

FAZL ALI COLLEGE JOURNAL

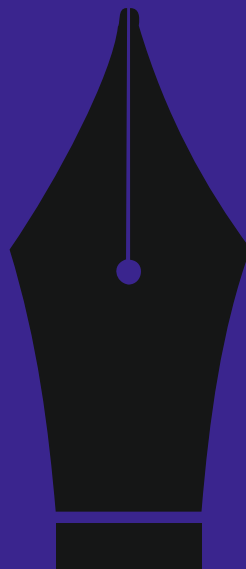
A Multidisciplinary Journal



**Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung
Nagaland: 798601**

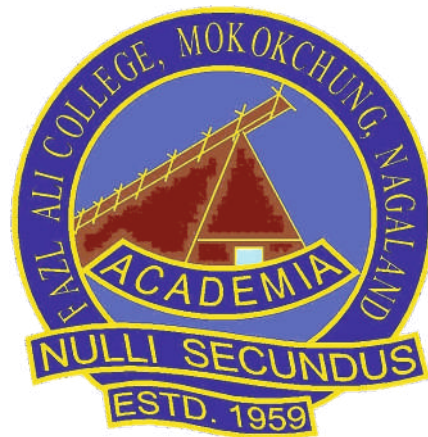
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A Multidisciplinary Journal

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FOREWORD

Although we are going through difficult and trying times, it is heartening to note that many faculty members of the College are working relentlessly to keep up the academic excellence of the College. Despite the onerous challenges caused by the global pandemic and the depressive situations since March 2020 till date, the faculty members of the College have never paused in the tracks to maintain the academic atmosphere of the College and keep it ticking and alive.

Thus, I take great honour and pride in sending out this foreword to the 9th edition of the 'The Fazl Ali College Journal', the publication of the journal is no mean feat under such a dampening and unsettling state of affairs. One can imagine the editorial team going through a painstakingly tedious time of working tirelessly contacting their peers to encourage and egg them on to write and contribute qualitative articles.

The journal therefore reflects the team spirit and undying thirst for knowledge amongst the many scholars and writers of the teaching faculty. I'm sure there will be varied and novel exchange of ideas, views and expressions within the inter departmental contributors.

The College have been coming out with standard Journals containing varieties of highly commendable articles written by the seasoned scholars. And this edition is going to be not less worthy than the previous ones. My acknowledgment and appreciation to both the editorial team and all the individuals who have contributed richly to this edition.

(HELEN JAMIR)
PRINCIPAL,
Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung.

Editorial

COVID 19 pandemic has taken innumerable toll on humanity. Academia is no exception. Many brilliant academicians have fallen victim to this dreadful virus. Laboratory scientific research, field survey, and many other academic activities came to standstill. It has also adversely affected the mental health of everyone due to prolong isolation, limited healthcare and infrastructure. The pandemic has imposed restrictions on in-person (face to face) work, laboratory access and field research. Many field projects were forced to shut down or paused. Many research institutions have redirected its focus to COVID 19 research. These are challenging times. Wistfully, one can only hope for a new dawn of post pandemic “return to work”, “return to class”.

Education has gone online in order to adapt to the new normal. Work from office has been replaced by work at home. Seminar and conferences have switched to online mode. Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft team, WhatsApp etc have become very popular platform for learning and intellectual interactions.

Ironically, COVID 19 crisis has opened up tremendous opportunities for research publication. It has resulted in an unprecedented research worldwide. According to one source, 2329 Journals published by Elsevier publisher received 2,70,000 manuscripts, or 50% between February and May 2020 as compared with the same period in 2019¹. Bulk of these papers, no doubt, related to the novel corona virus.

The scope and magnitude of scientific research and knowledge have attained an unprecedented level of advancement nowadays. The current pandemic has demonstrated this fact that by “January 5, 2020, just weeks after the first cases of illness were reported, the genetic sequence, which identified the pathogen as the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, was released, providing information essential for identifying and developing treatments, vaccines and diagnostics. As of May 3, 2020, 1133, COVID-19 studies, including 148 related to hydroxychloroquine, 13 to remdesivir, 50 to vaccines, and 100 to diagnostic testing, were registered on Clinical Trials gov”². This trend of scientific advancement is only expected to grow in leaps and bounds in the days to come. As Neil Armstrong pointed out, “Research is creating new knowledge”. This inquisitive mind is a boon to humanity.

One positive impact this pandemic had on the academic community is that it has provided an opportunity for researchers and scholars to introspect and produce higher quality of research outputs.

In this challenging time, the Fazl Ali College Journal is delighted to come up with the Ninth Volume of

¹Flaminio Squazzoni, Giangiaco Bravo et.al “Only second-class tickets for women in the COVID-19 race. A study on manuscript submissions and reviews in 2329 Elsevier journals”. For more, See <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3712813>

²Debra L. Weiner, Vivek Balasubramaniam "COVID-19 impact on research, lessons learned from COVID-19 research, implications for pediatric research". For more, see <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41390-020-1006-3>

its annual publication. Ever since its launch in 2010 with the twin objectives in focus, *viz.*, to contribute human knowledge in social transformation; and to encourage local researchers, scholars, and academicians in sharing of knowledge; the Journal has unceasingly endeavoured to improve its quality and output.

As a multidisciplinary journal, it welcomes article from all disciplines. There is no common theme to restrict any scientific researcher. The Journal does not encourage one-size-fits-all approach. In the same manner, the current volume has contributions from different fields ranging from women issues, political, economic, literature and other social issues. We are pleased to receive papers from various walks of life probing pertinent issues.

The Editorial board is grateful to all the authors for contributing to the pool of knowledge for posterity, and to the reviewers for their sincere efforts to improve the quality and content of the papers.

The Predicament of the Fallen Woman: A Gendered Reading of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*

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Abstract

In Partition literature of the Subcontinent, writers depict the massive violence, communal riots and genocide which affect thousands of lives. Pitched against such mayhem is the female figure—the one who faces different forces of marginalization. Her body is turned into a site of warfare where men wrestle for their dominance on the pretext of race and religion. Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* depicts the victimization of 'fallen' women in a patriarchal setup. This paper is an attempt to show how one of the victim asserts her individuality to liberate herself from the predicament defined by prefixed gender roles.

Keywords: Partition, marginalization, fallen, individuality, border, crossing, liberate

Introduction

Ice Candy Man of Bapsi Sidhwa deals with the partition of the Sub Continent into India and Pakistan in 1947. The novel poignantly portrays the expression of bitter differences, the rift and division in social relations of the characters. Recent literary scholarship has contributed much to the immense eruption of hostility and destruction, the genocide as a result of the political upheaval and also questioned the violence to which women were subjected.

Sidhwa's interview with Bhalla emphasis about the suffering and victimization of women during partition:

It is the women who bear the brunt of violence that accompanies these disputes. They are the ones who are rooted in the soil; they are not interested in politics. But suddenly they find that their bodies are being brutalized. Victories are celebrated on

the bodies of women. So, it is not surprising that women became the targets of brutality during the partition also. They were seen as the receptacle of a man's honour. When women are attacked, it is not they per se who are the targets but the men to whom they belong. It is humiliating for a man to see his woman being abused before him (Bhalla 2007, 232-233).

Menon and Bhasin (Menon and Basin 1998, 43) also observe how women are victimized and subjected to many facets of brutalities during such mayhem. They find it to be “shocking not only for its savagery, but for what it tells us about women as objects in male construction of their honour”. Elaborating upon this they further adds that “Women's sexuality symbolizes “manhood”; its desecration is a matter of such shame and dishonour that it has to be avenged. Yet, with the cruel logic of all such

violence, it is women ultimately who are most violently dealt with as a consequence” (Menon and Bhasin *ibid*, 43).

Menon and Bhasin further say:

The abundance of political histories on partition is almost equaled by the paucity of social histories of it. This is curious and somewhat inexplicable circumstances: how it is that an event of such tremendous societal impact and importance has been passed over virtually in silence by the other social sciences? Why has there been such an absence of inquiry into its cultural, psychological and social ramifications? There can be no one answer to this question, but what seems to have stepped in, at least partly, to record the full horror of partition is literature, the greater part of which was written in the period immediately following the division of the country. In one sense, it can be considered a kind of social history not only because it so approximates reality (what Alok Rai calls “a hypnotic, fascinated but slavish imitation of reality”) but because it is the only significant non-official *contemporary* record we have of the time, apart from reportage (Menon and Bhasin 1998, 6-7).

Fiction is an art, a form of storytelling, which has enabled men throughout the ages not merely to imagine, but to transmit or share information of events, happened in the past. Fictional work has often succeeded in giving a voice to the past events by filling by the chasms or fissures where history had failed; it voices or tells the unheard stories. As these literary materials are fragmentary in nature, it is often incomplete and only marginal and therefore not whole or

complete. At times it can be particular or even individual but they persuade us to view how history gets inscribed, at the same time gives us a new perspective or an alternate reading of the master narrative. We, therefore, understand that these fragments (fictional works) are important in their own right because in their absence, “the myriad individual and collective histories which simultaneously run parallel to the official accounts of historic events” (Menon and Bhasin 1998, 8) will get lost. They will be “buried eventually in the rubble of history” (Menon and Bhasin *ibid* 8).

Jason Francisco in ‘*In the Heat of Fratricide*’ has justly commented that a fictional work built on a historical event “validates historical truth precisely in its power to represent” (Francisco 1996, 239-40)

A reading of *Ice- Candy- Man* as a political novel will show how religion became the determinant of identity. As such, racial harmony turned into racial murder, villages on both sides were plundered and burned, and women mutilated. Many partition novels in English have concentrated largely on the helplessness of women pitched against oppressive male forces and highlight the trauma a woman is subjected to at such times.

In *Ice- Candy- Man*, Sidhwa employs Lenny Sethi a young girl as the narrator. She is eight years old (she was five when the narrative begins). Though young in age, she is portrayed as being very alert “It is not without reason Mini Auntie has designated my talented ears 'cricket ears' ” (Sidhwa 1989, 261) having a keen sense of observation to the things happening around her. She is skillful and responds spontaneously to the situations that unfold before her. Bibhash Choudhury in *Beyond Cartography* describes Lenny as “the prime mover and articulator of a

narrative that chronicles a major crisis-ridden period in South Asian history". "Hers is a child's vocabulary, an advantage in this case, because it carries an innocence into the things seen that experienced eyes would have obfuscated or marginalized" (Choudhury 2016, 26-27).

The body of the fallen women as script

With the Partition as the bedrock, Bapsi Sidhwa has built the *Ice-Candy-Man*. The story of the novel revolves around the Sethi household. Nestled within the Sethi household drama is the traumatized narrative of the "fallen women" as Sidhwa calls them in the novel. They are the destitute women who were brought to the camp. Gradually some were restored to their families and some given employment as household helpers. These women comprises of all those, who were abducted, raped or dragged into forced marriages and exploited in different ways. The fate of these women highlights their vulnerability at times of unrest. It also testifies of the overarching patriarchal consensus to subjugate them. The stories of these women would have been silenced and pushed into oblivion if not salvaged in fictional narratives. Through the active and keen observation of the young narrator-Lenny, the novel unfolds an array of episodes and incidents of tension, riot and violence. In the narrative, the stories of the "fallen women" cannot be overlooked because it is these stories that reveal and speak of the trauma women go through, the price she has to pay as men wage wars and vows vengeance.

This paper will try to study the predicament of Shanta who is a 'fallen' woman, her experiences of abduction, rape and humiliation in the hands of her former admirers. She is a Hindu Ayah in the Sethi household. Pre-Partition, she is portrayed as a symbol of integration, a unifying figure. The story shows

how her dozen admirers would gather around her irrespective of religious denomination. "Only the group around Ayah remain unchanged. Hindu, Sikh, Parsee are, as always, unified around her" (Sidhwa 1989, 97). But once the Partition violence is unleashed, her status is reversed, she is changed into a site of hatred and revenge, she becomes an object of attack, "her body takes on a wholly new meaning, for she is now the symbol and site of the enemy, ready to be devoured and annihilated. There is a crucial transfer here of the metaphoric implications of her body: from being the object of desire she is transformed into a subject of hate" (Choudhury 2016, 33).

Sidhwa allows sufficient space in the novel to depict Ayah as the embodiment of feminine sensuality and beauty. Men from different walks of life would gather around her.

Lenny remarks-

The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down they look at her. Stub-handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretences to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships. Ayah is chocolate-brown and short. Everything about her is eighteen years old and round and plump. Even her face. Full-blown cheeks, pouting mouth and smooth forehead curve to form a circle with her head. Her hair is pulled back in a tight knot.

And, as if her looks were not stunning enough, she has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her

buttocks under her cheap colourful saris and the half-spheres beneath her short sari-blouses. The Englishman no doubt had noticed (Sidhwa 1989, 3).

The above lines clearly indicate how the novelist objectifies Ayah as a figure to be looked at. It is also irrefutable that Ayah does not resist this build up of feminine identity; she basks in the glory of the admiring gaze of men around her. She is further portrayed as one who retains power, sexual autonomy and control within the circle of her male admirers. She fails to be tempted by the sensual advances of Ice-candy-man upon her. In this regard Lenny says,

“Things love to crawl beneath Ayah's sari. Ladybirds, glow-worms, Ice-candy-man's toes. She dusts them off with impartial nonchalance. I keep an eye on ice-candy-man's toes. Sometimes, in the course of an engrossing story, they travel so cautiously that both Ayah and I are taken unawares. Ice-candy-man is a raconteur. He is also an absorbing gossip. When the story is extra good, and the tentative toes polite, Ayah tolerates them” (Sidhwa 1989, 19).

This control and autonomy of her individuality is built upon very early in the novel and later on we see that it is this same conviction that will release her from the clutches of Ice-candy-man at the end of the novel. Running parallel to her individualized attitude is the recognition of Ice-candy-man that Ayah's autonomy can be taken away only by force. In the turmoil of the religious fanaticism following the Partition, the Parsi household including the Muslim inmate, Imamdin hides Ayah inside the house and guard it. This secret is religiously guarded. When Ice-candy-man came along with the mob he is unable to trace Ayah. He knew at once that the information to the hideout can be

extracted only through insidious means. He quickly takes the advantage of Lenny's innocence and elicits the information. Ayah is betrayed because of Lenny's innocence-her “truth infected” tongue (Sidhwa 1989, 184). It is due to Partition that Ice-candy-man succeeds in forcibly debasing Ayah on the pretext of love and revenge. Thus we see that the Partition no longer remained a topographical division or demarcation of a space but it became an entity, an agent endowed with great destructive powers. Ice-candy-man, who at one time fervently admired Ayah became beastly, hunts her down as a wild beast would hunt its prey. The fabric of social relationship being too fragile, it failed to withstand the intense confusion or chaos of partition and the once beautiful and endearing relationship and friendship is shattered, and physical, emotional and psychological wounds inflicted on each other. The forceful abduction of Ayah from home, the helplessness of the Sethi family as mute spectators to such a heinous crime being committed, testifies that the spaces of safety holds no meaning at times of war.

After her abduction, Ayah ends up in Hira Mandi, a space traditionally out of bounds for women of honour. Here, she is given a new identity which is beyond recognition. She is forced to transform from the simple and desirable Ayah to the heavily made up dancing girl to entertain men in Lahore's brothels. Feminists' theorists and writers have provided their insights to expand and develop the scholarship on issues relating to the female body, sex and gender. Numerous discussions have emerged in order to understand, highlight and explore the importance and position of bodies and sexuality, their identity within cultural, religious and philosophical discourse. In this connection Rosi Braidotti writes,

In the feminist framework, the primary site of location is the body. The subject is not an abstract entity, but rather a material embodied one. The body is not a natural thing; on the contrary, it is a culturally coded socialized entity. Far from being an essential notion, it is the site of intersection of the biological, the social and the linguistic, that is, of language as the fundamental symbolic system of culture. Feminist theories of sexual difference have assimilated the insight of mainstream theories of subjectivity to develop a new form of corporeal materialism that defines the body as an interface, a threshold, a field of intersecting forces where multiple codes are inscribed (Braidotti 1994, 238).

The redefinition of Ayah's identity as a prostitute has reduced her to a maimed soul; she has become a site where men quenched their thirst for lust. She is sold over and over to "any man who has the money" (Sidhwa 1989, 241) and also forced to become the second wife of Ice-candy-man. The profundity of Ayah's victimization can be fully comprehended through an understanding of the history attached to Hira Mandi. This place dates back to the times of the Mogul Emperors. It was located on the margins "in the shadow of the old Mogul Fort" (Sidhwa 1989, 246) to "house their illegitimate offspring and favourite concubines" (Sidhwa 1989, 246). Hira Mandi still survives and as in the past, women's bodies are still used as sites to inscribe patriarchal supremacy. In the novel, Ice-candy-man is an agent in carrying forward the same age old patriarchal agendas set in motion centuries ago. In the words of Ice-candy-man, Ayah possesses "divine gifts" with the "voice of an angel and the grace and rhythm of a goddess" (Sidhwa 1989, 247). Ice-candy-man's

utterances imply that Ayah possess all qualifications to project herself as one with a desirable body, a show piece that man may ogle. These words transform Ayah into a sexual figure, and voice the continuing perpetration of how a woman is degraded to the status of an object. Ice-candy-man is convinced that since "I've covered her in gold and silks" (Sidhwa 1989, 250) Ayah would be more than happy to remain his wife conforming to the accepted set of gender roles. Again he says "the past is behind her", "But now she has everything to live for" (Sidhwa 1989, 264). These words very clearly reveal that Ice-candy-man is ready and willing to forget the past events. He is further willing to move forward, look forward to a future with Ayah. But does Ayah also nurture the same wishes? Does she look at the events of her life with the same eyes as him? She views things differently. She is not ready to forget and forgive, nor does she nurture any future prospect with him. This is because her experiences do not simply amount to some emotional, physical or psychological wound. It was something deeper—it was an act of forced intrusion, the invasion not only of her physical body but of her very essences, her very being. She was raped by her own friend, was prostituted to people whom she thought were her trusted friends. She was made to drink the bitter cup of betrayal. Trust, which is believed to be the foundation in an institution like marriage, was absent between them. For a "fallen woman" like her, marriage could have been a boon, a purveyor of her identity, security and stability in society but in her rejection of a connubial relationship with Ice candy man she is refusing to barter her self-esteem to satisfy and fulfill the norms laid down by a patriarchal set up for women. Fiona Toland writes "For de Beauvoir, marriage is an oppressive and exploitative economic arrangement, which

reinforces sexual inequality, and binds women to domesticity. It perpetuates the belief that if the female is protected and provided for by her male partner, she is happy: she is thought to be content that her needs are provided for. De Beauvoir, however refuted this belief” (Tolan 2014,321). Ayah's refusal to remain chained to Ice-candy-man as his wife Mumtaz echoes this view of De Beauvoir.

Ayah's reaction again corresponds to De Beauvoir's “concepts of 'transcendence' and 'immanence', she argued that the fulfillment of human potential must be judged, not in terms of happiness, but in terms of liberty. Liberty is something more than maintaining one's existence peacefully and comfortably; to be free, a person must transcend the animal part of his or her life- the temporary and unthinking happiness that comes from being warm and well fed- and pursue the uniquely human desire to know more, do more, have more” (Tolan ibid, 321-322). By retaining her feminine individuality, Ayah refuses to succumb to any psychological power Ice-candy-man had over her. Her future with ice-candy-man was a twisted vision of love, a forced imposition upon her. It was sowed on the soil of betrayal.

The novel uses the historical event of Partition to highlight some of the most pertinent social issues at the time of Sidhwa's writing. She employs characters to give the readers an idea about the vulnerability of women. By incorporating the stories of the “fallen women” Sidhwa endeavors to bring to light the marginalized state of women, the treatment she receives and the value attached to her in the patriarchal society. Hamida is another “fallen woman”and she is introduced as the second caretaker of Lenny in the narrative to act as the connecting link through whom Sidhwa strives to achieve the continuity of the abducted women's

narrative. This continuity enables us to have a glimpse at the flickering hope of restoration for Ayah because the abducted woman carries with her the stigma of being 'fallen'. Hamida was 'fallen' and therefore considered unclean as she has been touched by other men. She is rendered unacceptable in her husband's home- a place designated as respectable according to patriarchal norms. The masculine power, the male dominated space forbids the entry of such women to debase their sanctum. But this façade of respectability is male construct, male oriented. Such a perception greatly highlights the very fragile and shaky state of female existence in a society dominated by forces of patriarchy. When such blind forces are in free play, the female voice is silenced and a clear picture of gender biasness is projected. This predicament of Hamida triggers questions on the reader's mind why women is subjected to harsh punishments for a deed which she never committed willingly. It is the man who is the perpetrator of heinous crimes as rape but the irony is that the female sex has to bear the brunt. Through the story of Hamida, Sidhwa is implying that Ayah has to traverse a rocky path in the course of her relocation and regeneration. In *The Other side of Silence*, Butalia states, “Not only had they very effectively been rendered invisible, but many of them wanted to stay that way, their stories held closely to them” (Butalia 1998, 355). In the novel, Hamida says, “Let her be. It'll take hours if she's being registered” (Sidhwa 1989, 273). “They'll be asking a hundred-and-one-questions, and filling out a hundred-and-one-forms (Sidhwa1989, 273). These camps though set up to protect the abducted women fail to give back their lost freedom. The suggestiveness therefore is very blatant- the rescued are further entrapped. Ayah's wounds are still fresh so she is utterly silent, as for Hamida, shehas somehow accepted

her fate and speaks. At times, intense pain and tears would cement human bondage. We see this taking place unconsciously between the two 'fallen' female characters as Sidhwa allows Hamida to empathize with Ayah's state. This unconscious empathy is an act of expression and articulation of their collective pain and anguish.

Ayah as a marginalized figure suffers as a result of the combination of two factors. One is Ice-candy-man's personal desire for her and the other is his religious antagonism towards Hindus. Here we see that Sidhwa balances the politics of communal hatred to the politics of emotions. Ice-candy-man had coveted Ayah before the eruption of partition turmoil. But Ayah preferred Masseur to Ice-candy-man. The corresponding reaction from him was his constant surveillance of Ayah and Masseur "where Masseur is, Ayah is. And where Ayah is, is Ice-candy-man". (Sidhwa1989, 121)

In the course of the turmoil of the Partition, Masseur is found murdered. With his most potential rival out of the way Ice-candy-man possesses the woman whom he unsuccessfully courted in the past. Later he marries Ayah, and this marriage was an appeasement of his desire for her. As a result, Ayah become the hunted, the helpless victim and she is unable to forget the dehumanized way in which she was possessed against her will. The result is the ensuing trauma, the intense personal suffering she undergoes. Lenny observes that her "radiance" "animation" and "soul" (Sidhwa1989, 260) have all disappeared. Reduced to a lifeless form she is all "vacant eyes are bigger than ever: wide-opened with what they've seen and felt" (Sidhwa1989, 260) Godmother who is depicted as an influential character in the novel is instrumental in releasing Ayah from her grim situation. The conversation between them bears a note of fatalism about how society would always

privilege the social and communal over the individual. Ayah should therefore forgive and try to make the best of her present situation. But what is most pertinent here is to understand the suppressed pain waging inside Ayah. Why cannot she remain wedded to him? Why cannot she accept him when he no longer mistreats her? He himself declares "I cannot exist without her", "I'm less than the dust beneath her feet" (Sidhwa1989, 251). But what Ayah has experienced is beyond repair, she has experienced the annihilation of her inner being. The question of forgiveness is now meaningless for she ceases to exist "I'm not alive" (Sidhwa1989, 262). In her rejection of a life of physical comfort with an identity as Ice-candy-man's wife, she enters into a space full of uncertainty and the idea of a sovereign self, an autonomous individual is silenced but the challenges involved in recovering her voice is not a case of lack of voice. Butalia speaking of abducted women with undecided futures asks, "where, and to whom, did these women belong?" is she "a migrant/ or a refugee? Or a dislocated person? Or all of those? How do we understand her experience?" (Butalia 1998, 145). The tragedy is that such people belong nowhere. Cultural norms always exerts its influence on the female community, and Ayah on her own is exposed to many unknown dangers. This realization forces us to recognize the supremacy of patriarchy. Basu Raychaudhury also observes that life for the displaced was disoriented:

The refugees had to renegotiate with various new choices, and women refugees were no exception to it. In fact, the communal violence that occurred during and after Partition always made women the victims of double jeopardy. The displaced women were victims both as displaced persons

and as women. For them, the economic uncertainty associated with a life beginning almost from scratch spelt disaster, and they faced different kinds of atrocities, in the form of sexual abuse and violence-atrocities that usually only women face (Basu 2006, 171).

Overcoming Silence

Gayatri Spivak opined that South Asian women are so rigidly and completely strangled by patriarchal politics that they have no real voice. She famously asserted can they “talk back”? (Spivak 1985, 330-363). But Kathryn Hansen's argument shows that South Asian women instead of seeing the self as 'fragmented' with weak individuality, asserts that all selves construct themselves in rational terms. Interestingly Sidhwa gives Ayah a voice while remaining voiceless. Thus, despite the numbing pain, Ayah is shown as retaining her individuality as a person.

Ayah will have to renegotiate her life over again and for this she should have a foothold which lies somewhere far away from Ice-candy-man, therefore the necessity, “whether they want me or not, I will go” (Sidhwa 1989, 262). Ayah's future is bleak and uncertain. The possibility that she may not be accepted in Amritsar looms large. The story of Hamida is only another indicator Sidhwa employs to further the uncertainty of her acceptance by her relatives. In the midst of the surmounting uncertainty for a secure future she decides to undertake a journey into a world where Ice-candy-man's icy hands cannot reach her. Ayah's action corresponds to the views of Smith and Watson “a strategy of gaining agency” (Smith and Watson 2010, 235) and agency according to them is that which is disruptive to “existing social and political formation” (Smith and Watson *ibid* 235). After her abduction, rape and prostitution

Ayah knew there cannot be another experience more harrowing. But as a free agent she decides to step into a space across the border which is fraught with many questions of her survival as a “fallen woman”. Ayah's act of gaining agency and going to Amritsar is going beyond and in this regard Bhabha has remarked : “ 'beyond' signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary- the very act of going beyond- are unknowable, unrepresentable...” (Bhabha 1994, 5-6).

Heidegger also views that “A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its essential unfolding” (Heidegger 2012, 250). In the words of Menon and Bhasin :

Not all the stories we heard were intrinsically different: what is different is how events have been grasped, how remembered; how they have been understood or misunderstood; how each woman assimilated her experience. All are part of narration, and part of an unfolding history. Some women never recovered from Partition, others saw in this rapture a moment of unexpected liberation for themselves as women (Menon and Bhasin 1998, 19).

Conclusion

Ice-Candy-Man is unique in its eloquence in successfully presenting a painful epoch that the subcontinent and its communities experienced. Sidhwa shows how the 'fallen' female characters suffer, the marginalization and violence they faced.

Ayah is a victim of patriarchal oppression but by rejecting the traditional gender role she recognizes her exploitation in

the hands of men and makes a conscious choice to gain power and retain her autonomy. Such an attitude is what feminists assert – that a woman can never liberate herself unless she realizes about her marginalization.

Ayah's self-knowledge of marginalization could be interpreted as the way to her psychological liberty. Self-knowledge

may never be a guarantee to happiness, but it is like the coming of the rainbow after a raging storm. It is like a bridge key in between great depths to provide a way ahead. Ayah decides not to submit to patriarchy without giving a fight. She decides to take control of her destiny through the assertion of her individuality. She is a symbol of a woman's will to rise.

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Feminism and Ethical Polity: Engaging with Jean Bethke Elshtain

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Abstract

The article engages with Jean Bethke Elshtain discourse on feminism and ethical polity and attempt to understand how Elshtian tries to bring to polity the 'womanly values' that claims to motivate peaceful approach to conflict and injustice. Seeing ethical polity in different frames, the paper take two cases – 'Mothers of Disappeared' in Argentina and the 'Naga Mothers Association' and explore how the role of women can bring about justice and peace politics without instrumentality of violence, or, without resorting to any alternative that can have serious fallouts.

Keywords: Feminism, ethical polity, Naga Mothers Association, conflict resolution

Feminism is a move, to divest current society from sexist approach, which predominantly works against women. So to consider it anti-male will account to ignore its “anti-sexist and social interaction ethic which is not necessarily anti male”ⁱ. Though the underlying objectives of feminism is to advocate women rights on the ground of the equality of sexes, there are points of divergence among groups of feminists in approaching the issues of rights, liberty, equality and justice in gendered power relationships. Against the various strands of feminism like Marxist feminism, Liberal feminism, and Post-modern feminism, I prefer to take the views of Conservative feminism in this study.

The rationale for choosing conservative Feminism is the fact that, Conservative Feminist like Jean Bethke Elshtain against many feminists of her time tries to bring to polity the 'Feminine Values’ⁱⁱ that were by what she calls as 'Politics of Rage'. Betty Friedan and Elshtain

criticize feminists for an attack on family with the contention that 'instead of throwing the water, feminists have thrown baby along with water'. Both therefore, call for a politics that preserves women's traditional sphere of home vis-à-vis the necessary changes within that sphere in order to realize the dream of egalitarian society. In this respect, significant attention will be given to concept of “Ethical Polity” as expounded by Elshtain. Further exploration will be made on the relationship between “Feminine Values” or “Womanly values” and women's peaceful approach to politics and how these so called maternal values motivates peaceful approach to politics and injustice and ultimately realizing an “ Ethical Polity”.

Elshtain Concept of Ethical Polity

The notion of ethical polity is one based on imagery of a 'unifying myth of a body politic, the coming together of separate elements in order to give birth to as social world that links

past and present and makes history possible'(Elshtain 1982, 58-59). The conception of ethical polity will be motivated by justice-care dialectic in which both men and women will act together. They will debate and re-articulate the ends of public life. Instead of being of a particular sex, each person in his/her capacity will be 'a reflective human being with capacity for self-reflection as to the ends and means of public and private action' (Elshtain 1981, 352). Elshtain favours the practice of 'doing political theory' instead of proceeding with mere abstraction, so that women's situation is reflected upon properly in both public and private spheres. She thus asserts that theorizing must start from real life experiences of womenⁱⁱⁱ. For this, Political theorists (feminists) need to 'explore female speech and language along the public and private vectors' (Elshtain 1981, 352).

One of the main problems with the mainstream feminist theory has been political silencing of woman that is theorised upon. To avoid such problem 'Woman' as subject of political theory need to be taken as active agent of life world of intense personalization and immediacy. There is need of sharing theory with the subjects so as to locate convergence of shared points. This can be called as 'dialectical relationship with subject' – an approach, according to Elshtain, reflected in better way by psychoanalyst discourse. In addition to this, process of probing and hearing women will help feminists to allay fears of those women who are not aware of the social forces of domination lying at the base of their confusion.

An important step towards realizing the ideal dream of ethical polity is to put private sphere on the track of feminist theorization. This is because feminists, particularly liberal feminism have been obsessed with notions of

'abstract personhood' which ignores the private sphere. The private sphere which has its own values and imperatives is a theatre of intimate relations and everyday concrete meaning, therefore evaluating the power relations within the private realm is significant. However, Elshtain mentions that family is a basic institution of human life, and changes within it should be allowed only to such a level that its structure remains unchanged as any alternative to family will nothing short of new state of nature. Accordingly, one important option that is visible in her model is distinct moral language of women that need to be preserved. She identifies that feminist mode of public discourse imbedded with values of what Sara Ruddick calls 'Maternal Thinking'^{iv}.

The concept of ethical is motivated by Christian social gospel. This ethical polity will be a moral and political community. Women will come to it with immediate concerns and will transform political community. The terms of equality related to all sections of society will be guaranteed by their humanness. In case of breaking any law that seems contradictory, moral law should be kept in consideration. Non-violence seems to be an important part of such polity. Since human world is characterized by diverse human practices, so ethical polity will be one in which such diversity will prevail. Private sphere will come to bear its own dignity and purpose. Public life will sustain and nurture as set of ethical imperatives including;

'a commitment to preserve, protect, and defend human life in their capacities as private persons, and to allow women alike to partake in the good of public sphere on an equal basis of participatory dignity and equality. Rather than an ideal of citizenship and civic virtue that features a citizenry grimly going about their

collective duty, or an elite band of citizens in their “public space” cut off from a world that includes most of the rest of us, within ethical polity, an active citizen would be one who had affirmed as a part of what it meant to be fully human, a devotion to public, moral responsibilities and ends,^v

The important aspect of ethical polity will be that individual will be restored to his self-reflexivity – in which individual persons will decide ends of public and private actions. Human beings will come to recognise that conflict will never end in such a polity because some of them are inevitable and will therefore tolerate the ineradicable tension between public and private imperatives, thought and action, aesthetic standards and ethical principles. The citizenry will decide as to what duties and obligations need to be inculcated in such life. Ethical polity will emphasize civic virtues and all those beliefs, habits and qualities which are integral to civic order (Elshtain 1981, 356). Consequently, ethical polity will be sort of polity that reconciles human needs with the practical realities of political life deriving from the basic human qualities of moral equality of all human beings.

Contextualising Ethical Polity across States

Purpose of any theory is not specificity but universal applications under well-defined conditions. Elshtain enriches the conception of ethical polity by showing how motherly quality of women can transform the public life. The thread of mothering runs across the nations and that is how Elshtain's concept sources its relevance. Ethical polity seems to be a strong concept in modern day state, where day to day violence of the state seems to be rationalised by the authority that people in the control of political institutions inherit. Against such rationalised violence, the womanly values of

peaceful approach, care and issues concerning citizens can go a long way in addressing the injustices pervading the society today.

Elshtain claims that women's domestic and maternal responsibilities not only supported private households but also served as a source of resistance to the state's illegitimate demands (Ackelsberg et al. 2015, 571). She inquired as to how the virtues of nurturing, life-giving and preservation that a woman can cultivate in the family or household could be taken into the 'public arena'. In 'Antigone's Daughters'^{vi}, Elshtain expressed the contradictions between the family claim and the social claim. Antigone represents a woman who dares to question public authority by speaking up for family and social imperatives and responsibilities. Women today must be guardians of familial values in the same way that women in the past were, but without the quietism and subordination that came with that position (Ackelsberg et al. 2015:572).

Elshtain observed this interplay in the actual activities of 'The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo' in Argentina. She was strongly moved when she met these mothers whose children had been 'disappeared' during the years of 'dirty war' (1974-1983) of Argentina (Ackelsberg et al. 2015, 572). Mentioning the case of Argentina, Elshtain brings up role of mothers of disappeared children in bringing Junta regime to accountability, through national and international pressure in which mothers played a pivotal role. These mothers organised themselves into collective “We” on the basis of shared experiences and opposed junta regime. Through their language and maternal suffering, these mothers aroused the rights talk across the world through media and as a result had immense effect in shaping the politics of Argentina.

Elshtain saw the Madres as modern day Antigone daughters who were willing to sacrifice anything to openly oppose the military junta that had taken control of the country. The Madres demanded not only the return of their loved ones and an explanation of what had happened to them but also that the perpetrators be held accountable. To her, these mothers politicized their private grief, drawing on the power of family and community, to give them the strength to question a terrifying authoritarian and oppressive military regime. These women, according to Elshtain, were an even more powerful model for modern women than Antigone because they behaved collectively, as women, in a situation where political action was considered impossible (Ackelsberg et al. 2015, 573). As a result, the situation of 'the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo' is an exceptional example of 'Maternal politics'.

Driving example home, one can see that Naga Mothers Association (NMA) comes close as to change the local politics in Nagaland. The NMA was established on February 14, 1984, in response to Naga women's concerns about the growing problems in Naga Society. Its preamble states that 'Naga mothers of Nagaland shall express the need of conscientizing citizens toward more responsible living and human development through the voluntary organisation of the Naga Mothers Association'^{vii}. The membership of the organization is open to any adult Naga women irrespective of their marital status and members will become members of the organization through their own women's tribal organization. The NMA seeks to protect women's rights, human dignity, and human values. It promotes human development through education, aims to eliminate social problems and economic exploitation and works to achieve

peace and progress in Naga society (Banerjee et al. 2012, 16). Since its inception, the NMA has been actively engaged in efforts to achieve peace. Initially, the organization focuses on combating the widespread drug addiction and alcoholism that afflicted Naga society at that time yet, gradually started to mediate between opposing parties in a number of cases, and has been active in reaching an amicable agreement.

One of the NMA's many notable achievements is the creation of Peace Team in October 1994 to address the worsening political situation in the state. Under the slogan "Shed no more blood" members of the peace team began a peace process with the Government of India and various Naga armed groups to end conflict and bloodshed. They also held public peace marches in collaboration with churches to call for peace. The NMA's peace initiative did not concentrate only on army killing but also on militant killings. On May 25th 1995, it issued a pamphlet stating that "the way our society is being managed, whether by the over-ground government or the underground government, has actually become intolerable" (Banerjee 2000, 139). They further appealed all parties indulging in the violent conflict to stop killing, as the:

"Assassinated man may be a husband, a father, a son or a brother. His whole family is shattered by his violent liquidation no matter what reasons his liquidators choose to give for snuffing out of his life"^{viii}

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, NMA took up the issue of violence that ripped Nagaland apart; atrocities by the Indian armed forces against Naga armed groups and civilians followed by years of fratricidal killings between different Naga armed factions. When tensions rose, they drove into the jungles of Nagaland and neighbouring states on barely-there roads to

persuade faction's leaders to reconcile (Shrinivasan, Times of India, 21st, 2013).

The NMA facilitated a truce between the Indian government and the NSCN (IM) in 1997 and has been actively involved in talks even after ceasefire had been initiated. It has reinvented itself as frontline 'peace keepers' and a stakeholder in the Naga peace process, participating in significant civil society initiatives such as the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) and Global Naga Forum (Manchanda et al. 2017, 118-19). They have consistently demonstrated their commitment to peace by engaging in a numerous community dialogues on the subject both within and outside the region. They also participated in the United Nations discussions on peace and are now regarded as one of the region's most legitimate women's peace group (Banerjee et al. 2012, 17).

One areas of concern of the NMA which deserves significant attention is the shifting agendas of the organisation from motherhood politics to Women's rights assertion. The NMA initially focus on social issues like drug abuse, alcoholism and providing care for HIV inflicted patients. Gradually, the organisation became increasingly engaged in conflict resolutions and peace process and at present shifted its attention to women's rights assertion. As Manchanda and Kakran (2017) pointed out, the NMA is demonstrating its ability to transform its local influence into formal public authority. The shift in the organizational agenda represents its transformational journey. In the recent years, the Naga educated middle class women started to challenge the unequal gendered power relations in the Naga society. The NMA as the state's most powerful women's organization has been leading the new generation of tribal women's campaign by confronting and questioning

women's exclusion from decision-making (Manchanda et al. 2017, 137). The state government introduced a 33 percent quota for women in urban local bodies in 2006, but after the NMA persuaded it to hold elections with quotas, the government stated to waver (Deka, India Today, Feb 16, 2017). As a result of this, the NMA was forced to take the case to court. Despite the NMA's efforts, the Naga Tribal Hohos strongly opposed the 33 percent quota for women claiming that it violated Naga customary laws and traditions, which are covered under Article 371(A) of the Indian constitution.

Conclusion

As seen in both the case of 'The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo' and the 'Naga Mothers Association', Women and mothers through their language of maternal suffering organised themselves and challenged the repressive power of the state. What is considered as private such as grief and suffering was politicised by these mothers. Elshtain goes on to call this language of mothers as human rights language. One of the aspects of these mothers' group is the basis that they laid for the anti-repressive politics in which moral supremacy and passionate feeling can have an unending effect in shaping the general public life. Another important aspect of the NMA is their strong support for inclusive politics whereby they fight for inclusion of Naga women in decision-making. Consequently, women's peaceful approach to politics motivated by maternal values and their commitment to inclusive politics constitute prominent principles of Ethical polity. Thus, we can say that Jean Bethke Elshtain's concept of Ethical polity has lots to serve, when individuals – both men and women – comes to politics with values and virtues that are mutually reconcilable and take into consideration the needs of all.

Endnotes

- i. Hooks 2000, vii.
- ii. The values here are love, care, concern, or what Carol Gilligan calls Women's Associational quality in which women always think their benefit in association with other people. Women are more concerned about questions of care and responsibility rather than individual rights and rules.
- iii. Much of Elshtain writings is an experience of her own. Eg. *Public Man, Private Woman, Woman and War* and *Jane Addams*.
- iv. Ruddick 1995, 64.
- v. Elshtain 1981, 352.
- vi. 'Antigone Daughters' is an ancient Greek play of Sophocles. Antigone is a woman in the play who dares to challenge and went against the order of the king Creon of Thebes.
- vii. Banerjee et al. 2012.16.
- viii. Banerjee 2000, 139.

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COVID-19 Pandemic and Mental Health Issues Among Young Generation

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Abstract

Keeping in consideration the outbreak of Covid-19, on 24th March 2020 the Government of India announced lockdown in the entire country. This sudden and unplanned lockdown immensely affected the life and livelihoods of people from all different backgrounds and social strata. This pandemic and lockdown has brought about a sense of anxiety, fear and helplessness around the world. However, one can see that over the time, people have started to adopt to the new ways of living life which is also sometimes labelled as the “*NEW NORMAL*”. Since then, new ways of social life is experienced by all sections of the society irrespective of their age, sex, caste and class. Since then, various digital platforms have emerged as a strategy to retain the daily activities such as education of students, accessing health facilities, online income generation etc. Thus the term “*New Normal*” is very much connected with the uses of digital platforms as well. But the excessive use and dependency on digital platforms are resulting in serious consequences in human life. It has severely affected the physical and mental health of those who are continuously engaged in various digital platforms for their day to day activities.

The paper is focussed on the impact of excessive use of digital platforms and how this pandemic has forced teens to be removed from normal social, physical, and educational interactions. The worldwide increasing rate of suicide among youths indicates that they are at high risk of losing mental equilibrium. There is a need to understand the extent and severity of the problem so that appropriate measures can be planned. The paper is developed based on secondary data, reports and articles published.

Keywords: Covid-19, mental health, youth, digital platforms, online activities.

Introduction

On 11th March 2020, World Health Organisation declared Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) as Pandemic. Since then a drastic change could be observed around the world. Lockdowns, home quarantine, social distancing etc. have a direct impact on the life and livelihood activities of people (Tabish, 2020, p. 99). The pandemic have directly or indirectly affected all sections of the society. But the marginalised and the most vulnerable sections of the society around the

world are severely affected and suffering in both the economic and digital realms (Robinson, et al., 2021, p. 45). In present context, women, refugees, children, aged and disabled are considered as the most vulnerable sections of the society and it is true that these sections of people have witnessed the dare consequences of this pandemic in their life. Very limited studies have been conducted considering the issues of younger generation in this pandemic whereas adolescents and youth are

the representative of a particular vulnerable population (Labana, 2020, 4).

The first case of covid-19 was diagnosed in December 2019 and since then it has started spreading very quickly. In a very quick time it got spread all parts of the globe drastically affecting the life of millions and millions of people. The total lockdown and maintaining social distance are the effective strategies as opined by the experts to slowdown the spread of the disease (Golechha, 2020, p. 10). Because of this suggested and adopted strategy every section of the society are directly or indirectly affected. And during this process mostly the youths' lives and activities were restricted. Sudden shifting of activities such as education, socialisation with peers etc. shifted to digital platforms but frequent use of such online and digital platforms are resulting in extensive impacts on mental health and development of the youth (Golberstein, Wen, & Miller, 2020, 41). It is estimated that more than 330 million youngsters have been stuck at home for at least nine months, since the virus spread (UN News 2021, Feb. 16).

The UNICEF spokesperson James Elder was of the opinion that “Tens and tens of millions of youngsters have been left feeling isolated, afraid, lonely and anxious because of these enforced lockdowns and isolations that have become as a result of this pandemic.” The issues of the young generation are serious matter of concern now. People are bound to limit their social gatherings and as a result people started to use various digital platforms for mutual sharing and interactions. We have already moved into online services for our education, income, and other day today activities. Now in cases of lockdown, teens have had to stay home all day for months, with online interactions only.

Excessive use of digital platforms and accessing online services are resulting into severe health hazards for the young generations who are addicted to their electronic gadgets. Education, entertainment or whatever the reason may be, the children and the young people are important sections of the society who are mostly bound to engage over the online services and digit platforms in this pandemic. Worldwide more than 1.5 billion children and young people have been affected by the closing of schools and many are online now taking classes and socializing in a new way (*The Indian Express*, 2020). Since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic starting from last year, the mental health crisis for children, adolescents and families is growing, devastating underdeveloped systems and services (Harvey & Prabhu, 2020, 3).

The Nature and Extent and Causes of Mental Health Issues in Pandemic

The Digital Divide

UNICEF's Executive Director Henrietta Fore mentioned in her annual open letter how global lockdowns have exposed the inherent inequity of the digital divide. During the peak of school closures in 2020, about 30 per cent of the world's schoolchildren were unable to access remote learning (UNICEF 2021, Mar 1). Because of the structural gap there is a section of people who are economically not that sound to afford smart phones at home. In India, the numbers of families living below poverty line is significantly high and for the younger generation of the families, it is not possible to access the online education. Those who are having the access to smart phone, laptop, computer and other technological devices, for them even in pandemic education were continuing. But for the poor families it was not at

all possible to continue their studies. For a section of students unable to attend classes, examinations etc. are causes of stress and frustration too.

The Mental Health Challenges During Pandemic

According to UNICEF, half of all mental disorders develop before the age of 15 and majority of the 800,000 people who die by suicide annually are under 18 year age group (UN News, 2021, Mar.1). Before the pandemic, an estimated 10–20 percent of children and adolescents worldwide experienced mental health challenges with one in four children living with a parent who has a mental health condition (Harvey & Prabhu 2020, 3). There are very limited studies conducted on youths' mental health experienced during covid-19 pandemic. Larger survey data showed that in Italy during the early phase of lockdown the young adults of the age group 19-24 years experienced less level of fear and anxiety compared to the age group of people 40-49 years. But surprisingly the younger age group is found experiencing more loneliness and boredom (Colombo et al. 2020, 1). The assessment report concerning mental health symptoms, in Belgium showed that anxiety and depression among the people of the age group 16–24 year greater than before when compared with a past survey reports of 2018. It signifies the highest rates while comparing to other age groups (Sciensano 2020, 4). A study reported that in China more than one-third of adolescents of the age group 12-18 years old, were experiencing depression and anxious symptom during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is surprisingly represents almost double than normal (Zhou et al. 2020, 7).

It is very much true that during isolation in pandemic, occurrence of anxiety, frustration, anger, confusion, and posttraumatic stress symptoms etc. appear to be the significant causes of distress (Brooks et al. 2020, 4). It was also found that half of the young people of the age group 18-24 years experienced loneliness during lockdown. Similarly higher level of loneliness was reported among more than one third of the adolescents (Loades et al. 2020, 5). Loneliness and social isolation during pandemic is closely connected and it has a direct relation with the psychiatric problem of an individual. Loneliness is again connected with different psychosocial factors e.g., suicidal thoughts, anxiety, alcohol and substance dependence, depressive symptoms and aggression (Cacioppo et al. 2015, 132).

In this pandemic the youth are failing to achieve the developmental milestones, for example completion of school, engagement in labour market, maintaining social relations and ability to ensure autonomous decision making (Arnett, 2004). Implication of the pandemic e.g., fear of contagion, social isolation etc are some of the important factors of increasing stress, anxiety and issues of mental health (Galea et al., 2020; Mengin et al., 2020; Rossi et al., 2020, 3). Younger generation also experienced the significant level of stress witnessing the degrading financial condition of the family, health concerns of the family members and most importantly thinking about the uncertainty about the future life (Tsai et al. 2018, 10). All such issues care further pushing the young generation in a risk of developing mental health concerns and engaging in substance use. Therefore there is a need of further investigation, research work and strategic planning to understand and manage the impacts

of pandemic on mental health of young people (Hawke, et al. 2020, 4).

Part-time employment, physical activities such as participation in sports, creativity etc are key to the identity of adolescents. But unfortunately the covid-19 crisis severely affected such key factors and thus the identity of the adolescents as well. Complete restriction on in-person activities in addition to increased screen time and online networking have become the contributing factors to limited physical activity, increased negative effects, sleeping disorder (Becker & Gregory 2020, 8). At the same time sleeping disorder may result in negative outcomes increasing susceptibility to mood disorder and anxiety problems (Becker & Gregory 2020, *ibid.* 7). Remote learning and excessive use of technology during the pre-sleep period leads to high stress level and other physical and mental disorders. Similarly the direct exposure to the blue light of the electronic devices can disturb the production of melatonin that means the body cannot get the biological cue that it is already time to sleep. The exposure to online platforms during covid-19 pandemic aggravates or become a contributing factor to psychopathology (Dijk & Cajochen 1997, 7).

Cyber Bullying in Pandemic

Use of online platforms has increased the risk of cyberbullying in many folds and online discrimination as well. In a report it has been mentioned that more than a third of young people in 30 countries report being cyberbullied and with 1 in 5 skipping school because of it. National head of UNESCO, Sarita Jadav, also mentioned that because of the raising issues of cyberbullying children are suffering academic loss. It become more complicated and difficult for the children to handle such incidences as majority of the children are not aware of the

availability of any support mechanism thereafter. According to a study, 62% of digital users did not know where to find help if they were cyberbullied (Hussain 2021, 12).

In one way when the internet connectivity is having a wide opportunity for knowledge sharing and knowledge building, it is equally risky if safety protocols are not followed. Cyberbullying and other forms of peer-to-peer violence are rising in an alarming rate during covid-19 pandemic (UNICEF 2020, Feb. 16). According to a report of an organisation who tracks the cases of online harassment shared that there has been a drastic increase in the numbers of cyberbullying cases in just a few months. As per their record there has been 70% increase in the numbers of such incidences (Mi Blues Perspective 2021, 4). It can definitely affect young people each time they log in to a social media. There is always a high possibility that when browsing the internet, children may get the exposure to hate speech and any aggressive content. There are also possibilities of getting messages that incite self-harm and even provoke to commit suicide (UNICEF 2020, Feb 16).

Online Exploitation and Other Possible Threats

Following the strict containment measures and after the closure of schools, the parents are bound to engage the children into technology and digital platforms for continuing their teaching learning process. Such platforms are also used to keep the younger generation, entertained and to keep them connected with the outside worlds. But in doing so because of the negligence of the parents and limited knowledge about the protocols to be followed while doing online activities, they fall prey in many online fraudulent (*The Indian Express* 2020, Jun. 17).

There is another way of targeting the children and the youth. They can also be put at risk when tech companies violate their privacy to collect data for marketing purposes. The excessive screen time often results in negative consequences on individual's healthy development (UNICEF 2020, April 15). During this pandemic people have started spending more time online than ever before and thus unknowingly the possibilities of online threat increases which may have severe consequences in life.

The UNICEF recorded that during covid-19 pandemic, spending more time on online platforms can leave the younger people vulnerable to online sexual exploitation. Due to the lack of opportunity to interact with friends and peer groups in face to face situation the children get involved more into exploration of the digital world and thus become prey to sexual abuse and cyber bullying (UNICEF, 2020). Moreover, poor social connection is result in suicidal behaviour among the young people (Hou, Mao, Dong, Cai, & Deng, 2020, p. 4). Increased and unstructured time access online platforms may also expose children to harmful and violent content (*The Indian Express* 2020, Jun. 17). The threat of online sexual exploitation and abuse is most alarming in present context. Some 80% of children in 25 countries report feeling in danger of sexual abuse or exploitation online (UNICEF 2020, Feb. 16).

Thus it can be said that due to the closing of educational institutions amid imposed lockdowns around the world, millions of children and youths are at high risk of online sexual exploitation, violence and cyberbullying (*The Indian Express* 2020, Jun. 17). For an individual, this may result in social isolation, mental health issues, substance abuse, self-harm or suicide. There is also increased likelihood of exhibiting similar abusive

behaviours by themselves in adulthood (UNICEF, 2020, Sept. 3).

Conclusion

Rising online platforms offers limitless opportunities for learning. Using technological devices such as computers, smart-phones, gaming consoles, and televisions, anybody can learn, and get the opportunity to develop their social networks. Safe internet facility has the potential to widen the knowledge and to improve and shape ones' creativity but only when it is used in the right way and when it is accessible to all without any discrimination (UNICEF, 2020).

From both physical and mental health standpoints, Youth who are having physical health issues can also be considered as a vulnerable section, though their mental health challenges are generally not acknowledged (Katon, Richardson, Russo, Lozano, & McCauley, 2006; Parasuraman, Anglin, McLellan, Riley, & Mann, 2018, 7). The impact of COVID-19 on the young people with existing psychological disorders may become more serious. There are high possibilities that their treatment may have been disrupted as result of the pandemic. Similar challenges can be further aggravated among adolescents with disabilities, who may not be able to maintain the protocols of maintaining physical distancing. The young people with learning or cognitive disabilities may not be able to fully understand the situation brought about by COVID-19, or effectively use available virtual channels for communication and to avail remote support (Harvey & Prabhu, 2020, 3).

Globally, there is only one mental health professional for every 10,000 people and in this pandemic the mental health services,

particularly for children, adolescents and youth are neglected and less talked about (Harvey & Prabhu, 2020, 2). The UN agency said that the pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93 per cent of countries worldwide (UN News 2021, Mar. 4) and it is a serious matter of concern. UNICEF is looking into the matter seriously and already adopted different action strategies worldwide to protect the younger generation from any possible online threats and to address the issues of mental health. Time to time UNICEF has issued guidelines and working very closely with tech companies to ensure online safety measures and protocols. UNICEF is also working very closely to address the issues of online sexual abuses using the model called “We PROTECT Global Alliance” which aimed to strengthen the capacity of the ground level service providers to provide service to the victim. This is high time to take-up this matter seriously and to work collectively to promote well being of the younger generation. It is equally the responsibility of the parents and the adult population to understand the needs of the younger generation and to ensure necessary

support mechanism whenever needed. It is also important to identify all different contributing factors which may lead to serious psychological damage among youth. Along with the initiative from the government, community level collaborative initiative, involvement of civil society organisation and NGOs should be welcome and encouraged. There are a lot more that could be done by forming youth self-help groups for mutual support at the community level. At this juncture, the most important work will be to create public awareness about the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and to safeguard the well being of the younger generation. It is also realised that very limited studies or proper research are conducted in this area. The available study reports are just an indication of such problem in a particular location limited to a small population. There is a need to look at the problem of mental health among the younger generation in pandemic considering a larger population and sample size. Then such studies will definitely give a better understanding on the nature and severity of the problem and pave the way for planning strategic intervention.

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Shared Sovereignty and its Challenges in the Indo-Naga Political Settlement

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Abstract

Five years have passed since the signing of the Framework Agreement on 3rd August, 2015 between the government of India and the Naga nationalist group, the NSCN (IM), in New Delhi, considered to be a historic achievement. The Agreement based on shared sovereignty is now on the brink of collapse due to the differences between the two negotiating parties on the issue of separate flag and the constitution. The paper seeks to examine the idea of shared sovereignty between the two negotiating parties and critically analysed the challenges confronting the Naga peace talk.

Keywords: Framework agreement, shared sovereignty, territorial integrity, separate flag, separate constitution, Pan-Naga Hoho.

I. Introduction

The Naga political struggle has haunted both India and the Nagas for decades. Many attempts were made to bring the issue to its logical conclusion. However, in all these attempt one finds that there was an attempt by the Indian state to play the role of a big brother¹. This has only generated suspicion in the minds of the Naga nationalist groups, ultimately leading the issue to more and more complications.

Experience suggests that in this kind of nationalist conflict when the extremist sections are left out of the negotiation, the conflict is not likely resolved, because they are the real

stakeholders espousing “the cause”. Fortunately, in the ongoing peace process, almost all the extremist groups are engaged in the dialogue which in itself is a big achievement; given that the nationalist groups are often divide in approach and strategy. Both India and the Naga nationalist groups cannot afford to let this opportunity go without striking a deal for settlement.

The current Naga peace process started in 1997 with the signing of ceasefire between the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak –Muivah) i.e. NSCN-IM, and has been

¹The first attempt to settle the problem was made in February 1948 popularly known as Akbar Hydari-NNC 9 Point Agreement was unilaterally scrapped by India after signing, because the interpretation of the last point of the Agreement i.e. “to decide their future after the expiry of 10 years” was construed as a disadvantage for the Indian State. Similarly the 16 Point Agreement 1960 signed between the Naga People's Convention and the Indian State that led to formation of the present Nagaland State under Indian Union was a strategy to divide the Nagas by co-opting the moderate element of the Nagas, thereby leaving out the real stakeholders, i.e. the nationalist section from the negotiation. Likewise, the infamous 1975 Shillong Accord signed between the Indian State and some section of the Naga Nationalists (i.e. the Naga National Council) was considered by the Nagas as a sell-out, leading to the formation of Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim in 1980.

continuing for the last 23 years. However, the negotiation seems to have reached a stalemate, where both the negotiating parties are not willing to budge their stand “for” and “against” on the issues of separate flag and separate constitution. As accepted by the Indian government the uniqueness of the Nagas, a unique solution is required, unless we see history repeating again.

This paper is an attempt to understand the idea of shared sovereignty based on the Framework Agreement signed on 3rd August, 2015 as an ideal solution for the protracted Indo-Naga conflict². It will also discuss the two major obstacles, namely, the separate flag and the separate Naga constitution, which has led to deadlock between the two negotiating parties.

II. The Concept of Shared Sovereignty

Sovereignty is derived from Latin word *superanus* meaning supreme. Jean Bodin introduced the concept of sovereignty in modern times, and defined it “as the absolute and perpetual commanding power of the state”, as the “supreme power over citizens and subjects unrestrained by law” (Gaubu 2013: 179). This classical understanding of sovereignty believes in absoluteness, permanence, universality, inalienability and indivisibility of the state. Therefore legally speaking sovereignty is the supreme authority of the state. However, in practice this classical understanding faces many challenges as sovereignty has to share its authority with family, church, union, and local governments. Sovereignty is also forced to accommodate and recognise from the “conscientious objectors” (IBID: 196).

According to the pluralist understanding sovereign can never be allowed to become absolute and irresponsible. Pluralists also argued that internally sovereignty has to justify the exercise of its special power. Sovereign is also limited by country's constitution, and cannot overstep its authority. Externally it is limited by international law, convention and practices. In short, there is no such thing as absolute sovereignty; rather, sovereignty is always shared by various organisations within and outside the state.

The classical understanding of sovereignty which was in vogue till the 20th century is now seen receding with the coming of globalisation. In addition to the forces of globalisation, the understanding of sovereignty as an absolute and exclusive power from both internal and external actors has been violated many times in the history. Stephen D. Krasner (1999: 25) mentioned four ways by which these violations occur, such as, convention, contract, coercion and imposition. Even in today's world we find several instances, where sovereignty is shared externally through contract between two or more entities, and internally through various forms of division of powers such as federation, autonomy etc.

Shared sovereignty would mean different things to different people depending on what context one uses. In the context of international legal sovereignty, it would mean ceding certain power to some party (bilateral, regional or multilateral) through voluntarily participation for mutual gain. For e.g. the United Nations, European Union, World Trade Organisations, North

²The Framework Agreement was signed on 3rd August, 2015 between the Indian state and the NSCN-IM in New Delhi in presence of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and host of dignitaries from both sides. The Agreement is speculated to have contained the broad contours of power sharing know as shared sovereignty.

Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) etc. Here sovereign states voluntarily participate to be a member of these Organisations. This participation entails them to share some of their sovereign powers to the supra-sovereign body. For e.g., acceptance of international law as a governing principle by the member state. Similarly NATO has power to make decisions with regard to the member nations in certain aspect, because the members voluntarily share their power with this organisation. The same idea of shared sovereignty also happens between two sovereign states. For e.g., the trade relations or border management between two sovereign states. This believe is according to the monistic understanding of sovereignty.

The Second type of shared sovereignty is to divide and share the sovereign power between and among different units within the state, such as, minority group, nationalist organisations etc. Here the power sharing is done by way of bilateral treaty exemplified by the Russian Federation; Autonomy as exemplified by Hongkong and Macau; different kinds of federal arrangement, ranging from confederation to consociational democracy exemplified by Switzerland; asymmetry and segmented federal form under Russian Federation etc. In this type of shared sovereignty, one sovereign is shared between two or more entities. This forms the pluralists understanding of sovereignty which believes in divisibility of sovereignty.

Many scholars, such as Rupensinghe (1996), Ulrich (2002) Tishkov (2002) have established the fact that federal-model strategy is the best form of government in multi-ethnic, multi-

nationals state, because this system provides the necessary space for developing, safeguarding, and preserving the different ethnic group's identity, resources and system. The degree of power sharing may vary from state to state. For instance, the Russian Federation allows some of its republics to enjoy a high level of independence even to the extent of having an independent foreign relations³, while the Indian federal system is known for its quasi federation character, i.e. a mixture of unitary and federal features.

III. Shared Sovereignty in the Context of Naga political Settlement

The Nagas are ethnic nationality comprising of different sub-ethnic groups. Though the very term “Naga” is contested by some as it is not a primordial origin, it is a reality and accepted fact that Nagas are considered to be a group of sub-ethnic communities residing at a contiguous area with shared historical and similar cultural attributes. This fact is accepted by the Nagas themselves as well as by the outsiders. So the question of Naga as a national identity has passed the stage of nationality formation.

The Nagas are fiercely independent. The Nagas have fought the Britishers to preserve their independence; however they were finally subjugated and incorporated under the British Indian sub-continent in 1879. Even while under the British India, Nagas have asserted for self-rule and petitioned the British-India to exclude the Nagas from the design of independent Indian sub-continent⁴.

Following the inability of the Britishers to officially recognise as a separate political entity at the time of their departure, the Naga

³Under Russian Federation, Chechnya enjoys independent foreign policy. For more see, Halbach, Uwe (2018).

⁴The first such petition was submitted to the Simon Commission on 26th March 1928 by the Naga Club on behalf of the Naga tribes. For more, see “Naga Club Memo to Simon Commission 1929”.

nationalists declared independence on 14th August, 1947, one day prior to the declaration of Indian independence. However this declaration could not achieve international recognition and therefore the struggle continues.

In the post-colonial India, the Naga inhabited areas were incorporated into the Indian republic. At first, on its own volition, India placed the Naga territories under the ministry of External Affairs, but was unceremoniously stripped off and brought back to the ministry of Home affairs in 1972. This incorporation of Nagas into the Indian union was not without resistance, and the struggle for independence from India continues till today.

In order to resolve this nationality issue, the Indian state has made various attempts such as the Akbar Hydari-NNC Agreement 1948; the 16 Points Agreement 1960; the infamous Shillong Accord 1975; and finally the ongoing peace process since 1997 till date. However, all the previous attempts could not resolve the nationality question and the nationalist struggle continued with renewed vigour every time an Accord is signed. Therefore the ongoing peace process has sought to address this question by bringing all the stakeholders on board the negotiation and making it a broad-based agreement. Toward this end, the Framework Agreement was signed in 2015 to bring final settlement to the Indo-Naga political problem.

The Framework Agreement is revealed to have contained the idea of shared sovereignty as the formula for Indo-Naga political settlement.

Although the original text of the Framework Agreement is not produced in white paper, there is sufficient evidence in the public domain from the revelation made by the negotiators of both sides that shared sovereignty is the basis of the settlement. Here again the term shared sovereignty is not clearly defined. When asked about the meaning of shared sovereignty, the interlocutor RN Ravi replied “both sides have acknowledged the universal principle that in a democracy, sovereignty lies with the people. Government of India have acknowledged the uniqueness of the Nagas. This uniqueness will be reflected in the sharing of power⁵”. From what one understand by this term is that, the term is used in the sense of sharing of competencies or sharing of powers between the two entities, i.e. the Indian State and the Nagas. Therefore we can look at the areas where powers can be shared in a given circumstance.

Shared sovereignty in the context of Naga political settlement is used to imply special federal arrangement. This inference of special federal arrangement is for two reasons. Firstly because, even though the Naga nationalists declared independence in 1947, prior to Indian's independence declaration, this declaration was not accepted by India, at the same time there was lack of international recognition. Therefore the parallel governments run by these nationalist groups did not possess officially recognised sovereignty. All the actions of these nationalist groups were considered outlaw by the Indian government, although the Naga nationalists have always claimed that Naga sovereignty was

⁵RN Ravi, a retired Indian Police Service officer, was appointed as the Fourth interlocutor since 1997 by the government of India to represent the Indian state in the Indo-Naga peace talk. The Framework Agreement was signed by RN Ravi and Th. Muivah, the Prime Minister (*Ato Kilonser*) of NSCN-IM, in presence of host of dignitaries from both the parties in New Delhi. On several occasions, when asked to clarify the meaning of shared sovereignty, RN Ravi has implies that the meaning of shared sovereignty as sharing of competencies. Similar opinion is also expressed by the NSCN leaderships. For more see, “Ravi meet GPRN/NSCN, NNC/FGN”

illegally taken away by British and India. The secondly reason is a necessary extension from the first argument. That is, if the Naga sovereignty was not recognised by the Indian state, then, shared sovereignty, in this sense, only means sharing of India's sovereignty. Therefore this special federal arrangement is expected to be asymmetrical federalism by giving more powers to the Nagas than the existing normal power sharing. Otherwise there is no rationale of another federal arrangement, because India already has a federal form of government whereby the constitution of India has clearly delineated the powers into Union list, State list, Concurrent list and residuary power. Moreover, Nagaland state already enjoys special powers under Article 371A⁶. Therefore, it is expected that the ongoing power sharing arrangement will be more comprehensive and inclusive, because if it is “equivalent to” or “less than” what is already provided, there is no point of another power sharing initiative.

So what are the areas that can be shared? Schedule 7 of the Indian constitution provides the power sharing formula between the Union and the States, wherein the Union government enjoys exclusive power over 100 items, and the States enjoy exclusive jurisdiction in 61 items. There are also 52 items under Concurrent list which is shared by both the Union and the states. In addition to these, Part XI (Article 245-263) of the constitution provides further power relations between the union and the states. The items in the union list are those of national interest, such

as foreign affairs, defence, atomic energy, railways, currency, airways, judiciary, mineral oil resources, Reserve Bank of India, Union Public Service Commission, Central Bureau of Investigation, etc.

In the context of shared sovereignty, it is expected that some of these items such as foreign affairs, defence, mineral resources etc. are to be shared between Indian government and the Nagas. These items are of common concern. For instance, sharing of foreign policy is justified especially given the circumstances that the Nagas are spread across international boundaries⁷. In the field of defence, joint defence management is prudent given the strategic geo-military location of the Naga territory⁸. History shows that on many occasions Nagas have bravely fought against their enemies to safeguard their borders. As Th. Muivah stated during the signing of Framework Agreement, “Nagas can be trustworthy and take into confidence for any policy in the northeast and beyond”. Given that the land is considered sacred for the Nagas and tied to her identity, she will not easily give up the responsibility of border security to India alone. They have fought to safeguard their land before and will continue to do so with the help of India if possible and alone if necessary. Similarly in the area of land ownership, the Nagas have a unique form of ownership which is different from the rest of India. In Naga society land belongs to the clan, village and community. This makes it difficult for the government to freely use and dispose off

⁶Article 371A of the Indian constitution, *inter alia*, provides special power to the State of Nagaland in the field of religious and social practices of the Nagas, Naga customary law and practices, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

⁷According to Naga Hoho, the apex body of the Naga tribes, there are 36 Naga tribes found in Myanmar, commonly known as Eastern Nagas. At least seven of these tribes are found both in India and Myanmar. For more on this, see, Naga Hoho (2002), *White Paper on Naga Integration*.

⁸The present Nagaland state is roughly 16,000 sq.km in size. However, there are Naga tribes in Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal. It has international boundary with Myanmar and China.

the land and its resources. At present this unique land ownership is protected by the special constitutional provision under Article 371A. Therefore, under the special federal arrangement, the ownership, usage and disposal of land and its resources (both surface and underground) can be shared between the two parties.

In the same way there are many areas such as official language, national identity, election system, customary law, flag and other symbolic elements etc. whereby the power sharing formula that is uniquely suited to the situation will help develop more trust between the government of India and the Nagas. And such solution can become a model solution in the world to resolve similar cases of ethno-nationalism.

IV. Challenges

The idea of shared sovereignty in the Indo-Naga political settlement is faced with several challenges. These challenges can be broadly classified as internal and external challenges. The internal challenges are those issues and challenges within the Naga society such as the differences among the various factions of the nationalist groups, the formation of Pan Naga Hoho. The external challenges come from the neighbouring states of Naga inhabited areas and the central government. The external challenges are the territorial integrity and the issue of

separate flag and constitution. These challenges have to be resolved one way or the other in order to realise the idea of shared sovereignty.

Internal Challenges:

a) Differences among the nationalist groups:

From the lone Naga nationalist group, i.e. NNC in 1946, there are now nine different factional groups espousing for the same Naga cause. From the existing nine groups, seven groups came together and formed the Working Committee of Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) on December 13, 2016 to negotiate with the government of India⁹. Except the NSCN (K), which is based in Myanmar, all the nationalist factions in India are currently engaged in negotiation with government of India in two groupings, i.e. the NSCN (IM) and the NNPG. Similar to the Framework Agreement, the Indian state also signed “Agreed position” with the NNPGs on November 17, 2017, which is based on the recognition of Naga political and historical right to self-determination¹⁰. In spite of the declaration that there will be only one Naga solution, the parallel negotiations with two different Naga groups, i.e. the NSCN (IM) and the NNPGs, and the tacit differences between the two Naga negotiating groups on the issue of symbolic elements is obvious. While the NSCN (IM)

⁹There have been tremendous efforts by the civil society organisations for the various Naga factions to come together for the common cause. For instance, the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) was formed in 2008 by the *Naga Shisha Hoho*, to promote unity among the Naga factions through the process of reconciliation. Under the initiative of this Forum reconciliation meetings were held in neutral venue such as Chiang Mai, Thailand, and such other places where various nationalist groups along with other Naga civil society organisations participated. Similarly, through the initiative of the Nagaland Tribes Council (NTC) the six Naga Nationalist groups (later joined by the Khango Konyak faction of NSCN-K) came together to form the NNPGs.

¹⁰As revealed by the Convenor of the Working Group of the NNPGs, the “Agreed Position/Preamble” contains statement of “recognition by India the political and historical rights of the Nagas to self-determine their future in consonance with their distinct identity. That, the two parties agreed to work out the details of the relationship which is honourable, inclusive with due regard to contemporary realities”. See, “A Letter by N.Kitovi Zhimomi, Convenor, WC, NNPGs to Gen. (Rtd.) Nyemlang Konyak, Chairman, NSCN (K)”.

group argues that the symbolic elements should be addressed and included in the final agreement, the NNPGs are of the position that these symbolic elements should be left out for future negotiation in the post-settlement. These differences have stood in the way for inking the final settlement.

b) Pan Naga Hoho: The proposed Pan Naga Hoho is envisaged to be parliament-like body for the Nagas. Its original idea is to endow the body with all the decision making powers ranging from political, economic and socio-cultural. This Hoho is supposed to be bicameral legislative body with the upper house having an equal representation from all the Naga tribes constituted according to Naga customary law. The lower house is to be constituted from the directly elected representatives based on proportional representation of electorates. While this is the proposed designed of the Pan Naga Hoho, the contemporary realities of the existing state boundaries have compelled the negotiating parties to re-interpret this original idea. Now, both the Naga negotiating parties seem to have compromised on the original idea of an all comprehensive power of the Pan Naga Hoho, rather there is a talk of Pan Naga Hoho with limited power in the field of customary law, and without territorial integrity. However a Pan Naga Hoho without a wholesome integration including physical-geographical, political-administration, and

socio-cultural-economy integration seem to be toothless and unworkable. It is an undeniable fact that a partial integration in the form of Pan Naga Hoho without the physical-geographical integration will not be acceptable to the people of Nagaland, and it will open a new era of complicated conflict¹¹.

As stated, territorial integration is of course more complicated issue than one can imagine. Rearrangement of territorial boundaries affecting multiple states will not only hurt the pride and ego of the affected states but some unpleasant hardship is bound to occur. However, as NSCN leader VS Atem argued, Naga problem cannot be solved through Manipuri or Assamese interest, and that the Nagas are not infringing on the rights of these people, rather Nagas are only fighting for their rights¹².

External Challenges:

a) Territorial integrity: It is difficult to imagine a shared sovereignty without territorial integrity. If the Nagas are not brought under one administrative unit in the form of integration, the idea of shared sovereignty will just be a fantasy and hollow, for the very fact that a sub-unit within an existing federal unit (for example, autonomy within the state of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh) will be too little or small to swallow the concept of “shared sovereignty”. It will be like an advance jet fighter without a launching pad.

¹¹There are already similar pan-Naga organisations such as Naga Hoho, Naga Students' Federation, Naga Mothers' Association, Naga Peoples' Movement for Human Rights, etc. There is a strong apprehension from the people residing in the state of Nagaland that unless there is a wholesome integration of Naga inhabited areas, partial integration without the physical and economic integration will give rise to a deadly conflict among the various Naga tribes, therefore this partial integration is not acceptable.

¹²VS Atem, NSCN leader, is considered to be the chief architect of the NSCN negotiation group and the chief spokesperson of the group. See, Radnadip Chaudhury. 2016.

One should understand that the persistent struggle of the Naga nationalist groups is not confined to increasing the power and status of the state of Nagaland alone but the main objective is the recognition of the Nagas as one nationality. In this regard the self-contradictory position of the Indian leaders has only added more confusion to the already existing complex problem. On the one hand, the Indian political leaders have assured the neighbouring states of the inviolability of their territorial integrity; on the other hand, they have promised the Naga negotiating groups of a unique settlement based on the political and historical uniqueness of the Nagas¹³. For the Naga negotiating parties, the recognition of the uniqueness of the Nagas means that the Nagas are one ethnic nation and independent prior to British India and therefore territorial integrity should be a pre-requisite for the final settlement of the Naga political problem. There seems to be no converging point in this regard at the moment. This has led some people to advocate for emotional integration rather than physical geographical integration¹⁴.

b) The Issue of Separate flag and Constitution: Under the concept of shared sovereignty separate flag and constitution should have been a natural outcome. As discussed above, the Nagas struggle for sovereignty was recognised when the current cease fire and peace process first started in 1997 with three preconditions, namely, talks

at Prime ministerial level, talks without precondition, and talks in third countries. This indicates that the Indian government accepted the Naga group as a separate entity qualified for negotiation. However, the final settlement seems to have reached a deadlock because of the Indian government unwillingness to concede these two demands of the Naga nationalists. To argue that these two demands are not within the ambit of negotiation is not to acknowledge the genuine desire of the Nagas. We can understand the position of the Indian state, that is, the principle of one country one constitution, in the process of containing Jammu and Kashmir; however this should not be the reason for withholding the settlement of Naga political problem. Such reluctance only shows the insincere attitude of the Indian government to resolve the Naga issue for good. Indian government's approach to the issue seems to be guided by conflict management strategy rather than conflict resolution. This will create a bad precedent in the future for India. It will only create a trust deficit in the minds of others.

One should understand that Naga struggle is on the one hand a struggle for independence; on the other hand, it is also an identity struggle, which is to protect and preserve the separate identity of the Nagas. It is only fair that a minority nationality like the Nagas is assured of protecting and preserving their identity. Therefore the symbolic issues are

During the election campaign rally in Imphal, Manipur, the then Home Minister of India, Rajnath Singh, announced that "no force in the world could disintegrate Manipur's territory". Such statement has only added fuel to the fire. See, IANS, the *Morung Express* (February 19, 2017).

People who advocate for emotional integration are the present Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio and others, who argue that if territorial integrity is not possible at least Nagas should have an emotional integration by having a common body that takes care of the social and cultural aspect of the Nagas. In this regard several Resolutions have been adopted by the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. See, Chakrabarty, Rakhi.

important in the context of Naga political settlement. Symbolic elements such as flag, anthem, emblem and constitution are an important indicators of the distinct identity. Therefore, it may be possible to compromise certain issues under the substantive items; however, it will be difficult to sell in the domestic constituency a compromised solution without these symbolic elements. It is also not an impossible issue for the Indian government to recognise these symbolic components of the Nagas. This is not going to lessen Indian's prestige; it will show the maturity of India's approach towards its minority nationalities. Most importantly it will help resolve the century old separatist movement. To deny these rights just to prove the case of J&K is not wise strategy.

V. Conclusion

On the eve of signing the ceasefire and the subsequent peace process between Indian government and NSCN (Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagalim), three important terms were agreed upon by the two parties which are: Talk at prime ministerial level, talk without condition, and talk in third countries¹⁵. All these terms are now blatantly violated one by one. The prime ministerial level talk has now come down to governor/interlocutor level; talks without condition is now conditioned by the Indian

constitution and the inviolability of territory of the states; and the base of negotiation has shifted from Zurich-Bangkok-New Delhi to Dimapur. With multiple changes of hands of the negotiators from the Indian side, there is an evidence of slowly undermining the Naga struggle. India seems to be guided purely by the strategy of conflict management, rather than an honest effort of conflict resolution. The veracity of this conflict management approach is questioned by many keen observers with an apprehension in mind that history might repeat itself, and the final resolution of the Naga political problem may elude this time again.

On the other hand, there is a clear indication that the Naga people are eager to settle the long standing Indo-Naga political problem on the basis of the idea of shared sovereignty. By bringing all the stakeholders including the civil society organisations, tribal bodies, the elected representatives, along with all the different nationalist groups, in the consultation process for the final agreement, the government of India has certainly laid a strong foundation to bring an honourable settlement. However, unless the government of India is sincere in addressing all the issues including the symbolic issues, a final, comprehensive and enduring peace agreement may not be achieved anytime soon.

¹⁵As a prelude to the ceasefire agreement, these three preconditions were arrived at the Paris Agreement 1995 between the NSCN led by Th. Muivah and the Indian government led by the then prime minister PV Narasimha Rao. For more on this, see, RH. Raising, "NSCN (IM) gives update on Framework Agreement, Political Negotiation with India".

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Econometric Analysis of Organic Large Cardamom Production in Yongam Village, Longleng District of Nagaland

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Abstract

Yongam is the thirteen largest village of Longleng in terms of demographic determinant. It is located in the Far East region of East Asia towards Myanmar and is gradually becoming the hub of organic large cardamom (*Amomum subulatum Roxb*) production in Longleng district, Nagaland. Agriculture is the backbone of Yongam and supports more than 71.08% of the total population. In recent time, organic large cardamom cultivation has become one of the foundation economies and farmers were motivated for cultivation of organic large cardamom by various governmental agencies like Agriculture Technology Management Agency, Horticulture Department, Agriculture Department and Krishi Vigyan Kendra. They are shifting their choice from growing food crops to commercial crops i.e., organic large cardamom as the aforesaid agencies provide proper training and ad rem suggestions to the farmers. Total of 40 respondents i.e., organic large cardamom growers were selected using simple random sampling technique. The paper investigates the size of area, production, productivity, cost and net return. The result shows higher Benefit Cost Ratio for large acres of areas as 1.23, 1.94, 3.10 and 3.31. This paper examines the Cobb-Douglas production function on the organic large cardamom production in various spaces and dimensions. The objective of this study is to investigate the logical relationship between production and capital invested on labour and inputs. The finding shows Cobb-Douglas production function exhibits diminishing return to scale. Presently, organic large cardamom cultivation in Yongam suffers from various challenges like marketing, credit, maintaining the quality of the product and lack of scientific technique to tackle the situation. Monitoring and analysis of these data over time are important for continued situational awareness on production and productivity of large cardamom with ensuring stable economies and livelihood.

Keywords: Organic large cardamom, Production, Productivity, Benefit-Cost Ratio Cobb-Douglas production function

JEL Classification: Q1, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q15

1. Background

Agriculture is an integral part of the Nagaland economy (Rongsen 2003, 47; Mandal et al. 2006, 360; Krishan 1992, 29; Kalamkar 2006, 351; Alam 1993, 3). Agriculture and allied sector plays noteworthy role in the socio-economic development of Nagaland (Dhakre &

Sharma 2009, 71; Laxminarayan 1970, 1971; Kuba & Jha 2008, 113; Bhatt 2006, 55). This sector is the second largest contributor to the Nagaland economy as well as providing livelihood to more than 70% of the working

population (Rongsenchiba et al. 2017, 22; Saikia, 2006 340; Borah & Chakraborty 2006, 342). However, the mountainous topography, uneven terrain, low level of investment, lack of irrigation facilities, credit, and lack of modern technology is a hindrance to a large scale production of agriculture crops for commercial purpose (Bagchi 2006, 347; Misra & Mishra 2006, 345; Nair 2006, 352, Das et al. 2018, 250). Despite of all these obstacles, the farmers have significantly moved on to adopt system such as integrated approaches, organic, dry land farming and double cropping system (Nakro 2009, 10; Murry 2019, 311). Some farmers have gone forward to grow commercial crops such as tea, rubber, kholar, ginger, large cardamom, oilseeds, black pepper, pluses and tuber crops (Economic survey of Nagaland 2017-18, 8; Barah & Birthal 2006, 18; Singh et al. 1997, 147).

In the course of time the predominance of chemical intensive farming has resulted in a near stagnant of production and productivity of many of the economically crops and the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has eventually emerged as a potential source of danger not only to the sustainability of the environment (Ghosh 2009, 372; Laxminarayana et al. 2005, 495; Saha et al. 2012, 1; Saha et al. 2007, 112; Borthakur 1992, 31). As a result of loss of agro-ecosystem vitality and productivity, the cost of cultivation has escalated and this led most of the small and marginal farmers to shift away from raising food crops to cash crops in order to sustain their economic viability of agriculture. This scenario can be predominantly observed in states like Nagaland (Yano & Lanusosang 2013, 651; Rawat, 2014, 1; Yano et al. 2012; Devi 2010, 199). This situation made it inevitable to think beyond the unsustainable agricultural practices

of state (Singh 1992, 219) and slowly, a number of alternative eco-friendly farming practices have evolved from different parts of Nagaland (Wangshimenla & Renthungo 2012, 78; Singh, et al. 1996, 18). While analyzing all the developments from different parts of the world *Organic Agriculture* seems to have an edge in the adoption process among the farming community of Nagaland and the success of organic farming is predicted by the availability of eco-friendly method capable to sustain agricultural productivity, increase market potential and maintain economic viability (Kuotsuo et al. 2014, 23; Das et al. 2018, 301; Bujarbaruah 2004, 4; Avasthe 2006, 585).

Organic large Cardamom may offer sustainable economic guarantees for the farmers, with a stable demand, and hence a lucrative price level for the farm works, despite the high transportation cost to a market centre. It is generally assumed that the option of organic farming is a practice leading to agricultural development (Sharma et al. 2001, 261; Gupta 1983, 3; Rao et al. 1993, 77; Sharma et al. 2000, 108; Gupta et al. 2012, 7). It is one of the highly priced and expensive spices and rightly called as the “*green gold*”. Till early 1970s, India was the main producer and exporter of this commodity. Now Guatemala has emerged as world's largest producer, offering stiff competition to Indian cardamom in the international market. Since the ancient time India is an organic produce exporting country. So, export of organic agricultural produce, especially which of low volume high price commodities like spices have an impact on India's economic future (Gills 2012, 2).

As per the statistics available with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, currently, India

ranks 33rd in terms of total land under organic cultivation and 88th in terms of the ratio of agricultural land under organic crops to total farming area. The cultivated land under certification is around 2.8 million hectare (2007-08). This includes 1 million hectare under cultivation and the rest is under forest area (APEDA 2011, 2). Sikkim, which has been declared India's first organic farming state, grown large cardamom over 17,000 hectare and produces 4000 tonnes annually, Sikkim share 90% of the country's organic production. Exports of large cardamom in 2015-16 (April-March) were at 600 tonnes, decline 10% from 665 tonnes a year ago. However, large cardamom exports are higher than India's export target of 500 tonnes for 2015-16. (Indian Agriculture Report 2015-16, 3).

In Nagaland during 2015-16, 5667 hectare was cultivated under these crops as against 5508 hectare during 2014-15 registering a percentage increase of 2.89%. The production too has increased from 17759 MT in 2014-15 to 18179 MT in 2015-16 showing an increase of 2.36%. In terms of productivity, almost all organic spices improved except large cardamom. During 2014-15 the total area cultivated under large cardamom was 3153 hectare and production was 1378 MT having a productivity of 437 Kilogram/Hectare. Again during 2015-16 the total area increases 3231 hectare and production was 1408 (MT) having a productivity of 436 (Kilogram/Hectare) (Economic Survey of Nagaland 2015-16). In Longleng district as per the VISION 2025, Government of Nagaland, prosperity through Agriculture Food for All, the Phonli Self Help Groups (SHGs) of the village solely works for Large Cardamom. The area covered by the cardamom in Longleng district is 75 hectare. Its

productivity per hectare (in MT/Hectare) is 0.3 and production (in MT) is 22.5 (KVK 2017, 2).

2. Materials and Methods

1.2.1. Study area and period of research survey

Longleng, smallest district of Nagaland, situated in the Eastern region bordering towards Myanmar, lies between 94°E-95°E longitude and 26°N-27°N latitude of the equator, the district is mountainous with an area of 562 Sq.km. The home of the Phom Nagas is the tenth district of Nagaland. As per census 2011, Longleng had a population of 50,484 of which males and females were 26,502 and 23,982 respectively. The district has an average literacy rate of 72.17% lower than national average of 79.55% (Census of Longleng 2011, 6). The proposed study has planned to cover the Yongam village of Longleng district which is the largest producer of organic large cardamom for many years. The data collected relate to the agricultural year 2017.

1.2.2. Demographic and socio-economic information of the study area

Yongam village is situated in Yongnyah, Teshil, Longleng district. The village has total population of 1304 as per 2011 census. The census data of 2011, shows the male and female population comprises of 51.45% and 48.54%. Literacy rate of Yongam is 64.87%, for male and female literacy rate is 55.18% and 44.81%. The entire working population is 927 which are either main or marginal workers. Total main workers are 668 out of which 51.49% and 48.51% were male and female.

Table 1: Demographic and socio-economic indicators of Yongam village

Indicators	Total Number	%	Indicators	Total Number	%
Household	358	---	Main workers	668	100
Total population	1304	100	Male	344	51.49
Male	671	51.45	Female	324	48.51
Female	633	48.54	Total workers	927	100
Age group 0-6 years	248	100	Male	473	51.02
Male	129	52	Female	454	48.97
Female	119	48	Cultivators	570	100
Literates	685	100	Male	271	47.54
Male	378	55.18	Female	299	52.45
Female	307	44.81	Agriculture	10	100
Illiterates	619	100	Male	8	80
Male	293	47.33	Female	2	20
Female	326	52.66	---	---	---

Source: Census of 2011

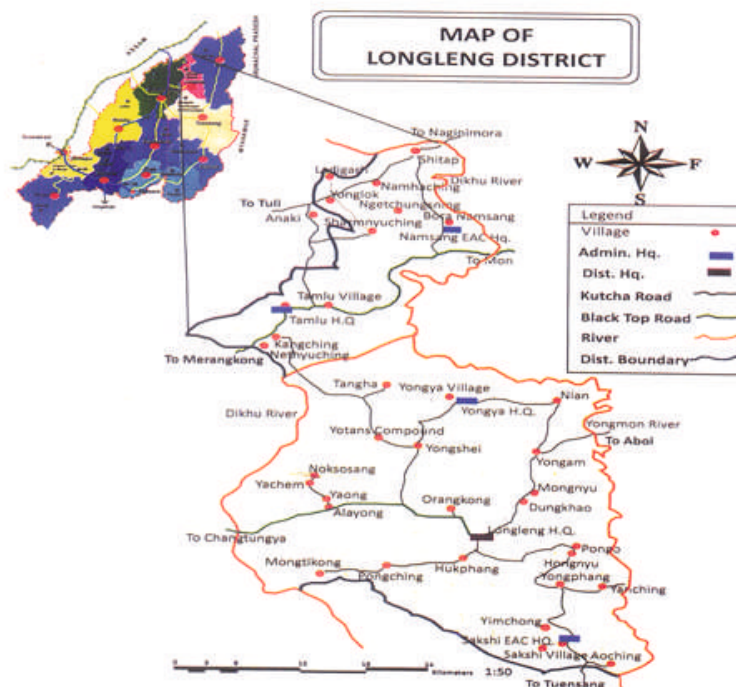


Fig. 1: Map of Longleng district

Source: National informatics Centre, Longleng: Nagaland

1.2.3. Sample size and sampling method

Total of forty (40) respondents i.e., organic large cardamom growers were selected using simple random sampling technique to study production and productivity of organic large cardamom (Cochran 1963, 3; Deming 1960, 3).

1.2.4. Research instrument and study design

The data were collected from four size classes, viz., below 1 acre, 1-2 acres, 2-4 and 4 and above. The maximum yielding life of organic large cardamom, according to cultivators is approx 3-5 years depending on soil fertility. Data collection was done through personal interviews. Primary methods were used to collect data, shared experiences, observation and find out the real problems mostly faced by the larger cardamom grower which were collected through questionnaire, key informant interview and focus group discussion (Ackoff 1961, 45; Bailey 1978, 3; Bowley 1937, 1). The target groups were asked a series of open and close-ended questions. All three such as structured, semi structured and unstructured questions were included in the interview schedule.

1.2.5. Statistical analysis

Information collected from the field survey was coded and tabulated on Statistical Package for Social Science version (SPSS) 20 and Microsoft Excel. The data were collected from four size classes, viz., below 1 acre, 1-2 acres, 2-4 and 4 and above. Benefit cost analysis was estimated using the total cost of production of large cardamom and gross return from large cardamom production. The total cost of production was calculated by summing the variable cost and fixed cost items incurred in the production process. The collected data were analyze using Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) and Cobb Douglas production function model.

Measurement of Cost-Benefit using Benefit-Cost Ratio method

Mathematical expression for BCR

$$1. BCR = \frac{DiscountBenefit}{DiscountedCost}$$

Discount Benefit = (Quantity of mean product Price of main product) + (Quality of by product price of by product)

Cost = Expenses incurred for agronomic operation in terms of labour, farm machinery and inputs costs such as seed etc., (Gitting 1984, 5).

- The production function named after two economists C.W. Cobb and P.H. Douglas is known as Cobb-Douglas production function. This production is widely used in economic analysis. A production function in which two inputs K and L are expressed in multiplicative form is known as Cobb-Douglas production function. It can be expressed as

$$Q = AK^\alpha L^\beta$$

Where, $A > 0$: Technical / efficiency parameter

$\alpha, \beta > 0$: Share of capital and labour / Substitution parameter Homogeneity

Multiplying k and L by λ times

$$\begin{aligned} Q &= AK^\alpha L^\beta \quad (\because \alpha+\beta = 1, \beta = 1-\alpha) \\ &= A (\lambda k)^\alpha (\lambda L)^\beta \\ &= A \lambda^{\alpha+\beta} K^\alpha L^\beta \\ &= \lambda^{\alpha+\beta} .Q \end{aligned}$$

Thus, Cobb-Douglas production function is homogeneous of degree $(\alpha+\beta)$.

If $\alpha+\beta > 1$ is increasing returns to scale (IRS).

If $\alpha+\beta < 1$ is increasing return to scale (DRS).

If $\alpha+\beta = 1$ constant returns to scale (CRS).

Cobb-Douglas production function is linear homogeneous

When,

$$(\alpha+\beta)=1$$

$$\text{or, } \beta = 1-\alpha$$

Thus the linear homogeneous Cobb-Douglas production function is

$$Q = AK^\alpha L^{1-\alpha}$$

Model specification is a mathematical expression showing the inter-relationship between the economic relationship existing between economic variables (dependent and independent). The model is a two-variable model and stated covers the production of organic large cardamom as the dependent variable; while agricultural sector output and labour, capital expenditure on inputs as the independent variables (Cobb & Douglas 1928, 18).

1.3. Objectives of the Research Work

Study the size of land holding, production and productivity.

To examine cost components of the organic large cardamom growers.

1.4. Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis H_0

There is no relationship between organic large cardamom production per acre and the labour as well as capital expenditure on inputs.

Alternative Hypothesis H_1

There is statistical significance between organic large cardamom production per acre and the labour as well as capital expenditure on inputs.

1.5. Results and Discussions

Table 2 indicates that in the sample of 40 organic large cardamom growers out of which 10.8 acres of land is covered by farm size below 1 acre which comprises of 30% of the total share, 35 acres of land is covered by farm size 1-2 acres which comprises of 57.5%, 11.4 acres of land is covered by farm size 2-4 acres which comprises of 10% and 4.5 acres of land is covered by farm size 4 and above acres which comprise of 2.5%. The result showed that the average land under organic large cardamom cultivation was 1.54 acre ranging from 0.84 to 4.5 acre.

Table 2: Size of land of the sample households

Size	No. of Sample	Own land	Total	Percentage
Below 1 Acre	12	10.80	10.80	30.00
1-2 Acres	23	35.00	35.00	57.50
2-4 Acres	4	11.40	11.40	10.00
4 and above	1	4.50	4.50	2.50
Total	40	61.7	61.7	100

Source: Author computed from the field survey report, 2017

Table 3: Area production and productivity

Size	Area	Production (Kg)	Productivity (Yield)
Below 1 acre	10.80	380	35.18
1-2 acres	35.00	2700	77.14
2-4 acres	11.40	950	83.33
4 and above	4.50	300	75.00
Total	61.70	4330	70.17

Source: Author computed from the field survey report, 2017

The total area under large cardamom in Nagaland during 2010-11 was 3180 hectare but further increased to 4208 hectare in 2016-17. Production area is the actual area that provides an agronomic yield on a yearly basis. Total production of large cardamom in Nagaland during 2010-11 was 15 metric ton and increased to 74 metric ton in 2016-17. During the same year the areas under organic large cardamom cultivation in Longleng was 50 hectare and increase to 234 hectare (Statistical Handbook, 2011, 36 2018, 19).

From table 3 reveals that the farm size between 1-2 acres shows the highest production with 2700 Kg and the lowest was found in the farm size 4 and above with 300 Kg. The farm size 2-3 acres shows the highest productivity with 83.33 Kg. The lowest was found in the farm size 0-1 acre with 35.18 Kg. The total area as a whole is 61.70 acres and total production is 4330 Kg and productivity is 70.17 Kg. The average production and productivity of cardamom were 0.27 MT/acre and 0.02 MT/acre respectively in the study area which was lower than the national productivity of cardamom (1.67 MT/acre) and productivity of large cardamom (0.07 MT/acre).

The study found that the productivity of organic large cardamom started to decline in recent times, because the large cardamom farmers did not apply recommended amount of manure and fertilizer to the cardamom orchard which degrade fertile soil (Gudade et al. 2013, 4). In addition, the incidence of large cardamom stem borer, rhizome rot, viral diseases such as *Chirkey* (Mosaic streak) and *Foorkey* (Bushy dwarf) also seems to have effect on yielding. Besides this, climate change, poor management of cultivation area, unavailability of suitable variety according to the altitude etc. are other reasons behind the decline of large cardamom production (Annamalai et al. 1988, 5). Due to all above discuss reasons of lower production and efficiency, organic large cardamom growers are destroying the cardamom orchard and reestablishing the orchard of cardamom.

As a consequence of long dry spells and disease infestations during 2018-2019, the production area and yield decreased each year (Chattopadhyay & Bhowmick 1965, 272; Biswas et al. 1986, 105; Sharma et al. 2001, 261). Revitalization strategies were then initiated by improving the management of the

farms such as use of manures before flowering and after harvesting, uprooting infected plants, and manual management of pests and diseases followed by application of bio-pesticides (Karibasappa 1987b, 2; Karibasappa 1987a, 1; John 1984, 3; Biswas et al. 1986, 105). Farmers planted cardamom in new fields, leaving the old plantations fallow, while the Horticulture Department Longleng, Government of Nagaland provided them with incentives for reviving organic large cardamom.

Table 4: Cost components organic large cardamom growers (Cost in ₹)

Cost components	Below 1 Acre	1-2 Acres	2-4 Acres	4 and above
Hired labour	65,000	414,000	128,000	32,000
Imputed value of family labour	30,600	36,800	6,400	2600
Seedling	35,500	2,76,000	37,000	17,000
Drying of cardamom using firewood	4,000	9,000	2000	1400
Total	131,100	722,800	173,400	53,000

Source: Author computed from the field survey report, 2017

- ** Interest on working capital,
- ** Rental value of land,
- ** Repair and maintenance depreciation,
- ** Manure and fertilizers,
- ** Plant protection and
- ** Mulching, shading and drying (Nil).

From the above table 4 it is evident from the analysis that cardamom cultivation requires three major costs such as labour, seedling and drying cost, farm size below one labour cost is Rs. 65000, imputed value of labour is Rs. 30600, seedling cost Rs. 35,500 and drying cost is Rs. 4000. For farm size 1-2 acres labour cost is Rs. 414000 imputed value of labour is Rs.36800, seedling cost Rs. 276000 and drying cost is Rs. 9000. For farm size 2-4 acres labour cost is Rs. 128000, imputed value of labour is Rs. 6400, seedling cost Rs. 37000 and drying cost is Rs. 2000. Size 4 and above labour cost is Rs 32000, imputed value of labour is Rs. 2600, seedling cost Rs. 17000 and drying cost is Rs 1400. It has been found that in all the farm size labour cost is highest. Till now cost in other components is negative.



Fig. 2: Organic large cardamom plantation under 50% shade in Yongam

Table 5: Cost and return of organic large cardamom growers (Cost and return in ₹)

Farm size	Cost	Return	Net Return	BCR
Below 1 Acre	135,100	304,000	168,900	1.23
1-2 Acres	735800	2170000	1447200	1.94
2-4 Acres	172400	760000	540600	3.10
4 and above	53,000	240000	177000	3.31
Total	1,096,300	3,474,000	2,333,700	2.12

Source: Author computed from the field survey report, 2017

Table 6: Generation of income of different farm sizes

Farm size	Total cost	Production (in Quintals)	Return from sale	Total income
Below 1 Acre	135,100	380	304,000	1,68,900
1-2 Acres	735,800	2700	2170000	14,47,200
2-4 Acres	173,400	950	760000	5,40,600
4and above Acres	53,000	300	240000	1,77,000
Total	1,097,300	4,330	3,474,000	2,333,700

Source: Author computed from the field survey report, 2017

Cultivation of large cardamom includes various types of cost, since it uses various kinds of inputs in terms of labour, seedling, cardamom plantings, equipment, firewood etc. It is evident from the analysis of Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) that all categories of the farmers enjoyed some profit since BCR varied from 1.23 to 3.31. The farmers of large farm size enjoyed the highest profit as per acre, cost is comparatively low than the farmers of small farm size. Benefit and Cost Ratio (BCR) were used to analyse whether the large cardamom enterprise was profitable or not. Any producing unit with BCR ratio less than 1 are not feasible since they are not profit yielding. However, BCR ratio greater than 1 denotes feasible enterprise/producing unit that could be sustained or making profit. So, overall BCR was estimated in the study area, which was found greater than unity (BCR 2.12). This showed that

the large cardamom enterprise is profitable in Yongam village. The details on benefit cost analysis of large cardamom in the study area presented (refer table 5 and fig. 3).

The estimated coefficients of Cobb-Douglas production function show that if labour increases by 10%, output increases by 7.30%, whereas if capital invested on raw material and transport cost (Seedling and firewood cost) increases by 10% output increases by 4.12% i.e., has a positive impact on production, even if at diminishing marginal returns. Since the coefficients value of labour and capital cost is less than 1 it exhibits diminishing return to scale and the Cobb-Douglas production function is not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that production per acre and the labour as well as capital expenditure on inputs is rejected.

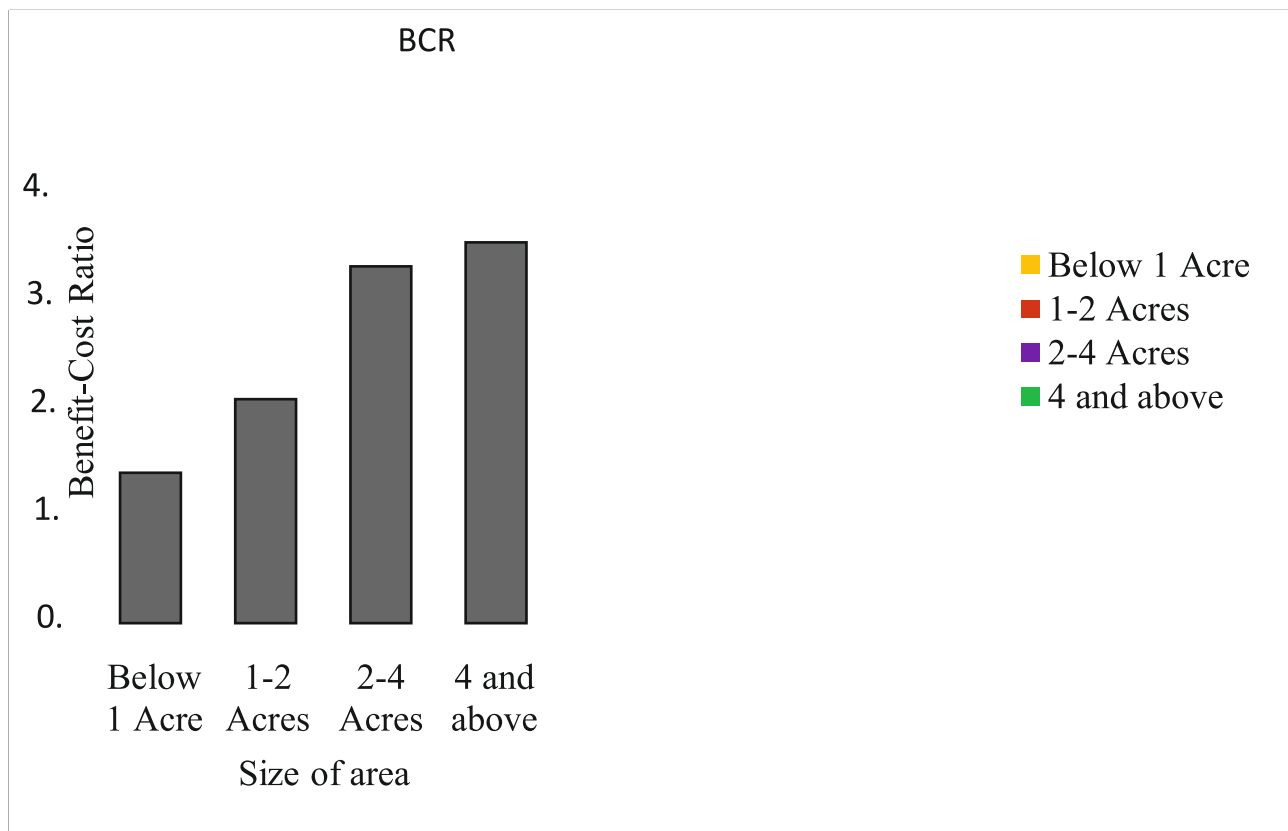


Fig. 3: Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) and size of area

1.6. Conclusion

The area under cultivation of organic large cardamom in Yongam village during 2017 is 61.7 acres and the total production was found to be 43.3 quintals/4330 kg and average yield per is 70.17 kg. The finding show the average cost per acre is Rs 1,096,300 and the return per acre is found Rs 3,474,000, net return in all farm size is found Rs 2,333,700. The Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) was found to be 2.12 and show higher BCR for large acres of area. It was also found that out of four major cost, the highest is the labor cost, followed by seedling cost, imputed value of family labor, it is also found that other cost such as manure, plant protection, mulching, shading, maintain and depreciation cost is negative. It is clear to see that fact finding of

Cobb Douglas production function, where 10% change expenditure and labour and capital inputs leads to 7.30% and 4.12% change in production function. So system is less efficient or exhibits diminishing return to scale. As a result, large cardamom growers are not getting enough benefits despite change in agriculture policy issues. So, agriculture production policies should be interlinked with macroeconomic policies. The large cardamom growers in the district is facing several problems in its efforts for increasing production and the most important of which is the limited scope for extensive cultivation, prevalence of diseases (*Foorkey and Chirkey*), cultivation based on traditional methods, land put to other use, labor problem, improper management of plant,

absence of work force education, lack of processing facility, unremunerative prices, lack of credit, inadequate government investment, existence of middlemen, lack of market knowledge about price and finally the most important, is the increasing cost of production. There is a need to promote organic cultivation of large cardamom among farmers so as to enable them to enhance their earning in an ecologically sustainable manner. At the present time, organic large cardamom farming is gaining impetus for income and employment generation and improving the livelihood of the farming community (Jamir 2021, 8; Jamir 2020, 221; Jamir & Ezung 2017b, 50; Jamir 2019, 4-14). So, the government agencies should come

forward and provide proper training and ad rem suggestions to the farmers so as to promote organic cultivation of large cardamom among farmers so as to enable them to enhance their earning capacity and boost livelihood among the farmers (Jamir & Ezung 2017a, 64).

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Challenging Stereotypes-Projection of Queer Characters in Indian Cinema

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Abstract

Indian cinema has come a long way from marginalising queer characters to placing them in the spotlight. Though queer-friendly trend has recently begun in Bollywood, past productions in Indian cinema had purportedly used queers as non-binary characters for entertainment purposes only. It inseed into the minds of the people as certain odd traits which were associated with being queer, gay, lesbian and so on. Anyone or any action falling outside the category of heteronormativity was given an eccentric portrayal, a ridiculous make-over which became an accepted stereotype of what queer identity consisted of. With a purpose to dismantle the widely accepted gender stereotypes, this paper is an attempt to bring to light queer characters who challenged the widely propagated stereotype and to question the necessity of devising extreme means in the projection of queer characters in Indian cinema.

Keywords: Queer, stereotype, bollywood, cinema

Introduction

The *Natyashastra*, a collection of information on dramaturgy, notes how men assumed women's character and women assumed men's. Popularly known as 'Rupanusarini', this exchange of roles was looked upon as entertainment tactics. Regional folk theatres also witness this men/women impersonation of the opposite gender such as the Kathakali of Kerala, the Ram Lila of Uttar Pradesh and the Nupi Manbi of Manipur. As rural theatre culture vanished, cinematic space emerged as a plane for expression and representation of queers. It is significant to note that although folk theatres engaging in exchange of roles by both men and women were not scorned, the cinematic productions seem to have taken a different aspect when dealing with queer characters. Therefore, in most Bollywood films, queer

characters firstly emerged in the represented form of the 'Hijra' who served no other purpose apart from comedic intervals in a bigger narrative. Kathryn Hansen (2002) opined that the cultural and folk theatres enabled acceptance of cross-gender role play and "theatrical transvestism not only enabled actors to transform their own gender identities but also sustained and eventually reworked viewing practices predicated on interest in transgender identification and the homoerotic gaze".

Bollywood movies in particular, play a great role in representing queer identities. However, upon proper analysis, it has been found that the projections of queer characters have been inadequate and misdirected. Also noteworthy in this aspect is the aftermath of the release of Deepa Mehta's movie 'Fire'(1996) which is

about a lesbian relationship. While some Bollywood movies like 'Dostana', 'Bol Bachan' and 'Kal Ho Na Ho' were widely appreciated by the audience for the comedic service of its queer contents, 'Fire' had a different effect upon the people. Theatres were vandalised, the movie was boycotted and groups emerged who blamed western culture as the influencer of homosexuality in India. This drastic difference in the attitude of people towards queer representations onscreen raises questions about proper knowledge and education of queer.

Discussion

On carefully analysing Bollywood movies, it can be seen that movies such as 'Dostana'(2008) fixates upon two male straight characters who, in order to rent a flat together, portray themselves as gay. In exocitising gayness, Sameer and Kunal set out to create and engage in stereotyped actions that 'make' a person gay. With their sexual orientation hidden at bay, these men who set out on a gay make-over might have entertained the audience, but it raises serious questions to the confused audience about sexual orientation, identity and performance. Their actions are inconsiderately directed to an audience of heterosexuals. Because for the hetero-gaze being gay or queer was attached to conventional or stereotyped mannerisms. Writing in this context, for the Indian audience, being gay meant liking pink, dressing and talking funny, and at social spaces exhibiting 'feminine' traits. Hence the characters' plan to convince people that they were gay, served the purpose of hilarity aimed by Bollywood. In this context, Himadri Roy(2020) states: "Bollywood has been very cruel in depicting the reality about the gay men's world, and by portraying them as drags or transvestites, has confused the spectators . The

other categories are neglected and were not even talked about during this golden era of Bollywood cinema, especially during the 60s and 70s of the last century".

There are instances of Bollywood characters who adopt stereotyped gender performances instantaneously to prove their sexuality. In "Bol Bacchan" a scene displays Abhishek Bachan posing as queer for some moments, borrowing 'feminine traits' and dancing effeminately in front of Ajay Devgan. These scenes reduce the identity of gay and transvestites to mere performances such that the audience begins to cultivate the suggested notion that these identities are associated with simply performing 'feminine' or 'effeminate' mannerisms- a certain sort of bodily movement and a certain manner of speaking. Other movies like 'Student of the Year' portrays Rishi Kapoor who plays the role of a gay man. He constantly approaches the PT coach in a stereotyped gay manner. As noted by Himadri Roy(2020), effeminacy might be a part of a gay man's world but "it is not the entirety of the population of gay men. It is one of the complex matrixes that gay men exist in". Roy (2020) also states that "Bollywood has accepted this mass psychology. This attempt of Bollywood gave panache to the distinctive world and makes them exist and perish in a definite ghettoised world. The gay men in such strife lose the battle. The heterosexual world has always seen this gay world with awe, curiosity, abhorrence, and loathing".

Bollywood's introduction to gay and transvestites evokes a different level of emotion from the characters in the screen and the viewers offscreen. In ways, Bollywood films portray the popular reaction among masses- the homophobic response which characterizes

many individuals in society. Shohini Ghosh(2011) also notes that the homophobic 'sighting' can be seen in several other films such as 'Kal Ho Na Ho' by Nikhil Advani. The movie deals with a love triangle between two men and one woman: "the film plays self-consciously on the slippage between friendship and eroticism. However, it also retains ambivalence about homosexuality by introducing homophobia as a possible perhaps even legitimate response through the figure of Kantaben, a disapproving and paranoid housekeeper"(Ghosh).

With such movies simulating people's minds with represented images and ideas of what gay or queer identities are, it can be surmised that smaller factions of sexuality such as cross-dressers, butch-femme and dykes remain invisible in the representational narratives. Hence, gender identity has been rigidly limited to being male, female and the comedic element of transgender, gay or lesbian characters.

It can be further noted that lesser movies are produced upon lesbian identity and topic. When 'Margarita With a Straw' was released in 2014, Shonali Bose stated in her interview with Devarsi Ghosh that "many were put off by the fact that the heroine is both gay and disabled, and viacom18 wasn't actually wrong". Representations of gay and transvestites dominated the screen in Bollywood. When characters like Laila, played by Kalki Koechlin, dominates the screen, a larger number of viewers seemed unaccepting of the portrayal of a woman's sexuality- a woman who was a lesbian as well as a patient suffering from cerebral palsy.

To call movies like 'Dostana' only comic, would be an understatement because on a deeper level it questions identities, sexual orientation, preferences and performances. On one hand, the

binaries of man-woman works mainstream while a subjective reading would perhaps point at straight-queer issues that bleakly move in the periphery of many Bollywood narrative. Nevertheless, Bollywood industry had unquestionably focused more on the exhibited traits of a character without considering or probing deeper into their sexual identity. Categorising or clubbing sexuality would end up limiting the diversity of various identities. To classify a person or a character as being gay or lesbian would probably and unquestionably lead to mapping out the performances of that person and putting him into a group: "the fact, about fixing a category for any sexuality, is in fact the pomo-eclecticism that leads Indian, the heteronormative men to even create a limited domain for gay men"(Roy).

The question thus arises as to how such inaccurate representations in Bollywood be overthrown. How would movies in a world of 3D or 2d screen, with only the viewers eyes be able to elaborate so much of what sexuality consists of ? It would be wrong to guess the sexuality of a character on their performances. Could there be in anyway a channel through which the true sexuality of a person could be conveyed to the viewer, is a question of much importance. With the limited knowledge of the viewer and the restricted representation of queers, how would Bollywood cinema then challenge or break this stereotype and be able to project the true sexuality of a character?

It is at this state that narratives come into the spotlight as a force that would truly and faithfully deliver the sexual identity of a person. Without the act of a person declaring his/her sexuality or elaborating his/her preference, it is only futile at the part of the viewers to derive in fact anything out of what they see and assume:

“As queer sexuality becomes impossible to elide or overlook at the start of the new millennium, two new currents begin to emerge. The first is the beginnings of a new queer cinema that displaces conventional cinematic codes of masculinity and femininity”(Ghosh, 2011). Recent queer interventions in cinema has further complicated the process of understanding queer identities. Ghosh (2011) opines that movies like 'My Brother Nikhil' breaks new grounds by featuring a queer protagonist “and reimagining new gender and sexual identities, plunging heterosexual masculinity into a state of profound flux, thereby reshaping conventional notions of manhood and male desire”. The protagonist in 'Kapoor and Sons' for instance, does not perform the stereotyped role of a gay until the end when he comes out to his family. Other movies like 'My brother Nikhil' and 'Aligarh' represents the gay characters who dress, act and talk conforming to heterosexuality.

'Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga' keeps us captivated and fixed to the hero and the heroine's story. A viewer who had never heard or never watched the trailer of this movie would be taken aback by a sudden change in the narrative which distorts the usual progress of a Bollywood movie. Initially the viewers would believe the story to be about a love story between a man and a woman, and they must have waited for the next big event- for the heroine to fall in love with the ever pursuing hero. But things take a turn only upon the declaration of the heroine to the hero that she is in love with her own kind. This jolts the viewers for a moment with the least expected trajectory. The viewers are not prepared for this revelation. A gradual hint like seeing the heroine with short hair or wearing pants would have been enough.

The traditional approach of a viewer with a cue as to what is going to happen in the theatre is now at this point destroyed. In no way can he/she depend on what is being shown on the screen, because the truth might be right there behind a gossamer screen. Therefore, subtle queer representations need derivatory understanding of queer complexities and requires subversion of heteronormative gaze.

Devdutt Pattanaik offers the following lines in his book 'Shikhandi and Other Queer Tales They Don't Tell You'-

“I have a man's body, I accept this body. I offer it to everyone.

I have a woman's body. I accept this body. I offer it to everyone.

I have a man's body. I reject this body. I desire no one.

I have a woman's body. I reject this body. I desire no one.

I don't know if my body is a woman's or a man's .
I feel I am a woman.

I don't know if my body is a man's or a woman's.
I feel I am a man.

I have a man's body. It should be a woman's. I desire men.

I have a woman's body. It should be a man's. I desire women.

I have a man's body. I dress like a woman. I desire women.

I have a woman's body. I dress like a man. I desire men.

I have a man's body. I dress like a man. I desire both men and women.

I have a woman's body. I dress like a woman. I desire both women and men.

I have a man's body. I dress like a man. I desire men.

I have a woman's body. I dress like a woman. I desire women.

I have a man's body. I dress like a man. I desire women.

I have a woman's body. I dress like a woman. I desire men.

I am a man. I desire only one woman.

I am a woman. I desire only one woman.

I am neither male nor female.

I am both male and female.

I am firm and flexible.

I am aware and I am not.

To appreciate this fluidity of nature
And the shifting rigidities of culture
Is to appreciate queerness.”

Like Devdutt Pattanaik's elaborate insight into various sexual identities quoted above,

there could be more. Perhaps it would in fact, be folly on the part of the consumers and the viewers to classify and categorize them at all into the few restricted gender groups that we are aware of. And Bollywood movies had actually been, if at all, able to show only a miniscule of these various sexual identities.

Conclusion

It would be proper to state at this point that Bollywood has not been able to expansively incorporate all gender and sexuality at the present time. Perhaps a larger inclusivity could in the future be achieved by gradually breaking the stereotypes about gender and sexuality — such as the consistent representation of trans and gay men for comic purposes. The projection of queer characters would need a drastic update from one that is ignorantly misleading to something that probes deeper into knowledge about queer. This would prepare viewers and people to be accepting of queerness in any form it is presented. Another way of tackling the issue of queer representations could be best done by acknowledging that queerness exists in all cultures. Specifically in India, the inaccurate belief among the larger population that queer is an effect of colonial intervention needs to be resolved and the fact that queerness has been present since pre-colonial era in India requires to be disseminated in narratives.

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Representation of Tribal Woman in *Paraja* and *The Primal Land*.

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Abstract

The process of representation calls for close reading and re-examination of the discourse of representation in the postcolonial situation under the consideration that the discourse of representation involves certain political interests resulting in a fallacious construction of the original text. The represented body is refashioned and therefore may be seen as a product of subjective construction of the political agency that comes into play - a key role in the entire practice in which the dominant power dynamics decide what to present and what to erase. The discourse of tribal representation remains skewed with some gray areas of political debate in the recent times owing to its seemingly unresolved issues ranging from misrepresentation of socio-cultural aspects to construction of certain stereotypes that has led to further distortion of tribal identity. On the question of fallacious representation, tribal woman has always been at loss in the patriarchal setup where woman is commodified at the backdrop of colonial invasion in India that channelized external influences in the guise of modernity. Within the premise of the above proposition, this paper intends to discuss the politics involved in the process of representation and examine the status of tribal woman as represented in the select novels.

Keywords: Postcolonial situation, fallacious representation, modernity.

Representation may be loosely defined as a process of presenting a substitute of something or making a presentation on behalf of someone/something. This definition, however, fails to meet certain criteria of authentic representation when contested under the parameter of present development in postcolonial studies. This is mainly to do with the representation of the subaltern section of the society under the dominance of certain political agency. It further opens a ground for discussion on the potential political interest that determines what to represent and what to erase or who represents whom. It is argued under the postcolonial rubrics that the colonized body during colonial period was subjected to certain

misleading representation pertaining to the self/other dichotomy that largely guided the colonial narrative. Anthropological texts produced during the colonial period were instrumental in propagating and giving currency to Eurocentric view of the world which eventually situated the West at the centre of the order of all things with further confirmation of its peripheral colonies as Tilotoma Misra rightly argues, “colonialism, however, superimposed a Eurocentric concept of modernity derived from the enlightenment...” (Misra 2011, xiv). Representation of the colonized not only corroborates the colonial authority but also appropriates the position and power dynamics of the authority under the

premise of the apparent rationale of civilizing the savage. Pramod K. Nayar maintains, “Colonial discourse masks the power relations between races, cultures and nations. It makes the relations seem natural, scientific and objective. Colonial discourse therefore produces stereotypes from within European prejudices, beliefs and myths” (Nayar 2012, 3). Nayar's argument points at the politics involved in the process of 'othering' of the non-West or in the construction of what Edward Said defined as the 'Orient' in his book *Orientalism* (1995). Colonial takeover of a certain geographical area entails the power politics involved in the establishment of the administrative control that radiates from the dichotomous relation of the colonizer and the colonized. The construction of self/other binary on the basis of racial difference also demarcates the cultural and social disparity. In Nayar's words colonial discourse acts as a 'mask' that appropriates the power relation involved in the regimentation of the colonized body. Colonial texts further add to the entire design of reduction of the 'other' by the construction of certain stereotypes on the colonized society that inversely legitimizes colonial intervention for the correction of the heathen natives. Colonial representation of the natives in the colonial texts is thus guided by racial prejudice that further devalues and erases the entire socio-cultural ethos from the subconscious of the native as well as the entire human epistemology.

Colonial enterprise was not always dependent on the military power of the colonial authority but was simultaneously run with a purpose of winning the mind of the colonized which largely proved to be more effective in giving permanency to colonial takeover. Representation of the colonized body as the

'other' of the West served the purpose of emphasizing the racial, social and cultural differences with the 'self'. This further strengthened the ground for perpetuation of colonial engagement for the correction of the 'other' by way of taking it under the fold of the 'self' through the colonial design of civilizing mission of the 'other' such as English education, religious conversion etc. Colonial civilizing mission ostensibly had certain positive impacts on the natives with the introduction of modern education but it also caused an irreversible damage to the cultural identity of the natives by negation of its significance. The civilizing mission undertaken by the colonial power also contributed to the creation of certain elite class within the natives who eventually participated in the oppression of their own people. Frantz Fanon rightly argues,

“All colonized people- in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave- position themselves in relation to the civilizing language: i.e., the metropolitan culture.” (Fanon 2008, 2)

Colonial narratives affirm the continuation of colonial rule and legitimize its position with the claim of employing scientific and objective methodology in the study of the native notwithstanding the fact that this process of distancing with much emphasis on the difference between the 'self' and the 'other' was primarily grounded on racial differences.

Tribal representation in colonial ethnographic texts were largely prejudiced and prescriptive in nature with little serious attempt at exploring and understanding the possibility of an existent ethnic civilization embedded in its own value system. Needless to mention that

pertaining to these two significant factors of incongruity. Tribal life world was represented as an entity that is fundamentally governed by primitiveness, savagery and obscurity lacking in scientific reason that further led to the construction of certain stereotypes around tribal identity. The study of tribal people was very often based on voyeuristic gaze without much empirical revision which resulted in a largely romanticized and biased representation of tribal identity in the colonial texts.

Extension of this discussion to the representation of tribal women further problematizes the entire discourse, for like the tribal men, the women were also subjected to many misrepresentations through the wrong interpretation of certain socio-cultural ethos of the tribal. Tribal women has always been represented as a figure of sensuality and social transgression in the colonial representation pertaining to the comparatively open and liberal nature of tribal society that allows much freedom to women in terms of social mobility and individual rights. It is important to note that social freedom enjoyed by the tribal women was alien and undesirable to the 19th century European patriarchal setup and therefore the fallacious representation of the tribal women may be understood as the backlash of the male ego of the colonizer. It is however pertinent to mention that the colonial design of representation of tribal life has not undergone any remarkable transformation even in the postcolonial situation in India with further perpetuation of the same dialectic in the dominant mainstream understanding of tribal condition. On the question of fallacious representation, tribal people have suffered different layers of marginality and exploitation. The continuation of such prejudiced

representation of the tribal has caused discontentment and strong resistance to marginalization in the present situation of identity consciousness among the tribal.

Representation cannot be simply understood as a process of someone/something making the presentation on behalf of someone/something. Rather, in the event of representation, the representing agency situates itself at the centre of the representational discourse. The agency eventually regulates the power dynamics in the discourse of the representation and the act of representation cease to remain objective making room for subjectivity and its lingering prejudices. Representation thus remain skewed in the problem of indeterminacy with regard to the authenticity of the represented body for the process of representation often suffers from the tendency of being guided by the subjective priorities of the representing agency.

Stuart Hall in his essay "The Work of Representation" (1997) comments that language plays the central role in the process of representation and appropriation of the represented text as he further argues, "Language is one of the 'media' through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the process by which meaning is produced" (Hall 1997, 1). Here, Hall deliberately emphasizes the terms 'language' and 'culture' in relation to representation, for these are the two factors that always remain enmeshed in the power dynamics of the dominant that regulates the entire process of representation. Representation invariably is dependent on the function of language and it is through language that any represented object gets recognition and permanence in a culture.

Subject to phonocentric view of human world, language serves the purpose of 'media' through which message is transmitted in a meaningful manner and subsequently a meaningful identity is ascribed to the represented object. It is however pertinent to note that language is arbitrary in nature and owing to this arbitrariness of language, representation and the meaning it produces remains unstable with further confirmation of the temporality of the fixity with regard to meaning. The meaning of any representation is determined by the language and culture of the dominant and hence the meaning keeps on shifting with the shift in the power structure. In the premise of the slippery nature of meaning pertaining to the arbitrariness of sign system, every reading of the representational text "...opens representation to the constant 'play' or slippage of meaning, to the constant production of new meanings, new interpretations" (Hall 1997, *ibid.* 32). The relational thread of language and culture with representation further extends to the power dynamics that regulates in a particular society where the meaning or truth is constructed and established.

Michel Foucault in his deliberation on 'Truth and Power' in an interview published in the book *Power/Knowledge* (1980) argues, "Truth isn't outside power. Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enables one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault

1980, 131). Foucault's argument focuses on the process of production of truth and perpetuation of this construct which is carried out with the exercise of certain power politics in a given society. He calls the entire exercise as the work of 'regime of truth' that controls the discourse of truth and sanctions the license of continuing it as truth.

Extending this argument to the representation of the tribal in India and elsewhere situates the tribal at the receiving end owing to the history of marginality meted out to them by the mainstream society. The marginalization of tribal community in India dates back to the colonial period when the colonial anthropologists classified the entire tribal population under a singular identity marker without much study on the potential socio-cultural differences among the tribes. The underlying colonial blunder in the classification of the tribal as primitive, savage and essentially lacking in progress and scientific knowledge was further continued in the post-independence era in India. Consequently the status of tribal remained almost the same in the post-independence India as far as representation of tribal reality in the mainstream is concerned. The study of tribal society has always been done placing it against the mainstream society by way of comparison in the colonial model. Progress in tribal society is measured in relation to the degree of assimilation of tribal society with the mainstream and absorption of certain markers of evolution such as literacy, social mobility and economy. A scientific and empirical study of the tribal with a view of understanding the inner dynamics of the tribal life-world is seldom done which may be understood as the fundamental cause of misrepresentation of certain aspects of tribal society.

The misrepresentation of the tribal has further given way to the fallacious representation of the tribal woman in all the available literature due to the lack of sincere and systematic study on the subject. The condition of tribal woman has been subjected to casual commentary lacking in insight and a definite methodology of study which resultantly contributed to the formation of certain stereotypes that has remained instrumental in furthering the sense of marginalization. Commenting on the status of woman in tribal society, Virginius Xaxa argues, "Except in some of the works of Elwin, Furer-Haimendorf, and some others, there has been no explicit discussion of the status of women in tribal society. Even in these works, the assessment of the status of women has been far from uniform" (Xaxa 2008, 113). Xaxa's argument provides that the condition of tribal woman in India demands further study in order to understand the actual status, for the condition of tribal woman in its authenticity has not been explored yet. It is generally perceived that woman enjoys a certain amount of freedom and authority in tribal society and an equal status is thereby granted to them. Nevertheless, continuity of the tradition of equal status for woman in tribal society is highly debatable considering the degree of assimilation of tribal society with the mainstream through the introduction of modern administration, economy, education, political system and cultural exchange. Tribal society has undergone massive transformation in terms of social values pertaining to the absorption of certain mainstream socio-cultural elements such as religious practices, system of marriage and means of economic sustenance. Majority of the tribal population in India has been ascribed the religious identity as Hindus through the process of Hinduization by way of acceptance of certain

religious rites and the patriarchal system of Hindu society has made its inroad into the once egalitarian society of the tribal. Conversion of the tribal into Christianity may also be seen as a means of introducing radical changes in social values as Xaxa maintains, "Both Hinduization and Christianization thus led to a number of restrictions on the kinds of freedom women enjoyed in the traditional social setting. In the case of Hinduization, such restrictions were part of the concern with maintaining respectability and status; in the case of Christianization, it had more to do with religious morals and values" (Xaxa 2008, *ibid.* 116).

Condition of woman in tribal society in the present context calls for a detailed study for the traditional value system and the equal status of both woman and man are gradually being eroded in the face of rapid modernization in terms of livelihood and sustenance. It has also undergone a paradigmatic shift from community living to nuclear system of family thereby adopting new idiom of cultural values.

Tribal woman in *Paraja* and *The Primal Land*

Novel has generally maintained to be a genre of literature of authentic representation without much regulative constraints and normative obligations, especially when compared to the anthropological texts of the colonial times which were produced keeping in mind of the interest of the authority in power. Writing fiction involves a greater sense of freedom as well as sensibility in the representation of the substance. It has the power of representing the nuanced realities of the subaltern, in this case the tribals of India. Pratibha Ray's *The Primal Land* (2009) and Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja* (2008) offer an insight into the core of tribal reality at the backdrop of certain degrees of exploitation of

the tribal by the outsiders and enforcement of modern system of administration posing greater threat to the sustenance of the tribals in their own homeland. The position of women in tribal society as represented in these two novels is worth examining by way of juxtaposing it against the colonial representation of tribal woman in the premise of the above discussed theoretical parameter.

The story of *Paraja* is set on the life of the Paraja tribe of Koraput region of Orissa at the backdrop of advancing modernity into the serene and primordial life of the tribe surrounded by forest and mountains. Jnanpith awardee Oriya writer Gopinath Mohanty wrote the novel in Oriya language and published for the first time in 1945 when India was still under British rule. His depiction of the tribal reality yet commands relevance with its exploration of the darker areas that remain untouched in the romanticized projection of tribal reality in majority of the mainstream literature of his contemporary times. Unlike the colonial texts, Mohanty offers an insight of the tribal reality in an authentic manner by focusing upon the predicament of his protagonists in the face of rapid modernization of the tribal lands and assimilation of the tribal life with the mainstream society manned by opportunists like the Sahukar Mahajan (Moneylender) and oppressors like the Forest guard and other government officials.

Land rights of the tribal holds cultural importance in tribal pantheon for every object in their land ranging from the rocks to the forest and rivers are worshipped. Land for the tribals is not simply individual property but a collective occupancy that corroborates to the community life of sharing and everything that inhabits the land forms the essence of their cosmology.

Tribals consider it their duty to guard the sacredness of every object of their land including the oral culture of folk beliefs and myths for man and nature coexist forming a symbiotic relationship in tribal worldview. However with the intrusion of external elements in the guise of modernity into the land of the tribal, their land rights come under certain threat as the tribal is dispossessed of their land the moment forest law is enforced by the state. In the novel, with the enforcement of forest law the life of the protagonist Sukru Jani gets baffled. Besides, at a symbolic level this may be understood as the first blow of patriarchal system on the life of the tribal against their traditional symbiotic relation with Mother Nature. This symbiotic relation of the tribal with Mother Nature is systematically damaged and replaced with modernist view of materialism.

The representation of tribal woman is mainly concentrated on two daughters of Sukru Jani namely Jili and Bili in the novel. Narrating the freedom of women in choosing their partner in tribal society Mohanty maintains,

“In the centre of the village was a hut which served as a dormitory for all the unmarried girls in the village, while little way off was the men's dormitory. It was an ancient Paraja custom for all unmarried boys and girls to sleep in their respective dormitories, rather than in their parents' homes.” (Mohanty 2008, 14-15)

Unlike the restrictive patriarchal system of the mainstream society, tribal society is based on the freedom of both the sexes allowing them the liberty of making individual decision of life. Jili meets her beloved Bagla in the village dormitory and their courtship begins. It is pertinent to note that in spite of the freedom to meet in isolation, both Jili and Bagla maintain

the sacredness of love without consummating physical intimacy. Jili also takes the liberty of being flirtatious with the forest guard which may be understood as another example of freedom tribal woman enjoys. Jili's carefree behavior with a stranger implies the liberal nature of tribal society where a woman is granted the freedom of making her choice unlike the restrictive patriarchal setup of the mainstream society. However, the forest guard fails to understand the inner dynamics of the tribal reality and takes Jili's Jovial as an opportunity of taking undue advantage, which is ostensibly thwarted by Jili. With her resistance to the forest guard's unwanted advancement, Jili represents the ability of every woman to question and transgress social boundaries when she is provided with the freedom of making her own decision.

Sahukar Mahajan introduces money into the life of the Paraja and robs them of all their belongings as the Paraja tribe is not adept in the use of money and Sukru Jani ends up becoming the bonded labour or 'Goti' under Sahukar. Sukru's daughter Jili is married to Sahukar which may be seen as a case of assimilation of the tribal with the mainstream. However, in this assimilation and negotiation of two cultures, the tribal suffers greater loss for Jili does not enjoy equal status in the house of Sahukar pertaining to the patriarchal setup of the mainstream society. Jili suffers like any other woman in a patriarchal system and her predicament is equated with the suffering of her father Sukru as a bonded labour under her husband, the Sahukar.

Jnanpith and Padmashree awardee Oriya writer Dr. Pratibha Ray's *Adi Bhumi* was published in 1993 and translated into English as *The Primal Land* by Bikram K. Das in 2001. The story of *The Primal Land* is set in the remote

mountainous forest areas of Malkangiri region of Koraput district of Southern Orissa inhabited by Bonda tribe. Ray has always been an exponent of feminist ideology and her narration of the story in this novel aligns with feminist reading of the tribal society. In this novel she portrays the life of the Bondas in the light of rapid modernization and awakening of the tribal consciousness about their identity at the backdrop of massive exploitation by the outsiders. She has given ample space to the discussion of the position of woman in Bonda society through the narration of a Bonda legend of Bundi Mahadei. Bundi Mahadei is considered to be the legendary female character who gave a definite direction to the life of Bonda tribe by way of uniting them and creating awareness about their identity. In her introduction to the Bonda society in *The Primal Land* (2009) she mentions,

“It has always been thus among the Bondas: when a boy is ten years old, he is married to a bride of twenty. Why have the Bondas adopted this strange custom? The age of the female is the age of Bundi Mahdei while the age of the male that of her pre-pubescent son. They are more mother and son than wife and man. And so the woman looks after everything while the man roams free.” (Ray 2009, 11)

Here the writer introduces a very interesting custom prevalent among the Bonda tribe in which a young male marries an aged woman and as a result entire responsibility of the family falls on the hands of the woman. It is generally assumed that being elder in age the Bonda wife commands authority in the family as well as the society which is totally opposite to the mainstream society where the husband's age is always desirable to be older than the wife.

Woman in a Bonda society has more responsibility owing to her older age while the husband is yet to attain his adulthood. Bonda woman is ascribed with peasantry and household work while the man's work is generally associated with hunting as Ray maintains, "When she is five years old she picks up the da to mow grass, to cut firewood and to harvest the crops. While the Bonda uses his arrow to kill, the Bonduni uses her da to sustain" (Ray 2009, *ibid.* 17). Here, Ray tells about the duties of a woman in Bonda society in a symbolic manner and suggests the division of works and duties among the Bonda man and woman. She indicates about the greater burden of works falls on the woman due to the unequal distribution of duties and a despondent life of a woman in Bonda society due to frequent occurrences of separation and desertion of the aged wife by the young husband.

Ray does not identify herself as an outright feminist writer but in her depiction of the Bonda life in the novel, she empathizes with the Bonda woman and their sufferings in the society. In order to show the predicament of Bonda woman, Ray portrays several female characters who suffer despite the popular claim of tribal society granting freedom to woman. The Bonduni does not enjoy equal status when it comes to decision making in the public domain. For example, the *Sindbore* which is a stone platform placed in the middle of the village where the members of the village council sit for making important decision concerning the village is exclusively a male domain. A Bonduni does not have access to the seats on the *Sindbore* for it is not expected of a Bonda woman to occupy important position in the society.

The Bondas are known as the naked people owing to the way of their dressing half naked. Pratibha Ray has provided justification to

the nature of their traditional attire by mentioning about the mythical tale of Sita-Takrani prevalent among the tribe. According to the myth one day in the forest some Bondunis answered to the call of a hornbill by laughing which was heard by the goddess Sita who was taking bath in a nearby stream. Goddess Sita thought that they had mocked her by laughing and out of anger she cursed,

"The whole world shall laugh at you in the *Kali* age, the evil time to come! Naked you shall be to every eye! And not a hair shall cover your heads, you shall walk with your heads shaven, bare from head to foot! But beware! If you try to cover up your nakedness or grow hair on your scalps, not a blade of grass will grow on these mountains! The Bonda people will be destroyed!" (Ray 2009, 25)

The deep-seated myth of Sita-Takrani is strictly maintained by the Bonda society till date and the Bondunis are prohibited from covering themselves for the fate of the Bonda tribe remains at the hands of the Bondunis. If the Bondunis defy the order of goddess Sita, her curse would befall upon them and the Bondas would be destroyed. However, ironically there is no social prohibition if a male Bonda wants to adopt a new dress code like wearing a dhoti emulating the plainsman. Oral myth of Sita-Takrani is thus designed to contribute to the patriarchal interest by depriving the woman of all possible opportunities for social empowerment and upward mobility.

Mention may also be made of the character of Adibari Toki who volunteers to work in a government project along with other two Bondunis. After joining the project she starts wearing sari which is perceived as an unwelcome gesture by a bonduni and a

downright insult to the age old social order of the Bondas. She is not accepted by her own people and rejected company when she visits the *Dingo* (dormitory for the young Bondas). Disheartened and deprived of respect, she elopes with a man of another society and disappears from the village. But the reaction of the Bonda society to her disappearance was shockingly indifferent and rather much of a relief as, “the Bondas concluded she had been devoured by a man-eating tiger. Well it had to happen. Was it surprising that the first sari-clad woman became the tiger's prey? The sin had been atoned for” (Ray 2009, *ibid.* 195). Adibari's attempt at social transgression costs her place in her own society for patriarchy and masculine strength rule even in a tribal society despite the popular perception of woman having a considerable social space in comparison to the mainstream society.

Both the novelists have made different representations of the position of woman in tribal society. Mohanty's representation is of a tribal woman who is capable of transgression and resistance when the society is liberal enough to grant freedom of making choice. But this freedom of woman is reduced with the intrusion of external influences from the mainstream society that culminates in restricting woman within the patriarchal constraints of social normativity. Mohanty's novel stands as a critique of the colonial representation of tribal society as uncivilized and unprogressive by demystifying the negativity attached to tribal life-world. On the contrary, Ray's depiction is of a tribal woman who has always been at loss in the face of patriarchal setup and social taboos. A

Bonda woman has to struggle for sustenance throughout her life playing the roles of a helping hand as a girl, a dutiful wife, a caring mother and an old woman deserted by her young husband. Sometimes she has to act even as an object of sexual gratification by other male members of the husband's family, especially when the husband is of young age.

Tribal society has been subjected to different layers of marginality and exploitation, and fallacious representation of tribal reality has led to the perpetuation of this process despite many attempts at correcting the deplorable condition of tribal society in India. Woman's position in tribal society has generally been perceived to be better in comparison to the patriarchal society of the mainstream Indian society owing to the free and liberal system prevalent among the tribal. However, in the present context of massive cultural exchange and social interaction between the tribal and the mainstream, traditional value system of the tribal society has undergone tremendous transformation. A systematic study with the employment of a definite methodology for the understanding of the inner dynamics of tribal reality and the long standing question of the status of woman in tribal society is of utmost necessity. This paper limits its study to the theoretical analysis of the politics involved in the representation of the tribal and tribal woman in two select novels which needs to be taken for further exploration of the present condition at the backdrop of massive identity consciousness and apparent resistance to the sense of marginality among the tribal.

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Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Kunzan Choden's *The Circle of Karma*

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Abstract

Kunzan Choden in *The Circle of Karma* portrays the daily activities of the household. The relationship between mother–daughter, sister-sister, and woman-woman, how each like the other knows the truth yet fails to understand one another. The circle covers the life of Tsomo who wishes to study religion and become a nun. Caught in the materialistic world she endures the sufferings she faces which she calls her Karma. She worries of what her next birth would be like if she could not gather any merit in this birth. When it comes to gender, she portrays the different attitudes of society based on gender. The Postmodern world has provided arena for women to present their views, and thus Kunzan Choden outshines to become the first Bhutanese woman to write a novel in English with the publication of her first novel *The Circle of Karma* in 2005. The novel is rich in detailed descriptions of the ritualistic life in Bhutan. The author seeks to expose patriarchal practices and its effect on women. The readers travel to Nepal and India along with the protagonist Tsomo, who is led to new places by circumstances acquiring new experiences across cultural differences.

Keywords: Gender, marginalization, religion, karma.

Literature serves as a map of changes mainly for women. They have played a momentous and crucial role in enhancing the quality and quantity of English literature. When we look into Women writers collectively, the recurrence of certain patterns, themes, problems and images from generation to generation is seen which is different from traditional male preoccupations and roles.

The concept of Feminism is always presented differently from time to time and place to place. Feminism in Literature is essentially concerned with the representation of women in society and their corresponding fluid position. A Woman is considered more as a product of social norms and restrictions are put upon them and often they are restrained to act, sit passively or

live their own way portraying them as an object or merely as a product of nature. The Subjugation of women in a patriarchal social set up varies according to class, caste and race. Feminism actually is a thought process which tries to identify the prejudices against women in a patriarchal set up. These prejudices cover diverse areas such as economy, society and politics. These pre-conceived notions about women have been responsible for their unequal participation in the affairs of the society along with the male counterpart. Liberalization grants women a space for their presence and thereby provides them opportunities to develop multiple identities for themselves. Women from different cultures are evolving new strategies to challenge or subvert dominant patriarchal ideology and to

represent other images of sexuality. As Simone De Beauvoir wrote in *The Second Sex*:

“The *World has always belonged to males, and none of the reasons given for this has ever seemed sufficient. By reviewing prehistoric and ethnographic data in the light of the existentialist philosophy, we can understand how the hierarchy of the sexes came to be. We have already posited that two human categories find themselves face-to-face, each one wants to pose sovereignty over the others: if both hold to this claim equally, a reciprocal relationship is created, either hostile or friendly, but always tense. If one of the two has an advantage over the other, that one prevails and works to maintain the relationship by oppression. It is thus understandable that man might have had the will to dominate woman: but what advantage enabled him to accomplish his will?*” (Beauvoir 1949, 1732).

The first Bhutanese woman to write a novel in English, Kunzan Choden is the author of *The Circle of Karma*. The novel was published by Zubaan Books in collaboration with Penguin books. It is explicitly a Buddhist novel but one that concentrates on the everyday struggle of the protagonist, Tsomo's life. The novel is set in the 1950s, with beautiful detailed description of the ritualistic life lived in Bhutan. Kunzan Choden as a woman writer portrays her female characters from the perspective of a woman. The author in the novel seeks to expose patriarchal practices and is concerned with the issue of discrimination and inequality. It tells the story of Tsomo, a young Bhutanese woman, who embarks on the difficult and lonely journey of life. It is from childhood that the issue of gendering is faced and brought up in the Novel. And we come to understand that it is not only the Men folk that discriminate women but

sometimes the women themselves are their own enemies. Women in the novel are expected to do domestic works, care for the family and be obedient to her husband. Whereas Men have the privilege to pursue Education, go out work and command over the family.

Tsomo is the echo of the society and symbolic of the women crushed at the extremity of society. Mary Daly in her book *Gyn/Ecology Metaphysics of Radical Feminism* says that Knowledge is a male defined project, and that patriarchal society has created a lie or deception towards the female which is very much applicable in the society where Tsomo lived. They had lived according to the demands and wishes of the male figure. They were also made to believe and think that they cannot exist without a male figure as their support. We see in the novel the mother was just as hapless as Tsomo woven in the web of deception and belief that a woman is born to serve and be confined in the household.

When Tsomo ask her Mother of the furthest distance that she can travel to, she replied:

“*Where? I don't know. Where can a girl travel to? Her old thoughts are stirred by the childish question. Then, gently, teasing, 'Perhaps as far north as Tibet and as far as South of India'*” (Choden 2005, 2)

Simone Beauvoir in the introduction of her book *The second sex* writes

“*With the advent of Patriarchy, the male resolutely claimed his posterity; the mother had to be granted a role in procreation even though she merely carried and fattened the living seed: the father alone was the creator*” (Beauvoir 1949, 830).

This same patriarchal system is seen in Tsomo's Family. Patriarchy appreciates docility,

passivity and voicelessness in women. While the Father a faithful gomchen, i.e a religious scholar is the head and teaches the son how to read religious text, educates them and teaches his sons to be good gomches, the mother merely advises Tsomo to be a good woman. In the novel it is seen that being born as a male already had the advantage of a better birth while being born as a girl was equal to being in a bad situation. As a Child Tsomo was always interested in being educated and learned but she was only taught the household chores and not religion. She longed to be able to read, write and chant beautiful prayers like the boys, but the response she got was:

“You are a girl. You are different. You learn other things that will make you a good woman and a good Wife. Learn to cook, weave and all those things. A woman does not need to know how to read and write.” (Choden 2005, 21)

As she cries at her father's response, she looks at her mother for some support but mother only smiles and says nothing.

“Tsomo only sees the same curious expression on her face, a smile that merges into sadness. A smile of resignation and acceptance. Tsomo feels the same spreading on her own face” (Choden 2005, 21).

This makes us realize that the concept of gender inequality is put into our heads at a very young age and thus the discrimination based on gender. Under evaluation of Femininity is the seen through plight of Tsomo's Mother. She defines her identity and finds meaning of her life through her husband and children so much so that she loses her own identity. Though she is described as a brave and strong lady yet she is never really able to complain or stand up against her husband. It is because of the culture of man being treated superior and equivalent to God.

“Tsomo never heard her Mother complain. She was a big strong and brave woman and she did not complain about anything. Sometimes Tsomo though she had strange fixed expression on her face. It was funny expression, a smile that verged on sadness. When she had this expression she would stare into space as if she missed something and Tsomo thought that she would complain if she would.” (Choden 2005, 6).

The mental, physical and emotional consequences of gender discrimination are shattering. The ritual of marriage is an act of hegemony by the men. They feel they have the right over the female body. In the novel, it is seen how Men comes in the middle of the night making promises but when the day breaks they themselves leave and disappear leaving the girls humiliated and shattered. And the worst thing was when the girl gets pregnant, she is forced to announce her pregnancy and organize a purification ceremony called *Tsangma*.

Purification Ceremony must be done to purify the pregnant woman who is thought to be unclean until the purification. When Tsomo's friend Chimme becomes pregnant and the father of the child refused to own the child, She faces the first instance of betrayal but she herself is betrayed when her husband Wangchen leaves her for her much younger Sister. Tsomo's Karmic illness, i.e her protruding belly causes her great inconvenience and misery but also turns out to be an embarrassment and shame as it later becomes the subject of “secret male laugh” (Choden 2005, 160). Tsomo loses her grace and whatever position she had in her family. Her husband abused her mentally, verbally and physically when he began courting kesang (Tsomo's Sister) in her presence which degrades her completely. This makes Tsomo think about the pain and humiliation that Wangchen's first

wife and children would have endured when Wangchen left them and came to her. It was a complete circle of Karma.

Mary Daly considered the foreground of the Patriarchy as objectification, stereotyping, alienation, deception and confusion and hence we see how Tsomo in her childhood till her marriage suffers, she is objectified by her parents and husband undergoes alienation, deception and confusion when her own sister becomes her husband's mistress. She leaves all of these behind to find her life. Mary Wollstoncraft argues in her book *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that if a woman is given education it will lead to many good things. It will lead them to make judgment based on rationality than emotions. We see Tsomo taking decisions based on her emotions by being silent towards her sister (another woman) rather than claiming her husband Wangchen back. It was her husband who become unsatisfied with her and turned to another woman. If not her sister it would also have been another woman. However, Tsomo instead of finding out the reason of her husband's betrayal she humbly accepts her defeat.

Ap Thinlay a character in the novel plays sexual politics with Tsomo by making her believe that she was vulnerable without Man's company.

"You are a woman, alone and so far away from home, I am concerned for you. I feel like a parent to you and I feel I have to advise you. You should have a husband. Gomchen Lhathu is a good man and he is quite well educated too. I must tell you his parentage is clean, tax payers on both of his parents' sides, like yourself" (Daly 1978, 196).

Choden portrays Tsomo who submissively consents patriarchy as the mandate of their life and suffers from it. Apparently she was not so amused in making

Lhathu a part of her life, but as she was drilled and filled with the concept of respect for Man, she started caring for Lhathu, and lives with the deception that Lhathu loves her, and even though he humiliates and deceives her in many ways she is unable to stand up for herself as she is bound by chains of her belief that women are inferior to man and must always remain submissive. In the latter part of the story when Tsomo senses that Lhathu is cheating on her, she follows him to Phuntsholing and sees him with a young pregnant girl. Feeling helpless she decides to let Lhathu go. Tsomo is actually "not fighting with matter but life" (Beauvoir 1949, 725) Tsomo took on the blame silently.

"Women internalized their problems and grief and believed that they were all at fault. Women were the thieves, stealing husbands for each other, living in suspicion and in hate. We had it all wrong. We had to rethink our roles and obligations, our obligations to ourselves and to each other" (Beauvoir 1949, 270).

Both Men in Tsomo's life are the personifications of a misogynist society which claims rightful possession over the female body and soul. They leave her shattered and devastated and represents how women are even discriminated when only she wants is to love and be loved. The role that Tsomo carries out as a daughter and wife is not endowed to her during her birth rather it is socially constructed. The discrimination based on Gender continues and prevails in the novel but gradually Tsomo is able to break down several walls of discrimination and inequality as she evolves from a timid, submissive and dependent girl to a bold and independent woman.

Tsomo faces betrayal from her own, that is, from her own women folk. Even though her mother is brave she is unable to sympathize or

bring her up the way she wants to. She is further betrayed by her own sister who becomes the other woman and in a way she also betrays another woman by taking away a father and a husband when she marries Wangchen. But other than this, the novel celebrates the coming together of women from different strata of the society-Tsomo, Pema Buti, Dechen Choki, Sita and many others as friends and sharing of pain and sorrow. In this feeling of sympathy for one another, an identity is struck which ultimately forges the bond of sisterhood crossing the boundaries of caste and class. In one instance Tsomo sympathises with a Dechen.

“Our stories are similar and yet so different. Everything happened because we are women...” (Showalter 1979, 109). In another instance she also adds that it's not the woman's fault.

“Your only problem is being a woman, we cannot change that but we have to be strong” ((Showalter 1979, 121).

As the story develops, Tsomo's personality develops and as shown by Elaine Showalter, Tsomo goes through a phase of imitation, protest and finally self-discovery. She becomes a nun and it becomes possible for her to endure any obstacles in a composed, peaceful and serene manner. Through her journey, the author has created a realistic portrayal of gender inequality and self discovery. Her journey starts from Thimphu and ends there thus creating a perfect circle of shedding of gender inequality and discrimination and rediscovering herself.

Kunzan Choden has portrayed the vulnerable conditions of Bhutanese Women who live in a society structured by rigid tradition and custom and also religion. They are subjected to discrimination and violence on a daily basis.

This violence is often not conceived as a violation of human rights but rather as a normal aspect of lives of Bhutanese Women.

Women are aware of the discrimination at the societal and household levels. They receive more discrimination in the societal level comparing to the household level. Married Women experience more discrimination in mobility, property and education. Similarly, unmarried women perceive more discrimination in mobility and modes of behaviour. They consider gender and customary practices as major factors responsible for discrimination. Thus, on a broader level the novel becomes a window for showcasing the social patterns of patriarchy and an exposure of the maltreatment and oppression of women in the name of social custom. The issues dealt in the novel are current and even go across geographical boundaries.

If the women folk are expected to be more judicious and grow in every aspect of their life, they must be set free from oppression. As Mary Wollstonecraft states in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:

“ Make them free, and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, as men become more so; for the improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of the human race are obliged to submit to, retorting on their oppressors, the virtue of men will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet” (Wollstonecraft 2014, 186).

The novel is a representative of how women have to tussle to survive in the male-dominated society. Through Tsomo's journey the notion of patriarchy and gender inequality is defied and even though the novel's exposition is murky it is positive in tone.

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Quartet in Autumn: Marginalization of Older People

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Abstract

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, across periods, across languages, across boundaries between literature and the other arts and across disciplines. Barbara Pym, a celebrated British writer conscious of the marginalization and discrimination reflects the problems and hurdles faced by the old people through her work. Older people are not given much importance in the family or societies in decision making. Reference to the text, the researcher will analyse the struggles and problems faced by the old people regarding Barbara Pym's novel *Quartet in Autumn*. Age brings status and prestige to a man, not only in his family but also in the community, where it almost automatically confers political influence. It is the story of four office workers on the verge of retirement. Negative attitudes toward the elderly do far more to make an old person feel isolated and alienated than do the attitudes themselves. In many societies the aged are valued far less than in ours; indeed, they are assigned the lowest possible status. Society or community appears to think that the elderly belong to a different group. Societies attitude towards the old is deeply uncertain. Generally speaking, they do not look upon the aged as belonging to one clearly-defined category.

Keywords: Marginalization, society, elderly, isolation, older.

Introduction

Britain with their cultural identity, the multiplicity of languages, religions and sects, castes and creeds, races and colours, and ethnic patterns strive to be one of the important countries of the world. Regardless of their social varieties share their post-frontier status and their mentality towards the social orders, the matured individuals become a weight to the family, to society and the country on the loose. Hardship, separation and maltreatment to recognize self-

evident and covered up parts of how more seasoned individuals are frequently underestimated in their networks. These multiple domains of the investigation will produce findings that can inform better quality service, provision for older people and enable smart evidence-based policy interventions to be developed. In the country, elderly people experience loss of dignity and self-respect. One of the French Philosophers, Simone De

Beauvoir in her book called *The Coming of Age* seeks greater understanding of our treatment of elders. She quotes:

Old age is an autumn, filled with ripe fruit: it is also a barren winter, and we hear of its coldness, snow and frost. It has the sweet gentleness of a lovely evening. But it is also associated with the dark sadness of twilight (Beauvoir 1996, 211).

Atrocity against aged cut across all racial, social, cultural, economic, political and religious boundaries. It is impossible to ignore the fact that old people are increasingly marginalized in an aged marked by the faster and faster pace of historical change. The old persons know from experience what the others have yet to learn in terms of morals, customs and the techniques of survival. So in this paper, the scholar will analysis Barbara Pym's *Quartet in Autumn* which belonging to different cultures, by comparing and contrasting to bring out the similarities and differences. Though old people are geographically separated, they are politically, socially, culturally and psychologically united. Their identities are localised, but their sufferings and the discrimination against them are globalised. Marginalization is an exploitative structure reinforced by governments, religious and social practices.

Age brings status and prestige to a man, not only in his family but also in the community, where it almost automatically confers political influence. Great age is also viewed as a sign of innate virtue and divine blessing, and it is undoubtedly for this reason that such extravagant ages were assigned to the early Biblical patriarchs. If old people show the same desires, the same feelings and the same

requirements as the young, the world looks upon them with disgust. In many societies the aged are valued far less than in ours; indeed, they are assigned the lowest possible status.

Older people tend to remain loyal to the principles and values acquired in their youth and mature years, or even just to their habits which, once formed, are painful to change. Yet interaction between the young and the old is free and comfortable within that context. The loss of status causes suffering, discontent and a sense of loss, but everyone at least knows what the problem is and can talk about it. The young can feel or express compassion with the old and the old with each other; they can extract those benefits which derive from their loss, for high status is always a mixed blessing. Ageing is a series of processes that begin with life and continue throughout the life cycle. It represents the closing period in the lifespan, a time when the individual looks back on life, lives on past accomplishments and begins to finish off his life course. Adjusting to the changes that accompany old age requires that an individual is flexible and develops new coping skills to adapt to the changes that are common to this time in their lives. There are many forms of social and economic marginalisation and their negative impact on the health and longevity of older citizens. Gender remains one of the primary structures that affect the quality of life in old age. Recent research demonstrates a variety of ways in which age and gender may interact, not to mention their relations with other power structures; comparatively, examine men and women at different ages to observe the differential impact of age and gender on their lives and to identify spaces of exclusion in old. Barbara Pym is one of the very important women writers of Britain. In all her novels she

has portrayed aspects of human life, which transcend the probability of British culture and attain the height of universality. *Quartet in Autumn* which deals with the life of Marcia, Letty, Norman and Edwin all work together in the same office. None is married, and each is nearing retirement age.

Problems Faced by the Aged

Failing health

It has been rightly said that we start dying the day we are born. The ageing process is synonymous with failing health. While death in young people in countries such as India is mainly due to infectious diseases, older people are most vulnerable to non-communicable diseases. The issue of failing health, it is prime importance that good quality health care is made available and accessible to the elderly in an age-sensitive manner. Effective care and support are required for those elderly suffering from various diseases through primary, secondary and tertiary health care system.

With age, muscle strength and bone density decrease and connective tissue is transformed becoming less elastic. This leads to increased vulnerability, to falls, fractures and frailty. Muscle function and, to some extent, bone density are best maintained by physical exercise. Modern life does not necessarily favour physical exercise at work or during leisure time. The age-associated decline in physical fitness may be aggravated by illnesses affecting bones and joints. Strain and trauma on the joints are risk factors for osteoarthritis limiting mobility by pain and impeding function. Today hip or knee replacements are effective means of securing mobility and independence in old age (Johnson 2005, 170).

For well being and prosperity, the staff of correspondence is foremost. Accordingly the broad decrease in hearing seriously influences the capacity of numerous more seasoned individuals to mingle and take part in day to day life, the local area and in social life. Weakness or loss of vision is another basic factor that hinders actual working and is a significant wellspring of handicap. Hearing misfortune might be because of hereditary factors yet is sped up by ear injury. Today the openness to uproarious commotion during relaxation time may have genuine outcomes in later life. In the by and by old partner, defensive gadgets were less being used and boisterous commotion during work contributed broadly to hearing debilitation. Amplifiers can remunerate progressively well for these conditions. Forestalling acoustic injury is today a significant general medical problem at work yet substantially less liked during recreation time exercises. Essentially, the age-related loss of visual convenience is remunerated by glasses and along these lines work is kept up. Waterfall medical procedure has gigantically improved with superb useful outcomes. Again co-dreary conditions, for example, diabetes speed up maturing by glycation and initiate retinal changes. By treating diabetes mellitus energetically, it is feasible to avoid diabetic microangiopathy. Evaluating for glaucoma permits early location and treatment in medication and specialized sciences may add to keeping up capacity and independence in the old (Johnson *ibid.* 173).

Economic insecurity: The problem of economic insecurity is faced by the elderly when they are unable to sustain themselves financially. Many old persons either lack the opportunity or the capacity to be as productive as they were. Increasing competition from

younger people, individual, family and societies mindsets, chronic malnutrition and slowing physical and mental faculties, limited access to resources and lack of awareness of their rights and entitlements play significant roles in reducing the ability of the elderly to remain financially productive, and thereby, independent.

Economic security is as relevant for the elderly as it is for those of any other age group. Those who are unable to generate an adequate income should be facilitated to do so. As far as possible, elderly who are capable should be encouraged, and if necessary, supported to be engaged in some economically productive manner. Others who are incapable of supporting themselves should be provided with partial or full social welfare grants that at least provide for their basic needs. Families and communities may be encouraged to support the elderly living with them through counselling and local self-governance.

Isolation: Isolation, or a deep sense of loneliness, is a common complaint of many elderly is the feeling of being isolated. While there are a few who impose it on themselves, isolation is most often imposed purposefully or inadvertently by the families or communities where the elderly live. Isolation is a terrible feeling that, if not addressed, leads to the tragic deterioration of the quality of life. This aspect is very true in the life of four members in *Quartet in Autumn*.

It is important that the elderly feel included in the going on around them, both in the family as well as in society. Activities centred on older persons that involve their time and skills help to inculcate a feeling of inclusion.

Neglect: The elderly, especially those who are weak or dependent, require physical and emotional care and support. When this is not provided, they suffer from neglect, a problem that occurs when a person is left uncared for and that is often linked with isolation. Changing lifestyles and values, demanding jobs, distractions such as television, a shift to nuclear family structures and redefined priorities have led to increased self-neglect of the elderly by families and communities. This is worsened the elderly are less likely to demand attention than those of other age groups. Our characters Marcia, Letty, Norman and Edwin all of them under goes the above mentioned problems in their life.

Age is not a thing to be pitied, to apologize for, to fear, to resist or to see as a sign of doom. Only the old can make age a bright and vibrant place to be. And so we must. If we don't, we stand to waste a full twenty-five to thirty per cent of our lives. And waste is always a pity. In many societies the aged are valued far less than in ours; indeed, they are assigned the lowest possible status. Yet interaction between the young and the old is free and comfortable within that context. The loss of status causes suffering, discontent and a sense of loss, but everyone at least knows what the problem is and can talk about it. 'As for old age, Seneca said, "embrace and love it. It abounds with pleasure if you know how to use it. The gradually declining years are among the sweetest in life. . . Even when they have reached the extreme limit they have their pleasure still" (Marcus 1887, 65).

Barbara Pym canon, a body of work that establishes her unique style and presages her lasting importance. In her work, she probes the human condition, seen through the prism of such quotidian events as jumble sales and walks in the

woods. Her characters are unassuming people leading unremarkable lives; Pym became the chronicler of quiet lives. Marcia, Letty, Norman and Edwin all work together in the same office. None is married and each is nearing retirement age. Letty has plans to share a country retreat with her long-time friend, Marjorie. Her hopes are dashed when Marjorie suddenly announces that she is to marry a clergyman some years younger than her.

After Marcia and Letty retire, each is faced with challenges. Letty suddenly has to move and Marcia has to deal with a loss of the routine that was an essential part of her life. Marcia gradually withdraws from the outside world, while Letty has to engage with it. Marcia eventually gives up eating and dies in pathetic circumstances. She has unexpectedly left her estate to Norman, in whom she had indulged a brief and secret semi-romantic interest. When Marjorie's fiancé deserts her for a younger widow, Letty and her friend decided to take the country cottage after all. By now she has come to terms with retirement, her world has expanded, and so she does not immediately move. She realizes that she has opportunities to make her own choices. Norman and Edwin play less central roles in the "quartet", as their characters develop in response to the absences and actions of Marcia and Letty. At the end of the book, Letty is looking forward to inviting Norman and Edwin to meet Marjorie in the country. She thinks this would be a huge "opportunity" for the quartet, which was previously so urban and parochial, even though they have lost Marcia.

Older people who are discriminated against or abused often experience it over and above other forms of marginalisation which renders them doubly vulnerable. Abuse on one hand, and health, well being are denied to the

elderly. In the novel *Stone Angel*, the writer says, "privacy is a privilege not granted to the aged or the young. Sometimes very young children can look at the old, and a look passes between them, conspiratorial, sly and knowing. It's because neither are human to the middling ones, those in their prime, as they say, like beef" (Laurence 1993, 6). Throughout the seasons and years of one's life, there are constant changes. Robert Browning in "Rabbi Ben Ezra" also has aptly pointed out that old age is the completeness of life:

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

the last of life, for which the first was made.

Our times are in his hand

who saith, 'A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half; Trust God: See all, nor be afraid!" (Browning 1951, 1-6).

Many novels portray the sufferings of old people in their work such as Ernest Hemingway's *Old man and the Sea*, Margaret Laurence *The Stone Angel*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Woman destroyed* etc. highlight the agonies, sufferings, pain, isolation, abandonment and fight for the elderly. Old people in all the countries, be it first world nations or third-world nations, Canada or India are faced with similar problems. Barbara Pym a British woman novelist, has registered her voices against the elderly.

The creator starts in a similar spot as numerous current hypothetical, and insightful requests. Like women's liberation, my examination of advanced age wrestles with a circumstance which connections individuals straightforwardly with their actual appearances so they should think by and through the body

both to experience the world and to be experienced by the world. Also like feminist theory, the study of old age, in authors opinion, must not overemphasise the body, which, although crucial, can limit the study just as the body is perceived as limiting the experience of senescence. Also like feminism, old age studies affect people of different genders in acutely different ways. Men and women experience ageing differently because of how they are constricted to perceive self-worth.

Conclusion

To conclude, the novelist has portrayed the land and characters to which they are familiar.

Pym has presented a typical western woman with a strong will, raging nature, and the ability to succeed in life. Barbara Pym has depicted the picture of four elderly persons from inward knowledge. She has shown how these four elderly persons never lose their gusto for life in spite of all the varied problems and difficulties of her life. The lives enjoys and suffers every moment of life with the intense feeling of attachment thereby proving to the world that life is beautiful and meaningful in spite of all hindrances and hardship that clutter it. Marginalization is a common thing we see in society towards the elderly. Remember, one day all of us have to face this stage of our life.

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Women Empowerment in Nagaland: Reality or Myth

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Abstract

Women are not born but rather made by society. In Nagaland women have been outperforming men in every sphere, but famous as male jingoistic state, patriarchy appears to control all institutions, modern as well as traditional, around which the Naga social and political life revolves, never recognised the rights of women even as primary decision maker but Naga Mother Association's brilliant decision about Indo-Naga peace talk reveals different.

Key words: Jingoistic, institution, Indo-Naga peace talk.

1. Introduction

Empowerment of women is a socio-political ideal, encompassing notions of dignity and equality, envisioned in relation to the wider framework of women's rights. It is a process of gaining control over self, over resources and over existing societal perceptions and attitudes and would be achieved only when an improvement in the 'condition' of women is accompanied by an advancement in their 'position' by enlarging the economic, social and political freedoms and choices available to them.

The most common definition of women's empowerment in the literature I reviewed is: "a woman's ability to control over resources with dignity, her ability to choose and select the most desirable elements through keen observation, and her ability to make decisions and affect outcomes of importance to themselves and their families to achieve common goals". Causes of gender discrimination are radical feminists. Human reproductive biology is responsible for

discriminatory treatment with women. "Women is not born but rather made by society." (Simon De Beauvoir). Gender representation is a concern in Nagaland because gender equality still disadvantages women over men in all socio-economic, socio-cultural and in political spheres that impinges the decision making empowerment of women. It posits that without the transformation of economic, socio-cultural and political sphere, the mechanism in place cannot lead to a real and transparent women empowerment. It is on this premise that the researcher suggests that the government of Nagaland needs to resolve the loopholes in the legal system and reconsider its approach and place resources at the disposal of women, in particular, to achieve equality and equity. Unless the laws are amended, until a decisive initiative is taken to reconcile the dilemma and contradiction between the Indian constitution and customary laws and unless the government reinvigorate its commitment, women

empowerment, though a reality, will not transcend mediocrity.

2. Naga Society and Women

During late 19th century the British missionaries brought education in Nagaland, which have changed the nature of livelihood and occupation of the Nagas from hunting and gathering based livelihoods to agrarian livelihoods. Since statehood Nagaland government have ratified important global and regional gender based protocols and made attempted to domesticate some and modified state structures and policies that encouraged the women's rights to access to various facilities and resources within home and outside but not adopted quotas or women reservation to address the problem of gender gap and women's participation in politics. Despite the higher female literacy rate, the implementation of gender protocols, mainstreaming of global and regional policies, the earning of women is comparatively very less than men in Nagaland. Furthermore, the degree of women political representation in each social quantum tends to be zero. It implies Naga tribal women do not have the capacity to manifest strategic control over their own lives. Nagaland is famous as a male jingoistic state. Despite of the guaranteed constitutional rights for Naga women (Article 243-D), they continue to be inaccessible and superseded by customary practices and usages, purely dominated by the male body. There is the inequality in the distribution of land, income, violence and the laws that disadvantage Naga women over men. In Nagaland patriarchy appears to control all institutions, modern as well as traditional (those are considered as democratic bodies), around which the Naga social and political life resolves, have never recognised the rights of women even as primary decision maker. It is highly poignant

to note the comment of a village leader in relation to women's access to political platform, when he revealed, "If we can change the Bible then we can also change our custom".

In Nagaland there is no gender discrimination in educational curricula and gender stratification in career and employment opportunities, and no sign of marginalisation of women in the formal sectors. Naga women may arguably have higher degree of freedom as compared to other non-tribal society, not restricted in mobility and access in information, they run for office and hold ministerial and higher posts and positions, reflects their degree of sincerity in duty and office proceedings. "In Nagaland women are outperforming men in every sphere" (Dr. Shürhözeli Leizietsu, the then CM of Nagaland; Nagaland Post; 30-03-2017). Even in lieu of that Naga women are liable to live, act, and conduct them under the barricade of a patriarchal tribal society. Stepping out of such a smoke made fencing would mean an inerasable stigma from society. In a nutshell no gender inequalities exist in the development of human capabilities like education, skills, and information in Nagaland. But inequalities perceived in unequal participation of women in decision-making for developmental programmes and resources at all levels of public and private life in traditionally male dominated areas. Hence it is pertinent to reveal the ground realities to empower the women in Nagaland and the factors impinges the women empowerment in our country, deviates little in the case of Nagaland.

2.1 Role of Politics in Women Empowerment

Participation in political activities and political representation of women has great impact on strengthening themselves. In India, research

suggests that having female political representatives can be an effective tool to empower women in the battle against gender crime. Recently a research conducted by Iyer et al. (2012) finds that having more women political representatives in India makes a surprisingly powerful impact on the outcome of crimes against women. In Nagaland women not only do not get permission from their families to take part in civic, political and electoral process but also remain in total isolation from decision making in those institutions. In the early part of 2017 the whole country witnessed the political turmoil in Nagaland because of women reservation and women's participation in Municipality election. Mostly Naga women's votes are decided by the opinion of their male relatives.

2.2 Women Empowerment Through Financial Empowerment

Several Naga women are 'bread winner', men remain simply idle at home, go for domestic work and are expected to get into any livelihoods which can provide secondary income to the family provided they are good. In Nagaland most of the women are deprived of financial institutions as they don't have anything to keep as security (in Nagaland women are not property holder). Micro credit alone cannot alleviate poverty, though many women are functioning under Self Help Group (SHG) - Bank linkage programme (SBLP), yet poverty deprives women of the opportunities to have equal access to participate in decision-making for developmental works and resources and in social mobility. The greatest constraint to Naga women entrepreneurs is that they are women. Naga women entrepreneurs remain in dark about the development of new technology, new methods of production, marketing and other

governmental support which will encourage them to flourish. Women's family obligations also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in Nagaland. Though Naga women kept clean and healthy footsteps in business yet their success cannot reach beyond a certain limit, several times hampered by their family members. Women mobility in Nagaland is highly limited and has become a problem due to traditional values.

2.3 Empowerment through Socio-cultural Empowerment

A woman in a Naga society plays a multiple roles within the house hold, farm lands, community and the market. They play the dual roles of a giver and income supporter. In common Naga women are self-sacrifice, docile, submissive and Intelligent, in education outperform men, disciplined, diligent, and dedicated in nature, highly laborious comparing with men. Women's free mingling with opposite sex is a part of their taboo, and the degree of intensity varies from tribe to tribe. Spinster mother and their baby are not estranged by the family and society, though finger points to the women but male are little relaxed. But either one is not allowed for further holy marriage in the church.

• General characteristics of Tribal Naga women:

1. They are the hard working individual in their society.
2. In true sense they are educated, humble, and reflect transparent hospitality to others.
3. They outperform men in every walk of life.
4. As house maker and caring family member they can be compared with respect and dignity with other advanced women in the world.

5. They are brilliant in playing desirable multiple role and reflect responsibility to care and rare their family and relatives.

● Rare characteristics of Naga women, varies from tribe to tribe and place to place

1. They initiate and mingle freely with opposite sex.
2. Expert in showing westernization only in dress code.
3. Social code of private and public hardly bothered by them. Their private becomes public and vis-à-vis without the hindrance of the society.
4. Influenced by the western life style, several young girls hardly bother to represent themselves exotically sexy, free discussion of sex, illegal sex are rampant.
5. The result of sex promiscuity is the high percentage of HIV in the country.

It is poignant and witty to say, the moral and chastity of average Naga tribal girls are entirely depends upon family background, respective tribal taboos, and SES of the parents.

2.4 Empowerment Through Decision Making Empowerment

The input in productive decision indicators like, household and nutritional decision of family,

livestock, and cash crop farming are not entirely a soul decision of Naga women. Majority of the Naga women cannot involve in decision-making on family planning and use of birth control even fail to involve in decision-making on buying and selling property. Naga married women hardly got the decisive power for initiation of divorce. Naga Hoho the apex decision-making body of Naga people, represented by different Naga tribes, till date has been functioning without women representatives.

3. Material & Methodology

3.1 Population and sample

In the present investigation all the women of Nagaland were the population of the study. As sample, based on purposive sampling technique the researcher selected 210 Naga women from Kohima, Dimapur, and Peren district.

3.2 Tools used in the study

To collect the data from sample groups the researcher used

- A self-develop 36-items questionnaire on Naga Women's Empowerment scale was used under both positive and negative statement. Assessment is made under five points Likert's-format scale.

<i>Intervening Variables</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Independent Variables</i>			<i>Total Q.</i>
	<i>Decision making Empowerment</i>	<i>Political Empowerment</i>	<i>Economic Empowerment</i>	<i>Socio-cultural Empowerment</i>	
<i>Age groups</i>	03 Questions	03 Questions	03 Questions	03 Questions	12
<i>Marital Status</i>	03 Questions	03 Questions	03 Questions	03 Questions	12
<i>Profession</i>	03 Questions	03 Questions	03 Questions	03 Questions	12
Total Questions	09 Questions	09 Questions	09 Questions	09 Questions	36

3.3 Statistical technique used

The data pertaining to the criterion variables of tribal Naga women's empowerment have been examined by One-way ANOVA for each variable, to examine the significant difference among groups. In case of significant F ratio obtained, Scheffe's Post Hoc test was applied to test the significant differences between the ordered pair means.

3.4 Scope and delimitation of the study

- the study was conducted only for the year 2017-18.
- the study was conducted only for the tribal women of Nagaland residing in Nagaland.
- the study was conducted only for the tribal women of Nagaland, under different intervening variables like age groups, marital status, and professions & occupations of women.

3.5 Objectives of the study

- To determine whether or not there is difference in Naga Women Empowerment under different intervening variables like age groups, marital status, and professions & occupations of women.
- To determine whether or not there is presence of correlation among and between women's political empowerment, financial empowerment, and socio-cultural empowerment that impinges decision making Empowerment of tribal Naga Women.

3.6 Hypotheses of the study

H_{01} : There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on political empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.

H_{02} : There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on financial empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.

H_{03} : There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on socio-cultural empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.

H_{04} : There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.

H_{05} : There is no significant difference and influence of intersection among and between dependent and all the independent variables i.e., political empowerment, financial empowerment, socio-cultural empowerment and decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland.

4. Statistical Analysis and Interpretation (Result)

Through descriptive and inferential statistics researcher analysed the collected data.

4.1 Political Empowerment of Naga Women

Intervening Variable		N	Mean	SD
Age (in years)	21-40	70	21.62	2.74
	41-60	70	17.74	1.78
	61 and above	70	18.64	2.09
Marital status	Un-married	53	21.37	2.78
	Married	121	22.38	2.91
	Divorcee	19	21.73	2.70
	Widow	17	21.64	2.99
Profession	Unemployed	94	22.13	3.03
	Employed	70	21.60	2.42
	Retired	46	22.47	3.15

H_{01} : There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on political empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.

Intervening Variable	Variation	∑ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Age Groups (21-40 years) (41-60 years) (61 & above)	Between groups	579.2095	2	289.6048	57.54368	0.00001
	Within groups	1041.7857	207	5.0328		
	Total	1620.9952	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(2,207) = 3.03950825$ The result is significant at $P < 0.05$

The null-hypothesis H_{01} is rejected under the different age groups of Naga women means, *there is significant difference and influence of interaction on political empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups (21-40 years, 41-60 years, and 61 years and above)*. Hence at least one significant difference definitely exists between the group means. To find out which of these paired mean had a significant difference, the Scheffe's post-hoc test was applied.

Intervening Variable (Age Group in year) (Number within bracket indicates size of the sample)			TS : F_s	Paired mean difference	Result
21-40 Y (70)	41-60 Y (70)	60 Y & above(70)			
21.628	17.742	XX	105.01805357	> SCV	Sig.
XX	17.742	18.642	5.6330472109	< SCV	N/Sig.
21.628	XX	18.642	62.006608653	> SCV	Sig.

Scheffe's Critical value(SCV) = F-critical Value*df(N) = 3.03950825*2 = 6.0790165

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Marital status	Between groups	41.4492	3	13.8164	1.67764	0.172939
<i>Unmarried</i>	Within groups	1696.5318	206	8.2356		
<i>Married</i>	Total	1737.981	209			
<i>Divorcee & widow</i>						

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(3,206) = 2.64843238$ *The result is not significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{01} is accepted under the marital status of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on political empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their marital status (unmarried, married, divorce and widow).*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Profession	Between groups	23.2863	2	11.6431	1.40986	0.246512
<i>Unemployed</i>	Within groups	1709.4804	207	8.2584		
<i>Employed</i>	Total	1732.7667	209			
<i>Retired</i>						

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(2,207) = 3.03950825$ *The result is not significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{01} is accepted under the profession of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on political empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their profession (unemployed, employed, and retired).*

4.2 Financial Empowerment of Naga Women

Intervening Variable		N	Mean	SD
<i>Age (in years)</i>	<i>21-40</i>	70	18.44	2.68
	<i>41-60</i>	70	17.74	1.78
	<i>61 and above</i>	70	18.64	2.09
<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Un-married</i>	53	17.81	2.53
	<i>Married</i>	121	18.35	2.10
	<i>Divorcee</i>	19	18.47	2.29
	<i>Widow</i>	17	18.94	2.57
<i>Profession</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	94	18.32	1.97
	<i>Employed</i>	70	18.15	2.50
	<i>Retired</i>	46	18.39	2.38

H_{02} : *There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on financial empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Age Groups (21-40 years) (41-60 years) (61 & above)	Between groups	31.2667	2	15.6333	3.17043	0.044032
	Within groups	1020.7143	207	4.931		
	Total	1051.981	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(2,207) = 3.03950825$ *The result is significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{02} is rejected under the different age groups of Naga women means, *there is significant difference and influence of interaction on financial empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups (21-40 years, 41-60 years, and 61 years and above).* Hence at least one significant difference definitely exists between the group means. To find out which of these paired mean had a significant difference, the Scheffe's post-hoc test was applied.

Intervening Variable (Age Group in year) (Number within bracket indicates size of the sample)			TS : F_s	Paired mean difference	Result
21-40 Y (70)	41-60 Y (70)	60 Y & above(70)			
18.442	17.742	XX	3.4779963493	< SCV	N/Sig.
XX	17.742	18.642	5.7493409039	< SCV	N/Sig.
18.442	XX	18.642	0.2839180693	< SCV	N/Sig.

*Scheffe's Critical value(SCV) = F-critical Value*df(N) = 3.03950825*2 = 6.0790165*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Marital status Unmarried Married Divorcee & widow	Between groups	20.4707	3	6.8236	1.36272	0.255279
	Within groups	1031.5102	206	5.0073		
	Total	1051.981	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(3,206) = 2.64843238$ *The result is not significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{02} is accepted under the marital status of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on financial empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their marital status (unmarried, married, divorce, and widow).*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Profession <i>Unemployed</i> <i>Employed</i> <i>Retired</i>	Between groups	1.8526	2	0.9263	0.18209	0.833658
	Within groups	1053.0045	207	5.087		
	Total	1054.8571	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(2,207) = 3.03950825$ *The result is not significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{02} is accepted under the profession of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on financial empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their profession (unemployed, employed, and retired).*

4.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT OF NAGA WOMEN

Intervening Variable		N	Mean	SD
<i>Age (in years)</i>	<i>21-40</i>	70	20.31	2.64
	<i>41-60</i>	70	20.45	1.70
	<i>61 and above</i>	70	19.94	2.64
<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Un-married</i>	53	20.56	2.60
	<i>Married</i>	121	20.09	2.38
	<i>Divorcee</i>	19	20.63	2.21
	<i>Widow</i>	17	19.76	1.48
<i>Profession</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	94	20.10	2.92
	<i>Employed</i>	70	20.40	1.83
	<i>Retired</i>	46	20.30	1.74

H_{03} : *There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on socio-cultural empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Age Groups <i>(21-40 years)</i> <i>(41-60 years)</i> <i>(61 & above)</i>	Between groups	9.8667	2	4.7333	0.87564	0.418131
	Within groups	1166.2286	207	5.634		
	Total	1176.0952	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(2,207) = 3.03950825$ *The result is not significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{03} is accepted under the different age groups of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on socio-cultural empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups (21-40 years, 41-60 years, and 61 years and above).*

Intervening Variable	Variation	∑of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Marital status	Between groups	14.7866	3	4.9289	0.87431	0.455271
<i>Unmarried</i>	Within groups	1161.3087	206	5.6374		
<i>Married</i>	Total	1176.0952	209			
<i>Divorcee & widow</i>						

P<0.05 table F, df (3,206) = 2.64843238 *The result is not significant at P<0.05*

The null-hypothesis H_{03} is accepted under the marital status of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on socio-cultural empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their marital status (unmarried, married, divorce, and widow).*

Intervening Variable	Variation	∑of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Profession	Between groups	3.6485	2	1.8243	0.32345	0.724013
<i>Unemployed</i>	Within groups	1167.4753	207	5.64		
<i>Employed</i>	Total	1171.1234	209			
<i>Retired</i>						

P<0.05 table F, df (2,207) = 3.03950825 *The result is not significant at P<0.05*

The null-hypothesis H_{03} is accepted under the profession of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on socio-cultural empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their profession (unemployed, employed, and retired).*

4.4 Decision Making Empowerment of Naga Women

Intervening Variable		N	Mean	SD
<i>Age (in years)</i>	<i>21-40</i>	70	19.50	1.98
	<i>41-60</i>	70	19.94	3.35
	<i>61 and above</i>	70	2.72	3.97
<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Un-married</i>	53	21.35	3.49
	<i>Married</i>	121	19.85	3.06
	<i>Divorcee</i>	19	21.63	3.18
	<i>Widow</i>	17	21.11	3.73
<i>Profession</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	94	20.06	2.78
	<i>Employed</i>	70	20.30	3.17
	<i>Retired</i>	46	21.71	4.15

H_{04} : *There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups, marital status, and profession.*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Age Groups (21-40 years) (41-60 years) (61 & above)	Between groups	54.2	2	27.1	2.62244	0.075037
	Within groups	2139.1143	207	10.3339		
	Total	2193.3143	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(2,207) = 3.03950825$ *The result is not significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{04} is accepted under the different age groups of Naga women means, *there is no significant difference and influence of interaction on decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their age groups (21-40 years, 41-60 years, and 61 years and above).*

Intervening Variable	Variation	Σ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Marital status Unmarried Married Divorcee & widow	Between groups	120.7985	3	40.2662	3.82304	0.010751
	Within groups	2169.6968	206	10.5325		
	Total	2290.4952	209			

$P < 0.05$ table F, $df(3,206) = 2.64843238$ *The result is significant at $P < 0.05$*

The null-hypothesis H_{04} is rejected under the different marital status of Naga women means; *there is significant difference and influence of interaction on decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their marital status (unmarried, married, divorcee, and widow).* Hence at least one significant difference definitely exists between the group means. To find out which of these paired mean had a significant difference, the Scheffe's post-hoc test was applied.

Intervening Variable (Age Group in year) (Number within bracket indicates size of the sample)				TS : F_s	Paired mean difference	Result
<i>Unmarried</i> (53)	<i>Married</i> 1(121)	<i>Divorcee</i> (19)	<i>Widow</i> (17)			
21.3585	19.8512	XX	XX	7.950234196	> SCV	Sig.
21.3585	XX	21.6316	XX	0.099039606	< SCV	N/Sig.
21.3585	XX	XX	21.1176	0.070920025	< SCV	N/Sig.
XX	19.8512	21.6316	XX	4.942135393	< SCV	N/Sig.
XX	19.8512	XX	21.1176	2.269684758	< SCV	N/Sig.
XX	XX	21.6316	21.1176	0.225058174	< SCV	N/Sig.
Scheffe's Critical value(SCV) = F-critical Value*df(N)= 2.64843238* 3 = 7.94529714						

Intervening Variable	Variation	∑ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
Profession <i>Unemployed</i> <i>Employed</i> <i>Retired</i>	Between groups	88.8521	2	44.4261	4.18838	0.016476
	Within groups	2195.6431	207	10.607		
	Total	2284.4952	209			

P<0.05 table F, df (2,207) = 3.03950825 *The result is significant at P < 0.05*

The null-hypothesis H_{04} is rejected under the different marital status of Naga women means; *there is significant difference and influence of interaction on decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland according to their professional status (unemployed, employed, and retired)*. Hence at least one significant difference definitely exists between the group means. To find out which of these paired mean had a significant difference, the Scheffe's post-hoc test was applied.

Intervening Variable (Profession) (Number within bracket indicates size of the sample)			TS : F_s	Paired mean difference	Result
<i>Unemployed</i> (94)	<i>Employed</i> (70)	<i>Retired</i> (46)			
20.0638	20.3	XX	0.2097864398	< SCV	N/Sig.
XX	20.3	21.7174	5.2576318228	< SCV	N/Sig.
20.0638	XX	21.7174	7.9620703023	> SCV	Sig.
Scheffe's Critical value(SCV) = F-critical Value*df(N)= 3.03950825*2= 6.0790165					

4.5 Correlation Among PE, FE, SCE, and DME of Naga Women

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Political empowerment (PE)</i>	210	22.00	2.88
<i>Financial empowerment (FE)</i>	210	18.27	2.24
<i>Socio-cultural empowerment (SCE)</i>	210	20.23	2.37
<i>Decision making empowerment (DME)</i>	210	20.33	3.34

H_{05} : *There is no significant difference and influence of intersection among and between dependent and all the independent variables i.e., political empowerment, financial empowerment, socio-cultural empowerment and decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland.*

Variables	Variation	∑ of Square	df	MS	F #	P
<i>PE</i>	Between groups	1468.9464	3	489.6488	64.9854	0.0001
<i>FE</i>	Within groups	6299.0524	836	7.5348		
<i>SCE</i>	Total	7767.9988	839			
<i>DME</i>						

P<0.05 table F, df(3,836) = 2.61555274 *The result is significant at P < 0.05*

The null-hypothesis H_{04} is rejected under the different marital status of Naga women means; *there is significant difference and influence of intersection among and between dependent and all the independent variables i.e., political empowerment, financial empowerment, socio-cultural empowerment and decision making empowerment of tribal women of Nagaland.* Hence at least one significant difference definitely exists between the group means. To find out which of these paired mean had a significant difference, the Scheffe's post-hoc test was applied.

<i>Variables</i> (Number within bracket indicates size of the sample)				<i>TS : Fs</i>	Paired mean difference	Result
<i>PE (210)</i>	<i>FE (210)</i>	<i>SCE (210)</i>	<i>DME (210)</i>			
22.0095	18.2762	XX	XX	194.2033947	> SCV	Sig.
22.0095	XX	20.2381	XX	43.72711761	> SCV	Sig.
22.0095	XX	XX	20.3381	38.92945875	> SCV	Sig.
XX	18.2762	20.2381	XX	53.63784294	> SCV	Sig.
XX	18.2762	XX	20.3381	59.24514506	> SCV	Sig.
XX	XX	20.2381	20.3381	0.139353400	< SCV	N/Sig.

*Scheffe's Critical value(SCV) = F-critical Value*df(N) = 2.61555274*3 = 7.84665822*

5. Results

- There is significant difference and influence of interaction on political and financial empowerment according to different age group of Naga women.
- There is significant difference and influence of interaction on decision making empowerment according to marital status, and profession of Naga women except age group.
- There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on socio-cultural empowerment according to different age group, marital status, and profession of Naga women.
- There is no significant difference and influence of interaction on political and financial empowerment according to different marital status, and profession of Naga women.

6. Conclusion

In Nagaland there is no gender discrimination in educational, career and employment opportunities, and no sign of marginalisation of women in the formal sectors. Naga women enjoy higher degree of freedom as compared to other non-tribal society, not restricted in mobility and access in information, they run for office and hold ministerial and higher posts and positions, reflects their degree of sincerity in duty and office proceedings. But under different strata they don't have any decision making empowerment as they are deprived of political, financial, and socio cultural empowerment those are intrinsically interrelated. It is poignant to say the decision of Naga women unanimously accepted by society with great honour (when Naga women hold a high position in an office) but always male dominated jingoistic society never values the same.

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