But western world's Denis Diderot, Petrovich and other intellectuals appraised Shaman as Magician, smugs and magical villains and it is seen that Russian Botanist Stephen krashennnikov criticised their work as a pessimist and humorous.¹⁴ Even then in Nepalese community the faith and devotion to Shamans are found to be prevalent because they have been protecting us from the supernatural evil powers by being our healers since the ages. Hence, Shamans are often referred as Power Doctor, Powwow Doctor,¹⁵Witch Doctor.¹⁶

Folk medicine prevalent in Nepalese society

The practice of these two parts of folk medicine can be found to in Nepalese society as a long tradition. The folk medicines prevalent here can be divided into two sects-

- (i) The use of the herb in folk medicines
- (ii) The use of flesh in folk medicines

(i) The use of the herb in folk medicines

¹⁰ Mariko Nambu Walter & Eva Jane Naumann Friedman (edit.) (2004) 'Introduction' *SHAMANISM: an encyclopedia of world beliefs, practices and culture*, California, Santa Barbara, p.xx

¹¹ *ibid*, p.xvi

¹² *ibid*, p.xvi

¹³ *ibid*, p.xvi

¹⁴ *ibid*, p.xvii

¹⁵ Don Yoder, *ibid*, p.201

¹⁶ Eagam Khaling, (2013) 'Jhankri in Darjeeling' (edit.) Terrace Mukhia & Sushna Subba, *DARJEELING SAGA*, sonada, kalpagriha Publication, p.8

It is found that the use of different types of herbs is prevalent worldwide and its development can be seen as old as the origin of humans. And this medicine is found to be rather effective. The common herbs used as medicines and prevalent in our Nepalese community are as follows-

Ginger-(*Zingiber officinal Rosc/Zingiberaceae*) for a toothache, tonsils. **Indian Gooseberry**- (*Emblica Officinalis Gaertn. Syn.Phllanthus emblica/Euphorbiaceae*) for indigestion, fever and regular hiccups. **Cardomum**-(*Amomum sabulatum Roxb/Zingiberaceae*) for nerves related diseases. **Winter Cherry**-(*withania somni fera*) for Female diseases and cough. **Malabar Nut, adulsa**-(*Adhatoda vasica nees/Acanthaceae*) for diarrhoea, dysentery and stomach related diseases. **Belly Goat Weed**-(*Ageratum conyzoides linn/compositae*) also for above related diseases. **Bitter guard**-(*Momordica charatia linn/Cucurbitaceae*) for diabetes and disease of liver and lungs. **Ash Guard**-(*Benicasa hispida/ thumb/cong./cucurbitaceae*) best for epilepsy and internal bleeding from any part of the body. **Horse Tail**-(*Equisetum diffusum d. Don/Equisetaceae*) for kidney and kidney stones as well as when the stomach is warm. **Aloe vera**-(*Aloe barbadensis mill. Syn. Aloe vera tour. Ex linn/ liliaceae*) for burns. **Chiretta**-(*Swertia chirata buch.Ham./Gentianaceae*) for fever. **Himalayan Silver Fir**-(*Abies spectabilis/d.don/spach syn.A wabbiana lindl./Pinaceae*) for asthma. **Spikenard**-(*Nardostchys jatamansi dc. valerianaceae*) for epilepsy, hysteria etc. **Stephania Glabra**-(*Stephania glabra miers. Syn. S.rotunda hook. F. Thoms./menispermaceae*) for tuberculosis, urine infection and stomach diseases. **Indian Wormwood**-(*Artemisis nilagirica/artemisis vulgaris/ compositae*), for nose bleeding, problems in the menstrual cycle. **Astilbe Rivularis**-(*Astilbe rivullaris buch/ saxifragaceae*) for body ache. **Manjhista, samanga**-(*Rubia cordifolia linn./Rubiaceae*) for chest disease, snake and insect bite. **Garlic**-(*Allium sativum linn./liliaceae*) for lowering cholesterol level and for stomach worms. **Cinchona**-(*Cinchona ledgeriana moens ex trimen./rubiaceae*) best for malaria. **Nettles**-(*urtica dioica linn./urticaceae*) for high BP and gouts. **Harad or Haritaki**-(*Terminalia chebula retz./ loranthaceae*) for blood dysentery. **Leafless Mistletoe**-(*Viscum articulatum burm./ loranthaceae*) for fractures in bones. **Bishop's Weed**-(*Trachy spermum linn./umbellifeera*) for diarrhoea and dysentery and chronic cough.¹⁷ There are still many more herbs prevalent in Nepalese community since long.

¹⁷ Meghbahadur Thapa, (2001) *Jaributi*, vol. 1, Darjeeling, chandmari, p. 1-70

(ii) The use of flesh in folk medicines

In this way, the other method of folk medicines is seen prevalent in Nepalese society where flesh is used to cure the diseases. Like- monkey's (Bonnet Macaque) meat is given to the person having a weak heart, **Jackle's** (*Cavisaureus indica*) meat is given to the Asthama patient. The **Pig's** (*sus*) mouth is given when there is excessive bleeding, **Leopard's** (*Panther Pardus*) meat for the treatment of tuberculosis and the meat of bird **Blue whistling thrush** (*Myophonous Cearuleus*) for treatment of piles. Whether the diseases are cured by eating meat or not is hardly vivid in a medical context, but this is Nepalese folk belief inherited traditionally, and it is prevalent to date.

B Magico-Religious Folk Medicines

Magico- religious folk medicine in Nepalese society can be divided into two parts.

- (i) Shamanism and sorcery/spells as folk medicine
- (ii) Sacrifice as folk medicine

(i) Shamanism and sorcery/spells as folk medicine

According to this healing method any diseases can be treated by sorcery or by chanting words and person who perform this act is known as Shamans. Such shamans are found to be of three kinds in our society. The first one 'Bhuifutta'i.e., the shaman believed to have taken by the 'Banjhankri' (shaman of the jungle) while in his childhood by tricking the eyes of his family. The second kind is the one who is a shaman by inheritance (meaning if someone in the clan or family is a shaman then after his death someone in the family will inherit the divine power and he becomes a shaman) and the one is the shaman initiated by a teacher or Guru (meaning anyone who is interested being a shaman learns the craft from accomplished shaman by being his disciple). This kind of shamans is often called by different names by various caste and creed present in the Nepalese community, like- Mangpa (Rai), Fedangba (Limbu), Bungthing (Lepcha) etc. All these various shamans provide treatment to the person affected by a witch or someone ill at home by the process of sorcery/spells. In this kind of treatment, almost all shamans use rice grains and indian wormwood. Apart from this

at times they treat the person suffering from stomach pain or fever by the process of spells through pure water and at times disease like Jaundice is treated by spells through oil on the bronze plate. In this way, these shamans not only cure the muscle cramps (legs) and toothache but also take out the snake venoms by spells. And in some illness, they cure the diseases by tying up 'Butti' a kind of talisman.

(ii) Sacrifice as folk medicine

Apart from these type of treatment by herbs and spells, the treatment of the diseases done by the sacrifice of the animals and birds, also can be seen in Nepalese society. It is because the tradition of offering the sacrifice of animals, birds, grains flower, prayer, flags, vermilion etc., to one's worshipable god-goddess, spirits and ancestors for happiness, contentment and health is prevalent as folk belief.¹⁸ And this belief is one of the methods of folk medicine in our community since ages. Especially in some cases where a person is not cured for a long time, this kind of shamans are called to perform a ritual, and the shamans perform the ritual the whole night for the good health of the sick by sacrificing a fowl and keeping it at the crossroad to ward off the evil spirits. This is called 'khadgo katnu' meaning removing the obstacle. In this way, a kind of ritual known as 'Himmang Puja' is performed in Limbu community. 'Himmang' in limbu means the god of the house. If anyone in the family is suffering from pain in ears can be cured by sacrificing a fowl, is the belief that is still prevalent. In this ritual animals and birds are sacrificed, and their blood is sprayed to ward off evil spirits in the name of 'Thungdungba'. The god of the jungle and 'Thungdung', the old god.¹⁹ This tradition is found prevalent till at present.

Conclusion

In this regard, it can be seen that folk medicines as a strong tradition are prevalent since the beginning of any community's history of civilization in the whole world. At the time when there was no development of medicines by the scientific way, the use of herbs and the process of spells was instrumental in curing the diseases. Later on which was handed down from generation to generation in the form of folk belief in the history of mankind. Among the tradition developed this way by the different kinds and forms of folk belief prevalent in

¹⁸ Manoj Limbu, (2015) *Nepali Lok Biswasma Bali Prathako Sanskritik Adhyayan*, unpublished M.Phil Desertation, Sikkim University, p.71

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.84

Nepalese community is discussed here in, where the Nepalese culture- tradition and the real identity is still survived.

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Evolution of Language and Identity of English Narratives in Postmodern India: An Eclectic Study

Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty

Abstract

Indian English literature has earned a place of reverence in the world forum for its diction, tone, discourse, approach and characters. Especially, during the postmodern era, the characters of Indian novels have expressed themselves in varied ways by unlayering multiple moods and identities. Furthermore, these narratives have helped in evolving the possibilities of the language and the identities of the soil that include every single sphere of the society. As Peter Barry (2010) writes “the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it”, the narratives of the novels after 1980 reflect every facet of India with “parody and pastiche”. Every single fragment of the society has been celebrated with joy, justice and juxtaposition. This paper analyses the evolution of English language in India post-1980, and the shift of identities from ‘high’ and ‘popular’ to ‘gaudiness’; from ‘elitist’ to ‘bits’ and ‘pieces’ from different segments of life. In order to see this development, four novels have been analyzed which are carefully chosen from four decades of postmodernism. They are Nayantara Sahgal’s *Rich Like Us* (1986), Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain* (1996), Rupa Vajwa’s *The Sari Shop* (2006), and Jerry Pinto’s *Em and the Big Hoom* (2016). With these narratives, the four Sahitya Akademy Awardees have captured the tone and attitude of postmodern era and proven that less can never be more. Grand narratives and human perfectibility are no longer part of their narratives; rather they hybridize both ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, and bring out relatively next door characters who are local as well as global in their appeal and approach. With the language of these novels, and the selection and presentation of the characters in them, the taste and sensibility of Indian English has really been evolved to a new identity.

Key words: Postmodernism, Language, Identity, Indian English Novels, Eclectic Approach, Development

Introduction

More or less Indian English has established its standard in the world of English literature. The continuous effort from the writers of the soil has made it possible to create its own identity by shaping the characters that remain local in their approach, at the same time they have a very global appeal. Indian English literature excels in its quality, quantity, variety and antiquity. Indian English novel has evolved as a subaltern consciousness; as a reaction to break away from colonial literature. Hence the post colonial literature in India witnessed a revolution against the idiom which the colonial writers followed. Gradually the Indian English authors began employing the techniques of hybrid language and magical realism peppered with native themes. Thus from a post colonial era Indian literature ushered into modern and then the post modern era. The saga of the Indian English novel therefore stands as the tale of changing tradition, the story of changing India. This paper aims at analyzing the stories of post modern India told by Indian writers as a way of progress, evolution, and at the same time externalization of internal conflict and the internalization of external influences. The paper has analyzed four novels: Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* (1986), Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain* (1996), Rupa Vajwa's *The Sari Shop* (2006), and Jerry Pinto's *Em and the Big Hoom* (2016). All these four novels bagged Sahitya Akademi Award for their authors in the respective years along with other national and international recognitions as well. At the same time, this paper has focused upon the taste of post modern Indian English literature which has come a way ahead where it stands for its own and eclectically celebrates the array of themes that are garnished with Indian flavor and served with the emotions of the Indian cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh and Mumbai. This paper has also highlighted the evolution of characters and along with them the identity of the Indian fictions.

Review of Literature

Postmodernists questioned the idea that there is an objective reality out there to be discovered. They abandon foundationalism (the idea that we can identify a sound foundation upon which to build other knowledge). They are suspicious of the type of meta-narratives that modernists sought (grand accounts which were supposedly true for everyone). They question the concept of objective truth and believed that everything is subjective and relative. Consequently, although they do not reject the use of reason in certain areas, they

do not believe it is the only or even the main way to investigate the world. Emotional responses are given equal status to logical ones. They reject the idea that language is neutral and can provide an objective account of reality. Many postmodernists question modernist's faith in science and technology to lead to progress and some are very suspicious about the dangers of technology. Postmodernists tend to reject the idea that we have an independent rational 'self'. What we think of as our self, is actually a collection of different experiences. We are constantly changing and have no fixed identity.

Peter Barry (2010) writes "the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it". He further says that the tone and attitude of the two also differ. An important aspect of modernism was a fierce asceticism which found the over-elaborate art forms of the nineteenth century deeply offensive and repulsive. By contrast, postmodernism rejects the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' art which was important in modernism and believes in excess, in gaudiness, and in 'bad taste' mixtures of qualities. It disdains the modernist asceticism as elitist and cheerfully mixes, in the same building, bits and pieces from different architectural periods.

Lyotard (1979) defines postmodernism as 'incredulity towards metanarratives'. 'Grand Narratives' of progress and human perfectibility, then, are no longer tenable, and the best we can hope for is a series of 'mininarratives', which are provisional, contingent, temporary, and relative and which provide a basis for the actions of specific groups in particular local circumstances. Postmodernism thus 'deconstructs' the basic aim of the Enlightenment, that is 'the idea of a unitary end of history and a subject.

Indian Writing in English witnessed a renaissance in 1980s. The two cultural and literary events that led to the attempts of departing from the preceding period way of writing are: The first one, Edward Said's theoretical deliberations in *Orientalism* was instrumental to the emergence of the postcolonial discourse and the second one is the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* with departure from the predominant realist mode of the Indian English novel practised since the 1930s.

The study of the Indian English fiction after 1980 unfolds the following changes in theme and narrative strategies. The first important theme is these novelists go back to history. Even the early novelists also went to history but objective of them was to portray the greatness and the glory of our civilization. They are the revisionist historiographers. Due to

the impact of many literary social and political developments or changes these new novelists feel 'the reality is the matter of perspective'. In other words they are skeptical about the recorded materials. They depict how the historical events affected the lives of the individuals. They bring to light the untold stories and subjects. They strongly believe that since the history of postcolonial territories was, until recently, largely a narrative constructed by the colonizers, its fictions and languages in which they are written operate as a means of cultural control. Moreover, they read the present through the present. They resort to history with the purpose of finding its relevance to the contemporary society, to caricature the present personalities, to allegorize, to record the unrecorded, to give voice to the subaltern, to subvert it, to question the hegemony, to unfold the constructedness of many ideas, concepts and truths, to interrogate the concept of nation and finally to present their point of view through it. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosomes* are good examples for this.

Some of the major narrative-devices the writers of this period employ are non-linear plots, multiple narrations, flash back and flash forward, anti-heroes and heroines, more about common men, magic realism, intertextuality, mixed genres, story within story and so on. The novelists of this period mainly depict metropolises, their inhabitants, their problems, plights, culture and their way of life. The reason for this is that "the nation itself has moved from the village centrism of the Gandhian era to the city centrism of the post-Nehru period" (Mee 320).

The very striking aspect of the Indian English fiction after 1980 is the playfulness in the use of language. The novelists before 1930s were very much meticulous and conscious in using English. Because firstly most of them were writing after mastering that language, secondly they were writing to English readers. The novelists of the period from 1930s to 1980 started experimenting with use of English and many of these writers stayed abroad for at least some period got mastery over it and it became possible to experiment. The writers of this period used Indian words, phrases, idioms, proverbs and sometimes translated words from the regional language into English. All this was done by these writers to establish Indian identity, to convey the Indian sensibility through it and to give the Indian 'tang' and 'colour' to the language. The novelists after 1980 have also experimented with the use of English. But here the objective is entirely different. First of all, the experimentation with use of English is not at all a problem for these writers because many of them have learnt it from the birth and

now it has become one of Indian languages. The writer of this period uses the regional language words neither to establish the regional identity nor to privilege one language over the other. The novelists of this period feel that “The Indian ‘tang’ is not a pure essence but the masala mix of culture that has always been able to appropriate influences from outside. Indian identity lies in the chutnification not in the distinct language” (Mee 321). Again this experimentation with the English language strategy is used to decolonize, to dismantle the hegemonic structures to show the distrust and finally to convey the idea of cultural translation, cultural dislocation, cultural weightlessness, cultural crisis, hybridity, identity crisis and multiple identities.

Four Novels

Rich Like Us is a historical and political fiction novel by Nayantara Sahgal. Set in New Delhi during the chaotic time between 1932 and the mid-1970s, it follows the lives of two female protagonists, Rose and Sonali, and their fight to live in a time of political upheaval and social re-organization. *Rich Like Us* takes its title from a brief meeting at the beginning of the novel that Dev and his wife Nishi have with a businessman named Mr. Neuman, who reflects that all he has been told teaches him that if the poor of India would “do like we do, they’d be rich like us,” yet seeing the poverty in the streets in person, he finds this hard to believe. This historical fiction entwines the fate of two upper-class females, Rose, a British immigrant and wife to powerful native business man Ram with Sonali, a highly educated young civil servant. The former struggles to find a sense of home in this foreign society, filled with ancient customs, including the sati, and exotic social standards. She is entangled in a three-pronged marriage, as she is the second wife of Ram’s. Rose suffers to understand the Indian culture, and its ramifications on the female spirit. As Ram’s health deteriorates, she realizes her rights as wife are in question. Dev, Ram’s son from his other wife, Mona, schemes to take all Ram’s assets by disposing of Rose. In fear, Rose turns to Sonali, her friend and niece. Sonali is an anomaly to the average Indian, aristocratic woman. She deals with the living and working in New Delhi during the political upheaval of the Emergency and is divided between two worlds, one representing her ideals and longing for progression and the other that embodies her upper-crust, conservative culture. From these two characters branch off numerous other tales, which provide a deep and thorough overview of life for all people during this critical historical period. At root of these stories lies the duplicitous role of women in the dynamic, chaotic, new India of the mid 20th century.

Memories of Rain is a stunning, luminous novel set in Calcutta and London by Sunetra Gupta, true heir to Virginia Woolf. The forward action of Gupta's hypnotic novel takes place during a single weekend: Calcutta-born Moni, despondent over her English husband's infidelity, secretly plans to take their daughter and return to India on the child's sixth birthday. But the stream-of-consciousness narrative weaves together memories and images, providing not just the history of a fragile love but of a woman's psychology and soul: Moni's brother first brings Anthony home in the rain-swollen dark of a Calcutta flood storm. She and the English student fall in love, expecting an unconsummated passion and years of satisfying, sorrowful memories. Instead, they marry and make their home in London, where Moni--intense but too silent--soon disappoints Anthony. When Anthony begins to stray--even when his mistress becomes practically a member of the household--Moni believes his divided heart will add an edge to their painful, eternal love; she cannot bear it when his manner changes to kindness and indifference. Moni's sensibility--formed by the poetry (both English and Bengali) of anguished passion, darkness, and death--is the basis for gorgeous prose that flickers between romantic longing and exquisite detail.

The Sari Shop by Rupa Bajwa is an incredibly well written novel. The writer weaves us the simple story of Ramchand the naïve salesman working in Sevak Sari House, in Amritsar. Set in the olden part of Amritsar the book is like a picturesque tour for readers telling us the tale of Ramchand's mundane life, his rendez-vous with Rina Kapoor one afternoon and his struggle to learn English from an old Oxford Dictionary. *The Sari Shop* beautifully brings to surface the harsh cruelty of real life making it a must read. The writer has an intrinsic eye for detail which is visible in her storytelling skills. The novel takes you to Amritsar into the life of Ramchand and as you watch him wrestle helplessly with the second-hand English grammar book in his room you wish you could reach out to him and help. It is this emotion that touches your heart the most.

Em and The Big Hoom by Jerry Pinto is the story of a regular family going about its regular ways with a single irregularity – the mother is a manic depressive. This is a charming little story that invites the reader into a world aching to be normal in spite of all the challenges it faces. Narrated by the son it is about trying to keep up with the mental anguish of the person you love the most. Imelda, or Em, is a wonderful character. Unabashed and unapologetic, she is straight-forward and frank. You ache for her as she screams about 'them' trying to kill her family and rejoice with her in her memories of her earlier days. Through

conversations with her children and letters from the past, Imelda takes us through her love affair with the handsome and enigmatic Augustine or as she calls him, The Big Hoom.

Evolution of Characters

These novels have essayed characters that are taken from every sphere of life and society. As per the characteristic of postmodernism the novels include everything that is real and having a next door approach. This eclectic approach has given voice to every Indian with their authenticity and rawness. The authors never settle down for something that is a larger than life, rather they present the nuances of everyday life in a larger forum explicitly that vividly describes all the small details of day to day life in a lucid and uncompromising attitude. In *Rich Like Us* Rose and Sonali represent the elite class during the emergency period who raised their voices against the so called elitists and tried to include the commoners in the process of development of new India. *Memories of Rain* presents the plight of Moni who rejects the glamorous but plastic life of London to give vent to her own emotions in the soil of her motherland, India. Ramchand, a salesman in *The Sari Shop* revolts against the social prejudices to give justice to Kamla, the wife of his co-worker Chandu. Jerry Pinto has successfully presented the fear of a teenage boy who wishes to bring an end to the plight of his mother Imelda, who suffers from bipolar disorder in *Em and the Big Hoom*.

These characters do not hesitate to express their emotions. Sonali fearlessly expresses her displeasure against the government run by Mrs. Indira Gandhi for imposing emergency upon the country. She openly criticizes the family politics and the aristocrats of the society who wish to please the power in the center to fulfill their selfish interests and to levy their dominance upon the common public. At the same time, Rose, who in spite of being from Britain feels marginalized in the house of her husband, Ram. These characters express their displeasure against Sati system prevailing in pre-independent India. Kishori Lal refuses to take help from his industrialist son-in-law, Dev as he feels he cannot please the Prime Minister by acting against his principles. Moni in *Memories of Rain* refuses to surrender to the infidelity of her husband, Anthony in a foreign land, whom she loved so much and left her family back in India. She never regrets her decision of marrying him, but refuses to compromise upon her self esteem. She leaves for India without bothering about the consequences and criticisms she is going to face from her family members. She is an epitome of an independent new age Indian women who challenge themselves and social customs to give way to a new world.

Rich Like Us and *Memories of Rain* present a journey from a foreign land to native land, where the protagonists have rejected the charms of the other world and welcomed the life of their soil with élan. At the same time, Ramchand's journey in *The Sari Shop* revolves in his own workplace and city, Chandigarh. The journey of Imelda in *Em and the Big Hoom* is quite inward. It reflects the conflicts of her mind and its reflection in the life of her husband, daughter and son in four hundred square feet flat in Mumbai. The journey of postmodern writings in India over these four decades show a way towards externalizing the inner conflicts rather than finding something from an external world and presenting that in a grand way where the reader feel aloof to the setting.

Evolution of Language

English is no more their language. Fictions in English are written by the authors who have learnt this language here for the readers who have learnt or are learning the language as their first language or second language. It is no more considered a foreign language or the language of the elites who got their training in a foreign atmosphere. The authors are no more writing to impress the native speakers of the English language. Rather they dare to experiment the nuances of Indian life and its features in a language that is their own, no more foreign.

They dare to use the expressions and words to showcase the innermost emotions of human, which were once considered as social taboos. The authors have broken the barrier between the languages that is socially accepted and others which are socially restricted. In this way the authors have widened the scope of creativity and the ease of deliverance of thought and emotion in an unrestricted manner. In *Em and the Big Hoom* Imelda never hesitates to discuss her emotions, physicality of a woman, and male-female attraction with her children (chapters 3, 8 and 10). In *Memories of Rain* Moni's fantasy detailing her husband's infidelity has been expressed in an explicit manner.

The authors use the translated versions of the popular writers to justify the mood of the characters. Nayantara Sahgal uses the reference from Bhagavad Gita to establish the conflict "whenever there is decay of righteousness... I was born from age to age" (p 241). In *Memories of Rain* Sunetra Gupta confidently uses Rabindra Sangeet in its translated form to reflect the memories of the soil: "in the dense obsession of this deep dark rain/ you tread secret, silent, like the night, past all eyes (p 10). Ramchand in *The Sari Shop* does not hesitate

to use the second hand copy of an English grammar book and a battered Oxford Dictionary to learn English. He uses a fresh pair of socks and bar of Lifebuoy soap to groom himself to meet the expectations of his boss.

The syntax of the fiction has also been changed over the decades. In *Rich Like Us*, Nayantara Sahgal uses long and extended sentences to establish her ideas. But over the decades the novelists have become very precise and exact in their descriptions. In *Em and the Big Hoom*, Jerry Pinto uses phrases and broken sentences to express the inner conflicts of Imelda. He also uses a lot of figurative languages like oxymoron, allusion, irony and abbreviations for the precise use of words.

Evolution of Narration

The authors use flashback and flash forward techniques to narrate their respective stories. Nayantara Sahgal captures the picture of eight decades including the social reformative actions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the rise of Aurobindo, the picture of partition, the power politics of Gandhi-Nehru dynasty, and the period of emergency using the above mentioned techniques. The title of Sunetra Gupta's novel in itself suggests the use of flashback technique. Though the time duration of the novel is only a weekend, but it captures the memories spread over a period of ten years.

The novels by Nayantara Sahgal and Sunetra Gupta present their novels as single narrations. Though they have divided them into various chapters, but they are presented in continuation. Rupa Bajwa has divided her novel in two parts: one tells the story of Ramchand and the other narrates the story of Kamla. The latest novel under consideration by Jerry Pinto divides the entire novel into thirteen chapters as each one is provided with a subtitle. All stories present many stories within stories that portray the society of their respective times with their entirety.

Evolution of Identity

With these characters, settings, plots, language and narratives, the identity of the Indian narratives have evolved over the decades giving a voice to India in the world forum. Indian authors no longer borrow characters and settings from the other world or exaggerate them to impress others. They are confidently picking the characters that rediscover

themselves in every Indian. They represent a pan Indian society. If the works of Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Amitav Ghosh and others are taken into account, then it will be noticed that the characters breathe India, live India and aspire to change India for a better one. The recognition of the works of these Indian authors by the international organizations has provided these characters an international identity.

Evolution of Society

With the writings of these writers, the post modern society of India has found a voice that questions the existing culture, tradition and prejudices openly to find a solution to the human uncertainties in the time of technological evolution. The micro-narrative style of the narratives has been successful in retaining the charm of the fictional world that depicts the problems of the contemporary society nakedly without any inhibition during the time of multiplexes, e-books and web-series.

On the other hand, the present society has also been a great inspiration to the creative vision of the authors in general. The society questions its own existence and credibility in these writings and has been evolving dramatically. The creative synchronization and interdependency of the society and the narratives has given a wing and thrust to the authors of this new India.

Conclusion

Postmodernism has really been successful in taking everything into account and projecting the feeling that one can never be satisfied with less of anything. These narratives have broken the mundane world of grand narratives and set their feet upon a world of creative revolutions that inspire many to experiment with their artistic visions. The distinction between the reality and fiction has been thinning down every single moment. The Indian English is no more considered lower in standard in comparison to any other variety available at present. It has found its own credibility in the eyes of the world literature with a distinction and dignity. The eclectic approach of the postmodern era has suggested many possibilities for Indian fiction writers who dream of experimenting with every single emotion of the Indians and make them face to face with their hidden identities with a language that bares one and all for a better tomorrow. With these aspects, the next decade sees many opportunities in Indian fictional world that dares to bare the inner conflicts in an objective manner.

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Language against the Truth – A Critical Discourse Analysis of Arundhati Roy’s Polemics

Priyambada Pal

Abstract

We use language to express our views, opinions and feelings. Sometimes our opinions are genuine and at others what we say or write may deftly camouflage our real intentions. What we say and how we say it constitutes our identity in a particular social context. A close analysis of the linguistic properties and structure can reveal the hidden agenda or the unexpressed thoughts. The role of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a type of discourse analysis, in revealing the hidden intentions and ideologies is significant. CDA is different from other discourse analytical theory as it has a sharp political edge. It specifically deals with linguistic features that reveal hidden ideology, power abuse, dominance and inequality. If we denaturalize language by looking at aspects such as foregrounding, back grounding, over wording, ideologically contested words, euphemistic expressions, use of formal and informal words, type of metaphors, vagueness of agency, use of pronouns, type of sentence links etc. a revelation of hidden ideologies and taken-for-granted assumptions in the text can be found. This paper is an analysis of well-known author, Arundhati Roy’s book *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, which is an explicitly political text and is polemical in nature. Roy criticizes the actions of the Government and presents her views that appear to be in the interest of common people. Her writing expresses concern for humanity, the environment and the future generation. The book deals with issues such as India’s nuclear tests, the dam industry, the 9/11 attack and the US Government’s war against terrorism. Ironically, her opinions are not received positively by all when we consider the larger social context. This analysis of Roy’s work through the tools of CDA is an attempt to understand the underlying ideology behind the concern for humanity in her text, if any.

Key words: Identity, linguistic properties, Critical Discourse Analysis, ideology, political text, polemics.

Introduction

Arundhati Roy is a prominent contemporary thinker who writes prolifically and passionately on important issues concerning India's current political and social state of affairs. Her writing is marked with a polemical verve. Criticism of the fissures in the government projects and questioning their credibility is the hallmark of her non-fiction writing. The book, *An Algebra of Infinite Justice* is one example of Roy's polemics against India's nuclear tests, building of big dams, America's war against terror etc. On the surface the writer's purpose in these seems to be in the interest of the common people – a genuine concern for the public. Although her writing is an attempt to appeal to the sense of justice of the common people, her opinions are not accepted well by all when we consider the larger social context. She is tagged as an anti-national and a hypocrite by many in response to her polemics. Hence, there seems to be something fundamentally wrong with her concern for society that needs to be analysed.

Objective

1. The objective of the paper is to analyze the essay "For Greater Common Good" from the book *An Algebra of infinite Justice* to find out what literary devices the author employs to convince the readers about the impracticability of the project and thereby achieve her aim.
2. The objective is also to examine how genuine are the concerns expressed for the common people. The paper would also attempt to highlight hidden ideologies, vested interests or other intentions, if any, embedded in the text. The analysis will be carried out with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis is a sub branch of Discourse Analysis and evolved from critical linguistics towards the early 1990s. Advocates of CDA hold the view that language is shaped by society and in turn shapes it.

James Paul Gee (1999:10) writes, "We fit our language to a situation that our language, in turn, helps to create in the first place." Norman Fairclough (1989:22) calls discourse as social practice and argues that language is a part of society, a social process and a socially conditioned process. According to him the relationship between language and

society is an internal and dialectical one. His statement, "Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena" briefly captures this idea. Moreover, linguistic choices can code people's ideology and express their identity without their conscious knowledge. To corroborate this view Rodney H. Jones (2012:12) says that people enact their identities through their discourse. Hence, critical study of the smallest linguistic detail can reveal a great deal about people's real intention. Critical Discourse Analysis is an apt tool to analyse political discourse as its focus is on social problems and political issues. In the words of Teun A. Van Dijk (2001:352), "Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political context."

The analysis of the text has been carried out through the theoretical framework proposed by Norman Fairclough (1989:25). Fairclough proposes a three dimensional analysis – description, interpretation and explanation. Description is concerned with analysis of the formal properties of the text such as vocabulary and syntax. Interpretation establishes meaning in relation with the situational and inter-textual context. Explanation on the other hand tries to locate power relations and ideologies embedded in the discourse.

Tools of Analysis

Analysis of the discourse is done using the following:

1. Analysis of Grammatical choices made in the text such as the use of passives, nominalizations, modality, positive and negative sentences, coordination and subordination etc.
2. Analysis of vocabulary choices such as over wording, metaphors, formal and informal language, ideologically contested words, euphemistic expressions, words that show power relations, fore-grounding and back-grounding of themes etc.

Data Analysis

The construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam over the Narmada River provides water and electricity to four Indian states, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The dam is one of the largest dams in the world and is proposed to serve the purpose of irrigation of 6,920 sq ml of land spread over 12 districts, provide flood protection to riverine

reaches and solar power generation which can benefit surrounding villages to get power and also help to reduce the evaporation of water. However, the construction of the dam has been surrounded by numerous controversies concerning the increasing height and displacement of tribals and farmers in the catchment area. Arundhati Roy's essay "The Greater Common Good" addresses this issue at length. She argues against its construction by presenting several aspects of the dam that affect people and doesn't serve its basic purpose.

Roy's Rhetoric

Roy's criticism of the dam brings into question the entire political system in the process. She starts by quoting Jawaharlal Nehru's speech to villagers to be displaced by the Hirakud dam in 1948:

"If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country..."

The sentence has a conditional clause having "if". And "suffering" is suggested as an inevitable thing that will happen. And if that should happen, it should happen for something good – for the benefit of the country. Mention of the country here serves to appeal to people's (those who will be affected) sense of patriotism while the modal "should" indicates towards a sense of responsibility of those to be displaced. And the word "suffer" is used with the motive to make the displaced believe that they are sacrificing for a greater cause and therefore the words help take down vehement reaction from them. Roy chooses Nehru's persuasive rhetoric to start her essay. In the next paragraph she directs her own rhetoric to talk about people and their land which will be submerged by the rising height of the dam. She writes,

"I could see ranged across the crowns of low, bald hills, the Adivasi hamlets of Sikka, Surung, Neemgaran and Domkhedi. I could see their airy, fragile homes. I could see their fields and the forests behind them. I could see little children with littler goats scuttling across the landscape like motorized peanuts. I knew I was looking at a civilization older than Hinduism..."

In contrast to Nehru's rhetoric, Roy's rhetoric achieves its objective by paying attention to the lives of the people to be affected and elaborates upon the existing life which will no more be there. And over repetition of the phrase "I could see" in the paragraph is to emphasize upon the fact that the life that is being observed will no more be observable. This indication comes from the modal "could" that indicates one's ability. And these series of

sentences is followed by the sentences “I knew I was looking at a civilization older than Hinduism.” The mention of the fact that it is a very old civilization and its comparison with the Hindu religion helps her establish the importance of the life to be displaced and destroyed soon.

Subsequently Roy defend her stance by saying,

“I am not a city basher...I am not an anti-development junkie, nor a proselytizer for the eternal upholding of custom and tradition.”

The statement naturally turns our attention to the identity of the speaker – someone speaking so forcefully in support of the sufferers. She writes,

“What I am, however, is curious. Curiosity took me to the Narmada valley. Instinct told me that this was the big one...”

“I went because writers are drawn to stories the way vultures are drawn to the kill. My motive was not compassion. It was sheer greed. I was right. I found a story there.”

The fact that the writer was not concerned with the project and it was mere curiosity that attracted her to it, goes against the seriousness of intention with which she speaks against the project and for the affected. The use of the phrases “that this was the big one”, “I found a story” and the metaphor of the vulture and its kill suggest an extremely selfish interest – the benefit she can get by getting associated with it.

The text has an overuse of the war metaphors. Examples include:

1. *“...the one in which battle lines were clearly drawn, the warring armies massed along them.”*
2. *“In India over the last ten years, the fight against the Sardar Sarovar Dam has come to represent far more than the fight for one river.”*
3. *For the people of the valley, the fact that the stakes were raised to this degree has meant their most effective weapon – specific facts about specific issues in this specific valley – has been blunted by the debate on the big issues.*
4. *“It is seen as a war between modern, rational, progressive forces of “development” versus a sort of neo-Luddite impulse – an irrational, emotional “anti-development” resistance, fuelled by an arcadia, pre-industrial dream.*

5. *"We have to fight specific wars in specific ways."*

While the writer could have chosen alternative expressions, she seems to be obsessed with the war metaphor and words like "battle lines", "warring armies", "fight", "weapon" and "war" to talk about opposition to the dam project seems to be too exaggerated expressions. The motive behind such language could be a desperate attempt to be heard or a deliberate attempt to display fake concern and grab attention of the public. If we correlate this exaggeration with the metaphor she used to talk about her association with the project, we can see a remarkable link – getting associated with the big project, and raising her voice against it is also a big opportunity for the writer to grab attention of people and be in the limelight. That is perhaps why the writer makes the best of the opportunity by being hyperbolic. In the essay what is fore-grounded is the displacement of people by the dam but what is back-grounded is the importance of building a dam through which many arid regions could get water to irrigate their lands amongst other benefits. Although Roy shows concern for those to be displaced, she is telling one side of the story i.e. dams will displace tribals and farmers, they are not the key to food security, they will consume more electricity than they produce etc. Nowhere is she suggesting alternatives that could help the arid regions to irrigate land. Interestingly, she says at one point, *"It's true that India has progressed. Today India has more irrigated land than any other country in the world."* This statement contradicts the statement she made earlier, *"I am not an anti-development junkie."*

But, while talking about the progress in the increase in food grain production she discredits the role of irrigation by saying, *"There are no official government figures for exactly what proportion of the total food grain production comes from the mechanized exploitation of ground water, from the use of high-yielding hybrid seeds from the use of chemical fertilizers and from irrigation from Big Dams."*

Hence, the embedded ideology here seems to be establishing the legitimacy of the fight against the dam by any means possible – discrediting the importance of the project all together and presenting facts only from those angles that serve her purpose.

Conclusion

A close reading of the essay thus reveals many things that have been shrouded by the presentation of collected facts about big dams and the repercussion of building them. Although the author has dedicatedly researched the facts and presented them, the choice of

language and representation seemingly tells a different story. Exaggerations, contradictions and partial representation of the issue emerges out of the analysis. And all these can indicate towards the embedded ideology of the author that is not explicitly expressed in the text.

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Linguistics
and
Language Pedagogy

Hegemony of One Language as a Tool of Subjugation

Anvita Abbi

Introduction

Being a linguist, I have had a grass root exposure to tribal areas and marginalized societies. I have seen these societies negotiating language dynamics and somehow keeping themselves afloat in the coercive linguistic environment thrown at them. The coercion by the State on the people to use the dominant language of the state leads to gross injustice to the masses that not only are deprived of the benefits of education but also are forced to suffer the inferiority complex. I still remember the Kurux mother in a village near Ranchi thrashing her child for speaking in Kurux outside the home domain. She thought her child would remain marginalized if she did not speak Hindi. The inferiority complex of not being the native speakers of the dominant state language runs very high among the tribals of India.

I have witnessed several times during my fieldwork in the villages of Chattisgarh: children being asked to stand in the scorching sun in hot summer days as a punishment. Their fault was that they could not answer the question asked in Hindi. On inquiry, I realized that all those punished students did not understand the dominant language of the region Hindi, but could have answered the question had it been asked in their local language Halbi or Chattisgarhi. This is the fate of all our rural children going to school. Non-recognition of local languages under the pressure of the dominant state language succeeds in killing the right to education (RTE). Children hate to go to school and think education is a punishment and suffering.

The injustice is not restricted to the rural children. It is often observed that because of the hegemony of English and discouraging attitude towards multilingualism of missionary and English medium schools, children are punished in cities and metropolitan areas for using their mother tongues in the school premises.

Non-recognition of a large number of languages leads to people hiding their language identity in the Hindi belt. Speakers speak any of the 49 varieties of Hindi (Census 2001), such as Shekhawati or Dhundhari in Rajasathan, Haryanvi in Haryana, Chambeali in Uttaranchal, Khortha in Bihar or Laria in Chattisgarh claim to be the speakers of Hindi despite the fact that many of them have problem speaking it or understanding it.

These forced circumstances enforce heavy push-out rates and at best denial to education and knowledge-systems. A young child comprehends very soon that his language is not powerful. He also realizes soon enough that he can be ahead of his own folks provided he learns the language of the state. The two ends of the education process, viz. inferiority complex for your own mother tongue and the possibility of being different from your own folks so as to be like those who are powerful dictates the young mind in schools. The inferiority complex towards one's own language not only distances the child from his environments but also forces him to forget the indigenous knowledge system that he acquired before coming to the school (Abbi 2012). The forced reductionism in education and knowledge makes our children slow learners. Moreover, the entire learning process becomes very alien to the child robbing off the enjoyment of learning. What could have been a journey of exploration becomes the journey of being further marginalized, unlearning and guilt.

Language has always been a powerful tool of subjugations of peoples. Empires have come and gone but the staying power of language outlives the empire. English in India and in many other South Asian countries is a good example. The speakers of English not only are

empowered in various arenas but also make others weak, those who are either semi-lingual or not competent in the language. The hegemony of a particular language need not be the language of empire but could also be the language of administration, education and judiciary. Any system which ignores the languages of the masses and in turn curbs the linguistic rights and weakens the society and its people. It leads to language loss and language attrition, and in turn reduces the linguistic diversity of the country. Few realize in administration that it is the diversity which is the key to human evolution and sustenance.

Language loss is often not voluntary; it frequently involves violations of human rights, with oppression or repression of speakers of minority languages due to defective language policy of a country. It is a matter of injustice when people are forced to give up their languages either by external subjugation or by internal forces which themselves cannot be delineated from the former. Internal forces such as negative attitude of the speakers towards their heritage language force mass linguistic *harakirias* in the case of Kurux speakers in Jharkhand. Internal forces have their source in the external ones. Both arrest the growth and survival of languages.

Non-recognition at the State-level

The languages of smaller population-base are not recognized as 'languages' but merely as 'dialects' of some dominant language of the region without having any substantial linguistic or scientific reasons. The big fish proverbially swallows the small fish and in turn we lose a plethora of knowledge-base along with particular human identity and more dangerously, a significant chip in Indian linguistic diversity. In the war of simulating the upper crust of the society, the so called 'small' language users or minority communities embrace the language of domination despite the availability of choosing a language of their home via Article 29 and Article 350A.

Ironically, the speakers of these languages are happy to forget their indigenous languages and have come to terms to not to use it for education. Instead, because of inferiority complex, they are happy to claim the dominant language as their mother tongue. These claimed mother tongues are foster mother tongues, not the tongues in which speakers interact with each other in the community (Abbi2008). This may appear to be internal forces of subjugation but it has sources which lie outside such as de-recognition of smaller languages at the educational level or grouping small languages under the umbrella of one dominant language of a State such as Hindi. This exercise fails to empower those who would naturally use their indigenous languages. The two forces are inter-related and feed each other.

Reduction of domain of use

The smaller the numerical strength of speakers of a language, the more likely it is that the language will be dismissed as “primitive”, and incapable of further development. Languages not reported and spoken by less than 10000 are standard examples. Responding to this implicit classification, speakers therefore ‘choose’ not to access education in their mother tongue(s), because that choice will disadvantage them scaling the heights of ‘progress’ or ‘superior class’. Hence, small language remains, at best, a small one; at worst, it shrinks by the day, as its speakers shift to the more dominant languages of the region for communication in as many domains as possible. Such an attrition of domains of use of mother tongue can well prove to be a precursor of language death, as the vitality of a language lies in the extension of its domains of use. In very real terms, **the attrition of a language is the loss of knowledge – scientific, social, ecological, historic or cultural.** Frequently, accompanying this loss of culture and self-worth is a deep sense of political alienation that limits human potential as well as the space for delivery for political and citizenship rights.

The defective education policy of a country which is not all inclusive of its linguistic diversity and the one that propagates dominant-language medium education prevents access to education, because of the linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barriers it creates. It

perpetually not only violates human right to education but also creates poverty and further helps in widening the gaps between the speakers of the dominant language and the dominated language.

“Dominant-language medium education for indigenous children curtails the development of their capabilities and perpetuates poverty.” Amartya Sen.

Contemporary research has effectively established the highly positive correlation between multilingualism on the one hand, and educational achievement, cognitive growth and social tolerance on the other (Mohanty and Misra 2000), (UNESCO 2003).

The high push-out rates among rural school children in our country are due to subversion of their rights to be educated in their mother-tongues. When a child fails to relate the education in school to his environment in which s/he has grown and is made to feel a ‘foreigner’ s/he is bound to withdraw from the system. Outright linguistic genocide is one cause of language extinction and marginalization as well as alienation of a community. Economic, military, educational, religious and cultural subjugation leads to linguistic genocide. **Languages are being killed. They do not die of natural death.**

Dislocation of Communities

Dislocation of tribal communities from their land or forests forces the languages of the communities to develop cancer of slow death, the one which is very painful for the elders to experience. Such irrevocable loss not only deprives the country of diversity of languages but also of language-based knowledge sources, and above all, robs people of their linguistic human rights to exercise justice and power. How can one visualize a judicial system of a country to deliver justice to the community whose voice is not heard because it is silenced by organized behaviour of its protectors? Even after sixty-seven years of independence, we have not evolved a judiciary system where a common man can complain and discuss the matter in

his own language. The complainant is always at the mercy of translation, which is far from his comprehension. The translated version is decontextualized, written in a language which does not have equivalents of oral medium [because most of the tribal languages are still unwritten], nor it refers to local ethos of the tribes and thus, a tribal accepts the verdict in silence. Muffling the voices creates insecurity and fear. That is, by killing indigenous languages we are succeeding in:

(a) Silencing a large number of speakers who had been successful in the past in maintaining Indian linguistic diversity.

(b) Violating the fundamental rights to education and freedom of speech (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000) and finally,

(c) wiping out from this earth a rich source of knowledge-system since all knowledge systems reside in languages.

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Effects of Repetition on Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

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Abstract

Second language vocabulary acquisition (SLVA) research has argued in favour of incidental vocabulary acquisition primarily from reading as it provides L2 learners meaningful contexts to acquire vocabulary. One of the major factors largely responsible regarding this is multiple occurrences of target vocabulary. However, the effectiveness of this in ESL contexts is yet to find a consensus. Thus, the present research under the broad category of incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading investigated effects of repetition on acquisition of the six aspects of word knowledge i.e. receptive (RO) and productive knowledge of orthography (PO), receptive (RG) and productive grammatical knowledge (PG), receptive knowledge of meaning (RM), and receptive knowledge of associations (RA). The participants, ninety students of class XI, were divided into three groups (E1, E3, and E7) according to the number of exposures to the target words. The mean scores obtained on six measures designed around the selected aspects of word knowledge for each group were compared with the mean scores of other two groups (E1 vs. E3, E3 vs. E7, and E1 vs. E7). Results obtained using independent t-tests indicated no significant difference in the performance of learners who experienced single exposure and three exposures to the target words. However, there were significant differences in the mean scores of E1 and E7 on four measures except the sub-tests on RG and PG. The difference was significant between E3 and E7 on RO, RM, RA, and PG except on PO and RG. Thus, increased exposure helped learners acquire the orthographic and semantic aspects of word knowledge.

Key words: *second language vocabulary acquisition, incidental vocabulary, repetition*

Introduction

The importance of vocabulary in the process of language learning cannot be overemphasized as language learning often remains limited to the lexical level in the initial years of first language acquisition. Researchers of second language acquisition believe that learners' proficiency in the L2 is greatly influenced by the lexical knowledge which remains integral to the development L2 proficiency (Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Kim, 2011). This lexical knowledge according to SLA researchers, includes seven major types of knowledge: (1) denotations of a word, (2) appropriate uses of a word, (3) syntactic knowledge of a word, (4) morphological variations underlying a word, (5) collocational associations of a word, (6) underlying social meanings of a word and its use (connotations), and (7) frequency of occurrence in spoken and written discourse (Gass, 1989; Richards, 1976; Tekmen & Daloglu, 2006). In ESL contexts, where exposure to the target language in the real world is limited, reading texts provide enhanced inputs for learners to develop their L2 lexical knowledge base and ability to gauge the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic behavior of the words to acquire other related aspects of word knowledge (Krashen, 1993; Nation, 2001; Richards, 1976). Hence, for continued vocabulary growth both in L1 and L2, it can be argued that reading provides increased opportunities to acquire vocabulary beyond the first few thousand most frequent words in the language (Krashen, 1989; Nagy *et al.*, 1985; Nation & Coady, 1988).

Many researchers argue in favor of incidental vocabulary acquisition from reading (Nagy, 1997; Nagy *et al.*, 1985; Tekmen & Daloglu, 2006). In the present study, incidental vocabulary acquisition has been defined as acquisition of vocabulary in the context of reading with repeated exposures to the target words where the focus is on the message of the text rather than the learning of the individual words in the text (Schmitt, 2000; Chen & Truscott, 2010; Heidari-Shahreza & Tavakoli, 2012). However, the importance of explicit instruction in intentional learning of words cannot be ignored; and the teaching of vocabulary learning

strategies (VLS) could help learners become autonomous and complement implicit acquisition (Lee, 2003; Schmitt, 1997; Peters *et al.*, 2009). This study attempts to investigate the possible effects of repetition of words embedded in reading texts on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Theoretical framework

Effects of repetition and incidental vocabulary acquisition

In view of the incremental nature of vocabulary growth, reference has been made to repetition of words resulting in vocabulary knowledge growth. However, the belief that repetition of words in the context of incidental vocabulary acquisition can have a positive effect in the acquisition of word knowledge is yet to find a conclusive view. Studies that tried to investigate this issue produced a mixed result as they differed (1) in methodology in terms of degrees of occurrence, word selection, maintaining consistency in morphological structure of the target words (TWs), ecological validity (future use of the words) of the TWs, saliency of the words; and (2) in measuring small incremental knowledge growth of the TWs (Saragi *et al.*, 1978; Horst *et al.*, 1998; Rott, 1999; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Tekmen & Daloglu, 2006; Webb, 2007; Chen & Truscott, 2010; Hedari-Shahreza & Tavakoli, 2012).

Saragi *et al.* (1978) in a study on incidental vocabulary acquisition concluded that repetition of words had a positive effect on acquisition of new vocabulary. However, the researchers lacked proper measures to capture the small incremental growth of the words in focus and had no control over the degrees of occurrence which significantly varied from word to word. The issue was later addressed by Waring and Takaki (2003) who had controlled tests over the degrees of occurrence of the TWs. However, they were substitute words which affected the ecological validity. They concluded that it would take 20 to 30 encounters to learn these words as most of the selected words had not been learned. Contrary to the

findings reported by the Waring and Takaki (2003), Webb (2007) concluded that increased exposure did help learners acquire the selected aspects of word knowledge but in this study too most of the TWs were invented words.

Criticizing the study by Saragi *et al.* (1978) as an artificial context to acquire new vocabulary, Horst, Cobb and Meara (1998) attempted to find out the number of repetitions learners required to acquire TWs from the reading of graded readers. They suggested that acquisition of new vocabulary could require eight or more encounters. However, the study suffered from a major methodological flaw i.e. learners had prior knowledge of the TWs as they were tested on these words a week before the study was conducted. However, Rott (1999), who adopted a similar framework, was successful in ensuring that the selected twelve words were unknown to the learners. She divided ninety-five university level students learning German as a foreign language into three groups, and exposed them to the unfamiliar words two, four, and six times respectively. It was found that even two encounters with an unfamiliar word resulted in significant vocabulary growth. Two or four exposure to the target words almost had the same effect. However, six exposures to the lexical items produced significant results. The study however, had several limitations. Firstly, no vocabulary proficiency measure was administered to maintain uniformity among the learners and the selected target words were concerned with objects and activities of daily life which did not pose any conceptual difficulty. Secondly, only two types of vocabulary measures (recognition and production) were used to check retention limiting the scope of sensitive measures in measuring the incremental growth for words encountered six times.

Later, Tekmen and Daloglu (2006) were able to address the methodological drawbacks of the previous studies. They examined the relationship between learners' proficiency level and incidental vocabulary acquisition along with the acquisition and frequency of occurrence. There was a significant difference in vocabulary acquisition by the learners categorized as

advanced, upper-intermediate and lower-intermediate in terms of their language proficiency. Frequency of occurrence did not play a major role in vocabulary acquisition in the case of learners with low proficiency which could be presumably due to their limited vocabulary proficiency which did not help them in deducing the meanings. However, the tests only measured learners' receptive knowledge of meaning and form of the TWs, leaving out other aspects of word knowledge.

Both the studies, Chen and Truscott (2010) and Heidari-Shareza and Tavakoli (2012) were successful in ensuring that learners did not differ in their proficiency level in vocabulary use and kept the TWs unknown to the learners. They concluded that increased exposure (exposure $1 \times 3 \times 7$) helped learners acquire the word knowledge in focus. However, the low frequency nature of the TWs included in the former study limited their scope for future use. The positions of the TWs in the texts were artificial which affected the overall text difficulty and the richness of the context. With increased ecological validity, the latter study, Heidari-Shahreza and Tavakoli (2012), was able to overcome this issue related to saliency of the target words (contribution of the TWs to the overall meaning of the text), however, morphological inconsistency in target word structures remained a major methodological flaw in word selection.

What was specific to most of the studies in this line of enquiry was the absence of sensitive measures which could account for the small lexical gains. In addition to this, the issues concerning ecological validity and nature of words were needed to be addressed. The examination of the related studies revealed that researchers had tried to investigate one of the following issues: (a) number of repetitions required to acquire word knowledge and (b) effects of repetition on acquisition of word knowledge. The present study is concerned with the latter. It aims to investigate the extent to which repetition could affect acquisition of

aspects of word knowledge. The purpose of the study has been outlined in the form of the following research question:

1. To what extent can repetition have any effect on the acquisition of the selected aspects of word knowledge in the context of incidental vocabulary acquisition?

The study

The study, experimental in design, belongs to the quantitative paradigm of research in terms of the procedures followed to answer the research question. First, it tries to examine the effects of the independent variables i.e. repetition and incidental vocabulary acquisition, on the dependent variable i.e. acquisition (recall) by way of establishing a relationship between them in a systematic and controlled design. Second, this relationship is generalized by quantifying the numerical data and doing an objective analysis of it. Finally, the study adopts a within-subjects design in which the same participants are exposed to different levels of treatment (exposures), and a comparison is made between them to see the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Sample

The participants of the study were Odia speakers of English, from class XI, in the age group of sixteen to seventeen, with a minimum of seven years of exposure to English in formal teaching-learning contexts. They shared a common socio-economic background and had the same level of language proficiency determined through a demographic study and the administration of the 3000-word level Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) respectively.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two stages. The first stage included selection of target words, creation of reading texts and the immediate recall test, and adaptation of the VLT. The next stage entailed pilot study, sample selection, and the main study followed by data

analysis. The following tools were used to investigate the research issue in focus: (a) word diagnostic test to select target words (TWs), (b) seven reading passages to contextualize the TWs, (c) questionnaire to obtain learners' response on the reading passages and vocabulary exercises designed in terms of several factors related to texts and tasks, (d) immediate recall test to measure the selected aspects of word knowledge, and (e) adapted version of the 3000-word level Vocabulary Levels Test (Schmitt, 2000) to select participants.

Selection of target words

Twenty potential target words were selected from the 'academic core' vocabulary list developed by Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), keeping in mind learners' need for these words in future academic spheres and professional life. The list of twenty words consisted of eight verbs, eight nouns, and four adjectives. A diagnostic test was administered to twenty-one students of class XI, as part of the pilot study, to know the participants' familiarity with these words. Learners had to guess the meanings of the target words embedded in sentences and match them with their meanings in English on a matching-type task. Eight words were selected as target words on which seventy percent of the learners scored correctly. This ensured that the target words were not beyond their proficiency level in vocabulary use. In terms of their morphological structure only one of the eight target words was a four syllabic word, and the remaining were three syllabic. There was stringent control over the meanings of each target word so as to avoid the effect of polysemy and cultural connotations. These eight L2 target words featured in each of the reading passages.

Verb	implement	constitute	manipulate	endeavor
Noun	perspective	dilemma		
Adjective	substantial	strategic		

Table 2 Target words

Reading materials

Seven reading passages were prepared with all the eight L2 target words embedded in each of them. These texts, of about 200 words each, had 10% of the words unknown to the learners for unassisted reading comprehension. While the contexts would provide clues to help infer the meanings of the TWs, no morphological evidence was provided to infer the meanings. Apart from the TWs, the words that make up the texts were selected from Oxford 3000 word list known to the learners. A sample of the text has been provided in Appendix A.

Immediate recall test

As the study included several aspects of word knowledge of the target words, different sub-tests were designed to check recall of the selected aspects of word knowledge as part of the immediate recall test. The list of different aspects of word knowledge represented a modified version of Heidari-Shahreza and Tavakoli's (2012) list of vocabulary knowledge. The following table displays the vocabulary knowledge measured and the item-type used for each sub-test.

Table 1 Types of vocabulary knowledge measured

Order	Knowledge Measured	Item-types
1.	Productive knowledge of orthographic form (PO)	Dictation
2.	Receptive knowledge of orthographic form (RO)	Multiple choice
3.	Receptive grammatical knowledge (RG)	Multiple choice
4.	Receptive knowledge of meaning (RM)	Matching
5.	Receptive knowledge of associations (RA)	Multiple choice
6.	Productive grammatical knowledge (PG)	Sentence construction

3000-word level Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)

An adapted version of the 3000-word level VLT was used to establish homogeneity among the participants in terms of their proficiency level in vocabulary use and reading ability. The VLT was adapted to include six verb clusters, two noun clusters, and two adjective clusters, in view of the number of TWs selected under each grammatical category, instead of the commonly available one which has four clusters each for verb and noun, and two adjective clusters.

Pilot study

As part of the pilot study, a questionnaire was administered to twenty-one students of class XI to ensure that the reading texts did not pose any difficulty in terms of topic familiarity, length, and ideas discussed. The goal was to ensure that learners could comprehend the texts on their own. Participants' responses on items on aspects of word knowledge of the TWs in terms of task familiarity, clarity of instruction, format familiarity, difficulty level, and time allotted were obtained. The texts and the item-types were retained for the main study as learners' responses on the texts and item-types were positive.

Procedure

Ninety students (out of 214) whose mean scores remained 27.5 or higher out of 30 on the Vocabulary Levels Test were selected. Further, they were randomly divided into three groups i.e. E1, E3, and E7 according to the number of exposures (1, 3, and 7 respectively) they would receive to the L2 target words. Next, all the three groups were provided with the reading texts as per the distribution given in table 3. All the reading passages were stapled together; and they were not allowed to go back to a text once they had finished reading it. After the participants read the texts, they were given an immediate recall test on the six aspects of word knowledge.

Table 3 Distribution of reading texts

Group	Texts read	No. of exposure(s) to TWs	
E1	Txt 1	1	
E3	Txt 1- Txt 3	3	Immediate recall test
E7	Txt 1- Txt 7	7	

Findings and discussion

To find out the effects of repetition, each group's performance on the six selected measures was compared with the performance of other two groups in the immediate recall test. For the purpose of analysis, independent samples t-test was used, and the results obtained in immediate recall test have been presented in table 4 and 5 for all the three

comparisons made between the groups i.e. E1 vs. E3, E1 vs. E7, and E3 vs. E7 followed by a discussion on the findings.

Table 4 Mean scores (<i>M</i>) and standard deviation (<i>SD</i>) on the immediate recall test						
Group	E1		E3		E7	
Sub-test	<i>D</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>D</i>	
Productive knowledge of orthographic form (PO)	.9	.1	.8	.5	.6	.15
	3	1	0	1	6	
Receptive knowledge of orthographic form (RO)	.6	.3	.4	.7	.5	.62
	3	2	3	1	3	
Receptive grammatical knowledge (RG)	.0	.0	.0	.7	.1	.00
	6	8	0	8	6	
Receptive knowledge of meaning (RM)	.7	.5	.8	.7	.7	.33
	6	5	6	6	6	
Receptive knowledge of association (RA)	.0	.4	.4	.7	.2	.11
	3	7	0	5	6	
Productive grammatical knowledge (PG)	.7	.6	.7	.7	.2	.35
	6	1	3	9	3	

Table 5 Group comparisons on the immediate recall test

Sub-tests	E1 vs. E3	E1 vs. E7	E3 vs. E7
Productive knowledge of orthographic form (PO)	.154	.000 *	.0 91
Receptive knowledge of orthographic form (RO)	.615	.001 *	.002*
Receptive grammatical knowledge (RG)	.894	.850	.735
Receptive knowledge of meaning (RM)	.885	.000 *	.000*
Receptive knowledge of association (RA)	.384	.001 *	.026*
Productive grammatical knowledge (PG)	.940	.230	.229

Note: * = $p < .05$

The analysis of the results revealed that the performance of learners who experienced single exposure did not differ significantly from that of learners who received three exposures to the target words on the six measures. No significant difference was found between the mean scores of E1 and E3 on the all the six sub-tests. However, the difference between the mean scores calculated for E1 and E7 was statistically significant on PO, RO, RM, and RA. However, there were no significant differences between the mean scores (E1 vs. E7) on RG and PG. Likewise, when a comparison was made between the mean scores of E3 and E7 on the six measures, statistically significant differences were observed with $p < .05$ on RO, RM,

and RA and no statistically significant difference was observed between the mean scores on PO, RG, and PG.

From the analysis of the descriptive data and a comparison of the mean scores, it can be concluded that learners who encountered the TWs seven times performed better than E1 and E3 on the selected measures. However, the need for statistically significant differences become inevitable to relate and refer to the findings of the previous studies conducted in this area. In the immediate recall test, no statistically significant differences were calculated between the mean scores of E1 and E3 which suggest that even a single exposure could result in significant vocabulary growth, and there could be no significant difference in vocabulary learning between one to three exposures as reported by Rott (1999). The findings seemed to suggest that learners who encountered the target words seven times performed better than the other two groups who encountered the TWs once and three times respectively. However, it was observed that irrespective of the number of encounters with target words in meaningful contexts, learners' receptive and grammatical knowledge of the target words showed significant growth, and no significant difference was observed at all the three levels of comparison contrary to the findings provided by Heidari-Shahreza and Tavakoli (2012). This highlights the importance of context in the presentation of new vocabulary items to learners in vocabulary instructional practice and also resorts to the idea that repetition could greatly contribute to learners' grammatical knowledge of target words. The acquisition of meaning involved in the target words got better only after three encounters with the target words as E1 and E3 differed significantly from E7 on RM.

Conclusion

The above findings suggest that increased exposures (exposure 1× 3× 7) helped learners in the development of vocabulary knowledge. Meaning focused reading enabled learners to use the target words in their proper grammatical form, thus, enhancing their

ability to use the target words productively. This implies that exposing learners to new words several times can help them acquire other aspects of word knowledge. This can be facilitated through graded readers at different proficiency levels. However, there is no consensus on the number of exposures required to acquire all the aspects of word knowledge involved in a word. From this study, it can be concluded that seven exposures can help learners build orthographic, grammatical, and semantic knowledge of a word. Learners can also be equipped with vocabulary learning strategies to acquire vocabulary in novel contexts as they grow as independent and autonomous readers. The study was limited as far as the nature of the texts was concerned: the texts were not authentic in nature. The inclusion of authentic texts in a similar design could provide better insights into this issue of repetition. Further research may include more number of words with no control over the notion of polysemy and cultural connotations, which can provide better insights into the patterns of acquisition of word knowledge.

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Appendix A

Skills development among the youth is an important aim of the present government. It has, therefore passed new laws and has also taken **substantial** steps to **implement** them. With a clear **perspective** to make India a global power, so far the government has taken every step with precision. According to the recent reports released, the government is planning to build **strategic** partnerships with foreign countries to work on various projects under skills development in the subsequent years. But, the **dilemma** still continues for the government, whether to invite other countries to invest or go it alone because some of the foreign laws may clash with the Indian law. The opposition is blaming the government that, “it is trying to **manipulate** the law in the name of skills development.” However, the government has promised to **endeavor** for everything that can help the youth. It has planned to **constitute** a committee which will address the negative effects of foreign investment.

Community knowledge in Schools

Storytelling Festival, Story Mapping and Village Mapping in Chhattishgarh

Sanjay Gulati

Introduction

Story telling is the world’s oldest teaching tool. From the beginning of time, the orality has been used to pass on beliefs, traditions, and history. Storytelling engages one’s imagination, bridges the gap for meaningful connection between the teller and the listener, and establishes common grounds in a multicultural society to touch the hearts and minds of the listeners.

Stories are told for entertainment purpose and often to teach lessons and provide morals. Human beings have a natural ability to use verbal communication to teach, explain and entertain. , which is why storytelling is so prevalent in everyday life.

We can define storytelling as “An art of using language, vocalization, and / or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific, live audience. “ The central, unique aspect of storytelling is its reliance on the audience to develop specific visual imagery and details to complete and co-create the story. In one way or the other, the subjects we teach in schools are presented in the form of stories. Stories are full of cognitive skills

The guiding principles of National Curriculum Framework 2005 emphasized that the students should learn outside the classroom. Story telling as a knowledge resource inherent among the community has been a good device to link the school with the community. This activity encourages the children to break their silence in a group, learn from the community, reproduce the story in writing, drawing creative pictures out of the content of the story and make it a meaningful learning.

The objectives and expected outcomes of a storytelling festival are listed below:

Objectives of Story Telling Festival

- To develop listening and speaking skills in children and to motivate them so that the listening and speaking skills transform to reading and writing skills
- To bring the community knowledge to the schools (NCF-2005)
- To develop an appreciation of stories as educational resources, especially as sources of teaching themes that support Education

- To develop strategies for integrating storytelling approaches into teaching units to achieve the objectives of Education
- To demonstrate an understanding of how storytelling can be used in classrooms to meet state and national goals
- To promote the art of storytelling for children and adults
- To bring a festival introducing folk tradition as presented through the telling and hearing of good stories using the local talent
- To demonstrate an understanding of storytelling's role in society

Expected Outcomes

- Children and adults will develop / increase the understanding of the importance of storytelling in educational , family , community and professionally settings
- Children will develop listening skills, writing skills, drawing and reflection skills.
- Teachers will be able to connect the classroom teaching with the world outside the classroom
- Parents and community will be involved in the process of education of their children

How to conduct a storytelling festival (STF)

- Go to a village.
- Ask the villagers if they can tell stories to their children
- The villagers know many oral tales / myths / local legends etc.
- Out of the villagers some will agree to tell the story (male / female)
- You discuss with them about the stories they know, listen to their stories and tell them that you are interested in the stories of birds, animals, trees, children tales etc.
- Then tell them that they are to tell the story in a storytelling festival.
- Take their name, address, and telephone numbers or ask the school teacher of that village to contact them.

➤ Next take a CRC and in the CRC centre one storytelling festival can be demonstrated.

➤

Preparation: Demonstration can be for 3 hours

➤ Ask the children of classes III – VIII to take part, may be not all children take part.

Those who write/like the story can take part.

➤ 50 students from one / two / three schools can take part.

➤ Fix up a date for storytelling festival.

➤ Notify the storyteller, teachers of concerned school to come with the selected storyteller and interested children of these schools to take part in storytelling festival.

➤ Make logistics arrangement for STF at BRC / CRC level. (100 children from 1-3 schools and 20 storytellers from the villages)

➤ Make arrangement for drinking water , breakfast , tea etc before STF

➤ The space where STF is organised should be clean. It can be outside / inside the school. It should have sufficient space for formation of groups etc.

Procedure of STF

➤ Coordinator will announce the STF. Local HM / BRC / Sarpanch may speak for 5 minutes. Total 15 minutes for formal start (introduction, objectives of STF etc). Next 10 minutes can be utilised in telling what STF is and what storyteller and children do in STF.

➤ Introduce the storyteller to the children.

➤ 5-6 children constitute a group.

➤ Each group will have a storyteller.

➤ The storyteller will tell the story to their own group of children, once, twice, thrice, till the children understand the tale.

➤ Children can be divided into two groups. Group A – Class III – V and Group – B – Class VI to VIII. Group A can be given a name as Junior Group and Group B can be given a name as Senior Group. We can have upto 40 students in junior group and 60 in senior group.

➤ Small stories will be used for junior group and medium stories will be used for senior group.

➤ Monitor the STF while the storyteller is telling the story, just observe no comment.

➤ Allow the storyteller to tell his story without any disturbance, don't ask him to finish the tale quickly. They may be allowed to take their own time. At least half an hour is required.

➤ After the storytelling is over, ask the children if they have understood the story.

➤ Ask the storyteller if he is satisfied?

➤ Ask the children to thank the storyteller.

➤ Now the coordinator will give a piece of paper (A-4) to children and a pencil with rubber to write the story that they have listened. This activity can take 20-30 minutes.

➤ Students will be given a drawing sheet and a crayon to draw the picture based on the story they have listened. They may draw anything related to the story, no compulsion.

➤ Now the students club the story and picture in one place (staple) and give it back to the coordinator.

➤ After the work is over , all children , storyteller and teachers sit together and coordinator will ask some children and storyteller about their experience about the event and what would they like to do in their village. He will also ask the teacher who attended the event – what you would do with this event when you go back to your village school. List the activities suggested by teachers , students and storytellers

CRC level meeting:

Once the STF is over, CRC will call a meeting where

1. Consolidation of stories and pictures will be done.
2. Workshop on editing the stories and picture will be planned
3. DTP and Scanning work will be planned.

Reflection

IFIG has adopted 100 RtE compliant schools in Chhattisgarh under four DIETs and storytelling festival is an attractive activity which link the community story tellers from the village to tell the story in the schools on a given day where this is known as Story Telling Festival(STF).

The STF is undertaken in 100 schools during 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and about 20000 students from class I to class VIII took part in the schools and about 500 story tellers narrated their oral stories to the students forming 8 - 10 students for one story tellers. 450 Teachers of 100 RtE schools as the facilitators managed the story telling sessions in their respective schools. The public response was encouraging.

After listening the stories from the story tellers the students in their group wrote the story in their own language and after that they were asked to draw pictures from the content of the stories. The students thus documented the oral community knowledge in to written and then in to visuals that captured the creative cognitive abilities of the students. The results is that all these stories came directly from the community memory and not from the text books, there by exploring the rich cultural knowledge on ecology, culture, society and individual experiences. The students enjoyed the festival as a writer and an artist of the stories and the story tellers got recognition in the schools which was a forbidden to them as a provider of language skills.

Many villages attended the storytelling and enjoyed the festival and a new discussion began that the community knowledge is the foundation of schools knowledge through which language, science, social life, and situated cognition of Chhattisgarh from

their cultural context is explored. Though it is a child friendly activity, it is a strong medium of teaching and learning orality, literacy and painting.

As a result of this activity a lot of stories and their paintings are available in the schools / DIETs which can be helpful to prepare wall magazine, graded reading materials like big book, small books and students creative talent will be a part of school activities in these schools.

Sample work from the storytelling festival is shown in the following pages:

Story, Village and Resource Mapping

Going one step ahead, these stories were used and connected to different schools subjects like language, environment science, history, geography, mathematics etc and for critical interpretation in historical, geographical contexts. This also helped to explore the local natural science through birds, animal, flora and fauna. The idea was to make the children connect their imagination to the realities of the life through the process of oral to written and visual on one hand and then from picture drawing to village map on the other.

For this purpose a story, village and resource mapping workshops were organised in 100 intervention schools of four districts. Students from classes V – VIII attended the workshop. Students prepared the story map and village map from selected stories from STF or their own experience stories and documented the village resources connected to the context of the stories.

Process:

- Children were divided into groups of two / three. In a school thus a total of 35 to 40 groups were formed.
- Each group is allotted one story from the STF organised in the schools.
- Each group need to prepare the following :

- Story Map
- Story Picture
- Write details about one of the items from a list of 20 items related to village resources.
- One group was allotted the work of preparing the village map.
 - Groups need to read the story themselves and prepare a sequence of events and prepare the story map with symbols.
 - Next they need to prepare the story picture by imaging the sequence of events, time, characters and story environment.
 - Each group prepared a detailed note on one of the village resource topic given to them. These notes are very useful and can be combined to prepare village history of that village.
 - One of the group prepared the village map showing all the main landmarks , roads and social institutions.

Village maps can be used for further mapping the village resources like water, electricity, digital equipment etc. This will enable teachers and children to learn the basics of micro planning related to village setup. The village map is also an excellent tool for teaching local geography and spatial sense. Children will also prepare geography museum, nature mapping and village history based on the village maps, these can be used in the classrooms to connect the school subjects with local contexts. Above all language skills, natural science and mathematics are also integrated in the stories.

Nearly 6000 students participated in the activity and lots of local resources like story maps, story pictures, village maps and documentation of village resources are generated.

**Stimulating and Sustaining in-Service Teacher Education:
The Road Not Taken**

Nivedita Vijay Bedadur

The focus of this paper is to understand two different approaches to Teacher Education which will help conceptualise a roadmap for sustaining continuing in-service teacher education framework:

- a. The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan's approach to teacher education
- b. The Guruchetana experiment in Karnataka

In India, the quality of education has become a serious concern of late, as national and international assessments of quality have proved time and again that children who have spent eight years in school cannot read and write. The ASER report 2017, which has been released on January 16, 2018, says that every year since 2006, has found that although all children are enrolled in school, many are not acquiring foundational skills like reading and basic arithmetic that can help them progress in school and life. According to ASER 2016, 27% children in Std. VIII are unable to read a Standard. II level text and 57% are unable to do simple division that is taught in Std. IV. With the introduction of the RTE act, the enrolment in private schools has increased (Annual State of Education Report Rural 2017, 2018). The cause of this has been identified as the quality of teaching-learning in State Board schools.

The Justice Verma Commission Report on Teacher Education, August 2012 (JVC), recorded its observations on the in-service education of teachers and gave recommendations for a change in perspectives in our approach to teacher education. JVC volume I page VIII states that the level of education in the community is recognized as the index of human

development and the teacher is the medium to achieve this goal. This has brought into focus the continuing education of teachers. Recognizing the continuity of pre-service and in-service education and the need to be strengthened both, the JVC report points out several lacunae in the present system of in-service education. JVC recommends that approaches to in-service teacher education (ISTE) need to enact a shift in perspectives and practices – to be designed locally, spilt design models, cascade models and follow-up, programs based on assessments of needs of teachers at cluster level, MRPs to meet same group of teachers continuously, regular follow up and onsite support and TMS to be put in place (Verma, 2012)

This paper will examine the two models of in-service teacher education and conceptualise recommendations for a roadmap for in-service teacher education.

Zonal Institutes of Educational Training – A Robust Top down Model!

The Kendriya Vidyalayas are a conglomeration of schools with a common curriculum and a common calendar, established for the education of children of transferable government employees especially the armed forces. The governing body of these schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan,(KVS) firmed up its model of continuing teacher education through its decision to establish Zonal Institutes of Educational Training (ZIET). The 1000 odd Kendriya Vidyalayas are divided into five Zones supported by the five training institutes, complete with infrastructure. Each institute ismanned by a Deputy Commissioner with a team of postgraduate teachers, trained graduate teachers and primary teachers. Existing Senior Post Graduate Teachers and Principals of Schools are invited to apply for thesepositionswhich are filled after a rigorous interview process.

The sole objective of the ZIET is to run longer duration courses and short duration workshops for principals, vice principals, teachers and administrative staff. The long duration courses are calendared at the beginning of the year by the KVS. All ZIETs and their feeder

regions follow this calendar. The short duration workshops are proposed by the ZIETs every year according to a needs assessment exercise conducted by the feeder regions. 21 day courses (split into 12 and 10 days in summer and winter breaks respectively) are conducted for PGTs, TGTs and PRTs in their subject domains on concept and pedagogy of subjects, while the short workshops are for issues related to perspectives, attitude, skill building or concerns like inclusion, diversity and gender sensitivity.

Module preparation for both the courses and the workshops is done by the resource teachers and the directors of ZIET. If the concerned subject teacher is not appointed at the ZIET, an expert from the feeder region is deputed for preparing the module. The module is not printed, it is in the form of a discussion, and each teacher develops her own module according to the context and the needs of the learners.

The transaction of the module is entirely done by the resource teachers as well as the director of ZIET. The transaction is divided into two parts: mornings devoted to lectures or activities and afternoons devoted to demonstration lessons by the teachers with sharing, reflection, feedback and exchange of pedagogical innovations.

There is a mechanism for feedback of the courses, through a questionnaire which is sent to the respective schools. The Principal of the school and the officers of the concerned Regional Office also observe the lessons and report on the improvement of the teacher. The report is then sent back before the second spell of the in-service course for further follow-up.

Let us now analyse how this model stands under the scrutiny of the JVC recommendations. Although a robust system, which runs smoothly, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan does not have a teacher education curriculum. It believes in developing teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge. This has strengthened the overall content and

pedagogical understanding of teachers bringing in rich dividends in the classrooms. There are some occasional workshops to sensitise teachers to issues of equity and inclusion.

Analysis

If one analysis this system one can deduce the policy decisions as follows:

- a. The policy of setting up dedicated institutions for continuing education which is not burdened with any other objective.
- b. Semi-Autonomous Institutions which are partially controlled by annual plans of KVS and partially responsive to the needs of the feeder regions.
- c. Teachers - teach - teachers policy dispensing with the cascade mode and resultant transmission loss.
- d. Building reflective practice related to subject pedagogy in the content design of all face to face engagements in subject areas.

The continuous education of teachers is linked to their higher scale entitlement as a mandatory provision – this makes it mandatory for the Principal of the school to send her teacher for an in-service course as per requirement. Composite school system makes this requirement both decentralised as well as the joint responsibility of the Principals as a welfare officer and the teacher as a professional who is aware of her professional growth avenues.

Lacunae and Challenges

Despite having a robust top-down model, KVS is not able to avoid unnecessary duplication of content as there is no policy decision regarding a curriculum for teacher education. This means that the possibility of a repetition of course content cannot be ruled out. Without a curriculum mapping of concept coverage from course to course the choice of content, the approach to the transaction is in danger of becoming ad hoc. The ZIET cannot obviously cater to all courses for all teachers. As a consequence, some in-service courses are arranged at different venues decided by the KVS. Orientation for these courses is provided by ZIET and modules are prepared by selected, expert resource persons under its care. These

courses are supervised by ZIET director or by the Venue Principal, who is ultimately responsible for their conduct. Transmission loss that happens in this arrangement could be avoided if ZIETs prepare ODL courses or multimodal design engagements of a bottom-up nature. The ZIET being an institution dedicated to teacher development, it could develop and offer a number of courses based on a curriculum which can be revised every few years, adding new knowledge, new research in pedagogy, content and perspectives. This would mean that teachers could have a choice of attending the course they need to.

Secondly, the feedback mechanism needs to be more robust in the ZIETs. It is not possible for the ZIET Director or teachers to move into the field to observe the change in the classroom. A structured observation of impact mechanism needs to be created linking the capacity building with classroom transaction seamlessly. ZIETs do bring out a magazine for teachers and teachers sometimes record the changes they brought into their classrooms by writing articles in these magazines. This is a voluntary response which can be made structured and sustainable.

In a top-down model, there is no open forum, no local voluntary initiatives for teachers to meet, to reflect on the daily challenges, e.g. beliefs, attitudes that shape interaction in the classroom, daily struggles about understanding children, parents, societal changes and handling the stress of oversized classrooms and unrealistic expectations.

To conclude, although KVS scores well with its sustainable top-down model, the design of such a model fails to empower the teacher to become an autonomous learner. In such a system, the teacher is always at the bottom of the hierarchy with no choice to steer her own development through multimodal or integrative means.

To counterpoint the KVS model of teacher education, let us now look at the infancy stage Guru Chetana experiment of Karnataka.

Guru Chetana – An Innovative Experiment through a Bottom-up Approach

On 5th September 2017, DSERT Karnataka decided to revamp its teacher education approach. A well laid out and structured plan was put into place. The conceptualisation of this program began in March 2016. The plan was to be laid out in four stages:

- A. Administrative and Policy Decisions:
 - To design a curriculum for teacher education
 - To offer need-based and choice based courses to teachers
 - To customize and contextualize content as per needs of teachers
- B. Content Design
 - To create a group of SRPs who would fall under the guidance of Nodal Officers from DIETs design 4 modules on priority in year one from the curriculum and more in the years to come with reference to the concept mapping.
 - To customize the modules in cascade mode from SRP to MRP and MRP to Teachers
 - To select MRPs through a written test and interview process
- C. Offering Choice of Content
 - To offer the content on the website and through promotion festivals – on the website, through pamphlets, through mobile information.
 - To inspire teachers to select the course they would like to attend and convey their choice through SMS.
 - To give a preview or trailer of all the modules so that teachers can make informed choices based on field needs.

D. Course Transaction

- Courses to be transacted at CRC level if they are in demand, at BRC level if the demand is less.
- Course transaction to be customized according to need.

The DSERT website gives the following update regarding Guru Chetana: Through Guru Chetana for the first time in India, the teacher is empowered and respected, she is responsible for her own development as she can opt for the course which is her most pressing need. This is possible because of the "Teacher Development Curriculum" to assist sustainable and continuing teacher education in the long run, which identifies subject –wise themes required for the next 3-5 years. Initially, 20 modules were developed in 2017-18. The teacher could opt for four modules, and this choice spreads across subjects. This initiative will benefit over 50,000 teachers in 2017-18.

<http://dsert.kar.nic.in/guruchethana/programme-overview.html>

Drawbacks and Challenges

This laudable initiative of Karnataka DSERT is to an extent bottom up, the structured yet flexible design of continuing teacher education. It is innovative in design and structure.

Yet it has not taken into consideration feedback and impact analysis. If the provision is made for feedback through digital means closing the loop from choosing, attending to applying understanding, it could prove a fertile ground for reflective practice. Moreover, it could also serve as a simple teacher information system. That this is not part of the plan is rather surprising as DSERT has obviously developed a very strong digital communication mechanism to reach out to teachers. It is also surprising that DSERT has not planned ODL mode of engagement with teachers for making it really need to be based and continuing.

Failure at what cost!

The discourse around continuous teacher professional development in India and its practice has been dominated by the 'teacher training' model. Education research and practice across the world has however rejected such training-driven models in favour of more powerful models of teacher professional development, especially those that support collaboration and peer learning among teachers. Enabling platforms that support such collaboration and peer learning has however been a challenge in the context of the Indian public education system.

Over the last seven decades or so, various strategies have been initiated for in-service teacher professional development in India. This is attested to by various education commission reports over the years. In spite of well-intentioned policies, the in-service professional development opportunities available to teachers in the public education system are somewhat limited. The institutional structures that support teacher professional development are weak due to half-hearted implementation. There is an acute shortage of quality teacher educators at all levels. (Ghose & Jain, 2017)

Although both the models examined in the paper have in their own way tried to ensure quality and sustainability in teacher education, the most striking drawback of in-service engagement whether top down or bottom up is that there is no well-articulated State wise policy for continuing and sustaining teacher education in a professional manner.

Secondly, the state board system, albeit moving towards innovative reform, does not prevent duplication, repetition and waste. While Guruchetana initiative of Karnataka has laudably designed a curriculum for teacher education, it has failed to avoid duplication and waste without a teacher information system in place. Vimala Ramachandran analyses this situation succinctly: 'This situation continues to-date. In a recent study on how we manage

our teacher workforce in India (Vimala Ramachandran et al., NUEPA, 2015) we found that there is no Management Information System (MIS) that tracks participation of teachers in in-service training. (Ramachandran, 2017)

The most important lacuna in Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and in the Guruchetana model is the teacher empowerment and critical reflection as there is no provision for discussion about day to day challenges in the classroom and perspectives on education. Face to face training is usually hierarchical in nature and thus lose out on empowering the teacher and developing ownership through critical reflection. Moreover, they never focus on the stark everyday realities of the teacher. An example in the case of the State Board Schools are the multigrade classrooms or the single teacher schools which expect the teacher to be superwoman! Vimala Ramachandran reiterates this fact. She says, 'an overwhelming majority of primary schools are multi-grade either officially (when schools have fewer than five teachers for five classes) or unofficially (when teachers take turns to absent themselves). Yet, both pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training assume one teacher for each class.' (Ramachandran, 2017 pg.30)

Similarly, none of the Kendriya Vidyalaya courses ever deal with the teacher's daily struggle with the social situation of a heterogeneous classroom. Teachers need forums to reflect, share and resolve their daily challenges, and the best models of one-off face to face in-service education, therefore, fail to ensure reflective practice, to understand and assess daily changes and ensure quality at the micro level.

In this regard, the Azim Premji Foundation has worked tirelessly in 54 districts in India to develop voluntary teacher forums and sustain them for the past six odd years. The documentation of this massive struggle is summed up in its report in the following manner(Ghose & Jain, 2017):

Platforms such as Voluntary Teacher Forums provide teachers in the government school system with much-needed opportunities for collaboration and peer learning. To sustain, such platforms need to address teachers' professional needs genuinely. They need to promote a culture of genuine dialogue and mutual trust and contribute to enhancing the professional identity of teachers. It seems to be of utmost importance that these are not stand-alone platforms, but are part of a holistic approach towards professional development that the teachers find value in. While they are peer-learning platforms, it requires significant, purposive and persistent efforts from outside – individuals or institutions - to start and sustain them. Availability of capable people in these locations who can put in such efforts - towards mobilizing teachers and providing relevant academic expertise – seems crucial (Ghose & Jain, 2017). This means that any roadmap for conceptualizing in service Education needs to factor in these key aspects.

Proposing a Road Map for in-service Teacher Education

Continuing Professional Development needs to be co-owned by the State and the Individual. A Comprehensive Policy and Framework for Continuing Education with multimodal and integrative engagement needs to be developed which will factor in the following points:

- A. Preparation for Teacher Education
 - A comprehensive curriculum for continuing teacher education needs to be put in place
 - Processes for selection of resource persons and teachers to be developed
 - Processes for assessment of needs of teachers to be developed
- B. The Process of Content Preparation
 - The approach to content selection and module preparation needs to be sensitive to the context of the field
 - The module preparation should adopt a bottom-up process

- The teacher should have a choice in the matter of her continuing professional development

C. The Transaction of the In-service Courses

- The cascade model of the transaction has been observed to be ridden with transmission loss and hence should be avoided

- The transaction should be responsive, collaborative and not top down allowing for reflective practices

- The theory and clinical practice linkage needs to be strong and well thought out

- Multimodal and integrative engagement instead of just face to face engagement

D. Impact Assessment of Continuing Education

- Processes for impact assessment need to be developed

- Mechanisms for teacher feedback to inform content preparation and transaction

In conclusion, we reiterate that continuing in-service education needs to offer a range of courses, with a credit system which is tied to educational and/or professional advancement. This course should be part of a flexible but structured curriculum which uses the multimodal digital platforms, structured face to face engagement and discussion forums which break the boundaries of space, time and hierarchy. It must be noted that reflective practice evolves much more comprehensively from voluntary forums which help teachers to share their concerns and reflect not only on subjects but attitudes, beliefs and challenges and any policy for teacher education should strike a balance between state and individual ownership of learning through a range of platforms.

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Voices from the Field

Report on State Level Seminar on “Inclusive Approach to Education of Tribal Children”

Mahendra Kumar Mishra

Swatika Bhuyan

Date: January 22 – 24 , 2016

Jagdalpur District Bastar

Organized by

State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT), Chhattisgarh in collaboration with ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth (IFIG)

IFIG is thankful to Ms Swatika Bhuyan for documenting the preliminary report of the Seminar

Executive Summary

A state-level seminar was conducted in Jagdalpur on Inclusive Approach to Education of Tribal Children during 22-24 January 2016. The focal theme of the seminar was to explore the issues and challenges in the linguistic inclusion of tribal children in schools in the context of access, retention and achievement. The idea was to understand the issues and devise strategies from the participants and formulate a plan for Bastar region to ensure linguistic inclusion of tribal children and afford quality education in schools of Bastar.

Recommendation to the state government by the participants attended the Seminar

.1. Bridge the gap between home language and school language by preparing tribal language textbooks and supplementary readers to tribal based on the MLE approach

2. Training of teachers on language teaching-learning methodology 9 Mother tongue education/ second language acquisition)
3. Linguistic Survey and mapping
4. Adoption of Gondi, Halvi and Bhatra language in the school curriculum in DIETs, Bastar
5. Training of teachers/BRC/CRC on attitudinal aspects and tribal language
6. Engagement of tribal language teachers in those areas where children need their mother tongue education.
7. Conducting community-based programmes from time to time and document local tribal language resource
8. Adoption of Cluster Approach to Tribal Education in Netanar CRC
9. Convergence with SC/ ST Development department

Concept Note

Seminar on Inclusive Approach to Education of Tribal Children in Chhattisgarh

Introduction

The importance of education as one of the most powerful means of bringing about socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes cannot be uncared for. Educational development is a stepping-stone to the economic and social development and the most effective instrument for empowering the tribal.

India is home to a large variety of indigenous people. The Scheduled Tribe population represents one of the most economically impoverished and marginalized groups in India. With a population of more than 10.2 crores, India has the single largest tribal population in the world. This constitutes 8.6 percent of the total population of the country (Census of India, 2011). Education is one of the primary agents of transformation towards development. Education is in fact, an input not only for the economic development of tribes

but also for the inner strength of the tribal communities which helps them in meeting the new challenges of life. It is an activity, or a series of activities, or a process which may either improve the immediate living conditions or increase the potential for future living.

Education, especially in its elementary form, is considered of utmost importance to the tribal because it's crucial for the total development of tribal communities and is particularly helpful to build confidence among the tribes by creating opportunities to be equal with others. Historically tribal have been perceived by others as a backwards community for their socio-cultural worldview, lifestyle, language and indigenous nature. Their literacy has been abysmally low in some parts of the country. The case of primitive tribes is also more vulnerable in providing educational opportunities.

The Constitution of India, Article 350 A provides facilities for instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage. It reads, "It shall be the endeavour of every State and every State and every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups;xxx. "Besides, the State commitment to the education of SC/ST children is contained in Articles 15(4), 45 and 46 of the Indian Constitution. Article 15(4) underscores the state's basic commitment to Positive discrimination in favour of the socially and educationally backward classes and/or the SC and ST. Article 45 declares the state's endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. Article 46 expresses the specific aim to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of SC/ST. In its effort to offset educational and socio-historical disadvantage.

National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, *Programme of Action*, 1992 specified among other things the following:

- Priority will be accorded to opening primary schools in tribal areas.
- There is need to develop curricula and devise instructional material in tribal language at the initial stages with arrangements for the switchover to regional languages.

- ST youths will be encouraged to take up teaching in tribal areas.
- Ashram schools/residential schools will be established on a large scale in tribal areas.
- Incentive schemes will be formulated for the STs, keeping in view their special needs and lifestyle.

National Curriculum Framework -2005 and RTE-2009, also the National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes have provision for the education of tribal in their mother tongue to overcome the language barrier and achieve other tongues. In spite of having such constitutional provision and national goal, tribal education has been discouraging due to proper academic plan, lack of understanding the indigenous pedagogy coupled with the geographical and linguistic barrier and also teachers stereotypes about the tribal communities. Denying the educational goal of tribal is a denial of national development and blocking of tribal development.

Recommendation of Position Paper of NCERT on Tribal Education

Specifically, the recommendations of the Focus Group are as follows:

Institutional Context

a) Provision: We strongly reiterate the need for an equitable provision regarding the quality of schooling at different levels, educational infrastructure and other facilities, qualified teachers, teaching-learning materials, texts and others. It is crucial to enhance the autonomy and working conditions of teachers, and teacher self-esteem.

b) We recommend the need to identify areas and groups which continue to suffer marked exclusion and neglect to enable a more focused implementation of positive discrimination policies.

c) School Organization: There is a need for flexibility in school structures and cultures. School times, calendars and holidays must keep in mind local contexts.

d) The school system requires a more generous and efficient provision of facilities meant for SC and ST children. It is important for all concerned to engage with those struggling for rights of these communities, especially those committed to their educational advancement.

School Curriculum

a) Curricular goals must emphasize critical thinking and critical evaluation and appreciation of Indian society and culture. Equal opportunity for intellectual growth, cognitive development, social and emotional development of underprivileged children must be sought.

b) Curricular content: An approach rooted in critical theory and critical multiculturalism is essential to critique the unjust social order, to indigenize and incorporate diverse cultures and prevent loss of valuable cultural heritage. We must make a commitment to the preservation of all languages as a matter of communities' cultural rights as well as of national pride.

Pedagogy

a) Incorporation of diverse pedagogic methods and practices towards enhancing learning and democratic classroom practice is essential.

b) There is need to develop pedagogic practices that aim at improving self-esteem and identity of SC/ST.

e) Non-graded instruction with the judicious use of tests for evaluation of learning may be considered.

f) Making available a wide range of texts and other reading and instructional material is essential.

Language

a) Home languages must be made the media of instruction / communication in the early years of school education. The pedagogic rationale is that moving from the known to

the unknown facilitates learning. Language is a critical resource that children bring to school and aids thought, communication and understanding.

b) Home languages in classroom process are also essential to build child's self-esteem and self-confidence.

c) Transition to regional language will be facilitated through learning of home language.

d) Where there are more than one tribal languages used in any village, we recommend the use of the regional lingua franca or the majority language after consultation with villagers.

e) Teacher training must include the stipulation that teachers pass an exam in a local language.

Enhancement of Teacher Education, Teacher Competence and Teacher Social and Self-Esteem

a) There is a great need to strengthen teacher education, its overall knowledge and value base and practical training. Teachers must be thoroughly equipped with subject knowledge and critical pedagogy skills. Teachers also require experiential knowledge through fieldwork about the lives of SC, ST and other marginalized groups, to understand cultures, school-home linkages and ensuing facilitators and constraints.

b) Teachers' attitudes need to be challenged on a scientific, historical, sociological and experiential basis, to help them understand their socialization.

f) Teacher education needs to be made more accessible in 'backward regions'/tribal areas.

g) We need to focus on developing competent teachers within SC and ST communities, particularly women.

Chhattisgarh in Tribal Context

In Chhattisgarh, out of total population of 2, 55, 45,198 the population of tribal is 78, 22,902 which constitute 30.6 percent of the population. Out of this 30.6 percent population, 92.5 percent (72, 31,082) tribal live in rural areas, and only 7.5 percent (5, 91,820) lives in urban areas. 85 blocks out of 146 blocks are tribal blocks in Chhattisgarh. The major tribes in Chhattisgarh are Gond, Bhatra, Halva, Kanwar, Kamar, Pardhi, Dhuruva, Baiga, Oraon, Soura, Korva etc.

MLE in Chhattisgarh: Since SSA was introduced; six languages have been adopted in the curriculum and textbooks. In Class I and II there is little evidence of using mother tongue in the classroom. The state has introduced texts in tribal languages from class III to V incorporating 25 % of context-specific texts in the state textbooks, as a matter of policy to address the learning need of tribal children. The languages used in class III to V Chhattisgarhi, Karuk, Sargujia, Gondi Kanker, Gondi Bastar and Halvi.

Efforts of DIET Bastar : Since last two years , DIET Bastar has initiated the education of Durua Children, a minority language groups in this region , to bridge the gap between home language and school language. 20 Durua Teachers have been trained on curriculum, pedagogy and language education to prepare culturally responsive text materials for Durua children and Berur Berur(Come Come) the first complete primer has been prepared by the Durua teachers guided by the DIET Bastar and SCERT, Chhattisgarh. To start with 21 schools in Darbha Block has been identified with 90 % of Durua children and has introduced Durua- Hindi bilingual class I textbook and the result is encouraging. Dropouts have been reduced in these schools, and meaningful engagement of teachers and students has been increased. This text is prepared based on the theory of NCF 2005. DIET faculties of Bastar are regularly monitoring these schools with IFIG support.

DIET, Bastar has opened a Subject Resource Centre on language pedagogy in which the DIET has taken up many programmes and activities to address the language pedagogy aspects of Bastar region. The District administration and Education department have taken keen interest to support the innovation to address the issues and challenges of tribal children in the district. The DIET plans to prepare Gondi and Halvi textbooks for Early Grade Reading (EGR) of tribal children through the bilingual model., where the children could achieve the mainstream language through their mother tongues.

Issues and Challenges:

These 92.5 percent tribal who live in rural areas face the following problems in their education:

- **The medium of instruction** – Language is one of the important constraints of tribal children which prevents them access to education.
- **Geographical Barriers** - The physical barriers creates a hindrance for the children of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighbouring village.
- **Economic Condition** - The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.
- **The attitude of the parents** - As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- **Teacher Related Problems** - Appointment of non-tribal teachers in tribal areas and the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon, and this affects the quality of education largely. Teachers are not sensitive towards the culture of the tribal students. Lack of understanding of indigenous pedagogy.

The tribal in Bastar region has a high degree of the gap in home language and school language coupled with the above issues for which the academic attainment of tribal children are lagging behind .

Objectives

Keeping in view the above issues and challenges, SCERT Chhattisgarh in collaboration of IFIG has planned to organise a seminar on Inclusive Approach to Education of Tribal Children in Chhattisgarh in Jagadapur under the leadership of DIET Bastar. The objectives of the seminar are to discuss the following:

- Understanding tribal education policy and programme, constitutional obligation and national goal of education
- The issues and challenges of learning difficulties of tribal children in primary schools
- The teacher's attitude and belief about tribal children , culture , language and society and their teaching difficulties to tribal children
- Learning from another state of India on tribal education
- Strategies for the education of tribal children
- Implementation of MLE for bridging the gap between home language and school language as per RTE 2009 and NCF 2005
- Strengthening mechanism for teacher support on how to bridge the gap between home language and school language

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the issues and challenges in tribal education will be discussed in details among the participants, resource persons, district education department and DIET faculty members. It is also expected to document the recommendations of the seminar and present a report to the district education department and DIET for its implementation.

The outcome of the seminar will be used for academic planning on teacher education, DIETs role in the education of the marginalized, and possibilities of context-specific work in BITEs on tribal education.

Identification of Core Group and language Resource Group for preparation of tribal –Hindi bilingual textbooks in Gondi, Halvi, Kurukh and other tribal languages of CG .

Resource Persons:

Some practice based experienced resource persons in the field of Tribal Education from Odisha and Chhattisgarh will attend the Seminar and facilitate the participants. They will also discuss the various issues related tribal education in details with the participants. Their programme in the government schools will help the teachers of Chhattisgarh to improve the tribal education in the state.

Participants

The seminar will be attended by nearly 65 – 70 participants. These include RtE schools teachers from Bastar block, subject resource group (SRG – Language) members, and Dura teachers, representatives from DIET Ambikapur, Kabirdham, Mahasamund, Dantewada, Kanker and Dhamtari. BRCs from Ambikapur, Kabirdham and Mahasamund. SCERT faculty members, DIET Bastar faculty members, IFIG staff members and staff members from district / block education department of Bastar.

Date and Venue: *The seminar is scheduled for January 22 – 24 , 2016 in Jagdalpur in Hotel Devansh, Jagdalpur at 10 AM to 6 PM.*

Session Plan :

Day 1-

Session I- Inauguration and Welcome

Chief Guest : Mr Amit Kataria, IAS,Collector, Bastar

Guest of Honour: Sri OP Nautiyal, Vice President , IFIG

Chief Speaker: Mr Utpal Chakraborty, SCERT ,CG

Key Note Address: Dr MK Mishra

The vote of Thanks : Principal DIET, Bastar

Session II- Tribal Education in India, Policy and Practice, Challenges & Opportunity

Session III- Group Work on Problems and issues in tribal education in Chhatisgarh

Session IV- i) Dhuruva Presentation and Discussion

ii) SRC Activities in Bastar

Day 2-

Session I- Group Work on Strengths of Tribal Society

Session II- i) Presentation by two district- Mayurbhanj & Keonjhar

ii) Presentation by CARE

Session III- i) Language Situation in Bastar

ii) MLE by DIET Dantewada

Session IV- Plan for BITE/DIET Tribal Resource Group and Annual Plan for Tribal Education

Day 3-

Session I- Plan for Tribal Education in Chhattisgarh by the participant

Session II- Plan for 'Gondi' and 'Halvi' Class I & II Primer in DIET Bastar

Session III- Plan for Dhuruva Class II Primer in DIET Bastar

Session IV- Concluding Session

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR

Day 1: 22nd January 2016

Inauguration and Welcome:

A warm welcome was given to the guest on behalf of IFIG and all participants. The Chief Guest, Mr Amit Kataria, IAS, Collector Bastar, Mr Utpal Kumar Chakrabarty, Mr O.P. Notiyal, the Vice President of IFIG, Dr Mahendra Mishra, State Head of IFIG were being welcomed by receiving flower bunch. The guests bestowed flower to the picture of Mahatma Gandhi and Veer Gundadhur and lighten the candle. At that time a very beautiful song was presented by the school girls. The guests were invited to give their valuable view and thought to the seminar hall in the context of educational issues and possibilities of tribal children in Bastar.

Mr Utpal Chakrabarty discussed that now a day's Chhatishgarh developed a lot, but if we focused on the schools, we could found that there are many deficiencies in the field of education. He said that innovations and experimentation in education are sometimes creating hazards to the establishment ,but I am necessary for a healthy and democratic system. No single one size fits all education possible in a diverse country like India. He lamented that, even after 69 years of independence, education had not reached the unreached Durua children. Explaining the visit to Darbha schools during 2014 , he said that he was unable to understand the language of tribal children and children were also unable to understand his language. Without a communication how education and learning can be taken up/ So he wished that DIET Bastar should come forward with innovations in tribal education or else the social inequality will increase leading to social unrest. He also said that constructive criticism is always welcome to foster a healthy democracy. Differences do coexist with the harmony of diversities with mutual understanding.

Mr Amit Kataria,the Collector of Bastar, discussed some of the important issues related to the educational system. He added that there is no solution for the question arises in the educational field. There are always controversies in the system. The focus should be given to the primary education.He said that there are two opinions about teaching the tribal. One is directly mainstreaming them ignoring their culture and language, and another is to teach them from their cultural context. Tribal education face this binary opposition in

educational institutions. But understanding the realities, strategies should be taken, and there should be a solution to up bring the tribal children in social inclusion. He said that Durua children had been provided Durua primers for a class I and it should work properly to facilitate the Durua children in getting better learning. The children should learn Hindi and English properly. According to him, there are many experiments taking place in the field of education. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it fails. It is a big challenge to make the tribal literate. Language is a big barrier in the system, but it can be a resource for intellectual development in a given cultural context. The historical isolation, lack of an ethnographic understanding on the tribal ethos and worldview, geographical barriers, cultural superiority of nontribal, etc. are the main cause for the underdevelopment of Bastar. He also added that isolation should be gone astray from the system so that proper development could be possible. He needed a group of philanthropists to mitigate the tribal issues in development in which education is a strong instrument.

After the valuable speech of the Collector of Bastar, Mr O. P. Notiyal placed his view. He told that while the tribal population of India is 9%, in Chhattisgarh, it is 36% and in the tribal areas of Chhattisgarh, it is about 96%. He tried to show the variation of the tribal population the nation, state and in the locality. He shared one of his experiences that one of the tribal schools in Nasik, where onion is cultivated on a large scale when the name of onion (Pyaaj) was taken the children could not get that. While it was translated to their local language as 'Kanda', they easily understood that. The main objective of learning should be to attach the children to their mother tongue and culture to have a learning context. He added a very effective sentence that "Once a child learns how to walk then it could run by itself. According to him, this is also applicable to education also. This is very crucial to shift from one language to another language, as the syllabus is same for both the tribal and urban children. During teaching learning process the tribal language should be related to the school language, state language and then towards the national /international language along with

their culture and practice. There should be a beautiful relationship between the student and the teacher. So the future path will be easy and joyful during education. Everybody should be a learner from the childhood till death. Punctuality should be the watchword of life. He shared some of his experience of that time when he used to be a teacher.

The sharing of experience with the guests was worthy to be learnt. After this, another song was presented by the school girls. And a brief introduction of all the participants held.

Tribal Education in India, Policy and Practice, Challenges and Opportunity:

About the policy, practice, challenges and opportunity of Tribal Education in India was vividly discussed by Dr Mahendra Mishra. He started with speaking that India is a country where we can find many languages, caste and religion. The Constitution of India gives respect to all language, caste and religion which could not be found in any other Nation. The tribal who are in rural areas are dominated, and very less percentage of them who lives in the urban areas has forgotten their language and culture. The Constitution is followed only in the book, but very little of the population follow this in their daily life. In the year of 1952 Pundit Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India declared five principles on tribal development. These are

1. People should develop along the lines of their genius, and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their traditional arts and culture.
2. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt, be needed, especially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.
4. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through, and not in rivalry to, their own social and cultural institutions.

5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

“the tribal should be developed by their language and culture; no one should force them for any other language or culture. With this concept, the other developmental plan should be done with the involvement of both tribal and non-tribal. So gradually the tribal could make their developmental plan on their own”. But till now the non-tribal mostly involved in the process of development of the tribal. The tribal are getting so-called incentives, residential school facility etc., but there is very less development of tribal takes place. Dr Mishra also added that the ‘Adibasi’ is the real protector of nature. But now a day nature is on the way of destruction by the outsiders resulting the global warming. The way of working is changing faster. Also, social dissimilarity is increasing. This causes an increase in envy. If it is not stopped, it must affect the educational system. On the view of an educationist, no language is smaller or greater. In DPEP and SSA the main focus was given to girls, scheduled tribes and physically challenged students. The culture of tribal still not reflecting in the books they are taught by.

Quoting the Six noticeable demand of Education in South East Asia, Dr Mishra said that these points should be resolved through imparting education to the society or else, there is a great threat to humanity. The challenges are due to the followings.

1. changes in professional profiles in the context of a world of work that is increasingly heterogeneous, in many cases, shrinking, swiftly changing and ever more globalized.

2. Need to counteract the deepening social inequalities and increasing marginalization and violence.

3. Need to recognize the diversity of individual and communities is a valuable resource that is different from social inequality

4. the need to educate individuals so that they can satisfy their need for better forms of representation as the citizen in the society

5. issues of advances in biotechnology on which individuals can take the decision

6.co existence of advantages and disadvantages resulting from the impact of technical progress on the environment and the quality of life of individuals and communities.

Dr Mishra also added the now a day's ecology is destroying, and technology is in the racing mode. Technology is destroying the ecosystem. The educated only could understand the changing situation but the tribal could not. And nobody is taking responsibility to aware them about this. Even the educated people are also not conscious about this. A very nice sentence was told by Mishra Sir that "The tribal says we are the children of the world, but the non-tribal says that the world is ours".It is necessary to create awareness of the eco-cultural system that the tribal people have sustained over the ages, and that is now known as a new science in the modern world.

It is also described by Dr Mishra that, a teacher should have learning attitude. But they try to do their duty only. No non-tribal teacher is interested in learning at least a single tribal word. It is seen that approximate 0.5% tribal becomes educated every year. He has also discussed the dropout percentage of the tribal children is very high and one of the reasons for this is the language. The local language they use at their home is the first language for them and the second language is the state language in which they taught at the school. But in school, the state language is always taken as the first language. This creates a gap between language and teaching-learning process. The whole efforts in school become meaningless to the children.

The valuable description ends, and discussion started about different problems in the educational field of Chhattisgarh, and the participants share their experience in the relevant field by giving their valuable opinion.

Group Work on Problems and issues in tribal education in Chhattisgarh:

After a Lunch break, a group work held on different problems of tribal education. Eight groups had formed, and each group had given a question for discussion and to find out the solution for that. The questions and the views of the participants on that are given below.

Question 1: Why the children face problems in learning in school?

1. **Way out:**
 - i) Lack use of local language – Lack use of local language in the textbooks.
 - o ii) A teacher does not use the local language while teaching.
 - o iii) Absenteeism of students in school – Due to household works, a celebration of festivals, the pressure of the family, geographical condition etc.
 - o iv) Hesitated nature – Hesitated nature of students creates an obstacle in the way of learning.
 - o v) The need of local things in teaching learning materials – During teaching-learning process lack use of local TLM & local examples.
 - o vi) Lack of emotional relationship – If there is no emotional relationship between teacher and student, then the teaching-learning process will be hindered.
 - a. vii) Be short of opportunity & freedom given to the students by their teachers.
 - b. viii) Use of activities by the teachers according to the need, like & level of the student.
 - c. ix) Previous knowledge and experience of the students should be shared at the time of teaching -learning.
 - d. x) Inactive teaching – The teaching will be effective less without activities.
 - e. xi) Untrained teacher appointment affects teaching-learning process.
 - f. xii) The parents and community are not aware enough.

Question 2: What are the problems of teachers in teaching in the tribal areas?

Way out: i) The parents are not aware.

- ii) Less attendance of the children.
- iii) Difficulties in the understanding of language.
- iv) Be short of the educational environment.
- v) Pressure to complete the syllabus
- vi) Communication Gap between teacher and students
- vii) Involve the teachers in non-educational works.
- viii) Pressure from the management side.
- ix) As the teachers do not know the local language, they face problems.

Question 3: Do the children of tribal area perform according to the expectation? If not, then why?

Way out: i) The teachers are not familiar with the local language of the tribal area.

- ii) The teachers use the standard language which causes a problem for the tribal children.
- iii) The book design in the standard language of the state not in the tribal language, which creates problems.
- iv) Syllabus designed according to the state curriculum.
- v) The locality, culture & history of the tribal do not include in the syllabus.
- vi) Lack of interest of teachers in the teaching-learning process.
- vii) The teacher has a problem to understand the local language. So they could not make the children understood.
- viii) Children could not get any back word support from their home, as most of the parents are illiterate.
- ix) Parents want their children to involve in household works and not interest to sent them to school.
- x) Children feel hesitation to express themselves in front of the outsiders.

Question 4: Do you think that the teachers of tribal areas are well equipped to address the learning needs of tribal children? If not, then what should be the interventions?

Way out: i) The teacher could not understand or speak the local language.

ii) As language is a hurdle, the good relationship could not form between the teacher and the student.

iii) Lack of training in the local language.

iv) Local and social word stock is not enough at the teacher level, which creates the gap to make the student understand.

v) Parents are not aware of education.

vi) Lack of elemental facilities for teachers.

vii) At primary level, the local teacher should be appointed.

○ **Question 5:** What are the responses of tribal parents and community on their children learning in schools? What are their views regarding school education?

Way out: i) The parents are not aware of their responsibility, no reaction could be seen from their side.

ii) Need to change their thought.

iii) Their thought is limited to the facilities their children are getting, like Mid-day-meal, Stipend etc.

iv) Need to create awareness among the parents.

v) Special attention should be given to protect their culture and succession.

vi) Lack of long-term planning.

vii) The local teacher should be appointed.

Question 6: Do you feel that the language and culture of a tribal society are important in schools curriculum & teaching-learning process? If yes, then how it would be addressed?

Way out: IN tribal education local language is most important at the primary level. Education in the local language will be effective and joyful for the students, as from the

beginning they use the local language and it will be easy for them to understand in their local language. Also at the time of teaching the letter, the teacher should use the local examples. Same should be followed in case of teaching mathematics. Their local culture and history should be used as an example while teaching about a different topic. The technology related things should be taken as examples so that the tribal children will be advanced. Different activities should be added to the education related to their local culture, local stories, songs etc.

Question 7: What are the policy and programme for the educational development of tribal children in your state / country?

Way out: The existing policies-

- i) Scheme for Girls education
- ii) Mid-day-meal plan
- iii) Plan for the Free dress, Stipend and books
- iv) Plan for Residential Schools
- v) Schools in every 1 K.M. radius.

The new plans should be added-

- i) The economic condition of the tribal should be changed for which intoxication should be stopped.
- ii) The teacher should know the local language.
- iii) Plan to inspire the students for education.
- iv) Vocational education plan from the beginning.
- v) Cultural, artistic skill should be added to the school education.
- vi) Both knowledge and activity should be included in the education.

Question 8: What are the problems in textbooks and curriculum to teach tribal children?

- Way out:**
- i) No use of mother tongue or local language.
 - ii) Less focus on bilingual education.

- iii) Fewer teachers training.
- iv) No academic involvement.
- v) Less use of local examples during teaching-learning process.
- vi) No proper monitoring and evaluation.
- vii) The curriculum should be related to the locality.
- viii) Lack of community involvement.
- ix) Government support is needed.

The above outcomes were presented by each group and discussion was also held on that. Many practical problems were come out from the participant's side.

Dhuruva Presentation and Discussion and SRC Activities in Bastar:

After the above group works Dr B.R. Sahoo, the Asst. Director of Tribal Education of Chhatisgarh gave his valuable views on tribal education. He discussed the differentiation of languages in Chhatisgarh. According to him, when discussion held on language, two types of people have problems. The highly educated people and the persons involved in the system. He made a comparison with the different languages used in Chhatisgarh and showed that there is a relationship between all languages. The language used in the tribal area should be used in the schools and gradually the local language should relate with the state language. He discussed the educational system of Chhatisgarh as he is involved with the system. The local language is highly overshadowed by the global language, for which the local language is vanishing day by day. with the death of language, the intellectual and cultural resources of tribal children is also dies. He also discussed the local dictionary, which has published in "Halvi", "Gondi", and "English" language.

A presentation was shown on tribal education by Mr Stanley John and also discussion held on that. After which Dr Mishra presented 8 key points from the group work session. Those are given below.

- Mother tongue should be used in primary education.

- Sufficient TLM should be provided to the children, and there should be multiple choice of learning for the children.
- Teacher training is needed.
- Resource support and resource organization are most needed.
- There is also a need for Government support.
- Monitoring process should be strong and continuous support is needed.
- The parents, community, children and teachers involvement is required.

At last Mr Utpal Kumar Chakrabarty, SCERT added that 'if the language is the hurdle in education then we should think on that, again and again, to find out the solution. So we could implement this in the education system. He also discussed the problems arose from the group work and discussed on those. One could develop than when he/she has the learning attitude from every situation. He told a very nice sentence at last that "The system of education should be followed, not to be kept in the museum".

Day 2: 23rd January 2016

This day was begun with a warm welcome by Dr Mahendra Mishara to all the participants in the seminar. The participants had presented their views on tribal education and shared some of their experience on this. A discussion was held on "language as a barrier". It was discussed that language would not be a barrier if it is used properly. Teaching the children should not become pressure for the teacher. But there should not be any other workload on the teachers except teaching.

It should not happen that if we are learning the second or third language or any other language, then we forgot our local language (mother tongue). Everybody should be proud to speak or write their local language.

Presentation by IFIG Team :

A presentation of the work done by the IFIG team in Chhattisgarh was done by the team wherein they presented the various academic / pedagogical works done by them in four districts of Chhattisgarh. The special focus was on the development of the Dhuruva primer developed in DIET Bastar. The detailed process of the primer development with the experiences of some of the Dhuruva teachers was also shared with the participants. IFIG team also shared other major work like implementation of thematic approach , preparation of big-books , listening stories , action songs , mathematics activities , TLMs , establishment of school museums , storytelling festival involving community storytellers and 10000 children , organization of math mela with community , extensive school monitoring with academic support to teachers , subject wise teacher orientation etc.

Presentation by CARE India:

After this discussion, a presentation was presented by Mr Bijay Nath from CARE India, BBSR. They are running a programme named as 'Udan' in different places. It is a residential school where the never enrolled or dropout girls were entered into and prepared for a standard level according to their age within a targeted period and get joined to a Government school. He added that the tribal children are less exposure to the state language or any other language but familiar with their local language. Udan takes responsibility to train the girls and make them able to read, write and speak the state language within a limited period. He presented different activities and TLM used for that. The used books in Udan were published in three languages, i.e. in their local language, Odiya and Hindi language. Sometimes it published in English also. In their library also they conducted various activities like, the student chose the book of their own choice, read those, draw pictures, put color on the picture cards etc.

Presentation by two district- Mayurbhanj & Keonjhar of Odisha MLE programme

Mr Durga Prasad Nayak & Sapan Kumar Prusty from Odisha gave a presentation on the tribal education of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar district. Mr Prusty told that out of 5000 schools of Mayurbhanj District, MLE is running in 600 schools. There was a description given on the percentage of tribes of Mayurbhanj district and Odisha. He discussed the challenges faced in the field of education in Odisha. Discussion held on the problems related to language, community involvement, lack of tribal or local knowledge of teachers, the attitude of the teachers etc. The state initiatives taken for MLE and use of local language with the book language were also discussed. In Odisha mother-tongue-based MLE programme is running. For implementing this programme, they have appointed teachers with knowledge of local language, build the capacity of those teachers by providing several training, involving the community with the education system, a collection of the local materials & preparation of TLM etc. There was a brief discussion held on the process and initiatives taken by Odisha Government and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan to reduce the language problem and also to enhance the education system in tribal areas. Mr Durga Prasad Nayak described the situation of tribal education in Keonjhar district. He had shown the tribal scenario of the system.

There was also a presentation from 'Sikshasandhan' Bhubaneswar, presented by Mrs Swagatika Bhuyan on tribal education at Kaptipada Block of Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. She had discussed the situation of education at Kaptipada Block before and after the intervention of 'Sikshasandhan'. There was a brief description of the process followed to strengthen the community, aware them about the need of education, the involvement of the community in the educational system, reduction of language problem by appointing language teachers in some of the schools. They provide several training to the built capacity of the language teachers and also trained the School Management Committee to aware them of their responsibility. To build the capacity of the tribal children, they involve them in a different competition like storytelling, song, drawing, essay, group discussion etc. For this, they organize children's festival, creative workshop etc. And to strengthen the community,

they organize village meeting, SMC federation meeting, and capacity building of SMC etc. She also discussed the problems arises on the tribal education.

Language Situation in Bastar:

The discussion on language situation of Bastar was started with "Dada JoKal" after the lunch break. He described the language problem by giving a practical example. He gave a speech on 'Gondi' language, the persons who did not know the language could not understand anything. Then Dada Jokal translated that to Hindi and described that if the well mature persons could not get anything hearing an unknown language then how could a child learn an unknown language. He shared some of his life experiences. He described the use of languages in different places. It varies from place to place. Even a common thing has a different name at different places. He also put his opinion on the gradual abandonment of local language. As every child has right to read in its mother tongue, sometimes it is seen that the tribal children feel the disgrace to express themselves with their local language or culture. Even they do not want to talk with their local language at outside.

Mr Netam shared some of his experience in tribal education. He described some process and system of tribal education of Bastar. He shared some his life experiences and asked some riddles to the participants who were entertaining. If those could be entered into the teaching-learning process, then it will be entertaining, and the student could learn some knowledge from this.

Mr Sengar told that diversity is the strength. For this only different person from different places could aggregate at a place and share their experience. He added that the riddles and folk tell has an important place in the tribal education. Those should be used in the teaching-learning process. He discussed the origin of different languages of different places. He also tried to express the thinking of the youth now a day.

Mr Dani, an Educationist, shared some of his childhood experiences. He had taken many initiatives & changed the educational system of the Government residential schools where he used to be in charge at different district in Chhatisgarh.

MLE by DIET Dantewada:

A presentation was given by Mr Sanjay Gulati, ICICI Foundation on the initiatives taken for tribal education. There are some museums made in different schools of Dantewada with the help of the community. It is a very good example of community involvement in the education system. They have stored many local agricultural & musical instruments, tribal ornaments, historical books etc. In a regular interval, the students visit the Museum in the presence of their teacher or any of the community members. They describe the use of the instruments and the relation of those with the local history. This system is very effective for tribal education. There was also a presentation of some teaching-learning materials which has prepared by the teacher as well as the students. Many initiatives have taken by DIET Dantewada to improve the tribal education. The other members of DIET Dantewada also shared their experience.

Day 3: 24th January 2016

Recommendation for tribal education:

Mr Yadav shared his experience that he has worked in those areas where the ratio of tribal children was 90%. But the education situation was very bad there. There were 10% students came to the school, and that was for the Mid-day-meal only. There was no teaching-learning happened. And the main reason for that was the language taught by the children could not understand by the teachers, and the children could not understand the teacher's language. There was no teaching-learning takes place from last 20 years due to the language

problem. Another educationist placed his view that the local teacher has a major responsibility to save their local language. The teacher should understand the locality and make them stronger. They should love their local language and culture so that they could make the tribal children to go forward. The educationist recommended some of their views for the enhancement of tribal education.

One of the 'Gondi' language teachers put his view that they could not improve because they have no support to find their way forward. In Dantewada 90% people use Gondi language, but changes could be seen in that language from one place to another place. Due to changes in a particular language from place to place the teacher has to face many problems during teaching. In this District, many teachers appointed from outside. According to him teacher from outside should have learning mentality & try to learn the local language from the children. Another teacher added that the local things should be added to the teaching-learning process as children love to hear about their local history and the local things from their periphery. He also told that the community and the parents should be involved in the meetings held in the schools.

Mr Sahoo added that we could found many languages in a particular area. He tried to show the similarities between different languages of a particular area. The Tribal should be proud that the language is protected only by them. No other community tries to save their language. But the language of the smaller community is on the way of destruction. Some of them vanished. Everybody should love their language.

Group Work on Strengths of Tribal Society and children

Six groups had formed with the participants, and each group had a question to give their views on that. The questions and the outcomes for those questions are given below.

Question 1: What kind of syllabus and books should be developed for tribal education?

Way out: i) The geographical data should be introduced.

- ii) Introduction and identification of language
- iii) Survey on language
- iv) Proper knowledge about the tribal culture
- v) Identification of occupational background of family
- vi) Local history should be collected from the community and added to the syllabus

Question 2: What should be the system for the development of the teachers working in the tribal areas for tribal education?

▪ **Way out:**

- i) The system made by National Educational Act for the development, should be reached to the teachers and should implement.
- ii) The library is needed for the teachers, where data could be found for the history, culture, and community. So the teacher could learn from there and teach the student easily.
- iii) The DIET, BRCC etc. should provide pre-education training to the teachers.
- iv) There should be a tribal Museum at DIET
- v) DIET should provide training to the teachers on the previous status of the school (teacher & students)
- vi) Thinking of the teacher towards the tribal children should be positive. For which training is needed.
- vii) To teach the children from local language to the state language, the teacher should be trained.
- viii) The school committee meetings should be held at the public place so the community could be involved in that.

Question 3: What kind of help should be taken from the community in tribal education to teach in the local language?

○ **Way out:**

- i) Without the support of the community development of the school is not possible.
- ii) Without their support, it is difficult to teach in the local language.
- iii) The help of the community is needed for collection of local stories, riddles, local history etc. which are very important for the tribal education.
- iv) The help of community is needed to develop the teaching-learning materials for tribal education.
- v) The community sometimes helps in the development of the school.
- vi) Various programme of the school should be arranged with the help of the community.

○ **Question 4:** What kind of probing is required for tribal education?

- **Way out:** i) Creation of language space
- ii) Study on the challenges of tribal education.
- iii) Teaching-learning materials should be developed according to the local surroundings.
- iv) Involvement of community for the development of the mother tongue and local language.
- v) The teacher should know the local language and periphery.
- vi) The teacher should be aware of the problem faced by the students during the teaching-learning process of the local language.
- vii) The teacher should be trained to teach local language to relate to state language.
- viii) The teacher should be attentive towards the development of the students.

Question 5: What kind of aids is required from the Government for tribal education?

Way out: i) Particular system should be developed according to the National Syllabus.

ii) Help is needed for the research on tribal education

Question 6: What could be done by DIET to develop the tribal education?

Way out:

- Academic members should be appointed
- There should be a tribal education room
- It should work on preparing the syllabus
- The module of teaching-learning should be prepared according to the language
- DIET should be associated with colleges
- The training should be arranged at the school level in the tribal areas
- Monitoring should be there according to the culture and language
- The culturally appropriate curriculum should be developed
 - ix) Tribal education office should be there at every tribal development department
- DEO/DPO should be associated with DIET
- "Tribal Education" should be included to the pre-service teachers
- Linguistic isogloss survey must be conducted by DIET
- Six groups discussed on the given six question, and some outcomes were founded. Those are
 - Economical status
 - Livelihood
 - Level of Education
 - Involvement of community

After all the discussion the responsibility is given to the member of DIET to make this happen by proper planning.

At last Mr, Panigrahi shared his experiences of the three days seminar and gave hearty thanks to all. With this at around 2.00 PM, the session came to an end. .

January 22 – 24, 2016 at Jagadapur

Findings of group work done on the final day of the three days State Seminar on Tribal Education held at Hotel Devansh , Jagadapur

The participants were divided into six groups, and each group was assigned separate question related to the education of tribal children. The recommendations of each group are shared with the large group and presented below for your reference.

Excerpts from the Position paper on SC/St Education , NCF2005 , NCERT , New Delhi

It rests on the premise that a proper understanding of the problems requires that they are located within wider socio-economic and political processes. Equally imperative is a critical examination of the currently ongoing "structural educational adjustment and reform" with its ensuing package of new approaches and practices. due to their oppression under caste feudal society and the latter due to their spatial isolation and cultural difference and subsequent marginalisation by dominant society. There are thus sharp differences between these two categories of the population regarding the socio-economic location and the nature of disabilities.

However, there is also growing common ground today regarding conditions of economic exploitation and social discrimination that arise out of the impact of the iniquitous development process. Concomitantly, the categories themselves are far from homogenous regarding class, region, religion and gender and what we face today is an intricately complex reality. Bearing this in mind this paper attempts to provide a contextualised understanding of the field situation of the education of SC/ST children and issues and problems that directly or indirectly have a bearing on their future educational prospects. The paper seeks to provide a background to the National Curriculum Framework Review being undertaken by the National Council of Educational Research and Training. As such, it looks critically and contextually at educational developments among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe to arrive at an understanding of what policy and programmatic applications can be made, especially in the

domain of curriculum, to improve their situation. The problems are many and complex. The paper attempts but does not claim a comprehensive discussion of the varied nuances of their complexity. What the paper underscores is the need for contextualised, differentiated and sensitivity analyses. It rests on the premise that a proper understanding of the problems requires that they are located within wider socio-economic and political processes. Equally imperative is a critical examination of the currently ongoing “structural educational adjustment and reform” with its ensuing package of new approaches and practices.

For a society that had lived for a millennium by a value system based on division and hierarchy, classically manifested in the system of caste-feudal patriarchy, the post-independent Constitutional commitment to social equality and social justice marked a watershed in its historical evolution. A synthesis of two ideologically divergent principles, i.e. the principle of merit and the principle of compensation – constituted the modern Indian political discourse on equality and was operationalised in the establishment of democratic socialism and the welfare state. Along with guaranteeing equality of citizenship, the state assumed the primary responsibility for compensating for histories of discrimination, exploitation and marginalisation and providing special support to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. As is well known, the Scheduled Castes (henceforth SC) and Scheduled Tribes (henceforth ST) are not sociological but administrative categories of the population identified by the Constitution of India for compensatory discrimination and special protection. They intend to comprise those who were at the bottom and margins respectively, of the Indian social order – viz. caste groups who because of their low ritual and social status in the traditional social hierarchy and tribal groups because of their spatial isolation and distinctive cultures have been subject to impositions of disabilities and lack of opportunity (Galanter, 1984).

Special state institutions were set up for the advancement of SC/ST and various legislations, social policies and programmes were drafted which were geared to their economic and political development and achievement of equal social status. It has been difficult, however, to identify these categories regarding criteria laid down by the state. The 'problem' of the scheduled tribes has been a vexed one, given the various levels of social and cultural distance and varying degrees of voluntary or forced assimilation exploitation and/or displacement. In fact, it has been pointed out by Galanter that just where the line between Scheduled Tribes and non-Scheduled Tribes is to be drawn has not been clear. There are problems of overlap with caste and controversy whether a specific group is more appropriately classified as an ST or SC (ibid, 1984). Policy, however, treats the SC and ST groups homogenously. Moreover, it rests largely on the assumption that mainstreaming is progress while paying lip service to preserving distinctive cultures, especially of tribals who are coerced into assimilation. Education was perceived as crucial to processes of planned change. It was seen as the key instrument for bringing about a social order based on the value of equality and social justice. Expansion and democratization of the education system were sought, the two primary egalitarian goals of which were the universalisation of elementary education and the educational "upliftment" of disadvantaged groups. The State's special promotional efforts have undoubtedly resulted in educational progress for the SC/ST especially in regions where policy implementation combined with the dynamism of reform, and most crucially with anticaste, Dalit, tribal and religious conversion movements.

The last two decades have spelt the decline of the Welfare State under the powerful impact of global economic forces and neo-liberal economic policies. The egalitarian ethic underlying planned change and development is being rapidly decimated. The ideology of the Indian State's New Economic Policy emphasizes the pre-eminence of markets and profits. In the context of an elite directed consensus on the inevitability of liberalisation and structural adjustment, the predominant problems and debates of education have undergone major

shifts. Structural adjustment has provided the legitimacy and impetus for many educational reforms that pose a direct threat to the mission of universalising elementary education and equalising educational opportunity for SC/ST, especially those left behind. The state is withdrawing from social sectors of education and health and delegating its social commitments and responsibilities to private agencies and non-governmental organizations. There is already enough indication that basic educational needs of the SC and ST are getting seriously undermined under the new dispensation adversely affecting life chances of vast sections of those who have yet to make the shift to first-generation learning.

Given the above scenario, the importance of bringing into focus educational problems of SC and ST children in the National Curriculum Framework Review can hardly be exaggerated. The discussion in this paper is organised into four parts: Section I provide a backdrop to the main analysis. It captures, in brief, the social location of SC and ST in a changing social, economic and political scenario. It then briefly examines current trends in the educational participation of SC/ST. Next, the paper moves on to a qualitative examination of the contemporary location of SC/ST children in the school setting and to unravel facilitating factors as well as multiple obstacles to their progress. Sections II, III and IV are devoted to understanding the contemporary reality of schooling of the SC and ST children and pertain respectively to issues of educational provision, curriculum and hidden curriculum. These sections are based on data drawn from (i) secondary sources such as the Census, the National Sample Survey, NCERT & NIEPA surveys etc., (ii) academic studies (iii) field-based case studies and iv) experiential accounts gathered from teachers, social activists etc. It attempts to synthesise findings of academic studies and field reports towards understanding field reality.

All sources are listed in the Bibliography and Appendices. It should be stated at the onset that available statistical data varies concerning quality and reliability. Hence data from many sources need to be used in combination to arrive at some reasonably accurate picture.

We have attempted to provide such a picture. We have relied more on small-scale quantitative and qualitative studies, though it must be emphasized that there is a dearth of systematic research on several crucial areas. A major limitation of the analysis is the inability to provide a comprehensive picture covering all states of the country. Some regions have been understudied, and for others, we were unable to gather material which is perhaps available. Section V highlights the general conclusions of the analysis, puts forward key issues that merit serious consideration as well as the major recommendations of the Focus Group.

Photographs

‘आदिवासी बच्चों की शिक्षा में समावेशी दृष्टिकोण’ विषय पर राज्य स्तरीय सेमिनार शुरू

प्राथमिक कक्षाओं में स्थानीय बोली में हो पढ़ाई

जगदलपुर @ पत्रिका . ज्ञान को स्कूल के बाहरी जीवन से जोड़ने के लिए राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यचर्चा 2005 की रूपरेखा तैयार की गई है। इसे शिक्षाविदों और वैज्ञानिकों ने तैयार किया है। इसमें पढ़ाई में रटने की प्रणाली से मुक्त करते हुए तनावमुक्त वातावरण बनाने के लिए स्थानीय बोली में प्राथमिक कक्षाओं से अध्ययन कराने पर जोर दिया जा रहा है। ये बातें डाइट के राज्य प्रमुख डॉ. महेंद्र मिश्रा ने शुक्रवार को तीन दिवसीय राज्य स्तरीय सेमिनार के शुभारंभ पर कही।

राज्य शैक्षणिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद व आईसीआईसीआई फाउंडेशन की ओर से होटल देवरा में ‘आदिवासी बच्चों की शिक्षा में समावेशी



सेमिनार में उपस्थित शोधार्थी। इनसेट में वक्ता।

1652 से घटकर सिर्फ 860 बोलियां

डॉ. मिश्रा ने बताया कि भारत में 1991 में 1652 बोलियां थीं, वर्तमान में यह घटकर 860 हैं। बोलियों को बचाना जरूरी है। सिर्फ भारत में ही इतनी पुरानी बोलियां आज भी अस्तित्व में हैं। इसके विपरीत विदेशों में बहुभाषा संस्कृति को मान्यता नहीं मिली है। आदिवासी इलाकों में दूसरी संस्कृति नहीं धोपनी चाहिए, बल्कि उन्हीं की संस्कृति से संबंधित सिनेबस कार्यक्रम में होनी चाहिए। 2001 की जनगणना के अनुसार 51 प्रतिशत आदिवासी बीपीएल, 4.9 प्रतिशत आईएएस, 7 प्रतिशत आईपीएस हैं। 1961 में आदिवासियों की साक्षरता 8 प्रतिशत थी, जो 2001 में बढ़कर 58 प्रतिशत हो गई। इस मौके पर डाइट के फ्लॉयम गायकवाड़, आरएस शुभा, अखिलेश मिश्रा, उत्पल कुमार, ओम नौतवाल और आईसीआईसीआई फाउंडेशन के सदस्य उपस्थित थे।

कौशल विकास जरूरी

कलक्टर अमित कटारिया ने कहा कि आदिवासी बच्चों को साक्षरता की नहीं बल्कि बुनियादी कौशल सिखाने की जरूरत है। इन्हें शिक्षित करने में भौगोलिक बाधा, भाषा और जुड़ाव

सीखने में अधिक समय लग जाता है। इसलिए आदिवासी बोली में ही अध्ययन करना जरूरी है, ताकि बच्चे रुचि से पढ़ाई कर सकें। वे स्कूलों में पढ़ते हिंदी में हैं और घर पर अपनी बोली में बात करते हैं।

नहीं होने की समस्या आती है। इस क्षेत्र में मानव विज्ञान अच्छा कार्य कर सकता है। सेमिनार में अधिक शोधार्थियों के आने की संभावना थी, लेकिन 3.5 ने ही पंजीयन कराया। इसमें वस्तर, महासमुंद, ओडिशा, नागयगपुर के प्रतिभागी शामिल हैं।

संमीनार आदिवासी बच्चों पर समावेशी दृष्टिकोण पर 3 दिवसीय सेमीनार में पहुंचे, आईआरआईजी के राज्य प्रमुख डॉ. महेंद्र मिश्रा

शिक्षा पर जताई चिंता, दायित्वों के पालन की दी नसीहत

भास्कर न्यूज़ | जगदलपुर

आदिवासियों के लाइफ स्ट्राइट और शिक्षा में कोई खास परिवर्तन नहीं आया है। यहां के 65 फीसदी आदिवासी ही साक्षर हो पाए हैं। पूरे देश में 5 फीसदी से कम आदिवासी परिवार के बच्चे भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा में हैं।

वहीं हजारों लोगों को संविधान में दिए गए अधिकारों व कर्तव्यों की जानकारी ही नहीं है। जिसका खामियाजा हजारों परिवारों को भुगतना पड़ रहा है। यह बात राज्य शैक्षणिक अनुसंधान, प्रशिक्षण परिषद और आईसीसीआई फाउंडेशन द्वारा आदिवासी बच्चों पर समावेशी दृष्टिकोण को लेकर आयोजित तीन दिवसीय सेमीनार में आईआरआईजी के राज्य प्रमुख डॉ. महेंद्र मिश्रा ने कही। उन्होंने कहा कि विश्व में केवल भारत ही एक ऐसा देश है

जहां सरकारें बच्चों को राष्ट्रीय और अन्य भाषाओं में शिक्षा दे रही हैं। उन्होंने कहा जिस तरह की शिक्षा आदिवासी बच्चों को दी जा रही है उसके जरिए उनका विकास करने में सालों लग जाएंगे। उन्होंने कहा कि जवाहर लाल नेहरू ने 1952 में पंचशील के सिद्धांतों को लागू करते लोगों व जनप्रतिनिधियों को आगे आने की बात कही थी जो देश में कहीं दिखाई नहीं दे रहा है।

इस मौके पर डाइट वस्तर के प्राचार्य एमएन गायकवाड़ ने कहा कि इस सेमीनार का मुख्य उद्देश्य आदिवासी बच्चों की शिक्षा में आने वाली चुनौतियों पर चर्चा करना है। जिसमें समाज के प्रमुख लोगों के साथ ही पूरे राज्य से डाइट के लोगों को बुलाया गया है। इस दौरान डाइट वस्तर के स्टाफ ने अपने विचार व्यक्त किए। कार्यक्रम का उद्घाटन करते कलेक्टर अमित कटारिया ने कार्यक्रम को महत्वपूर्ण बताया।

जगदलपुर। आडवात में धरना प्रदर्शन में शामिल हुए कांग्रेसी।

100 से कम लोग हुए शामिल

तीन दिवसीय इस सेमीनार में 100 से कम लोग पहुंचे। ब्याक कोऑर्डिनेटर लेखचंद्र सडू ने बताया कि सेमीनार की जानकारी लोगों को कई दिनों पहले ही दे दी गई थी। धीरे-धीरे लोगों का आना शुरू हो गया है। उम्मीद की जा रही है कि शनिवार और रविवार को बड़ी संख्या में लोग शामिल होंगे।

राज्य स्तरीय सेमीनार की शिक्षा में समावेशी दृष्टिकोण
22-24 जनवरी 2016
School and Teacher Education Reform Programme
A partnership between the Government of Chhattisgarh and ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth



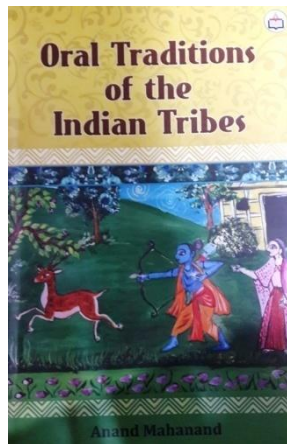


Book Review

A Pioneering Work on Oral Traditions of the Indian Tribes:

A Review of Anand Mahanand's *Oral Traditions of the Indian Tribes*

KBS Krishna



Title: Oral Traditions of the Indian Tribes

Author: Anand Mahanand

Pp: 103

Price: Rs 295; \$ 15

Publisher: Authors Press

Stories are important as they not only entertain, but also inform and educate. Borne out of and representative of their milieus, stories become important knowledge bases for the understanding of various cultures. Hence, a study of literature enables one to sympathise, if not actually empathise, with various world views. Such a reason becomes more important than ever before in the challenging age of globalisation, where most cultures are subsumed or

at least colonised in a capitalist world – leading to a homogenisation of civilizations. Superficially, homogenisation does seem beneficial; however, when, as it does, lead to the death of cultures, a need arises to create awareness amongst world citizens of the dangers of muting and exterminating the marginalised. Anand Mahanand's *Oral Traditions of the Indian Tribes* is a step in the right direction as it is an attempt to introduce the readers to the various hitherto hardly spoken of/about cultures of the country.

All literatures of the world were originally oral; script is a later invention. The introduction of script as well as the patronisation of written literatures implies a civilization that has moved to at least nascent industrialization – as script enables easy replication and mass production. Due to this, literatures that are still oral are not given the same importance as written works. However, as even oral stories carry within them a perception of the world that showcases an ideology that is inherent to their culture, their study is necessary. Moreover, in a world dominated by Western studies, the literature, and mainly oral literature, of the East has often been ignored, or misunderstood. This negligence Mahanand rectifies in his work.

Drawing upon G N Devy, whose immense contribution to the study and understanding of Indian Aesthetics worldwide needs no introduction, Mahanand underscores why this study on Indian tribes is equally relevant. He is right: If we consider Indian cultures are marginalised – oral cultures are suffering double/multiple jeopardy.

Mahanand deserves to be congratulated for his painstaking research which has brought to light the literatures of various Indian tribes such as Santhals, Bhils, Bihals, Parajas, etc... Often treated as a single entity by not just literature students, but also the government, these tribes have their distinctive songs, music, drama, and tales – which the author carefully compiled in this highly informative book. Even the various dance forms and paintings find a place in this study, and these are ably complemented by their photographs and illustrations.

Along with these, Mahanand had also transcribed a few songs of the various tribes, and given pithy summaries of their folk tales, enabling the reader to have an authentic

experience of these cultures. He had even, in a few instances, supplemented the transcription of the original with an English translation. While a critical appreciation of the translation could only be attempted by a reader who is conversant with both languages, Mahanand's attempt is pleasant-sounding. The desire to make the work as reader-empowering as possible shines through in the way the author has drawn upon his considerable experience as a translator to achieve this. The translations, furthermore, enable the readers to understand and empathise with the emotions of the tribals, while appreciating their uniqueness.

Moreover, the impossibility of clubbing together the various tribal groups' use of myth, music, tales, and even performances, is brought out clearly in the author's studied commentary. Such perception of the existing yet generally unacknowledged heterogeneity amongst the tribes facilitates the readers to realise the uniqueness of each tribe – and why it deserves to be celebrated.

The author in the final chapters of the book touches upon how these cultures can be brought into the forefront of our consciousness by using them as pedagogical tools. He further emphasizes the importance of digitising orality; thus, paving a path for seamlessly marrying tradition and technology.

However, the book, while it touches upon all the major aspects of Indian tribes, falls short of being a comprehensive study; and hence, remains a pointer to future researchers in the field. In fact, each tribe that is mentioned in the work deserves meticulous study that would lead to a book of its own. Further, the publisher should have paid attention to typographical errors that had crept in and act as dampeners. But that can be easily rectified in future editions.

Notwithstanding such slight lapses, the work, written sans jargon, is not forbidding even for a lay reader who desires an overview of the major oral tribal traditions in India. The author, being an experienced teacher and poet himself, knows the kind of language that would appeal to everyone, and had done so – making the work pacy, yet not pedantic.

Mahanand's work thus can be deemed as a pioneering study in this respect – as it becomes a handy guide for anyone interested in such studies.

Interview

Shravasti Chakravarty in conversation with Prof. Julu Sen

In this interview Prof. Julu Sen of the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad shares her teaching experiences over the years. She includes instances of teaching in numerous contexts across the school, college and university levels wherein she dealt with English both as a second and a foreign language. She also provides inputs regarding effective teaching practices which budding teachers can incorporate in their classrooms.

Here is a bio-note of Prof. Julu Sen

Prof. Julu Sen is working at EFLU (Formerly CIEFL) for the last 28 years. She has been involved in both pre-service and in-service Teacher Training Programmes, B.Ed., M.Ed., PGCTE, PGDTE, and in guiding M.Phil and Ph.D. Research Scholars.

She has a B.A. (Honours) from Bethune College University of Calcutta and M.A. from NEHU, Shillong. She did PGCTE, M.Litt., and Ph.D. from CIEFL. She was awarded the British Scholarship in ELT to do M.A. in Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex, UK, in 1986-87.

Her areas of interest are: Syllabus design, Programme Evaluation, Testing Language and Literature, Learning Strategies, Socio Linguistics, Cross Cultural Communication, ESP, Educational Psychology, Multiple Intelligences, Educational Management and Administration, Developing Listening Skills, Distance Education and Teacher Education. Apart from Research Articles in these areas of interest, she also published translations from Bengali to English.

She has worked as a Resource Person in a number of workshops and Teacher Training Programmes in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Belgium.

She has also been instrumental in setting up the Sri Lanka India Centre for English Language Training in Sri Lanka. As an Academic Coordinator for ITP (International Training Programme) She has collaborated with CCMB, NALSAR, NGRI, Survey of India.

As President of ELTAI-Hyderabad Chapter, she had coordinated many programmes at School, College, and University levels.



Shravasti Chakravarty: Thank you Prof. Julu Sen for agreeing to share your valuable experiences for this edition of Lokratna. How did you come to be associated with the field of teaching?

Julu Sen: I will go back and nostalgically remember my education. After completing my M.A. from the North Eastern Hill University, I met my principal in Bethune College, Prof. Nalini Das and I asked her what should I do next. She said, “Why don’t you do B.Ed first?” So she motivated me to do it from the Institute of Education for Women, Calcutta. She said even for

college that will be relevant. Like you all had the experience of first teaching when you were doing your internship or block teaching, we had that same experience in Carmel school in Jodhpur Park. So I remember after my teaching how my teachers gave me feedback. And the students, the colleagues also talked about it. So one was a poem I remember and one was how to brainstorm and think about an essay. I enjoyed doing that more than the theoretical aspects of the whole B.Ed programme. I enjoyed the practical aspects such as exhibition, making models and talking about it. That type of interaction or actual teaching in the class room. So it was like, it came in a flow. Then after the B.Ed courses were over I was looking out for a job I found a job in Grace Ling Liang English school, Chinese missionary school in Tangra, Calcutta. That is how my teaching career began.

SC: How did you shift from teaching in schools to teaching at the college level?

JS: While taking a break from the school, I found this advertisement for West Bengal College Service Commission and I just applied. They called me for the interview. After a few months I got a job in Kalna College. I accepted the offer and joined the college. After a long time in Burdwan University I met this professor who was there at the interview board. So, I went and asked him, "I don't know whether you remember me but I remember you because you have selected me. I wanted to know the criteria for selection." He responded, "Answer to my first question - are you willing to travel anywhere in West Bengal?" You were willing to travel anywhere. You said that I'm fond of travelling. So any place in West Bengal I would like to explore more of West Bengal. So that answer I liked and I selected you".

SC: As teachers we might have an idea that perhaps travelling is not part of the job but it does play quite an important role. So, what differences did you find in the teaching methodology in school and college?

JS: In school the classes were say 40-50 in a class. But in college in those days classes 11-12 were also included. Then there were the first, second, and third years. Honours were less say maximum 25-30 in a class. But first year, second year classes were large. And 11 and

12 were huge in number so it came to dealing with many students without a mike . So throwing my voice for a large class was necessary. And suddenly some student would ask me to explain in Bengali whatever I had said. I would say ,” My Bengali is not as good as yours, so can someone explain what I have just said? “So indirect scaffolding- I’m asking one of the peer group to explain what I have said in Bengali to the others so that they are able to follow my lecture. So that was the one problem that I was facing then. Another problem was probably that I spoke very fast. And sometimes students say, “Please go slow”. Even now the Mali participants in ITP ask me to “go slow”. So that is a problem that has remained I think.

SC: Could you tell us some more about your task based classes?

JS: Most of my classes are task based. So how is this class different from the other classes? This is learner centred task based class which is different from theory oriented classes. When I came to CIEFL the first thing I did was PGCTE in the distance mode . I came for the contact programmes. As it happens in practice teaching whoever is in charge of practice teaching is more inspiring because you are in contact with that person. So Prof. Pushpa Ramakrishna who came from B.R. Ambedkar Open University was my tutor. So I got a lot of inspiration from her and how to deal with classes how to do practice teaching as such. So I think besides my B.Ed background my PGCTE background also helped me a lot. The PGCTE practice teaching classes focused on dealing with group work, pair work, task based teaching etc. And in those days we didn’t have power point but she encouraged us with charts and posters. So I learnt a lot from Prof. Ramakrishna.

SC: You have had a very long teaching career in the span of which you have taught not only Indian students but also foreign students. How have you dealt with students with different learning styles in your class?

JS: I will talk about Kalna. All students there were Bengali medium. So they used to think in Bengali but write in English. So suppose they are taking an exam and I was invigilating. They would stop me and ask me in Bengali the meaning of the questions. So I used to think that using L1 as a resource should be a project for such schools. Like having a class newspaper

in Bengali and then having a class newspaper in English. Then the Bengali teacher and the English teacher should plan it together. Similarly if other subjects like History or Geography are taught in Bengali first and then taught in English, they would enjoy English better. So I was thinking of using Bengali as a resource at that time. So, if you want to use group work or pair work, they should first feel comfortable with the task. They can talk in Bengali, when they report it, they can report back in English. I started that way of introducing communicative language teaching in the classroom by doing the task- I would say to them, “ok, have you understood what are my instructions? Then do it in Bengali first. But when you report back to the class, do it in English”. So that was my approach to ensure that they do not become anxious. They were willing to come to my class. They attended my class and they even said that they felt comfortable. That was my priority. Then gradually one becomes comfortable in doing tasks because it is different from doing lectures.

SC: How does your teaching differ in your international training programme (ITP) classes?

JS: For the recent group of students from Mali, the first day we were giving them orientation. Initially, they were just listening passively. The moment Dr. Janani started talking to them in French, they became very active. They had lots of things to say. I asked Janani to continue talking to them in French for some time and to enquire about their problems in class. I had to teach them listening. First, I had introduced them to Karadi rhymes. These are very simple rhymes and they had to note down key words. We talked about the theme of the song. They were able to do that. But when I went to sound of music, little longer songs, they found it a little difficult to understand. Even the theme words were difficult to grasp. So I had to play it a number of times to make them understand. Then I thought that I will go through” multiple intelligence auditory inventory “so that each sentence is illustrated and they have to say whether they agree or disagree or are somewhere in the middle. They said that they liked visuals with sentences. So some visuals or if there are no visuals there as some short

dialogues and what is the situation, where did it happen, why did it happen. Simple *wh* questions along with dialogues were easy to understand.

SC: How helpful was this for the learners to use English on a daily basis?

JS: I asked them what they needed at their work place. They said that they had to talk to diplomats. "We have to talk about our country". So the problem is that they can understand short dialogues or short audio scripts but in the daily context they need to use longer dialogues and longer audio scripts. The time is not enough to train them from moving from short to long dialogues. By the time the course ends, they have to continue on their own. It's like we have shown them how to do it. How to deal with texts But they have to do it on their own. So I could feel the difference between teaching English as a second language to teaching English as a foreign language. It is a very different cup of tea altogether. So I think even in these contexts we should have French faculty member along with me in this classroom so that she can repeat the instruction in French and find out which tasks they can understand without French and which ones have to have the French translation. That's the difference. So, for my next group I will be having Spanish students. So if we have a colleague from the Spanish department that will be useful. I feel we should work collaboratively more along with another colleague for such courses. They don't feel comfortable initially just listening to English because they are not used to it. They are used to listening to their own language or contexts. Suddenly they come to a multilingual site and they listen to all the other languages they feel very confused. So we have to go very slowly from a familiar to an unfamiliar topic.

SC: What are some of the tasks you introduced to make the class more communicative?

JS: So what they have done is when they wrote it on the blackboard I said, I don't know about t your "Culture"! Can you explain it to me? For one hour we did whatever they had in their textbooks. The next hour I thought of letting them listen to their own voices. They had not heard each other in English either. They talk only in French. So "Culture" was a

familiar topic. Everyone knew as they brain-stormed on the board. So there were twenty of them. Each person could come and tell something that was there. So that was interesting! They liked that class because they were talking about something familiar and although they made mistakes in their English, but on the whole that was stimulating. They had a lot to say! One more topic was "Vacation," someone had gone to Paris, some had visited London, within their country wherever they had gone, they talked about those experiences. So I thought if I had more time I would have given them topics of that kind which were familiar and then go on to unfamiliar topics. I said, "When you talk to your diplomats they come from other countries. So you have to know about those countries as well. It's not enough to know only about your own country." They were getting a hang of it and were now moving on to other things. I follow these rules: "Make them comfortable, make them less anxious. Go from familiar to unfamiliar topics. "

SC: You talked about how time becomes an important factor for deciding how much a teacher can actually do. What can teachers do to manage time better?

JS: Suppose I have one hour, within that hour how am I going to organize those activities. How are we going to sequence them? If I have two hours then they will get bored with just one type of voice in the first hour. So can I have various types of voices in the second hour? Shall I have other colleagues inside my class or shall I ask them to talk about the different aspects of culture? Is it that they can talk about music, of food or clothes? More often than not as teachers we plan more than we need. Suppose I have time for four activities for the class I will plan for five activities. In case I can't manage then the fifth one will be allotted as homework. If the learners can't do it then it will be taken up in the next class. Yes, time is a factor. We are always running short of time. For the teacher completing the syllabus is very important. She should keep the syllabus in mind but not at the cost of rushing through the classes. The first priority should be that the learner should be able to understand her classes and the tasks whatever they have to do. And then she should divide the whole syllabus whatever she has to do according to that. The teacher should be accessible to the

students. In case they don't understand she/he should give extra time to that student and explain things at a more relaxed pace.

SC: As a teacher educator, what is a common problem that you often encounter among trainee teachers?

JS: Often, I find that a teacher asks a question and hardly the student has opened his mouth that she goes over to the next student. That means teachers' wait time is very less. She is rushing through because she has to finish within a specific time. She is not giving wait time to the student to finish whatever the learner has to say. Nor does she encourage the student by saying, "Yes you have done well but I expected more from this answer. Can someone help and add to what has been said?". She doesn't give that feedback. The teacher should always give positive constructive feedback to make them feel that they are on the right track and that how can they do better. That I had learnt again from Essex when I had gone to do M.A.inApplied Linguistics. One teacher gave me 'A' for my project on learning strategies. "I admire your energy and tenacity for doing this project for the coursework essay." Even for 'A', he wrote a one page feedback. I was impressed by the way the teacher had given me feedback. In our cases we give 'A' followed by "excellent" or "very good", that's it. We don't add any positive, constructive comments to encourage the students to do further work in the field. So I think that should be done both in written and oral format.

SC: What according to you are the possible areas of research to take the field of teacher education forward?

JS: See. You enter any classroom at any point in time and you will discover something new. Even after thirty-seven years of teaching experience, when I enter a classroom I can discover a new problem. Right now, some questions that I'm thinking about are, *how can I create a comfortable atmosphere in the class with the help of a colleague either from the French department or the Spanish department? When can I stop translating in French and use only English in class? How can I make them interested to listening in English?* Although I have been teaching listening for a long time this question is a research project for me. So if I look at

the patterns and themes that are emerging from them, in answering their questions when they are answering lot of influence of French are there obviously. The other thing emerging is that they want audio which is short in length. They want visuals. This means when I prepare my next task for the Spanish group I have to keep in mind those for preparing my tasks for listening. Then I can try out and see how do they feel at the end of the whole three months experience and how they feel in the beginning. So what is the difference? Are they able to answer more questions in the end? Are they more comfortable at the end? So if I do a study of that type. If I just answer those three research questions that I have collated, if I try to answer these questions at the end of the course, that is something that I am doing, exploratory action research- which any teacher can do. Now, first we explore what is the problem, and why is the problem occurring, and how can the problem be solved. And then you act to bring about a change and see the difference between what was happening in the beginning and what is happening in the end. Report that. So it's like a cycle. Therefore, I'm saying that you enter any class you can note down some questions that will emerge. Some questions can be learner centred. Some questions can be teacher centred. Some questions can be about developing their vocabulary or developing their grammar. And you have many options for conducting research.

SC: Could you give us some more examples of exploratory action research?

JS: I recently read an article by a teacher, Andrea from Chile. She was not happy with the way her classes were wrapping up. So she asked three research questions, *what is wrapping up, what are the characteristics of wrapping up and how do students react in this part of the lesson?* She asked one colleague to observe her classes and the colleague said yes the way you just suddenly end the class give the students some time to wrap up. So why don't you do something differently. Then she decided to stop whatever she had to do ten minutes before the class and then say now I want you to work in groups and then do a map of what I did in class today. She did some activities of that kind to wrap up. After that she compared the two types of classes and she thought the second type was better because she wrapped very

neatly and gave ten minutes for the activity. So a simple question “what is wrapping up?” can lead to an exploratory action research. Another teacher has asked whether students like working alone or working in groups or in pairs. So her question, was *how does sitting alone affect work? How students behave when they work in pairs? How do my students behave when they work in groups?* So she discovered that the students worked better if they worked in pairs. They have some support from each other. In groups some may talk and some may be quiet. And individually some tasks may be more challenging. So what I’m trying to illustrate is there could be very simple questions like this- *what is wrapping up or how can the seating arrangement be changed.* So anything of that kind can spark a classroom based exploratory action research.

SC: Who according to you is a good teacher?

JS: A good teacher should explore whatever they are doing and get immersed in it. It’s not just routine work of entering a class because one has to take a class. I read out a poem. Explain that in the mother tongue and go back. And say I have done a class. This is not enough! We need to understand an issue to act appropriately. If I probe, view the reasons before embarking on the possible solutions. A good teacher should do exploratory action research routinely on an everyday basis. For example the moment I found that my questions during the orientation of the Mali teachers were difficult, I requested Dr. Anjali Bagde, from the French department to send a student to explain the instructions in French immediately. She sent Vandana, and when she was translating in French I noted down which tasks the Mali teachers needed to be instructed in French. Thereafter, I took help from the learners who had understood some parts of the task to do the translations in French initially. So observe and reflect on what had occurred in your class. She should keep a self-evaluation report like a journal to keep writing why a class has gone the way it has gone or how it could have been better. As teachers we are doing lifelong learning. A good teacher is one who is open to lifelong learning. One should never feel that they know everything.

SC: How can a teacher bridge the gap between the inside and the outside of the classroom?

JS: I was doing an online course on using culture and critical thinking in the English language classroom. So this has inspired me to include aspects of culture into my classroom. I'm going to link what I'm doing online with my actual classes on the ITP. For example I played the Karadi rhyme "Caw caw shrieks the crows in the rooftop in a row..." to my ITP class. They could understand that a mother comes out and gives food to the crows in a bowl and the crows caw and eat the food. I said to them that it was just a poem, a song. And it had no other significance for me till 3 years ago when my mother passed away. The crows usually caw in our house at 9 in the morning. That day they were not cawing. We went up to the terrace, and saw that it was filled with crows. They sat facing towards my mother's bedroom. Suddenly I felt that the birds empathized with human beings faster than the human begin were doing. Before we could spread the word, the crows had spread the word and they all had gathered. That reminded me of Khushwant Singh's *Portrait of a Lady* where he has talked about his grandmother who used to feed sparrows. When his grandmother died, the courtyard was filled with sparrows and they did not touch the grain till the body was taken away. I shared this story online of how just a simple nursery rhyme can connect to Khushwant Singh's *Portrait of a Lady* and I asked students to read that story and they empathized with both the sparrows and the crows. So, it is true whenever you connect any poem or any song with your life and then share that experience with students, it goes into a different level altogether. So a teacher should be able to reach out to the students and also be able to share his or her experiences to become more empathetic.

SC: What do you like the most about your job?

JS: The best part of my job is entering the class and teaching. Getting to know so many students from so many different places and countries, from B.Ed, and PGCTE is an enriching experience for me. The other part is I have never seen in other contexts apart from EFLU CIEFL, teachers discussing classroom related problems outside the classroom. Here I have

some colleagues with whom I can talk to. For example, sometime back Prof. Upendran asked Rupa Suzanna to ask me to do a course on teaching through songs since he knew that I was interested in it. Now when a colleague talks like that one feels good about it because there is a colleague who is showing respect towards you and talking at the same wavelength. We talk about problems incurring within the classrooms. For instance in the distance education department we often debate over how to make the materials and assignments more user friendly and how to make the comments better so that we can teach through our comments.

SC: What are some of the projects that you are working on at the moment?

JS: At the moment I am doing one EVO 18 “Classroom based research project” that the University of Warwick is conducting, Prof. Richard Smith along with Paula Rebolledo and Deborah Bullock. What I liked about the project was every Saturday they have a webinar in the evening. So for one hour they do a webinar on various issues like how did they plan the action research and how they did the analysis and how they are sharing their way of analysis and interpreting the data. That’s what I was interested in. One person did how classical music is useful for increasing concentration. Since I’m fond of using music and songs I thought of that as an interesting topic. So each person was talking about their topic and how they did it. On the 24th of March we have to present our work. I am going to retire on 31st May. Then I plan to reach out to school teachers and college teachers in West Bengal and do workshops with them so that they do exploratory action research in their classrooms. I want to bring the culture of academic discussions in schools and colleges. I can serve as a mentor and they can fall back on me. I would like to encourage them to do collaborative or exploratory action research in their own context.

SC: Thank you so much for sharing so many insightful incidents and memories with us. I’m certain all our readers will benefit vastly from such rich information!

JS: Thank you! I too enjoyed this interaction with you! Have a good day!

Lokaratna
Khajana

Folktale of Meetei Community

Meetei People: The Meitei people are the majority ethnic group of the Indian state of Manipur. They are originally a Mongoloid group of people who speaks *Meetei lon* or Meetei language, popularly known as Manipuri language.

Story of the Silkworm “Leimatin gee Wari”

Once upon a time there was a king with his two wives. Every morning his two wives go to market for selling vegetables. One day, the second wife told him that she may transform into a crawling creature after she die and told him to feed leaves of Kabrang at her crematorium. King was shocked after her words and tried to console her always. The second wife has ability to produce silk yarn from her mouth secretly. She produces silk yarn from her mouth and sold to the market. The first wife was surprised always when her younger sister brings silk for selling to market. One day, the first wife enter to the room of her younger sister and open the mosquito net of her younger sister then she found her younger sister extremely wide open mouth and pull out silk yarn from it by her hand. The first wife scares and screams loudly. Unfortunately, her younger sister dies at the moment. As per she said, her husband finds a crawling creature and he feed the leaves of Kabrang tree. From this incident, the creature was known as Leimatin and culture of rearing was initiated in remembrance of his wife. As well as, the production silk yarn is also started.

Story of Henjunaha

Once upon a time, there was a youth boy Henjunaha live with his widow mother. His mother always takes care of him and she does not allow him to roam outside the house. She always wanted him to stay in home. Henjunaha and Thongnang Lairoulembi are fall in love and they promise to live together also. Both have decided to meet at night of Saturday in the month of Lamta. On the Saturday night, Henjunaha went out of his house without informing to his mother with holding a polo stick to meet his lover. He does not have idea of Saroi Khangba ritual which was announced by the king for appeasing Tinmu Laimu and Saroi Ngaroi (evil spirit) and warding off them from their native place. And also king has announced to his people not to get out of their respective house. However, Henjunaha went out from his house to meet his lover because he promised to meet her and he does not have any idea of the ritual also. On the way, Henjunaha meets evil spirits and they chase him to kill Henjunaha. He fights with his polo stick and all the evil spirits are afraid of him. Henjunaha ran towards the house of her lover fighting with evils spirits to meet his lover. He is about to reached the courtyard of Lairoulembi's house and calls her to open the door. But, Lairoulembi and her family do not hear and no one open the door because they are in deep sleep. When Henjunaha try to open the gate, unfortunately, the polo stick was felt down and all the Saroi Ngaroi (evil spirit) catch him and took his turban and kill near the verandah (churitabam). At last, Laikhurembi hear somebody's voice calling her name from outside of her house. Suddenly, she came out to check whether her lover come or not, then, she found dead body of her lover. She took a knife and committed suicide on the spot.

Retold by

Yumnam Sapha Wangam Apanthoi M

How Marang Bonga Created the Earth

Santali Tribes believe that each and every creation in this universe is an attempt by Marang Bonga, The super human. He always wants to create something beautiful and he creates something new every day.

Long long ago, Marang Bonga was roaming alone. He was the only existence. There was no sign of our earth and the creatures on earth. One day he was sitting on the branches of a banyan tree. Suddenly he wanted to create some living creature like him. Then took some clay and made two dolls out of it. Though Marang Bonga wanted to create creatures that would look like him, these creatures are a bit different. Though Marang Boga was not very happy, still he gave these two creatures life and they became a couple of swans. The male and female swan started swimming happily in the ocean. After swimming for a long time they became tired and they wanted to take rest.

Marang Bonga could understand this so he dropped a branch of the banyan tree into water. Immediately, the branch grew into a huge banyan tree with miles long branches. The swan couple made a nest on it and lived happily. After some days, the female swan laid four eggs. And in a few days she hatched four beautiful baby swans. Now the swan couple got worried about the babies. The father swan thought, “Where will my kids play? Where will they live? They will drown in the water and die. There is no place to stand, My God!!!”

Supreme God Marang Bonga could read the mind of the father swan. Marang Bonga thought a lot about a creating a land where all plants can grow and animals can live on. He then called for the huge Tortoise who was living in the deep ocean. Marang Bonga asked the Turtoise, “Can you stand without moving at all?” The tortoise agreed. How can he disagree with Marang Bonga, the Supreme God! Then, Marang Bonga called Vasuki, The largest snake

living in the ocean and asked him to sit on the tortoise holding a huge plate on its head. Vasuki did the same. Marang Bonga strictly told him not to move an inch. Then he ordered the worms to throw soil on the plate. Thousands and thousands of worms started throwing soil on to the plate kept on Vasuki snake's head. It took twelve years to fill the huge plate with soil. Then Marang Bonga came and looked at it. He called it Earth. The places where the worms threw more soil, the soil stood in a heap and became mountains. Where there were gaps between the heaps of soil that became lakes. The thin lines between heaps of soil became rivers.

Then, everything went on peacefully. Marang Bonga created different types of trees and animals on earth. Then he sent rain to help humans for farming. Like this every animal and humans started having families and children. The earth became heavy. So it became painful for Vasuki and the Tortoise to hold it without moving. They prayed Marang Bonga to help them. Marang Bonga understood everything and said, "Both of you want to change your side. You can change your side when you feel some pain. But remember, my earth should not drop into the ocean." Both the snake and the tortoise agreed. From that day, Vasuki, the snake and the grand tortoise is carrying the earth. When they change their sides, we feel some vibration in earth which we call earthquake.

The Doll Wife

Once upon a time there lived an old lady called Kamala in a far of village. In one rainy season it rained so heavily that there was huge flood in the river flowing near the village. Everyone of that village drowned in water. Some died and some were lost. Kamala could only find her grandson Madan. Kamala lost her husband, her son and daughter-in-law. She cried for the lost ones and gave all her love to the young Madan.

Time passed. Madan turned into a handsome young man. Madan saw all his friends getting married and living happily. He went to Kama and said, "Grand Maa, all my friends are getting married to beautiful girls. You also find a beautiful girl for me. I want to marry now." Kamala told Madan, "Listen my lovely child; I also want you to get married and bring a beautiful wife. I will be very happy to see you having your family. But for that you have work somewhere and start earning some money. First we have to repair our old house and then I will find a lovely girl for you."

Madan said, "Really Grand maa, If I start earning and repair our old house, will you find a beautiful wife for me?" Kamala agreed. Immediately, Madan went to the village landlord and requested him for some job. The landlord was very happy to see a strong and healthy young man searching for a job. He asked Madan, "Your father was a friend of mine. I cannot say no to you. I will also give you an easy job I the beginning. Can you take care of my mango garden? I will give you 10 rupees per month and new cloths for you and your grandmother on every celebration. Madan happily agreed. Madan worked for the landlord with all his honesty and loyalty. The landlord was happy with him and gave him a patch of land for cultivation. Within a year, Madan repaired his old house and saved some money. Then, he asked Kamala, "Grand maa, now I have repaired our house and I also have some money with me. Find me a beautiful wife now."

Kamala thought for some time and agreed with Madan. Kamala was worried about one thing. Though Madan was physically strong and had grown into a young man, he still had the mind of a kid. He was unable to understand the responsibilities of a married man. So Kamala wanted Madan to become more mature. But he was so much eager to get married that Kamala could not say no.

Then, Kamala got an idea. She went to the blacksmith and asked him to make a female doll. She gave the blacksmith more money than what he deserves for making the doll. Then

Kamala brought the doll home and wrapped her with a beautiful saree and decorated her with all other things meant for women. Then, she told Madan, "I have found a girl for you. She is in the other room. She is still very shy. So she will not talk to any male member soon. When she feels like talking to you, she will call you. Don't worry." Madan became very happy. Initially he kept quiet and did not try to talk to the doll. But after some days, it was impossible for him to control his interest in his wife. Whenever Kamala went out of the house, he started calling the doll. Sometimes he asked a glass of water or asked for some food. When the doll did not answer or listen to him, he started abusing.

One night, Madan thought, "Enough is enough. Tonight I will talk to my wife." And he lifted his wife on his shoulder and ran towards in field. As it was an iron doll it was a bit heavy and a doll never talks. Madan thought, "My wife also wants to talk to me. That is why she is also not making any noise." Little he knew about the truth. He kept the doll on a *Machan* and started talking to her. When the doll did not answer after a long time, Madan became angry and kicked the doll onto ground. There was a black dog sleeping under the *machan*. The dog got terrified by the drop of the doll and started running out of the field. Madan could not see anything in the darkness but thought his wife was running away. He followed the dog. The dog became more and more terrified and started running fast. Like this the dog and Madan, both crossed three villages. After some time the night was getting over and some of the village women came to the river to take bath. One of them was a newly married girl. Her jewels were dazzling in darkness. Madan thought she was his wife. So he lifted her on his shoulder and started running towards his house. The young girl started shouting. By this time, Madan started hating his wife as she was not willing to stay with him.

On the way, a man was working in his field. He saw a young man carrying a beautiful woman forcefully and the woman shouting for help. He stopped Madan and asked what the matter was. Madan said, "See brother, she is my wife but now she does not want to come

with me. I also don't want to take her back. I will give you my wife if you give me your sickle." The man thought for some time and gave the sickle to Madan and let the woman go back to her village.

Madan hung the sickle on his shoulder and started walking back. He got a cut on his shoulder from the sickle. Madan got angry and was thinking of selling the sickle to someone. He saw a cowherd boy under a tree with a fan made of palm leaves. He exchanged the sickle with that fan and came back. After coming back Madan told everything to his grandmother, Kamala and promised, "Grand maa, I will never force my wife for anything. I will never hurt her or make her sad. I will think and discuss with you and my wife before doing anything." Though Kamala was a little sad about the young married girl for the trouble Madan caused, she was also happy that Madan learnt the lesson of his life. Then Kamala found a beautiful girl from the village nearby and got Madan married. After some years Kamal died living Madan with his wife and two kids.

Retold by

Subhasis Nanda

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We invite original and un-published research articles in the fields of Folklore, Literature, Culture, Pedagogy and English Language Teaching for thesecond issue of 11th volume of *Lokaratna*; a peer-reviewed International journal with ISSN: 2347-6427. ***Lokaratna* is approved by UGC.** (UGC Journal Number: 47781)

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