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1

The Princely Rulers of Tripura and the Freedom Fighters

Dr. Ruma Bhattacharya*

Abstract : Tripura, a neighboring territory of erstwhile East Bengal (present Bangladesh) was influenced by the political activities and freedom movement going on in the surrounding British territories of East Bengal which was in fact the most fertile field of Swadeshi movement and revolutionary activities. Thus the British Government kept clear eye on the activities of the revolutionaries carried inside the native states and issued clear instruction that whenever any political suspect would enter or leave the territory, the incident must be reported to the British police immediately in addition to sending of weekly report in this regard. So the administration of Tripura often took measures to prevent entry of political suspects into the state and also to put a stop to the political activities carried secretly inside the state. In spite of strict rules of and critical attitude of princely rulers towards political freedom fighters they used to come to the region and Tripura was more or less a safe paradise for them. Coming in contact with them the sons of Bengali employees of the princely rulers of Tripura as well as few boys of royal families got influenced and they were deeply motivated by the freedom fighters of East Bengal. The paper shows that the Maharaja of Tripura had close contact with the people East Bengal as they were the land lords (Zamindars) of huge fertile land known as Chaklaroshnabad, comprising territories of Noakhali, Tipperah (Comilla), Sreehatta/Sylhet and Brahmanbaria (acquired from the Nawab of Bengal). Naturally the freedom fighters of these regions used to come to Tripura especially to hide from British eyes. Though the Maharajas of Tripura had to show a tough attitude towards the freedom fighters for fear of the British but in reality they had soft corners in their mind for the freedom fighters. The paper shows various instances to justifying the fact that the Maharaja's had in their mind sympathetic attitude towards the freedom fighters. Tripura was then free from direct British rule and therefore hilly Tripura was a safe haven for absconded freedom fighters.

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Tripura a neighboring territory of erstwhile East Bengal (present Bangladesh) was influenced by the political activities and freedom movement going on in the surrounding British territories of East Bengal which was in fact the most fertile field of Swadeshi movement and revolutionary activities. In early 1921 Khilafat and Non-Co-Operation agitators began to infiltrate into Tripura from the adjoining British districts of Tipperah, Noakhali and Sylhet. It was reported that some workers came to Agartala in April 1921 to collect subscriptions but they were summarily sent back like other political agitators. But these measures could not stop anti British political activities conducted inside the state. News of non-co-operation agitation reached Agartala from Kailasahar, Dharmanagar and Bilonia Divisions of the State. In Kailasahar Division, non-Co-operation meetings are reported to have been held in Ganganagar, Muktil and Manikbhandar mauzas. On receiving reports of such meetings held within Tripura State near tea-gardens situated in British territory, the Political Agent wrote a letter to the minister of Tripura requesting to prevent such meetings in the state within seven miles from the tea gardens. ¹

Thus the British Government kept clear eye on the activities of the revolutionaries carried inside the native states and issued clear instruction that whenever any political suspect would enter or leave the territory, the incident must be reported to the British police immediately in addition to sending of weekly report in this regard. So the administration of Tripura often took measures to prevent entry of political suspects into the state and also to put a stop to the political activities carried secretly inside the state.

Inspite of strict rules of and critical attitude of princely rulers towards political freedom fighters they used to come to the region and Tripura was more or less a safe paradise for them. Coming in contact with them the sons of Bengali employees of the princely rulers of Tripura as well as few boys of royal families got influenced and they were deeply motivated by the freedom fighters of East Bengal. Mention may be made of – Hariganga Basak, Haridas Basak, Aswini Kumar Biswas, Chitta Chanda, Mihir Ranjan Chanda, Pramod Ranjan Dasgupta, Tarit Mohan Dasgupta, Birendra Chandra Dutta, Dharendra Chandra Dutta, Ananta Kumar De, Sukumar Deb, Netai Debbarma, kanti Chandra Debbarma, Dwijendra Chandra Dey, Ananta Kumar Dey, Aswini Kumar Majumder, Haji Muhammad badsah Miah, Nilmoni Mukhopadhyaya, Purnima Mukhopadhyaya, Bijoy Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, Rouf Abdul, Prabhat Chandra Roy, Salam Abbas Maula, Tripur Chandra Sen, Debaprasad Sen, Nalini Chandra Sengupta, Sukhamoy Sengupta, Umesh Lal Singh and Bangshi Thakur.²

The Maharaja used to call parents (employees) whose sons were involved in revolutionary movement and warn them that the involvement of their sons in freedom struggle could result in the loss of their services. Ramendra Kumar Bhattacharjee the political guru of most of the students of Umakanta school was externed from Tripura in 1929 as it was under his guidance that members of Bhatri Sangha used to carry on various activities like - Social works, training of young boys for physical exercise and body building, practices of fighting with sticks and knives. Bhatri Sangha also used to carry on political organizational work with greatest difficulties put on their way by the reactionary Government of Tripura. Under his guidance many activities and protest used to take place in Tripura. Lila Bhattacharjee informed that under his guidance a strike was once called by Purnima Mukherjee of Tulisibati School. She couldn't throw much light on the purpose of the strike but it can be assumed that some women were also involved in various protests going on against Government. He couldn't stay at a particular place for a long time because there was arrest warrant against him and British police. Maharaja Birbikram arrested Sachin Singh and Umesh Lal Singh from their old colonel Chowmuhani house (commonly known as Colonel Bari) in 1931 (assumed) for his political robbery at V.M hospital and the royal armoury of Tripura Maharaja from where they looted one revolver, one mouser pistol and thousands of cartridges. In 1938 Sachin Singh, Umesh Singh, Hari Ganga Basak were all released from jail.

But he was again arrested in 1939 on charges of instigating students of Umakanta School and Tulsiboti school for hoisting flag of Indian National Congress at both the schools. When Maharaja got the news, he arrested Sachin Singh on 23rd April 1939 followed by arrest of other leaders – Sukhamoy Sengupta, Asutosh Mukherjee, Neelu Mukherjee and others. President of Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad Umesh Lal Singh was then at Kolkata. All were removed from Tripura. Though in the following notice of Tripura State Gazette, there was mention of only Sachin Singh :

Tripura State Gazettee, Part-38, Special Bulletin
10th Baishakhi, 1349 Tripura era (1939 AD)

Whereas it appears that exdetenue Sachindralal Singha, son of Dindayal Singha of Agartala, has for sometime past been making seditious and inflammatory speeches in different parts of the state which are calculated to promote disaffection, hatred and ill will among the people against the Government of the State, it is hereby ordered that the said Sachindralal Singha be externed from the State for a period of one year for the present.

By order of His Highness the Maharaja Manikya Bahadur
The Commissioner of police is hereby directed to executed the above order.

Sd.J.Sen

9.1.49.

T.E. Minister

This order was duly executed this day at 5 A.M. (24.4.39)

Sd.J.Sen

10.1.49.

Chief Minister³

All were externed from the state on 24th April,1939 to the nearby Chaklaroshnabad. Thus we can see that the Maharaja's of Tripura needed to be very strict with the freedom fighters and in various time needed to take action against them . But in general they were sympathetic towards the freedom fighters which we will focuss in the next part.

II

If we look at the geo-political condition of Tripura till 1949, we can see that the Maharajas of princely Tripura used to enjoy Zamindaris of huge fertile land known as Chaklaroshnabad, comprising territories of Noakhali,Tipperah (Comilla), Sreehatta/Sylhet and Brahmanbaria. (acquired from the Nawab of Bengal). So the Maharaja of Tripura had close contact with the people of these areas. Naturally the freedom fighters of these regions used to come to Tripura especially to hide from British eyes. Though the Maharajas of Tripura had to show a tough attitude towards the freedom fighters for fear of the British but in reality they had soft corners in their mind for the freedom fighters . Few examples can be produced here.

Firstly, the ruler of Tripura once foiled the attempts of the Comilla police to arrest two suspects at Sonamura, wanted in connection with theft of a revolver. Thus the Maharajas of Tripura were sympathetic towards the absconding revolutionaries and whenever a revolutionary absconded, an excuse would be given by them that he might have been concealing his presence somewhere in Tripura State.

Secondly, the Maharaja of Tripura dedicated a place in favour of the revolutionary activities named Konaban which was a safe place for revolutionaries.

Thirdly, when woman freedom fighter Leelabati Singh faced social boycott in Manipuri society due to participation in freedom movement, The Maharaja of Tripura, Bir Bikram Kisore Manikya ordered Sharad Bhattacharjee (a famous dancer and the grandson of Pandit Meeneswar, the Head priest of Radha Madhav Temple at

Radhanagar) to marry her . This is also a proof of the Maharaja's cooperation and sympathy towards freedom fighters.

Fourthly, during the Quit India Movement when police attacked freedom fighters for attending rallies breaking law under section 144, some entered the royal palace. Maharani could not tolerate when police entered inside royal palace to beat them. She ordered her security guards to drive the British police forces out of the royal palace.

Fifthly, there were incidents of receiving help from native police, working under British police Dept. Two cases may be mentioned here. Firstly, Freedom fighter Debaprasad Sen used to receive help from one police officers at Agartala named Jogesh Dutta . Due to assistance of Sri Dutta Dr. Sen and others, could know secret information of British Police Dept. Sometimes they used to receive information about movements of British Spies which helped them to remain aware. His son Sanat Dutta was a member of Juganta party and his name was associated with Deoghar Bomb Conspiracy incident for which he received punishment for three years. Secondly, another person in British police who helped them was Rohoni Bhattacharjee who was in charge of C.B.I. and he was the father of there friend Anil Bhatacharjee. It was through his help that he safely moved to Agartala when he was interned with the aim of meeting Sanat Dutta – a member of Jugantar . His plan was to communicate with Jugantar leaders – Thakur Chand and Tripureswar Majumder and others to bring various small revolutionary units of Anusilan and Jugantar in the same platform. Rohini Bhattacharjee was then in charge of British Spy Agency and he personally took Debaprasad Sen at Sanat's house for a long meeting in which they expressed their willingness to work together.

Thus the rulers of princely state coming under pressure of British Govt. used to maintain strict attitude towards the freedom fighters but there are many instances which shows that Maharajas of Tripura were sympathetic towards the freedom fighters. Tripura was then free from direct British rule and therefore hilly Tripura was a safe haven for absconded freedom fighters.

Notes and References :

1. Tripura District Gazetteers, 1975, pp121-122
2. Pal Sri Jitendra Ch, Tripurar Jana Neta Sachin Singh, Agartala, 2009 p.43



APPENDIX

Names of local tribal non-tribal freedom fighters of princely Tripura

Source Chatterjee Hiralal & Bhattacharyya Satya Ranjan Bhattacharjee *"Whos Who (of persons in Tripura who participated in the Struggle for India's Freedom-1818-1947)"*, Tripura Govt. Press, Agartala (Probably published in 1960s)

SI No	Name	Father's Name	Residence at Agartala	Residence at East Pakistan	Contribution in Freedom Struggle & Nature of Punishment Received
1	Deb Barma Kanti Chandra	Ananda Mohan Debbarma	Agartala, Tripura	Suffered imprisonment for six years.
2	Deb Barma Netai	Narendra Chandra Deb Barma	Agartala, Tripura	Suffered imprisonment for eighteen months during 1941-42
3	Roy Prabhat Chandra	Chhota Saheb	Agartala, Tripura	Detained from 1932-38 under the B.C.L.A. Act , also a Tripura State prisoner from 1940 to 46.
4	Thakur Bangshi	Lalit Thakur	16/1 Banamalipur, Agartala	Organized the "Mukti Mandir" Tripura Young Man Association and the Subaj Samity, Founded in collaboration with others the Tripura Ganatantrik Sangha (Tripura State Peoples's Organization) and the "Praja Mandal Samity".
5	Sen Tripura Chandra	Pratap Chandra Sen	Agartala, Tripura	Arrested in 1930 and detained in the Lal Bazaar Police Lock up , Transferred therefrom to the Presidency jail Hospital and then to Central jail Calcutta, as an under-trial prisoner, suffered detention for eight years during 1930-38.
6	Chanda Chitta		Jaynagar, Agartala	Arrested in connection with the Quit India Movement of 1942

7	Sen Debaprasad		Agartala, Tripura	Arrested in 1934 in connection with Titagarh Conspiracy Case; convicted and lodged in the Alipore Central jail, Released in 1945 and home interned upto 1946, Also transported to the Andamans.
8	Sengupta Nalini Ranjan	Sri Jatindra Mohan Sen	Banamalipur, Agartala, Tripura	Suffered imprisonment for six years during 1933-38 under the Arms Act and was transported to the Andamans.
9	Basak Hariganga	Bireswar Sengupta	Agartala, Tripura	Joined the Revolutionary Movement of Bengal while a student of class VIII of the U. K. Academy, Agartala. Arrested at Agartala in 1933 under the B.C.L.A. Act and suffered detention in several jails and detention camps till 1938. From 1937-38 he was a security prisoner in the Presidency jail; interned for 3 months at Kakadwip, 24 Paraganas, Bengal in 1938; served with restriction orders; formed in collaboration with others The Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad, affiliated to the All India States People's Conference and became its secretary; Externed from Tripura in 1941 and then also from Tipperah District and Assam; Met Gandhiji at Malikanda (Dacca) about this time; Arrested at Dacca in connection with the Quit India Movement and detained for about a year and a half.
10	Singh Sachindra Lal	Shri Dinadyal Singh	Agartala, Tripura	Externed from Tropura for Collaboration with the Chittagong Armoury Raiders, Thereafter arrested and

					<p>detained by British Police under the B.C.L.A. Act , Lodged in Bagura and Comilla jails and Hiji Detention Camp; Interned for Sometime in a village called Paba in Rajshhai district ; After release came to Tripura , launched a popular movement here and presented twenty demands including those for the abolition of the "Tuitang" (forced labour) system and establishment of full responsible Government in Tripura. Detained at Mymensingh and Birbhum district jails and also at Alipor and Agartala Central jails during World War II, Released in 1945.</p>
11	Basak Hariganga	Kalachand Basak	Agartala, Tripura	<p>Joined the Revolutionary Movement of Bengal while a student of class VIII of the U. K. Academy, Agartala. Arrested at Agartala in 1933 under the B.C.L.A. Act and suffered detention in several jails and detention camps till 1938. From 1937-38 he was a security prisoner in the Presidency jail; interned for 3 months at Kakadwip, 24 Paraganas, Bengal in 1938; served with restriction orders ; formed in collaboration with others The Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad, affiliated to the All India States People's Conference and became its secretary; Externed from Tripura in 1941 and then also from Tipperah District and</p>

				Assam; Met Gandhiji at Malikanda (Dacca) about this time; Arrested at Dacca in connection with the Quit India Movement and detained for about a year and a half.
12	Singha Umesh Lal	Nishi Kanta Singha	Arundhuti-nagar, Agartala	Arrested in 1930 under the B.C.L.A. Act, and detained in Berhampur jail from 1930-38, Arrested again at Comilla for anti-war activities during World War II, Externed from Tipperah and Assam ; He then went to Bengal, Worked in some Bengal Districts, but was soon expelled , on return to Tripura arrested again and detained at the Agartala Central Jail and Mymensingh jail.

2

A study of Religious Beliefs and the Festivals of the Tribal's of Tripura with Special reference to *Tripuris*

Sujit Kumar Das*

Abstract : It is believed that, "Religion is commonly understood on a belief that mankind has in visible controlling power with a related emotion and sense of morality. The common features and nature of religion belief of the Tribal Religion are some as in the case of any so called higher. It is true that in the field of the simplest beliefs and practices of Tribal communities, the non-Tribal virtuous people are not different from them. But yet, there are differences on pragmatic grounds 'Which are not logically valid'. At present it must suffice to say that "in any treatment of Tribal beliefs and practices, it would be useful to shed personal prejudices, or at least keep judgment in suspense's. The most important universal features of Tribal faith in Tripura is that it ranges from the vaguest animism and supernatural worship to the deepest anthropomorphism it is a fact that the rites and rituals of the Tribal people vary from those of the stately temples of Agartala to those of the Tripura. The reangs, noatias, Jomatias, uchais, Khasis, and Rupines, who worship their indigenous pre-hindu fourteen Gods and goddess with conventional Tribal rites and beliefs and practices. But it should be remembered that the form of worship spring from true love, therefore, we find no differences in the field of Tribal religious from the Brahmanical faith.

However, beside pujas to the Brahmanical Gods and Goddesses in their day to day life there are countless Gods and Goddesses belonged to animism along with rituals of all kinds in which scared natural objects representing them are adored. The most of the Tribal peoples of Tripura Hinduized or Buddhaized or Christianized but many of them seem to be knitted together by Tribal beliefs and practices and they are preserving vestiges of Tribal faith on religion even today. Through centuries many of Tribal people along with the rulers of Tripura have stream of Hindu way life along

* Research Scholar, Deptt. of Indian Comparative Literature, Assam University, Silchar.

with their pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. The sacred scriptures, the epics the puranas and the socio-religious system of Bengali speaking Hindu were highly accepted by the Tribals of Tripura. But one may not forget that many tribal people have also been forced by history to seek retreat in to the relatively more inaccessible religious of forest, hills and hill-slopes where they are still maintaining their indigenous religious behaviour patterns. The religion Tribal community to Hinduism is not a like to Christianity on religious point ground.

Many of the tribes of Tripura come more and more under influence of Hindu way of life, and their tribal cults were roughly assimilated to Hinduism by Brahmins who are said to be brought by Royal house of Tripura. But animism, the primitive form of religion, is still traceable in tribal's thinking and outlooks among the Hindu & Buddhist tribes. Now a new trend has been found among them in which respect for their own indigenous culture and their identity are the dominant facts. Buddhism has undoubtedly brought the message of peace of love to the converts. The Moghls and Chakmas are Buddhists, but they bear a distinct Muslim influence in their social norms, conventions, language and in the system of nomenclatures. On the other hand in their rites concerning the deities they bear marked traces of Hinduism.

Key Words : Tribal, aboriginal tribe, Tripurians, Tribal Festivals.

Introduction :

The Tripuri (also Tipra or Tipperah) people are the original inhabitants of the Kingdom of Tripura in North-East India and Bangladesh. The Tripuri people through the Royal family of the Debbarmas ruled the Kingdom of Tripura for more than 2,000 years until the kingdom joined the Indian Union in 1949.

The people from Tripura are considered part of the Tibeto-Burman ethnic group. Originally they migrated from near the upper courses of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers in present-day Western China. They had left China long before the Sui dynasty came to power. At the time of migration they were animists. So it may be reasonably assumed that they migrated before 65 AD, the year Buddhism was introduced in China. The common reference to these people as "Kiratas" and "Cinas" in the early Sanskrit texts of India unmistakably indicates that they came down to the Assam valley long before the dawn of Christian era. Tripurians entered their present country through its north-eastern corner, settled there and gradually expanded their settlement and suzerainty over the whole of Tripura. They were able to expand their influence as far south as Chittagong, as far west as Comilla and Noakhali (known

during the British period as 'plains Tipperah') and as far north as Sylhet (all in present Bangladesh)¹. The ruling dynasty passed through several vicissitudes of history and ruled Tripura for several centuries till 18th century, after which it became a colony of Britain. On 14 October 1949, Tripura was merged into the newly independent India².

Historical Geography, Land and people of Tripura :

Tripura, the land of "Chaturdasa-devata" (fourteen Gods and Goddesses) in the north eastern India with its capitals at Agartala is located between 20°56 and 24°32 north latitude and 91°10 and 91°21 east longitude. Bordered by Bangladesh on three sides. Tripura is connected to the main land through the eastern frontier which is adjacent to the Cachar district of Assam and Chittagoan Hill. Tracts in Bangladesh share a common boundary with Tripura on the north, west, south and south-east direction respectively.

The state aberrances an area of 10,49,169 square kms. According to the state department of land records and settlement. Geologically, the territory is not very old. It's seems to have risen from the sea-bed in the late tertiary age about forty million years ago. It is a part of Assam – Arakan geological province. Originally this province was a basin. Topographically, the wide territory can be divided into the following divisions of physical features – Hill, Hillock, river valley, lunga, Tilla, flat lands and lakes. The climate of Tripura is generally dry and humid with plenty of rains. The state lies within the south – west monsoon belt and rainfall is quite moderate. The annual temperature ranges from 10°4c to 35°2c.

Total population of the state is 36, 71,032 (Census 2011) 0.3% of the country's population. Indigenous communities are known in India as scheduled tribes about 30% of the Tripura's populations.

Tribes of Tripura : A Tribe social group which possesses certain qualities and characteristic that make it a unique cultural, social and political entity. A single tribe has languages, customs, rituals, social organization and religious beliefs. There often composed of generally autonomous and independent bands and villages.

Tripura is large extent, a melting pot of ethnic diversity; a great number of tribal people are living in Tripura from early times. According to the order of the resident in India in 1956 on the scheduled casts and scheduled tribes in Tripura. There are 19 scheduled tribes in Tripura. The Bengalis from the plains belonging mostly to different Brahminical sects started refuse in the hilly region of Tripura. This movement of people become more and more intense aftense after the partition of India in 1947 the tribes of Tripura could be divided into two groups as (i) Ab-origin and (ii)

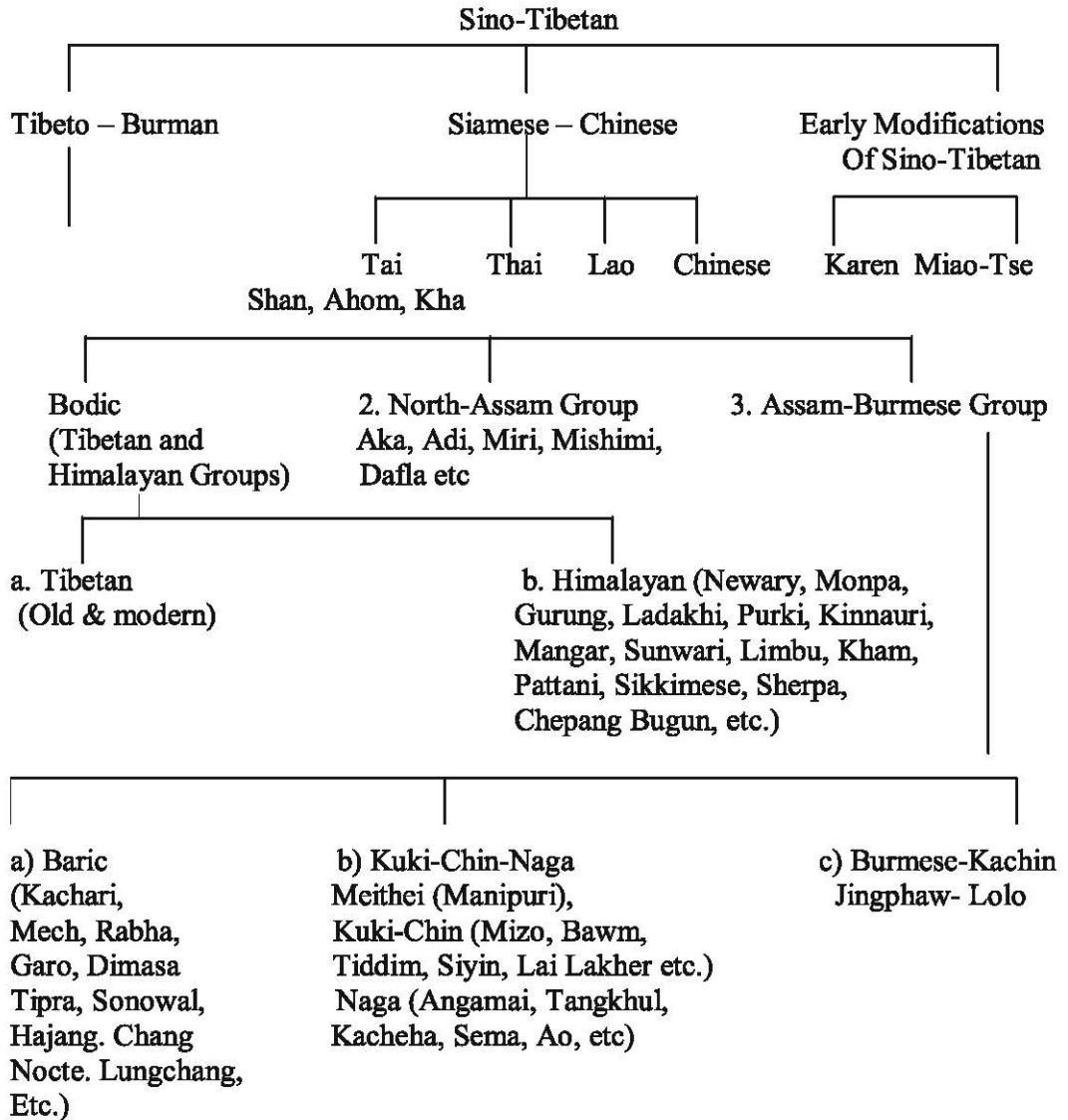


Figure 1.1

The above genealogical table is based in Ajita Tripura
(prepared for M.phil Degree.)

Tripura, Ajita : Tripurar Adibasi, Tripura Darpan, Agartala, 2009

ISBN : 81-89311-29-8 , Page no.125

Immigrants. All the Ab-origin tribes have been migrated in this territory from a place between Tibbet, up hills of Barma like Arakan hills tracts, shan state and adjacent to China. Ab-origin tribes are Tripuris, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Lusai, Uchai, Chaimal, Halam, Kukis, Garos, Mog and Chakmas. Other tribes like Bhill, Munda, orang, saotal, Lepcha, Khasis and Bhutia is are the immigrant tribes came and settled here for economic reasons. Most of them are central India tribes and come from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orrissa and west Bengal. Some of these tribes are however, northern frontier tribes come from Bhutan, Meghalayas, sikim, and north Bengal. Chakma's and Mog's are Arakan tribes enter Tripura through Chittagong Hills tracts³.

Puja and festivals of Tripuri community :

Among in numeral deities of the Tripura community few principle names are mentioned here. The deities can be grouped ads per the mode and purpose of the worship. These are as follows :-

1) Matai katar and Matai katarama :-

Matai katar is the supreme deity and Matai katarama is his consort. These deities are worshiped for the enhancement of prosperity and security. They are worshiped household wise or community wise. For these deities a goose is required to be offered; sometimes a he-goat is also offered in case of a promise. Along with this offering, banana, undried rice, vermilion, betel leaf and nut etc, are required. This puja takes place outside the house.

2) Akhatra and Bikhitra :-

They are the sons of the Matai katar and Matai katarama. The two deities are jointly named as 'Lampra'. These two deities are worshipped in Tripura community in the beginning of all social and religious ceremonies.

3) Toomima :-

Goddess of water. This deity is worshipped as household goddess as well as village Goddess as a precautionary measure against the attack of pox , Cholera etc. They worship the Toomima deity on the river. As the water helps to spread the disease so they worship the Goddess of the river not to contain the disease. To worship the deity one he-goat or one buffalo is needed as offering.

4) Sangram :-

Husband of Toomima Sangram is the God of wealth and prosperity. If any member of a family suffers very frequently from diseases and illness then the worship of the Sangram deity takes place to overcome the sufferings. It is a household deity. At the courtyard of the house the Sangram deity is worshipped. For deity two fowls are required as offerings. In want of fowls, this puja can be performed with two eggs also.



5) Khoodooma :-

Goddess of cotton. Mailoma and khoodooma are worshipped jointly for wealth and prosperity. These two deities are household deities. Two fowls are sacrificed for these two deities as offering during this puja. Inside the house the deities are worshipped.

6) Nakehumatai :-

The Guardian of homestead. A female deity. Nakehumatai is to be worshipped at homestead to recover from illness. To worship this deity a fowl or a pig of any size is needed. After the worship. The cooked meat is offered to the deity. Thereafter, the meat is eaten by the 'Ochai' and his helper 'barun' along with the family members of the household.

7) Suklakmatai :-

God of health. In the last part of 'magh' or in 'falgun' this deity is worshipped. Saklakmatai is a household deity and it is worshipped in the courtyard with different types of cakes prepared with oil and with other offerings. In the evening a he-goat is sanctified the house to the deity.

The following deities are named as malevolent in the Tripuri society. All these deities are worshipped as household deities related with the persons concerned.

1) Thoomnairok and Banirok :-

As these two deities are called the messengers of death news, they are worshipped to keep them in good humor. A he or she goat along with two chickens or two eggs is required as offerings in the courtyard. For banirok two fowls or two gees are need to offer. The Banirok deity is worshipped in the jungle.

2) Chhakal Jook :-

The guardian deity of witches. To be cured from the illness caused by the witches the Chhakal jook deity is worshipped. Cooked meat of the tortoise and pork are offered to this deity as offering. The Chhakal jook is worshipped outside the village.

3) Burasa :-

A male deity stand for diseases. When a household member. Especially the children cry incessantly from severe pain of fever it is believed that the 'Burasa' matai has caused this diseases. In order to cure the patient they worship this Matai (deity) with two black fowls along with two eggs. The worship of these deity takes place outside the village.

4) Haichukma :-

A female deity. She is the wife of "burasa". She rules over animals and forests. The Tripuris believe that when any domesticated animal is lost they pray to this deity to get back the animal and promise worship to the deity.

Priesthood :

The priest is known as ochi. The ochai is selected by the villager and the profession is not heredity. The women are not permitted to become a priest. In some religious occasion the priest needs a helper. The helper of the priest is called barua in some occasions the Ochai and Barua. In some occasions another man helps the Ochai and Barua whom they call 'Khandal'⁴.

Concept of soul :

The concept of soul among the Tripuris is similar to a certain extent like other primitive people. The soul according to the Tripuris is incombustible, invisible, untouchable, undestroyable and can have any form, colour etc. the Tripuris call the soul of humans body 'Fala'. They believe that when a man falls asleep the soul goes out from the body temporarily. In most of the cases of unnatural deaths by accident, snake bites, suicide etc. the tripuris, specially the older generation believe that the soul, may convert into an evil spirit. The custom of offering food and drinks to the soul of dead is another indication about their conception of soul.

Garia puja Festival :

Garia is the natural benevolent spirits of the hous hold who looks after the increase of production. Garia is called "Garia raja" that always prefers welfare of his inmates by giving the wealth, peace and children. On the whole, Garia represents the character of our benign nature and he always does well to us.

Kharchi puja festival :

So far as Tripura is concerned, the Kharchi puja is one of the most popular festivals of the Tripura as well as the dwellers in Tripura, although it is said to have been influenced by the Brahmanical Hindus. As a matter of fact, this festival is associated with the indigenous tribal deities. This festival is held sometimes in June July on the suklastami day which lasts for seven days and is essentially a festival of Tripurabasi. The kharchi puja is held at old Agartala, 8km from the state capital Agartala. ,old Agartala was the capital of the "Manikya Dynasty" and there was a temple of chaturdashdevata where the Kharchi puja would take place before entering into detailed account of the Kharchi puja, we shall now devote a few lines to a description of the deities of the Kharchi puja, the fourteen head-images are worshipped at the time of Kharchi puja.



Different religious sects of Tripura :

The religious history of Tripura is infect, the religious history at the Prachya dasa or the eastern India. Of course, regional variances are there, still its iverall history and development prior to the 12th century A.D is inextricable mixed up with the religious history of ancient sylhet samatata, Noakhali and chittagong.

Paucity of archaeological evidence from Tripura makes it difficult to ascertain the introduction to the Brahmanical religious pattern in Tripura. It is also not known exactly when the Aryans penetrated to the domain of religion in Tripura. The fact that Buddhism flourished in different part of Tripura from the early times has been attested by the discovery of various archaeological material. A copper plate inscription from Gunaighar proves and Buddhism flourished here sometimes before 507-508 A.D. similarly different forms of Brahmanical religion. Viz, Vaisnavism, saivism and saktism were prevalent as early as 7th century A.D. A good number of surya images, some of which measure about 11 feet high, have been recovered from the pilak, Jolaibari are of south Tripura and these objects belonged to a considerably early period. Such colossal figure of surya from eastern Indian has not come to our notice yet. Ganesa was also a popular deity among the people of southern.

Perhaps north Tripura was the seat of saivism and orthodox Bramanical preachers selected Unakoti hills of the region which was largely populated by the tribal people. Different tribes of shiva images are found scattered over the Unakoti hills.

The impact of the pujas and festivals on the society of Tripuri community : Culture :

The Tripuri culture has evolve through ages in its own soil a contact with the neighbouring Bangladesh an assimilation of the two coincide the extent took place. The acculturation is occurring is with the urbanized Tripuris in comparison with the Tripuries residing in the interior places.

Somehow the Tripuris of the remote area are to this day in a poison to sustain traditional culture. Their dress, food habit, performance or dance, folksongs and observed of festival little's till date their own. But it needs to be mentioned to be mentioned here that a little bit impact of the neighbour's culture is also penetrating in it. As for the traditional ladies garment it deserves mentioning here that the female folk wear 'pachra' and 'Richa' all the time. In this case a changes is noted to certain extent among the young girls, especially at the time of visiting certain a village market or a town area many of them wearshari and blous. The young boys have also been accustomed to wear trousers whenever they come to any urban

area. Even at the time of weaving their garments some of them are observed on now a days to used woollen thread with modern design. The Tripuri folk songs are rich in compassion and expression. These are me in tune and bear the great significance young generation shows great interest in Bengali and Hindi song. Sometimes they composed their songs imitating the tune of Bengali and Hindi song⁵.

The musical instruments 'Tuitreng' 'Lebangti' etc are played some of dances like Gorria, Mamita & Lebang bumani etc in this dance. Now a day in the month of Jaistha (Bengali Month) they usually perform this dance. Lebang bumani dance is also one of the most colorful dances of Tripuri community. The male and the female take part in this dance collectively. The Gorria dance take place at the time of Gorria puja in the month of Baisakha(Bengali Month). Like the Tripuri community this dance is also popular in other communities such as Jamatia, Nuatia, Reang etc. to have a happy and prosperous life and for bumper crop in Jum cultivation they propitiate the God Gorria and dance on the occasion the new year both man and woman take part in this dance. The drum and flute etc are played in this dance.

In the months October-November Momita dance is performed. Momita dance is one of the most favorite dances of Tripuri community. After the observance of worship of the God and Goddess of "Duapathar" this dance take place with a community feast by inviting persons from neighbouring village to make merriment. The invitees perform the dance with the host villagers. The musical instrument likes 'Wathop' 'Chompreng' 'Sarinda' 'Tuitreng' etc are played in this dance.

Conclusion :

Special Characteristics of the Tribal Religious and Festivals of Tripura. :

It has been brought to light at the present stage of our knowledge that religions, no doubt, have a social dimension which prescribed of man's life and rule in the society. The Tribes of Tripura give preference to the nature deity's spirits and ancestors to carry on struggle for existence. The Tribal religion of Tripura is essentially polytheistic and is expressed in pujas and festival's both at the family and the communal lives. But Christians should not be included under this theory.

The Tribal is related to religion. It is their music, dance, sculptures, crafts and literature which found expression in religious rites and rituals. So here in Tripura the culture identity and religious identity of the Tribal people go together.

Pujas and Festivals constitute the major part of the Tribal religious life. Pujas are regulated ways of devotion show towards Gods and Goddess, Spirits and ancestors to satisfy their anger or two achieve material gain. The water of holy pipe, chanting of mantras in the indigenous languages. Sacrificial animal, wine, and Ochai are the



essential components of puja. The Ochai performs the traditional puja according to his ancestral procedure. The aim behind majority of the puja is to avert and impending danger or calamity which might fall upon them or for food production or crops and also to achieve punya. Besides, some pujas are arranged to drive out the evil spirits from abody of diseased person the Ochai conduct puja as a shaman to cure a patient from illness.

The Tribal festivals of Tripura are celebrated in different seasons and characteristically these festivals are mostly agriculture, religious and marry making. The festival of river bathing in performs for prosperity of crops god health of mankind and domestic animals. A good number of festivals are accompanied with puja's, prayer's, music and dance at the time of celebration. The festivals of Garia puja are remarkable for its folk songs and rhythmic dance. The Biju festival is also accompanied with song and dance of the chakma and Mog communities⁶.

The government of Tripura has taking a policy of promotion of traditional culture, faith and practices because it has been found that the socio-religious cultural festivals accompanied with folk song and dance increase moral of the people, value of indigenous culture self respect for preservation of self identity by improving and developing folk songs and dance. On the occasion of the republic day, the marry making festival is arranged throughout the Tripura when the cultural activities of the Tribal people are displayed. At the time light of these activities Tribal people resolved to improve the celebration with incentive programmed.

The modernity should .be accepted to bring social and economic changes, to preserve the beauty of the state, and to conserve the value of Tribal life. The present school of modern religion culture and culture is developing the traditional culture keeping affinity with old traditions of the people. Majority of the Tribal people are not drawn in the stream of western culture. Here is Tripura, Brahmanical and Buddhist rites and rituals will survive along with the old traditions because it appears that the present generation will preserved the ancestor's culture along with their modern tendency.

In spite of imitating modern and western music dance, Bombay movies, video tapes, etc. the Tribal people of Tripura will not be compelled to give up old traditions because they younger generation are looking forward for better future accepting the moral values of their for forefathers along with modernity. The Tribal cultures of Tripura most find a new hope by criticizing social reality showing the social backwardness and developing a form of culture, art, music and literature.

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3

A study on the different dimensions of Bodo tribal community of Dalbari village in Barama block of Baksa district in Assam

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Abstract : Bodo is one of the plain tribes of India, which staying with the Aryans for a long time but still can maintain their individuality and culture. There are stresses of Bodos in Indian mythological history also, they are known as the kirata. Assam is the north eastern state of India where a good population of Bodos are living through generations. Bodos don't have different caste combinations but they have their clans among them. According to the works the clans are made. They follow the Batho religion. And speak the Bodo language which is belonging from the Sino-Tibetan language group. This study is focusing on the Bodo ecosystem in the village Dalbari by addressing different dimensions of their life viz. cultural, Social, economic, environmental and political. It was conducted through different participatory tolls, interview and closed observation through staying in the tribal house for 40 days. The key findings and cream of the study is discussed in the article.

Introduction:

A village is a geographically distinguishable place which is habitat of some human beings who lives in groups called family are socially, culturally and economically interrelated with each other. According to census data of 2011 68.84 per cent Indians are stayed in village which is around 833.1 million people live in 640,867 different villages. Among them according to the census data 2011 they are nearly 104 million people which is 8.6 per cent of the total Indian population is belonging from the tribal community.

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The term “tribe”, derived from the Latin tribua, originally meant a political unit, and was later used to refer to social groups defined by the territory they occupied. Tribes are generally stayed either in forest of hilly region which is little detached from the main stream society. But there are some few tribes who lives in the plains nearer to the main stream abut still maintain their own culture, tradition and individuality. Bodo tribe is one of among them.

Bodo is the one of the indigenous habitat of the north eastern India mainly in the Bramhaputra Valley of Assam. The word Bodo derived from the word Bod which means Tibet. It is identified that they are the origin of from the Indo-Mongoloid stock belonging to the Tibeto-Burman Language family. This Indo-Mongoloid group had close cultural assimilation with the Negritos, the Austro-Asiatic, the Nordic and Mediterranean races of India due to their close contact as established by history of civilization. But in spite of these the Bodos have maintained a distinctive identity The Boros prefer to call themselves as Boro or the Bodo or Borofisa. The term Boro indicates a race or a speech community speaking the Sino-Tibetan Boro language. They are recognized as a plains tribe in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The state of Assam is in reality divided into four more entities, viz Bengali dominated Barak Valley, Dimasa tribe dominated North Cachar Hills now known as Dima Hasao, Karbi tribe dominated KarbiAnglong and finally Bodo Kachari tribe dominated Bodoland. Bodoland is the gateway to the beautiful North Eastern Region of India, which was created very recently in the year 2007 by curving out some area of eight districts of Assam namely Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darang and Sonitpur within the state of Assam. It is an autonomous Administrative unit constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India covering an area of 8795 Sq. Km (Provisional). Judging from the wide range of extension of their language, the Bodos appear first to have settled over the entire Brahamaputra valley and extended west into West Bengal (in Kochbehar, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts) they may have pushed into North Bihar also. The present Bodo population in the state of Assam is 52, 49,937. (Approx, figure as prepared by ABSU HQ, Kokrajhar). As the present work has a link with the ‘Bodoland Movement’ which ultimately resulted in the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), a separate homeland for the Bodos within the state of Assam in the design of District Council (under 6th Schedule of the Constitution of India).

During the study of different dimension it is clear that their culture is totally different from the Assames in the state. They are very aware of their culture. They are the plain tribes and very closely living with the other cultures like the Aryans, but still they don’t lost their individuality. They maintaining it throughout the

generations. Their culture is one of the richest culture of India. The word Bodo derived from the word Bod which means Tibet, its shows that they came from Tibet. They follow the religion named Bathoism. Ba means five and tho means deep. They believe that the world is made of the five element. They believe in five traditional gods, Viz. Ailong(god of earth), Agrang(god of water), Khoila(god of air), Sanjaborle(god of fire or light), and Rajkumbre(god of sky). They are the worshipers of their forefather known as Obonlaure. At the initial period when the whole universe is a void he was the only one in the universe. After a long time living alone he became bored to live like that as shapelessly. So he decided to live in a body of blood and flesh. Then he created human and started to live in earth. Now they worship the Shijou plant as the God. It is the symbol of their God. Its branches of that plant have 5 ribs which signify the five elements and each rib has two row of thorns which signify that God creating creatures through couples. Women have the specific role of performing religious rituals in dance form like Kheraidance. In addition to that, women, particularly girls, use to share in many other social dance forms like BaisaguDomahi, and HabaJanaialong with the boys with their traditional instruments like Khum, Sifung, Jotha, Sherja, Gogonaetc.

Caste :

All the villages are habitat of only Bodo tribal people who are belonging to the same caste. All of them are Schedule Tribes.

Clan :

Bodo tribal group is divided in to some clans i.e. Ramchiary, Borgoyary, Mosahary, Narzary, Khakhlory, and Basumatary etc.

Practices :

They use to worship the Shijou tree every Tuesday and Saturday. There is a particular place in every house which is protected with the bamboo poles and fancying. They use to worship their ancestor what is called BathoiBahunai. On that day they take four bowls pour some rice and local liquor into that. Then they offer some little clothes to the ancestors. In case if there is some illness in the domestic animals they think it is an effect of evil spirit which is entered into its body, so to remove the spirit they took bath and do some special worship of Batho and sprinkle the water upon the animal and magically it became well. Very rarely it happen the incident of late monsoon, but in such cases they take two frogs one male and another is female and arrange their marriage for the monsoon. The Bodos believe in rebirth. They perform certain rituals before cremation of the deceased. Of course, all these



traditions of the Bodo society have undergone changes with the passage of time. With the advancement of education, a modernized life style has come in the social life replacing various traditional social culture and practices by the modernized one, particularly, amongst the younger generation. This has brought in a rapid changing trend in the overall social life of the community.

Marriage :

The marriage in the Bodo culture is a very important part of life. They think that the God made everything in pair, so marriage is that auspicious moment when one meet his another part. The average age of the male for marriage is 18 and for the girls it's nearly 16-17. The arranged and love marriage both is prevalent in their culture. In case of arranged marriage the groom use to go to the bride's home and marry him in front of Shinjou. There is no one such a special priest for any worship or marriage. Any aged person who know the process is requested by the bride's father. In case of love marriage is the both families are agree then they follow the same process otherwise the groom just take the bride from his house and the family of bride do not so that much problem in that. Then they marry and stay together. If there is some financial problem then both of them can stay together and when they can arrange money they do the marriage. There is no such social rigidity about marriage as it's already determined by Batho itself. In a negotiated marriage the girls have little say in the selection of boys. In Bodo society separation is permissible and polygyny has also the social sanction. They observe certain rituals with the birth of a baby. Male child has no added preference over the female child and both are equally preferred.

Food Habit :

The main staple food of Bodo is rice. They take three times rice. They are purely non-vegetarian group of people. Except beef they eat every part of every animal, fish and birds. In their food habit the rats, fox, snake, lizard, even porcupine is also included. They do not know the use of pulses. They make dal with rice powder only. In that also they add some small fishes. There is a culture of eating the dried fish and even dried meat also. They are a good consumer of pork. Pork is the favorite meat of the Bodos. In any happy moment it is common to cook the pork. If someone is having some financial problem that time they bring the intestine and other parts of the digestion system of a pork. There is high use of Kholrabi as a vegetable, otherwise they eat some green leafy vegetables called Lailafa what is basically the jute leaves. They are a good consumer of fish also. They prefer the sweet water

fishes. Rohu, Katla, Mrigala are the indigenous major carps and the grass carp, silver carp and common carp are the exotic varieties which are preferred by them. Other than Chang, Bata, Puti, Koi, Morola are the minor carps usually taken by them, and the Magur, Singi, Kocho and one highb breed Magur from Thailand are the air breathing fish which are usually eaten by them. They prefer the chicken but only the country breeds. Bodos take eggs very rarely, actually they left it for hatching. Mutton is not preferred by them due to its high cost in market. Other than this they take seasonal fruits like mango, litchi, jackfruit, banana, orange, pineapple etc. There is a unique dish I have observed called Khar. It is made of water which is filtered after shocking the ash of the dried banana stem into it. They cut the banana stem in very thin layer and dry it in the sun. Later they burn it in a very low hear. And then they took the ash into a coconut shell and start to pour water droplets on it. At the bottom of the coconut shell there is a hole from where the droplets come what we have to collect and stored. Later we can add it in any curry veg or non-veg. But where we add khar there tartaric powder should not be added. Otherwise the curry became red like blood. It is actually a basic solution what is good for health and work well against gastric and acidity. They have a habit of eat betel leaves with areca nut. They use the areca nut in raw condition do not dry it. There is a high consumption of tea and local rice beer.

Festivals :

Magh Bihu :

It is one of the famous festival of Bodos. It is mainly organized on the last day of Pous month naturally in January. This is also called the Bhogali Bihu. On this day they make small huts made with bamboo and paddy straw called Bhalaghar they organize feast and cook there and burn the house on the next day. On this day they first open the new harvested rice and make some sweet preparations with it called pitha. There are so many types of pitha like tilpitha, Tel pitha, Vapapitha etc. on this day Bodos drink lots of rice beer made in their house and do some play like Pot breaking and bull fights.

Batho Puja :

It is the worship of Batho. On this day if the Shinju plant is become old then they uproot it and plant a new one and do some special worship. This is often come in the month of February.

Holi- The holi is the festival of colours. On this day they use to play with colour powder. Usually its happen on the month of march.

**Rangoli Bihu :**

Rangoli Bihu is the festival use to come in the month of April. It is the main festival of Bodos. It is the welcome ceremony of new year of Bodo solar calendar. On this day they dance a lot with colourful dresses. From that day farmers start to prepare land for new rice cultivation.

Bihu Karma :

This is the worshipping of the Mother Nature and forest. It is organized during August.

Durga Puja :

This is a festival which is celebrating on the celebration of victory against the demon. It is a 5 days festival where the goddess came to her father's house with her two sons and two daughters.

Kati Bihu :

This is held during mid-October. It is the time when the rice in its maturity stage, and the farmers are in empty hand. On this day they light the earthen lamp in the foot of shijou for the protection and wellness of maturing paddy.

Livelihood :

Main livelihood of Bodos is farming. They are the first who cultivate rice and silk in Assam first. They are also good in animal and birds rearing. They mainly rear the cows for milk and plowing, Pigs for meat, hen for meat now a days some people also rear goat as their livelihood. Every Bodo people have water bodies in their houses. They are very well trained for inland fish farming and fish hunting from the river. In the village I observe a unique technique for fish hunting. They flow the DC current to the river water what make the fishes paralyzed for a few moment and then they catch the fishes. They are good in waving in handloom. There are some landless Bodos also they either take the land from others as rent or work as daily wage labour. Now a days some people get government job like teacher and Army. They do not hair agricultural labour in their own land. Either the family members do it own or they call some relative, neighbor or friend for help in return they will get a non-veg meal and local liquor. If someday the neighbor want help then the host have to come for helping them.

Panchayet :

This area comes under an autonomous body of BTC (Bodo territorial council). So there no panchayeti raj system. There is VCDC (Village council Development Committee) what is also a three tire system what is decentralized its power into Village, block and cabinet level. 4-5 villages according to the population form a VCDC. From every village there will be a representative in the board of members of VCDC. No mass election is done for the chairman post. It is the members of VCDC who select one member among them and make him chairman. Now the BPF (Bodo People's Front) and BJP (BhartiyaJanta Party) come to alliance to form the government. BPF is the main political party.

Conclusion :

From the above findings it can be concluded that the Bodos are belonging from a very rich culture which form their social structure beyond the level of so called civilized tag. Females are equally treated as male. There is no social discrimination among them. The four villages are the best example of sustainability in terms of economics and other dimensions. They are not dependent on out sider but solely interdependent. Any economic disaster or reforms cannot hamper the society. Their agricultural system is also sustainable. Still they do not buy seed. They preserve it and use next year. In case of animal husbandry also they are solely depend on the country breed. The traditional techniques of reproducing a new calf, chick or piglet is still remaining there. They do not eat egg. They let it to be hatched so that it can be a chick. The use of pesticide is still low. So the paddy fields or the small water bodies still have the natural system of carp ecosystem. They very often incorporate the fish seeds in ponds. All types of fishes, snail and crabs stay in the system what quench the need of protein and vitamins in the body of Bodos. They have their traditional medicinal believes what give them instant results but they are a good adopter of new modern medical also. The awareness built by the ASHA workers is so effective that unprotected or unsafe home delivery of baby is zero in the villages. They are well adopter of all the medical vaccination schemes. And even they are liquor attached they don't spend their earning on it. Produce the liquor in the house from a special type of rice fermented with a special yeast called Bakhar . In the study through FDG it is found that they are attached to liquor as a part of their culture but there are very few people who consume it daily and if someone consume the level of consumption is very low (50 ml hardly). Because according to them the total liquor consumption of any person throughout his whole life is fixed at the time of birth itself. So if someone's daily consumption is high he cannot drink more

days but if daily consumption is low then the span of drinking will be long. May be they are alcoholic but with moral values. They have their own community banking. Salt and petrol are the two most important commodities among some few product for what they are depend on the outer world. Their production system is not mass production but the production by the masses. They are the dream of our father of nation.

After observing all some suggestions can be given that

* Commercial fish farming integrated with pig cultivation will be a good livelihood opportunity.

* They are well skilled to use bamboo if some training given for making handicrafts from bamboo it can be a livelihood.

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4

Mid Day Meal Scheme in Primary Schools of West Tripura District and its Impact on Attendance of Tribal Student's

Dr. Dipankar Biswas*

The children of today are citizens of tomorrow. The Mid Day Meal Programme for the children is a part of making the school attractive so that they view the school as their second home. The concept of nutritional support to education is not new in our country and it dates back to 1925 when Madras Corporation developed a school lunch programme. Initially, provision of mid-day meal was regarded as part of charity. Over a period of time, it came to be regarded as an aspect of child welfare. Still later, it came to be perceived as a component of child development programme and thereafter, the nutritional improvement approach began to receive more attention from the hands of planner. The objective of this scheme was to give boost to universalization of primary education and impact the nutrition of students in primary classes. The Mid-Day Meal scheme has been revised in 2004 and as per the Supreme Court directive; it envisages provision of cooked, nutritious Mid-Day Meal to primary and secondary school children. While there are broad central guidelines for the implementation of the scheme, there is nevertheless tremendous diversity at the state level. Not all the states were responsive to the Supreme Court's order. By March 2004, 14 states were providing cooked mid day meals to all primary school children, 9 states were implementing the scheme partially and 4 states were distributing food grains. The most commonly used excuse was lack of resources. Hence huge expenditure on this programme was planned at Central and State level. For example, in 2003-04 the expenditure was Rs. 1400 crores and in 2007-08, budget of the Central Government has allocated

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about Rs. 7324 crores for the MDM scheme. Therefore, it became imperative that a comprehensive evaluation of the programme be undertaken to judge the efficacy of the scheme.

Further, the studies reviewed raised some critical issues related with the Mid Day Meal programme. A common charge is that mid-day meals are a health hazardous because they are not prepared in hygienic condition, [Jean Dreze (2003), CUT(2007)]. Serious health risks from lack of hygiene and safety hazards have been reported including an accidental death of one child by falling into a vessel of hot sambar and burns to 3 others in Tamil Nadu (Right to Food Campaign, 2006). Lack of infrastructure facilities, Menon (2003), Jean Deeze (2007), Practichi (2004), Angam (2008), Anima & Sharma (2008) especially with regard to water supply, kitchen sheds, utensils etc. were problems reported by many studies.

One of common arguments against mid-day meals is that they disrupt classroom processes. Teachers have been asked to spend their precious time (Jean Dreze 2003), managing various aspects of mid-day meal instead of teaching. The system does not work well, the already understaffed and over burdened teachers have to spend a lot of their time in supervising and organizing the mid day meal. Use of fire wood for cooking food leads to unhealthy atmosphere in school premises.

The state Govt. of Tripura launched Mid-Day-Meal Scheme in the state w.e.f 1st March,1980 for children reading in classes I-V in Govt. and Govt. aided schools. Under the scheme, the school going children of primary stage were provided dried food like biscuit, chira, muri and locally available seasonal fruits for 200 days in a year. Subsequently, Govt. of India introduced Mid-Day-Meal programme under the scheme entitled "National Programme of Nutritional support to primary Education"(NP-NSPE) w.e.f. 15th August 1995 in the whole country as a centrally sponsored scheme. As per guideline of the scheme, each child from classes I-V having attendance in schools up to 80% was supplied 3 kg of rice per month. Government of India provided rice free of cost and Rs.50.00 per quintal as subsidy for transportation of food grains. Thereafter, in pursuance to the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the State Government began providing cooked meal (khichudi) to the eligible primary school children on all school day since 1st April 2003 under Mid-Day-Meal. The NP-NSPE Scheme was first revised in 2004 and again in 2006. Presently, Government of India is providing central assistance to all state Government @ 2.42 per child per school day in the Primary and @ 3.63 in the Upper Primary stage. Against the central assistance, the State contribution is ` 0.50 per child per school day both for the Primary and the Upper Primary stage. Mid-Day-Meal is run in 4564 Primary schools and 1946 Upper

Primary schools. Till date, a total of **416608** children in the Primary stage and **201857** in the Upper Primary stage have opted for the Mid-Day meal in schools. Mid-day-Meal is also extended to all EGS & AIE centres established under SSA Scheme and also Madrassa/Muqtab institutions. The prime objective of this scheme is to enhance enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children (Government of Tripura, Education (School) Department, Mid-Day-Meal Section, 2011). Under the programme Rice & Vegetable curry twice in a week, Rice & Egg curry twice in a week, Khichudi once in week and Payesh once in a week (Saturday) are provided.

Objectives of the Study :

1. To study the infrastructure, this is an essential component for implementing the scheme for tribal students.
2. To study daily attendance of tribal students in primary schools after the introduction of midday meal.

Methodology :

It is survey type research study.

Sample :

Stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Five (5) Blocks were taken from five different Subdivisions of West Tripura District. Four (4) schools were selected from different parts of each block. Thus total (5x4=20) twenty schools were selected as sample. Only tribal students were taken as sample. All tribal students of 2001 and 2011 academic sessions were taken as a sample to satisfy the objective no 2.

Tools :

A research tool plays a major role in any research as it is the sole factor in determining the sound data and in arriving at a perfect conclusion about the problem or study in hand, which ultimately, helps in providing suitable remedial measures to the problem concerned.

1. Interview schedule on Physical facilities in the school.
2. Student's merit and attendance register

Tool 1 has been prepared by the researcher and finalized on the basis of results of the pilot study and opinion of experts.



Collection of Data :

The investigator has visited the schools and gave the Interview schedule to the teachers after taking permission from the administration. Clean instructions were given to the primary school Headmasters and doubts would be clarified. Students' attendance register of each class were collected. Daily attendance of the students was counted from the students attendance register. Their merit register was taken into consideration.

Analysis of data

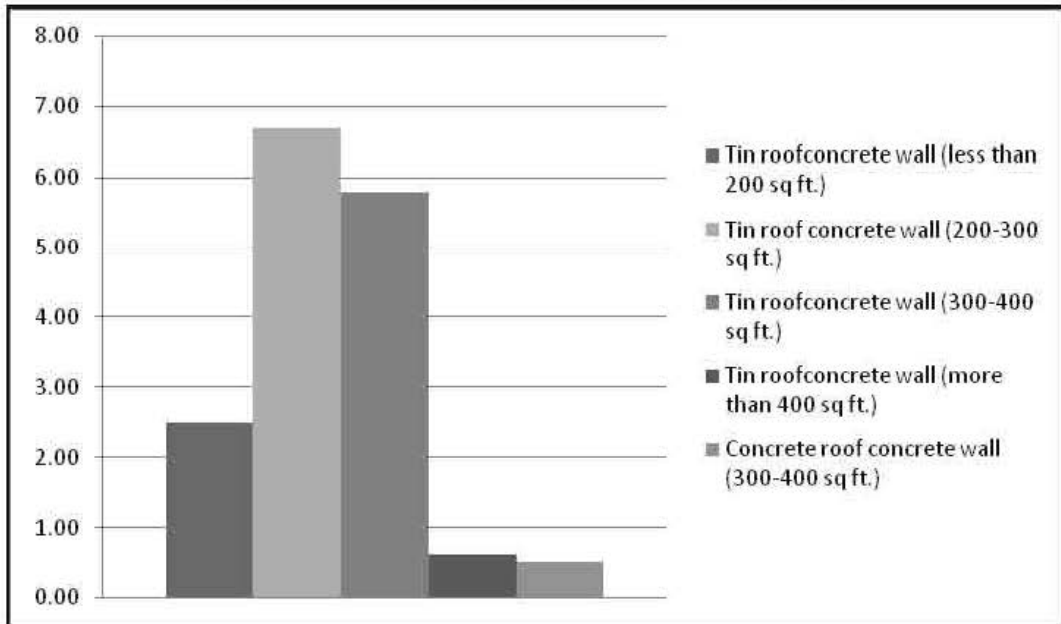
1. Infrastructure of the school

A. No of classroom in Each School : (See table in next page)

There are different numbers of classrooms in the in the 20 schools visited by the researcher. Five schools have six classrooms; two schools have seven classrooms, eight schools have eight classrooms, three schools have nine classrooms and two schools have ten classrooms. Among these in eleven schools twenty five class rooms are made of tin roof and concrete wall (less than 200 sq ft). In seventeen schools sixty seven class rooms are made of tin roof and concrete wall (200-300 sq ft). In sixteen schools fifty seven class rooms are made of tin roof and concrete wall (300-400 sq ft). In three schools three class rooms are made of tin roof and concrete wall (more 400 sq ft). In one school where three class rooms are there made of concrete roof concrete wall (300-400 sq ft. According to the Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA on Elementary Education in Rural India in Tripura only 0.05% schools don't have any school building in comparison to 1.01% in all states.

Table -1.1 No. of description of Classrooms in the Schools

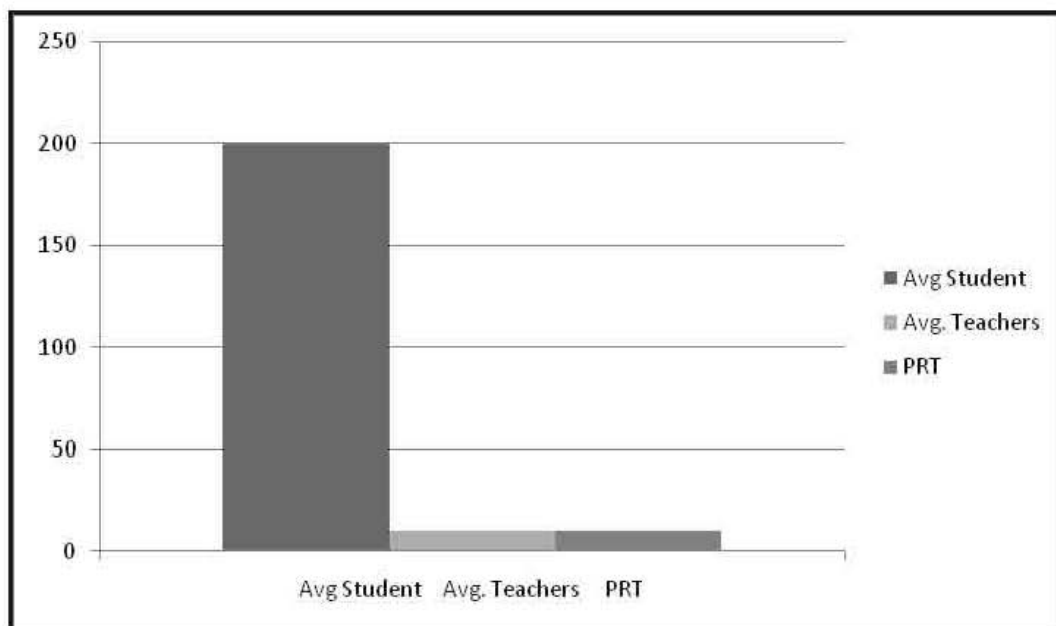
No of Classrooms in the schools	Description of the Classroom					Number of school	Percent
	Tin roof concrete wall (less than 200 sq ft)	Tin roof concrete wall (200-300 sq ft)	Tin roof concrete wall (300-400 sq ft)	Tin roof concrete wall (more than 400 sq ft)	Concrete roof concrete wall (300-400 sq ft)		
6.00	8	13	7	2		5	25.0
7.00	2	6	3		3	2	10.0
8.00	8	32	24			8	40.0
9.00	7	12	8			3	15.0
10.00		4	15	1		2	10.0
Total	25	67	57	3	3	20	100.0

Figure-1.1 No. of Classrooms In the Schools

B. School wise Student, Teacher and their Ratio :
Table-1.2 School wise comparison of Student, Teacher and their Ratio

School_no	No_Students	No_Teachers	Pupil Teacher ratio(PTR)
S1	72	14	5:1
S2	474	20	24:1
S3	212	12	18:1
S4	53	10	5:1
S5	455	21	22:1
S6	228	16	14:1
S7	247	17	15:1
S8	206	13	16:1
S9	207	15	14:1
S10	194	13	15:1
S11	160	14	11:1
S12	153	13	12:1
S13	182	16	11:1
S14	116	15	8:1
S15	148	20	7:1

S16	167	14	12:1
S17	184	14	13:1
S18	177	15	12:1
S19	166	13	13:1
S20	95	13	7:1
Average	194.8	14.9	13:1

Figure 1.2 Average of Student, Teacher and their Ratio (PTR)



The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which became operative from 1st April, 2010, prescribes a Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 40:1 and 35:1 at primary and upper primary level, respectively in every school. As per the District Information System for Education (DISE), 2011-12, the PTR at primary and upper primary level are 31 and 29, respectively. The table no-2 shows that in the sample schools the maximum PTR is 24 and the minimum is 5. Overall Pupil Teacher ratio (PTR) in the sample schools is 13.

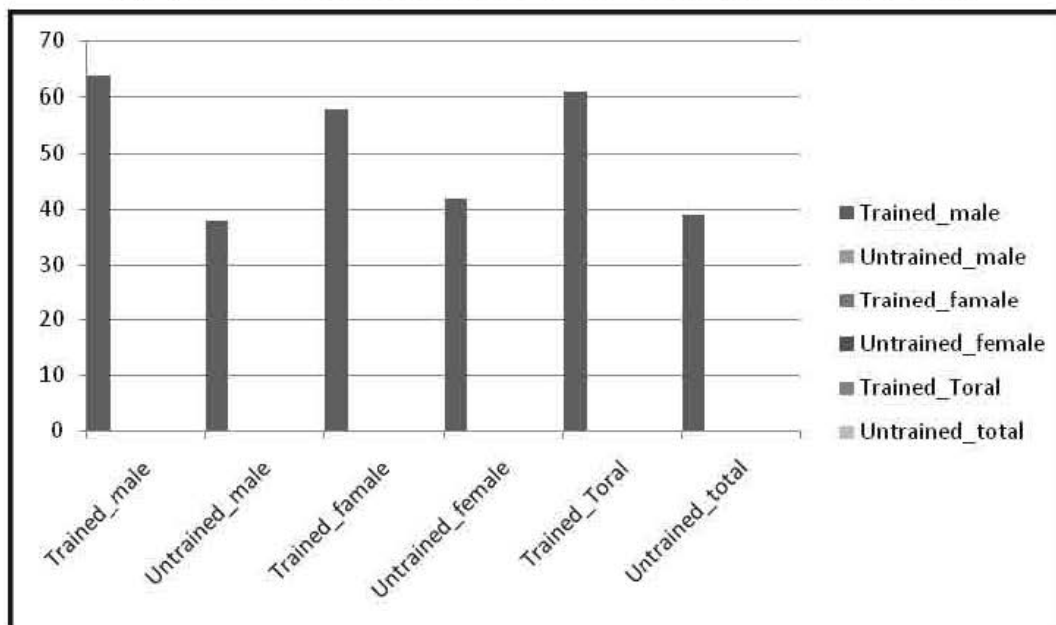
C. Teacher Training

Table 1.3: Total trained and untrained teachers

Total teacher	Male_ trained	Male_ untrained	Total_ male	Female_ trained	Female_ untrained	Total_ female
313	103	61	164	87	62	149

The researcher visited 20 primary schools where total 313 teachers were there. Among them 164 were male teachers and 149 were untrained teachers. Among 164 male teachers 103 have got teacher training and 61 is untrained. In 149 female teachers 87 are trained and 62 are untrained.

Figure 1.3: Trained and Untrained Teachers in the Sample schools



D. Library

All the 20 school have library but neither any of the school do not have separate reading room nor have any facility of issuing books to children. According to the Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA on Elementary Education in Rural India 40% of the primary schools have library in Tripura in comparison to 81.36% in all states. Though the schools visited by the researcher have libraries but no library activity for students was found.

E. Hall

Only one school have its own hall and it is been used for cultural programme. Some times in the rainy season the hall is used to distribute Mid day meal. The Hall is connected with electricity and has sitting arrangement of 200 people at the time of cultural programme according to the Head masters.

F. Play ground

The 20 rural schools where the researcher has visited found the existence of play ground. According to the data found from Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA on Elementary Education in Rural India 61.73% of schools have play grounds in Tripura. If we compare it with all states (58.13%), Tripura have better average. According to the Headmasters of the sample schools, all the schools have sports equipments.

G. Toilet

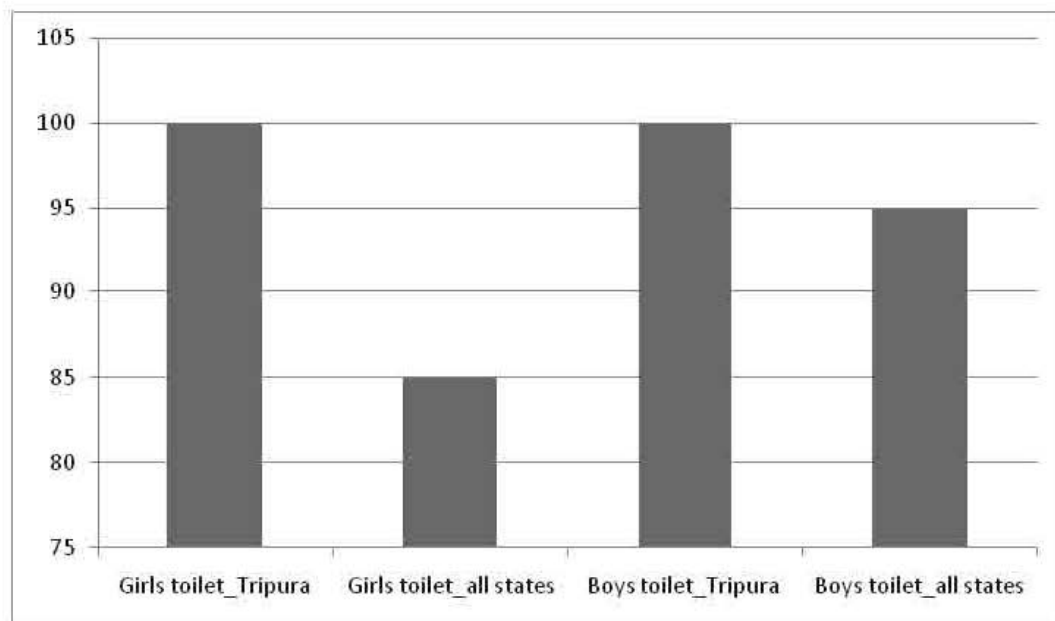
All the 20 schools researcher has visited have toilets in healthy condition and have separate toilet for boys and girls and for male and female teachers.

Table 1.4: Availability of Toilets for boys and girls in Primary schools

Toilet	Tripura	All States
girls toilet	99.82	86.13
Boys toilet	99.95	95.05

Source : Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA on Elementary Education in Rural India

Figure 1.4: Availability of Toilets for boys and girls in Primary schools



According to Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA on Elementary Education in Rural India, the percentage (99.82) of availability of Girls toilet in primary schools of Tripura is way better than national percentage (86.13). Same is in the case of boys, percentage of Tripura (99.95) is better than national percentage (95.05).

H. Water facility

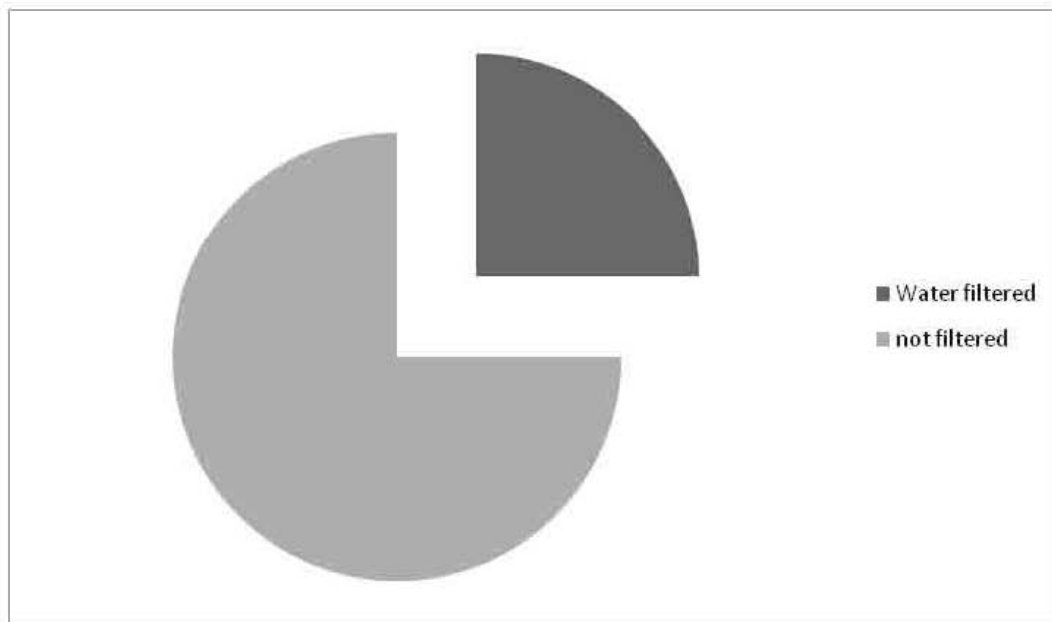
According to the According to Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA drinking water facility is present in 88.25 percent primary schools of Tripura. The researcher visited 20 schools where the main source of water Govt. Pipeline or tap water.

For drinking water in five schools Govt. pipeline water is filtered and used otherwise in 15 schools students directly use the pipeline water for their drinking purpose. For teachers in all 20 schools Govt. pipeline water is filtered and used for

Table 1.5: Water facility in the School for Students

	Frequency	Percent
Govt. pipeline water filtered and used	5	25.0
Govt. pipeline water directly used	15	75.0
Total	20	100.0

Figure 1.5: Water facility In the School for Students



drinking purpose. For cooking and washing utensils Govt. pipeline water is used directly in all the 20 schools.

I. Cooking place and Cooking Utensils

In the entire 20 schools kitchen shed is there for cooking purpose. The place of cooking is also neat and clean. According to the Analytical Report 2014-15 by NUEPA on Elementary Education in Rural India 88.71% primary schools have kitchen sheds. Whereas the national average is 77.82%.

Dekchi, kada, thala, hata, is sufficient for cooking Mid day meal in 20 schools the researcher visited. Only glass for drinking water for students is not sufficient in 18 schools out of 20 schools.

J. Cooking Fuel

Bamboo is used as fuel for cooking. As bamboo is a common fuel in the rural areas in Tripura. No school is using cooking gas for cooking mid day meal. According to headmasters cooking gas is expensive and the supply of gas cylinder is not very regular by the vendors in the rural area. That is why most of the schools prefer bamboo as cooking fuel which is easily found in the locality.

K. Separate place for Distribution of Mid day meal (Dining hall)

Only 4 (Four) School have separate place for distribution of Mid day meal. In the rest of 15 (fifteen) school food is distributed in the Veranda.

3. Status of daily attendance of Tribal students in primary schools after the introduction of midday meal

Data (Class wise attendance) collected by the researcher from the twenty schools of 2001 and 2011 academic years, classified in to three categories, a. Poor (0-29%), b. Average (30-59%) and c. Good (60% and above).

Table 1.8: Attendance of Primary School Students Before the Implementation of Mid Day Meal, (2001)

	poor	average	good	total
Class-I	310	1215	675	2200
Class-II	177	1236	786	2199
Class-III	304	1203	716	2223
Class-IV	175	1290	700	2165
Class-V	290	1221	524	2035

Table 1.8 shows the attendance of Primary school Students in classes I, II, III, IV and V. The number of first generation learners under poor categories in class I, II, III, IV and V were 310 (14%), 177 (8%), 304 (14%), 175 (8%), 290 (14%) respectively. The number of students of averages attendance in classes I, II, III, IV and V were 1215 (55%), 1236 (56%), 1203 (54%), 1290 (60%), 1221 (60%) respectively. Similarly, the number of students whose attendance were good in class I, II, III, IV and V were 675 (31%), 786 (36%), 716 (32%), 700 (32%), 524 (26%) respectively.

Table 1.9: Attendance of Primary School Students After the Implementation of Mid Day Meal, (2011)

2011	poor	average	good	total
Class-I	391	592	1481	2464
Class-II	179	597	1686	2462
Class-III	361	559	1511	2431
Class-IV	177	563	1590	2330
Class-V	338	446	1454	2238

Table 1.9 shows the attendance of Primary school Students in classes I, II, III, IV and V. The number of first generation learners under poor categories in class I, II, III, IV and V were 391 (16%), 179 (7%), 361 (15%), 177 (7%), 338 (15%) respectively. The number of students of averages attendance in classes I, II, III, IV and V were 592 (24%), 597 (24%), 559 (23%), 563 (24%), 446 (20%) respectively. Similarly, the number of students whose attendance were good in class I, II, III, IV and V were 1481 (60%), 1686 (69%), 1511 (62%), 1590 (69%), 1454 (65%) respectively.

Regression analysis is a statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables. It includes many techniques for modeling and analyzing several variables, when the focus is on the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (or 'predictors'). More specifically, regression analysis helps one understand how the typical value of the dependent variable (or 'criterion variable') changes when any one of the independent variables is varied, while the other independent variables are held fixed.

The regression analysis is carried out to find the causal relationship between attendance and existence of mid day meal. More precisely the method is applied to show how introduction of mid day meal effects the level of student attendance in schools.

Table 1.10: Regression analysis of Effects of attendance after introduction of mid day meal

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R Square
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	30.851	1.336			
	mid_yes	29.640	1.889	.745	23.099	.000
					15.693	.000

a. Dependent Variable: good percentage

As per table no-1.10 the proportion of good attendance among the tribal students is significantly affected by the introduction of midday meal. The proportion of good attendance is increased when mid day meal is introduced as compared to when it is not been in existence. Furthermore the introduction of mid day meal explains



55% of the total variation in the proportion of good attendance (table-1.10). Month-wise attendance of selected twenty Primary school students of classers I, II, III, IV and V School is shown in the table in the academic session 2001(Before implementation of mid day meal scheme).

So from this data analysis we may say that after the implementation of mid day meal the effect of season on the good attendance has diminished significantly.

Conclusion :

At present there is 6599 Govt. managed primary and upper primary schools as per DISE figure. Till date, 4136 schools have kitchen sheds constructed. Remaining 2463 schools requires kitchen-sheds to be constructed. Kitchen-sheds are constructed as per model estimate approved and communicated by the GOI. Fund toward this construction is placed with the school Authority who get it constructed with the knowledge of the School Development Management Committee who is also entrusted to supervise the works to ensure its quality. Provisions of drinking water and toilet are being taken care of under SSA and Drinking Water & Sanitation Department of the state.

Some key issues which are preventing the program from running smoothly and the children from receiving their mid-day meal are :

- m corruption (from the government officials to the teachers themselves)
- m The meagre amount of money per student is not enough to purchase food as well as a cook to prepare it; often times teachers (whose attendance is already infrequent) end up doing this themselves, taking away from the time during which they should be educating the children
- m A lack of basic infrastructure means that many children also do not have access to drinkable water
- m Parents, who rarely know what they are entitled to, usually do not realize that their children are not receiving as much as they should be; even when they do pick up on this, they do not know where to turn to voice their complaints.

Recommendations :

The Akshaya Patra model can adopted in Tripura. The Akshaya Patra Foundation feeds 1.3 million children in 19 locations across nine states in India every day, and served up its billionth meal last year. Akshaya Patra kitchens are technology-driven, which ensures the entire cooking process is untouched by human hand. These centralized, automated kitchens can cook close to 6,000 kg of rice, 4.5-5 tonne of vegetables and 6,000 litres of sambar, in under six hours.

Akshaya Patra uses customized industrial steam generators and specifically designed vegetable cutting machines. The vehicles that transport cooked food to schools are heat insulated and dust-free special purpose vehicles.

Such are the measures taken to ensure cleanliness in this three-tier kitchen, that rice is tilted out of the silo through a computer controlled flow valve. Once the cooking is done and food dispatched to schools for the day, the vessels are steam washed and read for the next day.

Some specific recommendations are:-

- ◆ This study strongly recommends that community participation is essential to make the scheme healthy. This will help on many issues like replacement of vessels, amt and sort out problem of safe drinking water; make appeal fir gas connection, healthcare of the children, maintenance of healthy environment in the school premises, supply of food on social occasions, etc. including boosting enrolment of the children.
- ◆ To save further degradation of forest or vegetations, all the Mid-Day Meal Schools need to connect with solar cooking system. Even supply of gas is not in time, so as a alternative system should be developed.
- ◆ This scheme could be run through the self-help group run by the women who are efficient in maintaining of the accounts. Such women are now available as well educated women are easily available in villages of Tripura.
- ◆ The essential commodities such as edible oil, salt, gas etc. should be supplied along with food grains to the schools. This process saves transportation cost and manpower.
- ◆ Local food habits should be given importance while preparing the menu. The different tribes of Tripura have their own food habit.
- ◆ Effective inspection technique should be developed to stop corruption in the scheme.
- ◆ Because of price rise the allotted money for MDM should be increased as necessary.
- ◆ Allotted money for MDM should release by the Dept. in time so that the school should provide MDM without any difficulty.

The Scheme could be a platform for strengthening the school health programme in order to produce a real impact. Since the Supreme Court says that the onus to monitor the implementation of the scheme essentially lies with the Central government, as it is the Central government that is providing assistance, it is important that leakages from the MDMS should be stopped at all cost. Comprehensive, periodical and systematic orientation is mandatory to sensitize all stakeholders including the

policy makers, implementers, teachers, centre level officials and community people to make them understand this scheme well. This would help them to become more efficient and be active partners in the programme that will certainly enhance its performance.

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5

Socio-Political Life of Jamatia Women in Tripura

Sumon Ali*

Introduction :

Women constitute almost half of the population in all societies, contribute more responsibilities in the family but not empowered in decision and policy making in every sphere of life. In the patriarchal set up their roles include bearing children, feeding them and other members of the family, clothing them, to take care of all the family members etc. The number of obstacles a woman faces throughout her life is uncountable. Moreover deficiency of education, less personal freedom, discrimination of gender, ignorance, unhappy relationships within the family and society causes of lower position at every sphere of her life. In tribal communities of Tripura, the role of women is substantial and crucial. In tribal society women are more important than in other social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. Even after industrialization and the resultant commercialization swamped the tribal economy, women continued to play a significant role. Mostly women and children do collection of minor forest produce. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. However, tribal women are still marginalized and deprived group in Tribal society. Gender equality among tribal groups is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addressed in the context of various issues of tribal life.

The Jamatia, one of the nineteenth tribes of Tripura live largely in Gomati, Khowai and South Tripura district of Tripura. A few numbers of them are also found in the Sadar sub-division of West Tripura and other area of the state. They hold the third position in respect of numerical strength among the 19 (nineteen) tribes of Tripura. As per census 2011, total population of Jamatia is 83347 person which has 7.14% of the total Tribal population of Tripura. The position of women among the Jamatia tribes is vulnerable in case of social, economic and political fields. Generally the

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position of the Jamatia women is the same as that of husbands. She is hard worker and she works harder than a man in many respects. But still, her status is not recognized by the society and her husband. Usually the male dominated over the women. The father as the head of the household occupies the central position in the family. Lineage and descent are traced through the father's line, and so the society is patriarchal. The woman never challenges the superiority of the man. Jamatia women have adjusted themselves to live a traditional life style in the local environment and follow occupations based on natural resources. The Jamatia women are also restricted to take part in village council elections. Jamatia women have lack of political awareness, lack in political representation and hence they are politically disempowered. In these backdrops, the present study is an attempt to focuses on the social-economic and political status of Jamatia women in Tripura. It also studied the level of political awareness among the Jamatia women in Tripura.

Objectives of the study :

1. To know the social-political status of Jamatia women in Tripura.
2. To examine the level of political awareness among the Jamatia women in Tripura.

Review of Existing Literature :

A literature review can be interpreted as a review of an abstract accomplishment. The existing literature on political, social, economic, and educational issues of Tribal community and in particularly Jamatia tribes is also fairly limited in terms of scope as well as quality.

The scientific study of tribal economy in India was first undertaken by two scholars Nag and Saxena. Nag (1958) made an extensive field tour in the areas of Madhya Pradesh like, Mandla, Bilaspur, Durg, Balaghat and studied the Baiga economy in the context of general economic theories lying emphasis on the sources of economy of Baigas.

A new trend in ethno methodology which came during the British period was a theory propounded by Verner Elwin (1943) who suggested that tribals should be kept isolated in their hills and forests. Elwin's theory is known in social anthropology as 'public park theory.' D.N. Majumdar (1944) took a slightly different position and suggests that the cultural identity of the tribals as far as possible should be retained. He feared that if the isolation was broken the tribals would lose their ethnic identity. Buddudeb Chaudhauri's (ed.) (1992) "Tribal Transformation in India", in five volumes, is a collaborative effort of Indian scholars to capture the changing tribal scenario and a whole diversity of issues related to tribal economy, agronomy, politics, ethnicity, and so on, yet more articulate framework, with both diagnostic and remedial models.

The Tribals of Tripura are living at different stages of economic development. Some still are in the stage of hunting and food gathering and leading a nomadic life. Some are still practising shifting cultivation and a few are settled agriculturist. There were a few tribal studies in Tripura. Let us have a look at some of these studies undertaken by famous authors.

Sarit Kumar Chaudhuri (2004) the tribals have to face feudal colonial domination, caste prejudices, illiteracy, poverty and isolation. The status of tribal society in the wider national context has been perceived as segmentary and autonomous.

Bhattacharya, Alak (2007), in his article "Tribal Politics of Tripura: A Study in Electoral Behaviour" analyses the motives of political participation of tribal people of Tripura in electoral politics. The paper deals with the mass movement of the tribal people of Tripura, which made them politically conscious.

The Tribals of Tripura are basically agriculturists; many of them still depend on Jhum or shifting cultivation. The Jhumias (Jhumias are the tribals who do Jhum cultivation) of Tripura were considered to be self-sufficient in food production in the past but the situation has changed radically now because the govt. of Tripura has banded the Jhum cultivation and therefore they may migrate to elsewhere for their livelihood (Das Gupta, 1986, 1996).

Since a large part of the State is under forest cover, the problem of tribal livelihoods in forest areas is a challenging one in respect of both socio-economic and ecological development (Tripura Human development Report, 2007) and has also come up with a number of innovative ideas to reduce the practice of Jhum, and promote alternate livelihoods as an alternative source of income for tribals (Sarkar, 2010). The nature and dimensions of change in the lives and livelihoods has occurred (Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011).

A study conducted by Ali, S & Akter, T (2015) on "Gender Development and the Status of Tribal Women: A Study of Tripura" found that tribal women are still marginalized and deprived group in Tribal society. The role of tribal women is important but their socio-economic development is poor. They suggest gender equality in Tribal society should be conceptualized as an integral part of the development process.

All the above authors describe the living conditions of the tribals at the time of their study and it will help us to drawing the idea of our present study of Jamatia Women in Tripura in particular and Tribals of India in general. Development of the nation in true sense can hardly be achieved without proper development and empowerment of women's. Modernization and development process is affecting both men and women life differently. Therefore it is most essential in present context

to know and identify the various factors that determines the status of Jamatia women in a society and role of these factors in empowerment of women as no society can develop ignoring its half of the population.

Methology :

The present study is empirical one. The source of data collection depends on both primary and secondary sources. For primary data, it is collected through the help of questionnaire method from the field survey. On the other hand, Secondary data is collected through library survey, books, Journals, Census Reports, Govt. and non-governmental sources, and other daily news etc. The study method allows the researcher to come in direct contact of people whom we want to study. The present study is mainly based on analysis and interpretation of data collected from field survey. Primary data are collected mainly from the field survey conducted in the ADC villages of Teliamura Block and Kakraban block area during the month of June in 2019 A.D. Total 100 respondents were selected for the field study. Purposive sampling method of Non-Probability method of sampling selection is undertaken for the purpose of study.

Tribals of Tripura and Their Development :

The term 'tribe' originated around the time of the Greek city-states and the early formation of the Roman Empire. The Latin term, "tribus" has since been transformed to mean, "A group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor" (Oxford English Dictionary). According to anthropologists, Majumdar & Madan (1956), tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes.

Major Tribes of Tripura :

The population of Tripura is about three million, of whom one third are tribal people. Altogether, there are 19 tribes in the State. These are Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Lusai, Uchai, Chaimal, Halam, Kukis, Garos, Mog and Chakma which belong to the settled tribal community of Tripura. Other tribes like Bill, Munda, Orang, Santal, Lepcha, Khasia and Bhutias are recent immigrant tribes settled here for economic reasons. Tripura has rich forest resources. Some tribes practice shifting cultivation (jhumra) and are accustomed to forest life. Nomadic tribes including the Bill, Munda, Orang, Santal, Lepcha, Khasia and Bhutias practice transhumance,

moving seasonally between winter and summer pastures. They keep cattle, sheep and goats for grazing in the hilly and mountainous areas. However, tribes like Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Lusai, Uchai, Chaimal, Halam, Kukis, Garos, Mog and Chakma have subsistence strategies which combine crop agriculture, horticulture, livestock and fish farming. The land of Tripura is widely inhabited by a number of tribes who form a major part of Tripura. Mostly depending on agriculture, the tribes of Tripura largely depend on the subsistence agriculture for their livelihood.

Scheduled Tribe Population of Tripura :

The people of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) comprise about one-third of the population. As per Census-2011, ST population of the State was 11,66,813 which is 31.75 percent of the total population of the State. Population density of tribes is 19 per sq. km.

Table 1 : Scheduled Tribe Population of Tripura (1874-2011)

Year	Tripura Population	ST Population	% of ST Population
1874-75	74242	42345	64
1881	95635	49915	52.18
1891	137375	70292	51.16
1901	173325	91669	52.89
1911	229613	111303	48.47
1921	304437	171610	52.24
1931	382450	192224	50.26
1941	513010	256991	50.09
1951	689029	238953	34.68
1961	1142005	360070	31.53
1971	1556342	450544	28.95
1981	2053058	562990	27.42
1991	2757205	853345	30.95
2001	3199203	993427	31.05
2011	3673917	11,66,813	31.75

Source: (i) Debbarma, Somendra Chandra., *Census Biharani (Bengali), Tripura State Tribal Research & Institute, Agartala, 1997 (2nd Edition), p. 11*

(ii) Directorate of Census Operation, Government of Tripura, Agartala.



Sex ration among the tribes in Tripura :

The tribes in Tripura have better sex ratio than people in general both in Tripura and in India as a whole. In 1991 the sex ratio of the tribal in Tripura was as high as 965.2 whereas it was 946 for all Tripura and only 929 for all India. If we make an inter-tribe comparison it is found that in 1961 the Jamatias had the highest sex ratio (999.3) followed by the Kukis (985.9) and the Tripuris (958.3). The Orangs had the lowest sex ratio (915.4). But the comparative position of the tribes in respect of sex ratio has undergone change greatly over the last three decades. In 1971 the pride of place went to the Kukis (1156) followed by the Orangs (1041.7) and the Garos (1036). In that year the Chakmas had the lowest sex ratio of 906.9. In 1981 the Garos (1008.8) came to the forefront in this respect followed by the Jamatias (989.5) and the Halams (975.2). The lowest position went to the Mundas (907.6). Thus great fluctuations are found in the sex ratios of the tribes and no firm conclusion can be drawn about the comparative position of different tribes so far as the sex ratio is concerned.

The Jamatia Tribe of Tripura :

Jamatia is one of the 19 scheduled tribes of Tripura and it is the only tribe of Tripura with its own Customary Law in Practice. They mainly dwell in the West Tripura and the South Tripura districts. They speak the language Kokborok which is of Tibeto-Burmese origin. There were 83,347 Jamatia people as of the 2011 Census which is 7.14% of the total tribal population of the state.

Jamatia Population :

Jamatia's are the permanent inhabitants of Tripura. At present, they are living in various places of the state. They are mostly living in rural areas. The profile of Jamatia tribes and its population are shown by the following tables below.

Table 1 : Jamatia Population Data

Year	Total Tribal Population	Jamatia Population	% of Jamatia Populations
1971	450544	34192	7.58
1981	583920	44501	7.62
1991	853345	60824	7.12
2001	993426	74949	7.54
2011	1166813	83,347	7.14

Source: Census Report, 1971-2011

The above data shows, the population strength are not much changed in different decade in terms of population percentage.

Table 2 : Rural/Urban wise Jamatia Population as per 2011 census

Population	Population	Male	Female
Rural	81,861	40,716	41,145
Urban	1,486	734	752
Total	83,347	41,450	41,897

Source: Census Report, 2011

The above data shows that Jamatia's are mostly living in rural areas.

Literacy Rate of Jamatia :

Literacy Rate of Jamatia Population as per 2011 census shows that, the have less literacy rate as compare to literacy rate of the state of Tripura as 87.75%. However, their literacy rate is increased day by day.

Table 3 : Literacy Rate of Jamatia Population as per 2011 census.

Category	Population	Literate	Literacy Rate
Male	41,450	33,049	79.73
Female	41,897	29,337	70.02
Total	83,347	62,386	74.85

Source: Census Report, 2011

Origin of the clan :

The Jamatia clan is the third largest sub-tribe of among indigenous Tripuris, after the Tripuris (Debbarma) and the Reang sub-tribe in Tripura. The origin of the word Jamatia, in one opinion, had derived from the word jamat, which means 'collection' or 'union of peoples'. This later on turned to Jamatia. The people of this clan live in unity and concentrated in any particular place even today. According to other opinion, Jamatia is conjugation of two Kokborok words: jama means 'tax' and twiya means 'no need to pay'. The men of this clan engaged in the Tripura royal force as soldiers by the kings of Tripura during the Manikya Dynasty. So the peoples of Jamatia clan were exempted to pay any tax by the king for their loyalty, service and sacrifice for the regime. Later on, the people of this clan became known as Jamatia.

The Jamatias are physically very strong, stout, and courageous, muscular as a whole. This led to induct them to royal force during kings' regime. It was evidently



proved by the mighty rebel leader like Porikshit Jamatia who fought against the unjust oppression by king's corrupt officials.

Like the Reangs, the Jamatias also constituted the fighting force during the time of Tripura King. Their system of worship comprises both Hindu practices and animistic rites. Having many social institutions in common with the Bengalese, the Jamatias are taking to plough cultivation in preference to jhoom and are now settling down in the plain areas of the state.

Economy and livelihood :

The economic condition and financial condition of Jamatia clan is same as rest of the indigenous Tripuris. Nowadays many youths are getting educations and being employed in state and central government offices. It is the Jamatia clan who had first discarded the shifting cultivation called 'huk chamani' and opted for modern way of agriculture and farming in plain land. The other clan followed them later on gradually. That is why they are in possession of more plain land than any other indigenous Tripuri. They are economically more sound and self sufficient than rest of fellow clans. Now a day many youths are getting education and employed in various state and central government office. Many people of this race are doing business in Tripura and many are settled out side of Tripura as success full business man as far as up to Shillong, Guwahati, and Mumbai, Delhi etc.

Religious Belief :

The Jamatia are also follower of traditional Tripuri religion like rest of the clans of Tripura. They worship the 'Goria mutai' the most, which is worshipped by all other clans. The Jamatias Goria celebration needs special mention and shall be dealt separately. Besides this, they worship the Mahadev or Mutai Kotor, Tripura sundori, twima, and other god of fourteen gods. The Jamatias were annoyed and agitated after the armed rebellion under the leadership of Porkshit Jamatia was brutally curved out. The Jamatias decided to leave the state en-mass and migrate to neighboring state. The king Beer Chandra pacified the agitated Jamatia clan by placing them as higher class than rest of the Tripuris. They were motivated to convert to Vaishnavism, since then, they had feeling of superiority and did not allow other clans to enter to their kitchen. They had stopped drinking wine, eating various meats, raring various live stocks like pigs, goats, hens, and etc altogether. The Jamatia men started wearing holy thread 'puida' and applying 'chandnan' tilak at fore head. But recently the Jamatias had discarded this tradition and started consuming meat and other things and such discrimination has abolished today.

Jamatia Hoda :

The Jamatia are followers of traditional Tripuri religion like the rest of the clans of Tripura. They worship Goria mwtai the most, which is worshiped by all other clans. Goria celebration of the Jamatias needs special mention and shall be dealt separately. Besides this, they worship the Mwtai Kotor, twima, and 14 other gods. The Jamatias were agitated after the armed rebellion under the leadership of Porkshit Jamatia was brutally curved out. The Jamatias left the state en masse and migrated to neighbouring state. They were motivated to convert to Vaishnavism; since then, they had feeling of superiority and did not allow other clans to enter to their kitchen.

Social structure of the Jamatia :

The Jamatia clan had three-tier social structures for smooth interaction and social order:

1. Hoda
2. Moyal
3. Luku

Hoda :

Hoda means the apex body of the Jamatia society. It is headed by the Okra who is the supreme of the clan. The head of the hoda, which is the hoda okra, is selected unanimously by the village chokdiris and moyal panchais at the annual conference for five years. There are two hoda okras at the apex body at present. The supreme authority to govern the society is vested collectively with the two hoda okras. They are assisted by a four-member Advisory Board, possessing sound knowledge and experience of traditional religion, cultural affairs, administrative rule, and Jamatia customary law.

There are 10 priests appointed by hoda okras and accountable to okras. There is a Hoda Working Committee consisting of 33 members which function under the direct supervision of hoda okras. One third of the board members have to be women. Hoda have an audit board with five members, who are selected by the hoda members for three years. All the income and expenditure are audited by this board once in every year, to maintain the financial regularity of the hoda. The hoda has 321 villages that are governed by the above social system.

The hoda is very strong and influential among the Jamatia clan, and that is why the traditional social life and the customary laws are still strictly practiced by the Jomatia clan of indigenous Tripuri.

**Duties of hoda okras :**

1. The twin Hoda Okras shall not do or follow opposite or contradictory policy.
2. They should ensure that the Hoda rules and regulations are adhered in performing social occasions and worshipping different gods.
3. The first and the foremost duty of the Okras is to implement the resolutions and decisions of the Hoda.
4. The hoda Okras should protect any person who is assaulted while protecting the society's rules and regulation.
5. Whenever there are disputes or conflicts among the members of the clan the Okras shall do the conciliation independently and impartially.
6. The okras should hold the responsibility for five years. But if they indulge in any unfair and corrupt practice, they may be removed before the expiry of the terms. Such expulsion from the post can be done only by 2/3 majority of the advisory board and 2/3 majority of the Hoda working committee. There should be a majority support for the removal by the moyal Panchais also.
7. The Okras can resign from the post by giving appropriate reasons. They should do so jointly as they were elected.
8. If any okra dies or any of their wives dies the two okras shall resign from the post and the emergency meeting of the Hoda shall be convened and new Okras selected unanimously.

Moyal :

The moyal consists of five to thirty-two villages, where two panchais are selected in each moyal by the region's Choudhori and prominent persons of the village for five years. The whole of the Jamatia population is divided into 16 regions called moyals. The head of the moyal is known as panchai.

Duties and powers of the panchai :

1. The prime and primary function of the panchais is to peace and discipline of the Moyal.
2. They shall solve all the disputes among the members by the help of working committee.
3. They should implement the programs of the Okras.
4. They shall keep contact with the Okras to maintain peace and tranquility at the region.
5. They should take any such step to maintain the harmony and discipline of the society with the approval of Okras.
6. They should collect the subscription for the welfare of the society.

7. They should preside over any working committee of the moyal.
8. They can arbitrate in any problems related to women, theft, dacoity, burglary etc. and punish the accused accordingly.

Luku :

The luku is a group of people in a village whose chief is called choudiri. The choudiri is selected unanimously by the head of each family of the village every five years.

Traditional folk culture:

Jamatias are fond of their traditional folk culture like Drama, Garia festival and other common dances of Kok-Borok speaking tribes. They have special form of Garia Dance which depict their Hindu based religious culture. A large numbers among them follows Vaishnavism and observe all events as per tradition.

Status of the Jamatia Women :

The status of Jamatia women can be judged mainly by the roles they play in society. The status of women in any society is a significant reflection of the level of social justice in that society. Women's status is often described in terms of their level of income, employment, education, health and fertility as well as their roles within the family, the community and society. Interestingly, tribal life in Tripura is marked by some striking commonalities.

Generally the position of the Jamatia women is the same as that of husbands. She is hard worker and she works harder than a man in many respects. But still, her status is recognized by the position of her husband. Usually the Male dominated over the women. The father as the head of the household occupies the central position in the family. Lineage and descent are traced through the father's line, and so the society is patriarchal. The women never challenges the superiority of the man.

The women are also restricted to take part in village council elections. The women spend their whole life in performing household chores only. She prepares food and cleans the house, fetches water and fuel and clean domestic utensils and clothes. All these give her little time for recreation.

So far as the question of gender roles and more particularly the place and image of women is concerned, in spite of being followers of the Hindu tradition of patriarchy, Tripura tribals have provided a place of considerable socio-economic importance to their womenfolk. Women constitute the economic backbone in each of the tribal communities.



Several studies on tribal women of north-east India reveal that like all hill women, they are physically and socially fitted to lead a life of extreme hardship. Social relations between the sexes in most cases are easy and natural; men and women generally meet freely on equal basis.

Economic Status of Jamatia woman :

The role of the Jamatia woman in the economic sphere of the family is very important. The women help the Male members in different agricultural activities such as weeding, transplanting, harvesting etc. They also weave their clothes of daily use on their indigenous looms.

Religious rites and the status of Jamatia Women:

In the matter of religious rites the status of a women is much lower than that of a man. The women are prohibited from becoming an Ochay (traditional priest) of their community.

Gender roles in Jamatia society :

Gender is a constitutive element in all social relations. The term 'gender' refers to the social classification of men and women as 'masculine and feminine' and their expected behavior based on their assigned social roles. The different roles that are ascribed to men and women are socially and culturally determined and influenced by traditional practices, institutions, customs and beliefs. Jamatia society in Tripura is patriarchal society where men dominate and exercise control over most of the resources and are considered superior to women.

The present study on Jamatia women of Tripura reveal that like all hill women, they are physically and socially fitted to lead a life of extreme hardship. Social relations between the sexes in most cases are easy and natural; men and women generally meet freely on equal basis. In tribal communities, the role of women is substantial and crucial. Mostly women and children do collection of minor forest produce. Many also work as laborers in industries, households and construction, contributing to their family income. Despite exploitation by contractors and managers, tribals are more sincere and honest than non-tribals. However, Jamatia women face problems and challenges in getting a sustainable livelihood and a decent life due to environmental degradation and the interference of outsiders.

Female Literacy Rate among Jamatias :

According to 2011 census the overall literacy rate of the Jamatia is 74.85 %. The female literacy rate is 70.02% though it's lower than the male literacy rate (77.73%).

The remarkable thing is the growth rate of female literacy. In 1971 it was 04.06 % only and in 1981 it was 10.64%. The rate of increase can be found as much better than the overall rate for Tribals.

Jamatia women in Tripura are less literate than their men counterpart. There is a negative attitude of the family towards educating the girl child. Moreover, lack of separate toilets for girls in schools, lack of security while travelling from home to school, lack of female teachers in schools, elder 3 sister’s responsibility to look after the younger siblings when both the parents have to work to meet both ends, are some of the reasons behind the high drop-out rate of girls from schools. Primary education is free, but parents are not interested to send them to school. Right to Education has been passed by the Parliament, but it is still far when the right will be a reality. Mid day meal scheme has been formulated in order to attract the small children to school. However, this scheme received set- backs when many school children died after consuming food from the school kitchen.

Result and Discussion :

The present study successfully found the overall result after analysis of its survey data on Status of Jamatia Women in Tripura. In order to analyze the Political, social and economic status of the Jamatia women, many broad indicators can be utilized. Hence, we limit our study to a small survey data on the specific areas. The present study successfully found the overall result after analysis of its survey data.

Location of study area :

The study is conducted in two ADC villages under Teliamura Block of Khowai District and Kakraban Block of Gomati district of Tripura. Kadambari ADC village is located 41 KM towards East from District head quarters Khowai. On the other Utter Silghati is a ADC village located in Kakraban Block of Gomati district of Tripura with total 485 families residing. Most of the peoples are belongs to Jamatia Tribes.

Table 4 : Details Location of study Area

STATE: TRIPURA.DISTRICTS: KHOWAI & GOMATI TRIPURA			
Name of Block	Name of ADC Village	Total No. of Family Surveyed	Total No.of Respondents
Teliamura	Khamarbari	50	100
Kakraban	Utter Silghati	50	

Profile of the respondent :

A total of one hundred families were randomly selected from two ADC village under the study area, during the months of June 2019, areas covering one two Assembly constituency with two villages. Out of 100 Jamatia family 100 % (percent) of the surveyed respondents belongs to women.

Table 5 : Age group of the Respondent

Age group	% percentage of Respondents
20-30	20
31-40	24
41-50	24
50-60	10
60-70	12
70- above	10

Source: Field survey, 2019

The above table shows that, 20 percent of the surveyed respondents are belongs to age group of 20-30 years, 24 percent of the surveyed respondents are belongs to age group of 31-40 years, 24 percent of the surveyed respondents are belongs to age group of 41-50 years, 10 percent of the surveyed respondents are belongs to age group of 50-60 years, 12 percent of the surveyed respondents are belongs to age group of 60-70 years, and 10 percent of the surveyed respondents are belongs to age group of 70 years and above.

Pie chart 1 : Age group of Respondent Women

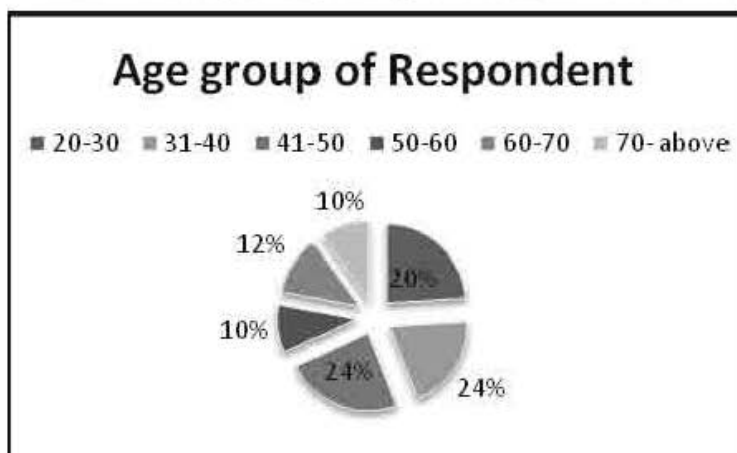


Table 6 : Family Type

Total	No. of Respondents family	% percentage
Nuclear family	40	40
Joint family	60	60

Source: Field survey, 2019

Data of the above table shows that, 60 percent of the surveyed village family type is Joint family and 40 percent family type is Nuclear.

Table 7 : Family Members Details

Family Type	No. of family	No. of Family Members	Average family Members
Nuclear family	40	120	3
Joint family	60	480	8

Source: Field survey, 2019

Data of the above table shows that, in 60 joint families have 480 family members of the surveyed village with average 8 number of family members and in 240 nuclear families have 120 family members with average 3 number of family members of the surveyed village. So, it is observed that Jamatia's are more likely to live with joint family.

Socio-Economic Status of the Respondent :

The condition of Jamatia women is more miserable in Tripura with respect to various socio-economic aspects.

Poverty :

Poverty is one of the important characteristics of India as well as in all social community and nearly 70 percent of Jamatia people in the study area are below poverty line. Most of them are just surviving with day to-day earnings. The Jamatia women assist their men counterparts in different agricultural activities such as weeding, transplanting, harvesting, etc.



Economy :

The tribals live amidst rich natural resources, but they are not able to tap these resources to their fullest advantage; hence they are left economically backward. The socio-economic structure in tribal societies is unique to the fact that they have a very simple technology which fits well with their ecological surroundings. There is no any uniform pattern in the tribal economic way of life. Economy of Jamatia tribe is depends on agriculture and animal husbandry.

Table 8 : Economic Status of Family

Total	APL	BPL
No. of family	30	70
%	30	70

Source: Field survey, 2019

With respect to Economic status among the Jamatia Women in the surveyed areas, it was found out that 70 percent of the respondents are belongs to BPL family and 30 percent of the respondents are belongs to APL family. Thus they have low economic Status.

Table 9 : Monthly Income of the Family

Amount (Rs)	No. of Respondents family	% percentage
1000-2499	-	-
2500-4999	8	8%
5000-9999	46	46%
10000-19999	20	20%
20000-49999	26	26%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field survey, 2019

In the surveyed area majority of the respondents family has low income. Data from the above table reveals that 8 percent of the respondent's family had Monthly income of Rs. 2500/- to 4999/-, 46 percent had Rs. 5000/- to 9999/-, 20 percent of the respondent's family had Monthly income of Rs.10000/- to Rs. 19999/-, and only 26 percent of the respondent's family had Monthly income of Rs.20000/- (ten thousand) and above. It can be observed that most of the Jamatia family has low income and their economic status is poor.

Education of the Respondents:

From our sample it is evident that not many pursue education beyond Class 10. Backwardness in education levels is a major issue prevails in Jamatia tribe. Only around 36% of people from our sample have education above High school level. Considering the State average level of higher secondary education, this stands abysmally low.

Table 10 : Education of the Respondents

Response	No. of Respondents	% percentage
illiterate	20	20
Literate	10	10
Primary	23	23
Class 10th pass	15	15
HS passed	20	20
Graduate	10	10
Post Graduate	2	2
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2019

Regarding educational background of the respondent, it is found that only two percent of the respondent is Post graduate, 10 percent of the total respondents were graduates, 20 percent Higher Secondary, 15 percent secondary, 23 percent Primary, 10 percent of the respondents were only literate, and 20 percent of the respondents were illiterate. Thus it is observed that their educational status is backward. It is evident that, 53 percent of the total respondent did not complete beyond primary education.

Health :

Health is the most important factor that shows the economic condition of a society. Health condition of Jamatia women is not well. Most of the people is depending on the primary health centre. Peoples are suffered with the life style disease like diabetes, cholesterol, malaria etc. during the pregnancy periods women were suffered due to lack of diagnostic facility in the local area.

Jamatia Women Participation to Politics :

The present study explore that the respondents of the surveyed area has less aware about the politics and their political behavior are much influenced by many



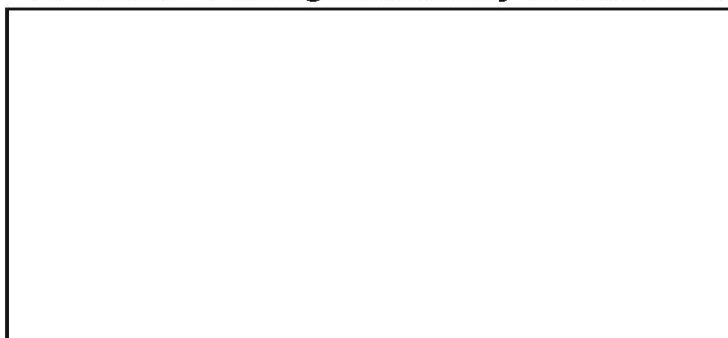
factor like socio-economic factors, issues of development and issues raised by political parties. The data analysis explored their awareness by the following:

Table 11 : Voting of the respondents

(Q. Did you participate in the state (Tripura) assembly election 2018?)

Response	No. of Respondents	% percentage
Yes	92	92%
No	8	8%

Pie Chart 2 : Voting in assembly election 2018



The response of the participants shows that, almost 92 percent of them have participated or casted their votes. It is a very high ratio comparing to the other parts of the country and it shows that high percentage of them are well aware of their democratic right. However, it is influence by others opinion.

Table 12 : In deciding whom to vote for, whose opinion mattered to you most?

Response	No. of Respondents	% percentage
Local Political Leader	24	24
Husband/Wife	16	16
Community Leader (Hoda)	40	40
Friends/neighbor	10	10
Others	-	-
Total	100	100

The data of the above table shows that, In deciding whom to vote for, 24 percent of the respondents says, local Political Leaders opinion mattered to them most, 16

percent of the respondents says, Husband/Wife’s opinion mattered to them most, 40 percent of the respondents say Hoda’s opinion mattered to them most and 10 percent of the respondents says, Friends/neighbor’s opinion mattered to them most.

Table 13 : Do you participate in political activities (protests, marches, meetings or demonstrations).

Response	% percentage of Respondents
Yes	90
No	10
Others	-
Total	100

According to survey only 90% of people go to political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that go to any political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that only 10% of people did not go to political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that. Here, it was observed that, their participation in political activities is high due to the influence of political leader and community leaders.

Jamatia women and Taboo :

The status of women in all types of societies, like that of Jamatia, is determined by various taboos that are generally attached to women. It is a taboo for women to be member of the Luku, Mayal, or Hoda. There are some other taboos about women at certain periods. During the menstrual period they were not allowed in kitchen and cannot participated in any social functions.

Alcoholism :

Jamatia women are mostly involved in making local wine.

- i. Drinking alcohol was a common practice among the people in the Surveyed area.
- ii. During survey it was revealed that consumption of alcohol was not limited to certain season.

Findings :

After a brief study of socio-political life of Jamatia women in Tripura, we observed that womens are still marginalized in Jamatia Society. However it is changing very slowly.

Negative self-image :

The following factors accentuate the negative self-image that the women have inherited along the way.



1. Women are considered as Shudras.
2. Menstrual blood is dirty and polluting.
3. Late marriage begets shame to her family.
4. Women's sexuality is dangerous to society.
5. It is woman's fault if she gives birth to a girl child.
6. In addition, early signs of illness are neglected.

Deprived of intangible resources :

Women are generally deprived of Intangible resources such as information knowledge; skills, self-confidence and articulation are integral elements in getting access to entitlements to material resources and in asserting their rights. There are certain innate qualities like self-confidence, self worth, communication skills, etc. are culturally suppressed and not fostered in women by patriarchal society.

Gender related handicaps :

Women come into the political system with many gender related handicaps like illiteracy, responsibility of house work, child care, social and familial oppositions to their involvement in public life, poor self image, lack of self confidence and ignorance about the political system.

Major findings: After the overall study we observe the following major findings:

1. In respect to Economic status among the Women in the surveyed areas, it was found out that 70 percent of the respondents are belongs to BPL family and 30 percent of the respondents are belongs to APL family. Thus they have low economic Status.
2. Regarding educational background of the respondent, it is found that Majority of the respondent were less educated. It is observed that their educational status is backward. It is evident that, 53 percent of the total respondent did not complete beyond primary education.
3. The response of the participants shows that, almost 92 percent of them have participated or casted their votes. It is a very high ratio comparing to the other parts of the country and it shows that high percentage of them are well aware of their democratic right.
4. According to survey only 90% of people go to political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that go to any political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that only 10% of people did not go to political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that.
5. The status of women in all types of societies, like that of Jamatia, is determined by various taboos that are generally attached to women. It is a taboo for women to be member of the luku, Mayal, or Hoda.
6. Jamatia women are mostly involved in making local wine and agricultural activities, and they played an important role in the economy of the community.

CONCLUSION :

It can be conclusively stated that there has been a radical change in the movement for empowerment of women. Recognition is dawning that women are indeed becoming a political force, both nationally and internationally. In this context it would be noteworthy to recall the observations of Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen in his book, "India : Economic Development and Social Opportunity", "Women's empowerment can positively influence the lives not only of women themselves but also of men, and of course, those of children". The above discussion clarifies the concept about the development and status of Jamatia women as Tribal community in Tripura. It is clear that gender equality among tribal groups is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addressed in the context of various issues such as family structure, fertility, child mortality, literacy, sex-ratio, labor force participation, economic worth generated within the household, religion, culture, and exposure to the mainstream population. It is tempting to conclude that general development programs are sufficient for the reduction of levels of gender inequality; this study does not necessarily show this to be the case inequality. With regard to policy formulation, the present study shows that for the scheduled tribe groups in India, gender equality should be conceptualized as an integral part of the development process. The role of Jamatia women is important but their socio-economic development is poor. The problems of Jamatias women and tribals are largely common.

From the overall analysis, we can conclude that the study area of Tripura is heavily poverty stricken and there is high inter-village variation of it. But it should be noted that most of the families are below poverty line and the level of empowerment is also very low, despite high inter-village variation. So, overall development for all sections of the society including women needs to be prioritized.

Figures in all the human development indicators (income, education and health) for women are extremely low, which could be due to discrimination and deprivation in occupation, education and lack of either healthcare facilities or awareness. These areas need special attention for the desired welfare of whole population of the area.

Lastly we would suggest some recommendations to strengthen and empower tribals as well as Jamatia women are:

- ◆ For promoting Justice- Social, economic and political, it is needed to be elimination of all types of discrimination against the socially disadvantaged groups specially the Tribals with the strength of Constitutional Commitments, legislative support, affirmative action, awareness generation, concentration of target groups and change in the mind-set of the people.

- ◆ The government should focus empowerment of schedule tribe women and allocate separate funds throughout the govt. plan.
- ◆ Health, education and nourishment should be selected key focus areas, besides; women should be provided ample opportunities for economic development, based upon the traditional skills, Jamatia women should also be provided additional skills for value additions to the produces.
- ◆ Jamatia Women should be educated and they should participate in debates and conferences in political issues.
- ◆ Legal system aiming at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women should be strengthened. In addition to that, awareness level about political events and laws should also be raised among women.
- ◆ Customary Laws of the community should be reviewed in regards of gender equality.
- ◆ Jamatia Women should be provided leadership and communication training.
- ◆ They must be socialized in the mainstream of the political system which is the only way to prevent them from becoming alienated and hostile towards the system which is the worst challenge of the contemporary world.
- ◆ Education and knowledge of community leaders like, Hoda should be considered while electing them.
- ◆ Lastly, but not least, there is a dearth need to conduct research study on socio-economic and political condition of Jamatia women and a inclusive policy implementation by the Tribal welfare department of Government of Tripura.

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6

Mapping Accessibility of Financial Services under Financial Inclusion of Wagdi Tribe in Bhagatpura Panchayat of Kushalgarh Block in Banswara District of Rajasthan

Aditi Khan*

Abstract : India is a country of millions of people among them around 833.1 million people live in 640,867 different villages. But the mainstream amenities and entitlements do not reach to all the citizen of this country. In such a situation this study was conducted at Kushalgarh Block in Banswara District of Rajasthan. This study mainly focus on the financial inclusion. Financial inclusion means the accessibility of banking and financial services like credit, savings, insurance, digital banking system to every individual in the society according to people's need without doing any form of discrimination. From the study it is found that this tribal based area where people are financially and socially belong to poor category. Migration and labour work is the primary occupation of 60% families where 26% family's main occupation is agriculture. In deficit condition most of the people prefer informal credit system like money lender, relatives, MFI rather than formal banking system because they are manipulated by BC, refused by bank and also they don't like banking process. Notra is one of the famous informal credit systems in this area that is use mainly in the time of marriage, house making or big health hazard purpose also. The study reviles that the 100 per cent of the population is covered under the bank account services. On the other hand only 21% people have savings a/c pass book, 29% people have ATM card and out of this only few are using ATM because due to less money they stop transaction through ATM, that make it expired and only 2% people have cheque book sometime they take cheque in migration

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and deposit that cheque in bank account. People don't do financial planning and budgeting for their daily life but in the time of marriage, building house, health hazard they go for financial planning and budgeting. Whenever they need credit they first plan it and then only go for credit and after taking first credit if he want another credit before repaying first loan, he will get loan or not that totally depends on creditor person who is providing loan. In such case, any external help can be a boost for them to come out of poverty cycle. Self Help Group Intervention also can be an appropriate solution of accessing formal system because through this people can grow their savings habit, easily then can get loan and other banking facilities as well as also they can come out from poverty.

Introduction :

Financial services refer to the services provided by institutions like banks for facilitating of various kinds of financial transactions like credit, insurance, savings, investment opportunities and overall dealing with money. This service is for the people and provided by government and non-government organizations. But the question remains how many of the Indian population get practically; Financial inclusion means the accessibility of banking and financial services like credit, savings, insurance, digital banking system to every individual in the society according to people's need without doing any form of discrimination. According to census data of 2011 68.84% Indians are stayed in village which is around 833.1 million people live in 640,867 different villages. But the ill fate of the country is the radius of the financial services is limited to the city or nearby city areas only. Where the majority of the population of a country lives in villages with poor communication through every means of transportation hundred per cent financial inclusion is seems to a myth to that country. There is a believe that only the business man and big industrialist need money for credit so if we cover the urban areas only we can meet the most need of credit in the society. But it is not true, maybe he businessman and industrialists need the money for the expansion of the economy of the country, but the poor community of India also needs credit in the fight for existence. There is more demand of the financial services more in the villages rather than the towns. The local money lenders and the cheat fund companies take the advantages of that innocent demand and exploit them as much they can.

The term "tribe", derived from the Latin tribua, originally meant a political unit, and was later used to refer to social groups defined by the territory they occupied. Though there was no proper definition of a tribe but according to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology 769 "...bound together by kin and duty and associated with a particular territory. Members of a tribe share the social cohesion associated with

the family, together with the sense of political autonomy of a nation". In India the word "tribe" is used to denote "original inhabitants" or in other words, "adivasis". It is now an umbrella term that includes diverse groups of people who are believed to be the original inhabitants of whichever place they occupy and whose distinct historical, ethnic, cultural and linguistic attributes have survived into the present.

Wagdi or Bagdiare the people of Rajasthan who is belonging from the Bhil Tribal root. Wagdi is one of the Non-Scheduled languages spoken in India. As a linguistic community Wagdi is majorly concentrated in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra as per the latest Census publication 2011. They are traditionally hunters and gatherers but now they learn farming and some labour work for survival.

To keeping in mind on above precious information and importance accessibility of financial services under financial inclusion in these three villages Galapara, Bhagatpura and Harkapara of Kushalgarh block of Banswaradist in Rajasthan the present study has been conducted with Highlighting on the following specific objectives –

- ◆ To assess the status of availing the various financial services among the tribal people of the village.
- ◆ To understand the financial planning and budgeting among the tribal people of this village.
- ◆ To assess the status of accessibility of the various financial services among tribal people of the village.
- ◆ To find the gaps as well as existing mechanism that leads to financial exclusion and inclusion under financial services.
- ◆ To find appropriate strategies for effective financial inclusion.

Study area and Methodology :

The state (Rajasthan), District (Banswara) and Block (Kushalgarh) are selected purposively, but the villages (Galapara, Bhagatpura and Harkapara) and the respondents (20 each village total 60) are selected through the systematic random sampling. The study was conducted with a sample size of 60.

Result and Discussion :

Vagatpura Panchayat is consists of 9 tribal villages. All villages are underdeveloped both financially and socially.. Every village has their own name history, these three villages Galapara, Vagatpara and Harkapara are also not exceptional of this. All three villages' people belong to hindu religion and tribal caste family. Previously villagers were dependant on rain water but nowadays mainly in winter season they use well water and Garadara river water through canal system.

Around 150 years ago there is a person called Gala^m lived in Galapara village. He was the rich person rather than others villagers but no one knows who are his descendant all are mixed. But as once he was the famous person of this area, so from his name this village is known as Galapara, likewise other two villages name also came from Bhagat king to Bhagatpura and an unknown person discovered the third village called Harkapara.

Demography :

Caste :

In these three villages all people belong to Hindu religion and ST caste, so there is no variation in case of caste and creed but there is a variation among men and women in case of wages, decision making purpose.

Distribution of Family members according to Male and Female population Index and Age wise distribution

This area is good in sex ratio, where female population is 50.14% and male population is 49.86%. Age wise categorization shows a huge difference is there among 3 categories of below 18 years (45%), 18 to 59 years (48%) and above 60(7%) years of old people. It is shown that it can be an opportunity of bring development in this area through huge no. of young people, because young people have their more mental and physical strength to do work for more hours and also they can earn more.

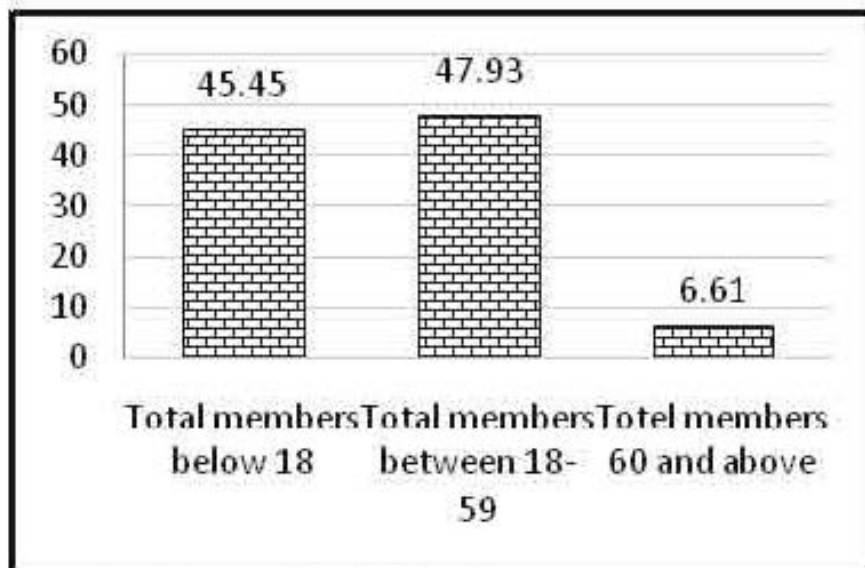


Chart 1 Age wise distribution of male & female

Financial Planning and Budgeting :

It is an important part of daily life as well as in future life also. In the country poor people are very far away from this part, where low literacy rate, poor savings habit, informal financial system drag behind them. Survey reveals that 100% people don't do their financial planning and budgeting in their daily life. But through focused group discussion it is known that in case of big health disease, marriage time or in the time of building house, purchasing land they do planning. First they plan how much money is needed for which purpose, then they do budgeting and last they go for credit. In case of sickness or during construction of house, if a person needs second time loan before his first loan repayment, the ultimate decision goes to creditor whether to give or not. When creditor gives loan first thing he observes that, his debtor is capable of loan repayment or not and secondly his behavior is good or bad. In case of marriage, building house, purchasing land the person who needs money organizes notra festival before 15 days, where who was in under debt he gives previous money what he got, with some bonus as per his wish to his creditor and here creditor is; who organizes the notra festival. There is no limitation of money exchanging in notra festival, it depends on family to family. Marriages, building houses how much money the family will spend in which purpose that planning they usually do.

Income and Expenditure of cropping pattern :

As villagers suffer due to water scarcity in summer, so they do agriculture activity in rainy and winter season. Their main common crops are wheat and maize, most of the people cultivate wheat and maize and other crops like soybean, cotton, Bengal gram and paddy also they cultivate. Villagers cultivate those crops both for consumption and commercial purpose both where 100% families meet their own consumption need first then only they go for sale.

Crop Name	Input (quintal)	Expenditure (Rs.)	Output (quintal)	Total Income (Rs.)
Wheat	1	10000	10	25000
Maize	1	25000	25	42500
Soyabin	1	5000	7	21000
Paddy	1	2000	6	6000
Cotton	1	500000	500	2000000

This table reveals that in every crop from each 1 quintal input get respective wheat (10q), maize (25q), soybean (7q), paddy (6q) and cotton (500q) output, where cotton

is there main profitable commercial crop (Income-Rs.2000000/q.) But they can cultivate only few amounts in their small land. Wheat and maize cultivation is almost common in all families but in case of other crops and also for wheat and maize how much which family will cultivate that depends on their own financial condition. Usually people invest money in crop cultivation what they earned from migration in summer season. In winter season villagers have some money in their hand because this time they do cultivation, harvesting and go for migration but because of their main diwali festival again they spend more money in entertainment and in summer sometime people go through in deficit condition because most of the marriages happen in summer only where they have to spend huge amount money and rain is the most vulnerable situation for them no labour work they get and they have to again spend money in field for cultivation purpose so this is the peak season when they go through deficit condition, most of the people spend the money in cultivation what they earned from migration and very few people go for taking credit only.

Income from Livestock :

Beside different types of occupation this area people have livestock, from this activity also they earn money. Among the total livestock income, contribution from goat, cow, poultry, buffalo and bull are respectively 59%, 14.83%, 3.37%, 18.11% and 4.68%. Another side in this area 70% families have goat and 30% families don't have goat likewise 37% families have cow, 63% families don't have cow, 28% families have poultry, 72% families don't have poultry, 18% families have buffalo, 82% families don't have buffalo and last 62% families have bull, 38% families don't have bull. Therefore, it can be said that people have the habit of keeping livestock as their earning source, so if they properly manage their livestock they can earn lump sum amount money from this sector and it is clear that if all family use goat as their livestock definitely economically they will be benefitted.

Annual income from different livelihoods –

Occupation	Average yearly Income
Migration	33405
Agriculture	17600
MGNREGA+Labour work	19398
Labour work	17000
MGNREGA	7650
Livestock	8898

Through survey it is known that in this area family wise yearly average income is Rs. 26656 and if include the livestock sector then total yearly average income is Rs. 35554. If all family will added with all sector then family wise yearly average income will be Rs. 33405 from migration, Rs. 17600 in agriculture, Rs. 19398 in (MGNREGA+Labour work), Rs. 17000 from only labour work and Rs. 7650 from only MGNREGA, and Rs 8898 from Livestock sector.

This table also shows that that among the total income of this area; migration plays the major role because the contribution from migration sector is highest that is 37.34%, agriculture contributes 26.70% of total area income, 13.42% comes from MGNREGA+Labour work, 5.88% from MGNREGA and 14.21% comes from only livestock sector of total income. So it is telling that if all family added with migration economy of this area will be increased. But only earning money is not enough to come out from poverty, they have to stop spending money unnecessary and also they have to grow the saving habit then only they can go financially & socially in better position.

Annual Expenditure :

Through survey it has been seen that consumption food cost, cloth and festival costs are their fixed cost otherwise entertainment cost, asset creating and savings amount all those are their variable cost. And in case of marriage they spend huge money; it is totally depending upon different families’ financial condition. In case of normal health problem like, fever, diarrhea, cold or any continuous treatment of any family likewise villagers have approximate fixed expenditure. Most of the villagers go for govt. few only go for the private hospital because in private hospital expenditure is more. But in case of big health hazard they go for credit only.

Particulars	Average family expenditure
Consumption	37973 (66%)
Health	4058 (7%)
Festival	4800 (8%)
Education	2850 (5%)
Cloth	8367 (14%)
Total	58048 (100%)

Above table reveals that family wise average yearly expenditure is more in consumption (food) purpose that is yearly Rs. 37973/family means 66% of total



expenditure, whether it is very less in case of education; only 5% of total expenditure that is average Rs. 2850/family. They spend 14% (8367/family) behind the cloth, 8% (4800/family) in festival, that shows they like more entertainment in their life rather than giving priority in education, but low balance is also one of the reason of not to continue education. Yearly spending certain amount money behind health is also another reason of ignorance towards their health. In case of marriage they spend more money, it varies family to family, and minimum Rs. 50000 to it can be up to 4-5 lakhs. Most of the marriages occur in March and April month. This area people have different festival also, among all festival Diwali is their main big festival in November. In this festival they spend money in buying dresses, different food item purpose. Likewise different month different festival they are celebrating.

Surplus and Deficit Condition :

Poor become poor because of their no savings habit. In this area very few people have their savings habit. But people's yearly transaction is Rs. 500-1000 to keep their account running. Because sometime their pension money, MNREGA money or if govt. allocate any money that only comes through bank account. Most of the case in surplus condition people spends their money in food purpose and then keep attention on repaying loan after then they go for cloth and very few go for creating asset like purchasing livestock and savings purpose. Another side in the time of deficit condition besides going for credit facility also they prefer to go for labour work and selling livestock all those kinds of things.

This chart reveals that in this area 22% family goes through deficit condition but rest 78% families have year round surplus condition and average family surplus is Rs. 4573. But actually situation is not like that because behind their entertainment (consuming alcohol, picnic, and gambling) they spend a lot.

Deficit Management :

This area people are habituated to deal with deficit condition. So in the time of deficit condition they are mainly doing three types of things; viz- taking loan, selling asset and labour work. Which time what types of management villagers will do that depends on the situation only, mean if in market, demand is more they go for labour work, if they have sellable livestock they sell their livestock, otherwise many times they go for credit, and through survey it has been seen that people prefer informal credit system more rather than the formal credit system because through the informal system they get easily money whenever they need it.

This chart reveals that under the 1st preference most of the families (76%) go for credit, only 6% families go for selling asset and rest 17% families go for labour work, next under the 2nd preference most of the families(55%) go for labour work, 26% go for selling asset and 19% go for credit, and in their last preference most of the families go for (66%) selling asset, 29% go for labour work and rest 5% go for credit facility. So it proves that people mainly want credit in their deficit condition rather than other management. But if they grow savings habit among them easily they can manage their deficit condition, unnecessary they don't have to spend extra money as repayment, by using their own money they can fulfill their need and also can make assets that will help them to come out from poverty also.

Relation between bank and villagers :

This area village people have bank account and passbook but problem is that they don't use their bank account. They don't like to go much more in bank at all, whenever they need money they go for money lender or Samastha microfinance. Actually they know bank are giving loan in low interest but problem is that for taking loan from bank they have to go step by step but in emergency case they don't get money easily from bank so usually they avoid bank. Only few people uses Kisan credit card and use short term loan and very few person use long term bank loan. Very few people have cheque book sometime they take cheque in migration and deposit that cheque in bank account. Villagers are unaware about Know your customer and they don't have any insurance. Problem is that if one family gets any facility from bank and explains it among few more villagers and again they go to bank, easily bankers refuse them by seeing more people at a time and ordered them to go Business correspondent.

Relation between Business correspondent and villagers :

When villagers are refused from bank and come to business correspondent again they manipulated through this category people. Where illiterate villagers don't know how to withdrawal money that case BC takes advantage. Suppose in any case any person want Rs. 10000, BC withdrawal more than Rs. 10000 and he takes that extra money but that illiterate person can't understand how he is manipulating because next time when he goes to BC and want the details about his account BC just avoid the situation through his own tactics.



Appropriate strategies for effective financial inclusion :

Relation among bank and tribal people should be good :

In this area bankers are unaware about how villagers are getting manipulated by Business correspondent, so they should have visit the villages location and whenever few more villagers go to bank, to avoid the crowd and for villagers illiteracy bankers usually refuse them but if make the relationship good among bankers and villagers they will think about poor people and according to the need they can arrange awareness camp and different programme for tribal people to make them understand, though they are getting easy loan from informal system but it is not safe, interest rate is also high so formal system is better than informal system in case of providing credit, savings, insurance, mobile banking and for all entitlement facilities.

Govt. should have to focus on poor villagers :

People felt difficulty and refused by bank also, that's why they prefer to go informal system and also they felt a pressure of timely repayment of loan in formal credit system. So for them govt. have to initiate literacy camp and awareness programme to make them aware and access about the financial services and also to stop getting manipulated by Business correspondent.

Need of Self Help Group Intervention :

Most of the poor people don't have any savings habit so after taking loan somehow they repay it but after few days again they want credit. But bank can't give frequent loan so they go for informal system but if SHG intervene here people will get their frequent loan and a saving habit will also grow among them that will help them in timely loan repayment, also they can get other financial services there is an opportunity of come out from poverty.

Other NGO intervention with their different awareness programme related to the finance can also be useful for the improvement of this poor section.

Conclusion and Way Forward :

This is a tribal based area where people are financially and socially belong to poor category. Migration is the primary occupation of 60% families where 26% families main occupation is agriculture, people also earn certain amount money from MNREGA, labour work and livelihood sector but because of their high expenditure rate they can't save money and goes to the deficit condition. In deficit condition most of the people prefer informal credit system like money lender, relatives, MFI rather than formal banking system because they are manipulated by

BC, refused by bank and also they don't like banking process. Notra is one of the famous informal credit systems in this area that is use mainly in the time of marriage, house making or big health hazard purpose also. People have awareness about banking facilities and entitlement but illiteracy and poor behaviour among bank and villagers restrict them accessing the financial services. 100% families have their bank means in each family at least 1 person has bank a/c, where 96% people have bank a/c in SBI and 4.2% have bank a/c in BOBKG and they keep their a/c operative by transaction of Rs. 500-1000/yearly because MGNREGA money and if any case govt. allocates any fund through any scheme and pension those things villagers will get through bank a/c. Almost all people prefer SBI because it is one of the old and well known bank in this area. Another side only 21% people have savings a/c pass book, 29% people have ATM card and out of this only few are using ATM because due to less money they stop transaction through ATM, that make it expired and only 2% people have cheque book sometime they take cheque in migration and deposit that cheque in bank account. People don't do financial planning and budgeting for their daily life but in the time of marriage, building house, health hazard they go for financial planning and budgeting. Whenever they need credit they first plan it and then only go for credit and after taking first credit if he want another credit before repaying first loan, he will get loan or not that totally depends on creditor person who is providing loan. When creditor gives loan first thing he observes that, his debtor is capable of loan repayment or not and secondly his behavior is good or bad and very few people who are literate and whose financial condition is somehow good rarely they are going for bank credit. Actually poor villagers felt difficulty in formal system and another side from informal system they get loan easily, but they can't understand this informal system is not safe, they can easily getting manipulated, so first making them aware about this and also giving them lesson related to the formal financial services through the literacy camp is very much necessary and there is also a need of bankers visit in location to understand the real situation and people's need. According to people need, bank also can arrange literacy camp and make them aware and access about financial services. Self Help Group Intervention also can be an appropriate solution of accessing formal system because through this people can grow their savings habit, easily then can get loan and other banking facilities as well as also they can come out from poverty.

**Way forward :**

- ◆ A savings habit should be generated among poor tribal people
- ◆ Self Help Group can be promoted for poor people to grow the savings habit and generate the formal credit system instead of going for informal credit.
- ◆ Awareness programme and literacy camp (by bankers and govt.) is needed for villagers for financial accessibility.
- ◆ Discrimination between man and women in the case of decision making should be stopped and as both can earn money from labour work, so both should be given rights of using money.
- ◆ Addiction towards alcoholism also should be stopped.

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Participation of Tribal Women in Gaon Panchayat : A Study in Assam

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Abstract : Panchayati Raj Institution- the three tier institutions of local governance which stands at bottom is the most common and mostly found almost entire states of India except the Sixth Schedule areas. Genesis, of India's local governance can be traced back to ancient times, however, these institutions got present shape and structure after series of reform study resulted in number of Acts and constitutional amendments. Major thrust of these Acts and constitutional amendments are to ensure the participation of community in these institutions especially women, yet, number of studies suggested that objectives of these Acts has not fulfilled due to various reasons. Considering these, in this paper, an attempt is being made to analyse the participation of women specially the tribal women in local governance of India.

Key Word :- Panchayati Raj Institution, Governance; attendance, party affiliation, community affiliation, patriarchy.

Introduction to the study :

“Women's political representation and participation is one of the most vital indicators of development together with an assessment of gender inequality in all societies across the globe” (Ramya, 2014, p. 98) because it assists women towards the inclusive growth. In context of India, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties, and directive principles. Equality of status and opportunity to women is a pledge made by the Indian Constitution. However, in practice, it has hardly been translated into action. Moreover “in no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as

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men" (UNDP, 1995, p. 2). It is because, women are often excluded from playing legitimate and active roles in rural community life due to social and institutional constraints (UNDP, n.d). Consequently, this led to less access of education, health and productive resources among "women particularly those belonging to weaker sections including Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes/ Other Backward Classes and minorities" (Gol, 2001, p. 10). Therefore, among tribal communities "though women hold comparatively high social position and respect in the society, they are still missing on the top ladders and high positions in governance and administration and in other fields of life" (STWD, n.d, p. 40). So, the gender relation among tribal group is a complex phenomenon, which needs a serious attention.

Accordingly, the Government of India to empower and to accelerate the inclusive growth of women especially tribal women introduced number of legal and institutional measures. In such direction, introduction of 73rd constitutional amendment pave to be one of the major initiatives. Although the Government has introduced these measures but there are number of literatures which consider that fruit of these reforms has not been reached to the poor. Considering all, in this paper an attempt is being made to analyse the women participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in general and in Gaon Panchayat¹ in specific among the Tiwas² of Morigaon, Assam.

Methodology :

The study is empirical in nature and by and large a preliminary enquiry into the research problem formulated for investigation. As the Gaon Panchayat is the lowest level body of PRIs so this research concentrated on understanding the participation of women in PRIs in special references to Gaon Panchayat. Accordingly, the field data was collected from two different Gaon Panchayat namely Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat and Torabori Gaon Panchayat. Reason behind the selection of these two sample Gaon Panchayat was because of composition and their location. President of Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat was a Tiwa woman whereas the President of Torabori Gaon Panchayat was a man belonged to Tiwa. Further, the entire representatives of Ghaguwa belonged to Tiwa community whereas in case of Torabori, there was only one Tiwa woman representative. These two Gaon Panchayat located at far from district headquarter maintaining the rural settings and belonged to two different development blocks of the district. Moreover, to understand the participation of general women in different activities of Gaon Panchayat two villages were selected, one from Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat namely Udahinbori and Kapurpurabori from Torabori Gaon Panchayat based on demographic composition of these two villages. The entire inhabitants of both the villages were Tiwas and the representative who represents their village in concerned Gaon Panchayat were women.

Field data was collected during 2018 and for this purpose of this research women representatives who were in office during 2013-18 were interviewed. Primary data were collected through interview, participant observation and Focus Group Discussion from villagers and staffs of concern Gaon Panchayat. Secondary sources consist of different statistics of PRIs available different offices and at PRIs office.

Evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Assam :

In Indian context, the tradition of PRIs can be traced back to ancient period (Gandhi, 1962; Maheshwari, 1963) literary meaning of which is an assembly of five members elected by villagers, which represents the systems, by which the innumerable village republics of India were governed (Gandhi, 1962). Although, India has a long tradition of Panchayati Raj system, the present Panchayat system has no direct connection with the rural local self-government that existed in ancient and medieval period³. Yet the present Panchayati Raj system is highly inspired by the institutions that prevailed in those periods (Phukan, 2010).

Similarly, the ancient institutions of Assam like Khels⁴ and Mels⁵ under the Ahom Administration during early thirteenth century and Naamghar (common worshipping place) during sixteenth century which acted as occupational and territorial Panchayats, however, these institutions cannot be considered as local-self-government (Chakraborty, 2012) but they promoted community feelings and common decision making (Zakir & Kalita, 2011). On the other hand, the records of Krai Chomot among the Khanggiwalli Tiwas and Pisai Raw of Ghoba Rajya and Hedari Khel reflect the prevalence of the present system of PRIs among the Tiwas of Assam.

In a true sense, in Assam the local self-government institutions gradually developed under colonial rule with the introduction of Assam Local Self Government Act 1915. During post-independence Assam has experienced Rural Self Government Act 1926, which also emphasized on constitution of Village Authority consisting of not more than nine elected members. Therefore, objective of this Act is to promote self-help among the villagers to manage their own affairs. However, as the village authorities could not draw financial support from the colonial government, the village authorities had nominal existence (Sangma, et al., 2001).

“With the dawn of independence, the history of local self-government in Assam witnessed a remarkable change” (Chakraborty, 2012, p. 50). The Assam Rural Panchayat bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 11th March 1948 with the objective to develop the local self-government in rural Assam to make better provisions for administration, reconstruction, and development of villages (Bhattacharjee & Nayak, 2001; Chakraborty, 2012). Then Legislative Assembly passed the Assam Panchayat Act 1948. Meantime in July 1953, the Government of Assam

under the leadership of Hitendra Chandra Chakraborty an Ex-minister appointed a Panchayat Enquiry Committee to review the progress of the working of the Panchayat system in Assam. This committee came up with its report and recommended to increase the term of the Panchayats from three years to five years (Malaviya, 1956) but the Amendment Bill which was prepared on the basis of these recommendations failed in the Assembly (Chakraborty, 2012).

In 1959, based on recommendation of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Assam like other states of India introduced the Assam Panchayat Act 1959, the objective of which was to amend and consolidate the laws relating to the Panchayats and it sought to invest them with necessary powers and authority (Bhattacharjee & Nayak, 2001). The Assam Panchayat Act 1959 was enforced in Assam from 1960, which provided the provision of Gaon Panchayat at the village level, the Anchalik Panchayat at the block level, and the Mohkuma Parishad at the sub-divisional level. However, after four years of enactment of this Act, the study team appointed by the Government of Assam to review the progress, made some modification to the functioning of existing Panchayati Raj. Similarly, based on these recommendations the Government of Assam introduced Assam Panchayat (Amendment) Act 1964 (Sangma, et al., 2001). Then in 1972, based on the recommendation of the Estimate Committee which was appointed in 1970, the Assam Panchayati Raj Act 1972 was introduced and it reintroduced a two-tier system of Panchayati Raj with Gaon Panchayat at the lower level i.e. village or base level and Mohkuma Parishads at the sub-divisional level. Therefore, this Act abolished Anchalik Panchayats. Although, the Assam Panchayati Raj Act 1972 introduced a two-tier system of Panchayati Raj in Assam, however, the three-tier system was again reverted in Assam by the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1986 with effect from September 1990, which brought back the institution of Anchalik Panchayats in the Panchayati Raj in Assam. Later on, the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1986 was amended by the Assam Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Ordinance, 1992 and it was replaced by the Assam Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Act, 1992 (ibid).

With the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act 1992, the structure of the Panchayati Raj changed in Assam too. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Bill introduced in the Indian parliament created a milestone for PRIs in India. Based on different provisions of this Act most of the Indian States introduced their State Act on PRIs. Accordingly, the Government of Assam introduced the Assam Panchayat Act 1994 on the conformity of the new provision of the Seventy-Third Amendment of Indian Constitution. The Assam Panchayat Act 1994 was passed by the Assam Legislative Assembly and was approved by the Governor of Assam on May 5, 1994. The Act

covered the rural areas of Assam except the Autonomous Districts under the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution of India and any area, which has been included in a Municipality or Town Committee or Cantonment constituted under the Assam Municipal Act 1956 and the Cantonment Act 1924 respectively or by any other Act. The Act endowed in promotion of the three tier PRIs along with formation of a District Planning Committee (DPC) in each district of Assam. The Assam Panchayat Act 1994 empowered the Gaon Panchayat with 29 subjects (Government of Assam, 1994). The Assam Panchayat Act 1994 was further amended in April 1997. The Assam Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 1997, gave the provision of appointing the minister-in-charge of the respective district as the Chairperson of the DPC in place of the President of the Zilla Parishad (Sangma et al. 2001). Again, to raise the number of reserved seats the Assam Panchayat (Amendment) 2011 was introduced. It had increased the number of reserved seats at Gaon Panchayat to 50 per cent for women (Government of Assam, 2011).

Though the first election after the introduction of the Assam Panchayat Act 1994 was held in October 1996 to establish the three-tier PRIs in Assam (Chakraborty, 2012), the first Panchayat election in terms of the Assam Panchayat Act 1994 was held only in December 2001. This election was held at 2487 Gaon Panchayat, 203 Anchalik Panchayats and 21 Zilla Parishads. However, with the creation of Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District in 2002 the number of Gaon Panchayats reduced. Thus, the Assam Panchayat Act, 1994 is not applicable for the district of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksha, Udalguri, KarbiAnglong and Dima Hasao. The second term of Panchayat election was held in Assam in 2007 and the third election was held in 2013. The last election was conducted during 2018 at 21 Zilla Parishads, 185 Anchalik Panchayats and 2202 Gaon Panchayats.

Discussion :

With the participation of tribal women in local-self-government, the power of tribal women at the grass root level bodies upsurge tremendously, hence led to great degree of social transformation in society (Ramya, 2014). On the other hand, some studies (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2007/2008; Alsop, Krishna, & Sjoblom, n.d) have found that the participation of women or the occurrence of women's complaints have not enhanced by the policy of reservation, particularly among the women belong to Schedule Tribe (ST). There are certain weaknesses pertaining to the reservation system responsible for less participation of women in PRIs among tribal societies. Lack of devolution, finances (Jayal, 2008) gender division in the villages (Alsop, Krishna, & Sjoblom, n.d) family, social outlook, patriarchy and socio-

cultural constraints (Ramya, 2014) are some of the major factors responsible for ineffective participation of tribal women in PRIs. Further low participation of tribal women in PRIs is also accelerated by family background (Patel, 2008) lack of education and information (Alsop, Krishna, & Sjoblom, n.d) procedural distortions such as no-confidence motions and two-child norms (Jayal, 2008) and lack of awareness (P R Memorial Foundation, n.d). On the other hand, financial limitation (Mohanty & Singh, 2014) is the most important reasons which forbidden the tribal women from contesting in election.

Political participation is an exercise of power^{vi} through entering into decision making either participating in casting vote or contesting in election process. However, as field data shows that casting vote and contesting election did not ensure political participation as “the problem of political equality and equal participation, however, depends on more fundamental changes in social, economic and educational conditions” (Sharma, 2004). Therefore, before understanding the participation level, let me discuss why did the women contested in the election as suggested by the field data.

It is true that with the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution and subsequent introduction of the Assam Panchayat Act 1994, a huge number of women representatives entered into the Gaon Panchayat. Further, in Assam, it was accelerated by the amendment of this Act in 2011 by increasing number of reserved seats for women. Considering this it can be conclude that the reservation process had created an enabling environment for women to take part in the election as candidates. Similarly, the entire women representatives of these two Gaon Panchayat said that reservation of seat for them was the first and foremost reason for contesting election by them, although there were other factors too. Now with the reservation, they no more had to contest against men counterparts who were traditionally powerful. If it would had been unreserved, women would have to fight in two strata to became the elected representative. First, was the rooted patriarchy, which did not allow a woman to take part in election as contestant in an open seat and second was the election process. Now with reservation they automatically crossed the first strata.

Although reservation was found to be the prime factor that inspired the women to contest in election, but it did not encourage all rather a section to contest in the election. Accordingly, four to five women contested in the election. Enquiry to this shows that number of factors responsible for this. Interestingly all these factors had direct relation between woman and herself, family and society. In analysing the age of the representatives and those who contested in the election held in 2013, it was found that only women belonging to a specific age group contested in the election. It

was the age group of 30-50 years, which produced the highest number of women contestants in the election. It was because till 50 years of age generally they were physically active and has higher physical mobility. Their physical strength convinced their husbands or elderly men at their families to allow them to take part in election, as it would not change any domestic division of work at home, if they would elect as representative. They would have physical strength to carry out the political works being member of Gaon Panchayat along with the domestic chores that were assigned to them according the family norms. Therefore, if the woman could manage both the works then there was no problem for men in allowing them to participate in election as contestants.

The field study shows that there is a positive relation between marriage of woman and contesting in election. It was observed that generally it was married women who contested in the election. No unmarried girl was allowed to contest in the election mostly because they were not considered as real assets of the family. Further, it was also informed that the family did not like to expose an unmarried girl to public life as it might create problems to her future married life or she would not get married if she would become a public figure. In such condition, even if any unmarried girl wanted to contest in the election, she would not have the support from her family. As they did not have the family support so, they did not contest in the election as said by few girl respondents. Interestingly all these girl respondents were highly educated, had a vision about their life and society, and were bold. Therefore, it can be assumed that prevail patriarchy work as hinderance in contesting election of unmarried girl in election process as allowing an unmarried girl to take part in such activities means allowing challenges to existing patriarchal set-up.

It was also found that prior political affiliations of different political parties of the family acted as an accelerating factor, which induced a woman to take part in the election as a contestant. It was found that almost all families of the present elected woman representatives had political affiliations with any political party. Women might not be actively involved with any political party earlier. Either their husband or any elderly member of their families involved as active worker in those political parties, which gave them chance to contest in the election as their representative. Political affiliation was important as no woman candidate contested in the PRI election 2013 from these two Gaon Panchayat independently. National, regional or local political parties directly supported all the candidates who contested in the election. Therefore, prior affiliation of their family to any specific political party provided them an exposure to different issues of political affairs of their locality. They informed that as they had prior political information so they were well aware of local political issues in advance, which also motivated them to take part in election process of the Gaon Panchayat.



Womens' Participation in Gaon Panchayat :

As mentioned in above, mere contesting and casting does not ensure the participation of women in different institutions of PRI. The term participation refers to three inter-related elements such as influence, interaction and information sharing, which may be manifested in the decision-making processes of an organization in a widely ways (Singla, 2007/2011). To understand the political participation of women, this research not only relied on interaction with different respondents but the researcher attended number of meetings.

Let me introduce with one such meeting organized by one of the samples Gaon Panchayat. This meeting was organized to approve the list of beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana (now Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)). Although a number of women attended in this meeting but attendance of women was considerably lower than men. Further, most of them remained silent. Except the elected women representatives no general women took participated in discussion like other men participants. In fact, they were not allowed to do so. However, a few women discussed different issues among themselves in small groups but could not bring their concerns to the public forum. It was because those who tried to raise their voices were not given due importance by other men members.

Exclusion of women from decision making in public forum is not only institutional arrangement but also managed through different cultural norms. Although it was informed by many respondents that women did not speak in front of elderly men at public forums as cultural norms but institutional arrangement also like that which forbid women from taking part in decision making. For example, the sitting position of women at the meeting. The sitting arrangement was like that which physically exclude women from others. The entire general women sat at the last row and were far behind from the authority of Gaon Panchayat. This was same for women representatives. Except the President, the entire women representatives sat at the last row in opposite direction of general masses and after the row of men representatives. Thus, physically there was a gap between general women and authority of Gaon Panchayat and elected women representatives and general masses. Thus, physically by keeping them outside off the periphery actually men were forbidding the voice of women to reach at the centre of meeting hence making them voiceless (Kakati, 2016).

To understand the level of participation, this research also analysed the attendance of entire elected women representatives of selected Gaon Panchayat at the executive meeting of the Gaon Panchayat during 2013-2018. Office records shows that average attendance of women representatives at these meetings was

3.58 women per meeting for Torabori while it was 5.24 women per meeting in case of Ghaguwa including the woman President (See table-1). Now question may arise- why it is happening in two different Gaon Panchayats of same district.

Table-1

Attendance of elected women representatives in Gaon Panchayat meeting during 2013- June 2018

	Torabori Panchayat Number	Gaon Percentage	Ghaguwa Panchayat Number	Gaon Percentage
Average Attendance	3.58	78.18	5.24	87.3
No of meeting has 100 % attendance	1	8.33	13	61.9
Meeting between 50-99 % attendance	11	91.67	8	38.1
Meeting below 50% attendance	0	0	0	0

Source : Office record

Analysis of field data shows that attendance of women representatives in Gaon Panchayat meeting was highly dependent on composition of the Gaon Panchayat, community affiliation and collectiveness. The entire six women representatives of Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat were from one single community whereas the entire five women representatives of Torabori Gaon Panchayat belong to three different communities. Moreover, except the President of Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat other five women representatives were from same political party whereas the women representatives of Torabori Gaon Panchayat had different party affiliation. Thus, the political affiliation and community affiliation played an important role in their attendance in the different meetings of Gaon Panchayat, which in turn affected decision making as each political party, and community had their own specific agendas. The impact of such affiliation was so much over these elected women representatives at Gaon Panchayat that even when there was no meeting at Gaon Panchayat, the elected women representatives of Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat used to meet at office on every Monday. This gathering also helped them to discuss not only political issues but also different personal issues. This was lacking in Torabori Gaon Panchayat. It was found that within the interest group, which we consider here as women, a range of interest occurred that can be reflected in their no collective actions. So, it can be said that "heterogeneity affects the level of collective action that might be expected from a given group" (Oliver, Marwell, & Teixeira, 1985, p. 528). Further, elected women representatives as said by them felt more comfortable with women President then that of man President. As, the Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat was headed by a woman representative who found was to be



sensitive towards different women issues and women felt comfortable with a woman President at Gaon Panchayat meeting.

Regular functioning of the Gaon Panchayat has also effects on attendance of women representative in different meeting. However, at Torabori Gaon Panchayat the attendance of the elected women representatives at Gaon Panchayat meeting still needs some rectification. This can be done only through regular conduct of the Gaon Panchayat meetings. It arranged only 12 meetings of Gaon Panchayat during 2013 to June 2018 and only in one meetings of this Gaon Panchayat had 100 per cent attendances of elected women representatives at the meetings. On the other hand, out of the 21 meetings of Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat, in 13 meetings, all six women representatives including President attended the Gaon Panchayat meeting during this period (See table-2).

Table: 2
No of meeting organized by Gaon Panchayat during 2013-June 2018

	Actual Number of Meeting*	Torabori Gaon Panchayat	Ghaguwa Gaon Panchayat
Nos of transaction business meeting of GP	33	12	21
Nos of Gaon Sabha	22	8	13

* Number of meetings supposed to be held during 2013 to June 2018 as per Act

Source : Office Record

Participation of General Women in Gaon Sabha :

Cumulative attendance of women in the Gaon Sabha was considerably low for both the Gaon Panchayat during the study period i.e. 25.22 per cent in Ghaguwa and 22.12 per cent in Torabori Gaon Panchayat. Low attendance of women in Gaon Sabha was generally driven by improper selection of beneficiaries for different development schemes and project as said by the respondents. Although boycotting of Gaon Sabha and Gaon Panchayat is one of the weapons of protesting corruption by them but it actually assists the powerful section who generally attend the meetings to deprived them from their rights and opportunities. Although, it was considered the most prominent reasons of not attending Gaon Sabha by women but there were number of hiding reasons which actually plying as hindering in their participation.

Lack of information regarding the meeting of Gaon Panchayat was one such factors which can be consider as one of the major hindering factors for participation of general women in Gaon Sabha. The women respondent informed that generally

they were not properly informed about the meeting. There was no system of public announcement of meeting organized by the Gaon Panchayat. No Gaon Panchayat taken for this study has schedule of Gaon Sabha meeting. It was informed by the representatives that they only organized the meeting when they were instructed to do so by the block officials. As, there was no prior schedule of meeting and no public announcement, so the message of conveying meeting was not properly disseminated to general masses which in turn led to low attendance of people in general and women in specific.

Literacy is also another major issue which affects the participation of women in Gaon Sabha. Many elderly women said that they sometimes attended the meeting of Gaon Sabha, but it was too complicated to understand procedure of the meetings. Further, nobody asked their opinion, as they were illiterate. In such conditions, most of them decided not to attend these meetings again and preferred to have the information about the discussions from those who attended the Gaon Sabha. Even one informant said that Gaon Sabha was a place of highly literate people. Thus, according to her only highly literate people should take part in Gaon Sabha. Further, a few other women respondents informed that they did not take part in Gaon Sabha as the entire decisions were being taken by men.

Generally, the Tiwa woman could not go outside the house without the permission of her husband or elderly men irrespective of their marital status. It might be possible that she was the sole decision maker of her mobility, but the man at her family gave the final approval. Thus, the participation of woman at Gaon Sabha also depended upon the wishes of the men of her family. Thus, the division of work rooted in the family, which assigned domestic chores to women, led to exclusion of women from participating in community decisions. Therefore, 'the non-recognition of women's labour in the home leaves them with no sense of value as a group at all' (Rowbotham, 1973/1981, p. 69). Many women respondents informed that they wanted to attend the Gaon Sabha but could not attend the meetings; as their husbands did not allow them do so. However, versions of men respondents were different and they considered that participation of man member is enough as he can inform the other members of family regarding the resolutions and discussion of the meeting. Thus, subsequently attendance of women declined at the Gaon Sabha. On the other hand, it was also observed that in the village meetings, which were organized in the respective villages, participation of women was almost equal to those of men.



Conclusion :

Therefore, to sum up it can be concluded that although the reservation in PRIs by 73rd amendment of Indian constitution has brought different sections of women to local level democratic institutions but the actual fruits of these institutions yet to achieve. Most of the members irrespective of any sex, used to attend the Gaon Sabha only to avail grants or subsidy. Their intention is not to participate in democratic process of decision making rather getting something. Until the concept of PRIs as extension or delivery agency of different development programme of government change, the real objective of PRIs will not achievable. So, there is a need for making aware and educate the people about the local level democracy. Otherwise, the Gaon Sabha will be the instrument of that section that have knowledge and will be a platform from creamy layer only. Further, Gaon Panchayat should deliver with additional power to amendment different guidelines or eligibility criteria of different development schemes of government in accordance to their locality so that the many more people can bring under the umbrella of different development schemes. Power of amendment of guidelines or eligibility criteria of different development schemes is very important so that local issues can be mitigated hence the actual beneficiaries can be selected.

Meantime it is also important duty of the State to bring institutional reforms to encourage the participation of women in these institutions. It is the role of the State to convey the different meetings of Gaon Panchayat in different villages rather than conveying it in near the Gaon Panchayat office. Further the Gaon Panchayat office must situate at physical proximity of the villagers. The Gaon Panchayat must maintain the logistic arrangement before conveying any meeting for general people. If the State will not arrange these hygienic arrangements then there will be always less participation of women in these local democratic institutions.

¹In Assam Gram Panchayat is known as Gaon Panchayat.

²Is one of the major tribes of Assam mainly concentrated at the central part of Assam.

³India's old sacred books and historical sources have references of different kind of self-governing institutions such as 'sabhas', 'panchhakula committee'. For further details, see Thapar, R (1966/199). A History of India: Volume One. New Delhi: Penguin Books India (P) Ltd.

⁴Khel is the occupational group or territorial guilds that enjoyed considerable autonomy within their organization, though controlled by some officials like Boras, Saikias, Hajarikas and Rajkhuwas under respective Phukan during Ahom period in Assam. For further details, see Sarkar, J. N. (1994). The Ahom Administration. In H. K. Barpujari(Ed.), The Comprehensive History of Assam Volume-III (pp. 1-86). Guwahati: Publication Board.

⁵It was an administrative structure of the Ahom administration of medieval Assam. When several Khels of the same chamuapaiks were placed under an officer, they formed a Mel, administered by a Phukan or a Barua or a Rajkhowa and sometimes by both a ChamuaPhukan and a ChamuaBarua. For further details, see Sarkar, J. N. (1994). *The Ahom Administration*. In H. K. Barpujari(Ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Assam Volume-III* (pp. 1-86). Guwahati: Publication Board.

⁶Two sets of issues affect women's participation-the first related to the nature of representative democracy and the second relates to the status of political equality and citizenship. Women have to grapple with both the issues of representation and governance and the nature of politics and political institutions in a multi-party democratic system. For further details, see Sharma, K. (2004). *From Representation to Presence: The Paradox of Power and Powerlessness*. In D. Bandyopadhyaya, & A. Mukherjee (Eds.), *New Issues in Panchayati Raj* (pp. 48-66). New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

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Looking into Jhum Cultivation Through Socio-Cultural Lens

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Abstract : Shifting Cultivation is a very primitive method of cultivation carried out in the hill slopes by tribal folks and aboriginals. This system of cultivation involves selection of site, cutting jungles, firing, clearing debris, sowing weeding, watching and harvesting along with certain rituals. It is called shifting cultivation because the jhum cultivator have to go on shifting their field in cyclic rotation. In the whole of Northeastern India shifting cultivation is commonly termed as Jhuming though at present day age of science and technology questions are arising about significance and utility of shifting cultivation or jhuming but the method of cultivation has a special place in tribal world. The tribals in the hills who practiced jhum cultivation had a self-sufficient economy. When the crops ripen these are harvested, threshed and stored in bamboo baskets. The whole process of cultivation is accompanied with singing, dancing, feasting and merry making. The tribal community in Tripura are socio-economically as well as emotionally attached to this system. No doubt after the discovery of scientific forestry, the practice of shifting cultivation has become primitive, uneconomic yet it's socio cultural impact on traditional lives of tribal community has a special importance from anthrological view point.] he purpose of the present endeavor is to analyze the basic social dimensions of shifting cultivation.

Key words : Jhum Cultivation, Shifting Cultivation, rotation farming. Harvest, Tripura, tribal

The new trends in historiography have influenced history writing to give importance to the social life of marginalized man and his cultural attainments. From that perspective the practice of Shifting Cultivation in Tripura deserves special mention as it is attached with the age old rich cultural heritage of the tribal folks of the State through ages.

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Shifting cultivation is in fact a very primitive method of cultivation carried out in the hill slopes world wide- in parts of Africa, Latin America, several parts of Europe and also in South Asian countries including India in general and its Northeastern States in particular. Shifting Cultivation as a system of agriculture represents an indigenous form from time immemorial. Man learnt about the art of crop growing around 6000-5000 BC. As the pressure of population increased, the hunters-cum-cultivators of the Neolithic period started clearing more patches in forests to bring them under cultivation. As fertility decreased, they used to migrate to new tracts to burn and clear forests for sowing crops. This type of cultivation has been termed as 'slash and burn' or 'Shifting Cultivation'. Shifting Cultivation is known by different names in various parts of the world. The term 'Jhum' is most frequently used in Northeastern region. In other parts of India, it is known by various names such as: 'Bewar', 'Dahiya', 'Panda' in Madhya Pradesh, 'Roma', 'Dahi', 'Raman', 'Bringa', 'Gidiya' in Odisha and 'Padue' in Andhra Pradesh.¹

Shifting cultivation system involves selection of site, cutting jungles, firing, clearing debris, sowing weeding, watching and harvesting along with certain rituals. It is called shifting cultivation because the cultivator have to go on shifting their field in cyclic rotation. So it is also known as rotation farming.²

As mentioned earlier in the whole of Northeastern part of India shifting cultivation is commonly termed as Jhuming. This practice is considered as an important mainstay of food production for a considerable population in northeast India in States like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur.

In the method of Jhum Cultivation each family select a piece of bamboo jungle for cultivation. Jungles were cut down and cleared in the month of December and set fire in the month of March. After the first fall of rain, they began to drop seeds of cotton, paddy and chilly into the holes.

In selecting a site some interesting magical superstitious practice are performed. Early in the morning of an auspicious day a very small patch of the tentatively selected site is cleared. A piece of bamboo is split into two halves which are held and dropped from above. It is auspicious if one half falls obversely and the other reversely.

It is done thrice if the pieces do not fall in the desired manner. If anything contrary happens, it is left. This ritual is known as Hook Oakha Kaimi. Not only that, at that time it is omen to hear the call of a kite or of a deer. Moreover, a lump of soil is taken to the home for revelation through dreams. (Imao nanui) The cultivator wears a clean cloth at night, sleeps alone and places the soil below his pillow. Cultivation would be profitable if the dreams of buffalo, cattle, marriage ceremony, clear water, fishing etc. It is bad if a naked woman, fire, police or a beggar is seen. Besides

places with deep and narrow holes, or where once a black monkey or python died or where witches and spirits are supposed to live are dreaded and left. These beliefs and practices are common to the Tipras, jamatias, Noatias, Garos, Halams and Kukis also. Beliefs of this kind are almost universal. The Nagas, Purums, and Lakhers also depend on dream revelations.³

The selected site is prepared by cutting down the bushes, bamboos, shrubs and trees. The plants are laid on the spot for a month for drying. After that fire is set usually in the evening. After two or three days the unburnt logs, trunks, stalks, and stems are collected, heaped and set to fire. All ashes remain as they are and serve as fertilizers.

Certain interesting magical practices are observed while fire is set to the dry bushes and bamboos. Prior to the settling of fire a suai seed (Entada Scandens), a hand fan, sesame oil, cotton and a small basket-work called 'Maicham' are taken to the field and thrown into the dry debris. Immediately after the setting of fire a few malignant deities namely Haichuma, Buraha, Banirao and Mainokma, are worshipped. The ritual is called Hatamalaimi in which two pigs, three chickens and four dishes are needed. Even the housewife is required to perform simultaneously a ritual. At the courtyard she is to place a quantity of sesame oil, cotton, a suai seed and a Meacham. This is to relieve the mother earth from the burning sensation.

Instead of ploughing or terracing the land, they dig hundreds of shallow and small holes with iron chopper. The holes are about 2' deep each and about 8' apart from one another. Digging and sowing go on simultaneously in the months of 'Chaitra-Vaisaka' (March-April). At the time of sowing, the workers stand in a line. Everybody has a small basket containing seeds and a chopper. The basket is tied to the left waist. The basket generally used by the women is smaller than that of the men. These are respectively known as Kaisni and Chim pai. While digging, putting a mixture of seeds and covering the hole, each batch of workers goes down from top to bottom, and again climbs up the hill. The process continues until the entire field is covered. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday are supposed to be auspicious for starting the operation of sowing. A piece of green turmeric charged with some spells is dug at the south-east corner of the field so as to prevent the evil spirits from entering and doing harms to the crops.⁴

The seedlings grow up within three weeks. After a few showers of the monsoon, creepers and grasses also grow abundantly. They require weeding twice or thrice with intermediate gaps. Weeding for the first time is called Hagra Tangmi; the second one Maiago Tangmi while weeding for the third and fourth times are respectively known as Karami and Khulmaomi. Weeding for the last time done in August-September is an occasion of great joy for the young boys and girls.

In order to protect the growing crops from being damaged by wild animals and birds, the jhum cultivators had to keep a watch on their jhums by constructing a watch house called Kaireng or 'tongh-ghar' (a raised bamboo hut) where some members of the family stay day and night to keep a watch on their jhums. This rectangular shaped and two roofed hut with raised platform is quite airy and convenient for looking around. When the crops ripen these are harvested, threshed and stored in bamboo baskets. A number of half split bamboos are erected hither and thither and connected with a long rope one end of which is tied to a post of the watch house. From time to time, a watchman by pulling the rope fluttering sound to scare the birds and animals. Deities like Buraha, Haichuma, Mainooma, Khoonooma, Tuima, etc. are also propitiated with spells, offerings, sacrifices. As the shifting cultivation on hills is almost entirely depended on rainfall, in case of draught, the jhum cultivators resort to sympathetic magic. Water is dropped on a tray and spread in the courtyard; the Goddess of water is worshiped; a lump of soil is thrown into the water; a particular insect called Chechema is buried alive with the head down ward, and also a sound in imitation of a rog is produced by rubbing laisrab leaf (*phrynium imbricatum*) against the bottom of a basket. Similar sound may be produced by ribbing a split against a scratched bamboo. All these rites are not performed at a time.⁵

The tribals in the hills who practiced jhum cultivation had a self-sufficient economy. In their jhums they raised everything that they needed. Paddy, cotton, seasmum, chilly and vegetables were the most important jhum crops. While paddy was mostly produced for self-consumption, other crops like cotton and seasmum were raised for both the self-consumption and exchange.⁶ A variety of crops is raised in the jhoom field. To name some of them: Paddy, cucumber, Brinjal, beans, jute, roselle, cotton, arum, gourd, lady's finger, maize, chilli etc. All these variety of crops do not mature at a time. They ripe one after another. So havesting continue from June July (Ashada) to September-October (Aswina).⁷ No crop is eaten unless it is first offered to the deities. Fruits like cucumber, Chindra, Marma, ripe in June. So the first offering is made of these fruits. Then again the new rice is offered to the deities. The offering of new rice to the deities and eating it assumes the character of a festival.

Harvesting of paddy begins in September-October. The stalks of paddy, about two inches below the grains, are cut with a sickle and put into two thickly woven baskets slung from the forehead on the back. These are temporarily stored in the watch house and then removed and stored in the granary. A series of granaries were formerly built on piles a little away from the living houses at the outskirts of the village to protect against fire. Through operations like cutting plants, sowing

and weeding are generally done communally; the crops are not divided among the participants. The products belong to the individual family. The participants are neither served the mid-day meal nor money. Everybody takes meal from his house. They may at best be served tobacco and betel leaf. The principle of distribution of reward is proportionate to the labour, in other words, the number of days the entire team will work in a family's field is equal to the number of worker participating from that family. Work is, however, mixed with recreation. The tedious operations are lightened through songs, jokes and tales which provide rhythm to the work.⁸

The advantages of jhum cultivation is that its' an organic farming, which doesn't use pesticides or chemical fertilizers. Trees burned to provide potash to the soil. Virginity of the soil and its manuring by the ash help in the raising of good crops. The next crop if any is poor as now the crude methods of farming start giving their results. Finding the field un-productive the family abandons the site and moves on to another field. Depending upon the population pressure the family has to come back to the site after 7 to 12 years. In good old days when there was a very thin population and unlimited land resources, the jhum cycle had a span of thirty years . Now it has shrunk to 7 to 12 years while in some areas it has still further curtailed.⁹

II

There are opposite views regarding the area under shifting cultivation in Tripura as estimated by different organizations and agencies. According to the Task Force on Shifting Cultivation, Ministry of Agriculture (1983), the annual area under shifting cultivation was 223 sq. km, fallow period is 5-9 years, minimum area under shifting cultivation one time or other was 1115 sq. km and number of families practicing shifting cultivation was 43000 but as per the estimates of Forest Survey of India (1999), the cumulative area of shifting cultivation (1987 to 1997) was 0.06. Shifting cultivation has been the main source of livelihood for most tribes of Northeastern hills as well as Tripura hills and a sizeable portion of population in the hills of Tripura still depending on jhum cultivation. It is not only the source of livelihood but also has high cultural importance among the people of Tripura. In the comparison of shifting cultivation in north-east India, the tribes of Tripura are having very low ratio among the Northeastern states.¹⁰

A NITI Aayog Report on shifting cultivation entitled, "Mission on shifting cultivation: towards a transformational approach" practiced particularly in the northeastern States, has recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture should take up a "mission on shifting cultivation" to ensure inter-ministerial convergence. The report said, "Central as well as State government departments of forests and environment, agriculture and allied departments often have divergent approaches

towards shifting cultivation. This creates confusion among grass-roots level workers and jhum farmers,” . The report that calls for policy coherence, said land for shifting cultivation should be recognised as “agricultural land” where farmers practice agro-forestry for the production of food rather than as forestland. ¹¹

The report notes that between 2000 and 2010, the land under shifting cultivation dropped by 70%. The report quotes data of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education published in Statistical Year Book-2014 by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which points out that from 35,142 sq km in 2000, the area under jhum cultivation dropped to 10,306 sq km in 2010. The publication also suggested that shifting cultivation fallows must be legally perceived and categorised as ‘regenerating fallows’ and that credit facilities be extended to those who practice shifting cultivation. ¹²

The Tripura government has launched an initiative to create jobs under MGNREGA for 6,979 families practising shifting cultivation in the State, a senior Minister said on April 29, 2020.

State Education Minister and Cabinet spokesperson, Ratan Lal Nath stated that apart from jobs, the families will also be provided with seeds for cultivation under the ‘Jhum Sahayata Prakalpa.’¹³

The use of human labour is the key input in the shifting cultivation system and the practice of mutual exchange of labour amongst these shifting cultivator communities is also not uncommon. In practices like harvesting, the groups of families join hands together to harvest the crop of each plot one by one. This practice of community labouring reduces drudgery and increases work productivity. During this harvesting time, it is said that farmers exchange their innovations and look at each other’s innovations as they work. Further, it is customary to arrange food and drink by the family of the plot which is being harvested. The community recognizes these harvest periods as festive events which makes their work enjoyable. The indigenous knowledge occupies an important place among the communities of shifting cultivators. The cultural norms, values, beliefs, and rituals also form an inseparable part of this knowledge. The indigenous knowledge covers a host of activities which includes land management, biodiversity conservation, water management, health care and medicines. This indigenous knowledge has been developed through careful observation and experimentation by the community members through generations and are transmitted and passed orally or through experiential learning. The land allocation is an unique characteristics of this society. The land allocation meant that the land is distributed to every family member of the village to eke out the livelihood by cultivating the allocated jhum plot. The allocation of plot is based on the family size. The size of the cultivation

plot possessed by the family is based on the food requirement and the available labour in the family. The larger the family, more hands will be there to extend their help in the shifting cultivation plot. The land allotment exhibits slight variation among the Northeastern Region. For example in a village named Phuldangshai in Tripura adjoining Mizoram, village council decides the hillock to be selected for jhuming. The areas selected for jhuming in the village are classified into big, small and medium size ones. Similarly, families who are interested in jhuming are also divided on the basis of adult members. Within each category, lotteries are put and the land is allotted accordingly. Distribution of land was based on the traditional institutions existing in the village. Among the tribal communities of Tripura when the jhum activities were about to start, the group of headman from close by villages decides a meeting for the Ker worship (Ker Puja). In Tripura during Ker Puja the group of villagers exercise their joint rights over a specific area they would jhum in a particular year. After the Ker Puja, the individuals were free to choose any hillock he like. This was based on the number of family members he had. The labour support taken from other family for his work in his Jhum plot has to be returned in terms of work days as much as was taken by him from others.

The majority of the tribal community today do no longer depend on shifting cultivation and now they have largely taken to plough cultivation. It implies that emphasis is being shifted from jhuming cultivation to plough cultivation. No doubt after the discovery of scientific forestry at the end of last century, the practice of shifting cultivation has become wasteful, primitive, uneconomic and a nuisance to the floral wealth. Shifting cultivation can also cause deforestation of a surrounding. This kind of farming leads to loss of biodiversity in the area and also pollutes the nearby water bodies.

The Table-1 illustrates that in the state of Nagaland of India, the current jhum is increasing and in case of Tripura it shows the decreasing trend. The per cent change is higher in the state of Manipur and Tripura compared to 2005-06. It also reveals that, the states like Manipur and Tripura may have contributed for diversification in terms of non-farm, off- farm and farm activities which may be responsible for reduction of current jhum in Manipur and Tripura.¹⁴

Table-1

Area under shifting cultivation in different states of Northeast India					
States	Abandoned <i>Jhum</i> (km 2)	Current <i>jhum</i> (km 2)	Total <i>jhum</i> land (km 2)	Total <i>jhum</i> land (km 2)	Per cent change in area
		2008-09		2005-06	Over 2005-06
Arunachal Pradesh	961.04	1078.52	2039.6	1531.5	+33
Assam	258.86	136.33	395.6	239.56	+ 65
Meghalaya	272.52	268.11	540.6	448.99	+20
Manipur	270.31	201.32	471.6	852.2	+45
Mizoram	612.71	1049.47	1662.1	2617.6	+37
Nagaland	1514.95	842.47	2357.7	2827.7	+17
Tripura	33.20	68.99	102.2	254.11	+60
Total	3923.59	3645.11	7568.7	8771.6	+13.7

Source : Wasteland Atlas of India, 2011 (http://doir.nic.in/wastelend_atlas.htm)

III

Though at present day age of science and technology questions are arising about significance and utility of shifting cultivation or *jhuming* yet one cannot expect a tradition bound community to altogether shun its age old practices overnight. Once one Sub-Divisional Officer at Bishramganj, while trying to convince a tribal to lead a settled life politely asked, 'why don't you come down and live a life that we live'? A tribal man tribal replied back, 'Why don't you come up, sir and live the life that we live'? This explains how attached they are to the *jhum* cultivation and the rich culture attached to this tradition of shifting cultivation known as *Jhum* cultivation. ¹⁵

The method of cultivation has a special place in tribal world. Because it provides not only means of sustenance to the tribals but also distinguishes the tribal society from the non tribal society. It is a pivot around which the community life of a tribal society revolves. In fact every aspect of the tribal life is interwoven with *jhuming*. The songs, dances, folk tales, socio-religious customs, work cycle, leisure and even romantic chores of the tribals are intimately related to *jhuming*. Probably the emotional attachment a tribal has with his system of life stands as an insurmountable

hurdle that impedes the progress of the scheme aiming at permanently settling or colonizing the tribes men. Therefore Jhumias has an emotional and cultural attachment with jhum cultivation process which stands as an obstacle to make a shift in tribal agricultural system from shifting to permanently settled cultivation. "The whole process of jhuming is clean and keeps the tribal in open, enjoying the cool mountain breeze, singing and dancing. No wonder the tribal refuses to go down to the valleys to lead a more "settled" life on the paddy field! Work and leisure for him are not two distinct and mutually opposing entities, they are two sides of the same coin."¹⁶

The whole process is accompanied with singing, dancing, feasting and merry making. The details of recreations cum deity –propitiating processes may differ from tribe to tribe but one remarkable feature is that all members of the clan at such cultural festivities are treated at par. It is only the clan chief who is allowed some direction. After the gala day is over the chosen site is given a distinguishing look by way of planting a bamboo or a flag post. Again on an appointed day the entire community to the tunes of drum beats and singing chores clear the site of trees and other growth. It is a very happy feature of the tribal community life that the work of clearing the site is done not only by the jhum owner but by the entire community. The strong feelings of co-operation and brother hood tie the community into one body. The tribal community in Tripura apart from being socio-economically wedded to the jhuming are emotionally, psychologically and even biologically attached to this system.

Shifting cultivation facilitates the tribal people to preserve their rich cultural traditions and diversity as jhum cultivation is interwoven into the cultural and tradition of near about 19 tribes those inhabit basically in the hilly parts of Tripura especially in Dhalai and North Tripura district. Shifting cultivation is a labor intensive and low subsidy based farming system, provides an assured source of food production and security to the nourishment level of the Jhumias in the hilly parts of Tripura. Shifting cultivation in its traditional form may also put in towards the conservation of agro-biodiversity, principally the native food crops like rice, various vegetables and even different fruits. They usually cultivate 8-10 varieties of crop items in a particular jhumming land, in that way they can produce more food in a single time-frame. Shifting cultivation practices in Tripura also shows an effective form of land use pattern as they are using limited space for optimum production in a specific time. In the process, a small piece of jhumming land accomplishes almost all the needs of Jhumias and reduces his reliance with other allied activities or external inputs. Besides burning and slashing in the jhumming plots, other cultural performs followed in shifting cultivation like controlling the weeds, soil-borne

pathogens and other diseases of crops and they also practice their indigenous religion customs like offering something their Gods and Goddesses when they cut their grown crops/ products. Topographically Tripura consists of a number of hill ranges, hillocks and hilly terrains interspersed with wide fields, application of modern technologies have certain limitations and more over Tripura is a landlocked state of India and the physical infrastructure of this state is not well established, so the Jhumias are not used the modern agricultural tools and chemicals and pesticides. So in this way, they are not damaging the chemical properties of soil as well as they have their own cultivation process to do Jhum which also prevent soil erosion a bit or partially. Therefore, jhum cultivation is having some positive aspects and Govt. of Tripura allows tribal people to do jhum in some extent but through improved and modern way as jhum provides base for low external input agricultural technologies.¹⁷

The practice of Jhum is not, merely exercised by the tribals for their sustenance, but a traditional method of earning a livelihood, a traditional farming system that uses local product and techniques, has rooted in the past, has evolved to their present stage as a result of the interaction of the cultural and environmental condition of the region and is deeply embedded in the tribal psyche.¹⁸

With the growing importance of Anthropology in social science researches, the pre-literate, primitive or rural societies, daily lives, living habits and beliefs of societies are gaining importance. In this frame work the socio cultural importance of jhuming needs to be highlighted.

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9

Looking for Opportunities of Development in the state of Tripura

Ajita Tripura*

1. Historical Background :

Tripura was a princely State before its merger with India on 15th October, 1949. Tripura is considered as the oldest Kingdom in India, the 2nd oldest in the world next to Japan, Tripura was ruled by as many as 184 kings and with its history stretching to pre-historic period. Its ancient history is shrouded with mystery and considered as a mythological period. Tripura is mentioned in the two great epics of India-Ramayana and Mahabharata, in the Puranas, in the Ashoka Pillars and in the Meghadut written by Kalidas. Even the oldest book of the world, the Rig Veda has records of Tripuri kings as Druhyu Tribes. The history of Tripura is known as “Rajratnakaran” which was written by two Brahmins of Tripura Royal Court in Sanskrit language, as narrated by Durlabendra Narayan-the head priest of Tripura Kingdom in the first part of 15th Century at the dictation of Maharaja Dharma Manikya.

The Tripuri Kings descended from Druhyu, the third son of Yayati of Lunar dynasty. Tripuri King Trilochan participated in the Kurukshetyra battle of favour of Pandava. Perhaps Tripura was the only kingdom which succeeded to maintain its independent entity right from the beginning even during Islamic period as well as British Period in India. It was the only State which had no written treaty with British Authority during the colonial period.

Gandhar he was the 4th King in succession from Druhyu and the 9th King Pracheta who had one hundred sons were mentioned in the Rig Veda and five Purans as settling down in the countries to the north of Afghanistan. The modern scholars have concluded that it was the Druhyu tribes who first migrated outside India, long before the ten king’s battle. The Druhyus first spread into the present Middle Eastern Countries and then into Europe. The Druhyus are the ancestors of Iranians, the

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Greeks, the Egyptians and the Europeans. They were known as Celtic Gauls in Europe. The Druze of the Middle East living in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and the Druids of Europe are still surviving as descendants of Druhyu People even today, despite undergoing various influences and admixtures.

Kapil Muni, one of the greatest sages of ancient India who founded Sumkhya Philosophy was the first head priest of Tripura Kingdom when it was located in Sagardeep in Sundarban, where Druhyu King founded the first Kingdom, which was known as Tribeg. The Nath Yugis also originated in Tripura Kingdom. Adi Nath or Alekh Ranjan's birth place still exists in the Sundarban near Chittagong of present Bangladesh. Gurkha Nath, Minanath and Rani Rash Mani all originated in Tripura Kingdom. Half of East Bengal now Bangladesh was part of the Tripura Kingdom including Chittagong, Noakhali, Comilla and Sylhet districts of Bangladesh known as Chakla Roshanobad during Islamic Period and Tripura District during British Raj in India.

Tripura was as independent Kingdom before it merged with India and that is why Tripura signed instrument of Accession on the 15th of August 1947. Kanchan Prabha Devi, Maharani Regent of Tripura on behalf of Tripura Kingdom and Louis Mount Batten, Governor General of India signed the instrument of Accession. The Tripura Merger of Agreement was signed on the 9th September 1949 between Kanchan Prabha Devi, Maharani Regent of Tripura and Mr. Vapal Pangunni Menon, advisor to the Government of India in the Ministry of State with the authority of the Governor General of India.

Pratuddan the 25th Tripur King in descent from Druhyu conquered a Kirata land in Kamrup, Assam around 3000 BC where Trilochan, one of the great kings of Tripura ruled and married the Queen of Hiramba Kingdom, now parts of Nagaland and Assam. He shifted his capital to Kamrup on the bank of Brahmaputra River which was known as 2nd Tribeg. That is the reason why today we can find Bodo and kachari people in Assam with whom the Tripura people have so much similarity in their customs, culture and language.

Tripura lost its plain land of East Bengal which was the Zamindary of Tripura Kingdom during British Period Known as Chakla Rosonabad or Trippera Zilla at the time of partition of India.

The then Pakistan Government was ready to pay compensation of Rs. 51 lakhs for Tippera District, however Govt. of India did not take any action in this regard. Had government of India intervened, Tripura would not have suffered the loss of its plain land.

2. Worse Victim of Partition :

Tripura has geographical area of 1091 Sq. KM and its population is 36,73,917 (as per 2011 Census) of which tribal population constitute, 31 percent. There are 19 tribes in the state out of which around 80 percent is Kokborok speaking Tripuri People. Tripura is found to be the worst victim of partition in the whole country with influx of lakhs of illegal migrants from the east while East Pakistan setting down in Tripura with the support of the state administration which resulted in abrupt change in the demographic structure of the state within 10 years of its merger with India, reducing the aboriginal Tripuri indigenous Tribal population to 29% only of the total state population.

The highest decadal growth rate of population of Tripura was during 1951-61 which accounts for 55.96% as against all India decadal growth rate of 21.6% and the growth rate of illegal immigrants from East Pakistan during the period is 78.71 as against 24.56% in 1951.

The decadal population growth rate of both Scheduled Tribe and illegal immigrants in Tripura from 1951 to 1991 as indicated below will speak aloud about the scenario:

Time Period (Census Year)	Percentage of schedule tribes to the total population	Percentage of illegal migrants to the total population
1951	48.65	51.35
1961	31.53	68.47
1971	28.95	71.05
1981	28.44	71.56
1991	30.15	69.05

Prof. A. M. Akash, Economics Department, Dhaka University, Bangladesh in his article appeared in the Bengali Magazine "Desh" dated 17-6-2003 has clearly shown that in 1951 the Bangalee Hindu minority population accounted for 23.1% of the total population of Bangladesh (East Pakistan). In 1961, it came down to 19.6% while in 1974 it was accounted for 14.6% in the year 1981, it had further declined to 13.4% and lastly in 1991, it accounted for only 11.4% implying that more than 50% of the Hindu minority of Bangladesh have already migrated to Assam, West Bengal and especially in Tripura of India.

In view of the unabated influx of refugees into Tripura, Mr. G. V. Panth the then Home Minister, Union of India, in his statement on the floor of Parliament in 1951 declared 'Tripura is super-saturated with influx population. Not a single refugee could further be accommodated in Tripura State'. Govt. of India appointed a

Commission in 1960 under the Chairmanship of U. N. Dhebar, which was known as “Dhebar Commission to look into the problems of illegal migrants and to put a preventive check on further inflow of the illegal migrants into Tripura”. The Commission made the observation in its report. “The influx of displaced persons from Pakistan to Tripura has been enormous and has upset the local economy. It has greatly affected the tribal and has made the tribal problems acute. The right of the tribals in land should be safe—guarded”. Indrajit Gupta, the then Home Minister of India stated in Parliament on 6th May, 1997 that there were 10 million illegal migrants residing in India, of which 5.4 million in West Bengal, 4 million in Assam and 0.8 million in Tripura and the rest are in other states.

In 1993-94, Electoral rolls revision exercise was taken up in Tripura and it was officially pronounced that consequent upon the revision of the electoral rolls, it was identified that 1.35 lakhs of persons were not having citizenship or any valid and legal documents. It is clear that they were none but the illegal migrants from Bangladesh. But surprisingly enough, later all of them were recognized as citizens and voters of India and issued citizenship and Ration Cards with the support of the state administration.

However, despite the best efforts of the Union Ministry and Govt. of India, the CPM party under the leadership of Sri Nripen Chakraborty, the Ex-Chief Minister of Tripura launched a mass movement against the Central Govt’s decision not to allow the Hindu migrants from Pakistan to settle in Tripura, taking the advantage of simplicity and educational backwardness of the Tripuri people of Tripura in the early 1950s. At that time, about 99% of the Scheduled Tribe people were members of CPIM party in the state. Basically, then the CPIM party in Tripura was the party of the Scheduled Tribe people. When Govt. of India decided to deport about 4 lakhs Hindu migrants from East Pakistan who had entered Tripura to Andaman and other places. Nripen Chakraborty sat in indefinite hunger strike demanding permanent settlement of the 4 lakhs Hindu migrants in Tripura. He asked all the tribal leaders—Dasarath Debbarma, Sudhanwa Debbarma and others to arrange for a massive agitation at Agartala to prove that the indigenous tribal are demanding to allow the 4 lakhs displaced Hindu migrants to settle down in Tripura. Thousands of Tripuri people participated in the great agitation at Agartala and built up human barricade with thousands of tribal CPIM members laying down on all streets to stop thousands of trucks sent by Govt. of India for deportation of the refugees outside Tripura. Under heavy pressure of the strong agitation and opposition organized by the Scheduled Tribes of the state, Central Govt, had to change its decision. Nripen Chakraborty broke his 20 days long hunger strike and succeeded in his attempt and

well-designed plan to make Tripura homeland of the displaced refugees of his own community. Since then, thousands of colonies were set up by grabbing the tribal lands for their rehabilitation in connivance with then Congress-run state administration and continuous influx of migrants from East-Pakistan began pouring in the state. The last King of Tripura Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya reserved a vast wet-land area for cultivation of the Scheduled Tribe people in two phases about 4116 sq. KM of the state by issue of two orders in 1931 and 1943 respectively. The then Congress Govt. of Tripura dereserved these areas for the sake of rehabilitation of the refugees.

Against this historical backdrop indicated above the problem of the Tripuri People of the State has to be understood. The Tripuri Kings all along tried to uphold the Hindu religion and had been successful to maintain resistance to the outside invaders throughout its history and to keep their ritual practices, customs and culture intact.

Conversion into Muslim during Muslim rule was common place everywhere throughout India among all castes and communities. Tripura Kingdom was the only exception and the Tripura People stood firmly and they were not subjugated neither by the Muslim rulers nor by the British People. Instead the British Empire had to take help from this Kingdom during the First and Second World War. The Japanese Air Force raided the Agartala Airport twice during Second World War. The first Tripura Rifles fought with vigor and courage for four years in Burma with the Japanese force during the Second World War. Till 1966 A.D., there was continuous attempt by the much advanced newly settled immigrants from East Pakistan with the support of local administration to destroy the tribal people without any kind of resistance or obstruction from the tribal people. Land grabbing of the tribal people was rampant and almost all the plain fertile wet-lands were illegally transfer to the non-tribal new settlers with the help of local Congress-led Govt. In such a situation, the indigenous tribal had to survive depending on shifting cultivation and were deprived of all govt. facilities or any kind of assistance, because all tribal people were supporters of CPIM, the then opposition Party. On the Other hand, the non-tribal businessmen, and the private money lenders, exploited the illiterate and innocent tribal cultivations by charging high interest and manipulating weight and measurement of their crops, and other products like jute, rice etc. and grabbed their lands when they failed to repay the loans.

3. Tripuri People's movement for survival :

The year, 1967 was the turning point when some educated tribal youths namely Shyama Charan Tripura, Nagendra Jamatia, Bijoy Kumar Hrankhawl, Harinath Debbarma and Drau Kumar Reang formed a Regional Tipra political Party in the

name of 'Upajati Juba Samiti' to launch movement to protect the tribal People and raise strong resistance against the one sided on-going process of exploitation and deprivation. Their major demands were

- i) Implementation of the Provision of six Schedule for Autonomous District Council as a safeguard for the Scheduled Tribe people.
- ii) Restoration of the illegally transferred land of the Tipras people.
- iii) Introduction of Kokborok in all schools and colleges in Roman script.
- iv) Deportation of foreign nationals from Tripura.

When the movement reached its highest peak, a communal riot took place in 1980 which was followed by another phase of extremist or terrorist activities. It is also worth mentioning here that during Bangladesh War in 1971, 17 lakhs refugees from East Pakistan took shelter in Tripura which was more than the total population of Tripura 15,56,342. Many of the refugees especially Hindu People did not return to their home land. Under mounting Pressure of the strong agitation organized by Scheduled Tribe based Regional Party, Upajati Juba Samity (TUJS), the then CPIM-led Left Front State Govt. headed by Nripen Chakraborty was forced to introduce Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) under 7th schedule by demarcating the tribal-dominated areas on 18th Jan, 1982 and later it was upgraded under provision of the 6th schedule to the Constitution of India w.e.f. 1st April, 1985 by the 49th Constitutional Amendment. The total area of the TTAADC is 7,132.56 sq. Km, which covers about 68% of the total land of Tripura and around 70% of TTAADC area is covered by hills and forests. Around 80% of the population of TTAADC are belongs to Scheduled Tribe Community.

4. TTAADC : A non-functional and powerless entity :

However, state Govt. right from the beginning is found trying to convert TTAADC virtually into a non-functional entity by making low annual budget allocation to TTAADC which amounts around Rs. 200 crores of which around Rs. 180 crores are spent for payment of employee's salaries and administrative costs, leaving a balance of only Rs. 20 crores for developmental works, which is far less than what a Block receives, under a single scheme, NREGA, while the current annual Budget provision of the state exceeds Rs. 14000 Crores, what is more worse is that Khas Lands of TTAADC areas are being allotted to the non-tribal people to intentionally increase the non-tribal population in TTAADC area by the State Govt. The Bangladeshi foreign nationals are still entering Tripura to settle down here as it has become daily occurrence now. As a result, there is mounting pressure on the land of the small hilly state. That is why Tipras political party TUJS now namely INPT demanding

more power or direct funding to TTAADC from three decades. And also demanding ILP (Inner Line Permit) in TTAADC area as safe guard of Son of Soil.

5. Bad shape of Indigenous peoples economy and education :

The major occupation of the tribal people of Tripura is agriculture while a small percentage of tribal people are Govt. employee. Many Tripuris families of the remote and hilly areas are still dependent on shifting cultivation for their livelihood. Though there is existence of school facilities in all hasitation of the TTAADC area, there is acute shortage of qualified and competent teachers which virtually makes these schools located in tribal areas ineffective. In the tribal areas, irrigation facility is rarely found, only temporary and seasonal dams are constructed, which helps only soil erosion, the most out-dated unscientific type of irrigation. Consequently, the Scheduled Tribe marginal farmers have to depend on the rainwater and harvest only single crop. Even the basic needs like permanent dwelling house, safe drinking water facility and electric connectivity are not available in many Scheduled Tribe areas. Though Kokborok is recognized as one of the Official Language on 19th January 1979 in reality, no initiative has been taken up by the State Govt. of Tripura for its development. Kokborok language as 1st language for the Kokborok speaking Tripuris students have been introduced in many schools up to class XII and also in few degree college but not a single post for Kokborok teacher for primary-upper primary, secondary or degree college has so far been created by the state Govt. with the sincere effort made by the then Governor of Tripura His Excellency P. B. Acharya, post-graduation course in Kokborok was introduced in Tripura University (A Central University) in 2015. However only one faculty has been appointed in regular post, for which there is heavy demand to increase the present intake capacity for the course, even Tripuri students from Bangladesh are also willing to study the PG in Kokborok. The initial problem is that qualified faculties in Kokborok with NET or SLET are not available, even part-time lectures are not being engaged without NET or SLET qualifications. Considering the initial such problems, some relaxation in appointment of Assistant Professor may be allowed by the University authority/UGC for the time being till qualified candidates are available. Prior to introduction of PG course in Kokborok, one year diploma course in Kokborok from 2002 and 6 months certificate course in Kokborok were first introduced in Tripura University, 3 (Three) months certificate course 1994-96, 6 (Six) months certificate course 1997-2001 which are still running. Degree course in Kokbork have been introduced in some selected degree colleges in 2012. Naturally, it will take some time to get qualified candidates with Bachelors and Master degrees in Kokborok. Now, the Tipras based regional parties are raising demand for inclusion of Kokborok in the 8th schedule to the constitution.

6. Prospect for development in Tripura :

Now coming to the issue of overall development of the state, first of all, it needs to be mentioned here that Tripura is one of the special category states of India, which is fully dependent on the central grants for its development and prosperity, with meager state's revenue contribution in the annual budget. Agriculture is the principal occupation in the state and other occupations include rubber plantation, sericulture, fishery and government services. There are tea gardens in some parts of the state, industry as we understand does not exist. Bamboo plantation, pineapple and oranges garden may also be mentioned as means of livelihood in the hilly areas. Among the indigenous people, women are accustomed to weaving with traditional embroidery. The males are also experts in making house hold products for various uses in their daily lives with bamboo and cane.

Various sectors which have potentialities for future economic development in the state may include tourism, rubber plantation, agriculture and sericulture with modern technology, small scale rubber and agro-based industries, handicrafts, handloom trades etc. with Bangladesh and other state of India. Besides, Tripura is also rich in natural gas.

A long term perspective plan which are based on resource mapping of the state with major focus on the sectors having potential needs to be drawn up so that more opportunities may be created for building up a prosperous and modern Tripura. Then on the basis of the perspective plans, short-term specific plans may be taken up with target setting. For production of traditional bamboo and cane made handicrafts and handlooms on commercial basis, the indigenous people should be provided with financial support and training so that they can adopt as occupation. Comparatively speaking, the tribal dominated TTAADC areas of the state as a whole shows a sluggish pace of development in almost all sectors, perhaps due to low level of government development expenditure and ineffective implementation process of different schemes. Number of 'Jhum' cultivators among the Scheduled Tribe is increasing instead of declining in absence of proper rehabilitation plan, despite crores of fund being spent every year for this purpose. Death of many Scheduled Tribe people because of water-borne disease and malaria or malnutrition in the TTAADC area has become an annual feature especially in dry season. As they failed to provide basic needs of Scheduled Tribe people i.e. drinking water and proper health care etc.

Education system is also not upto the mark. Numbers of Schools exist, but the misdistribution of teacher between plain and hilly area have made these schools virtually nonfunctional, language problem has made the situation more worse, as

they are not being provided education in their own mother tongue and they have to study in Bengali language. As a result, the quantity of education being delivered to them is hopelessly poor and low and they cannot cope up with the load of learning, as they move to higher grades and then ultimately, drop out of the system. Development of agriculture is unimaginable without irrigation facility, electricity, road connectivity, fertilizer, power tiller, spray machine, pesticides etc. The poor and marginal farmers cannot afford to avail these facilities unless distributed free of cost. Poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunities and capability or skills have made them vulnerable to becoming easy prey to exploitation by the contractor, businessmen, traders of the non-tribal plain dwellers. In such a situation their survival has become a big challenge to them. Now only the Govt. of India can show the ray of hope for the Scheduled Tribe people of Tripura by providing adequate safeguard to them.

Some key issues to be addressed :

- ◆ No doubt, Tripura is endowed with natural resources. Tripura is ranked second next to Kerala in rubber plantation. Fruits like pineapple, orange, banana, jackfruits are largely grown in the state. Climate and soil of Tripura are also found suitable for certain species like vanillas. Medicinal plants also naturally grow in the state. Those resources may be utilized for development and prosperity of the State.
- ◆ State resource mobilization need to be more emphasized and new sources for more local revenue generation should be more explored.
- ◆ Historical places like Unakoti rock sculpture, Chhabi Mura, Pilak, Neermahal and the flora and fauna of Tripura may attract more tourists. Besides there are more places for tourist attraction. The wild life Sanctuary Shipahijala Botanical garden and zoo, the Dumbur Lake, Second largest Dam in the North-East India, Jampui Hill, the Royal Palace, Tripura Sundari Temple, the holy pith where Sati's right leg is believed to have fallen down. Those places and monuments may help to make Tripura one of the best tourist destinations in North-East India.
- ◆ The present TTAADC authority, in its present has no independent entity, all powers legislative, financial etc. practically lied with the Governor or State Govt. A Bill passed by the council cannot become Act unless approved by the Governor. The allotment of all categories of land lied with the state Govt. and TTAADC has no power at all in the matter. As per provision of Sixth Schedule, the TTAADC is given power of land allotment within TTAADC areas. However, the TTAADC authority has to make law with the approval of the Governor. TTAADC passed a bill to make said law and submitted to the Governor for approval may be 15 years back but it is still

pending. In the meantime the state Government has been allotting land TTAADC to the landless and homeless to the non-tribal Bangladeshi nationals who procured all the required documents with the help of state administration to become Indian Citizen to intentionally and slowly increase the non-tribal population and reduce the indigenous tribal people minority in TTAADC area too. Thus, the proposed citizenship Amendment bill, if passed by the parliament will encourage the residual Hindu minority of Bangladesh to migrate to Tripura. Their safe heaven and is going to be a major threat to Tripuri with railway connectivity with Bangladesh being constructed. Bus service between Agartala and Kolkata via Bangladesh is already started since 5 years back. In such a situation, Govt. of India must provide adequate safeguard to Scheduled Tribe People, who were once rulers of this land. They have already become minority in their own ancestral homeland and they are now going to be reduced to minority in the TTAADC area in near future. TTAADC must be upgraded with more powers and direct funding from the centre, power of land allotment and law and order keeping in minds the forms and conditions of the instrument of accession and the merger treaty.

◆ All the good schools and other higher educational technical institutes are located in the plain areas in the state. In the TTAADC areas, there are no proper schools and adequate teacher to deliver quality education. The central Government may set up a few Kendriya Vidyalaya exclusively for Scheduled Tribe Children in the TTAADC areas and more residential schools, colleges and separate university to provide them a quality and better education. Progress and development of Tripura means the development of the Scheduled Tribe people and TTAADC areas. It implies development should be inclusive and for all in real sense.

(Seminer Paper, Poorvottor Parisamsad, Chanakya Varta, Guwahati, Assam, 8th-10th September, 2017)



The Apprehension of Migration Pattern of Indo-Mongoloid race in India with more specific to Tibeto-Burman Race –Tipra/Borok Community of North-East Indian region

Peter P. Debbarma*

1. Introduction:

The contexts of the migration pattern of humans have always been a debatable and insightful topic. In the contexts of India, where there are different races residing, the so-called Mongoloid race of North-East India is sometimes treated as early migrants from China or Mongolia coming from Northern directions as they have close affinity race with them. The people around need to be well informed and be well aware of it, as the migration pattern of early human migration never happened in that way; starting from the North to down South. The earliest fossils of recognizable Homo sapiens were found in Ethiopia and are approximately 200,000 years old. This early human migration has some definite route which thought to be started from the African region to the entire globe in different directions.

In different periods and stages, the 'Homo sapiens' has arrived with some distinct race features in the Indian Subcontinent region through the Western corridor. It is to be kept in mind that the word 'Mongoloid' is a definite term for clubbing some ethnic groups that have some similar racial characteristics along with many sub-branches of races. Although the country Mongolia bears a similar name, it is not indicating that the country of 'Mongolia' as the center origin of the Mongoloid race. It is to point out that Mongolians from the country of Mongolia are far more of recent evolution than other Mongoloid primitive races which have probably thoughts to be possessing the roots from North-East Indian primitive tribes.

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2. Significant Features to be portrayed and discussed :

The 'Tipra' community or in larger 'Borok' people which is related and sub-branch to 'Tibeto- Burman' family has some 'definite route' while entering the Indian subcontinent which is well understood by the geographical distribution pattern of Tibeto-Burman language family. There are some astonishing features of similarities, facts, and pieces of evidence that their larger families 'Sino –Tibetan' family had early been migrated from the Western sides, having its origin in East Africa, Ethiopia as well identified by some anthropologists, archaeologists and researchers. The destructions of Harappan civilization and the coming of the Aryans in the later period have something to tell about this migration pattern of the Tipra community. As some sections of the Mizo claim through some Biblical prophecy or dreams that they are one of the lost tribe among the 12 tribes of Israelites. the Tipra community in their culture and customs shows much more similarity as revealed by their cultural practices resembling some actions of the past tribes of Israelites or their previous ancestor life in Egypt or in West Asia. The researchers concluding from a DNA test has pointed out that the South-Indians Dravidians are forefather of Chinese and Mongolia people. In the succeeding hierarchy, the tribes of North-East may be the forefathers of Chinese and Mongolia.

Here, we shall study and understand that the earliest pattern of the Human migration route, and their center of origin. How different waves of migration took place at different periods and stages. How the one 'Homo sapiens' species got diversified and stratified into various major races and sub-races over the long period in the genealogy of race. It will also portray how their characteristics of physical traits and complexion evolved as they had been settling and doing habitat in the different geographic climatic and topographical environment.

3. Understanding the origin of Homo Sapiens species:

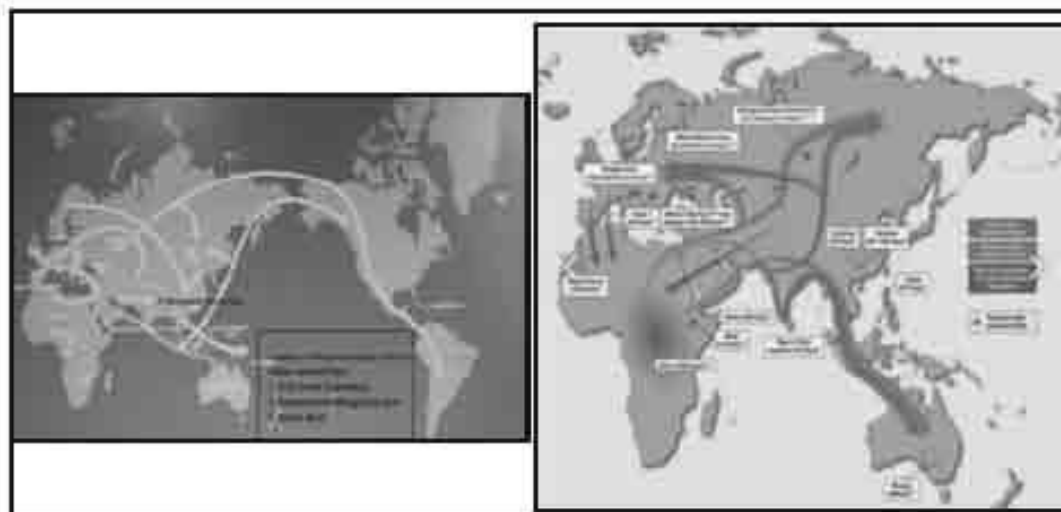
Our species is an African one. Africa is where we humans first evolved, and where we have spent the majority of our time on Earth. The earliest fossils of recognizably modern Homo sapiens appear in the fossil record at 'Omo Kibish' in Ethiopia, around 200,000 years ago. Although earlier fossils may be found over the coming years, this is our best understanding of when and approximately where we originated (See article, National Geographic article, Map of Human Migration)

4. Dispersal from the center of Origin, Africa continent:

Within Africa, Homo sapiens dispersed around the time of its speciation, roughly 300,000 years ago. The recent African origin paradigm suggests that the anatomically

modern humans outside of Africa descend from a population of Homo sapiens migrating from East Africa roughly 70–50,000 years ago and spreading along the southern coast of Asia and to Oceania by about 50,000 years ago. Modern humans spread across Europe about 40,000 years ago. (See Early Human migration, Wikipedia). See figure Map.1 for understanding global migration route.

Fig.1 Migration Pattern and route of the world



Source : National Geographic article letter-Map of Human Migration

Early human migrations are the earliest migrations and expansions of archaic and modern humans across continents and are believed to have begun approximately 2 million years ago with the early expansions of hominins out of Africa of Homo erectus. This initial migration was followed by other archaic humans including H. Heidelbergensis, which lived around 500,000 years ago and was the likely ancestor of both Denisovans and Neanderthals. Early hominids were said to have “crossed land bridges that were eventually covered in water” (History Alive, pub. 2004, TCI).

5. Origin of race and Classification :

A Race is a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society. The term was first used to refer to speakers of a common language and then to denote national affiliations. There are three major races which are being classified

1. **Caucasoid:** (white skin colour of various tones) This has eleven sub-classifications, Aryans in India are one among them.

2. **Mongoloids:**(yellow skin of various tones) This has several sub-classification along with Sino Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman family. The Indo-Mongoloid in India belong to this category.

3. **Negritoes:**(black skin color of various tones) This also has many sub-classifications with the Dravidian primitive may have thought to evolve from them.

However, it is to be noted that there is only one Homo- Sapien species most ancient family which after that variety of human races are thought to evolve possessing variation in complexion skin, physical build-up, and ranging in the structure of face and skulls. The variety of complexions can be a change in the climatic habitat environment. The evolvement of race is the long process, it took several thousand years. In the hot sunshine, tropical and mostly equatorial areas, the complexion of skin turns dark. The hair may also turn curly because of the heat of the sun. This race may be termed as Negritoes.

In the subtropical and tropical areas, where there is comparatively lesser hot than the equatorial areas, the complexion of skin become lighter or yellowish. It does have some variations. The environment of High hills and Mountain and dwelling in forest region makes the people short stature with thick thigh muscle build as they had to withstand terrain topography. The narrow eyes may also be formed to protect from insects as they dominate mostly in forest areas. These races may be termed as 'Mongoloid race'; however, they also portray their build-up become bigger as one finds them in the North. This whole race is clubbed as a 'Mongoloid race'.

When similar Mongoloid races go Northward in cold areas, their complexion turns out to be whiter with a large body build up as in the cold areas, the mass of body becomes bigger as the polar bear has a large size than tropical areas. The good favourable environment in the Mediterranean region and Southern Europe has generated one of the best looking races of the world as they were and are mostly dominating river valleys and plain topography with most favourable climate. They also have a variety of races ranging in a variation of white complexion, from the lesser white to the most white. They are clubbed as Caucasoid race.

There are only a few primitive races that exist in the world. Most of the present races and ethnicity have derived or originated from them. There is no doubt that inter-racial and marriage and mixed racial also took place which transforms the new looks in the race. In India, there has been a mixed races, the products of Aryan and Dravidians. The Indo-Mongoloid race may be the product of Mixed race between

Mongloid and Dravidians or Aryans. These are how in which many modern races have been developed, giving a complex nature of the identification of race.

6. Early migration waves of India :

There were thought to be three waves of migration that took place in the Indian subcontinent.

(i). First Wave of Dravidian race migration to India- the most primitive race after the African race:- The first and earliest migration are the Dravidian race which thought to have entered South India where once it was expected to be a land bridge which becomes submerged as the sea level rise. They mostly dominated in Southern India or Eastern India with a change in their variations.

(ii). Second Wave of Mongoloid race in India: They are considered to be less primitive than the Dravidians as they might have been evolved from the Dravidian race or the third stage of evolution after African, Dravidians races. The DNA scientists say that Dravidians may be forefathers of many Asian Mongoloids. They were thought to dominate North India until Aryans came who might have been driven out from the region. The decline of Harappan civilization and Mohenjodaro which might have been probably dominated by the Mongoloid race proves some hints of invasion by the Aryans where they might have been driven from those city of civilization.

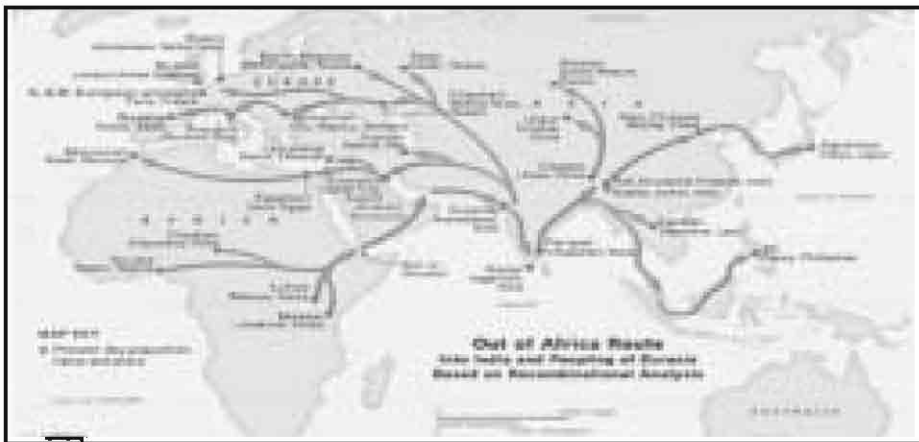
(iii). Third Waves of Caucasoid Race in India: The Caucasoid race is the most recent race which has developed at the last stage probably from the Mongoloid race. This may be proved as the Mongoloids residing in the north become taller, increased in size, and become whiter than the yellow skin Mongoloids. One can see the variations of Mongoloid from the North-East region to China, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Khazakhstan and the Russians. They have some similarities which indictes their forefathers were Mongoloid of North-East India and North India.

7. South Indian races as the forefathers of China and South-East Asian races- Findings :

In the article titled -Ancestors of Chinese came from India: Study, Times of India describes that the ancestors of most Asian populations, including the Chinese and Southeast Asians, came from India, a new genetic study across 10 countries has revealed. The study found that humans first migrated to the Indian subcontinent from Africa some 100,000 years ago and then spread to other parts of Asia. "When humans moved out of Africa, there was a migration to India and from India to Southeast Asia and then East Asia, and finally to the Americas. So, all Asians have a

genetic connection with India,” Mitali Mukerji, a scientist from the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology who was in the team, said. Look at the figure no. 3, how from the South India, the race got dispersal towards North-eastern India, China, South- East Asia and across large landmass.

Fig. 2 : Overview map of the peopling of the world by early humans following the Southern Dispersal paradigm.



Source : National Geographic

The study — Mapping Human Genetic History in Asia — was conducted in 10 Asian countries including India. Apart from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research DG Samir Brahmachari, the Indian study team comprised eight members and some students from IGIB, New Delhi, anthropologist Partha Majumdar and researchers from the Centre for Genomic Applications. The study contradicts earlier findings that humans directly went to East Asia from Africa. The study found remarkable similarities between the Dravidian population of South India and specific populations in Malaysia and Singapore. More interestingly, North Indians and Dravidians, too, were found to be genetically connected — meaning there are similarities in their gene structures.

8. Origin of the word Borok, Tipra, or Tripura :

The 'Borok' is the term usually to represent the greater race and ethnicity. It may be the earliest forms of representing and identifying themselves of the so-called Tiplasa/Tipra which usually refers to a territorial domain or racial identity inhabiting a particular region. The word is still used with some variations in phonology- Bru representing the Reang tribes of Tripura, Bodos of Assam may have

deviated from the actual word 'Borok'. The word 'Borok' which means in Kok-borok –the 'Human race' is an interesting aspect to be studied in terms of human race interaction with the environment. May be that the Borok thinks that they were the only human race in the world enclosed in some environment without contact with other races. Yes, in the early life of humans, that was the life we can imagine. As their interactions are with the wild environment, they might have differentiated themselves only between the Human race and the wild. The 'Kok-borok' language meaning the language of human beings, 'Kanborok' meaning clothes of human beings, 'Chaborok' meaning food items of Human beings, 'Da Borok' meaning tools of Human beings, so the word 'Borok' meaning 'Humans' are seen attached with materials that human used. The word 'Dimasa' may have deviated from the word 'Tiprasa'. The word 'Twi' of Kok-borok seems to be most accurate as the word is even found in Sanskrit old language referring water as 'Twi' and not 'Paani' or 'Jal', for referring water. This word may also get deviated from the actual word 'Twi'. The Garo and Dimasa tribes pronounced the word 'Dwi' for 'Twi'. Surprisingly, many of the tribes used 'Twi' for Water even by the Mizos and other tribes of North-east India.

Fig. 3. Greater Map of early great Tripura



Source : Historical Chronicle, District Gazeteer, wikipedia

The Tripura/Tipra (also known as Tipra, Twiprasa, Tripuri, Tiprasa, Twipra) are an ethnic group originating in the Indian state of Tripura. They are the original inhabitants of the Twipra/Tripura Kingdom in North-East India and Bangladesh. The Tripuri people through the Manikya dynasty ruled the Kingdom of Tripura for more than 2000 years until the kingdom joined the Indian Union on 15 October 1949. The 'Tipra' or 'Borok' community with greater Kok-borok speaking tribes is the product and one of the distinct sub-race ethnicity of Tibeto-Burman family. The first genealogy of the word 'Twipra' is the combination of word Twi+ Bwphra meaning branching of 'Water Bodies' or adjacent to the water bodies which also means dwellers of near water bodies. The 'Borok' community or greater ethnicities of Tipra always try to settle nearby water bodies, rivers, lakes, and streams. This was the nature of first human settlements where settlements are nearly water bodies as 'water' is the source of life and other necessities of survival. But, one astonishing fact of the Tripuris/ Tipra or Borok community, they often give their name of the place with the word 'Twi' either suffixing or Prefixing. The word Hokutwisa, Twibru, Twima, Tiyari, etc are all names of villages in Tripura and related to water around where they usually settle. There are many synonyms relating to 'Twi' in North India, Nepal, Himachal which shows some links that the greater race might have been once in those areas.

It is to note that unlike others, who derived their ethnic origin from the Cultural evolution, The Tripura community has derived from the nature of territorial dominion they inhabited. The word 'Twi- Bwphra' becomes Twipra and in short, became 'Tipra'. During the British rule, the anglicized word was 'Hill Tipperah' while the Sanskritized version is 'Tripura' which they are presently using this name. The 'Borok' or greater ethnicity dominates the major part of east and North-eastern India. Their related races are Bodo, Garo, Dimasa, Kachari, Karbhi, Rabha, and many other sub-tribes. Some of the people who settled in Cooch Bihar, Northern West Bengal also have some related ethnicity to 'Tipra' community or 'Borok' race. They have Mongoloid race features but ironically, they are speaking the Bengali language. They must have forgotten the language and which is the saddest part.

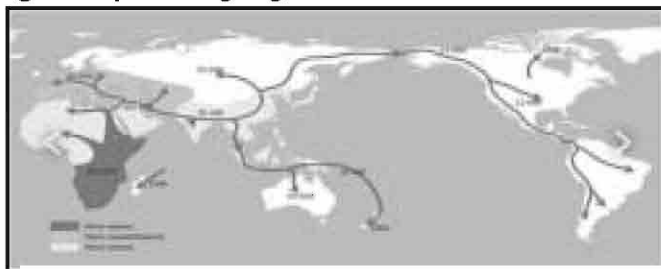
These same ethnic groups might have been migrated along with the ancient Burma race migration from West Asia entering into India dominating North India and ultimately to North-Eastern India; which after they might have traveled to South-East Asia and in Northern-ward direction. Some ethnic races permanently settled in this region and hence, they may be known as 'Tripura' community settled in this region and gradually expanded their settlement and suzerainty over the whole of Tripura. They were able to expand their influence as far south as Chittagong, as

far west as Comilla and Noakhali (known during the British period as ‘plains Tipperah’) and as far north as Sylhet (all in present Bangladesh). Once upon a time, Tripura Kingdom had the boundary in the North up to the Brahmaputra, to the West up to the river Meghna and the South up to Bay of Bengal Sea and the East up to Arakan hills bordering Myanmar (Burma). The great rivers and seas give a territorial boundary of the state Tripura and hence, the word ‘Tipra’ might have been originated as settlers near water bodies or branching of water bodies as this region in the South in Bangladesh has branching of water bodies with various delta formation. The ‘Borok’ inhabiting this geo-political boundary considering themselves as ‘Tiprasa’ meaning sons and daughters of particular region referring the nature of land with boundaries of water bodies and land territory.

9. Tipra and Tibeto Burman races its possible migration pattern :

There are some striking features that ‘Tipra’ community of North-East India - a sub-race of larger Tibeto-Burman family also has definite migration patterns entering India through the North-western part. In the article titled- Migration period of ancient Burma, source from Wikipedia, there is an indications and route of how ancient Burmese races populated present Burma, Myanmar. As the Tipra community belongs to larger races of Tibeto-Burman family, this shows that migration of the Tipra community did happen during the ancient Burmese migration. The Map fig.4 below shows the migration route of ancient Human race or early homo-sapiens which have entered India through the western part and got diversified to the South - India and all the way traveling towards the Eastern part in Burma and ultimately got routed to larger landmass and continents. The Tipra Community has a link with the Burmese in language family and also in their physical traits. It means the Tipra Community are the forefathers of the Burmese and the races which got diversified to major landmass in the later period. The Map figure no. 4 depicts of how ancient Burma race populated the present settlement following a large migration route.

Fig. 4: Map showing migration route of Ancient Burma race



Source : Ancient Burma migration map, wikipedia

9.1. Link to Harrappan and Indus valley Civilization :

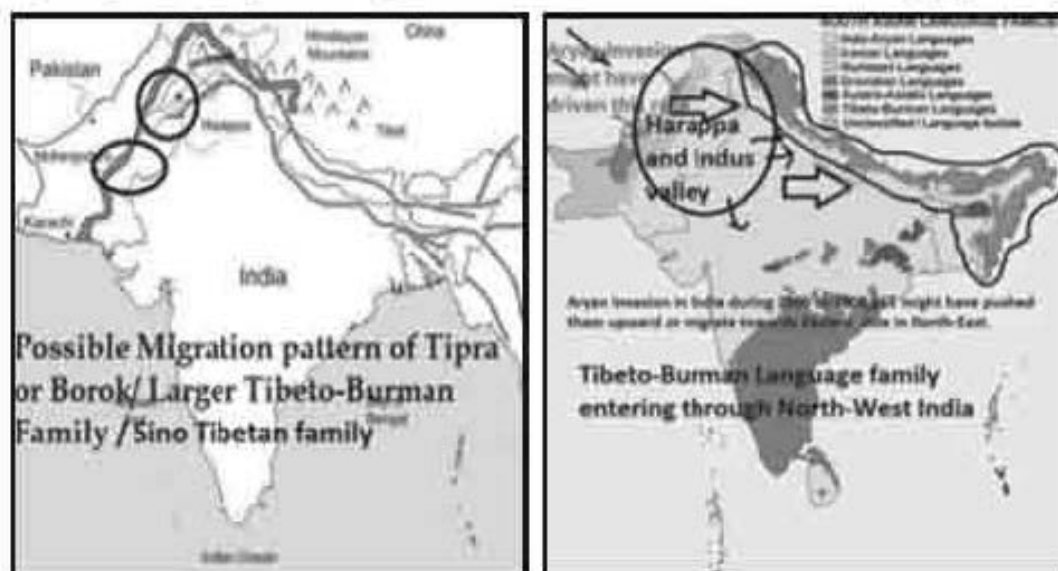
I have heard a lecture on Borok community and Tipra larger family. I also have interacted with him, Mr. Sajlang Tripura, Teacher in school, writer of Kokborok who proves with some related facts and shreds of evidence that the Tipra Community or larger Tibeto-Burman were the once who built civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The civilization might have been destroyed by Aryan invasion who had came later. He went on saying that the unknown scripts of Harappa were the script of Tipra community as it also suggests that earlier Rajmala was written in Tripur script or Koloma script, the lost scripts. He proved with facts that nobody could actually interpret the meaning of Harappa, but this synonym word has some meaning in Kok-Borok word. There are some place called 'Makran' in Kok-borok, it may be 'Mai Kwran' dry paddy field which also denotes arid region of those areas. Moreover, the naming of place name like 'Udaipur' during the royal has some relations with the Udaipur of Rajasthan. We need to still carry on the researches. In the skull examinations of lost Harappan Civilizations, the archaeologist found the resembling of greater Tibeto-Burman race and some of Dravidians race. This may be one hint that these racial greater race inhabited once upon a time. This is presented through Map fig.no 5

9.2. Link to North India, Western India, and Central Asia :

There is a mountain now in Central Asia by the name Taklamakan. He said that the word 'Taklamakan' has some relations with Kokborok term and the larger part of Tibeto-Burman family. The origin of the word might have been larger Borok family. The word is a combination of two words. 'Takla' or 'Togla' means 'Cock' and 'Makan' or 'Mwkhang', In the Tripura community, its sound of phonology is more related as they called 'Togla' as 'Takla' and 'Mwkhang' as 'Makang'. This name mountain has some meanings which many experts could not trace it out. The name of the place means 'Cock Cheeks'. If you see some mountains and deserts of Taklamakan, some of the land built or surface looks like red cheeks of the Cock. It is a deserted area and is red. Hence, it might have been derived from such a nature of the topography. It is demonstrated through fig.no 6. In Afghanistan, Northwest India, there are some names of place synonym to Kok-Borok term or Tibeto-Burman family which indicates the type and nature of the place and has more relevance to the greater family.

The place called 'Khumulwng' in Uttaranchal, one of the Northern States of India is much related to the ethnicity of 'Tipra' or 'Borok community' of greater ethnicity family. It means the valley of flowers. In Tripura, everyone knew it as the valley of

Fig.5 map shows the possible migration from North-west and Tibeto-Burman language Family



Source : Modified and edited Map, Author—language family of south_east Asia, User : BlahkekRocks Translated by User : Kitkatcrazy

flowers and in Uttaranchal also, one of the Northern states of India, it is the place of the valley of flowers. In Nepal also, Nepali used the word for Mount-Everest to have more meaning in the Tipra language family. These discussions can be taken separately as it is long descriptions. Besides these, there are several artifacts, remnants, and ethnicity that show some relation to the ethnicity of the Borok community.

9.3. Discussions on lost tribes of Israelites link :

This is not to contradict anyone about the issue of lost tribes of Israelites who is more fit or suited to be the part of Israelites descendants. As some sections of the tribes belonging to 'Kuki-Chin' and 'Mizo' group of Mizoram and Manipur claim that they are descendants and the lost tribes of Israelites, we need to discuss to some extent. This claim may be through the prophecy of some religious leaders or interpretation of dreams which has less valid ground in scientific norms. I heard that some DNA tests also been conducted. As no tribes of North-east India wanted to be tribes of Israelites or has any issues regarding the inclusion matter. They might have taken the opportunity as Christianity has a link with Judaism and Israelites.

The Tripuri or Tipra / Borok community has more strong shreds of evidence that they can also be the lost tribes of Israelites. The Twelve tribes of Israel are somewhat considered civilized and wherever they settled, they are thought to have established some kind of civilizations. The Tipra or Borok community build Kingdoms and some aspects of Civilization practices are seen through their cultures and traditions bearing the history of nearly 2000 years in the region and also might have been there in Harappa before their migration towards the Eastern side and North-Eastern part of India. However, In the last century or 75 or 80 years back, the 'Kuki-Chin' along with the 'Mizo family' were known as 'head-hunters' barbaric tribes which may not do justice that be the part of pastoral Civilization of Israelites of that time. However, they also belong to the larger group Sino-Tibetan, the largest ethnic race of the World.

The fig. 6, pictures demonstrate as Takla Makan has meaning in Kok-borok with its relevance to ground facts and also Tripuri customs of marriage resembling some related customs of Israelites.



The Tipra has a link with the names of places synonyms to 'Kok-Borok' term as discussed in the earlier paragraph section. The practices of aligning 'rignal' cloth with numerous layers with great height in the form of pyramids during the traditional marriage ceremony of Tiprasa tell us something about their past life in Egypt or Israel. The marriage customs seems to be more similar, before the marriage, the groom need to convince the father of bride that he is fit for her daughter's partner. The Bible quote in Genesis 29:20 says "In order to marry her, Rachel's father convinced Jacob to work for him for seven years and he could marry Rachel. Jacob agreed." This early practice among Tipra community is very much prevalent, although such practices become negligible. The process in Tripuri is known as 'Chamari Ompha'.

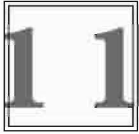
However, these practices are on the basis of apprehension and need to be proved well more with facts and pieces of evidence to relate the Israelites. I am more supportive of the Aryan race, that they might have been part of the pastoral civilization of West Asia. It was exactly 2000 to 1500 BCE years backs that Aryans invaded India. The Dravidians and Indo-mongoloid race came much earlier. The Aryans were thought to capture Harappa Civilization driving the Mongoloid race or Dravidian from the region. Their cultures, practices relate to more ancient Judaism religion or from the ancient Greece religion. I am of a standing view, that good findings may come out about their link with the lost tribe Manasseh of Israelites, if we relate Biblical chronology and their period of entering India.

10. Conclusion :

The above discussion is based on apprehension. The discussion still needs some more facts and pieces of evidence. The greater in-depth study will bear significant findings that may be valuable in understanding the genealogy of human waves of migration at different periods. This discussion is to prove that Human migration has some definite route of spreading across the globe from one epicenter point of Africa, the homo-sapiens to the outside world. The whole human race belongs to one species which got diversified into various races and sub-races through evolution and interacting with various natures of environments. The Tipra/ Tripuri or Borok community bears a distinct mark in the footsteps of understanding human migration to some aspects of the Indian subcontinent. However the discussion carried need more furnishing and elaborater discussion on presentation of facts and evidences and interlinking method. There may deep research on this aspects and trying my level to explore in this fields as the topic seems very fascinating.

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9. Discussion with James Dev verma, Assistant, Professor, Higher education, Govt. Tripura
10. Self Analysis and deep thinking about migration pattern.



The Necessity of Healthy Biodiversity for Human Wellbeing : A Philosophical Outlook

Dr. Jekap Halam*

Abstract :

Human wellbeing is a human experience that includes basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing along with social relationships. Normally humans lived in peace and harmony when these needs are met. In other words, to remain happy and peaceful human beings have to depend on the services provided by Biodiversity. They depend on biodiversity for their food to the shelter where they inhabit as they are part of this diversity. However, human beings have begun to exploit these diversities to meet their unlimited greed and satisfy the vested interest of few people. This destruction of the diversity is also to some extent motivated by the human attitude of superiority over the rest of the creation. Humans thought that natural resources are limitless and exist for humans to use them. Humans looked down at the rest of the organisms of the biodiversity on the basis of their rationality and self-consciousness. In reality this human attitude of superiority is not real because humans cannot have their existence apart from nature. Nature can continue to have its existence without humans in it but humans cannot live without nature. Hence humans must identify themselves as one belonging to the same nature. Humans had caused enough harm to the Biodiversity due to their ignorance and greed. It is time they try to restore the distorted Biodiversity as early as possible. However, many philosophers are against the concept of 'restoration philosophy'. As per these philosophers 'restoration' is not natural and restricts nature to take its own course of development. However, through restoration we can bring back the degraded and distorted biodiversity as close as to its original status, which will in turn assist humans to live in harmony.

Key Words: Biodiversity, Wellbeing, Anthropocentrism, Web of life, Destruction of Biodiversity, Human society, Human Superiority, Restoration.

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Introduction :

Human well-being is a human experience. This wellbeing experience is influenced by different factors such as cultural, geographical, historical, socio-economic processes and the services provided by the ecosystem as a whole. Very often the wellbeing is attributed to cultural, social and economic process. There are still some section of the society that attributes the wellbeing to the development of science and technology. This paper will differ with this conventional thinking pattern about human wellbeing. The well-being of the vast majority of human societies is based more or less directly on the sustained delivery of fundamental ecosystem services, such as the production of food, fuel, shelter, the regulation of the quality and quantity of water supply and the availability of the fresh air etc. In other words humans are closely connected with nature and partially depend on nature to live a harmonious life. It is unimaginable for a society wrought with hazardous industrial wastes, a polluted air, stinking water and a foul surrounding to live a harmonious life. This very line reemphasizes the necessity of a healthy biodiversity for humans to live a harmonious life. This paper will critically examine how our society's harmonious living depends on the services of the biodiversity, how human behaviour had destructed the rich biodiversity and propose ways to restore back the degraded biodiversity.

Biodiversity :

The most unique feature of Earth is the existence of life and the most extraordinary feature of life is its diversity. Approximately 9 million types of plants, animals, fungi and 7 billion people constitute the biodiversity. In other words we can find around 9 million types of plants, animals and fungi that inhabit the earth along with 7 billion of people. Biodiversity is that part of nature which includes the differences in genes among the individuals of a species, the variety and richness of all the plant and animal species at different scales in space, locally, in a region, in the country and the world and various types of ecosystems, both terrestrial and aquatic, within a defined area. Many writers intentionally or unintentionally exclude humans from the definition of biodiversity as part of the diversity. They defined biodiversity as if made up of varieties of plants and different animal species with different types of ecosystems. What about humans? Are humans not part of this biodiversity? The fact is that humans try to alienate themselves from biodiversity. They define biodiversity something out there. This state of mind has prompted humans to perceive the biodiversity as means to attain their unlimited ends. Mentality of this type had led giant industries to release their toxic wastes to the clean rivers, paper industries extract varieties of bamboos and trees and developers as much as possible clear the forest land for human

settlement and development. Subsequently, this human behaviour have forced humans to enter an era which is characterized by global warming, shortage of drinking water, untimely rain, ice melting, raising sea water level and eruption of unheard diseases. Tracing to the root of these problems it won't be wrong to say that humans have failed to view biodiversity as intrinsic part of human existence.

The truth is that for our peaceful living we depend on biodiversity in every way. Our need for food, clothing, housing, energy, medicines are all resources that are directly or indirectly provided by Bio-diversity. Human development is impossible without the diverse living organisms that are present in wilderness, in our crops, livestock, fauna and flora and the ecosystem as a whole. All the families, communities, nations as well as future generations depend on biological diversity for their survival. All organisms including human beings are inter-dependent into an ecosystem in which all species have their role to play which is called as web of life.

Humans and the Web of Life :

The Biodiversity of an area influences every aspect of the lives of people who inhabit it. Their living space and their livelihoods depend on the type of ecosystem that they reside in. Humans, residing in urban or in most rural areas depend for their living on the ecological services provided by the wilderness. However, developed communities in the urban areas who live a sophisticated and luxurious lifestyle far away from biodiversity, claim to use and exploit the natural resources lesser than developing communities residing in the rural areas. Generally the developed communities of the urban areas use the greatest amount of goods and services, which are all indirectly drawn from natural ecosystems. The point of focus at this juncture is whether humans reside in urban or rural depends on the services of Bio-diversity. Very often this truth escapes our attention as it is not explicit in our everyday life. The quality of water we drink and use, the air we breathe, the soil on which our food grows are all influenced by a wide variety of living organisms both plants and animals and the ecosystem of which each species is linked with in nature. That a natural forest maintains the water in the river after the monsoon or that the absence of ants could destroy life on earth are to be appreciated to understand how we are completely dependent on the living 'web of life' on earth. The wilderness is an outcome of a long evolutionary process that has created an unimaginably large diversity of living species, their genetic differences and the various ecosystems on earth in which all living creatures live. Of course, this includes mankind as well. Think about this and we cannot but want to protect our earth's unique biodiversity on which we are highly dependent.



II

Human Society and Destruction of Biodiversity :

Human societies have been built on biodiversity. Many activities which are indispensable for human subsistence lead to biodiversity loss and this trend is likely to continue in the future. We clearly benefit from the diversity of organisms that we have learned to use for medicines, food, fibres and other renewable resources. But humans have begun to overuse or misuse most of these natural ecosystems. Developmental activities have reduced the virgin lands without thinking of planting trees wherever possible. Mangroves have been cleared for fuel wood and prawn farming, which has led to a decrease in the habitat essential for breeding of marine fish. Wetlands have been drained to increase agricultural land. Green forest lands have been cleared for the settlement of unprecedented increased human population. Due to this 'unsustainable' resource-use, once productive forests and grasslands have been turned into deserts and waste lands making uninhabitable for organisms. Subsequently, year after year the number of deserts and waste lands had increased all over the world. Let us keep in mind that these changes will have grave implications on the human society in the longer term.

Reasons for the Destruction of Bio-diversity :

There are various reasons why humans have been degrading the richness of our Bio-diversity. Here we will critically and briefly discuss some of them.

Population Growth :

Growth of the human population is a major factor affecting the biodiversity. Simply put, overpopulation means that there are more people than there are resources to meet their needs. The root of almost all the environmental problems we face today can be traced back to the increase in population of the world. The human population is at 6 billion; with an annual global growth rate of 1.8%, three more people are added to the earth every second. This represents an increase of almost 60% since 1970 and over 150% since the Second World War.¹ More population require more food grains and more lands for settlement. The need for more food grains and more land accelerates the destruction of the natural resources which in turn speed up the rate of pollution.

Affluence :

Simultaneously, the world has experienced a great economic growth rate over the years. Affluence is a problem for the existence of bio-diversity because with increasing affluence comes an increase in the per capita resource utilization. Less than 20% of

the world's population controls 80% of the world's wealth and resources. The high standard of living that accompanies the increased production and consumption of goods is the major cause of pollution and environmental degradation and consequently the loss of biodiversity double up.²

Ignorance about the Function of Biodiversity :

The other reason for modern humans to behave the way they behave with the biodiversity is that they do not see all the varied functions that biodiversity plays in their lives as they are not explicit. Human beings rarely notice how they control and exploit the environment unless they study nature. Human nature is characterized by perception. Unless we perceive we do not believe. Due to this characteristic of human nature, humans tend to take short-term benefit actions that can have serious impacts on biodiversity leading to even extinction of species by disturbing their habitats. Humans tend to forget that they only share this planet with millions of other species that also have an equal right to survive on earth. Hence it is morally wrong to allow human's actions to lead to the extinction of species.

Human Superiority :

Human beings considered themselves to be the most intelligent species on the earth. They have elevated themselves to be the measure of everything. With the assistance of the intellect humans have escalated to the ladder of success. Human intellect had assisted humans to fly like a bird, soar to the sky with the help of rockets and land on the moon. This single factor of human intellect had made humans to elevate themselves to the position of supreme power having dominion over all other creatures. This thinking paved a way for the emergence of anthropocentrism which promotes that humans are at the centre and rest are at the periphery. Rest of the creatures and natural resources exist to meet human ends. Hence, humans savaged the natural resources forcing the extinction of millions of species and varieties of plants from the surface of the earth.

III

Denial of Human superiority :

Whether we are concerned with standards of merit or with the concept of inherent worth, the claim that humans by their very nature are superior to other species is a groundless claim.³ Humans are not inherently superior to other living things. From the biological point of view humans are totally dependent upon the well-being of the earth's atmosphere but for its well-being the atmosphere is not dependent on humans. It has developed and maintained itself for ten thousand times as long as the total

duration of human existence up to the present moment. Humans are not only new comers; they are also needy dependents, unable to support themselves without the aid of the rest of the natural order of life. As long as the earth's atmosphere as a whole is functioning well human existence may continue. If it disintegrates or becomes seriously disordered, humans will exist no more.

On this ground biocentrism attributes an intrinsic value to all plants and animals and to ecosystems, broadly conceived. Aldo Leopold in his essay "Land Ethic" argues that a true land ethic or earth-centred ethic is one that expands the limits of the moral community to include soil, waters, plants and animals or the entire ecosystem, biodiversity or the land. In other words, a land ethic moves humans from a dominant position to one of a simple member of the earth community, requiring that humans respect the other members of this biotic community.⁴

We are all aware that our unsustainable way of development, terrorist activities, population explosion, poverty and pollution has brought down our biodiversity to the brink of a catastrophe, rendering it uninhabitable for all forms of life, including human life. What are we to do to save our rich biodiversity? At this deciding moment of our life restoration would be of a great help.

Restoration of Biodiversity :

Habitat destruction results invariably in species destruction and hence eco-restoration leads automatically to biodiversity restoration. However, there are many environmental philosophers who deny the restoration thesis. They think that ecological restoration is only an attempt to restore nature rather than an effort to restore human relationship with non human nature. Eric Katz in his article "The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature"⁵ claims that restored nature can never reproduce the actual value of nature. There is a difference between human creation and natural. As per him restorations are human creations so they can never claim restoration to be things that contain natural value. Consequently we can say that restorations are not natural they are artefacts created by humans. As per Katz those who talk of restoration therefore talk of something that is not part of nature. He also looks at restoration as the tyranny of humans over nature by trying to dominate the natural process. For instance the attempt to redesign, recreate and restore natural areas and objects is a radical intervention in natural processes. All of these projects involve the manipulation and domination of natural areas and on the process impose anthropocentric interests. Nature is not permitted to be free, to pursue its own independent course of development. Which means real nature can never be restored by humans. Man's attempt to restore would prohibit nature from pursuing its own development. The

reason is that restoration is always a substitute for whatever would have occurred at a particular site without human interference. So he discouraged the practice of restoration.

The other philosopher who opposes the idea of restoration is Elliot. In his seminal article "Faking Nature" he states that any harm done to nature by humans is ultimately repairable through restoration, so the harm should be discounted and we could continue to harm. Restoration justifies our action of destructing nature. With the help of restoration the destruction of what have value in nature is compensated for by the later creation of something of equal value. He rejects the restoration theory through an analogy based on the relationship between original and replicated works of art and nature. We normally do not value a replication of a work of art as much as we value the original. In the same way we would not value a replicated piece of nature as much as we would the original.⁶ Because one is original and the other one is dubious.

To counter argue the positions of Eric Katz and Elliot, Andrew Light proposes two types of restorations. The first is the malicious restorations such as the kind of restoration described by Katz and Elliot and the second is the benevolent restorations or those restorations which are undertaken to remedy a past harm done to nature although not offered as a justification for harming nature.

Though Elliot described that restored nature is not original nature still there is some kind of positive value to the act of ecological restoration in many cases. Even if benevolent restorations are not restorations of original nature and hence more akin to art forgeries than to original works of art, they can still have some kind of positive content. A restoration could be more like repairing work of an art than like creating a fake one. Elliot to some extent accepts the ecological restoration. He states, "Artificially transforming an utterly barren, ecologically bankrupt landscape into something richer and more subtle may be a good thing. That is a view quite compatible with the belief that replacing a rich natural environment with a rich artificial one is a bad thing."⁷

In criticising Katz, Andrew Light states that even if we grant Katz his position of impossibility of the restoration of nature, we may still have moral obligations to try to restore nature. For Katz, restored nature is an artefact, a part of human culture, rather than a part of nature.⁸ This means nature and culture are entirely separate things. This view is not consistent with the worldview that sees humans as part of nature, exemplified in Aldo Leopold's land ethic, where we are required to see ourselves as 'plain members of the biotic community.' There are cases in which nature cannot pursue its own interests anymore because humans have destroyed it, for instance soil that has become contaminated by hazardous industrial wastes. In these cases restoration can simply be the act of allowing nature to again pursue its own

interests rather than shackling it to perpetual human-induced trauma. So even if we agree with Katz that humans cannot really restore nature, it does not follow that they ought not to engage in restoration projects that actually repair the damage caused by past domination. The benevolent act of Restoration will surely make the biodiversity once again healthy and rich to a great extent.

Conclusion :

Healthy and rich biodiversity will automatically enhance natural balance and consequently lead to social harmony. Degraded and unhealthy biodiversity is neither good for nature nor good for humans. Wellbeing of biodiversity is the wellbeing of humans as they live in the same web of life. For humans it is impossible to live a harmonious life in a distorted biodiversity. Amidst the turmoil and unprecedented destruction of the natural resources there is a ray of silver lining that is our policy makers had incorporated the environmental aspect in the major policies of the country.

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Tribal Research & Cultural Institute

The Tribal Research & Cultural Institute was established in the year 1970 under the Tribal Welfare Department with following broad objectives :

- To conduct different research studies like development of language & culture, socio economic condition of Tripura tribes, collection of historical elements and evaluation studies.
- To assist research scholars in the conduct of research works related to the tribes of Tripura.
- To promote Tribal culture like tribal folk song, folk dance, folk music through Tripura State Academy of Tribal Culture affiliated to Tripura University (A Central University).
- To demonstrate tribal heritage, culture, socio-economic condition, dresses, ornament and every day life through a State Tribal Museum.
- To document Socio-economic & traditional aspects of Tripura tribes through production of films and establishment of a rich Social Science Library.
- To organise State & National Level Seminar on Tribal life & Culture and Languages.
- To publish books related to Socio-economic condition on Tribal life & culture of the State and reprints the rare and old books related to Tripura.

For all kinds of Correspondence :

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