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## EDITORIAL

*Publishing a research journal requires constant dedication and a lot of inspiration. At times, things do not move in the direction that we always expect especially regarding following strictly editorial guidelines for submission of articles for publication in this journal. Never the less, it is with great pleasure we are presenting the second issue of our research journal **Spectrum: Humanities, Social Sciences and Management**. This issue has carefully put together a wide range of issues covering all the three disciplines.*

*One of the objectives of our journal has been to provide a platform for those in the academic to publish their work which can spark discussions and debates on various issues that we read, see and observe in the disciplines of humanities, social sciences and management. We hope the topics that we have covered will become areas of further research and newer interpretation by scholars. We must acknowledge that we are overwhelmed by the response that we received from teachers, researchers, administrators etc. We are confident that we will have more entries in the future issues. My only advice to those who are still thinking of contributing is that those scholars who think writing requires a lot of time are wrong. Those who write daily are likely to publish more than those who write in big blocks of time. We only hope that, research scholars and academicians at the beginning stage of their career, will systematically arrange their thoughts, findings and interpretations in a systematic and coherent manner so that they become easier for the readers to follow and understand them.*

*I would also like to warmly appreciate and express my gratitude to the Associate Editors, members of the Editorial Board and reviewers. I would like to specially thank Dr. K.S. Rajput, Coordinator of the Research Cell of the College and one of the Associate Editors of the journal for his untiring efforts in the publication of this journal.*

**Rakhal Kumar Purkayastha**  
**Chief Editor**



# A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AND BRAND EQUITY TOWARDS REPURCHASE INTENTION AMONG STUDENT CONSUMERS OF ELLE18 COSMETIC BRAND IN SHILLONG, INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The prime objective of this study was to test the role of endorser credibility and brand equity in influencing repurchase intention of student consumers of Elle18 cosmetics products in Shillong, India. In this study there is one dependent variable (Repurchase Intention) and two independent variables (Endorser Credibility and Brand Equity). This study is aimed to find which one of the two selected independent variables plays more important role in influencing consumers repurchase intention.*

*The researcher found that brand equity to have stronger positive and significant influence on repurchase intention when compared to endorser credibility. On the other hand, endorser credibility was discovered to have low positive and significant influence on repurchase intension.*

*From the findings the researcher concludes that it is very essential for the companies to focus more on their product attributes and brand equity dimensions in order to influence the repurchase intention of their consumers rather than relying entirely on celebrity endorsements.*

**Keywords:** Endorser Credibility, Brand Equity, Repurchase Intention, Celebrity.

## Introduction

Globalization, heavy competition and the cost of creating and educating a new customer base are tremendously increasing day after day, so business firms have started concentrating on adopting defensive strategies in order to retain their existing customer base and continue to remain in the market. Creating consumers' repurchase intention is one of the prime defensive strategies in marketing which focuses on convincing the existing consumers to buy their products over and over again. In this study, the researcher has opted for two of the most essential factors which play a vital role in influencing consumers' repurchase intention, which are celebrity endorsements and

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brand equity. The researcher adopted tri-component (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) celebrity endorsement credibility scale for endorser credibility and consumer-based brand equity (brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association and perceived quality) for brand equity. The prime objective in this study is to examine the role of endorser credibility and brand equity in influencing repurchase intention of student consumers of Elle 18 cosmetics products in Shillong, India. The prime objective in this study is to examine the role of endorser credibility and brand equity in influencing repurchase intention of consumers of Elle 18 cosmetics products in Shillong, India.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. The first and the second section provide a review of literature and builds up the hypotheses to tested. The third section details the research methodology. The fourth and fifth sections present the findings of the study and discusses. Lastly, the sixth section presents the limitation of the study.

## **Literature Review**

The literature of review of this study presents the dependent and independent variables along with its sub-variables which are repurchase intention, endorser credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) and brand equity (brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association and perceived quality)

## **Repurchase Intention**

Repurchase intention is defined as the probability and possibility of the consumer to purchase the product again (Lutz *et al.*, 1983). Hellier *et al.* (2003) defined repurchase intention as the probability of a consumer to buy again a product or service from the same company, taking into consideration of his requirement, situation and circumstances. Repurchase intention is an individual tendency of a consumer inclining towards a certain product or service and this tendency of a consumer can be used to study and forecast the future purchasing behavior of the consumers (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Repurchase intentions are customer's individual views regarding their behavior in the future which may not be the same as the actual repurchase patterns (Rust, Zahorik and Keiningham, 1995).

## **Endorser Credibility**

Credibility is a set of perceptions which a receiver possesses towards a source (Bush, William and Zeithaml 1987). In marketing, endorser is an individual who associates him/herself with a specific brand (Kamen, Abdul and Juidth, 1975). McCracken (1989) mentioned that involvement of the endorsers with a brand can be explicit when the endorser intends to gain more popularity through a brand (I endorse this product), implicit when the endorser has a serious involvement with a brand (I use this product), or (co-present) where the endorser hardly appears in the advertisement for

the sake of existence. Endorser credibility is defined as "attitude towards an endorser's communication held at a given time by a receiver" (McCroskey and Thomas, 1981).

### **Attractiveness**

Physical attractiveness is one of the most essential factors why celebrities are hired to endorse a product. It basically means how familiar, friendly and pleasing the endorser is perceived by the consumers (McCracken, 1989). The degree of attractiveness of the endorser enables in deciding the level of effectiveness of the message communicated by him/her and it leads to a process of identification that takes place when the audience begins to relate the endorser with the advertisement (Cohen and Golden, 1972). Singer (1983) stated that the most important reason for choosing attractive endorsers is that there are dual benefits, the recognition and the reputation which the endorser is associated with and the physical appeal which is the key factor in drawing mass attention. Studies found that the endorser who is attractive possesses the capability to influence purchase decision of consumers and can even change their attitude and perception towards the brand (Petroshius and Schuman, 1989).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is defined as the intensity to which the source is perceived to be objective, honest, reliable and impartial by the target audience viewing him/her (Ohanian, 1991). Erdogan (1999) had expressed trust as associated with much broader terms such as sincerity, integrity, objectivity, honesty, reliability; consequently an endorser needs to fulfill all these terms to be regarded as trustworthy in the eyes of the target audience. Dependability is an essential factor on which most of the advertisers capitalize while choosing trustworthy endorsers (Shimp, 1997). Friedman et al. (1978) found that endorsers are perceived as trustworthy when they are liked by the target audience for that reason likeability was considered as an important attribute of trustworthiness. Furthermore, in terms of endorser credibility, trust is the most essential factor so it is advisable for the advertising firms to opt for well-liked celebrity.

### **Expertise**

Expertise is the degree of how much the source is considered to be well-informed and knowledgeable regarding the brand which is being advertised (Dholakia and Sternthal, 1977). Expertise is a very much wider term which requires every endorser to inculcate various qualities such as talent, skills, intelligence, knowledge, awareness and experience about the brand being endorsed. Nevertheless, hiring endorsers who are actual expert does help consumers in influencing their repurchase intentions to a larger extent than a non-expert endorsers besides endorsers owning expertise attribute actually assists in enhancing the advertisement's commercial value (Ohanian, 1991). According to studies expert and trustworthy endorsers



possesses the quality to generate higher recall and recognition of the brand and the target audience perceived them as more credible (Speck *et al*, 1988). Trustworthy endorsers are more efficient in influencing consumers' attitude and opinions compared to expert endorsers (McGinnies & Ward, 1980).

### **Brand Equity**

Farquhar (1989) defined brand equity as the added value which a product earns from its brand. When consumers start to form positive image of a brand by regularly purchasing it, a situation is created where for the same brand they are willing to pay a higher price this is a time when brand equity is developed and therefore considered as the most precious asset of a business organization (Bello and Holbrook, 1995). Brand equity being an asset has the potential in influencing consumer behavior in different ways and many marketers consider it as a set of gains that is capable of generating huge profit margins for the business firm owning it (Kapferer, 2005). These diverse benefits create value and can be accrued directly or indirectly.

### **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is the solid and powerful existence and recognition of the brand in the mind of the consumers (Aaker, 1991). It means that brand awareness is the individual's ability to identify a brand name. Brand awareness is a prime necessity for brand equity, absence of which no consumers can associate themselves with any brand, perceive its quality neither becomes a brand loyal consumer (Pappu and Quester, 2006). It means that brand awareness is a vital factor of brand equity, the role of brand awareness depends on the extent of brand consciousness, higher the degree of consciousness higher is the probability of the brand being considered for purchase (Mackay, 2001; Keller, 2003).

### **Brand Association**

Brand association refers to diverse meanings by which a brand is surrounded (Keller, 1993). Brand association is everything that relates memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Aaker (1996) mentioned that brand awareness must precede brand associations; this means that in order to relate oneself to a brand must be aware of it (Washburn and Plank, 2002). Consumers judge a product not merely based on the performance of its stated functions and features but to an extent where it is superior over the alternatives products offered by the competitors (Aaker, 1996). Customers all the time look for brands that have capability to offer perfect and long-lasting physical operations (Lassar *et al.*, 1995).

## **Perceived Quality**

Perceived quality refers to the overall consumer's opinion or self-made judgment towards the brand which can be either positive or negative feelings of the brand in terms of its quality (Zeithaml, 1988). This implies that consumers' perceived quality can be considered as the true opinion about the commodity in terms of satisfying the needs of the consumers. It is difficult to give an intellectual opinion of the quality of a product that's why many a times consumers judge quality in terms of the colour of the product, appearance, texture, packaging, design etc., (Bernués *et al.*, 2003). Advertising and marketing of the brand are external cues for evaluating quality of the commodity (Teas and Agarwal, 2000). Repurchase intention of a consumer is deeply influenced by perceived quality of the product because it is an important feature of brand value, brands which outshine in terms of consumers perceived quality are certainly purchased (Zeithaml, 1988). A brand is considered to have higher perceived quality when consumers begin to consider it as superior and different from competitor's brands (Aaker, 1991).

## **Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is the extent of consumers' inclination towards a particular brand and this can be manifested by their earnest desire to repurchase the same brand as their prime choice (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). If brand awareness and perceived quality are primary requirements for creating consumer's intention to purchase a commodity, then brand loyalty is the assurance of the commodity being definitely repurchased. Brand loyalty is basically a consumer's defining level of positive attitude and commitment towards a brand and this is reflected by his/her intention to purchase more of the same brand in the future. Thus brand loyalty plays a crucial role in manipulating consumers' purchase, repurchase and switching behavior (Oliver, 1997). Thus, all three factors are essential when it comes to consumer's purchase and repurchase intentions. Consumer loyalty is said to be a fundamental element which leads to organizational success. Brand loyalty is a consumer's commitment to a brand by repurchasing it at all times despite of the competitors continues attempt to break this bond by applying all possible marketing tactics (Oliver, 1999).

## **Research Framework and Methodology**

### **A. Research Framework**

According to the research purpose and literature reviews discussed, the conceptual framework is presented in figure 1. Endorser credibility (attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness) and brand equity (brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty) are the independent variables and repurchase intention is the dependent variable.

Repurchase Intention among student consumers of Elle18 cosmetic brand in Shillong, India

Based on the research framework, two hypotheses are proposed as follows:

H1: Endorser credibility in terms of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness are statistically significant influential on repurchase intention.

H2: Brand equity in terms of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty are statistically significant influential on repurchase intention.

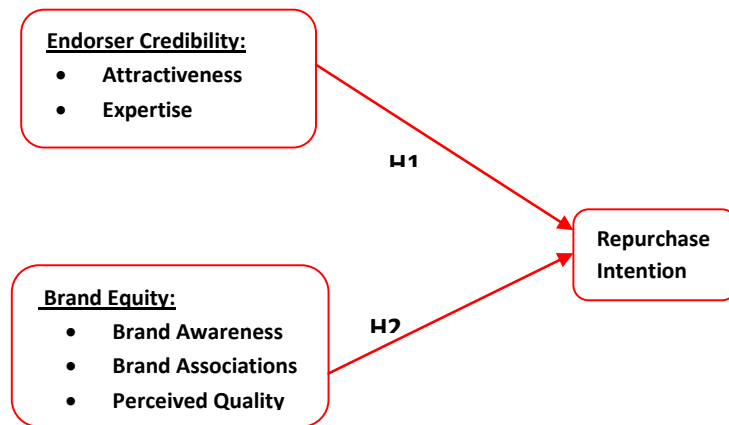


Fig. 1: A study on the Effect of Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Equity toward

## B. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to test the relationship between endorser credibility and brand equity towards the repurchase intention of student consumers of Elle18 cosmetic brand in Shillong, India. 420 sets of questionnaires which included semantic differential and likert scale for the consumers of Elle18. The researcher adopted non-probability sampling (quota and convenience sampling) to collect the primary data from the four selected colleges in Shillong, India. The duration of data collection was one month i.e., April 2015. The researcher applied descriptive analysis in order to present a demographic profile and general information of the respondents and multiple Linear Regression analysis was carried out to test the relationship with the dependent and independent variables.

Zikmund (2003) stated that descriptive statistical technique is employed to define the features of the population or samples in an investigation. The demographic information includes gender, marital status, age, personal income, education level and occupation.

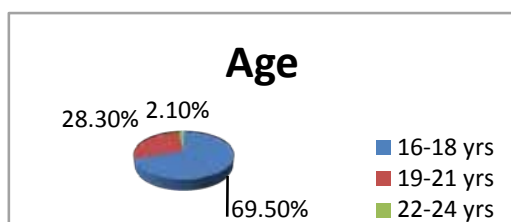
The Cronbach's Alpha was applied to test the reliability of variables of this research. Sekaran (2000) stated that the variables are reliable and can be used as research tool if the ( $\alpha$ ) value of questions which are being tested for each variable is greater than or equal to 0.6. The detailed reliability value of each variable is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Value of Variables

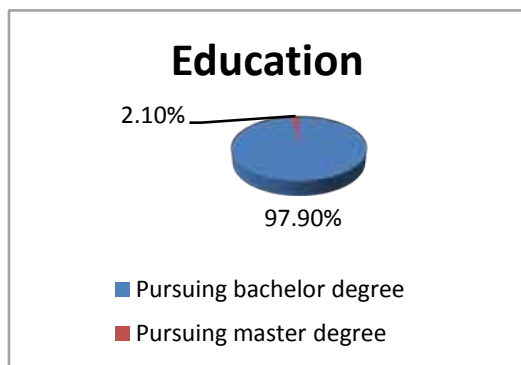
No. of items	Variables	Alpha ( $\alpha$ -test)
1	Attractiveness	.984
2	Expertise	.973
3	Trustworthiness	.974
4	Brand awareness	.961
5	Brand association	.968
6	Perceived quality	.971
7	Brand loyalty	.957
8	Repurchase Intention	.985

### Research findings

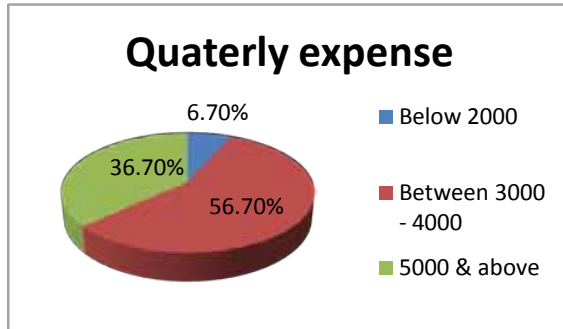
According to descriptive analysis result, the demographic profile of the 420 respondents can be summarized as follows:



69.9% of the student respondents who used Elle18 cosmetic product were between the age of 16 and 18 years.



97.9% of the student respondents who used Elle18 cosmetic product were pursuing bachelor degree.



The majority of the student respondents who used Elle18 cosmetic product were found to spent between ₹.3000 - ₹.4000, i.e. 56.7%

Table 2: Summary of the Results from Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Statistical Analyses	Level of Significance	Beta Coefficient Values	Result
H1 <sub>0</sub> : Endorser credibility in terms of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness are not statistical significant influence on repurchase intention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attractiveness</li> <li>▪ Expertise</li> <li>▪ Trustworthiness</li> </ul>	Multiple Regression Line	.000 .000 .000	.642 .397 .233	Rejected H1 <sub>0</sub>
H2 <sub>0</sub> : Brand equity in terms of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty are not statistical significant influence on repurchase intention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brand awareness</li> <li>▪ Brand association</li> <li>▪ Perceived Quality</li> <li>▪ Brand Loyalty</li> </ul>	Multiple Regression Line	.000 .000 .000 .000	.715 .709 -.550 .310	Rejected H2 <sub>0</sub>

Based on the modified conceptual model, there are two hypotheses which were tested in this research. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was applied. After analysing the hypotheses, all the null hypotheses were rejected. The most influential Beta Coefficient Values were found between the following variables:

- brand awareness and repurchase Intention:  $\beta=0.715$ ,
- brand association and repurchase intention:  $\beta = 0.709$ ,
- Attractiveness and repurchase intention:  $\beta=0.642$ ,

## Summary

According the analysis, this study has proved that repurchase intention is influenced by endorser credibility and brand equity. Therefore, the findings of this study will assist the marketing managers of Elle18 in understanding the buying behavior of student consumers in Shillong, India and achieve competitive advantage in the market.

Based on the results of tested hypotheses, the researcher have discovered brand awareness, brand associations of brand equity to have stronger influence on repurchase intention compared to perceived quality and brand loyalty. While attractiveness of endorser credibility was found to have stronger influence on repurchase intention compared to expertise and trustworthiness. Thus, the researcher would like to input some suggestion as follows:

The coefficient value of hypothesis one of brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.715$ ) implies a strong positive and significant influence between brand awareness and repurchase intention. This finding describes that if the brand awareness level is high, the repurchase intention will also be high. The brand awareness of the products or services in the eyes of the consumers generates the intention to repurchase (Malik *et al.*, 2013).

Awareness or familiarity of the product and services by the consumers is fundamental indicators which generate consumers' repurchase intention. Awareness of the brand or services leads consumers to associates with the brand. Regarding previous researchers' statements and the finding of this study, the researcher has some recommendations to Elle18 as follows:

- Conduct surveys
- Set up a customer voicemail service
- Use social media for customer service
- Examine all feedback

A high positive influence of brand associations on repurchase intention indicates that if the associations of the brand are high, the level of consumers' repurchase intention toward the brand will also be increased. Positive brand associations are developed if the product is durable, marketable and desirable. The customers must be persuaded that the brand possesses the features and attributes satisfying their needs. This will lead to customers having a positive impression about the product or brand. Positive brand associations help an organization to retain long term loyal customers and obstruct the competitor's entry into the market. Brand associations can be increased by the company getting involved in community actions, charities and local events. The company should also use social marketing channels because social media is the easiest way to build brand association and add meaning to the brand. Gremler (1996) stated that

brand association is the component that precedes the foundation of brand loyalty in the business that influences repurchase intention.

A positive significant impact of brand loyalty on repurchase intention implies that brand loyalty is the key drivers of repurchase intention and improving level of customers loyalty for the brand will eventually lead to long term product sales and profitability. Furthermore, in order to build loyalty, Elle18 should also take into consideration of providing more value added products and services, as well as keeping its promise, results and consistent value in line with the product or service because repurchasing intention is developed if there is an element of loyalty (Reicheld and Schefter, 2000).

Perceived quality of brand equity was found to have negative and significant influence towards repurchase intention of Elle18 cosmetics products by the student consumers of Shillong City, India. According to the result, the researcher can conclude that the repurchase intention was influenced by perceived quality negatively due to the involvement of super influential statements such as: “This brand offers excellent features”; “This brand is very reliable”. Therefore, most of respondents did not agree with those statements and that the perceived quality of this brand is still low in India. Hence, the researcher would like to suggest that the company should emphasize more on Research and Development (R&D) and improve the quality of the products and the attributes which are most liked by the youth, which can yield to the positive image in the eyes of the consumers.

A positive significant influence of endorser credibility in terms of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness on repurchase intention implies that attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness are the key component for driving repurchase intention of student consumers. Attractiveness was found to more influence on repurchase intention followed by expertise than trustworthiness. This truly makes sense since student consumers have high need for beauty and hence, may tend to be more susceptible to a product endorser’s attractiveness and expertise. Based on these findings, the Indian advertising agencies need to develop more creative advertising strategies by opting for more attractive and expert endorsers in order to appeal to the repurchase intentions of its target customers, rather than using standardized campaigns.

### **Limitations**

There are some limitations in this research which are as follows:

First of all, this study was conducted only in four selected colleges (St. Anthony’s College, St. Edmund’s College, St. Mary’s College and Lady Keane College) in Shillong, Meghalaya, India due to time, money and manpower constraints.

People living in different regions of the country may have different views towards Elle18 products and may perceive Anuska Sharma (celebrity endorser for this study) from a different angle altogether. Therefore, the outcome of this study cannot be applied as a standard to the whole country and it necessary to initiate the same research in different parts of the country.

This study was exclusively focused on Elle18 cosmetics products and its celebrity endorser and there are many other brands such as L'Oreal, Revlon, Maybelline, Himalaya, etc. on which similar studies can be initiated in the future.

Even though there are other various factors which influence consumers' intention to repurchase, this study focuses only on two independent variables: endorser credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness or expertise) and brand equity (brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association or perceived quality). The other variables which can be considered are consumer satisfaction, price, word of mouth, brand image, etc. for further studies

Lastly, this study may not be applicable to other time periods as it is subjected to the time period when the researcher gathered the data i.e. April 2015. The results and analysis may be accurate only to this time period since the respondents may ultimately experience changes due to changes in ideas, feelings or external environment.

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# GENDER AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA AND THE ROLE OF VALUE EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*The term gender refers to masculine and feminine qualities that society ascribes to each sex, thus it is completely different from sexual differences between male and female which is biological. Consequently gender disparity is more of social phenomena dependent on the cultural values, which a particular culture ascribes to the males and females. As the perception of gender is deeply rooted within ones culture and value system, it varies widely within and between cultures. The perception of gender role changes with time as value system changes. It is in this context that the present paper will attempt to highlight gender role in a traditional Indian society, subjugation of women, how it is changing (through policy intervention) over time as reflected by the literacy and economic empowerment of women. Further an attempt will be made to assess whether at present literacy and economic empowerment has really led to social empowerment of women, as studies indicate that violence against women is rising. The paper will also highlight role of value education in changing gender perception so as to realize women empowerment which, is one of the vital Millennium Development Goal of gender parity and women empowerment necessary to usher in a just and humane society.*

**Key words:** Gender Role, Social Perception, Changes through Policy Intervention, Value Education, Women Empowerment.

## Introduction

The concept of gender is neither well defined nor well understood. The definition of gender has been subject of exhaustible debate. The United Nation defines the term gender as a social constructed phenomenon, where ones identity attributes and the role of women and men are assigned by the social and cultural values resulting to a hierarchical relation between women and men in the distribution of power and rights favouring men and disadvantaging women. The social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic and environmental factors and can likewise be changed by culture, society and community (Freeman et al 2012). Consequently gender refers to

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the masculine and feminine qualities that the society and existing value system ascribes to each sex, hence it is a social construct rather than the male female differentiation, which is a biological phenomenon and is therefore natural. People are born male and female but it is the societal perception that assigns specific roles to both men and women. The perceptions of gender are deeply rooted in one's culture and value system, which vary over both over space and time as well as within cultures. The relationship between men and women, boys and girls as well as the attributes, opportunities are socially constructed and learnt through the socialization process. They are contextual, time specific and changeable through changes in the value and perception of the society.

It is gender which determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a women or men in a given cultural context, consequently gender on the individual level is more of a social construct while at the social level it is a component of social systems understood in context to other attributes of individuals existing in historically specific location (Demos et al 2009)

As gender parity and women empowerment is one of the major goals of the Millennium Development endorsed by world leaders at the UN summit in 2000 in which India is also a signatory, (U.N. Millennium Project 2005) India as well as other signatory countries are working at gender empowerment through policy intervention which is instrumental in bring about a just and humane society based on the equity of the sexes. Gender empowerment refers to gender equity, where the core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her destiny. This implies that to be empowered one must not only have equal capabilities as represented by access to education and health, but also have access to resources like ownership of land and employment opportunities and also have the capacity to use the rights, capabilities resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as are provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions). Empowerment of women also means that she can exercise her choices without the fear of coercion and violence (UN Millennium Project 2005). Consequently gender studies are emerging as a new field of research which addresses issues that pertains to gender parity and disparity between women and men as reflected by the responsibility assigned, access to and control over resources, as well decision making opportunities. In societies where there is gender parity women are respected and empowered, families are content and strengthened, citizens are responsible and conflicts are reduced. It is in this context that the present paper addresses gender issues in context to the Indian traditional system, the changing perception through policy intervention, existing status of women and the role of value education in the perception of gender and women empowerment in context to India.

## **Status of women in traditional Indian society**

India presents diversity in all aspects. The plurality of Indian society is not only exhibited in its physiography, religion, language and culture but also the position of women in Indian society. The country exhibits high range of social system ranging between highly patriarchal social order where the position of women is subordinate to her male counterpart and she enjoys limited economic or social rights where her only role is to mother children and she is reduced to a commodity, to a matrilineal system as practiced by small groups like the Khasis, Garos, Jaintias of Meghalaya and Nayars of Malabar region, where lineage is traced through women and she enjoys a greater gender parity enjoying both economic and social rights.

The position of women in Indian traditional society is highly paradoxical, she is raised to the pedestal and compared to Ma Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth) Saraswati (Goddess of Knowledge) Ma Durga (Goddess of Power) yet in reality she is poorest of the poor subjugated by a strong patriarchal system. This subordinate role of Indian women can be traced back to the rules laid down by Manu around 800 B.C. (Mathur 2008). Manu states that “In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and her Lord, when her lord is dead to her Sons,” signifying that a woman must never be independent. Further in a deeply ingrained patriarchal system as in the traditional Indian system a woman’s identity is closely related to mothering sons “May you be the mother of a hundred sons” is a common Hindu blessing. Accordingly the birth of sons is celebrated. The socialization of the girl child is a complex process as the main purpose here is to inculcate in the girl child the appropriate social role where her code of conduct includes self-effacement, self-denial, where her primary aim is to serve others. In fact the identification of women not only in Indian society but also other societies (traditional Christian and Muslim societies) has been with their bodies, which becomes the root cause of their oppression in a patriarchal culture. A woman is identified primarily as an object for male sexual satisfaction and reproduction that leads to childbearing, rearing and nurturing. Her entire life her role, her position and status in society are defined by this primarily bodily function (Mathur 2008). But historically it is observed that the status of Indian women has undergone changes where she enjoyed a better status in the ancient period than at present.

### **Ancient Period**

In Ancient India the status of women was different- a cursory look into the Vedic period (4000-1000 B.C). Suggests that women enjoyed a higher social status and there was greater gender parity. The status of women in the Vedic period can be judged by the way in which the birth of a girl child is received as an auspicious sign (Devi 1998) Women were an integral part of any social functions where she would recite

Vedic verses and perform *yagna*. It is said that there were 32 women compilers of Rig-Veda who expanded the Vedic literature, there were no Child marriages and women had the freedom to marry a man of their choice irrespective of caste as suggested by the social practice of “*Swamvara*”. The concept of *Ardhangini* suggests equal status between the men and women neither being superior or inferior. Though patriarchy was in vogue both boys and girls were encouraged for higher education as suggested by the presence of a large number of women scholars like Khana, Maitryee, Gargi, etc. The honourable and respected position of women is reflected in the following quote from the Rig Veda (IX: 85):

*“Be thou mother of heroic children, devoted to the gods, be thou queen in the father in law’s house. May the Gods unite the hearts of us two into one.”*

This suggests that as the value system of society changes the perception of gender and women empowerment also changes as reflected in the later Vedic period where the celebrated womanhood of the Rig Vedic period underwent a change and deteriorated women status to a commodity to be owned by her father in childhood, by her husband in youth and sons in old age without the realization of her own unique identity (as discussed in Manus Smriti).

## **Medieval Period**

In medieval period India experienced invasion from the Islamic world and the status of women further deteriorated due to insecurity and uncertainty, the Purdah system came with the Muslims thereby changing the value system where women had to live under rigid social sanctions limiting their economic, social and political rights.

## **Modern Era**

### ***(i) Pre Independence Phase***

The Modern era in India starts with the emergence of European colonialism marked by the British rule. As the sole interest of the British was to exploit and suck out the resources of India for England’s economic growth, they adopted a passive non-interference policy towards the status of women in Indian society. However some educated Indians influenced by western ideas and thoughts, questioned the deteriorating position of women in Indian society and tried to improve their situation by various legislative measures, in order to suppress child marriages, abolish Sati, and encourage widow re- marriage. Subsequently social reformers Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar, Dwarkanatha Tagore with the help of British administration encouraged reformative laws like the Widows re-marriage Act 1856, Abolition of Sati 1929, Child marriage restrain Act 1929 so as to change the value system and bring in a better perception of women in the social set-up.

## ***(ii) Indian Independence Phase***

The Indian Independence movement further changed the value perception of women in the society, as Mahatma Gandhi's call for women's participation in the freedom struggle led to many women coming out from the shackles of four walls into the public arena. Successful women leaders emerged like Sarojini Naidu, Durgabhai Deshmukh, Aruna Asaf Ali etc. The first all women's conference was held in 1927 to discuss the problems of early marriages and importance of women education. The Government of India Act 1935 provided franchise and civil services under the crown to women (Devi 1998).

## ***(iii) Independent India***

With Indian Independence women rights were given a priority by our constitution makers and our leaders recognized the equal social position of men and women. Various legislative measures were adopted to safeguard women rights and empower women, e.g. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 which not only determines the age of marriage but also provides for monogamy, guardianship of the mother and permits dissolution of marriage under specific circumstances. Dowry prohibition Act of 1961 which makes demand and acceptance of Dowry a punishable offence, etc., further the Constitution not only recognizes equality between sexes but under article 15 gives special provision to state to frame policies to bring affirmative discrimination in favour of Women and renounce social practices which are derogatory to the dignity of Women.

Yet the reality in India is that, the country still exhibits, highly gendered social practices with high degree of gender disparity, as exhibited by falling sex ratio, gender gap in access to resources, disparity in political, social and economic empowerment between the sexes which varies over space and time, rising violence against women are all suggestive of gender disparity in the Indian society. This calls for a greater scrutiny of the changing value system in our society.

It is observed that as women development is directly connected to the Nation's progress, the government of India has given ample scope for women development under its various Five year Plan- The first five year plan (1951-56) envisaged a number of welfare measures for women empowerment like establishment of Central Social Welfare Board, organization of Mahila Mandals, community development programme etc., The 2<sup>nd</sup> Five year plan (1956-61) gave priority to agricultural development where women was an integral part, the third five year Plan (1961-66) emphasized the need for female education and provided provision of services for maternal and child welfare. The fourth five years Plan (1969-74) highlighted the need for women education and promotion of women welfare within the family. The fifth five plan emphasized on training women and skill development, while the sixth five plan suggested a major shift

in approach from women welfare to development issues where for the first time it recognized that lack in access to resources impeded women development. The 7<sup>th</sup> five year plan operationalized the concept of equity and empowerment for the first time and the emphasis was lone quantitative aspects of women such as inculcation of self-confidence, generation of awareness among women for their rights, training and development of skills for better income generation etc. The eight five plan focused on empowering women at grass root level through the Panchayati Raj institution. While the tenth and eleventh five Plans aims at empowering Women through adopting and implementing measures adopted in the National Policy for Empowerment of Women and seeks to bring about an inclusive growth.

It is in this context let us examine the empowerment of women through two indicators i.e. Literacy and economic empowerment.

### **Literacy Transition in India**

As education is one of the prime factors enhancing women development and empowerment, the Government of India has various schemes encouraging girl child enrolment and education. The Census indicates that slowly we are controlling the gender gap in terms of literacy between male and female (Table 1). Yet gender disparity persists and much needs to be done for women empowerment.

Table 1: Literacy transition in India (1951-2011)

Year	Total Literacy Rate (Percent)	Male Literacy Rate (Percent)	Female Literacy Rate (Percent)	Male –Female Gap (Percent)
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.99
1981	43.57	56.38	29.29	27.09
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.96
2011	74.04	82.10	65.46	16.64

Source: Census of India

A cursory look into table 1 suggests that India has gained much in context to its literacy rate since Independence. Just after Independence the total literacy rate was only 18.33 percent and by 2011 census the total percentage of literates in India is as high as 74.04 percent suggesting a very high growth of 303.93 percent within 60 years.

In each census year the percentage share of male literates are always higher than the percentage share of female literates. But the gender gap is reducing from 25.05 percent in 1961 census to 16.64 percent in the recent census. The female literacy rate



has grown from mere 8.86 percent in 1951 census to as high as 65.46 percent in the 2011 census suggesting a growth rate as high as 638.83 percent within 60 years of independence; this is remarkable suggesting that various Government schemes encouraging female literacy are working. But much needs to be done to bring about a better gender parity

### **Economic Empowerment through Work Participation**

Economic development is generally conceived and defined in terms of growth in per capita Gross Domestic Product where both men and women contribute by being engaged in economically gainful activities, which is distinct from household and non-monetized activities. Consequently the work participation rate of women falls as in traditional societies women are usually confined to the four walls engaged in various domestic chores which do not get registered as work in the records. More over in an agrarian economy like India. As per 2011 census report the total female participation in gainful work is 25.5 percent at the national level while that of male work participation is as high as 53.26 percent. The rural –urban differentiation of both male and female participation is -in the rural sector 32.02 percent of the total work forces are constituted by women as against 53.03 percent males. In the Urban women constitute only 15.44 percent of the total workforce as against 53.76 percent of male counterparts. This can be attributed to the fact that in most cultures men are regarded as the main bread earner. Table 2 gives a comparison of work participation of females in relation to males in both rural and urban areas for the last 4 decades

Table 2: Changing Work Participation - in Percent (1981-2011)

Year	T/R/U	Female	Male	Percentage to Total Population
1981	Total	19.7	52.6	36.7
	Rural	23.1	53.8	38.8
	Urban	8.3	49.1	30.0
1991	Total	22.3	51.6	37.5
	Rural	26.5	52.5	40.1
	Urban	9.2	48.9	30.2
2001	Total	25.7	51.5	39.3
	Rural	31.0	52.5	42.0
	Urban	11.6	50.9	32.2
2011	Total	25.5	53.26	39.1
	Rural	30.02	53.03	51.7
	Urban	15.44	53.76	25.6

Source: Census of India

A brief look of table 2 suggests that the work participation rate in India is low as suggestive of any developing economy. There is a wide gap between male and female work participation rate as most of the work done by women do not come under monetized economy. The rural women have a better work participation rate than their urban counterparts in each successive census in spite of the fact that urban population has better access to schools and other educational institutions. Consequently literacy and education alone may not bring about gender parity and women empowerment unless the perception of women by the society changes.

### **Violence against Women**

The growing rate of violence against women in India is suggestive of the low status which Indian women enjoy both at the family level and societal level. Although literacy rate of women is increasing in each successive census, female work participation rate is also increasing, there are various laws protecting women in India yet the violence against women are on the rise which can be attributed to the wrong perception of the value of women in the family in particular and society in large.

The increasing rate of violence against women is reported in the form of domestic violence, dowry deaths, acid attacks, honour killing, rape, abduction, cruelty by husbands and in-laws which usually get reported in prime time news and newspaper headlines are on the rise.

Our media mostly projects women in stereotypical role which gets reflected in our advertisement and entertainment serials where women models are projected to sell men's commodity, e.g., after shave, perfumes etc. In most of the prime time serials most of the women characters are projected in a negative role conniving and crying to get attention, she is either projected as a "SatiSavitri" image or a cunning conspiring villain but never her real self. This is suggestive of the mind-set of our society.

According to the National Crime Records, of all the crimes reported against women in 2012, 3.4 percent were dowry deaths in other words it means that on an average 22 women are being killed /day because their families could not meet their dowry demands. As per the NCR (2012) about 43.6 percent the crimes reported against women fall under the category of Domestic violence indicative of the cruelty inflicted to women by their husband and close relatives. Of the 24923 rape incidences in India in 2012, the victim knew 98% of the offenders (John et al 2013). This is suggestive of how are young boys and girls grow up in a situation where they see violence against women as a norm. Hence no legislative measures, higher literacy level etc. can raise the status of Indian women unless the society starts respecting women which is possible only through a change in the perception of gender and women through value education within the family, in schools and colleges and the Society in large.

## **Value education**

The need for value education for developing positive attitude towards women needs to start from home, where the mother plays a significant role- “ the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world” is a saying which is appropriate here, however the mother needs to be aware of her rights and duties beyond the stereotypical role model, for which value education and a positive perception of her own self is necessary.

Young members of the family learn from the socialization process and from parents setting example of living values themselves. Consequently there is a need for changing the ideological base of a strong patriarchal society and the need for more creative intervention in the field of gender roles, egalitarian child rearing, skills and socializing process that strengthens marriage, family relations where both male and female counterparts enjoy equal rights and duties.

Instead of addressing all women issues by legislation process there is a need for educating the society on gender parity and creating positive self-image, self-worth and dignity of women, where the approach can be bottom up- starting at the grass root level where the emphasis is on creating awareness about problems and issues that retards women empowerment. Policy intervention is necessary in order to ascertain better access to resources that brings about a better gender parity.

The mass media can too play a significant role in women empowerment where the positive portrayal of women needs to be evolved. It is through media that awareness on women issues can be highlighted.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion it is to be noted that value education in the perception of stereotypical gender role needs to be addressed in order to bring about a more just and humane society essential for a holistic development. It should be remembered that women are not weak, but oppressed, powerless and helpless due to denial of opportunities over centuries which has labelled her as “*avala nari*” It is through change in the perception of women in society through value education that we can bring back her past glory as enjoyed during the Rig Vedic period in India.

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# EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT AND INSURGENCY IN MANIPUR: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND WAY AHEAD

Sushil Kumar Sharma\*

## ABSTRACT

*Unemployment issue, especially amongst the educated youth of Manipur is emerging as a major concern in the insurgency hit state. The influence of insurgency, politics, stagnant economy, disproportionate and unequal development, poor educational facilities and lack of opportunities have pushed the youth of the state to resort to bribes, appointing proxies, migrate outside and even seek jobs not commensurate to their educational qualifications. The ones left out are so disgruntled that they have no option but to take recourse to the insurgent activities. This study attempts to track the issues concerning the educated unemployed youth of the state and understand the dynamics surrounding it. It has also touched upon the migrant and proxy employment, something unique about the state. It has attempted to get public opinion on the issue by conducting a survey amongst a sample population and filling up of questionnaire by select individuals. In the latter half, the study attempts to identify the various issues affecting the employment situation with suggestions to empower the state of Manipur. Although a number of discussions, initiatives and commitments are underway at various levels to address the employment problem amongst educated youth, there is need for more intense and expeditious action to be taken at all levels to create and maintain decent opportunities for youth, safeguard social, economic and political stability, accelerate creation of jobs and solve the problem of educated unemployment in the state as this pool of Educated Unemployed Youth becomes the ideal breeding ground for militant groups.*

**Key Words:** Educated Unemployment, Insurgency, Militancy, Manipur, Development.

## Introduction

**“Unemployment is like a headache or a high temperature - unpleasant and exhausting but not carrying in it any explanation of its cause” - William Henry Beveridge**

Unemployment is a major problem in many countries, especially India. There are a large number of people who are either partly employed or wholly unemployed.

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\*Brigadier, Indian Army

The lives of such people, as well as of their families, are extremely miserable. It is a well-known fact that ours is a thickly populated country. The problem of educated unemployment is peculiar to India. India is the only country in the world where even highly educated persons fail to get employment. Every year, thousands of graduates pass out of schools and colleges. All of them cannot be absorbed in services and hence increases unemployment. Another factor for increased unemployment is the pressure from parents. Educated unemployment is due to a mismatch between the aspirations of graduates and employment opportunities available to them. The problem of unemployment is not only an economic one but also a social issue since the rapid rise in population is also equally responsible for rise in unemployment rates.

The economy of Manipur is characterized by high rate of unemployment and poverty; low capital formation, in-adequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and communication bottlenecks with practically no industrialization to speak of. The backwardness of the economy is further evident from the fact that there has been virtually no diversion from agriculture to other activities such as plantation and forestry, although significant potential exists for that. This state of the economy has in a way also contributed to the stagnant unemployment situation amongst the youth of the state. Hence, a Manipuri educated youth is already on the back foot when compared to his/her counterparts in other states of India due to the geographical isolation, stagnant economy and security concerns affecting his or her environment. These educated unemployed youth are either forced or compelled to join underground organizations.

### **The Study and its Objectives**

This study attempts to understand the issues and challenges facing the educated unemployed in one of the remote states of the country-Manipur, which has been in the throes of neglect due to years of unsolved insurgency and poor economic situation. The objectives of the study are spelt out as under:-

- i) Understanding the employment scenario in rural and urban Manipur.
- ii) Analysing the issue of migrant employment & proxy employment amongst educated youth of Manipur.
- iii) Addressing the issues/challenges associated with educated unemployed youth of Manipur and carrying out statistical analysis/survey.
- iv) Bringing forth recommendations to address the issues/challenges affecting the unemployed youth of Manipur.

### **Data Sources, Methodology and Scope**

The study is primarily based on primary and firsthand observation and secondary sources. Review of the literature on the subject was carried out to obtain current views on the subject. Interactions were carried out with the stake holders in order to obtain the viewpoints of the people right from the grass roots level to the

intellectuals who contribute on a regular basis to the media nationally as well as internationally. Field Surveys have been conducted to obtain the views of the stakeholders and the outcomes have been included to arrive at the recommendations. Manipur being a heterogeneous society, stratified sampling method was used to obtain the response. Equal sample size was obtained from all tribes i.e. Meitei, Naga, Kuki and others (300 each, total of 1200 respondents). Another exercise undertaken was to solicit and analyse the opinion of experts from various domains and to corroborate the opinions obtained from the common people with the opinions formed on the basis of research carried out. Their perception and outlook were studied, analysed and well-absorbed while authoring the study. This detailed analysis has formed the basis of proposing way ahead to overcome the problem of unemployment.

## Employment Scenario in Manipur

### Manipur at a Glance

Manipur is one of the eight north eastern states in India. The state comprises of multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious diaspora. Manipur is economically and strategically an important state of India. It is a land bridge to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and gives access to India to link with the economies of the Southeast Asian nations. The state is home to the Meiteis (the majority ethnic group), Kukis, Pangals (Muslim) and Nagas. The Meiteis occupy the Imphal Valley, the Kabuis the foothills around Imphal Valley and the Chin Kukis and Nagas, the hills. The Meiteis constitute more than 50 per cent of the population but occupy only 10 per cent of the geographical area<sup>1</sup>. Manipur may be classified in two distinct physical regions – an outlying area of rugged hills and narrow valleys, and the inner area of flat plains, with all associated land forms. These two areas are not only distinct in respect of physical features but are also in terms of development and employment.



<sup>1</sup>Narender Kumar, Contours of Conflict in Manipur: A Prognosis, CLAWS, accessed, on August 10, 2014 [www.claws.in/.../1394614778Narender%20Kumar%20%20CJ%20Wint..](http://www.claws.in/.../1394614778Narender%20Kumar%20%20CJ%20Wint..)

As per the 2011 Census, Manipur has total population of 2,721,756 of which male and female are 1,369,764 and 1,351,992 respectively. Of which urban population is 26.18% and rural population 73.82%. Literacy rate in Manipur has seen upward trend and is 79.85% as per 2011 population census as compared to all India average of 74.04%. Of that, male literacy stands at 86.49% while female literacy is at 73.17%. The state as compared to the rest of the country is still socio-economically backward. The state is leading in adequate infrastructure. Opportunities for employment are also meagre. The economy of Manipur is characterized by high rate of unemployment and poverty, low capital formation, inadequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and communication bottlenecks and practically no industrialization. Agriculture continues to be the mainstay of the economy with more than 60% of the population depends on agriculture for sustaining their livelihood. Manipur has one of lowest concentrations of banked blocks in the country. Out of 60 blocks in the state, 27 blocks are unbanked. The state has a very high rate of unemployment particularly among the educated youth. The number of persons on the live registers in employment exchanges which was to the tunes of 2.28 lakhs as on 30 June 1993, increased to 7.14 lakhs as on 30 June 2012. In Manipur main avenue of employment in the organized sector, is primarily restricted to the government jobs whereas the scope in private sector is negligible due to lack of industrial base<sup>2</sup>.

## Education System

A separate Department of Education was created for the first time in Manipur on 20th January 1950. The Department of Education retained the power of supervision, inspection, framing of curriculum, syllabi and selection of text books. Imphal, the capital of Manipur serves as the main hub of the state. Administrative work related to education, socio-economics and politics are carried out in Imphal and the community services are administered from Imphal. Many young boys and girls from different districts and villages come to Imphal to get better education but due to prevailing situation and unpredictable frequent occurrences of conflicts from various directions there is disruption in the daily routine of academic activities' and indiscipline is very much prevalent in government-run schools and colleges<sup>3</sup> In Manipur, hardly any regular teacher is appointed either by the State or Central Government (KV). Hence, there is ad-hocism from the Government itself. Further, as the appointing agencies appoint only ad-hoc teachers for whatever reason they have, Inspectorate of Education Department finds it difficult to exercise its control on attendance; in fact, they have little means to verify who is the actual teacher. Parents do not send their children to Government schools,

<sup>2</sup> Government of Manipur, Draft Annual Plan (2013-14) proposals, accessed on August 17, 2014, [planningmanipur.gov.in/.../AP%202013/AP%202013%2014%20docu](http://planningmanipur.gov.in/.../AP%202013/AP%202013%2014%20docu).

<sup>3</sup> Kengoo Kashung Zingran, Status of Education in Manipur, Scholarly State Journal, For Interdisciplinary Studies, September, 05, 2012, accessed on August 17, 2014, [srjis.com/srjis\\_new/images/articles/16%20K%20Z%20Kengoo.pdf](http://srjis.com/srjis_new/images/articles/16%20K%20Z%20Kengoo.pdf)



except those who cannot afford private schools. Pay for a teacher in private school is lesser but still there is some semblance of education being imparted.

### **Educated Unemployment**

The employment situation in Manipur is a matter of concern, with most of it being rural phenomenon. According to official reports, there are 7, 01,987 educated youth seeking employment in Manipur. The population of State, according to the 2011 census, is 2,721,756. Out of these, there are 2,01,327 girls listed in the employment exchange. There are 2,643 handicapped persons. Due to absence of industries and other private enterprises in the State, employment opportunities are very limited. These boys and girls have been scrambling for jobs in government offices. It is alleged that every government job has a price tag. Those boys and girls whose parents cannot afford whopping amounts to be paid as bribe are disillusioned and many of them become susceptible to anti-national propaganda<sup>4</sup>. A press release from the Directorate of Information and Public Relations has said that as per the official statement from the Directorate of Employment, Manipur, the total number of unemployed males and females registered with the Directorate stands at 6,88,135 till February 2013.

### **Migrant Employment and Proxy Employment**

#### **Migrant Employment**

The increasing labour pressure on agricultural land pushes the youth out to seek employment in non-agricultural sectors; however, the skills and knowledge they possess are unsuitable for practical use. As a result most of them remain unemployed for a time forcing them to engage themselves to contractual or informal jobs before moving to more stable or secure jobs. Unemployment problem is even harder for the youth and the educated because the aspiration and expectation are higher for them in comparison to the old and uneducated people. Also, a significantly higher unemployment rate among the youth in urban areas is due to migration of rural youth who are willing to compromise on their salary since their aspirations and expectations are lower as compared to urban counterparts. As a consequence many of them migrate to find a job irrespective of their household income. In Manipur, another phenomenon which has been witnessed is the increasing migration of youth out of the state due to insurgency and lack of educational and employment opportunities. Among the migrants who do get some jobs, some of them send remittances back to their families; others are just about able to cater for the financial needs of their sibling or relatives staying along with them.

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<sup>4</sup>Laithangbam Iboyaima, Over 7 lakh educated, unemployed in Manipur, The Hindu, Imphal, May 18, 2014, accessed August 10, 2014 [www.thehindu.com/...educated-unemployed-in-manipur/article6021743,,](http://www.thehindu.com/...educated-unemployed-in-manipur/article6021743,,)

## **Proxy Employment**

Within the realm of unemployment problem, there exists an undesirable system commonly known as “proxy employment” particularly in the education department in Manipur. In this system, many of the properly appointed government employees do not want to go to remote districts/areas and illegally function as a jobber by appointing another person in lieu of their physical presence in the posting area. This system benefited both the employers and the proxies. These proxies, otherwise unemployed, who accept the offered salary/wage, display desperation for a job. Ultimately, the root cause of the system is teacher’s absenteeism forced by vested interests. According to **Kremer (2005)** in North Eastern Region Vision 2020, the “substitute teachers do not have the requisite qualifications, so school children are imparted with poor quality of instruction and knowledge”. The study of World Bank in India found that the government primary schools teacher absenteeism rate is 24.8%. The proxy teacher gets roughly thirty percent of the properly appointed employee’s salary or depending upon bargaining power of the proxy.

This system eases the problem of unemployment among the educated for a short-run. But it does not solve the real problem because during the survey the proxy employee will be recorded as the employed. Hence, these employed, otherwise unemployed, will be excluded and not be benefited when government plans and policies are formulated for them. Thereby they enhance the real problem of unemployment in long-run. Therefore, undesirably, the educated unemployment problem to some extent is solved only for a short-run through the system called as proxy employment but enhance the real problem of unemployment in long-run<sup>5</sup>.

## **Educated Unemployment and Insurgency**

Manipur is a melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnicities and has gradually evolved into a dynamic multicultural society. The Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis have shared common spaces and have been competing for the same land and other resources, since times immemorial, thereby leading to an ethnic conflict which has often manifested itself into violence and bias against each other. The growth of Meitei identity, Naga identity and Kuki identity is a historical process. The demands or aspirations of insurgent groups in Manipur range from sovereignty, independence, regional autonomy, statehood to enhanced ‘say’ in the administration and governance of the people they represent. By and large the insurgent groups are split along ethnic lines, owing to pronounced ethnic diversity, which in turn has led to formation of numerous insurgent groups, generally by splitting away from the parent organisations. Unemployment problem in the region stands as a major cause for sustained insurgency.

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<sup>5</sup>Marchang Reimeingam, Unemployment and Proxy Employment in Manipur, 15 May 2012, Accessed on August 12, 2014, [reimeingam.blogspot.com/.../unemployment-and-proxy-employment-in](http://reimeingam.blogspot.com/.../unemployment-and-proxy-employment-in)

Thus lots of the unemployed youths become easy target for recruitment for the insurgent outfits. Extortion activities are also on a rise in the region, with militants collecting extortion money from almost everywhere, including educational institutions and religious places. The extortion activities have also disrupted the work of many important development projects in the region<sup>6</sup>.

Insurgents are frustrated people who have been brainwashed. Except for some of the leaders of these groups there is no ideological commitment to be seen in the cadres. Unemployed youth are easy targets of these groups. They are joining militant groups as alternate means of employment<sup>7</sup>. Some of the issues prevailing in the state are corruption at all levels, insurgency, counter insurgency, self-determination movement, ethnic conflict, rising extortion, unemployment, growing gap between hills and valley, lack of development and dwindling of state-society relationship<sup>8</sup>.

The nature of conflict has changed, given that the ideology has withered away and been replaced by the economic interests of the self-seeking leaders of these armed groups. These armed groups have established a parallel government and parallel economy, and as long as they are allowed to run their parallel economy, conflict in Manipur will remain<sup>9</sup>. For instance in 2012, when the state government employed some 1,000 men to form an armed “village defence force” to fight insurgents, it received applications from “some 17,000 people who were either graduates or postgraduates”, whereas the state was looking to hire people who hadn’t even completed school, “Such is the demand for government jobs in Manipur—even for high-risk jobs<sup>10</sup>.”

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<sup>6</sup> Northeast Insurgency Overview, CDPS, 26 January, 2011, accessed on August 10 2014 [cdpsindia.org/ne\\_insurgency.asp](http://cdpsindia.org/ne_insurgency.asp),

<sup>7</sup> Chaudhury Dipanjan Roy, Manipur seeks development to defeat insurgency, *Dialogue* April-June, 2006, Volume 7 No. 4, Astha Bharti, accessed on August 10 2014 [www.asthabharati.org/Dia\\_Apr%2006/Dipa.htm](http://www.asthabharati.org/Dia_Apr%2006/Dipa.htm), ,

<sup>8</sup> Raile Rocky, Issues, Responses, and Consequences: An Analysis of Persistent Imbroglio in Manipur, 2012, *Journal of North East India Studies*, accessed on August 10, 2014 [www.jneis.com/ojs/index.php/jneis/article/download/34/34](http://www.jneis.com/ojs/index.php/jneis/article/download/34/34)

<sup>9</sup> Narender Kumar, 2

<sup>10</sup> Datta Romita, Manipur | ‘At least 600,000 educated, young people are jobless’, *The Live Mint and Wall Street Journal*, Nov 24 2009. accessed on August 15 2014 [www.livemint.com/Politics/TckH83i1nyTxHe4hcQm1IP/Manipur--8216](http://www.livemint.com/Politics/TckH83i1nyTxHe4hcQm1IP/Manipur--8216).

## **Findings of the Survey**

The survey was carried out in Manipur. One of the questions asked in the survey was: **Do you think that the youth are joining militant groups by coercion / compulsion and not for ideology?** Over 76 % of Manipuri people feel that youth are joining militant organizations not for ideology but due to compulsion as there are limited employment opportunities available in Government and private sectors. Had the youth got jobs they would not have joined militant organization. Thus, It can be concluded that the affected section of the population is compelled to join militant organizations because of lack of employment opportunities.

Rise of insurgency cannot be attributed to any single factor. Infact the extremist movements are rooted in several factors. The probable factors fuelling insurgency can be the following :- Poor governance, support from the people, hostile terrain, foreign support, nexus with politicians, open borders with neighbouring states/countries, non-inclusive development, ethnic and cultural insecurity, autonomy and sovereignty, educated unemployment, property rights/land alienation, Easy income/insurgency a business. One important factor that needs to be analysed is whether educated unemployment is the reason behind insurgency. When the respondents were posed with this question, an overwhelming percentage of approximately 87% answered in the affirmative. This clearly indicates that the youth of the region, though educated do not find appropriate jobs, due to which they join militancy to earn their livelihood.

The tribe wise response from the respondents has been analysed, taking into view the opinion of the youth and elders of the tribe. An average of 93% Kuki youth and 90% Kuki elders agree that the unemployment can be regarded as an important factor for keeping insurgency alive. Around 83% Naga youth and 85% Naga elders respondents share the view that the insurgency is sustaining because people have chosen it as a means of livelihood due to dearth of jobs. 73% Meitei youth and 83% Meitei elders feel that educated unemployment is what is keeping insurgency alive. 82% youth and 85% elder respondents from other communities opined that insurgency is thriving due to lack of job opportunities. 93% Kuki professionals, 94%, Naga professionals and 84% Meitei professionals share the view that educated unemployment is a factor behind the growth of extremism. It is evident that the youth of the region are joining militancy due to non-availability of employment opportunities and not for ideology. This factor has to be addressed urgently in order to bring lasting peace in the region.

## **Issues and Challenges**

### **Out-of Date Syllabus**

The existing general colleges in the state run indifferent subjects which are based on traditional society; the syllabus is out-of-date to compare with the global competitive education. Hence there is a lack of quality higher educational institution that offers different kinds of global education which is based on technology. Majority of the

students continue to follow up pursuing arts stream while few enrolments in sciences, commerce, mathematics, engineering, information technology and other subjects have been witnessed. The student lacks basic knowledge in various streams of professional and vocational education because of non-existent or rareness in establishment of these types of educational institutes in the state. Besides, poverty, scarcity of career guidance and counselling centres for the students to follow up the particular stream of education that is suitable and give interest according to the capability of the student have resulted in raising the high rate of graduate-unemployment in youth<sup>11</sup>. The production of highly-skilled educated in youth is very low in Manipur. It is due to the irrelevant skills attained by the educated youth in the state. As a result, most of the educated unemployed youth acquired skills that do not permit them to work in the metropolitan cities where many job vacancies are available in industries, organizations, companies, corporate sectors, etc.

### **Disparity in Hills and Valley**

The Report of the Higher Education Commission (2003) states, “The commission finds that there is a great disparity in infrastructure development between colleges in the hills and the valley and also colleges in the urban and the rural areas of the valley. This disparity has affected higher education adversely, particularly in the hills where even the basic infrastructure and the minimum teaching staff are found lacking.” The youths in valley districts are somehow getting better opportunities and they are more advanced in different streams of education since, majority of the higher educational institutions are available in their vicinity and at walking distance. In hill areas, the subjects introduced had only three options - Arts, Science and Commerce. Among the three subject options, the enrolment of students are very high in Arts stream whereas enrolment of students in Science and Commerce streams are very low because of lack of educational infrastructures and shortage of qualified faculties. In addition, the government run professional and vocational institutes do not exist in the hill districts and all the government department headquarters are also based in valley districts where the dominant populations are employed with few minorities in the state. Therefore, it resulted in high production of educated unemployed youths in the hills district rather than valley districts.

### **Non Implementation of Reservation Seats**

Another burning issue in Manipur is recruitment of jobs in the state government departments in which the reservation of seats for tribal are not implemented equally.

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<sup>11</sup>Kengoo Kashung Zingran (2012), Educated unemployed youth in Manipur, International Journal of Research Studies in Educational Technology, accessed on August 10 2014 [http:// www.consortacademia.org/index.php/ijrset/article/147/122/](http://www.consortacademia.org/index.php/ijrset/article/147/122/),

The apex tribal student body in Manipur, All Tribal Students' Union, Manipur alleged, "The attitude of the Government of Manipur as well as the authorities of the university has severely marginalized the tribals, which is evident in the area of education as well as other areas too"<sup>12</sup> According to the population of the state, tribal consists of 34 percent; the remaining 66 percent are Meiteis with some (migrant) outsider. The state reserved only 7.5 percent to the tribals which leads to contradiction in participation of administration and deprivation of developmental activities. It has caused bitter relationship between the tribals and Meiteis within the state. All this has further complicated the problem of educated unemployed. It is important to note that advantage of Schedule Tribe Reservation has not helped the poor and deserving. It has only helped few elite and their family members in the tribes, but unfortunately, very few of them came back to their villages to create awareness and uplift other villagers.

### **Corruption**

Most of the state government departments in the state from the highest down to the lowest lack merit, fairness and transparency in governance. Bribery, corruption, power and money have played powerful roles in getting employment in the state or else there is no other option. The political leader and bureaucrat are the key persons to decide whom to offer the vacant post. The more amounts of cash flows into the hand of the political leader by the candidate, the better preference and opportunity he/she gets to join the vacant position of the state government departments. To quote from Singh (2011), "The estimated rates for various post are discussed in private conversations range between Rs. 3-4 lakh for a primary teacher, Rs. 10-15 lakh for a sub-inspector/assistant SI of police, up to 15 lakh for a supervisor (women and child welfare), and Rs. 15-25 lakh (or even higher) for a state civil services post." It has become the elite culture of the state. The educated youth with brilliant academic performance without cash and political link has no chance to get the required position. The involvement of political godfathers in government-run educational institutes like transferring, promotion, etc. of teachers in the inappropriate situation, without examining the condition of the particular educational institute has hurt the education sector very harshly resulting in further degradation in employment opportunities for the youth.

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<sup>12</sup>Kengoo Kashung Zingran, Education System in Manipur: A Comparison between the Tribes and Non-Tribes, August 14, 2011, accessed on August 15, 2014, [www.nagajournal.com/.../education-system-in-manipur-a-comparison-be](http://www.nagajournal.com/.../education-system-in-manipur-a-comparison-be)

### **Manipur Diaspora – Draining Talent**

According to Wikipedia, “Diaspora is the movement, migration or scattering of people away from an establishment or ancestral homeland”. Diaspora from Manipur settled /studying/ working elsewhere can be classified as Non-resident overseas Manipuri (NROM) who work and study abroad in different parts of the world and Non-resident Manipuri (NRM) who work and study in various cities and states outside Manipur but within the Indian union. This Diaspora is draining the available talent in the state as most of the youth moving out do not want to come back and settle in the Manipur citing reasons such as insurgency, security problems and lack of good employment opportunities. Water will flow wherethere is gradient. If we create suitable peaceful conditions and employment opportunities for youth in Manipur, the youth will certainly come back to the mainstream and add to the prosperity of the state.

### **Recommendations and Way Ahead**

#### **Educational Infrastructure**

There is a definite need to develop the basic infrastructure facilities in places other than Imphal and address the lopsided educational infrastructure available in the state. More number of technical and specialisation oriented colleges/vocational institutes need to be opened in the hill districts covering a variety of subjects such as science, commerce, information technology, engineering, medicine etc. Unless the education is brought to the common people right near their home, the issue of unemployment will only magnify and divert the young minds to other undesirable avenues. Practical work experience and training emerge as the most important policy objectives. However, these objectives are extremely difficult to achieve, particularly in rural areas and in small towns. The infrastructure for high quality training for marketable skills is quite weak and good trainers are difficult to locate. Considerable investments for this purpose will yield rich dividends. There is also need to have some Centres of Excellence to draw students from other parts of the country.

#### **Application Oriented/Industry Relevant Degree Courses**

The graduate courses currently opened in various colleges within Manipur are of traditional nature which is about learning basic science, or arts, or commerce. The applicability of such traditional degree course to the needs of current industry jobs elsewhere or any relevant jobs within local Manipur environment is very hard to find. Either course contents of degree courses ought to be adapted to application oriented learning modules, or new local industry relevant degree courses need to be introduced freshly to all the colleges within Manipur. State Government needs to consider availability of skilled manpower and capable enterprises in each relevant industry sector

before forming growth supporting industrial policies in those sectors<sup>13</sup>. Tackling rural unemployment and identifying opportunities within the rural areas would play a key role in controlling the educated unemployment rates since a sustainable policy in this direction would reduce the number of rural unemployed youth migrants to the cities. MNREGA has been a hit amongst the rural populace in Manipur. The intensive short-term residential training course for skill development and capacity building particularly in rural areas need to be planned to hone the skills and help youth in getting employment.

### **Development of Tourism in Manipur**

In a modern, globalized and borderless world, tourism has emerged as a major export industry which not only contributes to the shape of the economy but also determines the image of the land and people. The travel and tourism sector is the world's largest service sector industry and creates more jobs per million rupees of investment than any other sector of the economy. Tourism is no longer an appendix in modern government planning but rather a necessity to create employment opportunities, generate income & revenue and drive the inclusive growth of the economy, Manipur, with her comfortable climate, mystique cultural heritage and sublime natural beauty, located strategically, promises to be a huge potential for the growth of tourism. The Asian Development Bank has identified the region as a "Key Area due to its unrealized potential as an ecotourism product."<sup>14</sup> Manipur and its tourism policies become all the more important in view of India's Look East Policy and the Trans-Asian Highways and Railways. The Government must take advantage of these developments and therefore seeks to create a unique brand to market Manipur Tourism as the "Gateway to South-East Asia" in conformity with its modernity, relevance, competitiveness, strategic location and commercial aspects. Government must believe that once the appropriate infrastructure and services are suitably placed, Manipur has the potential to become a rich commercial hub and a tourist hotspot in South-East Asia, akin to Bangkok. Exploiting such a tremendous potential will generate exponential employment opportunities for the locals. However, first of all to attract attention of national and international tourists, a safe and secured environment needs to be created and maintained along with modern hospitality infrastructure, so as to build a confidence among tourists for comfortable and serene visits.

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<sup>13</sup> Mairembam Shanjoy, Policy gap between Higher Education and SMEs support leads to unemployment growth in Manipur, E-Pao, access on Aug 15, 2014, e-pao.net › education › Jobs Career

<sup>14</sup> MANIPUR TOURISM POLICY 2011, DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR, accessed on August 15 2014 kanglaonline.com/2011/08/have-your-say-manipur-tourism-policy-2011...



## **Encouraging Industrial Development in Manipur and Improvement of Infrastructure**

The report on 'Pre-investment Feasibility Study on Industrial Potential Survey for Manipur' provides a vision for development of potential industries in the State for the next ten years. As per the report, Manipur lacks behind the national norms with respect to their agrarian output resources, level of industrialization and infrastructure facilities. The industrial development in Manipur has been very slow. Various factors, i.e., lack of infrastructure like power, transportation, communication, are responsible for the slow process of development which has a cascading effect on other factors like poor storage facility, lack of marketing network, lack of credit facility, lack of technological knowhow etc.

The socio-economic development of Manipur will largely depend upon small and medium scale industries promoted by local entrepreneurs. The scope of few large-scale industries exists in agro-horticulture, bamboo, cement, green marble and power sector. This will generate direct and indirect employment and setting up of various forward and backward linkage support service sector units<sup>15</sup>. At present the role and investment of private sector in the state is very minimal. Virtually most of the private participants have chosen to stay out of investing in Manipur due to security concerns. There have been incidents of bumper crop when villagers threw their farm products on the streets as there were no buyers. Manipur has a curse of being the land locked bottom of development ladder, being a land locked state with limited access to markets outside. Improvement of the infrastructure, roads and rail connectivity with unhindered access to market without any harassment will encourage entrepreneurs to invest in the state. A more active private participation in investment and job creation would address the employment needs of the youth.

## **Self-Employment Programmes (SEP): Skills and Capacity Development**

Skills and capacity development courses need to be planned both for educated and uneducated youth to enhance their employability and productivity. Government should focus on skill and capacity development to harness the high potential of the youth of Manipur. This component should focus on financial assistance to individuals/groups of Rural/urban poor for setting up gainful self-employment ventures/micro-enterprises, suited to their skills, training, aptitude and local conditions. The under-employed and unemployed urban poor should be encouraged to set up small enterprises relating to manufacturing, servicing and petty business for which there is considerable local demand. Local skills and local crafts should be particularly encouraged. Each City/Town should develop a compendium of such activities/projects

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<sup>15</sup> Pricewaterhouse-coopers Kolkata. Industrial Potential survey for Manipur and Sikkim, 2003, accessed on August 15 2014 [www.nedfi.com/.../industry/.../33\\_Industrial\\_Potential\\_survey\\_for\\_Mani...](http://www.nedfi.com/.../industry/.../33_Industrial_Potential_survey_for_Mani...)

keeping in view skills available, marketability of products, costs, economic viability etc. No minimum or maximum educational qualification is prescribed for the selection of beneficiaries under SEP. Under this component, setting up of both individual and group micro enterprises should be supported. Individual and groups may be provided loan from the banks and the application for such loans be preferably recommended by the SHGs<sup>16</sup>.

### **Checking Proxy employment**

Proxy employment is the bane of Manipur society since it has created a convenient divide amongst the valley and hill based people, wherein appointed government employees quietly outsource their jobs to locals thus avoiding moving to remote districts. There is an urgent need to curb this trend and a requirement arises to put such systems in place wherein both the government employee and their proxy are taken to task. Curbing this trend will ensure the right person for the job and improve the quality of education.

### **Tapping Sports and Cultural Talent**

Manipur is known for its sporting talent especially in the fields of boxing, football, archery, mixed martial arts, etc. MC Mary Kom is a brand ambassador for the state in many a forum. Yet, many a young sportsman/sportswoman find it easier to prove their sporting talent by representing another state at national/international level due to lack of adequate training and infrastructure facilities in the state. A planned strategy and sustained investment in the sports arena by the government would bring a sea of opportunities to the talented youth of the state. Similarly, the cultural talent and variety of streams in the fields of music, dancing, art and cinema is unique to the state. The talent is not found elsewhere and as a tradition is being handed over from generation to generation. If this culture is preserved and given the exposure that it deserves, many a youth could benefit from it by the employment opportunities arising out of it. Establishment of National Sports Academy in Manipur is a step to the direction.

### **Better Governance and Job Awareness**

There is a need for more effective and people oriented governance in the state. The youth of the state form a potent human resource capital and tapping this potential rather than fritting it away to insurgency and migration does not augur well for the state. Good governance comes with effective implementation of the various programmes and transparency in implementation process. Unlike other states, Manipur has restricted publicity mechanisms and as a result even the daily newspapers reach a day late to the

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<sup>16</sup>National Urban Livelihoods Mission, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation  
Government of India, accessed on August 15 2014, [mhupa.gov.in/NULM\\_Mission/nulm\\_mission.htm](http://mhupa.gov.in/NULM_Mission/nulm_mission.htm)

interior and hill districts. This has caused many a youth to lose opportunity of getting job due to lack of awareness of recruitment/interview/selection. There is an urgent requirement of setting up job fairs and job melas conducting awareness campaign and recruitment drives and spot selection programmes. This can be done both by the government as well as the private firms and must reach both the rural and urban youth. Security Forces which are the only symbol of governance in remote areas can play an important role in creating job awareness.

### **Tapping Agricultural Capacity and Small Scale Industries**

Manipur is blessed with suitable climate to produce enormous agricultural produce and that's the reason the farmers grow cash crops, fruits and vegetables in large quantities. Hilly areas are conducive for the farming of vegetables and fruits. Organic farming has already been started at many hilly areas in the state. Many agro-horticultural crops are potential export commodities. The agro-based industry includes fruit preparations, juice concentrate plants, herbal plants, processing of spices and so on. These farm produce along with bamboo shoots are used for commercial purposes. Since, the cultivated land is under 10% of the total land area in Manipur, optimizing the use of balance 90% land and newer/ innovative methods to increase production in the wake of expansion of the residential areas would help in addressing the unemployment issue indirectly.

Manipur, with all its tremendous wealth of biodiversity, is an abundance storehouse of tea and horticulture which are of great commercial value, and if properly tapped, can open up new avenues of industry and employment. With its geographical location and proximity to Myanmar, Manipur has the potential to become a trade and business hub with opening of trade links across the border. Promoting small scale industries and encouraging small scale entrepreneurs to stand on their feet with loans and subsidies from banks/ government would assist young people to build their own business and generate employment for themselves and those around them. Garments, aluminium products, electronics, electrical, nursing and diagnostic services are some of the fields that can be exploited for setting up and promoting small scale businesses.

### **Additional Central Government Jobs**

There seems to be a clamour for central government jobs in the state. Many a youth when asked replied that they would prefer a central government job than state government job citing fairness in selection process, assured remuneration and also the chance and opportunity to go out of the insurgency prone state. If that be the case, then it would be logical to introduce more vacancies for central government jobs such as defence forces and paramilitary forces. The average youth of the state is mostly matriculate and these kinds of jobs are best suited for such target populace. Increased

number of recruitment rallies would assure the youth to earn Rs 15000-20000/- per month as starting pay in addition to other benefits such as free medical, canteen, travel facilities etc. Moreover such a job would generate respect for the individual within his community.

### **Addressing Reservation Status**

In Manipur, the tribal have been accorded ST status and have been given 7.5% reservation for jobs. This has not augured well with the Meitei communities who have also demanded ST and reservation status for their community. The problem here is that many of the unemployed tribal youth are not able to make use of their reservation status due to lack of awareness and unable to secure jobs. The government needs to tackle this aspect by giving it wider publicity and fairness in its dealing when it comes to according job opportunities. There is also a need for policy intervention to ensure that advantage of reservation is availed by poor and deserving.

### **Handling Corruption**

There is a dire need to handle corruption in the state since virtually every department and organisation is riddled with corruption and red tape. Bribery and parochialism is the order of the day and in Manipur. There is no fair play or transparency in the system of selection. The divide between the valley based Meities and the hill based tribal populace has only added fuel to the fire of corruption. There is need to institute transparency and accountability to check the corruption and instil faith among the people in the system.

### **Land Laws in Manipur**

There exists a disparity in the land laws within the state. While the valley based areas are governed by the Panchayati act, the hill areas are administered by the hill areas act. In essence, valley based people cannot purchase land in hills and there lies the problem. This has been a major cause of rift between the valley based Meites and Muslims against the hill based Naga and Kuki tribes. This has also led to unequal development taking place between valley and hill areas as entrepreneurs cannot buy land in hill areas. There is a need for in-depth study to address the land problem and have land laws modified and made acceptable to all tribes and conducive for development in Manipur. It would pave way for development and equal employment opportunities for the youth of the hills and valley areas.

### **Tackling Insurgency**

Insurgency in Manipur has mushroomed, unfortunately due to alienation, poverty and unemployment in the state. However, the same insurgency is today giving proxy employment to many a disgruntled educated youth, who have fallen prey to lure

of terrorism which is an easier alternative. Drugs, extortion and weapon trade have trapped these youth in the process. Taxation, extortion, violence and frequent bandhs and blockades called by the underground groups deter the entrepreneur from investing in Manipur. The Government needs to tackle this issue head on and address the target populace i.e. its educated unemployed youth. Fairer job opportunities, better education and transparency in job selection would go a long way in addressing the problem. There is also a need to rehabilitate cadres, who have laid down their arms and are in Cease Fire Camps.

## **Conclusion**

Unemployment problem, especially amongst the educated youth of Manipur is a problem of the individual as well as the society around him. It psychologically, financially, emotionally and materially affects him and his family. It brings in a sense of dejection, inferiority and hopelessness in the individual and often remains the subject of ridicule of those around him. The frustration, anger and disenchantment often force these bright youth to other alternatives ranging from alcoholism, drug addiction, robbery, murder and even suicide. Probably the greatest influence has been the prevailing insurgency as well. There can be no stability of any sort in the state if the policy makers and the administrators do not give this issue the importance it deserves. There is an innate and urgent requirement to take concrete steps to address the issue before it goes out of hand.

To raise the capacity of the society grapple with some of the long standing problems, we need to adopt a structure of incentives and sanctions that would put premium on efficiency and growth rather than on palliatives of subsidies or reservations and quotas for specific groups. A meritocratic society will almost certainly create some tensions; but it is more likely to transform the functioning of the Manipur state and economy in a short period of time than the continuing compromises to achieve amorphous or conflicting goals. Multi-disciplinary dialogues and discussions on the ways and means of raising the capacity of the society to confront and alleviate the problem of poverty and unemployment need to be organised on a priority basis to tackle the problems of youth as well. The present review is only a beginning and highlights the need for a comprehensive analysis of all the evidence on the subject.

The situation forces us to think as to what ails with Education systems and Employment avenues in Manipur. The problem of educated unemployment is mainly two fold, firstly, scarcity of government jobs and secondly, virtually there is no other employer in Manipur other than the government. There is an urgent requirement to improve the education system in Manipur. It is important to allocate share of the state

Budget for improvement in education systems which will help create a pool of skilled manpower in the state.

Manipur, a land locked state, on fringes of this country, with an overstretched communication to the rest of India, has disadvantages accruing through its geographical location and hostile terrain. Therefore to attract private industry, the true employment generation, it is utmost important to provide necessary communication infrastructure to allow the industry access to markets in the mainland. Providing only communication infrastructure won't suffice to attract industry; they will have to be offered incentives along with a peaceful environment to boost confidence. Government employment, which remains limited and stagnant, will get complimented by employment avenues created by private industry. However in creating such an employment environment, concerted and joint efforts by the Central and State Government are a must. The solution to the malaise experienced in Manipur is to provide work to all hands and they should not remain idle. Only the idle hands find Kalashnikovs attractive.

It is evident from the findings of the survey that the youth are joining insurgent organizations due to compulsion and not because of ideology. There is an urgent need to focus on this root cause which is sustaining insurgency in Manipur and also in other parts of Northeast India. Improvement of educational and other infrastructure and human resource development together with effective and people oriented governance in the state are essential. Creation of awareness, additional employment opportunities and tap the immense human and natural potential will help in bringing peace in Manipur and other parts of Northeast India. Peaceful socio-political environment and development initiative are corollary to each other and thus inseparable. The joint efforts of the central and State Governments, supported wholeheartedly by the locals, subduing their ethnic identities to the larger cause of peace and prosperity are probably the true solution to the issues and challenges of insurgency in Manipur.

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# FERTILITY PREFERENCES BY RELIGIOUS DIFFERENTIALS

Kishor S. Rajput\*

## ABSTRACT

*Religion is one of the oldest socio-cultural characteristics associated with the mankind. It, being an important social attribute, affects many individual and family decisions including fertility preferences. A particular stereotype of Indian society is the strong preference for a male child. Therefore, this paper tries to examine the fertility preferences of Hindu and Muslim women particularly the desire for a male child and the effect of some selected background variables on the decision.*

**Key Words:** Fertility Preferences, Desire for a Son, Hindu and Muslim Fertility, Fertility Stereotype.

## Introduction

Religion is one of the oldest socio-cultural characteristics associated with the mankind and civilizations created by them over thousands of years of known history. In fact, religion has become a worldwide institution. Its influence is found in all society and it really acts as a powerful system of social control (Moulasha 2000). Hence, religion can be considered as an important social attribute. It is of particular importance in our country because we have many faiths and our civilisation is closely linked to religion (Hussain 1994). India is a country of many religions. Hindus and Muslims are the two major religious communities of India. According to the Census of India, 2001, Hindus constitute 80.46 percent of the total population of the country, Muslim population's share is 13.43 percent and the rest is accounted by other religions.

It is often said that data on fertility preferences may be misleading, because; first, attitudes towards childbearing may not be fully formed and they may change over time and second, the responses may not take into account the effect of social pressures or the attitudes of the husband and other family members, who may have major influence on reproductive decisions. Nevertheless, the data on desire for additional children can be useful as a crude indicator of general attitudes and the future course of fertility (NFHS 1992-92, Assam).

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Several social scientists recognize India as strong patrilineal society and there are several stereotypes in the Indian society. A popular stereotype is the strong preference for a male child (Nath and Land 1994). Many studies have also substantiated this fact (Williamson 1976; Cleland et al. 1983; Mason 1992; Rahman and Da Vanzo 1993; Nath and Goswami 1997; Nath and Leonetti 2001; and Nath and Deka 2004). Son preference is generally regarded as an important factor influencing fertility decisions. The practice of dowry and importance of sons for religious rites mean Hindus have stronger preference for sons than Muslims (Bhat and Xavier 2005).

### **Sample Design and Tools of Data Collection**

The sample design adopted for the study is that of a multistage simple random technique. This study is primarily based on the primary data collected from the Sonitpur district of Assam. Altogether 503 women were surveyed using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule. Out of 503 women, 245 were Hindu women and the remaining 258 were Muslim women. The married woman in the age group of 13-49 with at least one live birth was considered as the sampling unit for data collection. The above data were collected during the period between April and July 2006.

### **Profile of the Respondents and the Family**

The background profiles of the women show a varied picture (Table 1). The current age of the women, on the basis of different stages of women's reproductive life, were divided into three categories, namely, 15-24, 25-34 and 35-49 for the present study. Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group 25-34. Around 53.0 percent of the women belonged to this group. The percentage of the women in the age group 15-24 was 18.7 percent. In the age group of 35-49, there were 24.8 percent of women.

As far as the legal age at marriage in India is concerned, it is fixed at 18 years for the girls and 21 years for the boys. However, the findings of the present study show many of the surveyed women got married before the attainment of the legal age at marriage. Around 36 percent of the women got married before the age 18 and the rest of the women, of course, married after the attainment of the legal age at marriage.

From the marital status point of view, 95.0 percent of the women were found to be currently married. The remaining percentages of the women were either separated/divorced or widowed. In the overall sample, 52.3 percent of the women were from the rural areas and the remaining 47.7 percent of the women resided in the urban areas. The data also portrayed that majority of the women live in the nuclear family. Nearly 70 percent of the women were found to be living in the nuclear family against the figure of around 30 percent of the women living in the joint family.

Table 1: Percent distribution of the women by selected background characteristics

<i>Background characteristics</i>	<i>Percentage (Number of Women)</i>
<b>Current age of the women</b>	
15-24	18.7 (94)
25-34	52.9 (266)
35-49	28.4 (143)
<b>Age at marriage of the women</b>	
Before 18 years	35.6 (179)
After 18 years	64.4 (324)
<b>Marital status of the women</b>	
Currently married	95.0 (478)
Separated/Divorced	1.2 (6)
Widowed	3.8 (19)
<b>Current place of residence</b>	
Rural	52.3 (263)
Urban	47.7 (240)
<b>Type of the family</b>	
Nuclear	69.8 (351)
Joint	30.2 (152)
<b>Education of the women</b>	
Illiterate	24.9 (125)
Less than middle school	39.6 (199)
Middle school and above	35.6 (179)
<b>Husband's education</b>	
Illiterate	20.7 (100)
Less than middle school	37.2 (180)
Middle school and above	42.1 (204)
<b>Work status of the women</b>	
Not working	90.3 (454)
Working	9.7 (32)
<b>Occupation of the husband</b>	
Agriculturists/farmers	11.6 (56)
Service holders	22.1 (107)
Businessmen	45.9 (222)
Others	20.4 (99)
<b>Standard of living of the family</b>	
Low	52.9 (266)
High	47.1 (237)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0 (503)</b>

**Please Note:** Figures in the parentheses represent absolute number

In the field of education, it was found that percentage of illiterate women stood at 24.9 percent, less than middle school educated at 39.6 percent, and middle school and above at 35.6 percent. However, as far as the education of the husbands is concerned, majority of them were middle school and above educated (42.1 percent), followed by 37.2 percent of the husbands with less than middle school education. The figure for illiterate husbands stood at 20.7 percent.

Work status wise, vast majority of the women were found to be involved only in household activities (90.3 percent) and only 9.7 percent of the women were found out to be working outside their home. The distribution of the respondents' husbands according to their occupation showed that 45.9 percent of them were engaged in business activities, 22.1 percent in services and 11.6 percent in agriculture and farming activities. The rest of the husbands (20.4 percent) were engaged in other activities not specified above.

The standard of living of the family was divided in two categories, viz., low and high. The data showed that a slightly higher percentage of the women were found to be living in the families having low standard of living (52.9 percent) against the figure of 47.1 percent of women living in families with high standard of living.

### **Desire for Additional Children and the Background Characteristics**

The data presented in the Table 2 show that 41.2 percent and 45.3 percent of the Hindu and Muslim women respectively desire to have another child in future.

When we look at the women by their current age, then we see that the desire for additional children decreases with the increase in the age. This is quite natural too for the women to have lesser desire for children at higher ages.

Likewise, the desire for additional children goes down with increase in the number of children living. For example, as compared to 54.3 percent of the Hindu women with 2 or less than 2 children desiring for additional children, only 9.7 percent of them with 3 or more than 3 children desire additional children. Likewise, 26.1 percent of the Muslim women with 3 or more children desire additional children as compared to 66.1 percent of the Muslim women desiring additional children with 2 or less than 2 children.

Table 2: Percent distribution of the Hindu and Muslim women according to the desire for additional children by background characteristics

Background characteristics	Hindu	Muslim
<b>Current age of women</b>		
15-24	70.3 (26)	75.4 (43)
25-34	46.7 (63)	45.8 (60)
35-49	16.4 (12)	20.0 (14)
<b>No. of living children</b>		
≤ 2	54.3 (94)	66.1 (82)
≥ 3	9.7 (7)	26.1 (35)
<b>Desire for additional children</b>	<b>41.2 (101)</b>	<b>45.3 (117)</b>

Source: Field data

Note: Figures in the parentheses represent absolute number

### Son Preference and the Background Characteristics

Table 3 presents the data on son preference of the women along with the data on son preference by some selected background characteristics. Out of those who want to have children in future, 61.4 percent of the Hindu women's preferred sex of the additional child is that of male, whereas the corresponding figure for the Muslim women is 53 percent (Figure 1). It can, therefore, be safely said that son preference is high in both Hindu and Muslim communities, though higher among the Hindus.

The son preference is found to be high among the aged women, women with 3 or more living children, rural women, women whose husbands are illiterate and women with low standard of living.

The son preference is found higher among the Hindu women living in nuclear family. However, for the Muslim women, the desire for son is found higher among the women living in joint family. As far as the women's education is concerned, the son preference exists among the women of all three educational categories. However, it is the highest among the Hindu women who are literate but have not completed the middle school, but it is the illiterate Muslim women who show the highest degree of son preference.

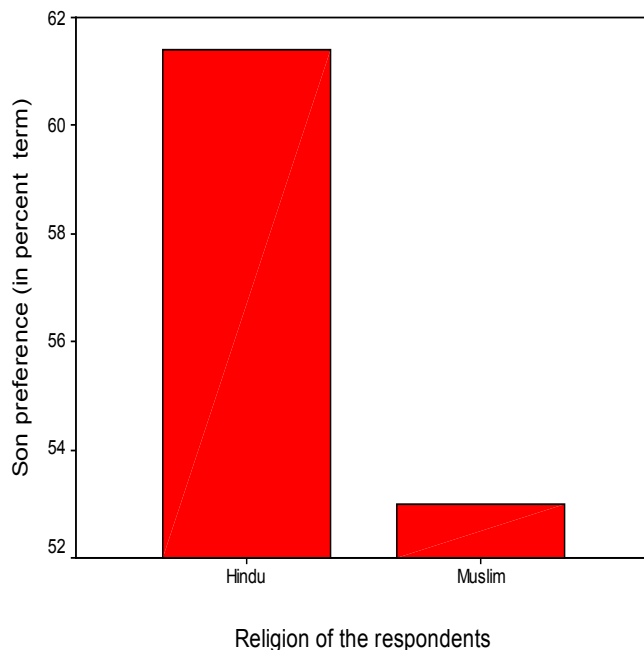
Table 3: Percent distribution of the Hindu and Muslim women according to the son preference by selected background variables

Background variables	Hindu	Muslim
<b>Current age of the women</b>		
15-24	53.8 (14)	58.1 (25)
25-34	61.9 (39)	48.3 (29)
35-49	75.0 (9)	57.1 (8)
<b>No. of children living</b>		
≤ 2	59.6 (56)	51.2 (42)
≥ 3	85.7 (6)	57.1 (20)
<b>Place of residence</b>		
Rural	73.5 (36)	53.2 (41)
Urban	50.0 (26)	52.5 (21)
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear	64.2 (43)	51.1 (46)
Joint	55.9 (19)	59.3 (16)
<b>Women's education</b>		
Illiterate	42.9 (3)	58.5 (24)
Less than middle school	72.5 (29)	51.9 (28)
Middle school and above	55.6 (30)	45.5 (10)
<b>Husband's education</b>		
Illiterate	100.0 (4)	69.2 (27)
Less than middle school	61.8 (21)	46.7 (21)
Middle school and above	58.7 (37)	42.4 (14)
<b>Standard of living</b>		
Low	66.7 (28)	59.4 (41)
High	57.6 (34)	43.8 (21)
<b>Son preference</b>	<b>61.4 (62)</b>	<b>53.0 (62)</b>

Source: Field data

Note: Figures in the parentheses represent absolute number

Fig 1: Percent distribution of Hindu and Muslim women desiring their additional children to be a son



### Determinants of Desire for Additional Children: Results of Logistic Regression Analyses

In the following logistic regression analysis model, altogether nine variables were entered to see their effect on the dependent variable, namely desire for additional children. The results so derived are presented in the Table-4, which shows that the Muslim women are 1.6 times more likely to desire for additional children as compared to the Hindu women after the control of the background variables. However, when religion is considered in the model as the only explanatory variable, it is not found as a significant variable influencing the desire for additional children of the women.

As far as the current age is concerned, it is found that the aged women's desire for additional children is lower than the younger women. Similarly the women with more than 2 children are less likely to desire additional children than the women with 2 or less than 2 children.

Likewise, the urban women's and the working women's desire for additional children are likely to be lesser than the rural women  $\{\text{Exp}(\beta) = 0.5\}$  and non-working women  $\{\text{Exp}(\beta) = 0.5\}$  respectively.

The type of the family in which the women live and the education level of the women are not found statistically significant explanatory variable affecting desire for additional children of the women.

Table 4: Results of logistic regression analyses showing the impact of selected background variables on the desire for additional children before and after the adjustment of other variables

Variables	Before adjustment	After adjustment
	Exp ( $\beta$ )	Exp ( $\beta$ )
<b>Religion</b> (rc: Hindu)		
Muslim	1.2	1.6*
<b>Current age</b> (rc: 15 - 24 years)		
35-34	0.3***	0.5***
35-49	0.1***	0.2***
<b>No. of children living</b> (rc: less than 2)		
More than 2	0.2***	0.1***
<b>Place of Current Residence</b> (rc: Rural)		
Urban	0.7**	0.5***
<b>Type of Family</b> (rc: Nuclear)		
Joint	0.8	0.9
<b>Women's Education</b> (rc: Illiterate)		
Less than middle school	1.4	0.9
Middle school & above	1.2	0.8
<b>Work status of women</b> (rc: Not working)		
Working	0.5**	0.5*

## Conclusion

Son preference is prevalent in both Hindu and Muslim societies. Among the Hindu and Muslim women desiring to have additional children, 61.4 of the Hindu women and 53.0 percent of the Muslim women want their next child to be a male child.

The son preference is particularly very high among the aged women. This may be due to the fact that they have already approached the end of their reproductive period and, hence, they are desperate to have a son. The education level of the women has been found to have little bearing on the son preference of the women. The result of logistic regression analysis on desire for additional children shows that Muslim women are more likely to desire for additional children than their Hindu counterparts.

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# SERVICE CUSTOMISATION AND OPERATIONAL EXTENSIONS IN BANK MARKETING

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## ABSTRACT

*The bank marketing and its analytics are largely witnessing Service Enhancement Systems (SEs) which enabled multi-objective criteria be it collective, selective or competitive. The much highlighted differentiation through customisation is formatting new service segmentations with conveniences as a major character. The current research on Consumer Finance (CF) evaluate the meeting of financial service needs which not only boosted up-selling but also cross selling of the financial services based on service-on-demand, designing service capacities labelled by quality banking and integrated service marketing offering retail, mobile, internet banking etc. The service transformations have also been adopting multi-communication channels viz., P2P (Person-to-Person), A2A (Account-to-Account), Channel Migration using new service management utilities based on market situations. The usage of smart-phones, smart-cards, personal finance management, security and fraud prevention, cloud computing, social media, shopping and payment conveniences including book-my-show, shoppers-stop, Bajaj Allianz and Flip Kart etc., are redefining the new financial prospects towards marketing promotion and prospects.*

**Key Words:** Consumer Finance, Financial Services, Financial Participation, Customer Orientation.

## Introduction

The financial environment is currently witnessing dynamic changes in the spectrum of its financial services wrapping the technology, services, focus on the financial majors in relation to product portfolios, lifestyle-linked credit extension strategies, encouraging points-of sale (POS) / points of purchase (POP), low-end and purpose-oriented finance schemes as a part of inclusive financing. The financial service aggregations in their multi-tier approaches supporting active participation of non-banking financial companies, private and collaborative affirmatives at one end and

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global institutional and service participation on the other hand to fill in the service gaps otherwise remained unattended. This new phenomena of integrated financial service systems (IFSSs) introduced innovative deliveries, relooking into financial broking, credit card, mortgage financing, consumer and personal loan segments, in durables and non-durable categories etc. Be it tourism, education, health, auto or retail the banking is witnessing its highly imperative financial modalities in both capital and operative facilities launching signature service statements in the dimension of financial services.

The consumer finance (here onwards CF) associate with the array of financial, credit and investment services in owning the goods and services. The credit support offered for a variety of purposes and the charge of interest is based on the duration of loan, terms and risks and the profit measures perceived throughout the process. More aptly, it involves in granting the credit facility to those consumer segments who enable to possess goods on daily basis or frequently.

The underlying philosophy believes that the consumers are willing to pay for viable financial advices and products. Be it the value with inbuilt interest, charge or commission it is basically the professional merits which ideally get engaged in planning the financial values systems concentrating on the clients' financial engagements and thereby generating the benefits. Traditionally the concept was evolved and was selectively practiced by wealthy investors or trusts etc. It is an extended financial planning where the consumer finance is a measure to focus over transactions related to markets, products, services and most importantly the consumers with diversified needs. All participant groups are seeking a single solution towards growing complexities and tackling the factored issues.

The issues rose over the comprehensive needs and effectiveness of consumer finance are

- related to cost-effective transactions linked with risk and uncertainty.
- lay directions towards new compliances.
- involve measurement of capital and operational allocations and returns.
- help constructing regulatory-related evaluation systems.
- support of technology, infrastructure, credit and other compliance needs etc.

The financial landscape needs both macro and micro indicators to consolidate the diversified consumer finance needs, knowledge, alliances and service spans. The composite effects witnessed the impending risks in the areas of value in mergers, acquisitions, simplifying the client retention strategies, to identify assessment value realisations and gaps, stabilising internal/external management reporting etc. The conflicting interests of financial participants in core audit and attest services, third party assurance, systems and technology assessments, technical accounting advice, transfer pricing systems etc., are few effective services relevant in the area of expertise.

### **Consumer Financial Services (CFS) and Approaches**

Irrespective of affordability and financial capacity the consumer preferences are skewed towards the pricey and affordable directions. These motives have been thoroughly supported by the financial prerogatives which are ensuring the purchases beyond the capacities of accumulated savings. The financing educational loans or student loans facilitating loans over anticipated future prospective performances, auto loans with most affordable instalments vying on the life style priorities of potential clients. The public relation divisions of financial institutions are targeting over the large scale or mega consumer borrowing as a new phenomenon. Each debt raise as an ultimate situation blended with diversified reasons and all interest bearing loans have schedules, estimations and securities. In fact loans and their interests are been perceived as amounts lent on agreements and as a compensation for creating the utilities. As the consumer finance is based on objective oriented diversities there exists a need to thoroughly regulate and ease the associated norms so as to overcome all corresponding uncertainties connected to relevant situations.

The service sub-categories of CFS are

✓ Ongoing or continuing	✓ The credit limit is based on the formal sanction and the credit is offered on revolving basis
✓ Fixed Category	✓ Credit is offered for specific period. The repayment is periodical based on the nature i.e., hire purchase, cash credit or instalment etc.
✓ Secured and unsecured	✓ Secured by collateral forms if offer a security to the credit. Based on the nature of financial institutions, personal capacities and credibility, resource-backup and alternative assets etc., also contribute.
✓ Cash	✓ Provision of direct persist in different forms

One need to understand the reference of consumer finance in relation to the activities involving in the process of granting consumer finances so as to facilitate the purchases of selective products other than real estate. This is done to gain a sequence of payments ranging from 3 months to 5 years.

### **Involvement of Facilitators**

The service channels are engaged by

- NBFCs (Non-banking financial companies/NBFIs (non-banking financial intermediaries) form as potential source which grant pigmy and medium credit as consumer finance. Besides its wide range of financial services the consumer

loans have been locking substantial spaces in the areas of personal cash loan segment and petty term receivables etc.

- Credit Card Institutions: The integrated financial services offering the participation of credit card institutions for opening “credit purchase” of selective consumer products as a part of banking service. The system also facilitates the purchase of credit card services “on credit”.

### Options of Consumer Finance

- The products or services are availed through cash payment over regular time intervals (Cash Loan approach).
- Usage of cards in the process of payment services (Credit Card)
- The products or services are transacted and possessed any time during the month or fixed time limit on instalment basis (Revolving Approach)
- Value bound purchases within a specific period (Open Account Approach)
- The purchase formats are as per clients convenience i.e., either in full or part payment based on purchase (Option plan Approach)
- Adopting a typical sequence of purchase frequency, capacity of client in terms of disposable amounts, capacity to increase or decrease the income sources, determining the size of down payment or operating credit contract along with charges (Demand Approach).

❖ Products Covered are	White and Brown Products, i.e., TV, dishwasher, cooking range, washing machine, cars, air conditioners, refrigerators, PCs, electronic & digital accessories, and even branded furniture & jewellery, books and teaching aids etc.
❖ Services covered are	Domestic and Global Tourism including package tours to resorts, entertainment and sports, shopping, health, education, interior decoration, fast food chains etc.

Large majority of consumers as such cannot understand the issues or challenges of financial plans and their complexities or contributions. It is the certified and strategic professionals who take the responsibility of investments, risks, keeping track of the financial securities and participate in the protection and multiplying the financial resources.

The involvement of global financial majors viz., GE Country wide, ICICI etc., are aiming towards financial inputs as possible means in the growth and expansion of consumer especially in the end-user markets of recent periods. They have been concentrating on the prospective segments with innovative market finance schemes. The consumer retail financing has been currently attending the Consumer Priority Areas

(CPAs). The industrial establishments like Hinduja Group have been adopting the fast track changes in consumer finance. The financing institutions like IndusInd Bank suitably created action-oriented financial strategies in broking, insurance and intermediation approaches and large scale acquisitions etc., are promoted by Standard Chartered Bank. The service units have been raising supportive financing and retail financing as emerging areas in their niche as well as a part of spinoffs in utility-expansions. The clubbing services in consumer finance and asset management businesses were approved by RBI. Under this service brand the AIG Capital India, an NBFC initiated its focus on new business modes in the fields of credit cards, consumer durable financing and personal loan segments etc., currently been adopted by other institutions.

The new financial expansions viz., Reliance Capital which is prominently offering service leadership in Private Equity, Mutual Funding, Stock Broking and Insurance etc., is keen to fill the spaces of consumer finance. It has been processing a tie-up with HDFC Bank in this area of service facility. The follow up measures are directed towards the gamut of personal and consumer finance, auto-finance and housing finance in the order of priority. The new waves of credit cards are still finalising the modalities and will soon be entering into the target segment service divisions of aiming senior citizens with retirement, services with tourism and ease in payment through card choice formats etc.

### **New Perceptions Prompted Consumer Finance**

- ❖ The growing importance is felt everywhere but the channels which are prompting extended financing are scanty and need to adopt equity and fairness.
- ❖ The status of consumers enable them to be eligible to raising potential sums of consumer finance but only some percentage only are able to use the economic resources for their pragmatic use.
- ❖ The financial services sought are often led to settle unwarranted agreements and uncertainties resulting in unproductive and speculative investment/s.
- ❖ Merely satisfying the security measures have been creating access to the finances ignoring the regions or territorial imbalances in the debit and credit status. Large sums of money ignore the reasonability of needs can support large scale financial scams and speculations.
- ❖ The low customer financial literacy also has been regulating the financial services into non-performing dimensions. The consumer protection has become an inevitable new development to protect the interest of large customers who are willing to avail both on-line and off-line financial services.

### **Impact of Change in Consumer Finance**

The new digital consumer is the result of new age financial endorsements. The “anytime and anywhere” banking is able to successfully to offer new digital financial modes and paper-less transactions with “real-time” effects. The new communication systems, Information and data access and computer –aided electronic gadgets in the past few years are witnessing a constant change, opportunity and new possibilities.

- Positioning of Social Media: Be it domestic or global consumer has become fast dependent on digital information sources. These have been able create direct contact with manufacturers, facilitators and channel systems etc.
- Command of consumer information is witnessing sizable new services patterns with growing insights of consumer needs and requirements.
- The SAP and Big Data Innovations are offering ultimate success measure of integrated and balanced operational and managerial supremacy.
- Innovation and new connectivity systems helping mass communication, direct-to-customer and creating customer-loyalty modes.
- The benchmarking approaches of data analytics, cloud computing and technological dominance in supply-chain and customer relationships managements redefining the end-to-end developmental structures of “user-experience”.

### **Impact of Consumer Technology**

More appropriately “user skills dominance” is the buzz word predicting new consumer technology trends. These spaces have been able to absorb new operating environments viz., mobile, i-pads etc., experiencing massive tech-participation in designing, trend-setting, cross-over and even new business quantifying approaches. The recycled initiatives of return-on-investments however, could not ensure total involvement but reflecting substantial growth in limited spans.

### **Composite Mobility Drives**

Ease-in-access and planned investments, decision-making on wider information platforms leading to the death of non-productive conversations, trial and error systems, marginal increments, unplanned turnaround and unsystematic and uncertain predictions could not accommodate the fast changing planning cycles.

### **People to People Communication**

The drastic change in the consumer and market modes of expression, consultancy and counsel has been changing their traditional forms viz., twitter, skype and face book etc., text messaging in day-to-day patterns. The growing tendencies of interactive mediums and wide choice in the option-services are contributing to the financial platforms and advisory sources.

## **Market Analytics**

Dominating multiple areas of customisation, impetus on appropriate client venue, on-line approaches of financial dealings/deliveries and growing magnitudes of suitability in facilities are accessible in instant messaging and blogging systems. The growing contribution of information technology in consumer finance is resulting in more satisfied customers, more realisation of financial needs, increase in investing in technology based communication and delivery channels, efficiency portfolios upgrading the seamless service systems etc. A growing pressure is constantly witnessing in the process of creating and building new regulatory and reliable Consumer Provisioning Approaches. Be it industries, channel service providers, territorial monopolistic forces, dynamic contributors equally addressing the new tie-ups of user-experiences and financial sophistication suitable to the current day needs. It is an admissible fact that it is an era of digital dependences, compatible lifestyles, information and access leadership which have been sophisticated with performance supremacy and shifting preferences in financial advocations.

## **Consumer Finance: A Key Functional Area**

Predominantly a key knowledge area associated with services and personal relationships the domain also need

- Proliferated technology of drawing diversified customer segments and also sustaining data security.
- Client Financial Leverage systems (CFLS) define the insights of client-driven technologies.
- Coping risk-prevention and risk –management systems to advocate security measures.
- Creating a regulating financial environment and involving a range of institutional services with due profitabilities.

The credit and smart cards, innovating consumer lending, electronic commerce, retail banking services, mobile payment systems, mass affluent and affluent banking functions redefining the executive and team building roles. The context is stipulated to overcome the negative effects like hacking, investor security and credit-valuation systems which are few to ensure the client confidence in the new facility-prone and comprehensive services advancements.

The vital changes in the world-wide financial service leadership is drawing its attention on the client base experiences, maintaining quality service spaces, outsourcing or creating in-house innovative and reliable financial assignments to provision the professional quality and experience. Amid the dynamic changes each participatory measure is linked with revenue growth, creating a move towards multi-disciplinary services, reform the client data security along with due reforms, legislations and legal

enforcements etc. The new consumer finance systems are open systems highlight the client status, rights and responsibilities, role-significance of regulating agencies and promotional agencies, enforcements through legal framework and e-navigations. The benefit of building and combining the formatted tools are

➤ Featuring	➤ Ease in access
➤ Well Defined	➤ Enforcement Systems
➤ Network	➤ Formal Vs. Informal Interpretations
➤ Ability	➤ Current and futuristic version
➤ Profound Impact	➤ Usage convenience to Gen Next
➤ Day-to-day finance	➤ Leveraging Saving vs. Debt (Personnel Financial Planning)
➤ New Financial Tools	➤ Interactive Mobile and video, Social Networking and Cost-effective /visualised on-demand Service Deliveries
➤ New Hype	➤ Customer Intimacy, Bank-of-choice, virtual and community incorporations, customer acquisition rating etc.

### Compliance Evaluation and Prototype

The client segments vary on multiple criteria and ideally on the goals and objectives, incorporated search measures, capacity in interpretations and pre-determined preferences etc. It is not the single system progression but the context is replaced by different contributions i.e., the coding/decoding systems, data procurement and interpretation, financial entrepreneurs and customer community involvements. The outcry categories leading to

- **The macro approach:** In its simplistic reference consumer finance is the debt of consumers only rather than firms or businesses. The finances are meant to boost the consumption rather than investment or speculation. The facility enables to enhance the native production capacities and the available credit to considerable extent creates the local purchase capacities.
- **Conditions associated to Consumer finance:** The consumer market systems with wide product and service range displaying several unique features in terms of promoting the concepts of suitability, serviceability, saleability, sustainability and smarting vending services including mercantile forms etc.

However, one can witness much of the insistence is on

- **Financial Credibility:** The primary entitlement of the consumer finance is the financial soundness of the client (consumer). This is dependent on the regular



and reliable income sources, nature of employment, tenure and prospective opportunities due, capacity to pay the EMI at regular intervals etc.

- **Security:** The financial worthiness in terms of alternative sources and collateral securities, guarantees which enable to define the extent of risk and liabilities involved.
- **Effective Rate of Interest:** Based on the norms set by the financial institution for different purposes and contexts these are flexible and are dependent on the reciprocal agreements, contracts and concessions.
- **Duration of Consumer Finance:** Ranging from a short period of 3 months to 60 months the time periods are based on the nature and category of credit. The value of assets and the corresponding depreciation etc., are taken in to consideration.
- **Repayment Procedures:** The post-dated cheques are accepted or the standing instructions linked to regular income source viz., salary account or cash credit account.
- **Miscellaneous charges:** the delivery systems of consumer finances are associated with processing fees, insurance, verification and validity, medical tests, legal opinions, confirmation of originality i.e., previous record, ownership of assets, sources of income, etc., management fees, collection charges and service charges including the documentation charges etc., form a part of instalment payments.

### Scenario Mapping of Consumer Finance

Concentration of Specific, selective and priority segmentation became vital which emphasising the geo-demographics, need-based segments viz., grass root levels , low and middle income groups and beneficiary segments or life style segments as a part of psychographic approaches. The Allied Economic Research consider the “affordable” perspective of vast customer groups irrespective of capacities enabled the financial facility stretched to consumer durables, white products, finances to rural segments as Inclusive financing, agri-business loans and erasing urban –rural divide it is the auto finance, consumer personal and family finance, education and health finances etc., are promoted by several public and private banks. ₹. 300 crores are given as auto-financing and two-wheeler financing by ICICI alone lead to 30% growth of the industries. The exchange offers in the car segment, computer and printer segments, focus on second hand car market etc., are the new innovative mega industries are the result of personal automobile financing. Upgrading of cars, housing, have substantially witnessed manifold growth in the areas of construction, renovation, residential, commercial and shopping complexes.

State Bank and ICICI took the lead in home loan segment followed by HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation) and LIC Housing are offering wide range of reasonably priced loans with adequacy norms. The finance companies like Kotak Mahindra and Citi Bank etc., have been earning popularity in the area of durable product markets. Both nationalised and private banks viz., Corporation Bank, Central Bank, Bank of Baroda, Allahabad Bank etc. The loans for tribals, teachers, zero-interest schemes, Instant approvals, security free-loans etc., are few to spurt the demand towards consumer financing. As a part of priority segment lending the consumer finance to agriculturists for purchase of farm equipment viz., tractors, pump-sets, processing machines, and non-agricultural include loans for purchase of livestock, construction of storage houses, animal sheds, etc., Under transitional segment the loans are offered to boost agri-business and farm-business expenses including remittances, advance monies etc. Referred as down payment or bullet payments, the finances to rural customers have reiterated the new and innovative inverse pyramid claiming project financing, seasonal, crop, insurance and loans of commercial significance.

The application-oriented financing plans based on the cash and fund flow capacities enabled “Household” loans for essential needs became a prominent source of rural lending systems. The rural clients in their composite income sources proved to be more diversified than their urban counter part. The Emergency Loans are adopting preferred structure/s in rural areas due to the physical injuries, sickness, losses due to natural calamities viz., flood, draught, epidemic or earthquakes, cyclones or storms etc. The Combo Loan Package Systems are prone and have evident reasons to upsurge rural credit with all emergent and contingent financial and non-financial demands. The financial institutions have launched “multi-purpose rural credit product-range” to combine different consumer finance loan needs.

The accommodative financing is emphasising over rescheduling the currently continuing loans, granting need-based loans, new loans to repay old loans, change in the loan plans and loan shift, loans for basic needs, financing repairs/replacements/damages/destruction and reinstatement etc., have redefined the new financial realisations of the clients-of-critical order. A new “risk averse lending” introduced relevant holiday, pre-pone or postponement of current liability, accommodating the losses and uncertainties enabled attractive packages. The farmer cards, smart cards, bio-metric ATMs have thoroughly supported the access of loan disbursements at ease.

The entry of mega or large retailing has redefined the market structure in terms of super structures, self-service, multi-brand outlets, retail chains etc., of Indian and Global became equally popular. The Pantaloons, Lingarie, Lifestyle, Reliance, More, Food World etc., have introduced new shopping versions of maintaining electronic data base, tracking systems, card and mobile payment, shopping convenience and attracting

seamless customer segments with their innovative client prospecting systems. The customer credit is not limited to financial institutions but the mega retail outlets too have been offering varieties of customer credit. In the popular format Pantaloons have been able to give credit facility over a single-bill of ₹. 5000. Depending on the credit requirements the amount can be repaid at convenience within the norms prescribed. The facility is a token tie-up with a financing company which in turn benefitting both the clients and pantaloons. This sort of tie-up financial support is much appreciated due to the involvement of the retail stores; offer a shopping experience with low interest liability and financial convenience as compared to the other modes of consumer credit. The scheme was an instant hit which not only introduced a growth driver but also enabled easy and hassle free financing to consumers.

### **Offering Operational Conveniences**

Be it internet smart cards, plastic cards, debit and credit cards have been offering a payment convenience. Introducing technology along with innovation the wide range of card instruments dominated the market transactions. Symbolizing the lifestyle these instruments have become the modern day necessities to reduce the cumbersome transactions, saving time and allowing convenience in payment or remittances. The alternative cash instruments enabling an array of services linked with personal and consumer loans, payment of EMI and periodical instalments, money transfer and deposit systems and also for instant information about current financial status etc.

Both State and Central Government have been boosting the home financing and personal financing to bridge the gaps of financial shortages and liquidity crunch. Each of the financial domains have been duly encouraged but also need several regulatory and promotional norms due to inter and intra institutional insufficiencies. For example in housing segment determining the quality of construction, reducing the delays in construction period, unwarranted hike due to inflationary tendencies, innumerable hidden costs, multiple ownership and disputed properties, middlemen commissions etc., remain outside the preview of consumer finance. Similarly the lack of genuine educational institutions, lack of hostel accommodations, de-recognition of institutions, fake institutions and degrees, fee-hike with no formal notice and premature closure etc., are not the part of consumer finance.

Credit scoring or enhancing genuine credit structure is important to reduce the risks. As several private financiers have been engaged in personal and consumer finance the need of credit reporting in standardised form is inevitable. The establishment of credit bureaus will make ease in financial decision making and solicit all information and risk-monitoring needs. The information is accessible by means of data base which is of immense use to all participants be it credit card institutions, insurers, bankers/financial institutions, facilitators, consumer finance organisations

(CIBIL detail) or clients. The associated responsibilities of the bureaus are they actively get engaged in lending processes and at time hold responsibility of repayment. The positive measures being incentives to the early payment, and low cost lending and determining large size loans to potential clients.

The vital information access enables these bureaus to handle the defaults at appropriate time and method. They also adopt negative measures viz., exposure of client, charging penalties and further cautioning the financiers and rejection of further lending. Managing the loan assignments is a huge financial responsibility in which the scorecards of clients are made based on the determining factors, rationalities, portfolio approaches and step-by-step weight ages ultimately define the feasibility in loan extensions. In this reference a Credit Information Bureau Registration Act was introduced to initiate the scoring of clients and institutions, usage of mathematical and statistical tools for estimation and assessment, using the available credit information available to all needed groups and sharing of information etc.

The forwards looking banking segments have been constantly searching potential avenues and domains specialised into focal areas viz., credit card, multi-brand outlets, targeted growth, rural financing, education, auto financing, home financing, and constantly exploring new least risk and credit worthy domains with potential scoring models. The new automated data-linked services promoted by credit bureaus have been offering integrated facilities of reducing transaction and processing time vs. costs, quick lending decisions and reinforcement, encouraging facility-oriented security and convenience systems in consumer finance.

The shopping spree enabled India to be the third biggest country in the sage of credit cards after Japan and South Korea. The card usage systems have been advancing to service areas like booking on-line air and railway tickets, bill and subscription payments etc. the new move towards co-branded cards issued by retailers, airline companies, tourism departments and petrol companies and even healthcare companies provisioning cards to use the cards. Currently the master Card, HSBC, Diner Club, Standard Chartered, Amex etc., are few well reputed credit card companies. The credit card system is the most convenient and acceptable forms with due licensing formats. Each card satisfies certain pre-determined norms viz., Possessor's Identity, credit limit, facility or service opted viz., limit, emergency withdrawal, jurisdiction, privileges, supplementary facilities i.e., classification, revolving, percentage of outstanding credit, interest, grace periods, Category-based privileges, highest credit limits, profession-based cards, viz., gold card, executive cards, standard cards, domestic cards, validity in India or abroad, currency transacted, based on RBI sanctions and FEMA regulations enabled Licensed Networks and franchises as an honoured domain.

Besides these, there are Bank Card Associations constantly monitoring the credit card transactions, licensing, engagements, operational and processing forms, promoting and getting engaged in research and development, counsel, enforcements, litigation and even investigations etc., associated to consumer finance. The trade-based impositions

encircle the consumer finance service forms viz., depository, mortgage, payment processing units/networks, lending service facilitators including solicitors, auditors, advertisers, recovery channels, credit reporters, electronic delivery, privacy and data security, fair lending systems and legal counsel etc. Several feed forward mechanisms are adopted by regulatory means continuously engaged in full range internal and external conformity services. They also are engaged in

- Assisting organisations and companies engaged in consumer finance to adopt integrated services, formatting new services w.r.t., legislations and legal enforcements.
- Encouraging new consumer finance products along with suitable policies and conditions. The areas of mortgage, lead, relief, foreclosure, handling class divisions, institutional counsel, and introducing mega changes in landscape of consumer finance.
- New bankers' counsel in the related areas mark the comprehensive transactions' prompting to joint ventures, acquisitions, mergers, market synchronisations, integrated public offer, outsourcing, asset management etc.
- New consumer finance attorney systems are currently engaged in more important and sophisticated bank marketing, bank insurance, consumer finance practicing categories viz., broking services, investment management, management of derivatives, tax concern, minimising unstructured issues i.e., private equity, forward and speculative dealings, sponsorships, agency-credit, disputes and distress, insolvency and loss-making enterprises, peer-groups and work group profiles and practicing systems etc.
- The strategic involvement in resource diversity, global consumer financing, institutional compensation systems, real estate management, developing extensive and innovative resource management norms, innovative restructuring and composite representations lead to an array of new un-prescribed outcomes to be dealt with.

Currently the area of consumer finance is rapidly expanding and is constantly been restored due to its managerial, administrative (leadership), operational affiliates, securing vast volumes of funded debt and investment funds have been merging into capitalisations and multi-disciplinary financial representations. The area of financial knowledge services has been growing into a mega service industry with new complex banking and integrated market representations.

New advanced counselling need to concentrate on the financial institutions engaged in consumer finance, procuring and investment approaches, trusts, risk and insurance, listed funding sources, transparencies and meeting finances to represented clients for their wider and ever growing financial needs and requirements.

To sum up, the consumer finance is an integrated approach of multiple partners engaged in financial environment and is a matter of professional concern. Understanding the forefront issues of shared knowledge leveraging the benchmarking approaches and resolving challenges and gaining an edge over unproductive financial versions. Its' new and innovative assistance is delightfully responding in the promotional areas of client experience, asset servicing systems, pricing the lending services, risk merging and associated regulatory norms etc.

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# Self-Help Groups: A Keystone of Microfinance in India

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## ABSTRACT

*Microfinance has evolved over the past quarter century across India and to varying degree of success. One such form of microfinance has been the development of the self-help movement. Based on the concept of “self-help”, small groups of women have formed into groups of ten to twenty and operate a saving-first business model whereby the members are used to fund loans. The results from these self-help groups (SHGs) are promising and have become a focus of intense examination as it is proving to be an effective method of poverty reduction. The SHG method is used by the government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and others worldwide. Thousands of the poor and the marginalized population in India are building their lives, their families and their society through Self-help groups. The main aim of this paper is to examine SHG operating model, the state of SHGs today, their impact on civil society and economic development and how they need to be supported going forward.*

**Keywords:** Poor, Self-Help Group, Social Justice, Sustainable Quality, Empowerment

## Introduction

Micro-finance interventions are well-recognized world over as an effective tool for poverty alleviation and improving the socio-economic status of the rural poor. In India too, micro-finance is making headway in its effort for reducing poverty and empowering rural women. Micro-finance through the network of cooperatives, commercial banks, regional rural banks, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and NGOs has been largely supply-driven and a recent approach. Micro-finance institutions are, other than banks, are engaged in the provision of financial services to the poor. There are three types of lending technologies:

- (i) The document based and asset based conventional technology, being followed by all banks.
- (ii) The group lending, this is of various shapes and forms with advantages and drawbacks attached.
- (iii) Individual based lending is one where the micro-finance institutions have to be very careful in assessing the repayments capacity of the borrowers.

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The above technologies are focused on micro-finance through SHGs. However, credit accessibility to poor through SHGs has enhanced tremendously and recovery is comparatively higher.

Rural women play a significant role in the domestic and socio-economic life of the society and therefore, true development is not possible without developing this segment of the society.

The rise of SHGs and more formal SHG Federations coupled now with SHG Bank Linkage have made this a dominant form of microfinance in addition to microfinance institutions (MFIs). The policy environment in India has been extremely supportive for the growth of the microfinance sector in India. Particularly during the International Year of Microcredit 2005, significant policy announcements from the Government of India (GoI) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have served as a shot in the arm for rapid growth. SHGs have spread rapidly due to their ease of replication. SHG Bank Linkage has provided the capacity for SHGs to increase their capital base to fund more members and bigger projects. Today, it is estimated that there are at least over 2 million SHGs in India. In many Indian states, SHGs are networking themselves into federations to achieve institutional and financial sustainability.

Cumulatively, 1.6 million SHGs have been bank-linked with cumulative loans of Rs. 69 billion. In 2004-05 alone, almost 800,000 SHGs were bank-linked.

However, the state of SHGs identifies key areas of weakness which undermine the sustainability of SHG movement, namely, areas such as financial management, governance and human resources that range from weak to average quality for a majority of SHGs. While the spread of the movement is impressive, these are key areas that need to be addressed if any external intervention is to be effective.

The impact of SHGs on women's empowerment, social security and economic development has been invariably an improvement upon the status quo but there is a need for support in several areas which are analysed in this report. The status of women has generally improved as they have developed stronger confidence which has changed gender dynamics and their role in the household. In south India, significant improvements in fertility rates, female literacy, participation in development programmes and economic independence are evident. Women are able to fight for their rights and entitlements and have emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Further, SHGs are becoming more than just financial intermediaries, instead they have emerged as a more political and social unit of society. More importantly, the penetration of microfinance to the poorest of the poor is still weak and needs a wider reach.



The areas of support to further the SHG impact are varied and the report describes areas for NGO technical and government policy support. The need for a coordinated and comprehensive support strategy is imperative as the financial management issues of SHGs need to be addressed otherwise the benefits of the civil society impacts will be lost as SHGs will become overburdened and un-sustainable.

### **Review of Literature**

Various studies have been conducted since the nationalization of commercial banks in 1969, highlighting the importance and use of credit particularly in rural areas. These studies look into the problems of over dues and the causes for poor recovery. Interestingly, several studies have been conducted by social scientists, financial institutions and agencies which highlight the positive trends and impact of self-help groups on empowerment, credit accessibility and the social change and economic development. In the following segment, available relevant studies, particularly case studies, workshops, seminars and symposia, have been critically reviewed.

Nagayya (2000) maintains that an informal arrangement for credit supply to the poor through SHGs is fast emerging as a promising tool for promoting income-generating enterprises. He has reviewed the initiatives taken at the national level with a view of institutional arrangements to support this programme for alleviation of poverty among the poor, with focus on women. He maintained that NABARD and SIDBI are playing a prominent role at various stages of implementation of this programme. There are other national level bodies also supporting NGOs/VAs, viz. Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi (RGVN), etc. He called for an imperative need to enlarge the coverage of SHGs in advance portfolio of banks as part of their corporate strategy, to recognize perceived benefits of SHGs financing in terms of reduced default risk and transaction costs.

Ahmad (1999) through a case study on Thrift Groups in Assam highlighted that women are coming to the administration directly for their just rights and to address their grievances. It proved that self-help groups are successful in North East India even in the midst of insurgency. Similarly Gurumoorthy (2000) maintained that SHG is available alternative to achieve the objectives of rural development and to get community participation in all rural development programmes.

SHG is a viable organizational set up to disburse micro credit to the rural women for the purpose of making them entrepreneur and encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurial activities. Credit needs of the rural women can be fulfilled wholesomely through the SHGs. The women led SHGs have successfully demonstrated how to mobilize and manage thrift, appraise credit needs, maintain linkages with the banks and

enforce financial self-discipline. SHGs enhance the equality of status of women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic and social and cultural spheres of life. They encourage women to take active part in the socio-economic progress of the society.

Bhatia and Bhatia (2000) through a few case studies highlighted that recovery of SHGs is higher than other credit extended to borrowers. Moreover, involvement of SHGs had helped the bank branches in recovery of old dues. They observed that there has been perceptible changes in the living standards of the SHG members, in terms of ownership of assets, increase in savings and borrowing capacity, income generating activities and income levels as well.

Puhazhendhin (1999) analysed the functioning of SHGs, in terms of performance, sustainability, empowerment of women, economic impact on the members, future potentials etc. He observed that SHGs in Tamil Nadu are performing well towards social change and transformation. The emerging trends are leading to positive direction of empowerment of members and promotion of micro finance.

Puhazhendhi and Satyasai (2001) in their paper attempted to evaluate the performance of SHGs with special reference to social and economic empowerment. Primary data collected with the help of a structured questionnaire from 560 sample households in 223 SHGs, functioning in 11 states representing four different regions across the country formed the basis of the study. The findings of the study revealed that the SHGs as institutional arrangement could positively contribute to the economic and social empowerment of the rural poor and the impact on the latter was more pronounced than on the former. Though there was no specific pattern in the performance of SHGs among different regions, the southern region could edge out other regions. The SHG's programme has been found more popular in the southern region and its progress in other regions is quite low, thus signifying an uneven achievement among the regions. Older groups had relatively more positive features like better performance than younger groups.

According to Abhijit Sharma (2006), microfinance has become an important tool or instrument to reduce poverty or promote micro and small enterprise development. However, despite the massive physical expansion, the outreach to the people has still not been commensurate. As on 2001, only 35.5% households availed of banking services. In the North-East region only 20.4% households availed of banking services.

Reji (2010) revealed that the effective functioning of groups is influenced by a host of factors that include quality of group meeting, saving habit, adequacy and

accessibility to resources, repayment behaviour, group cohesion, group leadership, group interaction, autonomy, sense of self, equity, accountability and transparency.

The above studies simply demonstrate that SHGs are playing a vital role in extending macro-finance to the rural poor. The functioning of SHGs has been based on participatory mechanism and therefore the impact of SHGs on its members in terms of empowerment, accessibility to credit, socio-economic change etc. has been found positive. Though there are a number of studies which are related to functioning and micro-finance but only a few studies have been taken so far to assess the impact of women self-help groups on the socio economic empowerment. In this context, the present study is important to assess the impact of women self-help groups on its members in terms of socio-economic empowerment. The study findings may be useful for policy imperatives and smooth functioning of SHGs. More benefits of SHGs may be obtained through proper functioning of these groups and extending of micro-finance to develop and promote micro-enterprises.

### **Objectives of Study**

The main objective of this paper is to examine SHG operating model, the state of SHGs today, their impact on civil society and economic development and how they need to be supported going forward.

### **Methodology**

The study is based on secondary data collected from sources like NABARD, Government publications, official websites, various books and articles. The data have been analysed using simple statistical tables and graphs.

### **Importance of SHGs in India**

- To alleviate poverty.
- To increase employment opportunities.
- To accelerate economic growth.
- To raise status in society which is the prime reason for respondents joining the SHG.
- To promote income generating activities.

### **Structure of SHG**

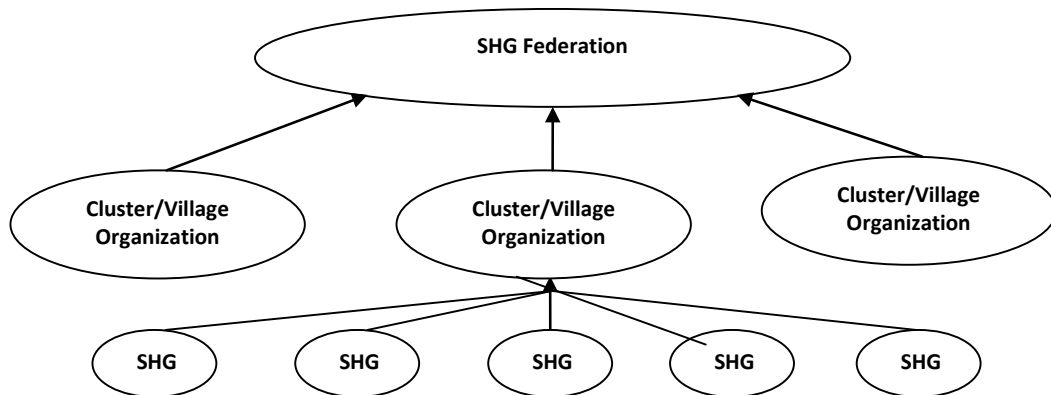
A SHG is a group of about 10 to 20 people, usually women, from the same class and region, who come together to form savings and credit organization. They pool together the financial resources to make small interest bearing loans to their members. This process creates an ethic that focuses on savings first. The setting of terms and conditions and accounting of the loan are done in the group by designated members.

### SHG Federation

As mentioned previously, SHGs have also federated into larger organizations. In Figure 1, a graphic illustration is shown of a SHG Federation. Typically, about 15 to 50 SHGs make up a Cluster / Village organizations (VOs) with either one or two representatives from each SHG. Depending on geography, several clusters or VOs come together to form an apex body or an SHG Federation.

At the cluster and federation level, there are inter-group borrowings, exchange of ideas, sharing of costs and discussion of common interests. There are typically various subcommittees that deal with a variety of issues including loan collections, accounting and social issues.

**Figure 1 Illustrative SHG Federation**



As already described, SHG Federations have presented some key benefits to SHGs as a result of their greater scale. Increasingly, SHG Federations are being seen as a key interface with the SHG movement because of their formal registration under the MACS and recognition from bankers. But, in addition to the benefits of SHG Federations, there are some drawbacks, or constraints, that should be noted.

An SHG Federation is a formal group of informal common-interest groups. As a result of its rather informal members, there are internal constraints that it faces. Namely, it has a poor capacity for self-governance, average to low quality managers and systems and process is poorly defined. Further, there is significant financial cost to organizing and registering a SHG Federation which has been estimated to be about Rs. 7,000 per

SHG member. To bridge these internal constraints requires savvy external assistance and there are few good quality NGOs to provide this assistance to a burgeoning number of SHG Federations.

### **SHG Bank Linkage**

A most notable milestone in the SHG movement was when NABARD launched the pilot phase of the SHG Bank Linkage programme in February 1992. This was the first instance of mature SHGs that were directly financed by a commercial bank. The informal thrift and credit groups of the poor were recognized as bankable clients. Soon after, the RBI advised commercial banks to consider lending to SHGs as part of their rural credit operations thus creating SHG Bank Linkage.

The linking of SHGs with the financial sector was good for both sides. The banks were able to tap into a large market, namely the low-income households, transactions costs were low and repayment rates were high. The SHGs were able to scale up their operations with more financing and they had access to more credit products.

### **The State of SHGs in India**

Before evaluating their impact and determining support solutions, it is important to examine the current state of SHGs in India today. And, it is certainly a mixed picture.

### ***Overall Financial Snapshot***

The table below gives the growth of SHGs – saving as well as credit linked—for the last 3 years, separately for all Groups, Groups formed under SGSY (Swaranjayanti Gram Swarazagar Yojana) and exclusive Women Groups.

Under the SHG-Bank linkage programme, over 103 million rural households have now access to regular savings through 7.96 million SHGs linked to banks. About 27 percent of these SHGs are savings linked through the SGSY programme – the rural poverty alleviation programme of the Government of India where predominantly households below the poverty line are admitted as members.

There has been a decline in the amount of savings balance with banks to the extent of 6.7 per cent as compared to the previous year although the number of SHGs saving linked has shown a growth of 6.7 per cent during the year. This decline is almost entirely attributable to the groups formed under SGSY where the decline was to the extent of 23.2 per cent. Increasing awareness at the SHG level about the advantage of using the savings for internal loaning is also partly responsible for the decline in saving balance with banks.

(Amount in Rupees Crore / Numbers in lakh)

Particulars		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
		No. of SHGs	Amount	No. of SHGs	Amount	No. of SHGs	Amount
SHG Savings with Banks as on 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Total SHGs	69.53 (13.6%)	6198.71 (11.8%)	74.62 (7.3%)	7016.30 (13.2%)	79.60 (6.7 %)	6551.41 (-6.7%)
	Of which SGSY Groups	16.94 (12.5 %)	1292.62 (-17.3 %)	20.23 (19.4 %)	1817.12 ( 40.6%)	21.23 ( 5.0%)	1395.25 (- 23.2%)
	% of SGSY Groups to Total	24.4	20.9	27.1	25.9	26.7	21.3
	All women SHGs	53.10 (9.18%)	4498.66 (1.46%)	60.98 (14.8%)	5298.65 (17.8%)	62.99 (3.3%)	5104.33 (-3.7%)
	% of women Groups	76.4	72.6	81.7	75.5	79.1	77.9
Loans Disbursed to SHGs during the year	Total SHGs	15.87 (-1.4%)	14453.3 (17.9%)	11.96 (-24.6%)	14547.73 (0.01%)	11.48 (-4%)	16534.7 7 (13.7%)
	Of which SGSY Groups	2.67 (1.0%)	2198 (9.1%)	2.41 (-9.9%)	2480.37 (12.8%)	2.10 (-12.9%)	2643.56 (6.6%)
	% of SGSY Groups to Total	16.9	15.2	20.1	17.0	18.3	16.0
	All women SHGs	12.94 (5.8%)	12429.37 (18.1%)	10.17 (-21.4%)	12622.33 (1.6%)	9.23 (-9.2%)	14132.0 2 (12.0%)
	% of women Groups	81.6	86	85	86.8	80.4	85.5
Loans Outstanding against SHGs as on 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Total SHGs	48.51 (14.8%)	28038.28 (23.6%)	47.87 (-1.3%)	31221.17 (11.4%)	43.54 (-9.0%)	36340.0 0 (16.4%)
	Of which SGSY Groups	12.45 (27.5%)	6251.08 (6.6%)	12.86 (3.4%)	7829.39 (25.2%)	12.16 (-5.4%)	8054.83 (2.9%)
	% of SGSY Groups to Total	25.7	22.3	26.9	25.1	27.9	22.2
	No. of all women SHGs Linked	38.98 (18.9%)	23030.36 (23.9%)	39.84 (2.2%)	26123.75 (13.4%)	36.49 (-8.4%)	30465.2 8 (16.6%)
	% of women Groups	80.3	82.1	83.2	83.7	83.8	83.8

The number of saving linked SHGs now stands at 7.96 million with a membership of over 103 million poor households. While the bulk of these savings is used for internal lending within the Group (over 70 per cent), the balance is maintained in the savings accounts with the financing banks. Over 79 per cent of SHGs linked to banks are exclusive women groups, which is one of the most distinguishing features of microfinance sector in the country.

The balance in the savings accounts of the banks as at the end of March 2012 stood at `6551.41 crores. Among the major States, Karnataka SHGs maintain the highest savings bank balance of over `16000 per SHG followed by Punjab of nearly 12500 per SHG. Among the regions, southern region is highest at `10080 per SHG and north eastern region recorded the lowest balance of 4159 per SHG. On an average, the SHGs maintain a balance of 8230. Commercial Banks account for 58 per cent of the savings account maintained by SHGs and RRBs (Regional Rural Banks) 27 per cent and Cooperative Banks the remaining 15 per cent. **Fig.1** below shows a graphical presentation of the savings, fresh loans and the loan outstanding of SHGs with Banks for the last 4 years.

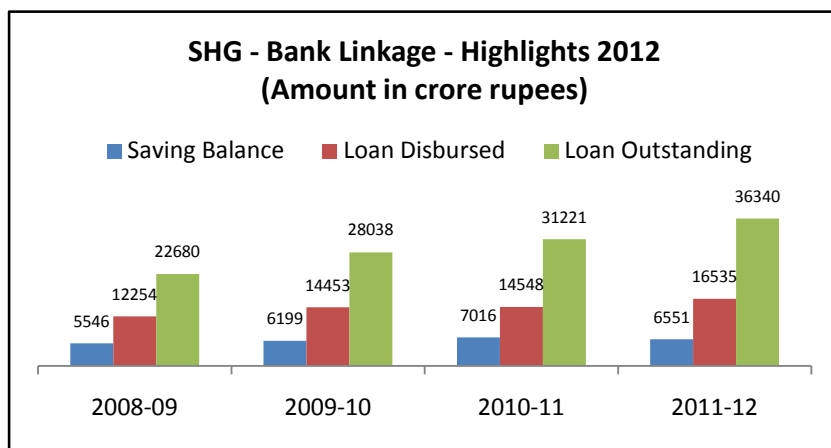


Fig. 1. SHGs as on 31.3.2012 – Savings and Credit

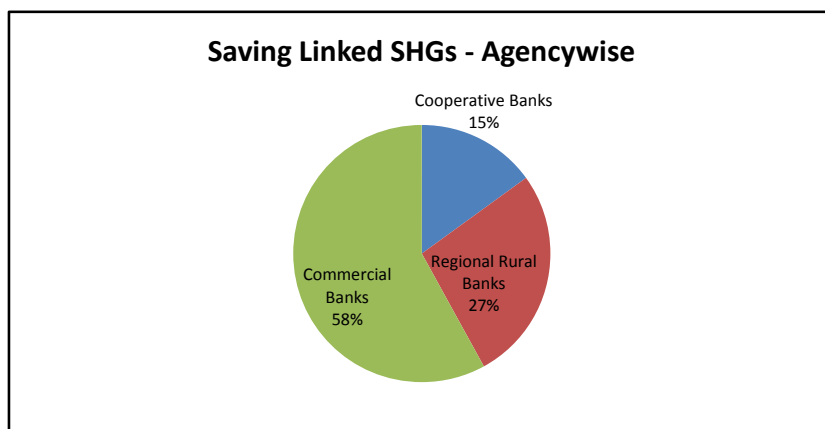


Fig. 2. Saving Linked SHGs (Number): Agency Wise

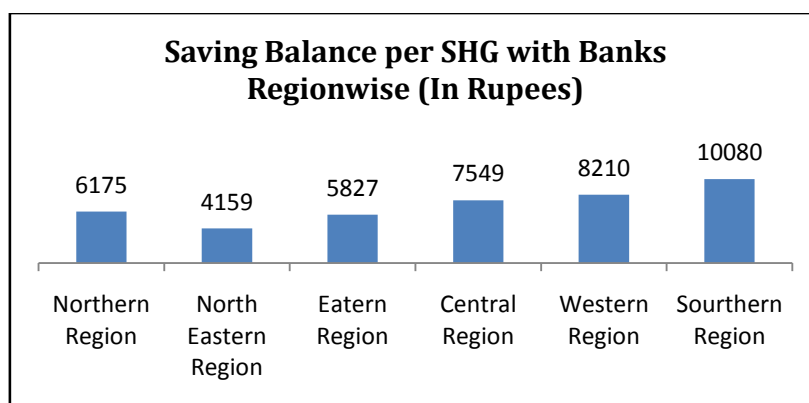


Fig. 3. Average Savings Balance of SHGs with Banks - region wise

Further, over 4.36 million SHGs have now access to direct credit facilities from the banks and the total bank loans outstanding against these groups is over Rs. 36340 crore as on 31 March 2012 i.e. an average of `83500 per group. About 1.15 million SHGs were extended fresh loans to the extent of Rs. 16535 crore during 2011-12 by all banks averaging Rs. 1.44 lakh per group. Although fresh lending to SHGs during the year showed an increase of 13.7 per cent over last year, the steady decline in the number of SHGs being extended fresh loans by banks for the last 3 years is a matter of concern.

The number of SHGs having outstanding loans with banks is also showing a decline partly due to the continued decline in the number of SHGs being extended fresh loans by banks for the last 3 years.

### Financial Management

The financial management of SHGs has been found to be ranging from weak to average. Specifically, internal controls at SHGs and SHG Federations are lacking. Internal controls represent the systems and processes that manage the day to day transaction flow and ensure that roles and responsibilities are defined and executed to safeguard assets. Field studies have indicated that these systems and processes have been ill-defined and poorly executed by members.

In addition to internal controls, how SHGs are managing their cash flows is especially important. Since SHGs are accessing external borrowings through SHG Bank Linkage and then lends these funds to its members, there have been cases of poor cash flow management to repay debts not just externally but also internally. The risk of overleveraging SHGs is high.



## **Governance**

Since SHGs are an informal organization and a SHG Federation is a composition of informal groups, there is poor governance and the capacity of the members to enact good governance is weak. The members of SHGs do not have much experience with establishing formalized monitoring and review functions or complying with legal regulations. With the growing size of the loans being made to SHGs, a strong governance system is needed to ensure that there is accountability.

## **Human Resources**

While the achievements of the women members to form common interest groups to help themselves is remarkable, there is a long way to go to build the capacities of the staff of SHGs. The role of NGOs to provide support is essential to many SHGs success stories. The support needed ranges from bookkeeping and accounting, organizational structure, governance and other areas.

## **Impact of Self-Help Groups in India**

With the structure and model of SHGs and SHG Bank Linkage firmly established the nature of the impacts of SHGs can be more closely examined and evaluated. The latest published estimates from NABARD state that, to date of March 31, 2012, 11.48 lakhs SHGs have benefited from approximately Rs. 16.5 crore in financing (NABARD, 2012). There is no doubt that there has been greater outreach of financial services to the poor through SHGs. Of course the outreach has been good in South India. However, the outreach has been limited in the rest of the country.

In addition to the financial analysis of SHGs, the non-financial areas such as social security and gender dynamics are also affected by the SHG Movement. Indeed, poverty reduction is much less an issue of numbers but rather ideas and concepts. The following is an analysis of the non-financial impact of SHGs.

## ***Political***

Political engagement includes active involvement by SHGs in government including local assemblies, Lok Sabha or Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). One of the key benefits of SHGs is women's empowerment and this can be seen with the number of women involved in public affairs. While the number of women actually involved in politics is still very low, research has indicated that of those women that stand for election, over 70 per cent had won their seat. And, the female contribution to civil issues ranges from issue of ration cards, laying of pucca roads, building of school, ensuring appointments in vacant positions in schools and health centres, recovery of river bank lands from encroachers and laying of drinking water pipes.

As mentioned, the number of women involved in politics is low. But, the trend is definitely moving up. A mere 5 years ago, the likelihood of women contesting panchayat election was extremely low. Their presence today is affecting the perception of women and their role in the political arena. They are being recognized as an important group with serious concerns.

The role of SHGs is both as an inspiration and as a financier. Impoverished women develop greater language and financial skills through the SHG which provides the building blocks for higher levels of confidence to engage the world. Also, the SHG sometimes finances the campaign of its members that stand for election.

SHGs not only empower its members but also wield a powerful political role as a group as well. At local village meetings, the leaders of SHGs are often invited to attend and speak.

### ***Social Harmony***

Broadly defined, social harmony encompasses the equality and integrity of relationships between different social groups. To frame the following analysis, SHGs typically consists of the following social groups:

- Schedule Caste (SC)
- Scheduled Tribe (ST)
- Minorities (MN)
- Backward Caste (BC)
- Other Caste (OC)

The composition of SHGs is sometimes exclusively for one particular social group or a mix. The impact of SHGs on social harmony has also been mixed. While it has been observed that groups with mixed membership had group leaders that came from a variety of the social groups. In the vast majority of instances, group's leaders were almost exclusively from the dominant social groups' category. This demonstrates a lack of equality and unity across caste divisions. Given the relatively young history of SHGs, it is to be expected that their impact bridging centuries old divisions would be slow.

### ***Social Justice***

Social justice is the presence of moral and ethical conduct in areas that are historically typified with backward and abusive customs. There have been several occurrences of SHGs resolving disputes between members and the community at large. These instances include initiating legal action, arbitration, divorce and others. While there have long been dispute resolution mechanisms in villages, in the past it was

controlled by men. Now, there are instances of women, SHG members, being involved in resolving disputes. Whether or not the women are working for their own interests or in the case for justice varies, regardless of SHGs' impact on the political arena is certainly being seen also in social justice, albeit in low and evolutionary process.

### ***Community***

Being a group based organization of members of similar caste and geography; the community resources are shared by the members of the SHG. Recent analysis has shown that the impact that SHGs have on the community at large has been minor. There have been few instances of significant contributions from SHGs to education, family planning, eradication of child labour and hygiene.

To interpret these findings further it should be noted that such community problems are often large financial commitments which SHGs simply do not have the capacity to afford. Also, of the few instances where there have been significant contributions from the SHGs to the community, the SHG demonstrated a clear leadership role and rallied the support of the entire village. This demonstrates that given the opportunity, SHGs, assuming they have the capacity, can act as a director of community development. The perception of having of a woman's based organization and women taking a leading role for the betterment of the greater good has monumental impacts on the local community. Gender dynamics begin to balance in instances such as these.

### ***Livelihoods***

Livelihood, meaning a person's economic activity, is an area that is vitally important to SHGs. The loans that SHG members receive are intended to improve their livelihoods so that they can receive greater and steadier cash flows. In rural areas, livelihoods range from agriculture farming, animal husbandry, dairy and various other goods and services activities. Experience has shown that SHGs have had improved livelihoods to the extent of providing the leveraging needed to start an enterprise. However, the interventions to introduce new livelihoods or refine existing ones that could yield better economic results were done by external agencies.

### ***Employment***

The implementation of SHG has generated Self-employment opportunities for the rural poor. The progress of the program since inception assisted in formation of 35.7 lakh SHGs; assisted 1.24 Cr. Swarozgar is in establishing their own micro-enterprises. The Government of India released Rs.11, 486 Crore under the program; bank credit mobilization is Rs.19, 017; Total subsidy provided is Rs.9, 318 Cr. The program helped many participants in improving their economic conditions. Another

good accomplishment of the program is that it has adopted the SHG strategy. The number of assisted SHG/ group Swarozgar is has increased from 35,000 in 1999-00 to 1.15 million in 2007-08. At the same time the number of assisted individual Swarozgar has declined from 586 thousand in 1999-00 to 254 thousand in 2007-08. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will create a Rs.15 billion fund to cater to women's Self-Help Groups in economically weaker districts in the country.

After joining the self-help group the women are economically and socially empowered. This empowerment cannot be transformed or delivered it must be self-generated such that it enables those who are empowered to take control over their lives.

### **Supporting the SHG Movement**

The impact of the SHG movement on various aspects of civil society has been varied. As mentioned, the development of SHGs has varied from state to state but, regardless of the phase of evolution, SHGs require external help to continue to grow and have greater outreach and impact to civil society. It is clear from research that some of the obstacles to evolution are beyond the control of the SHGs. The following is a pointed analysis of where government, NGOs, Banks and others, including the private sector, can work together to help answer the needs to SHGs in a measured and effective manner in hopes of not overloading them leading to failure.

### ***Political: Training on Governance***

The impact of SHGs on women in the politics is clear; they have helped women enter the political area as they are being elected to various public offices and SHGs themselves are engaged in discussion with governing bodies. Self-Help Promotion Institutions (SHPIs) need to be at least a few steps ahead of the SHGs, in order to be useful to them in their role in politics. Specifically, there is a need to train women on good governance because the history of poor governance has been long established. If there is to be a lasting change, women need to occupy the offices of where strategic planning is done.

### ***Social Harmony: Creating a Mixed Caste Model SHG***

SHGs do not appear to be managing social tensions well. The reason for this lack of unity is difficult to identify but it could very well be the deep rooted beliefs of the caste system which tends to exclude social disadvantaged groups. These are problems which have been ingrained in the ethos of the villages and it will take a very long time to change.

For SHGs to better manage social tensions there needs to be a perception among members of equity, or ownership, in an enterprise that exists for mutual benefit.

Fostering this cohesiveness is very difficult in a given the environment. SHPIs can encourage the formation of mixed groups of SHGs and make these “model” organizations for others to follow.

### ***Social Justice: Awareness of Legal Rights and Entitlements***

SHGs have played an important role in the lives of distressed members. Given the years of suppression of women in India, it is to be expected that SHGs take up the cause of their members. However, they are also responding from a desire to see justice done. Therefore, if helped to process the pros and cons of various situations and arriving at just and sustainable situations, women could be chosen by local communities as arbitrators. Arbitration in most villages is currently a male domain, but the experiences of women in negotiating for women’s rights could be taken to the next logical step of involvement of women in local justice issues, whether or not a member is involved, and whether or not a member is “right”. Similar to the political arena, SHPIs need to be able to provide the technical support to help SHGs equip themselves as arbitrators

### ***Communities: Provide Strategic Support***

SHGs have helped their members and their communities. By taking a leadership role in community development, SHGs are perceived to be a guiding force for the village. Though the instances of SHGs engaging in community development are low, given the capacity, there has been proven results.

SHPIs could help facilitate processes whereby women made long-term plans for their villages as a whole, and worked steadily towards the transformation of their villages into modern and equitable hubs of creative and sustainable actions. They might choose to focus on some core issues in each set of plans that they make, and work towards the fulfilment of these. Having persons trained to work on a larger canvas can contribute to a new cadre of political activists. Women may choose to engage directly in party politics, or to play a watchdog role from the environs of civil society-either way, they will usher in a new era of more responsible politics and public life.

### ***Livelihoods: Technical Livelihood Support***

The support of livelihoods is increasingly being seen as an important area related to micro finance. Indeed, the term of livelihood finance has been coined and is en vogue at leading NGOs. The need for livelihood support is critical to SHGs development as livelihoods are typically financed by the loans that members receive from the SHG. The needs of SHGs vary from the introduction of new livelihoods to providing support such as market linkages or procurement techniques to refine existing livelihoods. State government programs such as Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) in Andhra Pradesh have successfully executed livelihood interventions on various non-timber forest

products that have brought about increased cash flows to SHG members as they have been able to bypass middlemen and sell their goods at market and cut costs. Experience has indicated that these benefits would not have been possible without external intervention. Thus, SHPIs can provide the technical livelihood support as needed to help develop SHGs.

### ***Policy Considerations***

In addition to actual technical support, government policy can help support the SHG movement in the previously mentioned areas. Poverty is invariably characterized by lack of public investment in infrastructure or dysfunctional public systems including education and health care and underdeveloped markets. Large scale investment is required to build infrastructure like roads and bridges so that there can be access to markets. These sorts of investment will have to be completed by the state government. The payoff such costs though is infinite. An improved infrastructure will help to increase investment and mobility of staff. Further, livelihoods can be enriched through greater access to markets.

In some areas, there is a reasonable amount of infrastructure that state-owned rural banks operate. As some SHGs have grown and matured to a sizeable scale, they need access to more financial services. Governments can address this need through their state-owned banks by introducing flexible and easily accessible products. Specifically, products such as innovative savings products, micro-insurance, larger loans and enterprise financing can be introduced. Bank's lending to SHG federations could also facilitate access to livelihood finance by the women SHG members. Not only will programs such as these address the service gap but it will also change perceptions among bankers. If the state-owned banks take the lead, other bankers will likely follow and make an investment to work with the poor and expand their services to them.

### **The Other Side of the Coin**

This paper has outlined several areas of working with SHGs to further their impact on civil society. It should be noted though that the sustainability of SHGs to effect such change is directly linked to their financial sustainability. While this latter issue was not the intended focus on the report, any external intervention to SHGs should bear this issue in mind.

Research has shown that SHGs financial management is average or weak. Thus, it is vitally important that both government and NGOs work to bear all the costs in mind of interventions to make them sustainable otherwise the SHGs will be overburdened and destined to failure.

Government regulations could help manage this risk and increase the emphasis on sustainability of SHGs. There are key areas of SHG financial management that need to be improved such as internal controls, accounting, management stewardship, organizational efficiency and others. If the government were to enact policy that would regulate the quality of SHGs and tied this to their eligibility for SHG Bank Linkage, then this would help bring about a more measured and responsible growth to the movement.

Both for SHGs and SHG federations there is a need to aspire to attain standards following the best practices. As the SHG federations are emerging as community owned micro finance institutions, there is a need for significant investment in providing institution building support. These SHG federations being bodies like corporations as they are registered under an appropriate legal form must comply with the prudential and legal norms. There is a need for a well-developed third party rating system for SHG federations before they are linked with financial institutions to act as an intermediary as they handle large volume of funds from the bank linkage and also undertake savings from their members.

There is a need for establishing a computerized MIS for SHGs and SHG federations to monitor their performance on a regular basis. SHG Federations must be able to publish their annual reports and share those with all their members.

Governance of SHG federations is a major challenge. For the SHG members to manage their own institutions with professional staff and large volumes of transactions will be difficult. SHPIs must provide the needed support for the SHG federations to develop into sustainable institutions of the poor. Considerable investments would be needed to facilitate and sustain SHG federations across the nation.

## **Conclusion**

SHG Programme clearly plays a central role in the lives of the poor. The programme in various blocks all seem to be very successful in reaching poor clients. Importantly; there is evidence of increased household income. This is a very significant indicator of impact. Standard of living for the program participants have increased and also the food security is much more for the program clients. Programme loans are one of the main ways clients can overcome food insecurity with sickness, disease, emergencies and crises, where programme participants seem to transfer the loan source from friends and moneylenders to SHG loans to meet these expenses.

At the individual level, there is evidence that the programme attracts already relatively empowered people and that empowerment occurs among some clients through

programme participation. The process of empowerment manifests itself in increased self-esteem. Programme participation is also associated with changes in decision-making at the family level. Program participants are far more aware about the various programs and organisations and have an access to these organisations.

Microfinance is playing a significant role in alleviating poverty and promoting rural development. Since women are the sole family caretaker, proper emphasis should be given to the rural women and for empowering the rural women finance is required. Microfinance to the rural SHGs is a way to raise the income level and improve the living standards of the rural women. The Self Help Groups have proved the way for economic independence of rural women. Thus, it can be concluded that the self-help groups contribute substantially in pushing the conditions of the female population up and through that chip in poverty eradication as well. From the above analysis we can conclude that in spite of the concerted efforts taken by SGSY, it is clear that the failure of the programme is seen. But of course there are lot of advantages as well as disadvantages. Now the Ministry of Rural Development has been taking a lot of initiatives to revamp the programme. Let us hope that better solutions coming up to implement the programme in effective and efficient ways and means in the near future.

Self-help groups have been playing considerable role in

- training of Swarozgaris,
- infrastructure development,
- marketing and technology support,
- raising communication level of members,
- raising self-confidence of the members,
- reduction of incidences in family violence,
- changing the saving pattern of SHG members,
- changing the cumulative saving pattern of SHG members,
- raising involvement in politics,
- achieving social harmony and social justice,
- involvement in community action,
- achieving sustainable equity within SHG members,
- raising transparency and accountability in the functioning of the SHGs.



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# ISSUES OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Biswajit Mohapatra \*

## ABSTRACT

*The emergence of global governance as a model for managing global problems through the voluntary and active cooperation of diverse stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, though is felt often to be important, yet the same has several other challenges. In my paper I analyse the same with the objective to find out if this really can ensure key achievements of the objectives of governance in the face of existing challenges in this arena.*

**Key words:** Globalization, Global governance, United Nations, Challenges

With rapid globalization, the need for global governance<sup>17</sup> has risen. In the words of James Rosenau, the regulation of interdependent relations in the absence of an overarching political authority, such as in the international system, besides that of governance in the domestic arena, which includes the national governance stretching up to the local governance which is seen in the form of representative political institutions, like PRIs in case of our country, has been felt to be of equal significance. The reason for this has been the realization that without emphasizing on the idea of justice and also its realization, governance in any form can neither serve anyone's good nor can it be strengthened for the ends of justice.

According to Adil Najam, global governance simply is "the management of global processes in the absence of global government."<sup>18</sup> Thomas G. Weiss, Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Centre (CUNY), has defined Global governance'—something that refers to concrete cooperative problem-solving arrangements, many of which increasingly involve not only the United Nations of states but also 'other UNs,' namely international secretariats and other non-state

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<sup>17</sup> James Rosenau, "Toward an Ontology for Global Governance," in Martin Hewson and Timothy J. Sinclair (eds.), *Approaches to Global Governance Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> Riazati, Saba. "A Closer Look: Professor Seeks Stronger U.N.". The Daily Bruin. Accessed on June 10, 2014.

actors.<sup>19</sup> Global governance includes, “the complex of formal and informal institutions, mechanisms, relationships, and processes between and among states, markets, citizens and organizations, both inter- and non-governmental, through which collective interests on the global plane are articulated, Duties, obligations and privileges are established, and differences are mediated through educated professionals.”<sup>20</sup>

In the contemporary societies, the present day human, political and economic relations, which have become highly complex can be given a new turn if our interactions with the existing socio political institutions which are part of our governance mechanism are allowed to be influenced by strong ethical consideration, i.e., by an accumulated values and principles that address questions of what is good or bad in human affairs,<sup>21</sup> so as to inculcate binding commitments on our part towards the efficacy of these public institutions.

When the task of mere governance which is often confused with the task of mere prevention of human conflicts and also their resolution both in terms of prevention and the management of such conflicts. The human society is deprived of any transformation in their situations as their conditions are somehow tackled by the existing administrative arrangement, but are not encouraged to go beyond these immediate arrangements, the intergovernmental institutions, which were made in the inter wars period, hence are transitional and are need of large scale reforms imbued with ethical considerations, in the area of governance.

Over the years it's true these intergovernmental organizations at the world level have addressed a combination of global needs. As for example, in many of its meetings, UN Security Council has passed resolutions pertaining to issues of global concern, like the conflict relating to authoritarian regimes, for imposition of economic sanctions on the economic and trade issues of states viz., Iraq, nuclear-weapons enriching states as Iran and North Korea, and to call for launching of trial by way of judicial procedures

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<sup>19</sup> The UN and Global Governance, available at <http://www.unhistory.org/publications/globalgov.html>, accessed on 10 June 2014

<sup>20</sup> Thomas G. Weiss and Ramesh Thakur, *The UN and Global Governance: An Idea and Its Prospects*, Indiana University Press, 2009

<sup>21</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission and Australian Health Ethics Committee, *Protection of Human Genetic Information*, IP 26 (2001), ALRC, Sydney, p.106

for ex-autocrats and militant elements to be condemned for crimes against humanity, e.g. Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Cambodia etc. .<sup>22</sup>

The World Bank, on its part, has also provided financial and technical assistance to the developing countries around the world, in the form of highly concessional loans and the International Development Association, has extended grants to the poorest countries, for combating poverty, creation of conditions which will be congenial for sustainable growth through increased public and private cooperation at the national and state level. The World Bank has stressed on investments in infrastructure, road networks, improvement of people's livelihoods by carryout land reforms and distribution of land amongst the farmers and for public financing of water and sanitation service improvement through irrigation for improved agricultural productivity and food security.<sup>23</sup>

With the emergence of the World Trade Organization, since increased trade is being emphasized as one of the means to reduce poverty, enhanced negotiations amongst countries are being stressed for multilateral trading, regional cooperation, and sound competition policies, among others for bridging the gap and resolution of disputes between the member-states within its dispute settlement mechanism.<sup>24</sup>

As the present days of globalization has brought both the developed and developing countries together on the basis of , seemingly common interests to boost the world trade, the success of the Doha Rounds of multilateral trade negotiations<sup>25</sup> ,is again dependent on issues of governance ,as then various countries may be able to benefit from the ongoing world trade. Besides these factors, its commented by the pro-globalization supporters that due to certain kind of efforts made in the direction of development of some form of global governance, there is tangible improvement in the securing of many safeguards with respect to the protection of democracy and governance centering around consultation amongst the stakeholders ,around the world. However , it is felt, given the new kind of challenges that are emerging today, new approaches to global governance is required which would be more inclusive, more representative and more effective.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Dimitris Rapidis, Global Governance: Achievements, Prospects, and Crucial Problems, <http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/brookings-audit/global-governance-achievements-prospects-and-crucial-problems>, accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014

<sup>23</sup> For details, see <http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/what-we-do>

<sup>24</sup> See [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org) > the wto

<sup>25</sup> See [www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/dda\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/dda_e.htm)

<sup>26</sup> See [www.brookings.edu/research/topics/global-governance](http://www.brookings.edu/research/topics/global-governance)

The United Nations, with its evolved monitoring mechanisms and the several active nongovernmental organizations are held out to have been helpful in the tackling of devastating post-conflict conditions, mind boggling electoral fraud, intense poverty, large scale corruption and new lethal diseases in the poor countries. In addition, the UN Security Council is seen to be playing an active role in resolving the raging armed conflicts and establishment of transitional peace. This was seen in Afghanistan in 2001, in Iraq in 2003, and in Lebanon in 2006, where the UN even intervened militarily; and in several other cases, UN field missions seek to work for maintenance of peace and democratic stability in Cyprus and Kosovo, etc. It's often said that due to the UN's military enforcement mechanisms, armed conflicts, have dramatically decreased in number, which everyone doesn't agree though.

On the top of these achievements, it's very strongly claimed that there have been several breakthroughs in the arena of global governance which require to be strengthened in the coming years, the most significant ones include the enhancement of the role of civil society organizations to play an ever more important role in global and national affairs, for strengthening of democracy and proper working of democratic institutions in an accountable, transparent manner. These NGOs can be very helpful and play a complementary role with states in dealing with the issues such as immigration, environmental protection etc.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, in the context of required green growth, environmental protection is very closely intertwined with sustainable development, biodiversity and water management. To secure the benefits of conserving natural resources and for transition to low-carbon economies, environmentally responsible economies have to work together for global prosperity and broader equality regarding access to wealth. It's time that ethical governance is attempted as a practical principle as an inbuilt mechanism for a strengthened governance model in our world.<sup>28</sup> Thereby the states will be able to deal strongly and more effectively with challenges of poverty and unemployment.

Moreover, as the UN's Millennium Development Goals<sup>29</sup>, are being emphasized to be achieved with regard to education and health, it's of importance that issues of various ethical challenges in the area of governance and swift action is better coordinated amongst states as a fundamental obligation for every state also to collaborate in its various activities to bring down the gaps between global regions with different rates of development. There is still so much room for our constructive action,

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<sup>27</sup> [www.env-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/gemmill.pdf](http://www.env-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/gemmill.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> [www.cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/eplp\\_70\\_governance\\_for\\_sustainability.pdf](http://www.cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/eplp_70_governance_for_sustainability.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

and all concerned nations and organizations, should we be guided by a strong determination to herald an ethical governance, which is undoubtedly a challenging task

### **Good Governance and Sustainable Development**

Due to the long periods of global economic meltdown in the last decade, many developing countries have experienced significant economic decline, which have led to rising levels of poverty, unemployment and underemployment. The tackling of these challenges for ensuring economic growth and development surely requires a multifaceted approach that successfully combines both macro-and-micro-economic interventions and addresses both the quantity and quality of employment and economic growth which are, so to say the much desired national development goals.<sup>30</sup>

In today's global economy, good governance and respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms are considered to be prerequisites for sustainable human development in our society.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly the governments of many countries, particularly, the developing countries, have come under pressure to strictly emphasize governance and human rights issues within their domestic arena to not only promote economic recovery in the short run and also achieve sustainable and equitable human development in the long run. These concerns have got accentuated as in the recent past besides the prevailing instability in the social, economic and political arena, many developing countries have also experienced significant economic decline, which have led to rising levels of poverty, unemployment and underemployment within their national boundaries.<sup>32</sup> The successful tackling of these challenges and ensuring of economic growth and development requires a multifaceted approach that combines both macro-and-micro-economic interventions and also addresses both the quantity and quality of employment and economic growth and the reorientation and consequent strengthening of the national architecture for public service and justice delivery, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, as well as participatory democratic approaches for the people of our country.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Pro-Poor Sustainable Growth and Economic Development

<http://www.zw.one.un.org/togetherwedeliver/zundaf/2-pro-poor-sustainable-growth-and-economic-development>

<sup>31</sup> GUIDELINE 1 Democracy, *good governance, human rights*, [www.fao.org/docrep/009/y7937e/Y7937E03.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/y7937e/Y7937E03.htm)

<sup>32</sup> Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework, 2012 – 2015, [http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/.../Zimbabwe\\_2012-2015-UNDAF.pdf](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/.../Zimbabwe_2012-2015-UNDAF.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Op.cit, xiv

In this respect, it has been felt crucial that four main concerns (viz., anenhancement of economic management and pro-poor development policies and strategies). Increased access to livelihoods and decent employment opportunities especially for youths and women) Enhanced accountability in the management of public resources and service delivery; Enhanced people's participation in democratic governance structures and processes, will have to be addressed by way of effective policy formulation and implementation of programmes ,deeply rooted in the age old Indian liberal values ,as then these would not only prove to be of immense help for creation of economic opportunities and thereby increase women's participation in economic and political life and would discourage gender based violence and violent activities against the most vulnerable groups of society, especially women, youths and others besides ushering in robust economic recovery and growth and sharply reduce poverty. Some even have sought to lay greater emphasis on renewed focus on capacity building of political and institutional structures to enable them to have greater coherence through joint programming initiatives and smooth implementation of strategies for pro-poor, sustainable growth and increase in women's participation in the spheres of economic and political lives.

# STATE-BUILDING PROCESS IN MYANMAR: WHY DOES IT FAIL?

Dan Seng Lawn\*

## ABSTRACT

*Despite the media hype about Burma<sup>1</sup> being transformed into a democratic State, Asia's longest civil war<sup>2</sup> is still going on in the country. Since 2011 ethnic rebellions have resumed, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Strategically important parts of the country, especially areas bordering with China, are less susceptible to State's control, leave alone complete rule. Against this gloomy backdrop, this paper sought to analyse the causes of failure of state-building process in Burma. Mainly it will look at the importance of the nature of the regime, the need for legitimacy in the context of ethnic diversity and proximity to great power i.e., China, as causal factors in explaining the failure of State-building process in Burma. Thus, this paper will throw some light on the actual lacuna between **de jure** and **de facto** sovereignty in understanding the politics of Burma.*

**Keywords:** Regime, Legitimacy, Civil War, Ethnicity, Sovereignty, State, Army

## Introduction

Despite the efforts of successive governments for more than sixty years, Burma is still failing to establish an inclusive State, let alone a Nation. The scourge of civil war has been devouring the people's lives, country's natural resources and above all precious time, yet the end is still not in sight.

If war creates State, then why a viable state has not yet emerged in Burma? Surely, repression is not a substitute for good governance as order is not for rule of law. The fact of being capable of running an army of 300,000 soldiers should not mean running a viable state. The state is not in fact defined by order alone; more important it also includes the State's ability to manage efficiently the job of 'authoritarian distribution of values' in social, political and economic spheres. In this score Burma has failed, perhaps miserably.

Keeping that failure in mind, this paper sought to trace the reasons why Burma fails to establish a viable state after passing many a quality time. So far Burma's political experience of more than sixty years has shown us that war did not necessarily create a viable State, rather it vitiated the vitality of the country. If we stretch the argument a little more, then we may say that it did create mini-states run by rebels in

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their own controlled areas. On the other hand, it created an extractive economic institutions run by extractive government.<sup>3</sup> Weighing the evidences, war did more destruction to the state than strengthening it.

Having said so, the paper is structured in the following way: the first portion of the paper will briefly discuss the literature on the debate about whether the generalization, deduced from the study of the role of war in the process of state-formation in Europe, that ‘war makes state’ (Tilly 1992) is applicable in the non-European context; Extrapolating from this broader theoretical engagement, the second portion will look at the interrelation of war and state-building process in Burma, and how does it fail, signifying the reasons for its failure; the reasons are namely the absence of social cohesion due to ethnic diversity, the type of regime and the proximity with a great power i.e. China. The third portion will posit some prognoses evaluating certain means to overcome these inherent debacles namely reshaping the country on the basic of federalism, establishing a democratic regime and analysing possible policies in dealing with China. A certain conclusion will be followed suit at the end.

### **Locating the Debate in the Literature: state of the art**

‘War makes States,’ thus said Charles Tilly, having studied the process of European State-formation from AD 990 onwards. (Tilly 1985) Tilly’s central question is how did war relate to European state-formation? Or in a more general sense, what is the causal relationship between war and state-formation? He came up with a very interesting and convincing causal explanation; in order to prevail in a war, a ruler must first make sure that, in his territory, he has a command over ‘means of war’ or ‘resources’ which are crucial for war-making. In other words, he must have a monopoly over ‘extraction’ of the resources. Monopoly means no rivals within the territory, challenging his authority. In order to assert monopoly elimination or ‘repression’ of rivals is a crucial task for the ruler. Establishment of bureaucratic system helps solving these two cardinal problems namely extraction of resources and repression of rivals. Establishment of bureaucratic system, therefore, in weberian sense means establishment of state. (Figure 1)

**Figure 1. Tilly’s war/state-formation model.**



*Source-* (Taylor & Botea 2008)

Ever since then, Tilly’s aphorism remains as one of the central problems scholars accept, reject, or both at the same time. The central debate is on whether or not Tilly’s state-building model will be applicable to non-European context. Some argue it

will be; others maintain it will not be so, and the rest takes the middle ground. Let's look at each position.

### **First Position**

Proponents of the first position base their argument on the assumption that war is the only way for successful state-formation: there is no other way. Therefore, context is irrelevant. As it has worked in Europe, it will surely work in the third world as well.<sup>4</sup> Joel Migdal (1988: 273-274) and Michael Desh (1996: 242) maintained that 'the general absence of external war in the developing world explains weak states,' in comparison to the few states that became strong outside the developed world such as South Korea and Israel are strong because of their past experience of warfare.

Youssef Cohen, Brian R. Brown and A.F.K Organski (1981: 901) have rather an optimistic view on the role of war in state-making process in developing countries. They refused to accept failure of state institutions in the developing world as 'political decay.' For them *"violence in these states is an integral part of the process of accumulation of power by the national state. To the degree that this power accumulation is necessary for the imposition or maintenance of order, collective violence also indicates movement towards political order on a new scale."* Widespread political violence was not an indicator of 'political decay' but a movement towards 'political order.' They considered the movement as 'the process of primitive accumulation of power.'

Following the same logic, the most vocal one among them was Mohammed Ayoob. Ayoob (1997: 121-127) contended that unlike the developed countries the third world countries cannot take State as granted. They are yet to build credible states of their own. For that they need 'lots of time and a relatively freehand to persuade and coerce.' But these two conditions are not met in the third world context. First, they have to complete the state-building process within 'a ridiculously short duration.' Second, they have to do it in a 'humane manner,' as expected by the international system. Along the line of this argument, recently Emizet F. Kisangani and Jefferey Rickering (2014) have overstretched the argument by saying that 'interstate rivalry,' instead of war, drives state-building.

In a nutshell, the crux of this position can be summed up as a violence/time nexus: a relatively free condition for coercion is a must in state-making process, and duration matters in state-formation. The Problem with this line of thought is twofold: first, there is no evidence that third world state builders are less coercive than the European state-builders; in Africa alone four millions people had perished in domestic political violence from 1960 to 1987. But no viable state came out of such unparalleled political violence. Second, if duration is the case, then why some states, such as South Korea and Taiwan, can manage to build strong states within a short period of time. (Sorensen 2001:344) Thus, the inadequacy in the logic of the first position begot the emergence of the second position.

## Second Position

Supporters of the second position posit that war is not a must in state-formation. The type of war these countries are fighting against and the nature of capital accumulation matter. Their focus is not on the state's capability of generating coercion rather on the capability of generating consensus or legitimacy. The war is no longer relevant due to internationally recognized sovereignty (Jackson 1990), fixed border (Atzili 2006), and conquest and occupation no longer exist after 1945 (Fazal 2004).

Sorensen (2001) emphasised on the nature of war these developing countries are fighting against. The war in the developing world is internal in nature; they do not seriously face external threat as the European states faced. "*Domestic conflict*," wrote Sorensen, "*in post-colonial states takes place in a context of having a certified life insurance, deposited with the United Nations, which guarantees the absence of external mortal danger, no matter how bad things may look in the domestic realm.*" (Sorensen 2001: 347) In the absence of 'life or death threat' emanated from outside, the rulers of post-colonial states do not need to tie themselves organically with the population. Hence, they lack long-term considerations (i.e. to build a state that will last); instead their goal is the short-term considerations (i.e. to get rich in a hurry).

Centano (2002: 269), on the other hand, having studied the interrelation between war and state-formation in Latin America, pointed out that civil war did not generate state. If international war had any role in creating states, it would be limited in nature, thus it only generated 'limited states.' Rosemary O Kane (2000) on the other hand, contended instead of war it was revolution which played an important role in building state in Iran, Ethiopia and Nicaragua.

Doubting the very causal mechanism of Tilly's model, James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin (2003) questioned whether civil war per se (in the form of ethnic insurgency) is the cause of state-formation. They argued that it is rather the conditions (poverty, political instability etc.) prevalent in a weak-state cause civil war. In the same vein, Anna Leander (2004) questioned the role of capital accumulation in state-formation by arguing that now capital is raised not domestically but internationally.

In short, supporters of this position problematise the role of war in state-formation. If war makes state then what kind of war is likely to create favourable conditions for state-formation? War per se is not the golden route to state-formation. They point out that the very conditions and context in which European state evolved are necessarily different from that of the post-colonial countries.

## Third Position

Out of the debate between the first and the second, the third position is taken up by some scholars. They safely took up the middle ground. Michael Barnett (1992) in his study on Arab regional cooperation acknowledged the role of external threat in the formation of Arab-states. At the same time he emphasized Arab leaders' policy of

dovetailing the independence of state with the interests of elites, and skilful manipulation of symbols viz. history, religion etc. Recently Brian D. Taylor and Roxana Botea (2008) argued that, having done comparative case study of Vietnam and Afghanistan, Tilly model would work in some case and not in others depending upon the conditions in which a particular state is in. Such conditions are mainly two: first, the existence of a core ethnic group, and two, the combination of war and revolution, which inspired state officials and facilitated the promulgation of a unifying national ideology.

Fundamentally advocates of this position are non-committal. They adopt reconciliatory posture with regard to the on-going debate in the literature. There are two inherent pitfalls associated with this position. First, this position is not free from 'selection bias.' Just by picking up one or two cases which definitely support one's claim will not bring justice to the whole enterprise of explaining the causal relationship between war and state-formation in different contexts. Second, by taking the conciliatory posture, it did not add more knowledge to the body of literature. Rather it ended up making the whole statement un-falsifiable. The statement: 'war will create state in some case and not in other' cannot be refuted. In poperian sense it is not empirical. 'It will rain or not rain here tomorrow' will not be regarded as empirical simply because it cannot be refuted. (Popper 2005: 19)

### **The Case of Burma**

Which theoretical argument best explains the case of Burma? At the outset this paper would argue that the argument, refuting the replicability of European state-formation process in developing world, best explains the case of Burma. If so, then what are the reasons for the failure? The reasons are manifold and multi-faceted; however this paper will focus mainly on three causal variables namely the absence of social cohesion due to ethnic diversity, type of regime which predetermines whether or not the particular type of government will enjoy widespread legitimacy, and the proximity of great power viz. China.

### **War Does Not Create State in Burma**

Since 1948 successive governments have been actively engaging in a civil war. There was no absence of the State's substantial undertakings of extraction, repression and of building the army or *Tatmadaw*. Since 1962 when the Military took over the state power, most of the country's budget has been being allotted to armed forces.<sup>5</sup> All the natural resources at least in legal sense belong to the state.<sup>6</sup> The past repressive records show us that there can be no doubt that the Burmese government had been one of the most repressive ones in the World. (Wilson 2012?)

Despite all these preconditions for state-formation, the outcome shows us the reverse result. If we define state in Weberian term as a political entity which enjoys 'monopoly over the legitimate use of force,' (Weber 1946) the Burmese State, since Independence, never has been fully able to exert its state power across the country.

There are many autonomous political enclaves on which the government have no control whatsoever, let alone exercising the legitimate use of force. After all these years, therefore, what Burma got is a weak state being unable to response to the needs of society.<sup>7</sup>

The question thus remains: why a strong state did not emerge in Burma despite having preconditions for state-formation? Let's look at the main causes for the state-failure.

### **Plural Society**

In 1939 J.S. Furnivall coined the word plural society in his masterful study of Netherlands India. He defined plural society as '*a society, that is, comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit.*' (Furnivall 2010: 446) Frunivall's concept is still relevant, perhaps, especially in the case of Burma. In fact, the greatest failure of post-colonial Burma's political history is Burma's inability to bring out different social and political entities within a single 'political unit.'

Apart from eight major ethnic races, the government recognizes 135 distinct national races. (Steinberg 2010: Xxiii). Against this heterogeneous background, there sprung out more than 20 active armed ethnic organizations operating in their own administered territories. (Burma News International 2013) Despite recent cease-fire overtures reached between Tein Sein government and ethnic nationalities, the final settlement is still a distant dream in the absence of political solution. (Aung Zaw 2015) Mainly the tension between demographically dominant Bamar majority and geographically dominant ethnic nationalities defines the politics of Burma. Majority Bamar or Burmans, constituting more than 60 % of the population, monopolise the state power and attempt to bring different ethnic nationalities under their control, resulting in outright ethnic rebellions across the country since 1960s, some since 1949. The very reason, of launching *coup de'tat*, given by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) in 1962 was to prevent disintegration of the Union. (Silvertein 1977) Since then we continuously are witnessing a persistent and systematic policy of Burmanisation of state power, and excluding or perhaps, even marginalizing the other ethnic nationalities. (ibid)

Consequently, State in Burma is practically weak, being unable to control and command the state power within the territory. In sum, the state has failed to reflect the social reality, resulted in prolonged on-going conflict in the country, which has further weakened the state.

### **Garrison State**

Prophetically Harold D. Lasswell in his 1941 article entitled *The Garrison State* wrote that the world ahead would be marked by the emergence of 'garrison states.' It

indeed happened with the emergence of many military dominated states in 50s and 60s in post-colonial states. (Huntington 1968) What did Lasswell mean by ‘garrison state’? According to him, garrison state means a state in which ‘*specialists on violence are the most powerful group in society.*’ Not just in military affairs they would include ‘*large degree of expertness in many of the skills that we have traditionally accepted as part of modern civilian management.*’ (Lasswell 1941: 456,458)

Having stated the concept of ‘garrison state,’ we can but awfully agree with Lasswell that State in Burma is fundamentally a garrison state, in which military men or military men in civilian clothes dominate every possible aspects of politics in Burma. The current constitution contains a provision reserving 25% of the parliamentary seats for the military men. (Constitution of Myanmar 2008) Today important political offices ranging from Parliamentary speaker to President, all are filled up by military men in civilian clothes. This trend has not fundamentally changed since 1962 when the Military took over the state power. It is not likely to change any time soon.

### **Problem of Generating Legitimacy**

The natural corollary to the establishment of military regime in Burma is absence of widespread legitimacy even among the majority Bamar, let alone ethnic minorities. Sporadically the majority Bamar tends to show their discontent with the military government or now civilianized military government by means of popular demonstrations. (cf.1988, 2007, and recent student protests) The response on the side of ethnic nationalities is fundamentally different from that of majority Bamar. Armed resistance is the predominant mean used among ethnic nationalities.

The outbreak of civil war in Kachin state in 2011, and subsequent (still continuing in Kokang area) armed conflicts along the Sino-Burmese borders only remind us the absence of actual sovereignty. It makes us clear that juridical sovereignty guaranteed by the international system fails to mirror social realities in Burma. As long as the military is still in charge, the problem of legitimacy is likely to be still the central contentious issue of Burmese politics. So far as the military regime lacks widespread legitimacy, coercion is the only means it feels safe to apply. But the result definitely will be the prolonged violent conflict.

### **Neighbour Is Given, Not a Choice**

Burma from its known historical time could never totally shake itself off from the shadow of China, though it tried so from time to time. Yuan China’s conquest of Yunnan in 1253 AD changed the whole contour of not only Burmese politics, the politics of Southeast Asia as a whole. In this regard, historian Martin Stuart Fox penned, “*The conquest of Yunnan altered forever the relationship between China and Southeast Asia. Strategically it projected Chinese power to the South and West in direct contact with Kingdoms and peoples with whom they previously had little or no intercourse at all.*” (Fox 2003)

This historical trend indeed continued in modern time as well. In the cold war years Communist Party of Burma was equipped, trained and supported by China. (Litner 1990) The initial plan as suggested by Liu Shao Chi to CPB (Communist Party of Burma) was to establish base areas in Northern Burma and liberate first the upper Burma, and then the whole country. (Myo 2009) Though this plan was jettisoned in the 80s, China still maintains its influence over the remnant armed organizations of Communist Party of Burma, which demised in 1989. Practically China still maintains some degree of influence over ethnic armed organizations along the border. China is not likely to give up its influence in any substantive way.

Under these circumstances war cannot in any meaningful way contribute for state-formation in Burma. Rather it has weakened the state financially,<sup>8</sup> politically<sup>9</sup> and socially.<sup>10</sup> Realistically, Burma does not have war as an option for state-formation. If so Burma could have emerged as the strongest state in Southeast Asia for it hardly ceased to engage in a civil war since independence. The past experience should by now convince the muddle headed leaders that war is no longer an option.

Then, is there any other way out? If so, one obvious thing is that any future implication for state-formation in Burma must reflect the above mentioned realities namely the presence of plural society, the need for generating widespread legitimacy reflecting the plural society, and the shadow of China. Any policy failed to reflect these realities is bound to fail as past experiences have shown to us.

### **Federal Solution**

Essentially federal solution is advocated by the ethnic nationalities. They consider that it is the only political environment under which they can peacefully coexist with the majority Bamar. However no unanimous decision has been reached yet with regard to what kind of federal union will Burma be?

The minimum agreement they have reached among themselves is all constituent units of the proposed Union, including the majority Bamar, must be equal in spite of size, population etc. It is easier said than done. As the matter of fact, it is definitely a bitter pill for the Burmese military government, after more than sixty years in power, to swallow.

On the other hand, the Burmese government envisions a unitary state in which the state power is in the hand of the military or at least military dominated party. The current objective of the government is to bring all opposition groups under the military drafted 2008 constitution—some by force, others through reward or persuasion. Decentralisation of state power, as the ethnic nationalities suggested, is an unthinkable taboo for them.

Neither of these two extreme views is likely to prevail in Burma because both visions leave no room for compromise. The solution must be somewhere between the

two reflecting the social reality, accommodating each other's vital interests; it should be somewhere between pure federation and rigid unitary state.

### **Democracy**

Carl Gershman, president of National Endowment for democracy, in his October visit (2013) replied to the interview conducted by Irrawaddy magazine, said: 'the genie is out of the bottle' in Burma. (Aung Zaw 2013) Here he meant to say the process of democratization in Burma. Can democracy be panacea for perennial political, economic and social problems of Burma as Gershman suggested? A prudent answer might be, perhaps, both yes and no.

Yes, because under, at least a quasi-democratic government like current President Tein Sein government, negotiations with opposition forces, (UPWC and UNFC) though the result will not be necessarily positive, are possible. By conducting elections, though not free and fair, at least the general public could cast their votes, and participate in politics.

No, because it is not certain that what kind of democracy Burma will pursue. Will it be 'winner takes all' type of democracy,<sup>11</sup> in which state power is monopolized by the majority with little regard for the minorities? If so then ethnic minorities are likely to continue to resort to armed resistance as a means for demanding their dues. Then will it be 'discipline flourishing democracy,' as the current government espouses to promote? Ostentatiously in such democracy, the role of military is inevitably predominant in the Country's politics. In fact, the military is the pilot directing the path to democracy. In such democracy, again ethnic nationalities will see no difference between military government and civilianized military government. The only difference they could perceive will be change of clothes. The same means of armed resistance they are likely to resort to.

What kind of democratic government may possibly enjoy widespread legitimacy in Burma? It is extremely difficult to fathom. But if such government ever emerge in the future, it will emerge out of three crucial conditions: (1) the supremacy of civilians over the military; (2) equitable distribution of power between majority and minority according to their proportions; and, (3) successful establishment of multi-ethnic army under the civilian control.

### **Managing the Great Power**

What palpable strategic options do a smaller state has when facing a great power? (1) A small state can *balance* (internal, external and regional) against the great power; (2) *hide* (buck-passing) from it; (3) *transcend* (Shroeder 1994) the prevailing international anarchy by creating norms, institutions etc.; (4) it can *bandwagon* the great power; and, (5) it can use the policy of *hedging* or *leash-slipping*. (Walt 2009; Christensen and Snyder 1990)



So far Burma adopted the policy of *hiding* in dealing with China. According to Paul Shroeder *hiding* can take four different forms: (1) simply ignoring the threat or declaring neutrality in a general crisis, possibly approaching other states on one or both sides of a quarrel to get them to guarantee one's safety; (2) trying to withdraw into isolation; (3) assuming a purely defensive position in the hope that the storm would blow over; (4) or, usually as a later or last resort, seeking protection from some other power or powers in exchange for diplomatic services, friendship, or non-military support, without joining that power or powers as an ally or committing itself to any use of force on its part. (Shroeder 1994: 117)

Mainly type 1, 2 and 4 are eminent in Burma's policy towards China; from 1948 to 1962 Burma's proclaimed foreign policy was neutrality; the period between 1962 to 1988 saw isolationist policy as a dominant one; and, from 1988 to 2010, type 4 policy gained currency. (U Nu 1975; Myo 2009; Steinberg 2012) However, from 2010 onwards Burma's policy orientation is heading towards a policy of regional balancing against China by tilting closer to US, India and Vietnam.

Strategically Burma is posturing itself against China, on the one hand by launching offensive war against ethnic armed groups since 2011 along the Chinese border, creating an instability along the Yunnan frontier, and on the other, it tries to strike a closer tie with the United States by seemingly transforming itself into a democratic state. How will it pay off? Current political development shows no happy sign. The outbreak of the Tatmadaw's (Army) armed conflict with ethnic Han Chinese Kokang, on 9 February 2015 (still on-going), jeopardized, if not eliminated, Burma's option for regional balancing. Any strategy pursuing in the absence of social-cohesion is bound to fail. In this asymmetric calculus, it has to be noted that China has more cards to play against Burma than Burma against China.

Thus, before pursuing any possible strategy with regard to China in order to maintain its own strategic autonomy as the Burmese leaders so aspire to, Burma, willingly or unwillingly, has to pursue the policy of 'seek ye thy social-cohesion first.' In the absence of it, even the most prudent strategy will end up becoming an abortive one.

## Conclusion

We have so far discussed the reasons—lack of social cohesion, government's lack of widespread legitimacy, and neighbouring with a rising great power—why Tilly's thesis will not work in Burma. And we have also observed some possibilities to overcome these obstacles. None of these obstacles can be removed overnight. Well calibrated, inclusive national policy reflecting political, social and economic realities has to be formulated and pursued efficiently. Government's popular national policy—non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national unity, and non-perpetuation of sovereignty—does not necessarily reflect the political imaginations of

imagined communities within the plural society of Burma. From a more marginalized community, which is systematically deprived of political power, would argue that there is no union, in the first place, to be disintegrated; there is no national unity to be dissolved; and above all, there is only juridical sovereignty to be perpetuated, not de facto sovereignty whatsoever. Hence, in sum, the future of Burmese state will inevitably lie not on the State's ability to wage a hundred internal wars with the hope that it will come out stronger each time, but on its acumen to instil in each citizen a sense of belongingness to the country, or in other words social cohesion.

### End notes

<sup>1</sup>Burma is a more inclusive term embracing all ethnic nationalities residing in the country. Therefore the name is more political in nature. The new connotation Myanmar on the other hand is racial in nature. The use of the term is still controversial, and not accepted by all. Therefore, here in this paper I prefer to use Burma for it is more embrative and neutral.

<sup>2</sup>Though government official accounts tend to portray it as “internal armed conflict” or “armed conflict” and never admit that it is a civil war, if we define civil war according to Singer and Small's criteria, it is indeed a civil war of type 5. War is defined as *‘sustained combat, involving organized armed forces, resulting in a minimum of 1000 battle-related fatalities within a 12 month period.’* (Singer and Small 1972) Let's just take the example of a recent civil war broke out in Kachin states. It was indeed a sustained combat between organized armed forces, fighting more than 1450 battles from June 2011 to December 2013. (Lt-Gen Myint Soe, RFA 17/3/2015). On the other hand, the battle-related fatalities well crossed the threshold of 1000 casualties: Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) reported 6000 government troops killed, wounded and captured (KIA Headquarter Officers interviewed by Southern Weekly, Jan.17, 2013, also see (Anthony Davis, *Asia Time*, Jan 31 2013 ); Tatmadaw acknowledged more than 1000 casualties on its side between September and December of 2012 alone. (Shan Herald Agency for News, Aug. 28, 2013)

<sup>3</sup>These concepts are adopted from (Daron Acemonglu and James A Rohinson 2012); they define extractive political institutions or government are those institutions in which power concentrates in the hands of a few, who will then have incentives to maintain and develop extractive economic institutions for their benefit and use the resources they obtain to cement their hold on political power.

<sup>4</sup>I am using the word ‘third world’ as it appears in the literature written in 80s and 90s

<sup>5</sup>For instance, in 2014 alone Myanmar Army enjoys \$ 2.39 Billion accounting for 12% of the National Budget for the year 2014, ( What has changed within the Myanmar Army?), *The Irrawaddy*, Yangon, 26 March 2014.

<sup>6</sup>For example, see Burma's 2008 constitution.

<sup>7</sup>Burma still ranked 24 jointly with Liberia in Failed State Index for 2014, (FSI 2014)

<sup>8</sup>It is alleged that 105 MM motor shell, used by Tatmadaw in 2011 civil against the Kachin, costs approximately \$2000 to \$2500 per motor.

<sup>9</sup>Use of coercion more hardened the rebels to fight back, because the day they loss to the Burmese military, they considered it is the end of their rights to live.

<sup>10</sup>Needless to say, war polarizes the two warring societies, hampering social cohesion.

<sup>11</sup>C.f. parliamentary democracy period of Burma from 1949 till 1962.

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# THEORY OF PURUSARTHAS AND CRISIS OF VALUES IN OUR SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

*The theory of purusarthas is one of the classical theories of ethics in India, has its origin in the Rig-Veda. This theory describes human beings as not an ordinary mechanical concept but specifically stresses on the point that, human being is a value concept. Purusarthas advocate the theory of man in the context of the four important values of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa. A detail interpretation and explanation of all these values have been discussed in this paper and their importance in human life. Since the attainment of any kind of materialistic thing does not give proper satisfaction to which man is striving for, purusarthas in a beautiful manner gives a direction to life by the inclusion of the spiritual value of Moksa along with the two materialistic needs of Artha and Kama regulated by dharma. Therefore, purusarthas by itself is a complete theory of perfection and there is a need to do further research on this subject, particularly its relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Key Words:** Purusa, Artha, Dharma, Kama, Moksa, Prakrti

Purusarthas, a ‘Theory of Human Values’ is one of the central and basic classical theories of ethics in Indian philosophy and also in the whole of the classical Indian life. It is also central and basic to religion, culture and any types of social institution; because of its nature Purusarthas has drawn the attention of the moral philosophers, theologians, moralist and social scientist from time to time (Rajendra Prasad : karma, Causation and Retributive Morality- Indian Philosophical Research. New Delhi, 1989.P -175). Though Purusarthas is an ancient theory of ethics I believe that, this theory is relevant even to the modern times with its modern approach, as the societies are going through tremendous crisis of the devaluation of the values worldwide. Though born in India, this theory has a universal application for all the ages to come.

The Vedic seers sate that this world in which life evolved has a transcendental (Divine) origin. So, man also has a ‘Divine Origin’ like any other creatures. But man is special and significant in the sense that, man is endowed with the quality of the ‘freedom of the will’, ‘has understanding and acting capacity’, ‘can take responsibility

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for his own life as well for the life of others', 'can discriminate between right and wrong actions', 'has a search for the goal of life', 'has questions related to life, trying to find out the meaning of life'. 'Can teach what is to be done and what not is to be done'. There is always an endeavour towards the attainment of something higher. Man fixes target which man wants to reach and also to enjoy the bliss after attaining the target. The theory of Purusarthas had been developed taking into consideration all these and some more factors, perceiving human personality as a complex organism." (S. Cromwell Crawford: *The Evolution of Hindu Ethical Ideals*. Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyaya. Calcutta. 1974. P-204) is not an ordinary concept but a value concept. It recognizes the significance and importance of human life. Indian Philosophy does not treat life simply as a by-product of a mechanical system but finds teleology in this system. In almost all the texts it is found that human life has been defined as a life with a purpose, it has a goal which needs to be known and understood properly in this very life. In order to harmonize life, the ancient Indian Philosophers state that the universe is a Moral Stage in which each and every individual is a moral actor (agent) will have to play their allotted roles of life (duties) properly. The theory of purusarthas has been formulated keeping in mind all these factors and also to give a right direction to life for its proper upliftment and satisfaction. Therefore, there is a need to understand the theory of Purusarthas in a correct manner.

References of Purusarthas are found in the Brahmana (a section of the Vedas), in the Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Purana and in the Law Books of Manu. Even the contemporary Indian philosophers are concentrating on the theory of Purusarthas with much care and logical reflections regarding its applicability and justification related to life. A final shape of Purusarthas as an ethical and social theory is available in the Smrti (section of Vedas) which unites both the Brahmana and Upanisads "Unites the realm of desires with the prescriptive of the eternal" (S. Radhakrishnan the Hindu View of Life. New York. Macmillan. 1956. P 56.3). Unites the 'values' with the 'facts' of life. The theory of purusarthas divides human life into two schemes as below:

1. The Trivarga (the three-fold scheme)-consists of the three values of dharma, artha and kama. The Chaturvarga (the fourfold-scheme)-consists of the four values of dharma, artha, Kama and moksa. However of these two schemes, the trivarga scheme receives greater attention as it fulfills the worldly and materialistic aspect of human life because of its socialistic character. The Indological scholars almost unanimously maintain that, originally, the theory of purusarthas includes the concept of dharma, artha and kama –which constitute the trivarga scheme of life. . (Mahabharata and the Arthasastra contention are primarily in relation the first three purusarthas that is dharma, artha and kama". (Daya Krishna: *Indian Philosophy-A New Approach*. Sri Satguru Publications. Delhi. 1997. P-251-52). Moksa as a value was not included then, since moksa is not a goal in every human life. But to many other traditional

philosophies moksa being the highest purusartha, without its inclusion, purusarthas not only become in exhaustive but completely misses the point of categorizing the *Ends* of human life. Moksa as the Highest value is included in the Mahabharata, “Yudhisthira’s bringing the idea of moksa as a purusartha which transcended them all” (ibid) and also by the different philosophical schools of India.

Purusartha is a combination of two Sanskrit words ‘purusa’ meaning ‘an individual person’ and ‘artha’ meaning the ‘meaning’ or the ‘means’. By implication-purusarthas means ‘an individual person’- and the means are-dharma, artha and kama which together lead towards the attainment of moksa-the highest personal-Goal of life. Dharma, artha ,kama and moksa-this chronological order is highly significant. In this order, dharma is the first order, artha is the second, kama is the third and moksa is the fourth. Dharma is the foundational principle to regulate artha and kama and the goal is moksa. Dharma is the pre-condition in the attainment of artha, kama and moksa.

Purusarthas are not primarily a ‘subjective - ideal’ meant for the satisfaction of an individual’s needs and desires, but purusarthas has also a ‘social- dimension’. Hence, there is no occasion of conflict between the individual and social needs in the Indian tradition .Purusarthas take care of both these needs on the “Ground of Dharma.”To answer the questions ‘what should I do as an individual and also as a member of the society? What should be my ideal in life? How to attain it? What is the meaning of my life? All these questions have a common answer-that is Purusarthas which is directly related to the philosophy of life in a systematic manner.

Let me now explain one by one all the four purusarthas starting with dharma as the first purusarthas.

Dharma- the first needed value is dharma. The Sanskrit root meaning of this parallel word is ‘dhr’ meaning “to hold together (S Cromwell Crawford .Ibid) . It is derived from the Rig-Vedic concept of RTA-representing the Universal Moral Order operating in all phenomena- natural, social, religious and moral. “It is the ethical norm by which man could relate to nature, to one another and to the Gods. In the Smṛti periods, this Law permeating the whole universe is called dharma” (A.K. Mohanty: Philosophy of Values. Department of Social assistance in Philosophy.Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.2007).

RTA is the Highest Order under which all other orders (dharma) function in this Universe .Nature functions in co-ordination with the orders of RTA. Human life though endowed with the ‘freedom of the will’ needs to act in co-ordination with RTA,on its principle of dharma.

Why is dharma, the foundational law functioning? Is because of its universal value, present in all the actions of this universe of actions and reactions without any discrimination. Dharma is for the sustenance of a good life



for all, “Dharma means that, which sustains...it must be found in every individual, always and everywhere” (Ibid).

For Buddhism, it meant not only the law but also the substance of the universe and is ultimately reality itself. In any case, it is the law, the support, the ideal of the universe; it is that which makes the universe what it is.”(P.T.Raju, *Structural Depths of Indian Thought*: South Asian Publishers. New Delhi 1983.p-533).

Purusarthas is formulated in such a way that, it brings harmony to human life for which it is striving for. RTA is the Ultimate Moral Order and all other orders are the derivations or the reflections of RTA. In the words of Radhakrishnan”. The shifting series of the world are the varying expression of the constant RTA... As soon as RTA was recognized, the world is no more a chaos representing the blind fury of chance elements, but is the working of a harmonious purpose” (S.Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy- Oxford India paperbacks: Vol-1.P-79-80*) Dharma is the supporting principle of the Universe as well as to life. Rajendra Prasad says, “In this analysis of the theory of Dharma....Dharma will generally be treated as denoting the complete system of morality or moral obligations and values”... Dharma functions like an omnibus term denoting the essence of a thing” (Rajendra Prasad: op.cit.p-279) for any system to function Dharma is the precondition. Other scriptures state that, dharma is “righteous action, good, virtuous and justified actions”. It has some amount of ‘obligations’ in the initial stages for properly functioning as a social being, but in the ultimate stage a man transcends dharma also, yet practices dharma to create an example in the society. Yudhishthira performed all his dharmic deeds after attaining moksha just to give an example in the society. Defining the nature of Dharma, the Mimamsa darsana states “Dharma is that... which holds the plurality together, without it, the manifold world will fall apart. It is the grandest conception of Sovereignty of ethical actions. (P.T.Raju: *Structural Depths in Indian Thoughts*. Asian Publishers, New Delhi. 1985.P -54-55). Jaimini stresses on the point that, dharma is the good, the characteristic of which is impelling or the directing of man. Kumarila and Prabhakara state, if dharma is ethically right, the fruit (result) it produces brings enjoyment, if it is ethically wrong, the fruit it produces brings forth suffering and we call it adharma” (ibid). Mimamsa defines dharma as a potential force – Apurva or ‘extra – ordinary’ which produces ‘merits’ and ‘demerits’ of an action. And the unseen – Adrsta- the ‘force’ resides in the action of the *agent* which controls and determines the future life of the agent. Mimamsa asserts that, there is no other way than accepting the ‘Apurva’ and ‘Adrsta’, “We cannot otherwise explain how can actions performed now can cause or produce the fruit (result) after a lapse of time. (Ibid) The past life produces the capital for the future life, be it dharmika or adharmika ‘ethical or unethical’. According to Mimamsa ‘**karma is dharma**’.

Though the theory of Purusarthas harmonizes life with the principle of dharma, still, there always remains a ‘prescriptive force’ keeping in mind the ‘volitional aspect of man. ‘Dharmic deeds’ never become a binding -force on man; never remain an

‘external -obligation’. The Dharma of life is to take responsibility for one’s own deed (action) of life sincerely and this is the way of attaining moksa- the state of being –in bliss (Paramananda). Non- performance does not help in any way to enjoy the bliss for which man strive for the whole life.

In the context of the society, dharma implies certain code of conducts with a ‘wider denotation’ covering all the aspects of life which are codified in the Great Law Books (S.Cromwell Crawford: op.cit.P-80). Certain duties and obligations are to be practiced, keeping in mind one’s own good and also the good of the society. Dharma has different applications- Jati-dharma, Pitri-dharma,Matri-dharma, Stri-dharma,Pati-dharma,Putra-dharma, dharma to society,religion,politics,administration, etc.

Dharma is rooted in custom and in habits, and accordingly there were divisions of ashrama- dharma and varna- dharma which serves the purpose when society followed the traditional ashram order and its variations. Keeping in mind the total welfare of the society, human life have been divided into four stages called Ashram-dharma-the first stage is Bharmacharya- the student life. At this stage, the student residing in the teacher’s resident prepares himself physically, mentally and spiritually, with knowledge and learning,to take challenges of life, undisturbed by the socio-political influences. A student becomes a solid person and is ready to take the responsibility of the social life. The second stage is Grihastha-the household life. The person starts his marital life. This stage is more important when the householder will have to regulate Artha and Kama on the principle of dharma, keeping in mind the family and social welfare, a grihastha must base his life on dharma. Here also, social welfare gets primary preference (Sreyas) than one’s own personal welfare. The great seer Yajnavalkya correctly observes ‘Grihastha ashram was the only stage in which all the Purusarthas are jointly realized. The third stage is Vanprastha-the forest life. Dwelling in the forest in search of the ‘Self inquiry’ and the ‘meaning’ of life. The fourth stage is Sannyasa- the stage of total renunciation from all worldly attachments and attaining ‘Self-realization’ called moksa. At this stage a sannyasi though detached from the world of objects and experience yet, contributes his life’s experience guided by knowledge for the welfare of the humanity. In the Ashram- stages the ‘End’ is the attainment of moksa and the ‘Means’ is dharma. Brahmacharya,Grihastha and Vanprastha are the first, second and the third steps for the attainment of moksa which is the fourth and the final step. In each ashrama-dharma, an individual person needs to ‘rest’- (Ashrama) and to perform the duties of life is dharma. The trivarga scheme is mostly applicable in giriastha period and that is the purusartha. Though the trivarga scheme is mostly applicable to the grihastha period, yet purusartha in general is applicable even to the non-grihastha also.

Let me now discuss on Varna- dharma. In the varna -dharma, humanity is divided into four ‘varna’ meaning ‘a chosen profession born of one’s own nature’( prakrti).The sanskrit word'Var' means 'to choose a profession born of one's own nature'. These professions are Brahmana- the **proper** learning and teaching of the Vedas and practicing priesthood,counselling- keeping in mind the welfare of the society -

Paurahitya 'is' dharma. The kshatriya profession is the total welfare of the society on the basis of proper defence and administration 'is' the primary dharma. Artha and kama, these two values are important components for a **proper** administration. Now the "kshatriyas who make the government is invested with the responsibility of upholding dharma, the Eternal Divine Order of the society. In addition, protecting dharma, the duty of the administrator is to fulfill other social needs represented by artha and 'karma' By promoting artha, material prosperity and political stability is attaining, by cultivating karma he helps bringing pleasure into the life of his subjects. Therefore, individual and social welfare is not a chaos but a cosmos with a harmonious functioning based on purusarthas (S.cromwell Crawford: op.cit.P-86). Similarly, with the Vaishya's **-proper** and ethical business is dharma, and the Sudra's –the serving –staff for the other three communities, Seva-dharma is considered as the Paramdharma (the Ultimate –good) - for them there is hardly any need to practice dharma separately, which are binding on the other three varnas. All the four Varna needs to function harmoniously keeping in mind the total welfare of the society. Each varna is an organ of which "Society is the Organization". Then there develops a harmonious Organic-relation between the different varnas and proper co-ordination and development takes place in the society. There is a need to understand that, varna system is an **ethical means** towards self - development and self-perfection, it is the realization that, in this world of 'actions' and 'reactions' performance of one's allotted 'duty' with responsibility is primary for a healthier functioning of one's own self as well as for the functioning of the society. This understanding is important for the total development and welfare of the society as well as for the development of one's own self.

Both ashrama-dharma and varna-dharma are the two major socialistic aspects take care of both the socialistic and the individualistic needs and aspirations in the Indian context. Besides ashrama-dharma and varna –dharma, Sadharana- dharma also is prescribed which plays an important role in life. Sadharana-dharma **is binding on all man** irrespective of caste, creed, colour and gender, the motive is the fold:

1) To treat life as sacred and 2) To feel grateful towards life. The scriptures state that, the Unity of man is deeper than diversity and from unity has born sacredness, "Dharma changes along with the changing needs of the society, yet, Sadharana, dharma needs to be practiced. The famous Law giver Manu prescribes such dharma for all people irrespective of caste, creeds, gender and station in life. These are: 1) Steadfastness (remaining steady in all the situations of life) 2) forgiveness (to self and others), 3) application (tell problem to someone reliable, e.g., priest, teacher and doctor), 4) Non - appreciation (avoidance of theft), 5) Cleanliness (bath), 6) Repression of sensual appetite, 7) Wisdom- inculcating values in life, 8) Learning knowledge books only(reading other books may damage the internal physical system, 9) veracity -follow the path of truth, 10) Restraint of anger – (anger is self and other destructive).

Sadharna, dharma has a prescriptive force, is in harmony with the Moral Law of Karma (RTA) which stress on this point that, the rise or fall of life is either for good or bad deeds. Prasasthapada also includes the Generic or Samanya-dharma (general duties) of two kinds:

1) **Ahimsa**- refraining from injury to living creatures and 2) **Bhutahitvatva** – respect the Nature , its five elements of-Earth,Water,Air,Fire,Ether and every other material wealth produced out of nature, as they support our life. .Both Sadharna-dharma and Samanya -dharma has universal application, “has the act of free- will (Dr.Balkrishna S Pandit: Indian Philosophy.SDB Publishers’ Distributors.Delhi.1996.P-194) applicable to all ages, for all people.It is moral obligation to ‘speak the truth’ but there is flexibility in this regard. To ‘speak the truth’ or to ‘speak the lie’ depends sometimes solely upon the social welfare in such cases where the ‘*End justifies the Means* (S.Cromwell Crawford: op.cit.P-206).

The second needed value is ‘**Artha**’ – the primary requirement to live life is artha. Artha “includes the material means for the fulfilment of the needs of various types-social, religious, legal, for normal living and sustenance, artha denote all kinds of materials possessions, including everything that one can own, loss or gift etc..... All types of material thing irrespective of their potentiality for rightful or wrongful uses. (Rajendra Prasad; op.cit.P-278) again, “This value is cognizant of the economic and physical needs of man. Property and personality are productive ‘means’ for developing personality. Wealth is treated not only for its contribution to the physical wellbeing of personality, but also for its potency in bringing about a sense of social significance and political prestige”(S.cromwell Crawford:op.cit.P-206) Artha has an instrumental -value in the attainment of the various types of Kama regulated by dharma leads to’ social-blessing, without dharma it is bane’(Rajendra Prasad), does not help anyway in the attainment of Paramartha (moksa), because of its limitation and relative utilization ‘of only’ fulfilling the material needs of life. A.K Mohanty states, artha may be transitory without dharma, but ‘with dharma Paramarthas is permanent’. The pursuit of artha becomes a variable disvalue when it hinders the attainment of the highest good.”(A.K.Mohanty: op.cit.P52)hinder the development of the society. As individuals constitute society and **society upholds** the individuals.

Artha utilized for social well-being is **Paramartha**. Further, wisdom, honesty, truthfulness, benevolence, charty, fellow feeling, love etc. are also the **Paramartha** of an individual person.

The third needed value is kama. Kama is ordinarily defined as ‘pleasure or ‘desire’. It is the desire to enjoy the appropriate objects of the desires of life by the five senses by the agent. **Kama** also denotes the satisfaction of the various types of desires arising from the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual level. Kama could be defined in two ways (1) Kama as a value “refers to any pleasure derived through the five senses, under the control of the mind... includes sensuous enjoyment found in art, music, literature and in sexual activity.”(S.Cromwell Crawford: op.cit.P-206) Or a categorical

representation or hypostatization of man's appetitive life or pursuit (Rajendra Prasad: op.cit.p—278). Kama also denotes any mental, intellectual and spiritual desire. Removing poverty, corruption, to have a good life is kama arising out of the mind. To reconstruct the society, its education policy, economic policy and political system is a kama arising from the intellect and to bring unity harmony and to attain liberation is a kama arising out of the self. The desire to know the Self (Paramatman) and to unite with 'it' is the highest kama arising out of the individual-self (Jivatman) which is "all-inclusive". So, without restricting kama only to its physical nature, it could be possible to use kama as a wider value. In the words of A.K Mohanty, "Kama... connotes those sorts of desire that re-enforces and nourish desire for the blissful state which being attained find absolute fruition. That is precisely that state of moksha." (A.K.Mohanty: op.cit.p-53) **Paramkama is the Ultimate, is the desire to unite to the Universal Self – Paramatman** which brings unity with the whole creation. Paramkama is the desire to do welfare to the whole creation knowing that it is ***One -in -diversity***.

Now the overall objective is the harmony, stability and welfare of the Society which fulfils individual needs also. 'Which kama is to be persuaded and which not?' is again an ethical question in the theory of Purusarthas. Vatsyayana Writes "morality (dharma) is the deciding factor of the quantitative distinct of pleasure" C.D.Sharma: A Critical Approach to Indian Philosophy-Motilal Banarsidass.Delhi.1976.p-156). A qualitative distinction of pleasures also mentioned by Vatsayana.

Vatsayana's Kama- sutra gives a detail prescription of Kama 'which is to be persuaded and he mentions the desirability of pleasure including sensual yet 'dharma, which 'is' the supreme end of life. A dharma-less Kama is not prescribed-as done by the Carvaka Darsana (Gross-materialism) and for which it had to fall, a dharmless kama leads to social ill-being. Kama persuaded by dharma is socialistic and meritorious, here arises is no conflict between the individual and society, for instance, charity has higher value than malevolence.

Harmonizing artha and kama with dharma is the purpose of life is prescribed in the purusarthas. This harmonization is important S.Cromwell Crawford beautifully establishes this harmony. He writes, - "the rationale for this hierarchy of values is that, whereas kama is born of Tamas- guna (inertia), artha is born out of Rajas- guna (energy/motion) the source of dharma is sattva -guna (Purity. Goodness) this blending is the highest of the three fundamental qualities of nature (Prakrti, the root materials cause of the evolution of the world). Manu states "wealth and happiness repugnant to righteousness, must be discarded (S.Cromwell Crawford: op.cit.p-208). K.N. Upadhyaya writes "The persistence and intensity with which the inquiry is to dharma has been persuaded in India is mainly on account of the firm conviction... that dharma constitutes the differentia of man, whereby he is distinguished from brutes, just as in the west, following Aristotle, rationality is regarded as the distinguish mark of man. This

**approach at once reveals... that, what is most vital to man's life is not his mental, but his moral and spiritual nature" (Ibid).**

It is stated that the inner urge of man's life is to satisfy the desires related to pleasure of various types. This inner urge to attain pleasure and to attain satisfaction is a very powerful urge in man. Kama has different dimensions and it is also a drive towards the materialistic and spiritualistic progress of life. When regulated by dharma kama leads to social well-being and moksa, but when not regulated by dharma then kama leads to social ill-being., Ramayana, and Mahabharata discuss in detail why is kama to be regulated by dharma. Specifically, Ramayana and Mahabharata give the reference of Ravana and Duryadhana and teaches 'why are Ravana and Duryadhana had a fall in life for developing a blind passion towards artha and kama and for violating dharma. Kama is a value *'only if'* regulated by dharma *'then'* it is conducive to both the individual and social good.

Though Artha and kama are values in Purusarthas, neither artha nor kama is treated as the highest values, only moksa is accepted as the highest value.

The concept of moksa is one of the central concepts of Indian philosophy, theology and culture. The concept of moksa is associated with metaphysics, ethics, religions and logic of Indian philosophy and culture (Rajendra Prasad: op.cit.P-306). Moksa is described as the Highest Ideal. But the question is "why should someone recognize moksa as the highest ideal when some other ideals like artha and kama are already the desired goal of life? The answer is artha and kama gives momentary satisfaction but cannot give the final satisfaction. From the above discussion we have not seen that, artha nor Kama gives satisfaction to the extent man is striving for. Because the final satisfaction is inherent in the attainment of moksa only. In the attainment of moksa **'dharma is the Means and satisfaction is the End'** In the trivarga scheme, artha is regarded as an 'extrinsic value', kama as the 'intrinsic value' while dharma is both 'intrinsic and extrinsic value' as dharma is both the ends as well as the means. While in the chaturvarga scheme 'dharma is regarded as the extrinsic value' and moksa as the 'intrinsic value (inner urge)'.

Etymologically the meaning of moksa is, 'to get rid of the bondage of the actions and reactions of life which binds man'. 'It is to get rid of the chain of birth and rebirth caused by the attached actions'. The question is, "what is the harm if dharma is not practiced in life? "Or "what is the harm if moksa is not the desired object of life? 'What is the harm if someone does attached actions throughout the life? Attached to 'artha' and 'kama'? The answer is that, though dharma and the want of moksa is not the desired object of life and the attached actions are done yet, how long someone can do attached actions? The desire to attain liberation from the attached actions is inherent into human system-'dharma'. It is an on-going process in human life which is called Mumuksha. And its attainment is called moksa. Moksa is the 'attainment of freedom from bondage to liberation', it is the merging of the 'matter' to 'Spirit' a 'merge from 'finite to infinity', a state of dissolving into the infinity. It is the Spiritual End, the

Highest Value after whose attainment there remains nothing more to attain. In the words of A.k.Mohanty “moksa, therefore, provides the ultimate justification or rational for the pursuit of the tri-varga- dharma, artha and kama. In this sense moksa is deemed as the foundational and the ultimate value as well” (A.k.Mohanty.op.cit.P-57).

To attain this ultimate value Dharma is again the pre-condition. Artha and kama regulated by dharma is the pre-condition to attain moksa in the context of purusarthas, “needless to say that these four values do constitute an integral schemata by which one can reconstruct or envision model of an ideal life. It provides an ideal which can be attained here and now. Moksa is not a concept but an experiential state. It is not a prerogative of a person or a class. It is an existential state, attainable by anyone who treads the path of dharma” (ibid).

The question is ‘why is moksa regarded as the highest desired object of life?’ why not artha and kama the highest object of life?, ‘what is the gain in the attainment of moksa?’ ‘Is the attainment of moksa is the giving up of actions of life?’ The answer is found in the very analysis of moksa. The highest state in the Upanishads has been described differently as *aptakama*, *akama* and *atmakama*. ‘Moksa’ neither presupposes nor does it involve annihilation of propensities and actions, but marks the fulfilment of them. It is not inconsistent with action. What it is inconsistent with, is the life which is not lived according to dharma” (ibid). Again, “Moksa is the highest state of ‘being’ and the highest goal of ‘becoming’...since there is nothing which is to external to the realized individual, it marks the consummation of all desires. It is, therefore a state of supreme fulfilment (*aptakama*). This being so, there is nothing else to be desired (*akama*) and if there is any desire, it is the desire for knowing the self (*atmakama*)” (ibid).

How to attain moksa?. S Cromwell Crawford gives two different ways to realize moksa.

- 1) Philosophical Method - The Philosophical method consists of the study of the Scriptures and the philosophical schools. By reflecting and meditating on these scriptures and on the philosophical schools.
- 2) Ethical Method - the ethical method consists of the attainment of artha and Kama regulated by dharma. The life of Yudhisthira in the Mahabharata is depicting ‘how does a dharmic pursuance of artha and kama lead towards moksa’. Even Buddha’s Dhammapada-the ethical rules direct towards the attainment Nirvana.

The different schools of philosophy both Astika (based on the Vedas) and Nastika (not based on the Vedas) describe moksa in the way they have realized this state. The term Kaivalya (Jaina/Samkhya), Nirvana (Buddha), Moksa (Nyaya-Vaisesika-Vedanta) are all synonymous terms meaning –the state of Absolute Bliss. Nyaya-vaisheshika state that, “dharma is that from which results the accomplishment of exaltation and of the Supreme good...moksa is the final cessation of pain” (S.Cromwell Crawford:op.cit.P-208). Again “the soul attains

deliverance of pain by knowledge, by meditating on itself, by not earning fresh merits or demerits through action springing from desire and by becoming free from passion through knowledge of evil inherent in object” (Dr.Balkrishna S.Pandit: SDB Publisher’s Distributers.Delhi.1996.P-5).Buddha explains the meaning of Nirvana in two different ways: Negatively- it is the ‘extinguishing of desire called pleasure’. Positively - it is a ‘state of bliss’. Buddhism states “he who has attained nirvana cannot live a life of falsehood, cannot confine to the attainment of individual satisfaction...his sympathies are universal, his compassion are so far reaching that it excludes none. Who has attained nirvana cultivate good-will beyond measure among all being, towards the whole world...Unmixed with any feeling of distinction”( Dr.Balakrishna S.Pandit.op.cit.P-268). Jaina states that, at that state, the intrinsic nature of faith, knowledge, bliss and power of Omniscience is attained.” The karmic body (the physical body performing actions) finally disintegrates and disappears, the atman shines in full luminosity, in infinite greatness and infinite glory which state represents final liberation or moksa ”(Ibid. P-300). According to Samkhya, moksa is a state of complete isolation from all pain arising out the three distortions of prakrti (one’s own nature) - Adi-bhautika- physical suffering, Adi-daivika – mental suffering, Adhymatika – spiritual suffering. Moksa /kaivalya is the state of discrimination between Prakrti(matter)to one’s own Self – Purusa.Purusa is of the nature of ‘pure-knowledge’, ‘pure -consciousness (Jnana- chaitanya -Svarupa), the ‘witness’ (saksi) of all the play and display of the guna (attributes) of prakrti which are ever changing.Moksa is going beyond the limitations of the guna of prakrti and transcending to the pure- conscious nature of the Self( drasta-svarupa). (Chandradhar Sharma: A critical survey of Indian Philosophy) - Motilal Banarsidass. Delhi.1983.P-156).

For Mimamsa, “knowledge of dharma is known from the Vedas but artha and kama are learnt from worldly discussions... but moksa is the Ultimate aim (.ibid) Sankara Vedanta states that moksa “can be attained by total extinction of all desires for external objects’ of enjoyment...action on Brahman by the concentrated mind free from all taint of attachment, aversion, and the other affections, and withdrawn from all external objects of enjoyment” (Jadunath Sinha: Outlines of Indian Philosophy. New Central Book Agency.Calcutta.1985.P-412). Sankara further describes the state of a liberated person as the one “who have acquired integral experience, renounce all actions for egoistic ends, and engaged in actions only for the good of humanity without attachment and desire for fruits. Their actions are, in reality, not actions because they spring from integral experience of the atman or Brahman. Those who perform actions for solidarity of mankind are not bound by them, because they are selfless acts unmotivated by nescience and egoism” (ibid.P-413). For Sankara the attainment of moksa is not a future planning, “this realization of the absolute is possible here and now.”(Ibid.P-411). This attainment is called Jivan- mukta’ (S.Radhakrishnan: The term



Jivan-mukta is a later one, though the idea is contained in the Upanisads. Cp. e.g., Katha Upanisad., vi.14.P-798) enjoying the state of bliss of Brahman the Absolute. Satapatha Brahmana characterizes this state as 'in-wardness', 'cosmic-consciousness' (S Cromwell Crawford: op.cit.P-162). The jivan-mukta sees that there is neither duality nor plurality but is only One- self. Thus, all the moral actions are the spontaneous happenings without any external obligations. "Moksa is only the demise of moralistic individualism, not of morality *per se*" (Ibid. P-183). Bhagvad - Gita as 'Stithaprajna'-a balanced person, established in action with knowledge and devotion (Brahma-nirvana). At that state a Stithaprajna knows himself as a mere – instrument(nimitta) of the Divine and performs all the worldly actions without keeping any attachment to enjoy any 'return'(phala/fruit) from the action, remains active and also enjoys forever the state of infinite bliss, He has renounced himself in action. The ideal man according to Bhagvad-Gita, is one who has realized his rational being(prajna) and whose reasons has become steady. He preserves his equanimity under all conditions, whether they are favourable or unfavourable, whether in grief or in joy... does not have any egoistic desires... without being disturbed... does not have any attachment for the objects of his senses... nor hates them... attains peace and Nirvana" (P.T.Raju-op.cit.P-336-337). Even "Krishna, The Absolute, has his duties. He performs them, although he has nothing to gain. If he does not perform his duties, man will imitate him and the world will go to naught (ibid.P-533)." Vedanta describes as 'Cosmic -consciousness - connectedness to everything of this creation. Hiriyaana writes "he is not then realizing virtue but is revealing it. In one that has awakened the knowledge of the self, virtue.... imply no conscious effort what so ever. They are second nature with him" (Outlines of Indian Philosophy. London. Allan and Unwin. 1967. PP-381-82) the ego sense dissolves, the spirit of Universal- love dominates in each actions and deeds, enjoying complete freedom. Sankaracharya says that, no work will cling ever if one performs works during his whole life. (S.Cromwell Crawford: Vedanta Sutras-III.4.50.P-184). All works are done spontaneously, effortlessly. Dayakrishna, the contemporary philosopher explains moksa in two different ways: 1) dharma is necessary precondition of moksa. Unless one's consciousness is purified by the practice of moral virtue, liberation could not even arise and 2) any activity whatsoever, if persuaded to its fullest extent would result in the realization of that ultimate state which was designated as moksa... Realize the truth of the universe (Daya Krishna: Indian Philosophy-A New Approach. Sri Satguru Publications. Delhi. 1997.P-242) S.Cromwell Crawford states "Since life in the universe is morally structured, a man must bring all his warring passions under this principle of righteousness... for the good of the society... is the meaning of dharma in the context of purusarthas... consciousness of the moral law" (S.Cromwell Crawford:-op.cit.P-209). In the words of DS Sharma the purusarthas are based on the progressive realization of the spirit" (Ibid). W.N Upadhyaya writes "the world of inorganic and organic nature... is a world of divine and spiritual immanence with the fullest reality of moral values"

(Ibid.P-207)HH SriSriRavishankar says, “Through the various stage of life by ‘self-effort and karma’, with ‘awareness and understanding’ man can properly regulate all the karma with purusarthas”. (HH Sri Sri Ravishankar:OfficialSriSri.blogspot.com. 31.2014-swapnil/bawani.wordpress.com).

All the four purusarthas constitute a complete picture of man, any rejection of anyone of the purusarthas will lose the meaning and significant of the other three purusarthas. K.S Shah beautifully bring out the relationship between all the four purusarthas of Arthashastra in a modern context where he argues that “we must realize that artha will not be a purusarthas unless it is accord with kama, dharma and moksa, kama is turn will not be kama, unless it is accord with dharma and artha and moka, equally moksa will not be moksa without the context of the dharma, dharma will not be dharma without the context of kama and artha the four goal therefore, constitute one single goal, though in the lives of individual, the elements may get varying emphasis for various reasons.( Daya Krishna: op.cit.Pp-251-52).

This theory of purusarthas is the central to the understanding of man in the Indian tradition, also has universal appeal for all the ages to come. This theory is so complete that it does not need to take help of any other values for attaining its perfection. **‘Purusartha is significant for its Evaluative, Descriptive and Prescriptive nature’. Purusartha advocates Perfectionism.**

“The very fact that the theory has captured the attention of some of the best thinkers of contemporary India and in the shows that classical thought on this subject has something rich to offer to the contemporary mind :”(Daya Krishna: op.cit.Pp-251-252).S.Cromwell Crawford writes “the fact that, these ancient ethical concepts have survived more than three thousand years of turbulent history indicates their survival value and justifies their contemporary investigation. (S.Cromwell Crawford: op.cit.P-3)

Though purusarthas has been formulated in the ancient texts, yet life and its situations have remained almost the same, even in the 21st century of technology and globalization. The theory of purusartha can provide a way to the modern way of life also because of its **Perfection and International approach.**

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# AN OVERVIEW OF NO CONFIDENCE MOTION IN ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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## ABSTRACT

*Moving a no-confidence motion against the council of ministers is one of the most important constitutional rights in the hands of the opposition. The significance of no-confidence motion is discussed. The opposition in Assam Legislative Assembly from the period 1952-1985 tabled several no confidence motions against the government. There were as many as nineteen (19) no-confidence motions placed against the government during the period which are discussed.*

**Key Words:** No-Confidence Motion, Assam Legislative Assembly, Indian Constitution

Moving a no-confidence motion against the council of ministers is one of the most important constitutional rights in the hands of the opposition. Rule 133 of the Assam Legislative Assembly provides for the moving of no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers. It states that a motion expressing want of confidence in the whole ministry or a group of ministers or a motion disapproving of the action or actions of a Minister may be made with the consent of the Speaker. Such motions are subject to certain restrictions like: (1) No motion expressing want of confidence shall be made against an individual minister or a group of ministers; (2) no motion expressing want of confidence in the ministry shall be allowed to be made if, a similar motion has been made in the same session. Besides these restrictions, the motions of no-confidence have to fulfil certain conditions. The conditions are that (a) the member desiring to move the motion has, before the commencement of the sitting of the day, given a written notice to the Assembly Secretary of his intention to move the motion together with a copy of the motion; and (b) leave to make the motion has been asked for after the Question Hour and before the list of business of the day is entered upon.<sup>1</sup> If, not less than one-tenth of the total number of members of the House support in favour of the motion, the Speaker shall intimate the House that leave is granted and the motion will be taken on such day not being more than 10 days and not less than 24 hours from the time at which leave is asked as he may appoint. The emergence and the role of opposition in Assam Legislative Assembly from the period 1952-1985 can be explained through several no-confidence motions tabled by the opposition against the

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government. There were as many as 19 no-confidence motions placed against the government during the period which are discussed as follows:

1. The first No-Confidence Motion was tabled against the Council of Ministers on August 19, 1963 under Rule 133 of the House by 11 opposition members of the House.<sup>2</sup> This no-confidence motion was significant because this was the first ever no-confidence motion brought after independence in Assam Legislative Assembly.<sup>3</sup> The main grounds on which this motion was tabled were: the failure of the Government to protect the life and property in the communal disturbances in Cachar failure to check Pakistani infiltration, scams, etc. Tarapada Bhattacharyya (Independent) spoke about industrial raw-material scandal, imported betel-nut scandal, milk powder scandal, fertilizer scandal, embankment, drainage and flood control scandal, passport and visa scandal and alleged that unauthorized persons were allowed to do business in Assam and the Government officials were involved in giving contracts to the undeserving persons. Captain W.A. Sangma of All Party Hill Leader Conference (APHLC), supporting the motion, pinpointed the failure of the Government in maintaining security of the State particularly during the national emergency declared in 1962. Stanley D.D. Nichols Roy (APHLC) alleged that the Government was indifferent to the Hill areas. Santi Ranjan Das Gupta (Independent) criticized the Government for its failure to tackle food problem and root out corruption. 19 members including 5 Ministers participated in the debate. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed then Finance Minister and Bimala Prasad Chaliha then Chief Minister refuted the charges. The Chief Minister gave an assurance stating that the law and order situation will be improved in the state. After 3 days of discussion, the motion was defeated.<sup>4</sup>
2. The second no-confidence motion was tabled on March 2, 1964 by Hoover Hynniewta (APHLC) against the Council of Ministers .Altogether 16, members supported the motion. The motion was moved on March 5, 1964 by Hoover Hynniewta (APHLC). The member spoke about insecurity of the people, about the firing incident at Shillong on February 17, 1964 which he regarded as the worst form of Indian chauvinism. Hoover Hynniewta alleged that the Government was not favourable to the Khasi people. Dulal Chandra Barua (Independent) spoke on the Government's failure to stop Pakistani infiltration. They pointed out that though the Government assured the House to improve the law and order situation, nothing was done and people were much more insecure both internally and externally. Lakshmi Prasad Goswami of Praja Socialist Party (PSP) alleged that the Government had adopted a policy of discriminating people on caste basis without taking into consideration the economic basis for giving privileges to the down-trodden people. He drew attention to the presence

of 75,000 Pakistani infiltrators in Assam and the impending Pakistani attack.<sup>5</sup> The Government replied to the points raised and at the end the motion was defeated by voice vote.

3. A No-Confidence Motion was moved by Hoover Hynniewta (APHLC) and 10 other members against the Council of Ministers on September 8, 1966. This motion was brought with a view to discuss the police firing that took place at Shillong on August 10 and 11, 1966. Leave was granted as the requisite number of members of one-tenth of the total number of members supported of the motion. Hoover Hynniewta (APHLC) moving the motion alleged that many of the problems were caused by manifold omissions and commissions on the part of the Government. He alleged that the police firing at Malki (Shillong) on August 10 and 11, 1966 was undesirable and it aimed at nothing but to strike terror among the Khasi people of Shillong, the majority of whom decided to launch a, 'Direct Action Movement' in the month of September 1966.<sup>6</sup> He regarded the prevailing food stock position and water supply of Shillong as unsatisfactory and criticized Government's indifferent attitude to the needs of the Khasis. Dulal Chandra Barua (Independent) supporting him stated that though the opposition was aware of the fact that there was no hope of the motion being carried out in the House it would serve as a self-realization motion. The members who supported the motion spoke mainly about trouble in Mizo Hills, subversive activities of the Pakistani agents and the unemployment problems of the State. The debate lasted for two days in which 15 members from both ruling and Opposition sides and 3 Ministers took part. However, the motion was defeated through voting that took place on September 9, 1966.<sup>7</sup>
4. No-confidence motion was tabled on November 7, 1967 by Gauri Sankar Bhattacharyya (Independent) and 30 other members against the Council of Ministers. The debate took place on November 8 and 9, 1967. The opposition drew the attention of the Government to the problems like police firing on November 3, 1967 at Nowgong, failure of the Government to supply rice through the fair price shops, taking of settlement of a big area of Government land at nominal price and selling of the same to the Government at a huge sum of money by annexation. -MLA, anomaly in the Department of PWD in regard to promotion of the Officers, Mizo problem, Pakistan infiltration and the strained relationship between the people of the hills and the plains. The then Chief Minister, Bimala Prasad Chaliha, in reply to the points assured the House stating that measures would be initiated to solve the problems. The motion was defeated after voting.<sup>8</sup>
5. The opposition tabled a no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers on February 21, 1968. There were two motions, one was tabled by Phani Bora (CPI), and 13 other members, and another was tabled by Bhadra Kanta Gogoi (Independent) and 2 others. It was decided to club the two motions together and debates took place on February 22 and 23, 1968. The main allegations against the

Government were its failure to defend the honour of the National Flag of the Republic of India on January 2, 1968, failure to maintain peace at Gauhati on January 26, 1968 and to safe guard the property and dignity of the citizens. The Opposition criticized the Government for its inability to bring the real culprits to book, prevent the forces of disruption and disunity in Assam, and solve the unemployment problem and the problems of the teachers, employees, peasants and workers. 30 members from both sides of the House took part in the debate. Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Chief Minister, replied to the points raised by the members. He admitted that the name of Assam was lowered by the incidents at Gauhati on the Republic day of 1968. However, the No-Confidence Motion was not successful.<sup>9</sup>

6. On April 12, 1968 Phani Bora (CPI) and 3 other members tabled a no- confidence motion against Lakshmi Prasad Goswami (Minister, Panchayat and Community Development). In the explanatory note they stated that the motion was tabled for the failure of the minister to fulfil the desire of the people in the matter of Panchayat Administration and Community Development.<sup>10</sup> Mahendra Mohan Choudhury (Minister, Parliamentary Affairs) stated that in view of the fact that the matters were discussed in the previous No-Confidence Motion on February 23, 1968, another motion could not be allowed. He pointed out to Rule 164 (2) of the Assam Legislative Assembly under which the Ministers were collectively responsible to the Legislative Assembly of the State.<sup>11</sup> After the statement of the Chief Minister no further discussion took place.<sup>12</sup>
7. On April 4, 1968 Phani Bora (CPI) and 3 other members tabled no-confidence motion against Lakshmi Prasad Goswami (Minister, Panchayat and Community Development) for his alleged involvement in a deep-rooted conspiracy in connection with the Panchayat election.<sup>13</sup> The Speaker reiterating his earlier decision observed that no-confidence motion in a democratic House could be moved only against the Leader of the Council of Ministers or against the whole Council of Ministers. There were three types of motions namely, the no-confidence motion, censure motion, and, motion on disapproval of a particular action or policy. Censure motion against a particular minister may lead the Chief Minister to resign or he may just drive out that Minister. The Speaker after making this observation held that the issue might be treated as a matter of public importance and could be discussed under Rule 50 of the House and not as a censure motion. The minister concerned replied to the points raised by the members. There was no voting after the discussion under Rule 52 of the House. However, the minister remained in power as there was no effect of the motion in the House.<sup>14</sup>
8. A notice of No-Confidence Motion was tabled by Phani Bora (CPI), Dulal Chandra Barua (Independent) and others on August 29, 1968 expressing want of confidence in Bimala Prasad Chaliha (Chief Minister) Ministry on the following grounds:
  - (i) That the Chief Minister had failed to give competent leadership on the issue

of reorganization of Assam;

(ii) that the Chief Minister had failed to give a proper leadership in the matter of industrialization with particular reference to the setting up of a second oil refinery in Assam in the public sector;

(iii) that the Chief Minister had failed to tackle the food problem in the State.

The Speaker found the motion to be in order and therefore on August 30, 1968, discussion on the motion took place. Altogether 27 members from both sides of the House took part in the debate. The Chief Minister replied and clarified the points raised in the debate. However, the motion was defeated on voice vote.<sup>15</sup>

9. On April 8, 1969, a motion of no-confidence was tabled by Dulal Chandra Barua (Independent) and 3 others expressing want of confidence in Mahendra Nath Hazarika (Minister of Khadi and Village Industries) on the ground that his activities as a member of the Cabinet were against the interest of State. Dulal Chandra Barua alleged that the orders passed by the Minister in settling fisheries on the advice mostly of his wife, were in violation of law. The fisheries were settled with individual fisherman and with some co-operatives run by his relatives. He charged that the jail administration which was also under the same Minister was mismanaged and all sorts of corruption and criminal atrocities continued in Jorhat Jail. 10 members participated in the debate. The Minister gave a detailed explanation of the particular instances referred to and said that nothing illegal in the settlement of the fisheries was done. He regretted about bringing his wife's name in the settlement of fisheries. However, the motion was defeated in the House.<sup>16</sup>
10. The Opposition tabled a no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers on July 30, 1969. The failure of the Government of Assam to settle the issues on the Railway Divisional headquarters at Rangiya, location of the second oil refinery in Assam, extension of the broad gauge railway line-from Bongaingaon, failure of the administrative machinery, the problem of unemployment and that of the landless people were the main points on which the Opposition attacked the Government. Altogether 27 members participated in the debate that took place for two days. Biswadev Sarma, the then Minister of Industries and Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Chief Minister, replied to the points raised by the members. The motion was defeated through voting.<sup>17</sup>
11. On March 17, 1970, a censure motion was tabled against Lakshmi Prasad Goswami (Minister of Agriculture) by Gobinda Kalita (CPI) disapproving of the action of the Minister. The Minister by then had already faced three individual motions. This motion was an important one as it led to the resignation of the Minister.<sup>18</sup> The main complaints against the Minister were:
  - (i) that the Minister had unholy relation with the millers and black marketers and sabotaged the Co-operative movement, Apex Marketing and its activities;
  - (ii) that the Minister misappropriated public money;



(iii) that the Minister allowed the exploitation of the peasants and forced them to sell their paddy at a very low price;

(iv) that the Minister gave agency to Mr. Kedia and M/s Bhagabati Traders and without licence they were allowed to procure and sell paddy who kept thousands of tons of paddy in different godowns at Gauhati, Nowgong, Raha, Chaparmukhand Hojai in the name of Apex Marketing Society.

The mover of the motion further alleged that the Minister was guilty of shielding his brother who had allegedly misappropriated Rs.30,000 as the President of the Kampur Co-operative Society. During the course of discussion on the motion, an enquiry committee was formed by the Speaker on April 10, 1970 with 7 members of the House. The Minister had to tender his resignation on that day in order to facilitate a free enquiry into the matter. The committee mentioned in the report that the Minister did not act carefully on his part which led to the corruption.<sup>19</sup> Phani Bora (CPI), Hiralal Patwari (Independent) and Atul Chandra Goswami of Samyukta Socialist party (SSP), three Opposition members on the enquiry committee submitted a note of dissent on the conclusions of the majority report on following grounds: (i) that the Minister had full knowledge about the free sale of rice, (ii) that he had unholy alliance with some businessmen, (iii) that he had shown hostile attitude towards the Maharashtra State Marketing Federation, (iv) that the price of paddy fixed by him was not in accordance with the price fixed by the Government, (v) that the letter written by the Minister concerned to the Supply Department was a proof of serious offence committed by him, and (vi) that the action of the Minister had made serious harm to the Co-operative movement of the state.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the dissenting members recommended legal proceeding against the Minister and his associates.

12. A no-confidence motion was tabled by Gobinda Kalita (CPI) and 4 others members against the Council of Ministers on October 25, 1971. Another no-confidence motion on the same day was tabled by Dulal Chandra Barua (Independent). Both the motions were admitted by the Speaker and were discussed simultaneously. The main points raised in the discussion were the prevailing artificial scarcity of food-stuffs and soaring prices caused by the profiteers and hoarders. Participating in the debate, Gauri Sankar Bhattacharyya (Independent) alleged that Congress and corruption had become synonymous. He pointed out that even during the scarcity of sugar at Gauhati there were 10,000 bags of sugar at Gauhati stocked by profiteers and hoarders in 1971. He further alleged that concessions and tax reliefs were given to big businessmen and industries to the tune of Rs. 8.09 crores and while doing so Assam's public debt had gone to Rs.308.21 crores. Dulal Chandra Barua (Independent) alleged that several officers had accumulated huge property and that had been possible with the co-operation of the ministers. The Chief Minister refuted the charges and at

the same time welcomed the suggestions of the members. After voting, the motion was rejected.<sup>21</sup>

13. A no-confidence motion during this period was tabled on November 29, 1973 by Gourisankar Bhattacharyya and 12 Opposition members against the Indian National Congress Ministry headed by Sarat Chandra Sinha. The Speaker admitted the motion when as many as 13 members supported and the leave was obtained. The main grounds on which the motion was moved were that the government had failed to assure the basic necessities of life and to solve the growing unemployment problem in the state. The mover charged the Minister for its “misappropriation, negligence of duty, favouritism, nepotism, illegalities and abuse of political power.”<sup>22</sup>

Altogether 16 members belonging to the Opposition participated in the 2 days debate. The Opposition members who spoke in favour of the motion were Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya of People’s democratic Front (PDF), Dulal Chandra Baruah Of Communist Party of India (CPI), Charan Narzari Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), Ram Chandra Sarma of Socialist Party (SP) Nogen Barua (SP), Pitsing Konwar (Independent), Kabir Chandra Roy Prodhani (SP). The then Chief Minister, Sarat Chandra Sinha, made a statement in the reply to the points raised by the opposition in the course of discussion. But the Opposition refused to withdraw the motion. However, when the motion was put to vote it was lost by majority vote.<sup>23</sup>

14. A no-confidence motion was placed against the INC Ministry headed by Sarat Chandra Sinha. The motion was tabled on September 16, 1974 by Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya (PDF). The motion was tabled for the failure of the government particularly “in the supply of food which had held famine and starvation death in different part of the state”.<sup>24</sup> The Speaker of the Assembly admitted the motion when the required numbers supported the motion and leave was obtained. Altogether 27 members from both sides participated in the discussion which lasted for 3 days. The then Minister of Revenue, Md. Umaruddin, made a statement in reply to the points raised by the members relating to his department. The then Chief Minister, Sarat Chandra Sinha, made a statement in reply to the points raised by members in course of discussion. However, when the motion was placed to vote, it was defeated by majority votes.<sup>25</sup>

15. A no-confidence motion against the INC Ministry headed by Sarat Chandra Sinha was moved on October 31, 1977 by Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya. The motion was moved at a time when 10 members of the Congress Legislative Party resigned from the primary membership of the party and the state unit of the Janata party was formed with Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya as its leader.<sup>26</sup> Altogether 27 members from both sides participated in the discussion that lasted for 3 days. The then Minister of Revenue Md. Umaruddin made a statement in reply to the points raised by the Opposition members relating to his department.

The then Chief Minister, Sarat Chandra Sinha, made a statement in reply to the points raised by members in course of discussion. However, when the motion was put to vote it was defeated by majority votes.<sup>27</sup>

16. On September 3, 1979, the speaker announced that he had received notices from several members, expressing wants of confidence against the Janata Party Ministry headed by Golap Borbora. Then he called upon Giasuddin Ahmed (Independent) to ask for leave to move the motion and as many as 68 members stood up for admission of the motion.<sup>28</sup> There upon, the Speaker admitted the motion and in consultation with the leader of various political parties and fixed for the discussion of the motion on September 4 and 5, 1979. On September 4, Giasuddin Ahmed moved the motion and the leader of the CPI, Promod Gogoi initiated discussion. The main allegation against the Ministry was that the government had lost the majority support and failed to fulfil the election commitments in the last 18 months and it had failed to curb price rise and to supply the essential commodities.<sup>29</sup> Thus, on September 4, 1979, Golap Borbora had to resign and the Speaker adjourned the Assembly sine die. The Governor accepted the resignation and requested Borbora to Continue as a caretaker Chief Minister.<sup>30</sup>
17. Another no-confidence motion was tabled on November 6, 1979 by the leader of the state unit of the Janata party against the 66 days old, the Asom Janata Vidhaini Dal Ministry, headed by Jogendranath Hazarika. The main grounds on which no confidence motion was tabled were the failure of the government (i) to maintain law and order situations in the state (ii) to prepare voter list by eliminating the name of foreign nationals; (iii) to tackle effectively the drought and the flood situation, and (iv) to declare programme and policies of the government in clear term for solving the basic problems of the state.<sup>31</sup> Altogether 20 Opposition members and 6 members of the treasury bench including Ministers participated in the debate. The then Chief Minister, Jogenranath Hazarika, made a statement in reply to the point raised by the Opposition during the course of discussion.<sup>32</sup> However, when the motion was put to vote, it was defeated by majority votes.
18. A no-confidence motion was tabled on March 19, 1981 against the 104 days old INC (I) Ministry headed by Anwara Timur. Altogether 11 members belonging to 4 different political parties comprising of the Janata Party, the INC (U), the Janata (S), the PTCA and independent tabled 6 similar No-Confidence Motion against the Ministry. The No Confidence Motion were tabled and signed by 2 independent members, followed by INC-U, by JP, Janata-S, Lok Dal, and PTCA.<sup>33</sup>

The Speaker admitted the motion after ascertaining the sense of the House. On

March 23, 1981, Atul Chandra Goswami (Independent) moved the motion and alleged that the government, in the name of solving “foreign nationals” problem in the state, was suppressing the peaceful movement of the students with the help of Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF), and Border Security Force (BSF).<sup>34</sup> Golap Borbora (JP) alleged that the government was formed secretly without ascertaining the strength.<sup>35</sup> Baneswar Saikia of Socialist Unity Council of India (SUCI) accused that the government failed to protect the interest of the people and in solving the law and order problem in the state.<sup>36</sup>

After a prolonged 2days of debate in which 23 members and 3 Ministers including the Chief Minister participated and the 23 members of Opposition belonging to CPI, CPI (M), RCPI, SUCI parties abstained from voting which saved the Ministry from defeat.<sup>37</sup>

19. On March 17, 1982, 6 notices of No-Confidence Motion were tabled against Keshob Chandra Gogoi led 64 days old INC (I) Ministry by the members of 6 opposition political parties namely, the JP, the INC (U), the CPI, the CPI (M), the RCPI, the JP (S) and independent. The ground of no-confidence motion was that the Ministry headed by Keshob Chandra Gogoi had no requisite majority. The speaker admitted the motion after ascertaining the sense of the House.<sup>38</sup> On the following day when the House assembled, the Speaker announced the resignation of the Ministry.<sup>39</sup> It was for the second time during the period of Sixth Legislative Assembly that the Opposition was successful to compel a minority government to resign through no-confidence motion.

It was found that although the Opposition was not strong in the Assembly, it was a vigilant Opposition as evidenced by the interest it took in focusing issues of public importance and matters relating to security of the State and its social harmony. Due to the efforts of the Opposition to ensure a cleaner administration, the then Minister of Agriculture, Lakshmi Prasad Goswami, was compelled to tender his resignation from the Ministry on April 4, 1968. The Opposition took a leading part in initiating discussion on problem of economic development of the State and the Opposition’s move on oil refinery issue succeeded in reaching a unanimous agreement. Minor aberrations apart, the Opposition functioned as a responsible body befitting the parliamentary democracy. What detracted from its glory was the floor-crossing motivated not so much by principles but by self-interest of the defectors concerned. The primary object of the no-confidence motion is to dislodge the ruling party from power. This object was achieved for the first time since independence during the period of Sixth Legislative Assembly when the opposition successfully dislodged two minority governments from power. The other objective of the no- confidence motion is to assess and criticize the functioning of the government and thereby obtain some

clarifications and promises when dislodging is impossible. The Opposition while moving No Confidence Motion against the INC Ministry headed by Sarat Chandra Sinha knew it well ahead of time about the impossibility of dislodging the ruling party from power because the Ministry had comfortable majority. It is evidently clear that No-Confidence Motion proved only as an effective instrument in controlling the government even when it enjoyed majority in the Assembly.

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- <sup>10</sup> Assam Legislative Assembly Debate, April 2, 1968, p.17.
- <sup>11</sup> Assam Legislative Assembly Debate, April 2, 1968, p.30.
- <sup>12</sup> Assam Legislative Assembly Debate, April 3, 1968, pp.57-59.
- <sup>13</sup> Assam Legislative Assembly Debate, April 4, 1968, p.15.
- <sup>14</sup> Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Assam Legislative Assembly, 1969, p. 36.
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- <sup>18</sup> Assam Legislative Assembly Debate, April 10, 1970, p. 56.
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# PATTERNS OF TRIBAL LORE IN A TYNGNGER VILLAGE

Etawanda Saiborne\*

## ABSTRACT

*The Khasis of Meghalaya have a very rich oral literary tradition which includes wise sayings, proverbs, incantations, fables and folk songs besides numerous adverbial phrases and imitative words. These prevailed in oral form until the advent of writing after which many were collected and documented. Besides oral literature, the tradition of belief and practices were also taught and handed down through the spoken word. To the Khasis, the spoken word was used not only as an important means of communication, but most importantly as a means of transmitting age old knowledge, beliefs and traditions from generation to generation. These oral narratives hold the keys to understanding the unique historical niche of the Khasis. In this paper the village of Tyngnger (to which the author belongs) will serve as a model of this rich oral tradition. The paper will focus on the rich folklore and oral history of the people of Tyngnger. The village of Tyngnger was one of the longest standing bastions of the old ways of the Khasi people. The populace held fast and unswervingly to the rituals and sacrifices, the cultural dances and social traditions, and the practices and customs of the ancients. The people of Tyngnger worshipped and offered sacrifices to the Phra Skit, the local deities of the village. Faith in these deities proved to be the most resilient obstacle to the advancement of the Christian faith and one of the major reasons that ancient traditions survived the length of time that they did.*

**Keywords:** Khasi Society, Folk Life, Oral Tradition, Christian Faith, Oral History

Folklore is the sharing of the experiences and occurrences that are part of our everyday lives. Whether intentional or not, everyone is involved in the creation, transmission, performance and assimilation of folklore. Folklore is perhaps the oldest mode of disseminating human knowledge and information through attitudes, habits, social customs and traditions. Folklore contextualizes culture. It is the symbiont, which contributes to and borrows from both language and culture. The interdependence of these three is epitomized by the relationship of the expression of folklore through language and the moulding of language in culture.

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The Khasis of Meghalaya have a very rich oral literary tradition which includes wise sayings, proverbs, incantations, fables and folk songs besides numerous adverbial phrases and imitative words. These prevailed in oral form until the advent of writing after which many were collected and documented. Besides oral literature, the tradition of belief and practices were also taught and handed down through the spoken word. To the Khasis, the spoken word was used not only as an important means of communication, but most importantly as a means of transmitting age old knowledge, beliefs and traditions from generation to generation. These oral narratives hold the keys to understanding the unique historical niche of the Khasis.

Folklore and the oral narrative as historical documentation are of profound importance of to the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya in the absence of written historical accounts. It is conventional thought these days to state that folklore cannot be accepted as historical science (Dutta, 2002) and at best it is but pseudo-history; its only association with history is by way of the misnomers of two thought schools of folklore, the Historical-Geographical School and the Historical-Reconstructional School (Dutta, 2002). This may induce the thought that the concerns of the folklorist and the historian are, therefore, unrelated, and any links between the two are superficial. Paradoxically, however, the presence of a strong link between history and folklore, with regard to the Khasi tribe, is an overriding prerequisite to understanding the Khasi society and its historical identity.

In the absence of written documentation that would have been historically acceptable, folklore and oral history remain the only sources that attest to the historical identity of the Khasi tribe. This is also true for other tribe of the north-east which lack written histories. Meeta Deka (2011) states that it is through such an acknowledgement that the historical value of folklore can be appreciated, affirming Vladimir Propp's assertion that the science of folklore is a historical discipline and can be studied as a historical phenomenon. In his book *Theory and history of Folklore* (1984) he outlines the steps that one can apply to understand folklore. The steps he applies communicate his philosophy that folklore is not a static entity that faithfully preserves the patterns of the loom of time but it is a living and transitioning fabric that evolves with a people, gradually transmuting into fluid motifs that hold new meanings to them. An interesting tale comes from Tyngnger a village halfway between Shella and Mawsynram.

The tale of ***Ki Phra Skit*** resurged at the point of conflict between the old traditions and religious practice of the people of Tyngnger village and the new religion of the Welsh Christian missionaries in the early 1900's. The shaping of the tale of ***Ki Phra Skit*** is a classic case that agrees with Propp's observation that "*Folklore formations arise not as direct reflections of life (this is comparatively rare), but out of the clashes of two ages or two systems and their ideologies*". When viewed through this lens it immediately becomes clear that the renewed telling of this folk tale was as a reaction to the perceived threat of the Christian religion. The tale of ***Ki Phra Skit***



reminded the Tyngnger villagers of the power of the tutelary deities in the face of the intimidating power of the Christian religion backed by the British Colonial power.

From times immemorial, the village of Tyngnger had practiced a set of religious rituals and rites. Though the details vary from those in other parts of the Khasi Hills, the same thread of commonality that weaves through much of the religious practices of the Khasi people permeates through these rites and rituals and fabricates the pattern of religious practice in Tyngnger. The Khasi religious belief, though largely monotheistic believing in a Supreme deity (*U Blei Nongbuh Nongthaw*) who is at once Creator and Almighty, also allows for faith in tutelary deities called *Ki Basan Shnong* or *U Ryngkew* or *ki 'Lei shnong 'Lei thaw*. These tutelary deities have powers limited to a particular geographical location and act as protectors or guardians of villages. Their role as protectors can be invoked at times of danger, from invasion by neighbouring fiefdoms (*himas*), threat of force or war, or looting by roving bands of marauders. At such times a priest (*lyngdoh knia*) is empowered by the residents of the village to invoke the protection of these tutelary deities. Usually he petitions these deities to recognise the rights of the populace to have peace and security and protection from the violent intentions of invaders who would raid, rape, steal and kill. He divines their will using sacrifices and signs; and exhorts them to protect and guard the village. The tutelary deities find mention in many folktales of the Khasi people. In most Khasi folktales the role of the tutelary deity is a beneficent one. The tale of the power of *Ki Phra Skit (Ka Bor Ki Phra Skit)* commences this way:

*It was a time of peace and prosperity in Tyngnger when rumours and news of a marauding band of raiders from Hima Nongkhlaw, led by the able commander Ramdah came to the ears of the villagers. Word was that the marauders were spying on the village so as to exploit any weakness in the defenses of the village. Hearing the news the villagers appointed a lyngdoh knia to intercede with KiPhra Skit (Eight tutelary deities) of the village to perform their role as patrons, guardians and protectors of the village. Soon, came an early morning when in the hustle and bustle of everyday village life, some of the village residents who were moving to and fro about their business noticed a group of strangers towards the west of the village apparently encamped there in hiding. The sighting of this suspicious group of strangers so early in the morning alarmed the villagers who were quick to inform the village elders and heads (rangbah shnong). The village administration fearing that the strangers' had no good intentions arranged that a watch be established both night and day. Women and children were warned to be especially careful. And so it was that the village watch, armed with sword and shield, bow and arrows and spears and javelins watched and waited tirelessly both night and day.*

*It was on one such a day, when insecurity and unrest hung heavy in the village, that without warning, a great thunderstorm arose pouring buckets of water on the village and illuminated the landscape with flashes of lightning while echoing with the voice of thunder. In the midst of this great inundation word came to the village that a certain great cliff called **U Mawlieh** (literally **White-rock**), and located to the west of the village had cracked asunder and was now on lying on its side on the ridge of the hill. A few men of the village watch went forth to investigate whether this news was true. When they reached the location, they found a small group of men tending to a companion, who though narrowly having escaped the falling cliff had sustained some injuries. Upon questioning the men, they confessed that they were followers of the great commander Ramdah and that many of their companions had been crushed under the cliff while they took shelter in its shadow. They also learnt that it was Ramdah himself who had spied on the village and picked the great **Mawlieh** cliff as a camping point. Ramdah, however, escaped with a few companions leaving behind what was left of his band. They say that Ramdah escaped to a village called **Pyndemjathiat**.<sup>1</sup> (literally “a place where the Jathiat herb thrives”) and his notoriety lived on. To this day the place where the monolith fell is called **Mawramdah** (literally **Ramdah’s rock**) and the great rock that now lies on its side is called “**Mawngat-Nongphlang**.<sup>1</sup>” (literally the stone which trapped the plainsvillagers.)*

The pattern prescribed by Propp for Folklore which forms as a result of the clash between the old and the new is succinctly identified in this tale. According to the Khasi author S.G.Lyngdoh (2000), the tale of **Ki Phra Skit** displays their Power. Another Khasi author H.D.Reenbohn (2005), explains that it was this worship for Ki Phra Skit that proved the greatest resistance to the spread of the Christian religion. The tale of Ki Phra Skit is significant in that, the fallen cliff in the eyes of the Tyngnger villagers is a symbol of the protective power of the tutelary deities.

Another interesting dimension about the tale of Ki Phra Skit is that it is a tale which explains why the natural feature of **Mawngat-Nongphlang** is the way it is. According to I.M. Simon, there are four classes of folk tales in Khasi folklore.

1. Stories about the beginning
2. Stories purporting to explain why certain things are what they are
3. Stories concerning natural features such as mountains and other geographical features
4. Speculative stories relating to moral principles.

The tale of **Ki Phra Skit** reiterates the supernatural elements that compose the historicity of objects in the Khasi people’s natural environment. Another reprise of the wisdom that the Khasis believed that the local and tutelary deities possess is again, on

display in this tale that the gods directly intervene in matters pertaining to life and death.

In the absence of written documentation on the history of the Khasi people, oral history continues to serve as the sole method of reconstructing the unwritten past. “Folk literature in its oral form, has always represented a complex of information and sensibility that resists erasure” according to Syiem (2011). For the ancient Khasi, the book of nature served as the indelible repository of his history, combining elements of his religious life and the mundane domesticities of everyday life. His alphabet was the merging of words, deeds and imaginations handed down from generation to generation engraved in the rocks, hills, mountains, and streams of his habitat. Tales such as the one outlined in this paper will continue to serve as mark of his identity in the plural vibrancy of the Indian nation.

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# GRAPHIC NOVELS AND POPULAR CULTURE

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper attempts to trace the history and evolution of graphic novels as a form in popular culture. It looks at some of the important contributions to the medium, how it became a cultural product and what were the subcultures that emerge from it. Finally, it looks at how the comic book culture came to India and where the graphic novel and the comic book industry are heading towards in the future.*

**Key Words:** Graphic Novels, Popular Culture, Cultural Understanding, Gender History

## Introduction

The graphic novel is an artefact of visual images and written words; a complex and expressive form tackling a multitude of issues and themes across the globe. The graphic novel is a tool of self-expression and personal identity; of cultural understanding and philosophical exploration; of history and hope. Comics or graphic novels transverse themes such as heroism, identity, philosophy, gender, history and colonialism (Giddens and Evans, 2013). Now it is one of the fastest growing medium that is deeply ingrained into contemporary culture.

Graphic novels grew out of the comic book movement in the 1960s and came into existence at the hands of writers who were looking to use the comic book format to address more mainstream and adult topics. There is a debate about who first coined the phrase ‘graphic novel’, but one of the first graphic novels was Will Eisner’s *Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories*, published in 1978. Eisner, who began working with the medium in 1936, has stated that he devised the term as a marketing technique to increase the chances that his illustrated series would be published<sup>1</sup>, and also to establish some distance between his work and traditional comics. Thus, the term graphic novel is a marketing construct designed to give comic book publishers better representation on the shelves of large bookstores. However, the demarcating feature is that graphic novel tells a single, continuous narrative from its first to its last page; sometimes they are collections of shorter stories or individual comic strips.

The argument for the term graphic novel was further complicated out of what might be considered American and British cultural prejudices. However, no equivalent

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term is required in continental Europe or Japan, where the acceptance of comics as both an art form and a literary mode is unproblematic. In Europe, and especially in France, comics or *bandeddessinée* (drawn strips), have long been collected in high-quality albums, with themes and styles appropriate to a mature audience. This adult comic culture has coexisted very comfortably with comics for children, with no supposed contradiction in terms. In Japan a huge proportion of the population routinely reads comics or *manga* with a variety of themes and genres ranging from fantasy, crime, eroticism and so on. The emergence of graphic novel must therefore be understood in terms of cultural attitudes that shaped it<sup>1</sup>.

The format has gained popularity over the past 25 years in various countries, including the expected superhero stories and adaptations. Some graphic novels are the product of a single writer, or a writer of an illustrated team. Steven Weiner notes, 1986 was a 'turning point', although not the revolutionary year many had hoped it would be. In that year, comic fans witness the launched of two comic series for adult readers by DC Comics i.e. *Watchmen* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. Also, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning holocaust memoir that casts the Germans and Jews as cats and mice, was published.

*Maus* is just one example of a historical graphic novel. The medium is also proving to be an effective vehicle for historical writings, both fictional and non-fictional. Consider *Still I Rise* by Roland Owen Laird and Elihu Bey, which tells the history of African Americans in U.S.A. beginning in 1619 or Kenji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen* series, which tells of Japan before and after Hiroshima. Many graphic novels go beyond representing historical facts and offer portraits of a culture; one example is Marjane Strapi's *Persepolis* series which is an autobiographical account of her life, including her childhood in Iran during the Islamic revolution.

Increasing popularity of graphic novels may be linked to several graphic novels which have been adapted into feature films. These include Daniel Clowes's *Ghost World*, Jamie Delano and Garth Ennis's *Hellblazer* which was made into the film *Constantine* and Frank Miller's *Sin City*<sup>1</sup>. These exemplify several genres of graphic novels, including memoir, crime fiction, coming of age stories and action stories. The fact that an increasing number of graphic novel are being used as the basis for films is not surprising. Graphic novels, with their texts created within a visual context, are a natural fit for film adaptation, providing ready-made storyboards.

In order for us to better understand graphic novels it is important to understand its different genres. Chris Schlupe has catalogues them into three categories: superhero comics, popular entertainment and literary fine art. As a reader there is natural progression from reading about superheroes to the more literary work. The superhero category are simply collections of previously published periodical material put into a long book format such as *Superman*, *Batman*, *Spiderman*, *X-men* and so on. Readers in this category tend to be younger. However, Alan Moore's *The Watchmen* was the first

superhero comic book to present itself as serious literature, a move that did much to popularize the adult-oriented graphic-novel format. Set in an alternate 1985, where the U.S. is edging towards nuclear war with the Soviet Union, *The Watchmen* was one of the first graphic novels to present superheroes as real people with depth, as people possessing normal personal issues. The popular entertainment category is perfect marriage between comics and the literary traditions of comics. There is generally a real subversive quality to the art and writing that resonates with today's youth, recent examples include the anthology of artists in *Flight* edited by Kazu Kibuishi; *Elk's Run* written by Joshua Hale Fialkov and illustrated by Noel Tuazon; and Daniel Clowes's *Ghost World*. Finally the literary graphic novels are those which are more adult oriented, usually written with a historical context e.g. Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, that illustrated struggles during the holocaust; Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, that narrates about the Islamic revolution and Joe Sacco's *Safe Zone-Goradze*, a graphic novel about war in Eastern Bosnia.

### **Evolution of Comic Books – from Cave Paintings to Smart Phones**

As debatable as the definition of graphic novel, the origins of the art from itself are open to interpretation. Cave paintings may have told stories, and artists and artisans beginning in the Middle Ages produced tapestries and illuminated manuscripts that told or helped to tell narratives. The first introduction of the standard format for graphic novel however, was in American comic books *Funnies on Parade* in 1933. By the early 1940s, a lucrative market of comic books for children and adolescents existed with a variety of genres: adventure, action, mystery, superhero, teen and romance. In 1938 Action Comic #1 introduced *Superman*, the first comic book superhero. Disney also entered the market with *Donald Duck* in 1938, while the teen character *Archie* has his own comic book by 1942. Comic books targeting women readers appeared with *Sheena: the Queen of the Jungle* in 1939 and *Wonder Woman* in 1941. The more serious classics illustrated was introduced in 1941 to expose children to classical literature. The early 1940s saw a comic book market with monthly sales of 25 million copies, 125 different titles appearing monthly and annual sales at nearly 30 million dollars (Newsweek, 27 December 1953:55). In the post-World War II period, comic books continued to experience a boom with a diversification of genres such as romance, crime, horror and science fiction. This expansion involved catering to more adult readers and comic books thus featured more adult content. During the war, comic books were distributed to soldiers as cheap and exchangeable entertainment. After the war, a new adult-oriented market developed that coincided with a boom in romance comic books for female adults (Times, 22 August 1949:41). However, other comics such as *Crime Does Not Pay* and *Tales from the Crypt* which was filled with sex and violence elicited a national anti-comic book crusade that eventually led to a self-imposed industry code for comic books (Nyberg, 1998). It initiated a decline in the comic book market (Sabin, 1993). The graphic novel market continued to decline till the 1970s, when comic book

distribution significantly shifted from news-stands and other general retail outlets to special comic book stores (Comics journal Special, October 1997:4). The new market relied on direct distribution: shops pre-ordered comic books with strict limitations on return of unsold issues. This led to a change in percentage and the type of individuals reading comic books (Comic Journal Special, October 1997:4-5). By the late 1970s, the comic books market was a small subculture of mostly adolescent and college male readers who frequent speciality comic book shops. The above history focuses on 'mainstream' comic books. In the late 1960s, however, an underground comic book market appeared that centred on the counterculture movement of the time. These comic books were sold in 'head shops' (Estren, 1987), and the market lasted until the mid-1970s. In the mid-1980s what are commonly referred to as alternative comic books appeared (Sabin, 1996). They were published by independent comic books publishers and sold in the comic books shops. The alternative comic book market also brought women back to comic book readership, although male readers still dominate the market (Washington Times, 6 February 2002:2).

The growing interest in graphic novels and the comic form in both popular culture and the media also became items of interest in academic library. Teachers and academics have not been the only ones to reassess the value and use of graphic novels. School librarians and educators have reported outstanding success getting children to read with graphic novel, citing particularly their popularity with reluctant readers, especially boys – a group traditionally difficult to reach. At the same time, graphic novels with rich, complex plots and narrative structures can also be satisfying to advanced readers<sup>1</sup>. Recent coverage of graphic novels in the New York Times and the Christian Science Monitor shows that graphic novels are becoming part of the cultural landscape. In July 2004, New York Times magazine also suggested that graphic novels and comic books may be transitioning into new historical, political and cultural artefacts. Graphic novels share that visual image-plus-text sensibility, including the capacity to emotionally connect with readers. Print format graphic novels and the now increasing web-based comics on our very own computers, smart phones and tablets provide a natural meeting of the image and the word in sequential art.

Today, American comic books are still dominated by the superhero genre, although a diverse array of genres for both children and adults still exist. Earlier, U.S.A. dominated the comic book industry selling its ideology through these comics to the world, which is why French comic book creator Re   Goscinny and illustrator Albert Uderzo started the Franco-Belgian *Asterix* or *The Adventures of Asterix* comic book series on October 1959 to break the hegemony. Then there were British comics, which adopted a magazine size for comic books and successfully translated *Tintin* and repacked them into soft cover books. Japanese comic books known as *manga* also became increasingly popular over the last few years, catering to a young adult market,

with its increasingly popularity in the American market and from there onwards the global market.

### **The Importance of Japanese Manga and the Americanization of *Manga***

Japan has a long a rich history of graphic arts, including painting, printmaking, calligraphy in which all these were later incorporated into comic books and animated films of their own. The genesis of *manga* ties closely to wood cut prints called *ukiyo-e* which were mass produced and very popular in Japanese societies showing urban scenes and rural landscapes in Japan (Seeling, Li and Nicol, 2009). When industrial printing press came, wood cut method soon shifted to paper. Now there are well-established publishing houses and drawing studios in Japan that caters to Japanese readers of all age groups, providing them with a wide variety of high-quality comics.

Comics have evolved in Japan much as they have in the U.S.A but at a more rapid rate. Osamu Tezuka was among the influential Japanese comics artist who “developed their wartime exposure to Western comics into a form that reflected Japanese techniques and experiences,” according to scholar Francisca Goldsmith. He took aspects of the cartoons of Walt Disney and fused them into larger-than-life, cinematic storytelling, to create the dynamic, action-packed, ‘big-eyes, small mouth’ characters that has become synonymous with *manga* today. In Japan sophisticated, mature comics for adult readers have flourished since 1950s. Japanese artists began exporting and translating the comics such as *Astro Boy* in the 1960s and such comics became more widely available in English-speaking countries with the growth of manga distributors and publishers in the 1990s.

Since then manga became very popular among comic book fans in America, which led to the Americanization of the Japanese graphic novels that soon created a global popular culture (Kinsella, 2000). American fans have personalised and adapted *manga* to make it their own through video-games, films and cosplays. This phenomenon is because meanings and messages in popular culture is not predictable. In the case of graphic novel where a product encoded by one and for one’s own culture is decoded differently in another culture (Antonia, 2006). These *manga* even though they are largely targeted exclusively at a Japanese market without much consideration for the international market, are now widely available in translated versions and popular across Asia, North and South America and Europe. Also in each of these geographical areas, an act of cross-cultural negotiation takes place, where fans seek out other aspect of Japanese culture.

*Manga* in now a multi-billion dollar industry even outside Japan, its reach extend around the world. *Manga’s* greatest strength is in its flexibility - it is a format rather than a genre. Fans from romance to crime and horror can be found within the various versions of the format. Today, *manga* has truly conquered the world of comics, especially among young readers, who have grown up fluent in its intricacies and culture-clash elements. Titles such as *Naruto* and *Fruit Basket* regularly lead the market



when a new volume is released. Characters of *manga* comics have also become well known popular culture icons, such as *Astro Boy* and *Hello Kitty* becoming phenomenal international merchandise in clothing, toys, bags and more (Seeling, Li and Nicol, 2009).

### **Comic Books as a Cultural Form: the Rise of Comic Subculture**

Over the years critics have viewed comic books as sub-literate and feared they would disrupt children's development of literacy, the medium was especially condemned for its content which promotes mayhem, murder, torture, vigilante justice and cheap political propaganda. This led the comic book industry to implement a self-censoring Comics Code in 1954 (Nyberg, 1998)

Besides the stigmatization of comic books as a juvenile medium, artists and fans of comic books still note that comic books are stigmatized as less than literature and less than visual art (Sabin, 1996). The stigma of comic books as sub-literate stems from their mixture of image and text. The visual element is not stigmatized per se; also illustrated literature has never been stigmatized, because text was separate from image and therefore preserved its sanctity. But for many critics the 'transgressive' mix of image and text in comic books undermined the supposedly superior quality of print culture as well as the unique qualities of visual culture (Varnum and Gibbons, 2001)

The view of comic books as a mass-produced product of poor quality made artists who worked in this industry susceptible to being discredited as graphics artists. It was common for graphic artists to use fake names when working for the industry for fear of doing irreparable damage to their long-term career.

Before graphic novels became a part of popular culture, its readers were viewed as victims of potential harm of a discredited form. These comic book readers were labelled into a subculture of "fanboys/girls" or "geeks" which are attributed with being dirty, overweight, acne ridden and immature. The comic book became a sign of the anti-social and obsessive individual regardless of the reader actual complex personalities and abilities. There is an assumed relationship between comic books and anti-social behaviour. Due to these imposed stereotypes and in identifying with this subculture, they adopt what Fiske (1992) calls its "enunciative productivity." Fandoms are interpretive communities that share a unique discourse about their objects of consumption and about themselves as fans. This interpretive community also prescribes e.g. "styling of hair or make-up, the choice of clothes or accessories that are ways of constructing a social identity and therefore of asserting one's membership in a particular fan community" (Fiske, 1992:38).

This led to an important part of the comic book culture which is the creation of fanzies, conventions and cosplays. Fanzies articles, fan art or collector items that are circulated among comic book fans that acts as their forum to share their love for graphic

novels. Beginning in the mid-1950s a small group of comic book fans began publishing fanzies. Today, the internet has provided a perfect medium for fanzies.

The older generation of fans were also responsible for creating comic book conventions also known as Comic Con. The biggest and most popular convention is San Diego Comic Con which was started in the 1970. Now there are Comic Cons in many parts of the world which markets comic books. Comic book conventions is where fans get together and participate in various activities dedicated to creating awareness of, and appreciation for, comics and related popular art forms, primarily through the presentation of events that celebrate the historic and ongoing contribution of comics to art and culture. The convention now also includes a larger range of pop culture elements, such as animation, toys, collectible card games, video games, web comics, and fantasy novels. Academics and comic industry professionals annually hold the Comics Arts Conference at Comic-Con, presenting scholarly studies on comics as a medium. The event also includes awards ceremonies, film festival and masquerade costume contest also known as “cosplay” (Lopes, 2006).

Cosplay or costume play is a performance art where participants wear costumes and accessories to represent a specific character or idea (in this case a comic book character). Cosplayers often interact to create a subculture centred on role play. The popularity of Cosplay in Japan encourages the misconception that cosplay is specifically a Japanese or Asian hobby. The term cosplay is Japanese in origin, but costume play was originally a hobby from United States. Comic book fans create their own costumes and engage in cosplay to express adoration for a character, or in feeling similar to a character in personality, seeking to become that character, they even go to the extent to adopt its personality and mannerism. Some people enjoy cosplaying because of the attention that certain character brings at conventions, while there are also those who enjoy the creative process and the sense of personal achievement upon completion.

The internet has enabled many cosplayers to create social networks and websites centred on cosplay activities, while forums allow cosplayers to share stories, photographs, news, and general information. The rapid growth in the number of people cosplaying as a hobby since 1990 has made the phenomenon a significant aspect of popular culture. This is particularly the case in Asia, where cosplay influences Japanese street fashion.

### **Graphic Novels and Comic Book Culture in India**

In India Amar Chitra Katha ranked the largest selling comic book series in the country, which has produced more than 90 million copies in over 20 Indian Languages. What is unique about these comic books is that the creator Anant Pai was more of an educationalist who was concerned about how Indian children would know about Greek and Roman mythology from school books, but were ignorant about their own history, mythology and folklore, thus in most of his comic series, he attempted to teach Indian children about their cultural heritage. One of his famous series is ‘Tinkle’, a children’s

anthology, which was launched in 1980 and became India's first comic and cartoon syndicate.

Even though comic books started as an educational endeavour in India, nowadays there are a variety that has been published and has shifted from narrating Indian mythologies to fiction, fantasy and even issues on contemporary India. Some of the popular Indian graphic novels are *Kashmir Pending* written by Naseer Ahmed that talks about issues plaguing Kashmir for years now. *Hush* by Partheek Thomas and Manta Ray, explored the ideas of child abuse and violence in India through the character of a young girl Maya. *Delhi Calm* by Vishwajoyti Gosh, a graphic novel which transports you to 1975, the year when Indira Gandhi declared that India was in a state of emergency, the graphic novel highlights a journey through times of chaos accompanied by three impressive young men, who were staunch Marxists. *Legends of Halahala*, Appupen's second graphic novel which dealt with social and moralistic issues with the theme of love connecting the story<sup>1</sup>.

Like graphic novels in the West, Indian graphic novels are also slowly turning into feature films e.g. Tinkle character *Suppandi* and even the recent Bollywood blockbuster *Krrish 3* was based on a graphic novel. Graphic India and Filmkraft Productions Ltd. have also announced the launch of an original digital comic series and comic magazine called *Krrish: Menace of the Monkey Men*, which will be available on smart phones and iPads.

With the growing popularity of graphic novels in India, it is no surprise that it has started its own version of Indian Comic Con called the "Comic Con Express" which was started in 2011 at Delhi and has travelled to cities throughout India every year to support and boost the comic book industry through local interaction and participation and to credit the works of established local writers, artists and publishers. The Comic Con Express on September 2013, had a huge turn up of over 10,000 fans and amongst the several sessions held was an interaction meet with the Hyderabad-based, Rajiv Chilaka creator of one of India's favourite superheroes, *Chhota Bheem*. There were also Cosplay sessions which received close to 100 entries as people narrated in the guise of their favourite fictional characters.

In North East India the comic book subculture of cosplaying have recently started and is becoming popular. Mizoram had its first Anime Cosplay Con in 2012. Nagaland also celebrated an Anime Cosplay festival in June 2013. This also had comic book and anime fans from neighbouring states such as Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. The event is to promote animation and graphic novels in Nagaland and to create awareness and educate the young generation about Naga culture and history through comics, graphic novels and animated movies etc. The event was also aim to create employment opportunities to artistes, animators and story writers as they perceive that graphic novels and anime is not just a form of entertainment but an art form with most liberated and expressive state. The latest contribution from the region to the comic book

industry is *U Sier Lapalang* by Joshua Rynjah in which a famous Khasi folktale was retold.

## Conclusion

The graphic novel industry has experienced many changes; one of the biggest changes is the more adult oriented content that has appeared in comics lately. What was once considered by many to be primarily a children's market has since become a much more adult oriented market. Before Italian graphic novels had a huge impact on international audience after World War II, but were criticised for carrying erotic content; now sex, death and violence are sold with minimum censoring in today's graphic novels even the ones that were once geared more towards children. However, graphic novels are as strong as they have been in the past. Now academia embraces and celebrates them, too. At Stanford Graphic Novel Project, an annual program since 2008, where students delve into a topic they are passionate about and then create a graphic narrative around it. In the first year, a team collaborated on *Shake Girl*, a 224-page work focussing on Cambodia and acid attacks on women. Now anyone with an idea can make a comic book with the technology we have today. There are more and more upcoming publishers with various ways to get comic books to an audience through internet. Comic book fans also do not only consume their own local comic book, but international comic book as well and thereby engage in cross cultural activities through the medium.

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# THE ESCAPE FROM CANON: AN ANALYSIS OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S "WHAT IS A MINOR LITERATURE"

Amanda Christie Tongper\*

## ABSTRACT

*The paper examines Deleuze and Guattari's idea of Rhizome and Aborescence from their essay, "What is a Minor Literature". Minor literature is a concept which they have taken from a diary entry of Kafka (25 Dec, 1911) which Deleuze and Guattari crystallized as "...not the literature of a minor language but the literature which a minority makes in a major language." Their engagement with the works of Kafka is to study how he does not write the language of the canon that threatens to overshadow or lure into influence, but he writes like a "like a dog who digs his hole, a rat who makes his burrow." Rhizomes are un-centered, non-hierarchical, horizontal multiplicity with a non-unified structure that allows elements of it to be connected with any other element. Aborescences on the other hand are root tree structures with stratified totalities which impose regulated and limited connections between their components. The paper stresses on the 'flight from language' by which Deleuze and Guattari meant a flight from inhibition and convention, structure and hierarchy. Expression only comes in when the structure is 'deterritorialized'. The aim of the paper is to show that alternate modes of expression are a necessity in writing. What is achieved then is multiplicity, plurality and richness in literature. Literature grows when it finds multiple points of connection with other art forms as well. When writers find their own line of flight, they open their texts to a world of interpretation; they introduce a canvas of possibilities; they transcend barriers.*

**Key words:** Deterritorialization, Rhizome, Arborescence, Canon, Minor Literature

In the book of Genesis, Chapter Eleven, one can locate the story of the proverbial Tower of Babylon. On looking at the meaning of the word deterritorialization around which the essay "What is a Minor Literature" revolves, the destruction of the Tower of Babel can be used as an example. The Isrealites before Babel spoke one language, "at first the people of the whole world spoke one language" (Zondervan, NIV, 15). The Tower of Babel at once signifies a power structure, a codification, a territorialization of this language, a canon which the descendants of Noah aimed to build in order to "make a name for themselves"(15). The Isrealites were then established, unified by this monolithical language. Jehovah, according to the book of

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Genesis noticed this and doubted that any good would come out of it. He then destroyed the Tower of Babel. In short, the canon was destroyed. What ensued thereafter was chaos since the descendants of Noah were scattered all over the earth and they spoke mixed languages. But what also ensued after this destruction is production and re-creation, movement and multiplication, plurality and population.

In Deleuze and Guattari's essay, language is the canon, language is the tower of babel. They do not summarize the 'established' as a literature, but language. Minor literature is a concept which they have taken from a diary entry of Kafka (25 dec, 1911) whereby Deleuze and Guattari crystallized as "...not the literature of a minor language but the literature which a minority makes in a major language" (Deleuze and Guattari 22). Minor literature is a revolutionary use of language in linguistic terms within a major language. By asking a Minor Literature is, they do not imply the spatial location of a produced text but the linguistic position of a writer within a "great" literature.

Deleuze and Guattari engage their interest on the function of language rather than the heirarchization of literature. They propose for an "absolute deterritorialization" of language not a polemical negation or annihilation of the established language, but a deterritorialization that is "slow, viscous, coagulated." (26)

The concept of Rhizome is applied by Deleuze and Guattari to the corpus of Kafka's writing. Kafka's work they argue is 'a rhizome, a burrow' or in other words an uncentered and meandering growth like a crab grass which is the antithesis of a root-tree structure, a structure which has dominated Western thought. Arborescences are hierarchical, stratified totalities which impose limited and regulated connections between their components. Think of it as the tower of babel. Rhizomes, on the other hand are non-hierarchical, horizontal multiplicities which cannot be subsumed within a unified structure whose components form random, unregulated networks in which any element may be connected with any other element (Deleuze and Guattari,26). Think of this as the scattered Isrealites.

Kafka's body of works is termed as rhizomic for two reasons: a) it does not possess a hierarchy of fragmented or completed works b) his usage of language does not aim to emulate the great German writers of yore like Goethe. He makes German his own. He writes "like a dog who digs his hole, a rat who makes his burrow" (Deleuze and Guattari, 18). It should be understood that major and minor languages are not 'two different sorts of languages but two possible treatments of the same language.' Kafka's writing is rhizomic because of the "language function" in his works which Deleuze and Guttari talk about in the essay (23). He has found a third world of his own and in the process he deterritorializes the major language's constants after which they lose their semantic autonomy and becomes dependent on less heavily coded elements such as contextual clues, gestures, intonation, and stress, and in the process, a purely sonic, a-signifying aspect of the word gains emphasis (Bogue, 118). To write like a dog who digs his hole or a rat who makes his burrow signifies the impoverishment of a minor

language. Hence it is dependent on the a-signifying intensive usage of language which Deleuze and Guattari discuss about in the text.

This 'intensive usage' of language reverses the conventional relationship between the dominant form of content and the dominated form of expression. It is this intensive usage of language that is a line of flight or an escape from the language of the linguist, the language of form and content. In it, emphasis and meaning is more on the inflection of sounds and expressions rather than signified and their signification. Kafka wrote, "Not a word or almost none that I have written is harmonized with any other; I hear consonants grating against each other with the noise of scrap iron, and the vowels sing as Negroes at the Exposition." (qtd. In Deleuze and Guattari, 26). The minor writer engages 'a machine of expression' capable of disorganizing forms and contents in order to liberate pure contents which mingle with expression. When they talk about the flight from language, they mean language that does not have a structure. Expression only comes in when the structure is dismantled. Man relates to his world through expression. For instance the singular word *naad* in Sanskrit, without a culturally informed signifier points towards the utterance of life and life forms which are immediately assimilated through the senses. The sense is stirred by the sonic implications of the word. This usage of language is reminiscent of the deconstruction of language in the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter but what happens in these writers' plays is the degradation of language to mere gibberish at times which a minor literature's, though revolutionary usage of language, does not subscribe to.

An intensive usage of language subtracts the subject, the narrator, the character. It does not pay attention to specific cause and effect in writing, everything has a collective value. Herein comes the Marxist facet of the essay. Literature is an affair of the people says Kafka. What a minor literature does is it wields its political and social agendas by assuming plurality in singularity. Like the character of Saleem Sinai In *Midnight's Children*.

The pertinent point which one would explore in Deleuze and Guattari's manifesto is the question of finding a line of flight.<sup>1</sup> It is pertinent especially in the neo-colonial context which interrogates the varying threats of homogenizing. The tendency to categorize literature geographically obliterates the heterogeneity of the very idea of culture. Categorizing literature perpetuates establishments of monolithic canons which pre-condition the reader-writer relationship. For example, the simultaneous literary and geographical notion of the North-east of India many a times revolves around the violence/persecution narrative generated. This singular notion in turn hampers the credulity of literature that emanates from a generation of individual writers who have carefully constructed their incisive 'personal' voices. One can immediately argue that there is no one centralized idea of culture, especially in a country as diverse as India. There is no singular classification of 'Indianness' as some writers such as Ananya Guha state the existence of a "second classification of Indianness" (Guha.N.pag). What Guha's description points towards is the impossibility of homogenizing Indian writing



within a singular idea of culture. Similarly, the overt tendency to hierarchize and categorize literature as African or South-American generates narratives of a “single story” as Chimamanda Adichie points out in her speech,

<sup>1</sup> In the essay, Deleuze and Guattari defined the lines of flight as the “creative lines of escape, a use which now forms and constitutes an absolute deterritorialization”.

“The Danger of a Single Story” (Adichie. N.pag). A monolithic creation dismisses the presence of nuances.

Written within the post-colonial context of Indian writing in English, writers such as Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih, Robin S. Ngangom, Esther Syiem, Temsula Ao, Ibohal Khsetrimayum, Desmond Kharmawphlang however do not consciously participate in the post-colonial attempt to ‘write back’. They are not conscious of an audience beyond the immediate local. Their poetry rarely lingers in post-colonial questions; it dwells on its personal existential interrogations. It exhibits a poetry that leans more towards the social and political dynamic of its own. It does not indulge in the art, rather it uses the art to articulate a personal anxiety. In their poetry, the poet or the “I” is omnipresent hence their poetry stems from a very personal root. The personal in their poetry carefully avoids or resists any chance of being subsumed within a codified idea of culture and projects pointedly the nuances of their own realities. Therefore, it is this assertive local voice that articulates the absurdity of political gambits, the stab of insurgency and anti-social elements, and the memory and nostalgia of a generation.

The ‘line of flight’ in the works of the mentioned writers is evident from their trenchant metaphors, imagery and linguistic style without indulging in “verbal wizardry or woolly aesthetics” as Ngangom points out in his essay “Poetry in the Time of Terror” (Ngangom 425). They exhibit an attempt to turn away from the West as their target audience and write ‘for’ the local personal predicaments instead of ‘write back’. In the introduction to the anthology *Dancing Earth*, Nongkynrih and Ngangom pointed out that the poets find common ground in “chronicling their subjective realities and the predicament of their people”. (Ngangom and Nongkynrih, 11)

What the essay “A Minor Literature” implores is two-fold. One is the necessity and the creative obligation of a writer to find a distinctive voice within the menacing shadow of the canon and the other is to accept the nuances that exist in literature. Nuances are the multiplicity and plurality which is brought out in the allusion to the biblical tower of Babylon. Nuances are all that will ever be; the details of realities that are ever so vulnerable in the ambiguous play of politics within this neo-colonial arena.

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# ETHNICITY AS A POWER TOOL

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## ABSTRACT

*Identity is a process often shaped, formed and constructed by several factors, ethnicity being one. Ethnic identity which initially stemmed out of political thought and motivation is today largely guiding the social cultural milieu of Northeast region and Meghalaya particularly. For several decades now, North-east including Meghalaya has witnessed all forms of violence in the pretext of identity assertions, in fact the various autonomy movements draws its roots to identity. In absence of any written material of its own, lack of written scriptures, and following the oral mode of passing on the knowledge, much of the understanding of India's Northeast, its people and their way of life have emanated from the British rulers, who dominated this terrain before the Independence. Post-independence various political movements have led to resistant identity towards the nation state. The unique socio cultural setup has remained at the crux of these movements and emerged as an effective tool for larger domination as well as fragmentation. This paper is an attempt to understand how identities are constructed, shaped and reinforced through ethnicity and what are implications of such identities in the new era?*

**Key Words:** Ethnicity, Identity, Power Tool, Culture, North East India.

## Introduction

There are all kinds of things happening on social media and when I Say “all” I mean it in its most superlative form. My Facebook wall is not less than any of the soap operas on primetime television. It has all the drama and the beyond and amidst those inconsequential likes, comments and quizzes, a Facebook community (A virtual community much like the community based on real space knitted mostly by common shared interest) named “Like if you are 90’s kid!!!” does more than what can be justified by a mere thumbs up or thumbs down. Yes I am a 90’s kid and I miss being able to watch good TV shows, I miss waking up early to watch the cartoons as illustrated in the cover page of this Facebook community. But above all I miss my relatives, people who raised me up, elders whom I constantly looked up to and derived

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meaning of where do I come from? Where do I belong? What's my purpose? And most importantly who am I? Yes I am 90's kid and if you happen to be from Shillong, I am sure you will "fondly" remember the sudden curfews, the winter holidays which often got stretched till summer, night vigils, khaki men and of course the early morning 15 minutes bulletin. Late 80's and early 90's were defining period in the socio political and cultural scenario of Meghalaya. As a child, I could not make much sense as why my grandparents suddenly decided to leave Shillong, that we so dearly called home and settle in Nepal- and how suddenly it became "them and us", who are "them"? I am 90's kid, born and raised up in Shillong and like many of my contemporaries; I did witness the violent communal clashes and the new struggle of "us" and "them". I also grew up struggling to find meaning of the word, "Dkhar" that often defined me and many others not belonging to the indigenous local community are labelled and identified. With the help of few theoretical references, this paper is an attempt to understand ethnicity, how identities are formed, shaped and reinforced around ethnicities and what are the implications of such ethnic identities in this era of global expansion and exchange?

**Identity is people's source of meaning and experience. As Calhoun writes:**

We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made . . .

Self-knowledge – always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery – is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others. (Calhoun as cited in Castells M 2010 pp. 6)

According to Jenkins (1996 p 4) identity "refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities". The above definitions of identity highlight upon two core concept i.e. understanding of identity always takes place in relation to "others" and is a process of differentiation based upon various attributes such as race, class gender, culture, ethnicity etc. Taking references from above definitions, it may seem quite obvious to define one's identity primarily based on one's race, class, gender culture and above all ethnicity, however concepts and attribute of ethnicities expands beyond and is a complex one.

**Ethnicity as Identity**

Glazer and Moynihan (1975) have pointed out that the term "ethnicity" was not widely used until some three decades ago. For the first time the concept appeared in Webster's Third new international dictionary in 1961. By 1973 it was included in the American heritage dictionary with the following meaning- The condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group.

According to Trimble, J. E. & Dickson, R. (2005), the construct, ethnic identity, can best be understood through an examination of its etymological origins. The term *ethnic* has Latin and Greek origins – *ethnicus* and *ethnikas* both meaning nation. It can and has been used historically to refer to people as heathens. *Ethos*, in Greek, means

custom, disposition or trait. *Ethnikas* and *ethos* taken together therefore can mean a band of people (nation) living together who share and acknowledge common customs. The second part of the construct, *identity*, has Latin origins and is derived from the word *identitas*; the word is formed from *idem* meaning *same*. Thus, the term is used to express the notion of sameness, likeness, and oneness. This understanding clearly emphasizes upon the shared common customs as a unifying force rather than the common geographical location justifying the gap between the Khasis and the outsiders (people from the plain).

Punekar (1974, P.2) "Ethnicity refers to the sense of people hood or we- feeling shared by members of the groups: the groups whose members share this feeling are an ethnic group". Ethnicity as cited in Singh A.K (2008) is a sense of identity which has been defined by De Vos as consisting of subjective, symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people or any aspect of culture in order to differentiate from other groups. Scott (1988), defines an ethnic groups as a group with a common cultural tradition and a sense of identity which exists as a subgroup of a larger society. The members of an ethnic group differ with regard to certain cultural characteristics from the members of other group of the society. They may have their own language and religion as well as certain distinctive customs". Lyngdoh (1999) views exemplifies Punekar, Singh A.K and Scott's understanding of ethnicity when she states that, the feeling of belongingness among the Khasi tribe is based on their common tradition such as their belief to have been the descendants of the seven huts (Ki Khun U Hynniew Trep), and their belief in god (U Blei), the Creator. As a result of this the customary dance, and cultural practices, attires, ornaments are more than just cultural symbol and ritualistic procedures. In the recent times they have achieved an iconic status and a symbol of Khasi identity. One of the striking features of the *Khasis* is the Megalithic culture whereby they erect megaliths, monoliths, cromlech and dolmens over which lie the foundation of prehistoric origin. Such practices of the erection of stones are found in France and other parts of Europe. These stones themselves are a great mystery as their shapes are similar to those formed in England, ancient Brittany, Denmark and other parts of the world. This visually enchanting structures are not just a souvenir for the tourists but also synonymous to Khasi culture and identity.

Hughes (as cited in Burnet, 1976) observes that an ethnic group is not one because of the degree of measurable or observable difference from other groups: it is an ethnic group, on the contrary, because the people in it and the people out of it know that it is one; because both the INS and the OUTS talk, feel and act as if it were a separate group. Phukon (2002) describes ethnic identity as a socially and historically constructed concept. We learn about our own identity and the identity of others through interactions with family, peers, organizations, institutions, media and other connections we make in our everyday life. Phinney (2003) states that, ethnic identity is a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one's identity or sense of self as a member of

an ethnic group. From her perspective one claims an identity within the context of a subgroup that claims a common ancestry and shares at least a similar culture, race, religion, language, kinship, or place of origin. The first strand of ethnic identity formation among the Khasi's was the result of resistant identity referred to as Khasi Rebellion (1829-1831) under the leadership of U Tirot Singh- as cited by Kamei G in 2008, this event solidified Khasi's against the imperialist forces to protect their land and independence.

After Indian Independence, for a long time the people inhabiting the region were referred to as (called as) 'tribes', (and terminologies such as) "Aborigines" "Adivasis" "Jatis" or 'Indigenous People. However, amidst the growing dissent especially among the academicians, the word tribe was replaced with "ethnicity" or "ethnic group" as a source of Identity. Pakem B (1990)

The above reference to ethnicity and related questions of identity is clearly reflected in the nature of relationship between the Khasis and the "outsiders" (the plains- people). The conflicting nature of this relationship has led to formation of groups like the 'Khasi Student Union', the Federation of Khasi Jaintia and Garo people' etc. primarily to protect the cultural heritage of the Khasis and the other indigenous people inhabiting Meghalaya. Barth F (1969) also argued that ethnic identity was a means to create boundaries that enabled a group to distance themselves from one another. Therefore the demarcation of Meghalaya as a separate state is an important point of reference for solidifying and reinforcing ethnic identity. Yang Philip Q (2000) categorized the theories of ethnicity into three major schools of thought- Primordialism, Constructionism and Instrumentalism. The Hill State movement initiated by the leaders such as Captain Willaimson A. Sangma, Rev J.J Nichols Roy and P.R.Kyndiah though a major political activity was instrumental in unifying and solidifying people majorly on the primordial values as (i) Ethnicity as an ascribed identity - something inherited from one's ancestors. (ii) Ethnic boundaries being fixed and ethnicity being static- thereby drawing clearly the lines of insider and the outsiders, and thirdly, (iii) common ancestry as a prime requisite to ethnicity. In the recent times, ethnicity has moved beyond the "exotic" or "cultural" category to acquire an assertive entity, what Althusser defined as apparatus of power. Ethnicity, maintains Bell. D (1975) "is a means (now) for disadvantaged groups to claim a set of rights and privileges which the existing power structures have denied them and the series of various autonomy movements across the major north-eastern states is an extension to this.

Castells. M (2010) proposes three forms of origins of identity building- Legitimising Identity, Resistance Identity and Project Identity. In Etzioni's formulation, (as cited in Castells M 2010) the second type of identity-building i.e. identity for resistance, leads to the formation of communes, or communities. Ethnically based nationalism, as Scheff (1994) proposes, often arises out of a sense of alienation, on the one hand, and resentment against unfair exclusion, whether political, economic or social. Meghalaya and the Khasi tribe is just a minute inference of the insider and

outsider divide. History has witnessed extreme polarization in terms of race, class, colour, caste etc. The ongoing religious fundamentalism is also seen as yet another glaring step towards identity assertion and dominance. The trenches of resistant identity are laid deep in the history. Bijukumar V (2014) criticizes Nehru's failed nation building process of unity in diversity and views ethnicity or ethnic identity assertions in the region as the outward expression of discrimination at various levels in the region by the nation state. He also credits social exclusion as one of the primary agents of ethnic identity formation in the region.

## Conclusion

Differentiation is the key to growth, as the late prime minister of India; Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan once said "The greatest event of our age is the meeting of cultures, meeting of civilizations, meeting of different points of view, making us understand that we should not adhere to any one kind of single faith, but respect diversity of belief." The 21<sup>st</sup> century has ushered us into the new global era, where the technology is diminishing the gaps between people and places, and mass media as an active agent of globalization is converging and homogenizing the world wide cultures popularly referred to as "Macdonaldisation". However, the growth in ICT has also offered new ways for people to express themselves and as Mc Quail (2010) points out that the communication revolution led by the internet technology has empowered individuals and shifted the balance of power from the media giants often controlled by capitalism to audience. Therefore, there's more scope for individual voices to be heard and effective. In the recent years, a reference of this trend could be seen especially to call off 'bandhs' by insurgent and terrorist groups who are thriving more on social media platforms perpetuating fear and anxiety. Identity based on nationalism or ethnicity is culturally and politically constructed, but what really matters- both theoretically and practically, is, for all identities, is How, from what, by whom, and for what it is constructed? As we ponder upon this question, I rest upon Manuel Castell's and hopefully believe that identity is a continuous process developed through self-construction, individuation and socialization, where ethnicity do not create boundaries and distinctions but bridge to connect, share, learn and appreciate.

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# PHAWAR: ITS ORIGIN AND FUNCTIONS

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## ABSTRACT

***Ka Phawar** is an indigenous unique art form of poetic composition among the Khasis. This unique art form has been handed down the generations from times immemorial by word of mouth. **Ka phawar** is connected with the religious, social and political activities of the Khasis and the desire to express these activities in oral form. In the past **Phawar** forms an integral part of almost all ceremonial celebrations and community gatherings of the Khasis. It is associated or closely linked with the socio-cultural practices of the Khasis. Thus **kaphawar** is an integral part of verbal expression during festive celebrations, religious ceremonies and during different activities held at different occasions.*

**Key Words:** Ka Phawar, Rhymed Couplet, Phawar-Master; Ka Mei Hukum, Oral Literature, Ancestral Cairn.

## Introduction

**Ka Phawar** is an indigenous unique art form of poetic composition among the Khasis. This unique art form has been handed down the generations from times immemorial by word of mouth and is still performed on certain festive occasions. It is a set of rhymed couplet, where the first line “. . . is a compilation of the names of different objects, put together in a rhyme: here the objects are not supposed to have any connection with one another.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the first line of **ka phawar** “. . . is abstruse while the second line bears clarity to its significance.”<sup>1</sup> The first line of **ka phawar** is employed with the names of plants, animals or anything around the **phawar**-master (the one who sings or chants the **phawar**), either living or non-living things. The use of such names, though spontaneous, is well organized so that it renders proper rhyme to the second line. However the use of the names of plants and animals is not just to rhyme the **phawar**. Since it is composed spontaneously, the poet would immediately use anything which he sees or which comes to his mind and at the same time creatively thinks of the right diction for the second line which expresses the theme. All these are set in his mind but it is important for him to put each of them in a right and meaningful diction. The **phawar**-master also takes care to make it rhyme with the first line.

However, it is a fact that in most **phawar** the first line carries no meaning nor does it show any link with the second line, for example:

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“U pathaw ĩa ka syrdeng, u sohryngkham ĩa u thlen,  
To kynmaw ĩa ka jingsneng ba maham ki tymmen.”<sup>1</sup>

The above **phawar** urges young people to remember the teaching and the warning of elders. In the first line ‘pathaw’ means ‘pumpkin’, ‘syrdeng’ is ‘a fence or wall made of bamboo’, ‘sohryngkham’ refers to ‘a kind of small fruit’ and ‘thlen’ is ‘an evil spirit’. These words in the first line are not related to each other and are also not related in meaning to the second line. It is the second line which conveys the message of the **phawar** that one should remember and obey the advice of elders.

There are also types of **phawar** where both lines carry equal and related meaning, for example:

“A..... I thei i nong Sohra, i thei i nong Sohra,  
tang iba lieh tang na shyllang,  
I Mei i Nongbynta, ha ka ryntieh u khun shynrang.”<sup>1</sup>

‘I thei’ means ‘a young woman’ which refers to unskilled archers, ‘Sohra’ is the name of a place and ‘nong Sohra’ refers to ‘archers from Sohra’, ‘lieh tang na shyllang’ literally meaning ‘white only on the forehead’ refers to an arrow with white feather tipped, instead of having a fully white feather, which is a symbol of an extra ordinary sharp shooter. ‘I Mei i Nongbynta’ literally meaning ‘the Mother which provide’ refers to the deity **ka Mei Hukum** who favours archers with good fortune and ‘ka ryntieh u khun shynrang’, which literally means ‘the bow of a male child’ refers to the competitive spirit of the archers. The **phawar**-master tries to indicate that the Sohra archers have no sharp shooters though they have the spirit to compete even against skilled archers. Thus he implores the deity to channelize her blessing with good fortune to his bow. And with her blessings it is believed that they would win the competition.

### Origin of ka Phawar

The origin of **ka phawar** is connected with the religious, social and political activities of the Khasis and the desire to express these activities in oral form. William H. Hudson is right when he said that “Investigations into the beginnings of literature have shown that poetry originated in the desire to give outward form to the feelings not of the individual but of the clan or group.”<sup>1</sup> Khasi **phawar**, the indigenous Khasi poetry, is the poetic expression of the people in religious ceremonies, festivals, community gatherings, etc. where the rituals and events of which is voiced through **ka phawar**. It originates with these occasions because of the human wants and needs, in other words it is the need of the community as a whole not of the individual. As in the case of archery for example, without **ka phawar**, “. . . , the celebration in the game of archery becomes like a curry without taste or colour.”<sup>1</sup> (. . . ka rong bad ka biria ka ĩasiat ki long kum ka jyntah khlem ber mluh, khlem ber shynrai). Thus it is the need of the situation(s) which makes **kaphawar** find its place as a part of expression for a particular occasion.

Since **ka phawar** is a genre of oral literature, it cannot be exactly specified as to its origin but speculations can be made that it is the human needs that give rise to oral literature, not to its ultimate origin.<sup>1</sup>

### Functions

In the past **Phawar** forms an integral part of almost all ceremonial celebrations and community gatherings of the Khasis. It is associated or closely linked with the socio-cultural practices of the Khasis. **Ka phawar** summarizes the whole meaning of a celebration, such as the religious ceremony of **kaThep Mawbaha**, a religious ceremony performed by the clan for the deceased clan members. It is a ceremony where the bones of all the deceased clan members are placed in a common ancestral cairn of the clan.

Secondly, **ka phawar** is also used as a lament when someone dies, especially those near and dear ones. In these type of **ka phawar**, the **phawar**-master, laments over the loss of someone, like the death of the paternal parents or the death of the king. In short it is a detailed account of the deeds of the dead person while still alive, but mostly of the good deeds for no short comings of the dead person are included in **ka phawar**.

Thirdly, there are **ka phawar** of a highly ethical and satirical nature. These **phawar** are used to boost the good moral character and to condemn the bad behaviour or wrong attitude of a person or persons. These **phawar** embody highly satirical and metaphorical words and they are sung during community gathering, mainly during leisure time. For example:

“U dkhiew ia u ksinh u kyndeh ia u shymprong,  
Ki ksiew sa ban kynih ruh ka shu dang leh kyntrong.”<sup>1</sup>

Here ‘ksiew’ means ‘grand-children’, ‘kynih’ literally means ‘to crow’ which is used as a metaphor to symbolize a person who has attained the age of marriage. ‘leh kyntrong’ is a satirical reference to a person who is already married but still dresses and acts like a youth. The **phawar**-master ridicules such types of persons; especially women, whose way of dressing do not match their age at all. The **phawar**-master also would not spare men who are of the same type. He ridicules such a man by chanting:

“U thlen kum ia ka jasieh u phreit kum ia u risang,  
U tymmen uba la kum u shrieh u shu dang peit ia ka kharang.”<sup>1</sup>

Here the **phawar**-master humorously ridicules men of old age who are still looking for a young woman, by comparing such a man to a monkey for his skin is as wrinkled as that of a monkey (shrieh) but who nevertheless leers at young maidens.

### Conclusion

Looking at the origin of **ka phawar** it may be said that it is not simply the rituals or any ceremonies which gives rise to **ka phawar** but it is the socio-cultural need of the

community which makes **kaphawar** to emerge as an integral part of verbal expressions. Thus **kaphawar** originates along with different occasions held during different activities. And regarding the functions of ka **phawar** it is directly related to the events of different occasions. Lastly, **ka phawar** is performed spontaneously there and then, thus it may be concluded that **ka phawar** is a “*performance poetry*”<sup>1</sup>.

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# THERAPEUTIC QUALITY OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Madhurjya Palit Borah\*

## ABSTRACT

*The listening of Indian Classical Music (Ragas) has positive actions in the therapeutic world. The ultimate goal of this article is to highlight the various benefits and therapeutic qualities of Indian Classical Ragas and their soothing effects on the human mind and soul. Are Indian Classical Ragas the therapeutic agents of the medical world? Is Indian classical Music a Yoga system? Physiological, psychological, physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual effects of music confirm the supremacy of Indian Classical Music. "Music is a kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the infinite and lets us for a moment gaze in that" observed Carlyle.*

**Key Words:** Music, Indian Classical Music, Ragas, Therapeutic Use

## Introduction

*“Worries, anger, fear etc. adversely affect your circulatory, digestive and nervous systems. These negative emotions are detrimental to your health. I have not seen anyone dying of hard work, but I have seen many dying from the harmful effects of mental stress and worries.”*

Charles Mayo

*“Funeral pyre burns a dead man. Worries and anxieties burn a living person to death.”*

Subhasita

In this modern age of science and technology and the continuous development of technologies, our life has become complicated since stress has become a companion in day to day life. Earnings for survival face intense competition everywhere. Conflicts and violent confrontations between different religious groups, castes and classes, whether hidden or open, have disturbed our balance. In these circumstances one should

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know how to maintain and overwhelm his inner peace of mind , fear, anger, anxiety, worry and stress.

**Saint Valmiki said, “A venomous snake kills a person by its bite. But worry gripping a person destroys him. A person who is morose, worried and depressed ruins himself, and no matter what he does.”**

If a patient approaches a doctor and tells him in detail about his illness. Even if the doctor realizes that his patient's problem is not physical but psychological, the doctor faces a difficult situation. The patient hardly accepts doctor's advice and prescription to relax and reduce his anxiety and fear. The doctor has to take care of both physical and psychological needs of their patients. It is also necessary for a doctor or a physician to know things like the socio-economic background of the patient, his belief and childhood experiences. And after evaluating them, the doctor should clearly explain the harmful effects of any negative emotions that the patient may unconsciously harbour on his body and mind. At the same time he must also suggest ways to replace them by constructive emotions. This is the complete treatment, known as Adequate Psychotherapy. But this is a time consuming treatment. It requires about twenty hours to provide this kind of treatment to a single patient! Even in America, where a doctor on an average treats about twenty five patients a day this kind of therapy is not available to everybody, as it requires time and dedication.

**Physician Plato had suggested long ago that “the physicians have to take care of both physical and mental dimensions of their patients.”**

Music has frequently been used as a therapeutic agent from the ancient times. In ancient Egypt music was used to lessen the pain of women during child birth. Ibn Sina, a famous Arabic writer, has written in detail on this subject. In India, the famous musician of South India, legend Thyagaraja brought almost a dead person back to life by singing the composition ‘Naa Jeevan Dhara’ in raga Bihari. Even the Old Testament mentions therapeutic qualities of music where King David is said to have cured an illness by playing on the harp.

Music basically is a sound or nada generating particular vibrations which moves through the medium of ether present in the atmosphere and affects the human body. In 1729 Richard Browne, a physician wrote the famous text *Medicina Musica* which describes the use of music as medicine. Music therapy is a scientific method of effective cures of disease through the power of music. It restores, maintains and improves emotional, physiological and psychological well-being. The articulation, pitch, tone and specific arrangement of swaras (notes) in a particular Indian classical raga stimulates, alleviates and cures various ailments inducing electro magnetic change in the body.

Sarangdev mentions in his *Sangeet Ratnakar* that ahata nada or music is always produced by striking or aghata by a living being on an instrument of any kind. So music is a power or universal energy in the form of ragas.

After the Second World War, music therapy was intensively developed in American hospitals. Since then some hospitals, particularly in mainland Europe, have incorporated music therapy within their practice carrying on a tradition of European hospital based research and practice. Two papers (Benjamin 1983; Devisch and Vervaeck 1986) describe the use of music in African hospitals, both locating the use of music within a cultural context, and combining this music with drama and dance. As in other group therapy methods, music is used as a vehicle to reach those who are isolated and withdrawn and reintegrate them into social relationships.

The Arab tradition, which regards the body as the meeting place of psyche and soma, and locates psychiatric illness within social relationships, gives cultural support to the ideas practiced in such an institution. Culture is a source of meaning that does not only act through cognition, but also through personal interaction. Playing of music, and encouraging a person to express them in an articulate form within a relationship, promotes experiences that integrate the person inwardly within themselves and outwardly with others independent from cognition. Much of the research work has been developed within the field of nursing where the use of music is accepted as a useful therapeutic adjunct. Not surprisingly, the work from this field has concentrated on medical scientific perspectives. There is almost a complete absence of cross cultural studies, or the use of anthropological methods that would bring other insights into music therapy. That music has been used therapeutically in other cultures cannot be denied, and other perspectives regarding the application of music therapeutically would highlight the limitations of modern western scientific approaches when used as the sole means of research.

### **Uniqueness of Therapeutic Qualities of Indian Classical Music**

Indian Classical Music is the ultimate goal of Hindu Philosophy and religion. Melody is the keynote of Indian Classical Music. It is a kind of yoga system through the medium of sonorous sound, which acts upon the human organism and awakens and develops their proper functions to the extent of self-realisation. The entire subject is now in the experimental and implementation stage and data are rapidly accumulating. And the ancient system is gradually being transformed into a modern science. Indian Classical 'Ragas' have been acclaimed to have healing effects. They stimulate the brain, ease tension and remove fatigue. The effect of Music Therapy may be immediate or slow, depending upon the number of factors like the subject, his mental condition,

environment and the type of music, selected for having the desired effect. Matanga (9-10<sup>th</sup> century AD) was the earliest writer to define Indian Classical Ragas. Indian Classical Raga is that kind of sound composition consisting of melodic movements which has the effect of colouring the hearts of men. "There are four sources of ragas: folk songs, poetry, devotional songs of mystics and compositions of classical musicians. While harmony is the characteristic of Western music, Indian Classical Music is a pure melody. The general term for melody in India is raga or ragini." (Kangra Ragnala and M.S. Randhawa). The 'Raga' is the basis of melody. Various 'Ragas', have been found to be very effective in curing many diseases.

Symphonies of Indian classical raga have a definite soothing effect on the mind as well as on the body. Repeated listening to the particular raga being chosen for a particular disease produces a network of sound vibration. The muscles, nerves and the chakras of the affected part are contracted when one impulse is given and relaxed during the interval between two impulses. Thus, during contraction of the tissue, musical notes make the blood flow out from that particular area and in the interval there is relaxation and a state of reduced pressure is produced in these areas. Thus the blood from the adjacent area will flow there. This process is repeated again and again and the blood flow and energy flow in that part is enhanced. This makes quick, fast healing. Energy from URF (universal energy field) to HEF (human energy field) transmitted by the strokes of the different tones of raga affects the CNS (central nervous system) because the roots of the auditory nerves are more widely distributed and have more connections than any other nerves in the body.

Musical beats (**Rhythms**) have a very close relationship with regular normal heart beats. Music having 70-75 beats per minute equivalent to the normal heart beat of 72 has a very soothing effect. Likewise rhythms which are slower than 72 beats per minute create a positive suspense on the mind and body since the mind body complex anticipates that the music will speed up and this restored vital energy gives a deep relaxation to the body. Rhythms which are faster than the heart rate excite and rejuvenate the body such as notes [swara], rhythm, volume, beats and piece of melody. There are countless Indian Classical 'Ragas' with countless characteristic and peculiarities of their own. Physiological, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual effects of music confirm the supremacy of Indian Classical Music. Indian Classical Music with its unique swara / note structure ensures calm and cozy mind by exposure and subdues the emotion provoking situations. Music plays an effective role in subduing the so-called emotional imbalance.

The present day heavy schedule on individuals and work pressure take their tolls, first on the mindset and then on many other organs. The beating of heart is a delicate mechanism, highly sensitive to emotion-provoking situations. Many research



and several independent studies relate emotional circumstances to physiological conditions effecting cardiovascular function as well as the cardiovascular pathology. When the work pressure is the highest, serum cholesterol falls and the whole-blood clotting time is accelerated. Like that when work pressure is reduced these things will also come to normality.



**A Music Listening Session**

### **Therapeutic Qualities and Characteristics of Different Indian Classical Ragas**

Different Indian Classical Ragas have different specific therapeutic qualities. Indian Classical Music (RAGA) is considered as the best tranquilizer in modern days of anxiety, stress, worries, tension, high blood pressure, heart diseases. Different qualities of Indian Classical Ragas are as follows:

**Raga Darbari:** Raga Darbari is considered very effective in easing tension. It is a late night raga composed by Tansen for Akbar to relieve his tension after hectic schedule of the daily court life. This raga belongs to Asavari Thaat and is a complete raga containing all the seven notes. The seven notes are taken from various natural sounds of birds and animals. Pandit Jasraj's "Ram Ko Sumiran Kar" in Vilambil Ek Tal is one of the best available recordings of this majestic raga. Pandit Raghunath Seth's Raga Darabari (instrumental) in a Music Therapy cassette named Tanav is especially composed for easing tension.

**Raga Bhopali and Rag Tori:** Dr. Balaji Tambe (Music therapist) has proved through his scientific research that Raga Bhupali and Tori give tremendous relief to patients of high blood pressure.

**Raga Ahir-Bhairav:** Raga Ahir-Bhairav is supposed to sustain chords which automatically brings down blood pressure. This raga is a combination of Kafi and Bhairav. Pandit Jasaraj's "Aj to Anand Anand" in Drut-Teen tal is one of the best vocal performances of this beautiful raga.

**Raga Malkauns and Raga Asawari:** Raga Malkauns and Raga Asawari help to cure low blood pressure. Malkauns and Raga Asawari help to cure low blood pressure. Malkauns a very prominent raga of Bhairavi That (composition of musical notes from which the raga originates) is one of the oldest ragas of Indian Classical Music. Swaras 'Re' and 'Pa' are absent in this raga, all the other notes used are komal (soft). The timeless performance by Pandit Onkarnath Thakur in "Paga Ghunghroo Baje Mira Nache Re" is one of the best known examples of this raga.

**Raga Chandrakauns:** For heart ailment, Raga Chandrakauns is considered very helpful.

**Raga Tilak-Kamod, Hansdhvani, Kalavati, Durga:** These prominent ragas are used for relaxation and easing tension. They evoke a very pleasing effect on the nerves.

**Raga Bihag and Bahar:** For patients suffering from insomnia and in need of a peaceful sonorous sleep, Raga Bihag and Bahar have wonderful effects. Indian Classical Ragas are closely related to different parts of the day according to changes in nature and development of a particular emotion, mood or sentiment in the human mind. Bhairav is sung an hour before dawn, Ramkali at dawn, Vilavali at sunrise, Sarang at noon, Nata and Malava in the afternoon, Gaudi in the evening, Kalyan at night, Kedara, Chandra and Bihag late in the night.

### **Timings and Procedures of Listening of Indian Ragas**

- Music therapy treatment is conducted either early morning, evening or night. It depends on the timing of the Indian Ragas as described above.
- One should not attend long music listening sessions on an empty stomach.
- Music sessions should be of one hour duration with two or three short sessions with breaks.
- Patients should be clean and fresh in mind with faith to listen to the music session.

- Atmosphere of the room or hall where music session to be done should be noiseless from outer sound.
- To have access to his or her past; to be able to focus attention solely on the present; to be comfortable enough to give up control over the outcome of the task to experiment during the session .

### **Various Listening Benefits of Indian Classical Raga**

- Music acts on our mind before being transformed into thought and feeling.
- Use of music as a therapy helps in the search of an individual's personal harmony.
- Music influences the lower and higher cerebral centers of the brain.
- Music therapy is an important tool in the treatment of both psychological and psychosomatic disorders.
- Music therapy stimulates good vibrations in the nerves of the listeners.
- Music brings about a sense of mental well-being in individuals.
- Music therapy helps to clear the junked thought in the mind.
- Music therapy enhances the concentration level of children.
- Music improves the capacity of planning.
- Music training helps to express refined exhibition of emotions and clarity in cognition too.

### **Conclusion**

Indian Classical Music has a stabilizing effect when the music therapy session is concluded in a stable form. Again the structure is built up by stability with the use of one or more Indian Classical Ragas that signalize closure and stability. When the listening session has a clear form, time is also given a form. This might give the patients an understanding of continuance and stability. Besides ending the session, the music therapist ensures that the client is guided to a new secure basis. The carry-over-effect of the music listening session is better maintained, if the therapist ensures that the client is not dropped into a new chaos, but led to a basis, where he or she feels secure..

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