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EDITORIAL NOTE

This is the twelfth issue of the Bulletin of the Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati. There has been some unavoidable delay in bringing out this issue in time. The reasons for delay were beyond our control. In this issue, we have included 15 no. of articles. Among the authors who contributed for the bulletin are Dr. Prem Saran, Dr. Sankar Chatterjee, Dr. Kameswar Brahma, A. K. Sachan, Dr. G. S. Somawat, Dr. J. J. Kuli, Dr. B. C. Bhuyan. Late, Dr. B. N. Bordoloi and M. P. Hazarika expired before publication of the bulletin. Most of the articles are based on field study.

The bulletins of the Institute have been well received by the scholars and Institutions from various parts of the country. We regularly receive demand from the scholars for sending the bulletin. I hope the present issue of the bulletin will be received by the readers with great pleasure.

I am thankful to the faculty members of the Institute for bringing out the issue. I also thank M/S. Bohniman Printers, Guwahati for their help and co-operation in printing out the bulletin. Finally we look forward for comments and suggestions for improving the quality and standard of the bulletin in future.

R. Zaman
Editor

Bulletin of the Assam Institute of Research for
Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati.

And

Director
Assam Institute of Research for
Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati.

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PRIMATE BEHAVIOUR AND THE TANTRIC CULT : AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF HUMAN PLAY

DR. PREM SARAN, I.A.S.*

INTRODUCTION :

The Tantric cults of South Asia represent very old eroto-yogic traditions, dating from around the fifth century A. D. and surviving into modern times. The persistence of this hedonistic set of practices is thus something that would profitably bear close examination. In this paper I propose therefore to do so, from the perspective of physical anthropology, complemented by data from Indology and cultural anthropology. I accordingly begin by examining whether play-behaviour among subhuman primates can be used to elucidate the ludic aspects of Tantrism, and thereby explicate its remarkable cultural stamina. And the reason that I start out with such data is because of the socio-biological underpinnings of much of human behaviour.

In what follows, I first look at the available explanations of nonhuman primate play as being based on Darwinian adaptiveness; then, I specifically review studies of primate sexual behaviour. Subsequently, I briefly describe a type of Tantric ritual practice, after which I outline the possibility of extrapolating from nonhuman sexual play to human sexual behaviour, such as is exhibited in the Tantric cults. Then, I demonstrate how Indological and cultural anthropological knowledge of Indic society has necessarily to be used thereafter to complement such physical-anthropological data on nonhuman

primate sexual play. For only then can one fully explicate the ludic aspects, and thus the culturally significant persistence, of Tantrism. And I conclude with a few remarks on the potential crosscultural outreach of my analysis.

PLAY IN ANIMALS :

Scientific studies of play behaviour have emerged only comparatively recently. The reason for this is the pervasive feeling that play is a rather frivolous phenomenon unworthy of scientific research, and one which besides could not even be operationally defined. Then in the sixties, data began to accumulate in primate ethology about the importance of play in the evolution of the primates, its centrality becoming greater as one moves up the primate series to human beings. And among the latter, the Darwinian selection of the capacity for play, given the comparatively greater period of immaturity, is indeed particularly critical.

According to Fagen (1981), play behaviour involves a major biological paradox, in that animals of many species spend a lot of time and energy in apparently unproductive activities of this type. Play is rather important for these animals, however, because it helps to develop adaptive flexibility vis a vis the environment, it apparently accelerates physical development and brain growth, seems to be a basis for cognitive and motor skills, and also appears to

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facilitate social processes. In short, play is vital for the healthy development of all higher animals.

Play is however more difficult to define than other categories of behaviour, according to E. O. Wilson and others; in fact Hinde found play "impossible to define" (Fagen, 1981). On the other hand, play is accompanied in subhuman primates by a metasignal called the 'play face' (Bruner et al, 1976). Thus one is enabled to develop different types of operational definitions of play by example (say by citing the playful activities of kittens or puppies), by enumeration (i. e. by listing examples of all the kinds of activities that one wants to call play), or by contrast (i. e. by demarcating it from non-play behaviour).

With these brief prefatory remarks, we can now proceed to look in some detail at the evolutionary "use" of play in animals.

USE OF IMMATURITY:

The evolution of primates is marked by an increase in the period of immaturity, with the concomitant natural selection of the capacity for play. During this phase of immaturity, the individual is enabled to develop, in the course of its playful activity, many of the special skills and behaviours that are critical to adult life. That is, play during immaturity has many important uses.

First, it is a means to enable learning within a comparatively non-risk situation. This is especially true in the case of social play, where animals adopt a 'play face', as described briefly a bit lower down. That is to say, the animal can test existential limits in relative safety.

Secondly, play provides the related opportunity to try out behavioural combina-

tions that may not actually be feasible in 'real' life. This tendency toward experimentation is exhibited even in animals in captivity, as in the case of a young female chimpanzee learning to manipulate a tennis ball.

Van-Lawick Goodall's detailed reporting from the Gombe Reserve in Africa has made clearer why repeated opportunities for observation and play are developmentally essential. For example, the mastery of a complex skill like feeding on termites involves the initial mastery by the ape of the features of the task, and then the combination of the mastered features. Sheer repetition provides the routinization that permits one act to be combined appropriately with other acts, e. g. that of pushing a stick into a termite hole with that of pushing it inside in a particular way. In this connection, it may also be noted that it is crucial to try out variants of a new skill in various different contexts. Thus, an ape that climbs up stacked boxes then tries out the new skill on a ladder.

Again, such play activities are crucial to the evolution of tool using. Play, in view of its freedom of action in a pressure-free environment, helps to develop the flexibility needed for tool use. Laboratory studies have thus indicated the necessity of initial play with available materials, before these can be functionally converted into instruments. One such example is the use of sticks by an ape to rake in food.

Further, the dissociative aspect of play is also crucial to tool use. This refers to the ability to anticipate the potential use of an object in a novel arrangement. An elegant example of this is when a chimpanzee broke a wooden plaque along its grain in order to

use it as a stick to extract food from a tube.

To sum up, as regards the primates, "the great ape possesses manipulative subroutines that are practiced, perfected, and varied in play" (Bruner : 43)

PLAY AND INSTINCT :

According to Groos (1976), animals with complex forms of adaption to their environment quite definitely require youthful play, in order to practice many behaviours for which instinct is not fully adequate. He saw the connection of play with the evolution of intelligence as consisting in the mastery of important life tasks. Some of these are the absolute control of the animal's own body, complete control over the means of locomotion, agility in the pursuit of prey, and special ability for fighting.

While instinct is certainly necessary for the mastery of the above life tasks, without play these special instincts would have to be elaborately programmed down to their most minor details. That is to say, play practice is absolutely essential for instincts to be educated and completely developed. In addition, play performs the vital function of the evolution of higher intelligence. This is achieved through the mechanism of Darwinian natural selection, operating through the play of the young. It may therefore justifiably be claimed that youth, which belongs strictly speaking only to the higher animals, "probably exists for the sake of play" (Bruner : 66). Thereby the animal is enabled to supplement its hereditary endowment with individual experience, thus enabling itself to adjust to the tasks of life.

PLAY AND META-COMMUNICATION:

There is a universal need in many spe-

cies to communicate the meta-signal that the behaviour which follows immediately after is a special type of 'inconsequential' activity, namely play. We have already seen that play faces are one such signal, which enables subhuman primates to safely indulge in play behaviour. It will therefore be pertinent to look now at the processes by which adult communication skills develop in the infant stump tail macaques studied by Chevalier-Skolnikoff (1976)

The newborn stump-tailed macaque is relatively helpless, but is capable of reflexive movements like grasping, clinging and sucking. She communicates by these reflexes, which are exclusively tactile and very different from the primarily visual repertoire of the adult. Many of the adult's visual communication patterns do appear, however, to develop from these infantile reflexes.

For example, when infants visually fixate on other monkeys they make puckered-lip expressions. As the infants grow older, these behaviours mature into the puckered-lips of the friendly adult, which is still essentially the same expression as the infantile one. Again, as the infant begins to explore her environment, she initially does so with her mouth. As she grows, this very use of the mouth more and more frequently becomes the initiation of mature social interaction with other monkeys. And this also gradually results in the development of the open-mouthed play face. Finally, adults frequently embrace and huddle together, these actions being friendly gestures; these adult tactile behaviours too seem to derive from the reflex grasping and clinging seen in infants.

The above are then some aspects of the

general evolutionary significance of play in the higher animals. In the next section, we shall look specifically at the sexual behaviour of subhuman primates.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN NON-HUMAN PRIMATES :

Hanby (1976) has reviewed some of the studies of nonhuman primate sexual behaviour. This behaviour falls into two overlapping types, namely copulatory and affiliative or contacting, which latter he subsumes under the term "sociosexual". These include behaviour such as mounting, presenting, genital touching, embracing, and orgasm. Most of the sociosexual patterns are heterosexual, but homosexual ones are also seen. He groups the available research under the following three developmental stages: infancy, the juvenile period, and adolescence and adulthood.

Infancy :

During this stage, the elements of thrusting, mounting, presenting and (for males) intromission seem to form definite behavioural patterns. The newborn monkey or ape is in practically constant physical contact with the mother, and erections and thrusting (in both sexes) are directed to the mother's body; this seems to be true also of human beings.

Mounting seems to involve boarding either the mother or other individuals, and is sometimes elicited by those others. By the end of the first year, males appear to thrust and mount more often than females. Also, mounting gradually becomes linked to thrusting and intromission, through the latter is difficult to determine. And as for orgasm, this has been described only for infant male anubis baboons, though it has been

described in this phase for humans of both sexes. At this stage, however, neither sex shows any sexual preference.

Incidentally, regarding the phenomenon of presenting, even though it is related to mounting, it has a quite different developmental sequence. While mounting is a response to being presented to, presenting is associated rather with restraint : being restrained, having the lips held, and having the genitals and perineal area inspected and groomed. As for the infants themselves, they begin to sniff, touch and lick as early as four months. Cases have also been recorded of masturbatory behaviour, with indications of orgasm, but these seem to be directed more by others to the infant. In any event, presenting gradually becomes more independent of direct genital contact and exploration, and is now more often directed to older animals as a gesture of deference.

In sum, by the end of the first year, the various macaque, baboon and chimpanzee groups studied are able to integrate erection, thrusting, mounting, and to some extent intromission. And in the olive baboon, orgasm too seems to become integrated into the general sociosexual pattern of behaviour.

Juvenile Period :

During this period, the copulatory pattern in males, and the presenting and mounting behaviour in both sexes, become more linked to specific partners and situations.

For instance, male rhesus monkeys, Japanese macaques, hamadryas and chacma baboons begin to exhibit sequential mounting before ejaculation, as is the case in later adulthood. And among chimpanzees and olive baboons, which are single-mount-to-ejaculation species, the number of thrusts

per intromission reaches its peak in this stage.

Again, the series mountings of males on females becomes tied to the breeding season, and there is also a clear seasonal preferences for mount partners. Thus, outside the breeding season males of any age may be mounted, but only adult females are mounted during the breeding season.

Next, posturing becomes more stereotyped in juveniles, with an increase in mature mounting patterns and presenting. Young males often mount in play and in other situations, with a wide variety of postures. A variety of facial gesturing and vocalizations also accompany sociosexual behaviour during the stage, these being infrequent during infancy. Also, connections begin to be made between the appropriate sociosexual gestures, and the age and sex of the partner. The most frequent context is play, for these juvenile sociosexual patterns is as it also is in late infancy.

In short, the juvenile period too continues the progressive integration of the copulatory pattern into the normal sociosexual behaviour. The added ingredients, however, now are partner selection and seasonal patterning. This period is therefore important for the elaboration of the sociosexual repertoire into patterns that are specific to the species, as well as to partners and situations. And it may also be kept in mind here that all this occurs in the general context of play.

Adolescence and Adulthood:

With the onset of puberty and the concomitant hormonal changes, behavioural changes and related problems vis a vis adolescents occur among nonhuman primates too, just as in human societies. To a greater

or lesser extent, male and female adolescents now have to leave natal families and groups, and begin to establish families themselves.

Adolescent copulatory behaviour in this stage is therefore the resultant of an interaction between age, partner availability, position in a dominance hierarchy, general social situation, and hormonal state. Most studies are however preoccupied with male dominance as the main factor perceived to affect mating, whereas Hanby (1976:36) demurs : "agonistic dominance is only one factor in a multiplex of relationship that affect a male's copulatory success".

Again, as males grow older, their copulatory behaviour becomes more specialized, as regards actual practices and partners. Thus, mature males may copulate only with females in the middle of estrous, so that adolescents can presumably copulate only at other stages. Further, mature males seem to elicit more indications of "satisfaction" from the female.

In addition, there may be stable copulatory preferences between particular males and females. This may even lessen a male's chances of procreation, as in cases where the females were already pregnant. At any rate, the stage of adolescence and adulthood may be summed up as one of increasingly "mature" sociosexual behaviour, in terms of patterns of courtship, copulation, and partner selection.

Having thus examined in some detail the play behaviour, including sexual, of nonhuman primates, let us turn next to a special type of erotic behaviour among homo sapiens. I refer to a type of Tantric ritual, which has a long history in South Asia. Such ritual

occurs in both Hindu and Buddhist variants, and is an inherent part of the Indic civilizational template.

A CORE TANTRIC RITUAL :

At the very outset, however, it would be appropriate to explicate the rationale for my juxtaposition of Tantric material with the above data on nonhuman primate behaviour. The main reason is simply that the Tantric cults display a highly sophisticated human "use" of pleasure (Foucault : 1976). And additionally, the very persistence of such traditions in South Asia over the centuries is quite definitely a significant pointer to the generic, cross-cultural importance of human (sexual) play, as I shall finally indicate briefly.

To begin, let us define what we mean by the word "Tantric". By this term, we denote a system of rituals, which are full of symbolism and which utilize yogic techniques for the achievement of the ultimate Indic religious goal, namely the mystical experience (Saran : 1998). What sets Tantrism apart from other esoteric South Asian religious practices in general, however, is its use of highly antinomian erotic means, such as the Hindu pancamakara ritual.

This pentad (the "Five Ms") refers to items whose names begin with the syllable "ma", and of which the first four are ascriptive aphrodisiacs. These "5 Ms" are alcohol, meat, fish, parched grain and sexual union, all used in a sacramental setting. Of course the last "M", i. e. ritualized sexual union, may be either actually (i.e. physically) performed, or it may be visualized. Either way, it is this element which has made Tantrism such a very distinctive part of the Indian cultural matrix.

The Hindu Tantric ritual described be-

low (Bharati : 1976) has two parts, a preparatory first half, and then the actually operative second portion. The first part begins with the practitioner (i.e. sadhaka) waking up and doing his morning-observances. He sits up straight on his bed and mentally worships his guru (i.e. religious teacher), together with the latter's wife or ritual partner. The guru is invoked as the very divine in human form. Thereafter, he worships his chosen deity in a similar manner, using mental offerings or oblations of flowers, incense, lights and so on, as is done in traditional Hindu worship. All this over, he then carries out his bowel movements and his morning ablutions.

After his bath, he sits down for his morning ritual proper. He invokes the pilgrimage sites and other holy places of Tantrism, chants mantras (i.e. sacred words, syllables, or sounds) and meditates on his inner (i.e. visualized) yogic body. Thereupon he meditates on Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of speech and learning. He also makes other ritual observances which are very much along orthodox lines, until he comes to an item which is certainly a deviation from the orthodox worship. This is the taking of hemp (i.e. cannabis Indica).

The time that elapses from this ritual ingestion of hemp to the climax of the ritual in its second half is about an hour and a half. This interregnum is incidentally just long enough for the drug to have real impact. The practitioner is thereby enabled to overcome his cultural inhibitions, and so to perform the climatic part of the ritual successfully.

Having taken the cannabis, the sadhaka performs other items of orthodox ritual, ex-

cept that most of the mantras used now are Tantric, rather than generically Indic. Next, the bowls containing the four "Ms" and other ingredients are ritually installed. Thereafter he worships his chosen deity, and then strives to rouse the Devi Kundalini. This refers to his 'magico-spiritual' power, which is visualized as lying dormant at the base of his yogic body.

The practitioner imagines the Devi Kundalini slowly rising up, and passing chakras or centres located along the spine of his yogic or "subtle" body. She finally enters the highest center located in the cranium, where She unites with Her divine paramour, viz. the great god Shiva. Then the sadhaka concludes the first half of the ritual, by dedicating his self to his chosen deity.

The second half, or the ritual proper, begins with the formation of the chakra, i.e. the in-group of male and female practitioners, who literally sit in a circle. They begin by worshipping the chakra itself. This is done by reciting from various texts, and chanting the appropriate mantras. After this, the sadhakas ritualistically purify their body organs, both the visible ones and those of the "subtle", or visualized, yogic body. This second half of the ritual is incidentally presided over by a senior member of the group, who functions as a master of ceremonies.

Now the participants proceed to partake of the first four "Ms", viz fish, meat, liquor and parched grain. This is again done ritualistically, first purifying each item symbolically and then actually ingesting it. Also, all this is accompanied by disciplined meditation, in which each item is imagined as being offered to the Goddess Kundalini residing within one's body. Further, during the

ritual ingestion of these items, the practitioner simultaneously also silently chants his own personal mantra i. e. the mantra of his chosen deity. The entire procedure is undergone in a solemn manner, as befits a traditional yogic discipline.

Coming finally to the fifth and final M, the practitioners now mentally worship the cosmic Goddess, whose microcosmic aspect is the coiled up Kundalini. After this the sadhaka consecrates his ritual partner using mantras: he bathes her, puts fragrant oil in her hair, combs her, dresses her in a red robe, and makes her sit down. He then touches various parts of her body (forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, arms, and thighs) with his right hand, pronouncing the necessary mantras and so on.

Then he feeds her betel-nut, after which he touches her pudenda momentarily, the while chanting the appropriate mantra-syllable a hundred times. Subsequently, viewing his partner as the spouse of the God Shiva and himself as Shiva, he begins his ritualistic union with her.

During this final ritual step, he mentally recites a verse in which he visualizes himself as constantly offering oblation to the Goddess. He mentally repeats other mantras also, and at the conclusion he climaxes with a last mantra. He thereby sees himself as lovingly offering this final oblation too into the sacred sacrificial fire of the yoni.

In other words, just as the other four Ms were offered as libations and oblations to the goddess Kundalini, the final "M" too is similarly offered to the Goddess, as incarnated also in the person of the female practitioner of the ritual. It may, however, be noted here parenthetically that cognate

Buddhist-Tantric erotic praxis is quite comparable. One difference though is that the Buddhist male partner retains his seed at the end of the ritual union.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS :

To recapitulate, we have seen in detail that the phenomenon of play is quite crucial in the lives of the nonhuman primates. The question though is whether our data on nonhuman primate play, especially sexual play, can really help us significantly in understanding the corresponding ludic aspects of human behaviour, such as that exhibited so graphically in Tantric ritual praxis of the type described above. Before we do that, however, it would be appropriate to backtrack a bit, and look briefly into the comparability per se of nonhuman primate sexual behaviour with that of humans.

According to Hanby (1976), as we have noted, the sociosexual behaviour of nonhuman primate groups can be divided into "contacting" and "copulatory" systems, both resulting from the infant's clinging, riding, thrusting, and genital contact behaviour. The copulatory system early on develops into a stereotyped pattern, whereas the contacting system is more variable. The components of the latter (viz. mounting, presenting, genital touching, embracing, etc.) may often thus actually reflect a desire for reassuring contact rather than sexual gratification, even though they do superficially resemble copulation. For example, presenting and mounting may be employed to establish both affiliative as well as sexual relationships.

In other words, observers often tend to interpret all sociosexual behaviour of nonhuman primates as being sexually motivated,

though data on apes and monkeys indicate that the subjects themselves are better able than humans to separate copulatory patterns from contacting ones. It is of particular importance here that sociosexual behaviour be interpreted with reference to the particular nature of the relationship between the partners, as when an adult male mounts a juvenile female during play, but outside the breeding season. That is to say, the ease with which humans misinterpret the sociosexual patterns of nonhuman primates emphasizes rather the cultural standpoint of the human observer. This is because of the extent to which copulatory and contacting systems overlap, among humans, especially in Western cultures.

Such confusion is a natural result of human attributes like bipedalism, the face-to-face orientation of social interaction, the long period of immaturity with its restricted access to sociosexual partners, and the lack of estrous periodicity. At any rate, humans set very definite limits to the various possible kinds of early sociosexual learning. Thus, for example, the viewing of copulation is forbidden, older sex partners are not available for learning, and sex play with peers or younger children is often punished. The upshot of all this is, "a human is not a chimpanzee or monkey", as Hanby (*ibid*) aphoristically puts it.

An even more thoroughgoing critique of the validity of extrapolation from nonhuman primate behaviour to that of humans was made by Thompson (1976). He argues against the logic of studying primates just because they are "closer" to man. This is because such "closeness" refers actually to their positions on a phylogenetic tree, which

is of course fundamentally, a classificatory device.

Thus, man and monkeys do belong on the same twig of the tree because of their great anatomical similarities, but they are also on very different twiglets because of equally important behavioural and morphological differences. Morphologically, for example, the evolution of man has resulted in some novelties in the hind limb, pelvis, and brain. Behaviorally also, man's communication system has no parallels among other primates, and his social organization is very much unique in its complexity.

A final caveat about the nonapplicability of studies of primate play to research on human play should also be noted. This refers to the remarks by Bekoff (1976), made against the grain of such studies, about the "pleasure" aspects of play. It has been pointed out by many that animal play does seem to be a pleasurable activity. It also seems to be a preferred activity, which has a rewarding effect on an animal. And in addition, these strong overtones of pleasure cause the animal to actually seek out play situations.

The point here is that the pleasurable aspects of play have actually been quite neglected in primate research (Bruner et al, 1967; Fagen, 1981; and Symons, 1978). This is partly because the necessary techniques for studying these are not yet available. Or, as Bekoff (1976) quotes Bertrand: "sexual behaviour...cannot be considered only from the point of view of the future of the species". Unfortunately, however, as we have already seen in our brief survey above, most studies of primate sexual behavior have done just that (Hanby, 1974; Latta et al,

1967; Michael & Crook, 1973)

We may not of course entirely agree with the above critiques of the very comparability of nonhuman-primate and human behaviour, especially sexual play. Such reservation on our part would moreover be quite cogent, given the sociobiological bases of a lot of human behaviour. On the other hand, we must propose the caveat that when we do use nonhuman primate research to analyse human sexual behavior, say as expressed in our Tantric cult, we would have to complement such physical-anthropological data with other relevant material, say of a phycho-cultural nature. Thus, insofar as Tantrism specifically is concerned, we would have to make use, inter alia, of the findings of the cultural anthropology of South Asia, as also the available Indological knowledge.

We may therefore round out our exploration by briefly examining some cultural anthropological and Indological data that can illuminate for us the ludic and ecstatic features of the South Asian Tantric traditions. Before we do so, however, let us first recapitulate that Tantrics use ritualized sexual union mainly to attain the pan-Indic religious goal of the mystical experience. This again means essentially that Tantrism holographically encapsulates two core themes of Indic religiosity, namely play and ecstasy (Saran : 1996, 1998).

As regards the first, we may note that Indic cosmogony views the cosmos as the steady-state manifestation of the lila or divine erotic play of the great god Shiva and his consort Shakti. And it is precisely this divine erotic sport that is ritually replicated by the Tantric adept and his/her partner.

As for the second theme, it is known that

Indic tradition views the mystical experience (called *samadhi* or *nirvana*, in Hindu and Buddhist terminology respectively) in quite minimalist terms. One of the most minimalist of such interpretations is the Tantric one, which foregrounds the *ananda* (i.e. "joy") aspect of that experience (Bharati : 1977). For the very reason d'être of the entire Tantric ritual is to use the ecstasy of sexual union, whether actual or visualized. Thereby it is sought to psychologically leapfrog the practitioner to the higher goal of mystical bliss. Such self-levering is of course in accordance with the "hierarchy of pleasure" outlined in the "Taittiriya Upanishad, a canonical text of the Hindus.

To sum up therefore, studies of nonhuman primate play, especially sexual play, are definitely very useful to help us understand the *ludic* and *ecstatic* aspects of the Tantric cult. These have, however, necessarily to be complemented by cultural-anthropological and Indological knowledge of South Asian cultures. Only by such crossdisciplinary efforts are we enabled to appreciate and explicate the *persistence* of this Indic cult over the last fifteen hundred years or so.

In addition, our conclusions also potentially have very important *cross-cultural* implications, in view of the universal human need for *ecstasy*, whether mystical or otherwise (Saran, 1998). Such an ecumenical outreach becomes especially salient and useful when we reflect upon the amazing paucity of research into the actual prevalence of *play*, and of related *ecstatic* behaviour, in all human societies (Saran, 1996). A probable explanation of course is simply that most anthropologists, being *Western*, are willy-nilly enculturated into the guilt-imbedded Judaeo-Christian worldview, which systematically downplays play and pleasure as somehow 'sinful' (Foucault : 1986).

That, however, is another story, which belongs to the anthropology of knowledge....

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FAMILY STRUCTURE AMONG THE TRIBALS OF SOUTH KAMRUP AREA OF ASSAM

Rita Rani Talukdar *
Om Prakash Singh**

The present study aims to investigate the family structure among the tribals of South Kamrup area of Assam. The sample consisted of 30 tribal families including 12 Boro and 18 Rabha. An interview schedule containing 13 items was adopted as a measure of collecting information relating to - for e.g. - ecological factors, system in the society, system of marriage, social stratification, family organization, etc.. It has been found that tribal families tend to have independent - Nuclear - families more than in comparison to large extended families. The ecology of these families is mostly based on agriculture dominant/co-dominant with fishing, hunting and gathering.

Introduction

Behaviour is commonly conceptualized as a joint of the individual and the environment. The family is generally considered among the most important environmental influences on personality theorists have devoted a great deal of attention to the influences of parents on personality characteristics of chil-

dren. Relationships between child behaviour and family factors such as child rearing practices and parental attitudes have been empirically investigated. Researches of child deviancy have assumed the importance of the role of family functioning in determining child behaviours.

The majority of investigations concerning the relationship between the family and child personality functioning have reported on the effects of family variables. These investigators have not taken into consideration the multi-variate nature of the family social system. A system is a set of inter-related elements, each of which influences and is influenced by the other. A family exists as a system because its members interactions among one another are relatively intense compared with their interactions with other people, which creates a system boundary. The social systems perspective assumes that the family has discernible and characteristic patterns of functioning. During the past two decades a wealth of theoretical literatures has been generated concerning family system functioning, however, it

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has been limited largely to clinical concerns. The emergence of and growing interest in family therapy reflects recognition of the effects of the family social system on personality development in children. However the exact nature of the interdependency between the functioning has not been adequately demonstrated. Two factors appear to have hindered research on family systems a lack of conceptual sophistication concerning families, and a lack of reliable instruments to assess family systems.

A tribal community represents an earlier stage of our socio-economic life. Every stage in the socio-economic progression of the human race strikes a balance of these basic elements. Viz organisation, natural resources and technology. Each tribal society represents one such stage within its own frame or reference. Any change in any one of the three elements of this configuration leads to a sympathetic change in other two elements. The changes continue till new state of balance is reached.

There is no official definition of a tribe in the Constitution of India. As per 1991 census, the total tribal population in India is 6.77 crores constituting 8.08% of the total population in the country. 80% of the tribal population is found in Central India (Removal of Area restriction in 1976). There are total 430 tribal communities, in India. As per 1991 census the total tribal population in

Assam is 28.74 lakhs constituting 12.82 percent of the total population. Total population of Assam is 224,00 lakhs.

According to B.D. Sharma (1983), the basic question in tribal development is to guide the process of socio-economic transformation is such a way that while the benefits of new advances in science, technology and organisation can be assimilated by the community, deprivation does not set in for any section thereof and the egalitarian ethos is maintained. With a view to bring the various issues into focus the ideal social economic frame of a tribal community can be taken. Most of the tribal communities have an egalitarian social structure. There are no rich people here and there are no poor people either. This is an ideal situation and such an ideal situation may not exist in all tribal communities.

When two different systems come in contact with each other, its outcome depends on the quality and also the intensity of contact. One thing which every tribal community faces as soon as it comes in contact with the modern system, is the erosion of its politico-social autonomy. The modern system is in comparably strong. Therefore in new contact situation, the tribal society is rendered extremely weak and completely helpless. The people do not know how to protect their economic rights. The second crucial aspect of the new contact is the qualitative difference in the structure of the two systems. All modern sys-

tems have a formal frame while the tribal social system is an oral and informal one. To a tribal his word is final. A simple example of this is the marriage, which is so personal, intimate and sacred to every individual. The form of a tribal marriage is very simple. It comprises exchange of word between the two partners. Once the promise has been done, the marriage is complete notwithstanding whether the associated rituals have been performed or not.

The basic issue in Tribal Development is how to ensure that the command over resources, which the tribal community enjoys in the beginning when these areas are opened up for the first time, is not disrupted. They should be able to negotiate the process of socio-economic transformation without loss of their command. This is the first premise of tribal development.

A number of studies on the socialization of children were carried out. Anandalakshmy (1975) investigated the acquisition of competence in roles among 6 to 16 yrs old children. Competence meant assuming responsibility, self reliance and achievement. She chose four communities engaged in different crafts (Kumhars, manihars, clay toy makers and matmakers) from urban and rural areas and sudras (Chippas), weavers and printers from Delhi and Rajasthan. She found that children were free as there were no rules for small children. Sex roles were clearly differenti-

ated and influenced socialization from birth onwards. The traditional occupations were learned more through imitation than through instruction. The investigator made a distinction between individual competence (in work) and interpersonal competence (ability to get along with the family and community) she found competence to be not simply the trait of a personal, but as something structured by the interaction of a person with his environment.

In another study on socialization for adult roles in weavers' community in Varanasi, Anandalakshmy and Bajaj (1981) found little anxiety attending upon child rearing (Weaning, feeding and toilet training). The investigators had hoped to find that the competencies valued by a culture would be emphasized in its socialization processes. But they failed to find any direct relationship between the parents efforts to train and the acquisition of competencies by children.

Method

The Sample : The sample consists of 30 tribal families residing in the South Kamrup area of Assam. Actually it is a part of well formulated study, consisted of 120 tribal children, which assess the cognitive competence among tribal children and as such family system in tribal community has also been taken under project.

The Materials-Interview schedule

It is a semi structured schedule prepared by Singh and Talukdar collecting the background information about subjects including, type of tribe, age, sex, education, type of family, family relationship, socio-economic factors etc.

Procedure

The interview schedule was administered individually to all the subjects to get the desired information. The present paper reports about the family organisation, system of property ownership among the family, system of marriage, social stratification, ecological factors, relationship among parents, drug addiction in the family.

Results and discussion

The tribals of South Kamrup area have a democratic outlook in social

structure. Although they belong to different clans, there is neither classification nor inequality of the status among them. Every clan has equal right and position in the society. Irrespective of clans and religions they live together in a village with a cooperative spirit. In every village there is a headman called Gaonbura who is selected unanimously by the villagers. He is the supreme in all the matters within the village. A person beyond Gaonbura is also selected by the villagers called Halmaji, village chowkidar and he is given a considerable amount of remuneration in the form of paddy. Gaonbura is the head for the settlement of any kind of disputes of the society (M.M. Brahma, 1983).

The results of the small investigated study is presented in the following tables, the frequency and percentage have been worked out.

Table - 1.
Type of Tribe

Type of Tribe	Frequency	Percentage
Boro	12	40
Rabha	18	60
Total	30	100

Table - 2.
Ecological factors

Ecological Values	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture dominant/ codominant with fishing hunting gathering.	20	67
Fishing dominant/ codominant with hunting and gathering.	7	23
Hunting and gathering dominant.	3	10
Total	30	100

Table - 3.
System in the society.

System in the society	F	%
Patriarcal	30	100
Matriarcal	0	0
Total	30	100

Table - 4.
Social Stratification

Social Stratification	F	%
Hereditary aristocracy	4	13
Existence of wealth distinction	2	7
No class distinction	24	80
Total	30	100

Table - 5.
Family organisation

Family organisation	F	%
Large extended family	4	13
Small extended family	12	40
Independent N family	14	47
Total	30	100

Table - 6.
Relationship between parents.

Relationship between parents	F	%
Good	18	60
Disgruntled	5	17
Poor	7	23
Total	30	100

Table - 7.
Drug addiction in the family.

Drug addiction in the family	Father		Mother		Children	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Wine	25	83	26	87	12	40
Tobacco	25	83	25	83	15	50
Others	18	60	8	27	0	0

Table 1. Shows the frequency of two tribes viz the Boro and the Rabha. The percentage of Boro is 40 and the percentage of Rabha is 60. Table 2. indicates that the South Kamrup area of Assam is a Agriculture dominant area. As much as 67% of the tribal population is dependent on agriculture. The ownership of ancestral property in the tribal family is patrilachal (Table-3.) as it has clearly been cited by Brahma, M.M. (1983).

Table - 4. presents the social stratification in the tribal society. It has been found that 80% of the family they do not have class distinction. They can communicate their feelings and wishes to others in their society without having any kind of inhibitions among them. Therefore in such system it helps in minimising the problems occurred due to different reasons.

Family organisation in the society has also been studied and it has been obtained that 50% of the families are comprised of husband, wife with their children (Table - 5.). It somehow indicates the extent of desires to strive towards materialistic world. But it needs to be thoroughly

studied including other parameters.

The social interaction among the members of family as well as in society is based on equality which leads to shorten the different stress problems in the society. It has been corroborated with the findings that 60% of families are living happily. But the investigators feel to express that in such system, it produces the lesser amount of psychological pressure on the members of the family to strive for better economy. This again requires to be investigated in detail.

Singh and Agarwal studied the family environment of 6-11 yrs children and found that distorted family produces delinquency among children. The family system including many factors like ecological, ownership of property, marriage, social stratification, family organisation and other cultural factors, tends to create some kind of differential atmosphere in different culture to rear the cognitive competence, among the children of the family. Therefore the investigator plans to study the differentiated cognitive competence among the children of two different cultures viz. tribal and non tribal.

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CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS TO SCHEDULED TRIBES AND SCHEDULED CASTES

A.K. Neog*

The Constitution of India prescribes safeguards and protection for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the people with the objectives of removing social disabilities and promoting their educational and economic interests. It may not be out of context to indicate landmark safeguards provided to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in the various Articles of the Constitution. For the purpose of this note various safeguards are broadly classified into social and religious, educational, political, administrative, grants-in-aid, employment, machinery for safeguards, specification of Castes and Tribes.

A. Social and Religious Safeguards :

1. Abolition of untouchability, Article 17 : Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

2. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, Article 15 (2) :

According to this provision, no citizen shall be subject to any disability, liability restriction or condition with re-

gard to access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of state funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

3. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion, Article 25b :

It pertains to the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindu.

4. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour, Article 23 (1) :

Traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

5. Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech etc. Article 19 (5) :

According to Article 19 (1) all citizens shall have the right-(a) to freedom of speech of expression; (b) to assemble peaceably and without arms; (c) to form associations or unions; (d) to move

freely throughout the territory of India; (e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and (f) to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.

Nothing in sub-clauses (d) and (e) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the state from making any law imposing, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of any of the rights conferred by the said sub-clauses either in the interest of the general public or for the protection of the interest of any Scheduled Tribe.

B. Educational Safeguards :

6. Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections, Article 46 :

It says that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. This comes under the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution.

7. Protection of interests, Article 29 (2) :

(1) No section of the citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving and out of state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

It may be mentioned that the safeguards under Articles 15, 17, 19, 23, 25 and 29 mentioned above fall under the Fundamental Rights section of the Indian Constitution.

C. Political Safeguards

8. Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People Article 330 :

(1) Seats shall be reserved in the House of the People for (a) Scheduled Castes; (b) Scheduled Tribes except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam; and (c) the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam.

(2) The number of seats reserved in any state or union territory for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes under clause (1) above shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to that State or Union Territory in the House of the People as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or Union Territory or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or Union Territory or part of the State or Union Territory, as the case may be in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State or Union Territory.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (2) above, the number of seats reserved in the House of the People for the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam shall bear to the total number of seats allotted to

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that state a proportion not less than the population of the Scheduled Tribes in the said autonomous districts bears to the total population of the state.

9. Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the State, Article 332 :

(1) Seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous district of Assam), in the Legislative Assembly of every state.

(2) The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any state under clause (1) above shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the state or of the Scheduled Tribes in the state or part of the state, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the state.

It may be mentioned that the above provision is subject to Article 334 regarding the period of reservation Article 243-c provides for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Tribes, in every Panchayat.

10. Provisions as to Ministers, Article 164 :

In the state of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, there shall be Minister in charge of tribal welfare who may, in addition, be incharge of the welfare of the

Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes or any other work.

D. Administrative Safeguards :

11. Administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas, Article 244 :

(1) The provision of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Tribe Advisory Councils are to be set up under this provision. The Governor of each state having Scheduled areas is required to make a report to the President of India, annually regarding administration of scheduled areas in the state. Under the fifth schedule, Governors are given wide powers of making regulations to restrict transfer of land, land allotment and money lending.

2. The provisions of the sixth schedule shall apply to the administration of the tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

It pertains to the creation of Autonomous District Councils and Regional Councils, and envisages participation of the tribals in the management of their affairs through the Councils.

E. Grants-in-aid :

12. Grants from the Union to certain States, Article 275 (1):-

Under this provision, which forms the legal basis for Special Central Assistance(SCA), the SCA is required to be released for schemes for

tribal development that may be undertaken by the states, with the approval of the Government of India.

F. Employment Safeguards :

13. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, Article 16 (4) : It says that nothing in this Article (Article 16) shall prevent the state from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward classes of citizens which in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state. The provision provides for imposing reasonable restriction on fundamental right in the interest of protecting Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

14. Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts, Article 335: According to this article, the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

G. Machinery for Safeguards :

The Constitution (Sixty fifth) Amendment Act 1990 has amended the article 338 and created the National Commission for scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes as a statutory commission. The office of the special officer for SCs and STs abolished. The above

amendment came into force on 12.3.1992.

15. Special Officer for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes etc. Article 338 : In accordance with the articles :

(1) There shall be a Special Officer (known as Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, to be appointed by the President.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution and report to the President upon the working of those safeguards at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament.

(3) In this article, references to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be constituted as including references to such other backward classes as the President may, on receipt of the report of a Commission appointed under clause (1) of Article 340, by order specify and also to the Anglo-Indian community.

16. Control of the Union over the administration of Scheduled Areas and the Welfare of Scheduled Tribes, Article 339:

(1) The President may at any time and shall, at the expiration of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution by order appoint a Commission to report on the administration of the

Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the states. The order may contain such incidental or ancillary provision as the President may consider necessary or desirable.

(2) The Executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to a state as to the drawing up and execution of schemes specified in the direction to the essential for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the state.

H. Safeguards for Specification of Castes and Tribes :

17. Scheduled Castes, Article 341 :

(1) The President may with respect to any state or Union Territory, and where it is a state after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of the Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that state or Union Territory, as the case may be.

(2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes, specified in a notification issued under clause (1) above any caste, race or tribe, or part of or grant within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.

18. Scheduled Tribes, Article 342:-

(1) The President may with respect

to any State or Union Territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purpose to the Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or Union Territory, as the case may be.

(2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) above any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribal or tribal community, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by and subsequent notification.

Over and above the safeguards mentioned already there are also special provisions in respect of some states eg. Article 371 (A) for Nagaland, Article 371 (B) for Assam, Article 371 (c) for Manipur, Article (G) for Mizoram and Article 371 (H) for Arunachal Pradesh.

It may be mentioned that in addition that in addition to constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, there are other safeguards like legal, fiscal, etc. Mention can be made of the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955; the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The P.C.R. Act provides for penalties for preventing a

person, on the ground of untouchability, from enjoying the rights accruing out of abolition of untouchability. Enhanced penalties/punishment have been provided for subsequent offences. Under this Act there is provision for legal aid and monetary relief to victims. A person convicted of an offence under this Act is disqualified from contesting elections to Parliament and State Legislature for a period of six years. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

(Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 which was notified on 30.1.90 came into existence to prevent the Commission of offences of atrocities against the members of the two communities and provides for Special Courts for the trial of such offences and for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of such offences. It can also be mentioned that under the Income Tax Act some Scheduled tribe employees are exempted from payment of income tax.



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF POVERTY RATIO AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SCHEDULED CASTE AND SCHEDULED TRIBE POPULATION OF ASSAM

Dr. Shankar Chatterjee*

INTRODUCTION:

The poverty alleviation programmes which are in operation in the country mainly from Sixth Five Year Plan may broadly be categorised into two parts. The first part includes self employment programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). The other part covers wage employment programmes. During Sixth and Seventh Plans (upto four years of Seventh Plan) two popular wage employment programmes continued in the country - National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). In the year, 1989 NREP and RLEGP are merged together to Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) which is presently a major wage employment programme in the country.

Self Employment Programmes:

A brief history: IRDP:

In 1976, a working group was established to suggest norms and to select at

least one district in each state for implementing IRDP through its projects. The Planning Commission suggested that the districts to be selected for IRDP, inter alia, should be economically backward having considerable development potential. On the otherhand, the districts should have actue unemployment and under employment. Considering all these, the programme was launched on pilot basis in 20 selected districts of the country. After experimenting in the selected districts, the programme was extended to 2300 development blocks in 1978-79 and further it was extended to all the 5011 blocks in the country on 2nd October 1980.

Since then IRDP is continuing as a major poverty alleviation programme. The fund of which is shared between Central and the States on 50:50 basis. The programme covers all the Rural poor families including SCs and STs. Some safe guards were made for SC and ST families. During Sixth and Seventh plans at least 30 per cent of families assisted should belong to SC and ST communi-

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ties which later on is increased to 50 per cent.

TRYSEM:

The National Scheme for Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment was started in 1979 as a facilitating component of IRDP. Rural Youth in the age group of 18-35 years from the families below the poverty line are enlisted for TRYSEM training. Like IRDP, during Eighth plan, at least 50 percent of the youth should be from SC and ST families.

DWCRA:

DWCRA is a sub scheme of IRDP. The DWCRA scheme introduced in 1982-83 with the primary objective of upliftment of rural women below the poverty line. The DWCRA's primary thrust is on the formation of groups of 15-20 women from poor households at the village level for taking up economic activities suited to their skill, aptitude and local condition. Initially IRDP was introduced in 50 selected districts in the country. The scheme has now been extended to cover all the districts by the end of Eight Plan. At present 355 districts are covered under the scheme and to achieve the target 50 new districts are included each year.

Since its inception 60,000 groups have been formed and about one million women have been benefitted by DWCRA.⁽¹⁾

Wage Employment Programmes:

NREP & RLEGP:

NREP was introduced in the country on 2nd October, 1980 as a centrally sponsored scheme on 50 : 50 sharing basis between the Centre and the States. The main objective of the programme was to generate additional gainful employment for the rural poor through creation of rural infrastructure.

RLEGP was launched on 15th August 1983 as 100 per cent centrally sponsored programme. The main objective of the programme was to provide 100 days of employment to rural landless labour (at least one member from each family) through creation of rural infrastructure. However, the basic objectives of the two wage employment programmes were almost same.

JRY:

By clubbing NREP & RLEGP a new programme is launched in the country on 1st April 1989 which is popularly known as JRY (Jawahar Rozgar Yojana). The fund under JRY is shared between the centre and the States on 80: 20 basis.

The basic objectives of J.R.Y. are very similar to NREP. Apart from JRY another wage employment programme Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) has been introduced in the country on 2nd October 1993. Presently it is in operation only in Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) blocks num-

bering 2209 in the country.⁽²⁾

In the present analysis an attempt has been made to study impact of IRDP and JRY (including earlier NREP and RLEGP) on SC and ST population of Assam as these are the major poverty alleviation programmes in the country.

DATA SOURCE :

The data for the study have been collected from secondary source. For this various Government publications, re-

ports etc. have been consulted. However, mainly Sixth and Seventh Plans' data have been analysed for this study.

Poverty Ratio among SCs and STs of Assam: An Assessment :

To get an idea about the poverty level of SC and ST people of Assam, data of 1983-84 provided by Planning Commission may be referred which are latest community wise data available for Assam³ (Table 1).

Table - 1.

Percentage of SC & ST people below the poverty line (1983-84) in Assam

Category	Rural (Percent)
(i) Scheduled caste	21.90
(ii) Scheduled tribe	25.50
(iii) Total population	23.76

Source : Govt. of India, Ministry of Welfare - Report of the Working Group on Development & Welfare of STs during Eighth Plan (1990-95) P. 185.

Against the above backdrop, it is important to know the population of SC and ST in Assam. Since in 1981 no cen-

sus was held in the state due to disturbed situation so 1991 census of population has been considered and analysed here.

Table - 2.

SC and ST Rural population in Assam, 1991.

Category	1991 population
(i) Scheduled caste	1430131
(ii) Scheduled tribe	2777308
(iii) Total population	4207439

Source : Census of India, 1991

By comparing Table 1 and Table 2, number of SC and ST persons living below the poverty line may be worked out (Table -3)

Table - 3.

Number of SC and ST persons (Rural) living below the poverty line

Category	Persons below poverty line
(i) Scheduled caste	313199 (21.90% of 1430131)
(ii) Scheduled tribe	708212 (25.50% of 2777308)

Source : Census of India, 1991

Considering average number of members in each rural family of Assam as 5.9 (as per 1991 census), number of families below the poverty level can be worked out in the following way-

$$\begin{aligned} \text{No. of SC families below poverty line} &= 313199 \div 5.9 = 53085 \\ \text{No. of ST families below poverty line} &= 708212 \div 5.9 = 120036 \\ \text{Total} &= 173121 \end{aligned}$$

It is evident from the above that about 173121 number of rural families belonging to SC and ST are below the poverty level.

Impact of IRDP and JRY (including NREP & RLEGP) on SC & people of Assam.

Case of IRDP :

During Sixth Five year plan altogether 95027 number of SC & ST families (out of 306641 families) were covered under IRDP in Assam⁴. The 30.99 percent achievement during this period reflects the fact that coverage was not short of norm (30% for SC and ST).

In the Seventh Plan, another batch of 97398 number of poor SC & ST families were assisted under IRDP. In this case a slight higher percentage (31.5) is observed in achievement. The yearwise breakup is given in table - 4.

Table - 4.

Number of SC/ST families assisted under IRDP during Seventh Plan

Year	No. of families assisted	Achievement
(percent)		
1985-86	17033	32.88
1986-87	21236	31.22
1987-88	23904	36.16
1988-89	19229	30.91
1989-90	15996	26.18
Total	97398	31.5

Source : Basic Rural Statistics, GOI, New Delhi, 1990

It is evident from the above that, in the year 1989-90, the coverage of IRDP families was less than the stipulated norm of 30 percent. But prior to that the coverage was above the norm. However, during Sixth and Seventh Plans, altogether 192425 number of SC and ST rural families were covered under IRDP which is quite high than the number of families tentatively below poverty line in the state (120036) families belonging to SC & ST).

Case of JRY :

As mentioned earlier, present wage employment programme JRY has been introduced in the country on 1st April 1989 and prior to that two wage employment programmes (NREP & RLEGP) were in operation in the country. The performance of NREP and RLEGP as well as JRY during Seventh Plan may be seen from Table - 5.

Table - 5.

Employment Generated (SC/ST families in Assam under NREP and RLEGP & JRY during 7th Plan

Year	NREP	RLEGP	Total
1985-86	8.48 (32.91)	8.42 (38.27)	16.90
1986-87	19.87 (38.70)	15.29 (36.40)	35.16
1987-88	13.45 (39.77)	11.96 (33.22)	25.41
1988-89	17.69 (38.90)	9.11 (50.61)	27.30 JRY
1989-90	-	-	44.99 (36.72)

Source : Basic Rural Statistics, GOI, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi - 1990.

It is evident from the above that lakhs of mandays of employment were created for SC and ST People during Seventh Plan. Moreover, from the table it is clear that the achievement in percentage term was always high. The achievement (50.61%) in the last year of RLEGP (1988-89) was all time high in the state. With such huge generation of employment one can come to this conclusion that poverty ratio among SC & ST has not declined.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION :

It is evident from the above discussion that there is urgent need of assess-

ing poverty among SC and ST people of Assam and accordingly steps may be taken to eradicate poverty among them. It is very difficult to believe low percentage of poverty among SCs and STs. If this is so then how number of poor families assisted under IRDP may go up in the Seventh Plan. It is also fact that SC and ST persons living in rural areas are economically very backward. In this connection, it may be mentioned that according to a rough estimate about 80 percent of Scheduled Caste people are below the poverty line in Assam.⁽⁵⁾ My personal observation is that the same is

true to a great extent. However, in the Eight Plan, the level of income for determining poverty has been enhanced to RS. 11.000/- (annual family income). So the immediate need is to carry out a base line survey to assess poverty among SC and ST families living in rural areas in the state. And accordingly steps should be taken to uplift their economic condition.

Before winding up, I would like to

suggest that since a good number of developments and schemes are there for the development of SC and ST People so a nodal agency may be created for planning, implementing and monitoring of schemes then only better results can be achieved otherwise giving one/two schemes from a department cannot solve the problem. Therefore, State Govt. should look into the matter and try to assess whether the suggestion is feasible or not.

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Role and Status of the Bodo Women in their Society through the Ages.

Dr. Kameswar Brahma, M.A., Ph.D.*

1. Introduction :

(a) Social Structure of the Bodos :

The social structure of the Bodos is primarily patriarchal in character. In the Bodo Society Father is the sole guardian of the family. After the death of the father the eldest son inherits the rights exercised by his father. Generally it is observed that the entire property of family is distributed among the sons only. Daughters do not have the right to property when there are sons in a family. However, it is also observed that a portion of the property is given to the wife while distributing the property among sons. After the death of the Mother the portion of property given to her goes to the son who looks after her and takes care of her till her death.

(B) Family Structure : A Bodo family consists of the Father, Mother, their sons, daughters and their grand children. It is observed that in a Bodo family married sons are separated from their parents after marriage. The un-married daughters remain under the control of their parents till the marriage. The mother is more responsible of her daughters well being than the father. However, the general responsibility of the entire family lies on the parent, who is the sole

guardian of a family. After the death of the father the eldest son of the family bears the responsibility of the entire family. Of course, he is to be guided by his mother in some important affairs of the family. However, the mother is to bear the responsibility of the family after the death of her husband if the son is minor. In the Bodo society joint family is very rare. Separation is very common after the marriage of the grown up sons. The quarrel among the wives of sons leads to separation from the main stream of the family. It is observed that even without his will the son is compelled by his wife to get separated from their parents.

2. (a) Status of Bodo Women : Importance of women during the childbirth: Elderly women are essential at the time of the child birth. They attend to the mother of the newly born child. Because of their good co-operation safe delivery is possible to the mother. The elderly women perform the work of a trained mid-wife or of a nurse. She cuts the navel (uthumai) of the newly born baby and bath with tepid water. No male member is allowed to attend the child delivery safe and except of an 'Oja' or medicine man if his service is required.

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(b) Importance relating to Marriage :

During the early period there was a system of realising the bride price from the bridegroom. The rate of the bride-price was too high and it was unbearable to the poor bridegroom, although it was compulsory in the Bodo Society. However, the system of the bride price was later removed from the society. The custom of the feast in honour of the bride and her parents is still prevalent in the society.

To perform a marriage ceremony the presence of two young girls known as 'Bairathi' is essential. They can never be replaced or substituted by the male. They perform some important pre-marriage rites like distribution of areka nuts and bathing of the groom on the day of marriage, besides holding the 'chailan bati', the sacred lamp, meant for the marriage ceremony. They also dance while procession with the bridegroom and bride takes place.

(c) Important Role during Religious functions :

(1) The Kherai Puja is one of the most important religious festivals of the Bodos. This festival is performed with the help of 'Doudini', who must be a young and un-married girl. In absence of 'Daudini' no 'Kherai Puja' can be performed.

(ii) Brahma Dharma and Women's Participation :

In the modern Bodo Society it is ob-

served that a Bodo Woman, well-versed in vedic hymns (Gayatri mantra) performs the duty of a priest (Purohit) of the yojnahuti.

(iii) In the Bodo Christian Society also it is observed that a woman who is well versed and well acquainted with the system of prayer can conduct the prayer in the church or any place where prayer is arranged.

(d) Bodo Women's Participation at the family economy :

(i) *Custody of granary* : It is a common system of the Bodo Society that the granary (Bakhri) of a family is kept under the custody of the wife. She knows better than her husband about the position of the granary of their family. Her husband cannot dispose of any portion of the stock of paddy or any crops without prior discussion with her.

(ii) *Custody of the cattle, Poultry, Piggery, etc. of the family* : All female members of a family turn to be owners of the Cattle, Poultry, Piggery etc. The Father, who is the head of the family has to take permission from his wife or daughters if he desires to dispose of any cattle, Poultry or Piggery of the family. All daughters possess share of the poultry or piggery. Any income available either from poultry or piggery may be utilised for the benefit of the family. Thus the female members manage their required expenses for their garments, 'Dokhna', 'Jumgra', etc. They rear coons and produce rayon, Endi, Aronai,

etc. The value of Endi is very high at the market. Thus the Bodo ladies earn handsome money by selling the Endi cloths woven by them. The piggery and poultry also enable the Bodo women to earn handsome money. In such a way they can help the family.

(iii) Agriculture and Women folk :

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the Bodos. Without womenfolk agriculture is impossible for a Bodo family. Main role is played by female members of the family during the time of cultivation. A ritual performance is done by the female guardian of the family while plantation of paddy starts. During the time of growth of paddy plants another ritual performance is done by a young girl of the family wishing the paddy a full growth and successful harvest. She touches tops of paddy plants with a bamboo stick (goncha) which is used in weaving. While she touches tops of paddy she applies mustard oil in the stick. It is believed that if the maiden touches the top of paddy plants there is a great hope of successful harvest. Again, when the paddy is fully ripe and the time of harvest comes, a little portion of bundle of ripe paddy is brought to the house by the female guardian of the family. If it is not done, it is believed that 'Lakhi' or 'Mainao' the goddess of wealth becomes dissatisfied and may harm the family.

(iv) *Weaving and the Bodo women* : Weaving is the compulsory item for

the Bodo women. It is said that a girl who is not expert in weaving may not be selected for the marriage. Hence, a young Bodo girl knows how to weave from the early age. It is observed that the young girl and married women of the family earn money by selling different cloth woven by them and thus help the family. Every Bodo girl is bound to weave Dokhna for her own use. It is a matter of discredit for a young Bodo girl to use the 'Dokhna' woven by other girl or woman. Now-a-days, Weavers Association called 'Mahila Samiti' or Aijw Affat is established in almost every Bodo village with the view to produce cloths in community basis. The weavers are self-employed and get financial benefits from the Samiti.

(v) *Aijw Lakhi Bhandar* : It is observed that the Bodo women of Bodo villages or ganise a 'Aijw Lakhi Bhandar' and use to stock paddy by contributing themselves. The purpose of stocking paddy is to help their co-members of the 'Samiti' during the time of distress or hardships. In this manner they can save a poor family who suffers from poverty.

(vi) Bodo Women and Social reformation :

(i) *Bodo Mahila Samiti or Aijw Affat and Liquor prohibition* : The use of the country made liquor is deeprooted in the Bodo society. This illhabit destroys many Bodo families and as such it becomes a curse to the Bodo Society. The Women's organisation called 'Mahila

Samiti' or 'Aijw Affat' has undertaken programmes to eradicate the ill-habits such as consumption of liquor and sale of liquor from the society. Thus the Bodo women's organisations have become somehow successful to save the Bodo society from total destruction.

(ii) Bodo Womn's Participation in the Rural Panchayats : It is observed that the Bodo women take part in the Rural Panchayats along with the male members. They also participate at the discussion about the affairs of their villages along with their male members. Thus the Bodo women are given equal status at the rural Panchayats. Now-a-days the Bodo women are seen enjoying domestic rights by contesting at the general elections. There are few instances of becoming members of the Legislative Assembly as well as members of the Cabinet of Ministers of the state.

(iii) Example of Nationalism and Bodo Women : Legends say that during the pre-independence period, Bodo Women also stood against the colonialist British rulers. For and instance, Birgwhshri was such a Bodo lady who fought against the inhuman activities of the British rulers. She was a revenue collector during the regime of the British rulers. However, she refused to collect revenues and valuable things like gold, silver, etc. for the British rulers. At last she died fighting with the British soldiers.

Nowadays, it is seen that the

deucated Bodo women hold employment in Government and Semi-Government offices of the states. There are many educated Bodo ladies who are serving as teachers in educational institutions. A few ladies are found holding responsible jobs at various departments including medical, judicial, engineering, etc.

3. *Conclusion* : The position of women in the Bodo Society is however discussed here in brief. Summing up the discussion it may be said that since the early period the position of women in the Bodo Society has been found considerably high. So far as the social pattern is concerned it may be said that the Bodo society is not a matriarchal one, rather it is a patriarchal society. Sometimes it is observed that daughters are also allowed share of the property, although it is not very common example in the society.

It is, however, a matter of great pleasure that the Bodo women of the present generation have undertaken to uplift the position of the women folk in the way of many odds and difficulties. This arduous task of the Bodo women who have been much neglected and ill-behaved by different machineries in the country would be successful if they would be patronised and co-operated by their fellow brothers and well wishers. It is often observed that due to much simplicity, openheartedness, frankness and due to

lack of education the Bodo women become easily victims of the antisocial elements of some high-caste societies. Hence, it is a humble suggestion to the womenfolk in particular and all the members of the civilised human society to give stress in educating their daughters

and sisters properly and make them conscious. Education is the sharpest weapon of all to protect themselves from the social enemies and to maintain their position in the civilised human society as always high, so that womenfolk also can contribute a lot to the nation.

Administration of Forests (unclassified) by Autonomous District Councils VIS-A-VIS Tribal Development.

A.K. Sachan, IAS*

Introduction :

Historically the forests have constituted one of the important and significant source of livelihood for a very large population in the North Eastern region in general and tribal families living in hills in particular. In the ancient times a tribal family collected food, water, medicine, fibre, fuel construction materials, agriculture/hunting implements and virtually everything of their daily use from the forests. Their dependence on forests was almost complete and for them life without forests was unimaginable. While for the so called civilized world in importance of forests is in terms of global ecological balance, warming up of the planet, destruction of ozone layer on one hand and paradoxically on the other hand is its commercial exploitation, for a tribal the need for protection of forests was for his very physical existence. While the civilized world went for framing the Acts, Rules, Regulations for preservation/production of land from forests the tribal communities did the same by attaching religious ethos, social custom. Recognising this fact the Govt. of India's philosophy spearheaded by National leaders, the

*He was the Deputy Commissioner, Karbi Anglong, Diphu, at the time of submission of the article. He is presently on deputation to Govt. of India.

Institutions of Autonomous District Council were created to give concrete shape to the religious ethos and social customs in administration of various spheres of tribal life including forests. The idea behind this paper is to invite serious thinking and study on the present practices of forest management vis-a-vis the existence of District Council by the intelligentsia and tribal elite to devise people's development oriented strategy in conformity with conservation principles of renewable natural resources.

Forests (unclassified State) through the ages :

The area included in the present district of Karbi Anglong came under the British Rule in the year 1838. The British Govt. enacted Regulation X of 1822 which gave the foundation for administration of tribal areas by British. The distinguishing feature of this Regulation was that a new form of administration called Non Regulated System came into being. In April, 1874 scheduled district Act 1874 was enacted. Under the Govt. of India Act, 1919 the present Karbi Anglong district was declared backward tract and on such declaration no Indian

legislation could apply to this area subject to few exceptions and modifications. Significantly backward tracts as declared under Govt. of India Act, 1919 have been designated as Tribal Areas under Sixth Schedule of Constitution of India. The system of administration to be followed in backward tract came into some serious discussions in the report of Simon Commission. Govt. of India Act 1935 devoted a separate chapter on the issue and they categorised all backward tract (1) Excluded areas and (2) Partially excluded area in Govt. of India (Excluded and Partially excluded areas) Order 1936. Under these provisions Governor had been given special responsibility to administer these areas. Further no act of legislature could apply to these areas without the consent of Governor who could modify the provisions of the act. After independence a special provision was kept in the constitution of India in the form of sixth schedule for the good governance of these areas. Under provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution the Autonomous District Councils are given legislative, judicial and executive powers so that good tribal institutions, its culture and identity could be preserved through measure of self Governance. Para 3 of the Constitution of India defines legislative powers of the district council and one of the subjects assigned to them for legislation is management of forests not being reserved forests.

Before the advent of British rule and also during early part of it, the forests did not feature in the scheme of administration of rulers. All forested areas without making any classifications were uniformly subjected to shifting cultivation (Jhumming) by the local inhabitants, however a least control over them was exercised by head of Mei, (village council). The density of population during those days was so less that the damaging effect of it were not perceptible initially. In the later part of British rule (i.e. after 1910) the British ruler could visualise the damage caused to the environment by such practices and they decided to earmark certain areas as Reserved Forests and brought them under proper scientific management. However a large chunk of area under thick forest remained left with the people for practising shifting cultivation (Jhum) to earn their livelihood. The villagers did maintain a fraction of area as village reserve and other areas were put to jhumming. Though the British had acquired these areas purely for their economic interest but they did not undertake any major exploitation even during World Wars probably because of the inaccessibility of the area and also because of availability of good quality timber to meet the supply from accessible plain areas of other districts of Assam.

The free hand given to villagers to operate in those forests not under the reserved forests (present day USF) to a

large extent was responsible for some amount of uncontrolled felling. After independence with the concept of welfare state taking roots the population started rising by leaps and bounds leading to increased pressure on forests land and thereby resulting into shorter jhum cycle. This coupled with large scale fellings to meet the revenue requirement of the autonomous district council caused wanton destruction to the forest of Karbi Anglong affecting its fragile ecosystem. We have now reached a situation where the old days good forested areas have turned into wastelands. As per report of Assam State prepared by Assam Remote Sensing Agency, 57% of the total geographical area of the District is classified as wastelands. Almost all these wastelands are the areas earmarked as U.S.F. in the records.

Enactment of District Council :

Para 3 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India empowers the Autonomous District Councils to legislate on the matter among others, (a) management of any forests not being Reserved Forests and (b) Regulation of the practice of jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation. One aspect that has to be kept in mind is that the jurisdiction of state legislature and also of parliament to certain extent is barred in the matters specified in para - 3.

The Karbi anglong Autonomous District Council in exercise of these legislative powers have enacted following

laws to administer the U.S.F. areas.

(1) The Karbi Anglong District (Forest) Act. 1957,

(2) The Karbi Anglong District (Jhumming) Regulation 1954.

The Karbi Anglong District (Forest) Act. 1957 contains three chapters first of which basically deals with the definitions and power and manner in which the district council can constitute any forest land at the disposal of the district council as the Reserved Forest. Chapter II deals with the powers and procedure for constitution of village forest and the Chapter III is basically the adoption of certain chapters of Assam Forest Regulation 1891. Under this act the forest land has been defined as any land at the disposal of Karbi Anglong District Council in respect of which no person has acquired a permanent heritable and transferable right of use and occupancy under any law". This definition of forest land does not impose any legal restriction to check encroachment over vast U.S.F. areas by non tribals and taking the advantage of the situation many non tribals have occupied U.S.F. areas with a view to divert it for non forestry use. This definition also leaves sufficient scope for unscrupulous elements in public as well as government to acquire patta in U.S.F. and proposed reserved forest areas. The leaders of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council will be remembered in the history of forest management for having succeeded in con-

stituting a number of reserved forests under provisions of the act even though the same has not been possible in most part of the country and hardly any areas have been added to the Reserved Forest. Karbi Anglong District Council has been able to convert 749.60 sq. km. of U.S.F. into District Council Reserved Forest while another area of 1595.24 sq. km. has been proposed to be converted to Reserved Forest. If the efforts of the District Council really succeed the total area under District Council Reserved Forest (2344.84 sq. km.) will far exceed the total area of state Reserved Forest in Karbi Anglong District (1966.27 sq. km.) Under provisions of Karbi Anglong District (Jhumming) Regulation 1954 certain restrictions were imposed to regulate the pattern of jhum but enforcement of these restrictions was very poorly executed because of impracticability of the law.

Widening Gulf :

The spirit of creation of VIth. Schedule of the Constitution of India was that the people in the scheduled areas can develop using their genius which exists in the form of traditional tribal institutions which have become customary in nature. In the Karbi society every village is supposed to have a Reserved Forest of its own which is called as Reat Angnam in local language. Villagers not only protect this forest but also worship it. In fact there is traditional belief that every stream every tree and every moun-

tain has a God and the people worship them on different occasions by different menas including sacrifice of fowls, pigs, goats etc. Village institutions take the responsibility of protecting the village reserve forest, as well as Forest in the source of various streams. As per local customs no body can exploit village reserve forest for his personal gain. It can be exploited only for community purposes with the consent of Mei (Village council). In the traditional system anybody violating this rule used to be punished by the Mei. With the legislative powers of the District Council it was worthwhile giving legal status to all these traditional methods of conservation which could have been easily understood by the villagers. In a way the basic purpose of giving legislative powers to the Atonomous District Council has been to certain extent defeated by adoption of Assam Forest Regulation which could not have been treated as suitable to the people of Scheduled areas. Similarly for the regulation to control jhum the most of powers have been vested with the executive committee. In a vastly scattered population a centralised body can not regulate the methods of bread earning in case of each and every individual. Even if the political leadership is serious enough to enforce such legislation the cost of administration will be prohibitive. A gulf has therefore been created by enacting legislations not suitable to the local conditions.

Another factor which has added to the widening of this Gulf is perceptible change in the Demographic pattern of the District. Influx of Non tribals in various parts of the District resulted into a change in the value system and social ethos of tribals. Whereas percentage of growth of tribal population between 1951 to 191 is estimated at 406 the corresponding figure for the Non tribals is 780. Situation is worse if the estimated figures of growth between 1961 and 1991 are situated. Whereas the growth rate in case of tribal population in this period was 214. The figures for non tribals 506. Abrupt growth of Non tribal population lead to the wanton destruction of forest, as most of these people were cultivators and had no love for the forest. They settled down in the foot hills and plateau areas, clearfelling the forest for the purpose of cultivation. We are in fact now left with the forest only in the areas inhabited by the tribals, but they share the badname with the rest of the population for destructing the forest.

Impact of Developmental Activities :

There has been spurt of developmental activities in all sectors to provide for minimum needs of the population. As a result of various developmental programmes of the Govt. and Council, there has definitely been improvement of quality of life of sizeable population. Large areas have been opened up to modern means of communication by

constructing the roads to facilitate people movement but these roads have led to the opening of many virgin and inaccessible forests for heavy exploitation and settlement of non tribals/immigrants in these areas. Further because of rapid expansion of developmental activities a new class of elites has emerged amongst the tribals many of whom find it easy to earn fast money by exploiting various Govt. subsidies meant really for poor tribals. The forests particularly unclassified forests were adversely affected because firstly various developmental activities were taken up in isolation without having any coordination with the ground realities so far as the forest is concerned and secondly many such developmental efforts of the council were funded from the resources derived by forest operations. To compensate for the loss of forest large scale areas were brought under successful tree cover by way of plantations, but the total ecological value of the semi-evergreen and evergreen forests which were lost could not be compensated by creating monoculture of teak, Gamari etc. All these plantations which have been created over the years are adding to 'Govt. Empire' without any emotional attachment of local population. Consequently the protection of this forest has become only the responsibility of Department.

Strategy Suggested :

1. Discussion in the pages before makes one thing very clear and that is

that the breakdown of traditional tree management practices is posing a very serious problem. If one takes into account the vast areas classified as wasteland in this district, the official figures of percentage of total land area under forest will need a downward revision. We are far below the standard of 60% of Hilly areas under forest fixed by National Forest Policy. Though the density of population as per 1991 census is 63 all over the district. In fact the density of population in the hilly region where practice of jhumming is still in vogue, is still in the manageable limit, and if a management plan could be drawn up in these areas, the resources available can not only support the existing population, but can also be a good source of revenue for running the administration. In these areas we can still have faith in peoples' collective capacity to define their own needs, goals and priorities. It has to be what is called as peoples plan and Govt.'s participation, rather than Govt.'s plan and peoples participation.

2. For uninhabited USF areas forest protection methods will have to change.

Autonomous District Council can go for a legislation which has more teeth compared to Assam Forest Regulation of 1891 which makes all offences bailable, compoundable and maximum punishment is prescribed at Rs. 500/- fine of six months imprisonment. For exploitation of these forests a scientific management plan can also be drawn up in the lines of working plan prescribed for the Reserved Forest.

3. Another important constraint which has hampered the growth of the private forest is problems of land ownership. In present condition if a man plants a tree in the USF land it becomes the property of the Council. Idea of private forestry is gaining momentum everywhere in the world. In the Karbi Anglong's situation the scheme can do wonders. Village community or council can be allotted a degraded forest and assisted in creating their own forest which they can exploit as when they so wish.

4. Suitable amendment in the Act. may be made to recognise the right of Mei over village reserve forest.



A Note On Setting Up Of The National Commission For Scheduled Castes And Scheduled Tribes

Dr. G. S. Somawat

National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was initially set up in 1987 by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India resolution dated 1st September, 1987. This Commission, however, ceased to exist from the day the Constitution (Sixtyfifth) Amendment Act, 1990 was brought into force i.e. 12-3-1992. With this amendment replacing the Special Officer formerly known as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes appointed under the Article 338 of the Constitution, the present National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Statutory body) has been set up with Shri Ram Dhan, Ex-MP as its Chairperson, Sri Bandi Oraon, Vice-Chairperson and five other Members - Dr. Sarojini Mahishi (Karnataka), Chaudhary Hari Singh (Uttar Pradesh), Jhina Bhai R. Darjee (Gujarat), Shri B. Sammaiah (Andhra Pradesh) and Shri P.N. Brahma (Assam).

The Commission shall perform the following functions :

(a) to investigate and monitor all matters relating to safeguards provided for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes under the statutory provisions of the Commission or under any other law

*Deputy Director, SC/ST National Commission, Guwahati.

for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;

(b) to inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;

(c) to participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and the state Governments;

(d) to present to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of these safeguards;

(e) to make in such reports/recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or the States for the effective implementation of the safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and

(f) to discharge such other functions relating to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as the President may subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament.

In respect of the investigation of matters referred to in sub-clauses (a) or inquiring into any complaints referred to in (b) of clause (5) the Commission shall have all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit and in particular in respect of the following matters namely :

(i) Summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath.

(ii) Requiring the discovery and production of any document.

(iii) Receiving evidence on affidavits.

(iv) Requisitioning any Public record or copy thereof from any court of of-

fice.

(v) Issuing Commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents; and

(vi) Any other matter which the President may, by rule, determine.

The National Commission is assisted by a Secretariat with headquarters at New Delhi and seventeen field offices located in the States/Union Territories. Twelve of the field offices are headed by Directors and five by the Deputy Directors. The Secretariat of the Commission is headed by an officer of the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.

The Jurisdiction of the field offices and their addresses are as follows :

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Commission Offices & Addresses</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
1.	Secretary, National Commission for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, Vth Floor, Loknayak Bhawan, New Delhi - 110003	Head quarter
2.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, 11-A, Natha Lal Society Stadium Road, IInd -Floor, Ahmedabad -380014 (Gujarat)	Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli
3.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, 177, 22nd Cross, 3rd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011 (Karnataka)	Karnataka
4.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, D-7, Machna Colony, Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal-462006 (Madhya Pradesh)	Madhya Pradesh

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Commission Offices & Addresses</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
5.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, 79, Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswer-751007 (Orissa)	Orissa
6.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, Mayukh Bhawan Ground Floor, Salt Lack City, Calcutta- 700064 (West Bengal)	West Bengal, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
7.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, H. No.6-3-788/A/22 (IInd Floor), Durganagar Colony, Ameerpet, Hyderabad- 50016 (Andhra Pradesh)	Andhra Pradesh
8.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, B-48,Prabhu marg, Tilak Nagar Jaipur (Rajasthan)	Rajasthan
9.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, C-44, Sector 'F', (Opposite Arif Chamber II), Kapoorthala Complex, Aliganj, Lucknow-226020 (U.P)	Utter Pradesh
10.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, IInd Floor, Block 5, Shastri Bhawan, Madras- 600006 (Tami Nadu)	Tamil Nadu
11.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, Chiplunkar Bhawan, Navi Path Shastri Marg, Pune - 411030 (Maharashtra)	Maharashtra, Goa, Daman & Diu

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Commission Offices & Addresses</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
12.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, 189-B, Shrikrishna Puri, Patna - 800001 (Bihar)	Bihar
13.	Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, 'VILLA ENDEAVOUR' Nongrim Hills, Shillong - 793003 (Meghalaya)	Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Arunachal Pradesh
14.	Deputy Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, Pragati Road, Lake Chowmohani, Agartala - 799001 (Tripura)	Tripura
15.	Deputy Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, Kothi No. 1033, Sector 21 - B, Chandigarh - 160022 (Union Territory)	Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh
16.	Deputy Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, Dr. B. Borooah Road, Guwahati - 781007 (Assam)	Assam
17.	Deputy Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, 35, Railway Board, Building, Simla - 171003 (Himachal Pradesh)	Himachal - Pradesh & Jammu & Kashmir
18.	Deputy Director for Sch. Castes & Sch. Tribes, TC No. 15/968, 'Meenakshi' Vezhuthacaud Junction, Trivandrum - 695014 (Kerala)	Kerala & Lakshadweep

The Union and every State Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In order to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under any law and order and to evaluate the progress of the various welfare schemes/programmes being implemented by the State Government for their socio-economic development, the Commission undertakes field visits, calls information through its own field offices as well as from state Governments. On the basis of the investigations specific recommendations are made so that necessary measures are taken by the Union or any State for the effective implementation of various safeguards for the protection, welfare and socio economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Commission is largely depending upon the Central Ministries, State Governments and their establishments for the information and data that are required for monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional and other safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The past experience of the Commission in getting information from the Central, State Governments and their other establishment like Public Sector

Undertakings, Corporations, Boards, Banks, Educational Institutions, Universities and Statutory and Semi-Government bodies have been far from satisfactory and even the information and reports were sent only after repeated reminders, and personal contacts and that too with considerable delay. The present Commission is a statutory body and vested with the powers of inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952. With the Constitutional status, feedback from the Government establishments would be improved and the Commission shall be able to discharge its responsibilities more effectively and efficiently.

The office of the Deputy Director for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Guwahati is also awarding Government of India, Post-Matric Scholarships to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students of States other than Assam studying in the recognised Post-Matric Institutions at Guwahati. This office of the Commission regularly conducts inspections of the voluntary organisations who are receiving Grant-in-Aid from the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. The Scheduled Castes Development Division and Tribal Development Division of the Ministry of Welfare consider Grant-in-Aid proposals received from the voluntary organisations, who are engaged for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Demographical Profile Of The Rampu Khasia Punjee : A Report

Bidhan Sinha*

1. The Khasi, a recognised hill tribe of Assam originated to Meghalaya, are found scatteredly in the state of Assam, and at Rampu, a forest village under the jurisdiction of Narsingpur Development Block of Cachar district, a small group of Khasi people are living. It is 2.5 Kms. straight from the Kalibari Bazar, Katakhal of the Silchar-Aizwal Road 54 No. National High-way through Poloi Tea Estate.

2. The Academy Research Institute (Assam) working in the fields of research, planning, training, publications, and language teachings and vice-versa conducted a pilot study on the socio-economic conditions of the Khasias' of Rampu for finding-out informative knowledge on the Khasi community living there absolutely for academic background and research purposes. Sri

Birendra Kr. Sinha and Sri Jayanta Kr. Sinha jointly surveyed the Punjee under the supervision of Dr. Ananda Mohan Sinha, the Research Associate (P/T) of the Academy Research Institute.

3. Formerly, the Khasi's of the Punjee resided at Chuta Salganga along-with the Halams of the Tripura origin for nearly 35 years. Thereafter, they migrated to this Punjee and settled there a decade back. They organised themselves under a village Headman and named the new settlement - 'Rampu'. But, none of the new settlement have had their own land. They earned their livelihood by cultivating the forest land of the Dholai Social Forestry. Obviously, their living standard is very low. The main and the major cultivation of the Punjee population is betel-leaf.

*Director, Academy Research Institute (Assam)

Population (In figure)			Education Particulars		Age Group-wise Population (in figure)					
Persons	Male	Female	Literates	Illiterates.	Particulars	0-6 yrs.	6-14 yrs.	14-35 yrs.	35 yrs. onwards	Uncovered Group
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
104	49	55	8	46	Male-	10	13	16	10	50
					Female -	19	10	18	08	
						29	23	34	18	

Source : The Academy Research Institute(Assam)

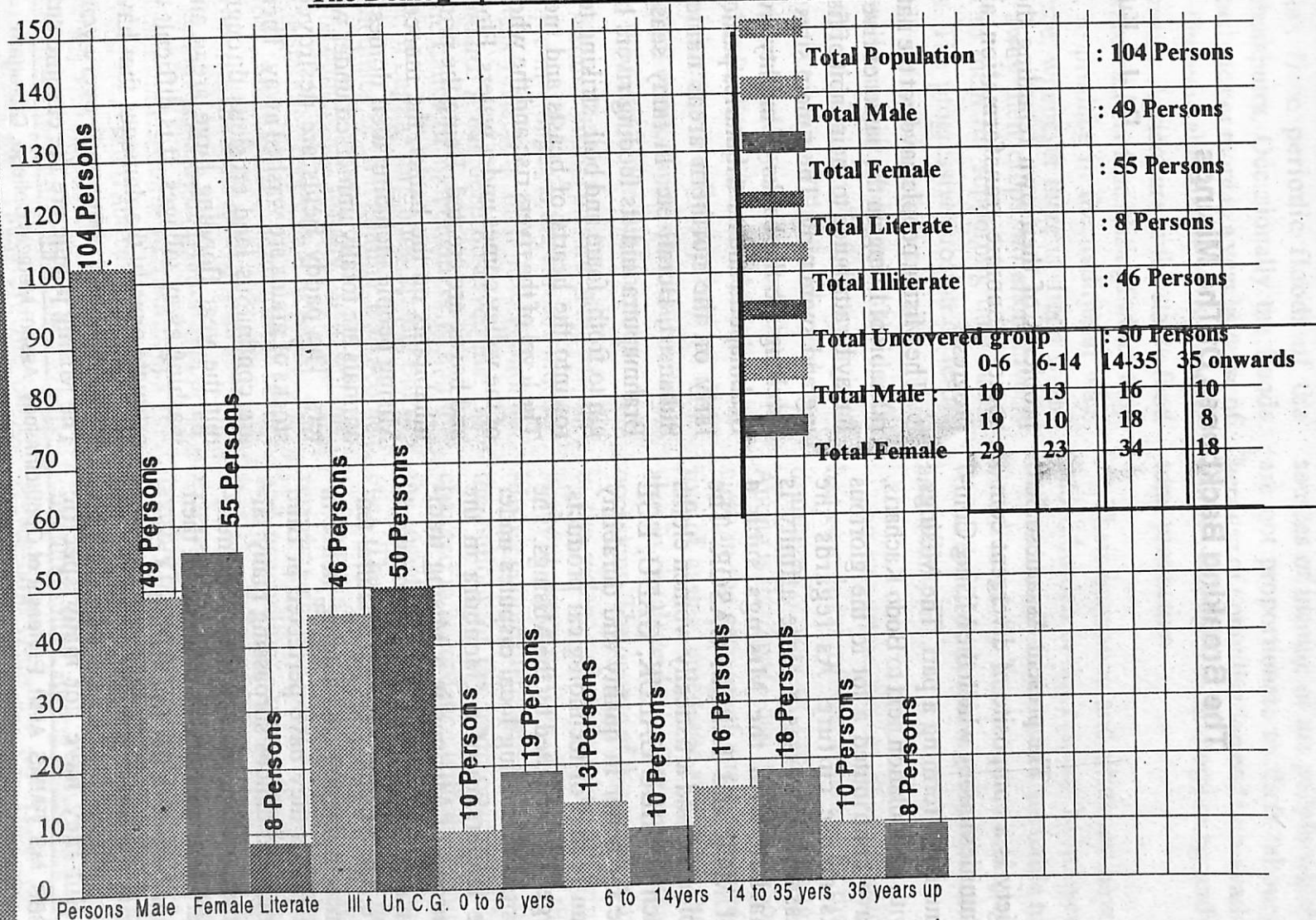
(Statistical Data Tabulated by : Md. Faijul Alam Laskar)

5. The village of Rampu Khasia Punjee is a backward place mostly inhabited by the Kasi people. There, however, some Hindustani, Bishnupria Manipuri and Muslim population living surrounding. The Punjee is situated in a hill view sight surrounded by Poloi Tea Estate in the North-East, Dholai Social Forestry in the South-East, and Chuta Salunga in the South, while Kanglai range remains in the North-West direction. There are no government educational institution, medicare centre and no means of proper communication to and from the Punjee. People made their by-roads through the narrow passage of Poloi T.E. It is as risky as dangerous too.

6. The Khasis of the Punjee are very simple hearted people. Their women are more laborious than their male counterparts. They built machn type houses and huts to live. Both vegetable and non-vegetable diets are common to all. Meat and home made wine are the favourable items in all occasion. They performed group-hunting deep into the forest.

7. Educationally, the Punjee is very disdained and most of the population are illiterates. Only eight persons of the Punjee has their primary education. Realising the nesesity, the Academy Research Institute set-up there the 'Tirat Sing Education centre' after the name of the great Khasi hero Tirat Sing, under the in-charge ship of Md. Kamrul Islam Laskar of the Youth Affairs & Sports of the Academy aiming at the educational upliftment and an around development of the Punjee population.

The Demographical Profile Of The Rampu Khasia Punjee



Source : The Academy Research Institute (Assam)

The Breaking Backbones Of The Misings

Dr. J.J. Kuli*

The present Assamese Society is a composite of divergent communities among which the Mising Community is forming a part. The Misings, with a population next to Bodo Kacharis, have contributed a lot to the glorious Assamese culture. As regards the Assamese dresses a close affinity is marked with the Misings such as DUMCR and TAPUM GASOR. The colourful and artistically women cloths such as MIBU GALUK, GADU, EGE are far better in quality and durability than to that of technological products, largely contributed by the Misings. The system of solving local disputes under the leadership of a Gaonbura in the Murong of Misings is a Mising tradition incorporated into the Assamese culture. The Misings have got a natural tendency in dancing and singing, hence in the plains they have perfected in Bihu songs and dances surpassing many talented boys and girls of other communities. These are but few examples of their contribution in the foundation of composite Assamese culture.

But they have got many specific

problems of their own retarding their socio-economic transformation and progress.

The Mising people have got the natural habit of living on the banks of rivers. It may be attributed to their habit of fishing and swimming. Their main sites of dwelling are the banks of mighty river Brahmaputra and its tributaries particularly on the northern areas namely Subansiri, Borali etc. In rainy season Brahmaputra and its feeding rivers begin to froth, foam and boil, striking terror into the hearts of beasts and men. The level of the rivers rise and the whole of the valley comes under waters. Flood and havoc are created. Being the prime inhabitants on the banks, the innocent Mising people including their domestic animals are totally immersed under waters. The paddy fields are destroyed, stocks of grains are washed away. There are continuous land erosions throughout the year flooding large areas and washing away villages. It is difficult to estimate exactly the damages that have been done to the community every year. The Mising people are the chronic suf-

ferers from periodic floods of the Brahmaputra. Occasionally the floods come twice or more in a year because of the unpredictable nature of the course of rivers. Agriculture is the staple food and profession of the Misings which they use to produce in the traditional way. Hence, whenever there is flood washing away their crops, no alternative is left to them for supporting their families. The progressive erosion of fertile lands caused by river currents, have caused sensation and terror in the minds of the Mising people. Due to lack of projects to control the floods and erosions particularly on the northern banks of the Brahmaputra and Majuli, they have been gradually deprived of their original fertile lands which are eroded into the heart of the Brahmaputra.

Another dismal picture of the Mising people in villages is the chronic indebtedness reflecting their low economic standard. It has been observed that the basic cause of indebtedness is mainly lack of capital formation arising out of inadequacy of land holding. The people of the community usually use to sell out their standing crops such as paddy, potatoes, black pulses, mustard oil seeds etc. to run the families. The main source of income is paddy cultivation supported by nominal amount of cash crops received from cited above. The laborious farmers also earn small amount of money by selling domestic animals such as pigs, hens, cows etc. These are the basic

sources of income of the people which are not proportionate to their labours because of nonutilisation and non-availability of modern technology in agricultural production.

Their ignorance and illiteracy have added burden in this respect. Moreover the products from the crops are liable to be affected by many factors among which the flood problem is the most citable example.

An important aspect of economic backwardness of the Misings is the drainage by way of brewing Apong. Apong is the day-to-day item of the Society in the service of guests irrespective of castes, creed and religions and also in rituals and on other ceremonial occasions. The people of the community in the villages can't imagine of living without Apong. It is popular to the Mising people of all ages and sexes. But the outlook of the tradition should be changed in accordance with the changing social system as seen in other societies. The Apong has been draining the economy of the Misings hampering and retarding their economic development and psychology. Apong should be an item in religious rituals no doubt, but the extravagance in consumption draining lavishly both material and man-power is not to be advocated. The people never think of reducing the preparation and consumption of Apong even when their agricultural crops are nil. They use to

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manage it even at the cost of selling domestic animals. In such circumstances, their indebtedness gradually increases with proportionate lowering of their economic standard. It has been observed among many villages that the infants are feed with Apong when they disturb their mothers. It is the reflection of ignorance, illiteracy and low socio-economic status of the people. Accustomed to such habit as they have grown up they become chronic drinkers and invite very many diseases prematurely leading to fatal consequences.

The Mising culture attach such importance to hospitality to friends, relatives and other visitors who are entertained rather extravagantly with food and Apong. Their social status depends much on capability of extravagant entertainment of guests, friends and relatives. With these basic objectives in view the people prepare enough Apong so that it can provide besides for its own members to other visitors also. Rice being the only raw material for Apong, it has been unnecessary extravagant crippling their limited economy day by day. Under such socio-cultural systems, the Mising people can't afford their children in receiving modern education.

The people are animistic in their religious habits and practices. They are very much superstitious which are widely prevalent in the Society. It is one of the reasons for their backwardness.

They still believe in various kinds of spirits, gods and goddesses. Human death and birth, fortunes and misfortunes, sufferings and losses are attributed to the capricious wishes of the gods and spirits. Based on these beliefs, they traditionally use to perform various festivals. Their traditional religious beliefs and customs are more or less influenced by superstitions. It is a matter of grave concern that the Mising society is still wrapped in superstitions even in the present age of science and technology. When people of other developed community speak of scientific technology and their utilisation in the various ways of their day-to-day life, the Mising people of the villages are busy in performing rituals during floods, epidemics etc. sacrificing animals. They are always apprehensive in accepting modern technology.

Most of the Mising people living in the villages are illiterate. The literacy rate of the society is less than twenty percent. The reasons are mainly their low economic standard, lack of facilities for higher education and conservative attitude of the old folk. The rural people totally neglect the female education thereby creating a sense of inequality and injustice. Though a Mising woman is a cultural idol of the society, this section is always considered and treated inferior to men in all aspects.

From the above discussions, we can

view roughly about the socio-economic backwardness of the society. The greater Assamese society can't prosper leaving behind a section of its composition. The problems breaking the backbones of the Mising's socio-economic structures should be understood by all sections of the society. Then and then only new planning can be formulated to make

them understand the fruits of education and can enhance their allround development.

The Government, the bureaucrats, the intellectuals, the educationalists and social organisations should come forward to help the most backward community in Assam.

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*Note : Dumcr = gamusa, Tapum gasor = Endi Cloth, Mibu galuk = Woven men's shirts,
Gadu = Mirijim, Ege = Mekhela, Apong = Rice-beer.*

The District Council in the North East : A case study of the power and functions of the Karbi Anglong District Council.

Dr. B.C. Bhuyan*

Abstract :

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides a peculiar type of local institution to the tribals of the North East. The Karbi Anglong District Council is a Council of the autonomous district of Karbi Anglong located at the nerve centre of Assam.

The present study is a study on the powers and functions of the District Council with a special reference to the powers exercised by the District Council of Karbi Anglong. The powers may be broadly classified into legislative, executive, judicial and financial.

The Council has been given legislative powers in respect of the allotment, occupation or use or the setting apart of land, management of forest, establishment of village and town committees, use of canal or water course etc. But all these powers had not been properly exercised by the Council.

The council has been given some executive powers also. One of the executive powers was to prescribe the language and the manner in which primary education shall be imparted. The Council could not take positive and precise decision in this respect. The decisions were whimsical which in fact, played with the career of the small school going children.

The judicial powers were not exercised by the Council for the reasons best known to them.

The financial powers were not exercised by the Council properly. The lack of proper revenue administration was the only reason for poor revenue collection of the Council.

In the end it may be said that the District Council could represent the tribal character of the people for which it was created.

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution provides a peculiar type of local institution to the tribals of the North East. The Karbi Anglong District Council is one of those local institutions created under the provisions of the said Schedule. It is a Council of the autonomous district of Karbi Anglong located in the nerve centre of the present Assam state.¹

The present study will be a study of some of the important powers exercised by the Council under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule since its inception i.e 1952 to 1984. No attempt has been made to study the powers exercised by the Council after that period. Besides

that, the powers entrusted under the amended provisions of the Schedule have been conveniently avoided. The powers under review are broadly classified into legislative, executive, judicial and financial.

Legislative - The District Council has the power to make laws in respect of the allotment, occupation or use or the setting apart of land other than any land which is reserved forest for the purpose of agriculture or grazing or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes or for any other purpose likely to promote the interest of the inhabitants of any village or town; the management of any forest not being a reserved forest; use

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of any canal or water course for the purpose of agriculture; the establishment of village or town committees including village or town police, public health and sanitation; the appointment of succession of chiefs or headman; the inheritance of property, marriage and divorce and social customs.²

The Councils have also the power to make (a) regulation and control of money lending by non tribals within the limits of their administrative jurisdiction, (b) regulation and control of primary education, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, roads, road transport and water ways within its own territorial jurisdiction; for the levy and collection of any of the taxes entrusted to them.³

This is to be carefully noted that no legislation of the state legislature shall apply to the autonomous district unless otherwise directed by the autonomous district council concerned with such exceptions and modifications as the latter may determine.⁴ Thus the Council is given a wide variety of powers affecting almost every aspect of the tribal life of an autonomous district.

The District Councils, on the other hand, were not satisfied with the present arrangement and demand more legislative powers while giving their evidence before the Commission on the Hill Areas of Assam.⁵

This is to be noted that all laws passed by the Council must require

Governor's assent.⁶

A close examination of the legislative powers exercised by the Council of Karbi Anglong is necessary in this context. The Money lending by Non-tribal Act, 1953 was the first of the regulations passed by the Council. The Act was almost a defunct. The Council itself admitted that out of the twenty five money lending pakhtoons and Afghan nationals in the district only one was issued licence in 1962 but the same was not renewed in subsequent years.⁷ The Jhumming regulation was a regulation which also could not be implemented by the Council. One of the important provisions of the regulation was to prohibit shifting of villages without previous permission of the Council's Executive Committee. But the shifting went on increasingly and the Council had to play the role of a dumb spectator only. The grazing Regulation of 1954 had to meet the same fate as it could not prevent the damage of crops by the cattle heads. The Administration of Town Committee Act, 1954 is another example of Council's reluctance to part with powers. The Council authorities did not like to see the elected bodies of the Town Committees so far constituted. The Forest Act of 1957 is one more example of Council's incompetence to deal with forest administration. The Commission on Hill Areas of Assam (1965) in its report observed that unclassified forest administration of District Councils were not

under systematic and planned management. The Commission reported that the areas covered by such forests were jumbled out extensively and deforested by shifting cultivators. Such uncontrolled exploitation of the forests had led to their rapid denudation. The Commission went to the extent of suggesting the transfer of forest administration to the State Government by giving due compensation for the loss of revenue caused by it.

The Transfer of Land Act, 1959 was another legislation which prohibited transfer of land from a tribal to a non-tribal without the permission of the Council. But a large number of such transfers had taken place without the previous permission of the council. This was admitted by the Council authorities themselves.⁸ Although the Council assured that some steps would be taken to prevent such transfers the steps taken so far were most ineffective and the illegal transfers went on breaking almost every provision of the Act. The Land Settlement Advisory Board of the Council discussed this problem and suggested to the Council's Executive Committee to amend the Act of 1959 so that the person who transfers land against the provisions of the Act is also penalised in the same way as the person to whom the land is transferred.⁹ The Council did not amend the Act in the light of the Board's suggestions.

The Land Reform Act of 1979 is an-

other step taken by the Council to regulate and control the use of agricultural land owned by the settlement holders. This had been done to prevent the use of land by the non tribals from the hands of the tribals. This Act, of course, has been a subject of judicial review and hence most of the provisions could not be properly implemented.

The District Council, however, have not exercised the powers relating to village and town administration including village and town police, public health and sanitation. These have been looked after by the agencies of the State Government. No legislations have been passed on social customs, marriage and divorce and on the appointment and succession of chiefs or headman.

The Council has adopted only two Acts of the State during the period under review. They are (1) The Assam Embankment and Drainage Act, 1959 and (2) The Assam Town and Country Planning Act.¹⁰ There were, however, some attempts by the State Government to extend the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959 and the Assam Excise (amended) Act, 1952 to the autonomous district with a view to ensure maximum efficiency and uniformity in procedure all over the State. But the Council was not at all interested in its extension.

Thus from the above it may be observed that the Council was reluctant to part with some powers.

Executive powers : The District

Council has some executive powers under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. The most important executive power of the Council is the power to establish, construct and manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, roads, road transport and waterways.¹¹ Of the powers noted above the Council have not yet exercised powers relating to the establishment of dispensaries, ferries and water ways. A few dispensaries were established by the Council in the first few years of its formation but it could not manage them properly. The rivers of the district are not suitable for management of ferries. The road transport has been taken up by the Council purely on an experimental basis.

Another executive power the Council has been given is the power of prescribing the language and the manner in which primary education shall be imparted in its schools.¹² But the Council could not take positive steps in that direction. It is important to note that Karbi was introduced in 1974 as a medium in Assamese script where there were eighty percent Karbi boys and girls.¹³ There were 371 such schools in 1974-75 and student strength had gone up to 10,300. This process continued up to February, 1979. In 1979, a new leadership came to power and changed its earlier decision and decided to introduce Karbi as a subject only. In the last part of the same year the Council decided to introduce Karbi as medium in roman script. In

1981, the Council examined the matter afresh and decided to introduce Karbi as language subject in all primary schools in roman script. The Council itself admitted that due to the dearth of competent writers of text books, financial stringency, non introduction of Karbi as medium or language in secondary stage, change of script, printing of text books, lack of experienced teachers to teach in roman script as the teachers were conversant in Assamese script only and the lack of definite decision on its own part were main reasons for such development.¹⁴ Thus the views of the Council were not definite and precise. The decisions were political without considering the pros and cons of the issues involved.

Judicial Powers : It is significant to note that the District Council of Karbi Anglong has not made use of judicial powers enshrined in para 4 and 5 of the Sixth Schedule. There were some moves from some of the members of the Council but all such moves were turned down by the Council either on the grounds of financial stringency or on the grounds of ineffective provisions being laid down in the Schedule. The provisions were stated to be ineffective because disputes between a tribal and a non tribal could not be decided by a District Council court. Moreover, it was stated that the exercise of such powers would keep the magistrates of the State Government idle which in turn, would be a wastage of

public money.

Financial powers : The Sixth Schedule has given some financial powers to the District Councils. These powers are as follows :

1. Taxes on professions, trades, calling and employment.
2. Taxes on animals, vehicles and boats.
3. Taxes on entry of goods into a market for sale therein and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries and taxes for maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads.¹⁵

The Council has also the power to assess and collect land revenue within the district in accordance with the principles followed by the State Government for the whole of Assam¹⁶. It has also the power to share royalties from mines and minerals.¹⁷

A close study of some of the powers exercised by the Council of Karbi Anglong is necessary in this context. The Karbi Anglong Local Rates Regulation of 1953 was intended to impose house tax on each holding according to the provisions of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation of 1886. But this regulation was also not implemented by the Council properly. This was, however, mainly due to the shifting nature of tribals. It was observed that till 31.3.63, arrear house tax amounting to Rs. 2.06, 125.52 could not be collected by the District Council of Karbi Anglong.¹⁸ The Land and Revenue Act of 1953 also met the same fate. All these were mainly due to the lack of proper land revenue admin-

istration of the Council. These are a very few cases only. Regarding the taxes on professions, calling, vehicles the Council had earned some revenue during the period under review. But that amounts to a fraction of the total needs of the Council.

Conclusion :

1. Most of the powers enshrined in the Sixth Schedule were not properly exercised by the Council. This was mainly due to the lack of will and efficiency on the part of those who wielded powers in the Council. Money Lending by Non tribals Act and the Jhumming Regulation were the best examples in this context. Although jhumming is very much a part of tribal life steps should have been taken for permanent settlement of the jhumias by giving them proper education on the benefits of wet cultivation. The Grazing Regulation is another example to be noted. On the Forest Act less said the better. The Report on the Commission on Hill Areas of Assam (1965) will sufficiently prove the contention. The Transfer of land Act is another example to be cited. The framers of the Constitution wanted to protect the land from the occupation of non tribals. But the transfer of land from a tribal to a non tribal became a normal feature in the autonomous district with or without the consent of the Council.

(2) Again on medium and script at the primary level education the steps taken by the Council were suicidal. The Council authorities had been playing with the carrier of small school going boys by taking decisions whimsically. The Council made

contacts with the Assam State Text Book Production Corporation for publication and printing of Karbi books in Assamese scripts. Accordingly the Corporation undertook the project and completed the work by the end of 1978. But in 1979, the Council decided to introduce roman script as a result all those books published by the corporation were thrown into the dust bins. Thus the Council took decisions in such a way which was not at all conducive to the effective functioning of a local body.

3. Another noticeable feature is the fact that the Council did not take steps to protect and preserve the social customs of the tribals. In other words it may be said that it did not consider itself obliged to the purpose for which it was constituted. The Council, in fact, had no tribal character at all.

4. One of the significant features of the powers is the fact that the Council was very much reluctant to part with powers. The constitution of Town Committee Act is the best example in this context. The Council should have realised the fact that decen-

tralization of powers would have given them the maximum amount of efficiency in the sphere of administration. Instead of giving powers they always wanted concentrate powers in their own hands.

5. The judicial powers provided in the constitution had not been made use of by the Council. The tribals have their own peculiar way of life. Therefore, it would have been good if they could exercise this power of the Schedule also.

6. The Council could not exercise the financial powers. The revenue provided by the constitution could not be collected by the Council. A huge amount of revenue could not be collected due to the lack of good revenue administration in the Council. The 1983-84 budget showed that the Council's own sources of revenue as only 18% while the rest 82% was provided by the Government as grants.

7. Finally, some of the powers of the Sixth Schedule could not be exercised due to the intervention of the Gauhati High Court. The Land Reforms Act and the Forest Act were the best examples to be cited.

References :

1. The District Councils created under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule exist in the autonomous districts of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
2. The Powers relating to marriage and divorce were substituted by the Act 55 of 1969 and the rest are provided by para 3 of the Sixth Schedule.
3. Para 6, 8, and 10 of the Sixth Schedule.
4. Para 12 of the Sixth Schedule.
5. Report of the Commission on Hill Areas of Assam (popularly known as Pataskar Commission) 1965-66, para 174.
6. Para 3 of the Sixth Schedule.
7. Proceedings of the 54th session of the Council.
8. C.E. M's (Chief Executive Member) reply to question no 6 put during the 97th session of the Council.
9. Proceedings of the Land Settlement Advisory Board meeting dated 7.5.75.
10. Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council Code Vol-1.
11. Para 6 of the Sixth Schedule.
12. Ibid.
13. Proceedings of the Executive Committee meeting held on 23.5.74.
14. This was in reply to the motion no 3 moved during 177th session of the Council.
15. Para 8 of the Sixth Schedule.
16. Ibid.
17. Para 9 of the Sixth Schedule.
18. Audit notes on the accounts of the District Council by the Accountant General (1962-63).

Study of Tongue Folding in Hmar, Thadokuki and Dimasa Kachari of Haflong; Assam.

B.C. Goswami*

Introduction :

The author had the opportunity to carry out field survey for the purpose of genetic survey among three Hills tribes of Assam i.e. Hmar, Thadokuki & Dimasa Kachari in 1987. The Hmar lived mostly in the area formed by southern parts of N.C. Hills, Northern parts of Mizoram and Manipur. The Kuki tribe again comprises several divisions of which the Thadokuki is one. The Bodos include the Kachari tribe which is again divided into several sub-divisions. Most of the Kachari people live in the plains, but one division of them the Dimasa Kachari inhabit the Cachar hills.

Liu and Hsu (1949) suggested the folding the tongue is complementary to rolling, namely that the expression of the folding which is recessive, must depend

Result & discussion :

Table -I

Frequencies of the tongue folding in Hmars.

Group	Sex	No. of individuals	Folder (+VE)		Non-folder (-Ve)	
			No.	%	No.	%
	M	147	124	84.36	23	15.64
Hmar	F	86	81	94.18	5	5.71
	M+F	233	205	87.97	28	12.01

$X^2 = 4.94$

d.f.=1,

.01

p .05

Table I shows that percentage of frequencies of folder is higher in both the sexes than that of non-folder. In male it is 84.36% and in female it is 94.18%. The Chi-square value shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the two sexes.

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on the presence of the dominant condition of the rolling. Subsequently there are no people who can foldup but not roll their tongues. Hsu, who found 30 folders among 1000, Chinese examined Mirium (1962) studied this trait among the Ethiopian tribes.

Material & Method :

In studying tongue folding the age of the subjects ranges between 14-60 years. The following methods were applied to collect the information. I should every individual the picture of tongue folding. They looked carefully at the picture and tried to fold the tongue accordingly. I carefully observed whether they could fold the tongue or not and noted the same.

Table -II

Frequencies of the tongue folding in Thadokukis.

Group	Sex	No. of individuals	Folder (+Ve)		Non-folder (-Ve)	
			No.	%	No.	%
	M	54	19	35.18	35	64.81
Thado Kuki	F	33	12	36.36	21	63.63
	M+F	87	31	35.63	56	64.36

$X^2 = .01$; d.f. = 1 .95 p .95

It is revealed from table II, that among the Thadokuki male and female; the percentage of non-folder is higher than the folder. In the non-folder it is 64.81% among the male and 63.63% among the female. The Chi-square value shown that there is no statistically significant difference between the two sexes.

Table -III

Frequencies of the tongue folding in Dimasa-Kacharis.

Group	Sex	No. of individuals	Folder (+Ve)		Non-folder (-Ve)	
			No.	%	No.	%
	M	51	24	47.05	27	52.94
Dimasa Kachari	F	30	14	46.66	16	53.33
	M+F	81	38	46.91	43	53.08

$X^2 = .0012$; d.f. = 1 .95 p

Table III. shows that the frequency of percentage of non-folder is higher in both the sexes than the folder. In the non-folder the percentage is 52.94% in males and 53.33% in females. There is a slight difference between the two sexes. The Chi-square value shows that there is no statistically sex difference.

We have already seen that there is no sex difference in respect of this trait in any one of the three tribes. Therefore we can combine the male and female data into one. It is seen among the Hmar the folder type is very much pre-dominant (87.97%). On the other hand among the Thadokuki non-folder type (64.36 %) occurs more frequently than the folder type (35.63%). Again among the Dimasa Kachari the two

types i.e. folder (46.91%) and non-folder (53.08%) are found almost in equal frequencies. Thus the Hmars differ from the Thadokuki as well as the Dimasa Kachari. These differences are statistically significant as is revealed by the value of Chi-square (Table IV). But the Thadokiki and the Dimasa Kachari do not differ significantly from each other.

The present tribes could not be compared with other populations of Assam in respect of this trait as no relevant data are available.

Table -IV
Values of Chi-square test of tongue folding.

Group	No. of individuals	X ² value	d.f.	Probability	Remarks
Hmar	233	64.43	1	P .01	Significant
X					
Thadokuki	87				
Hmar	233	57.85	1	P .01	Significant
Dimasa Kachari					
Thadokuki	87	2.19	1	.10 P .20	Non-Significant
X					
Dimasa Kachari	81				

Summary:

The occurrence of genetic trait of tongue folding among Hmar (233); Thadokuki (87); and Dimasa Kachari (81) are studied in Haflong, Assam. It is found that the frequency of folder type is much higher in Hmar. The Hmars differ from Thadokuki as well as Dimasa Kachari. These difference are statisfically significant. On the other hand Thadokukis and Dimasa Kacharis do not differ significantly from each other.

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Reservation Of Appointments Of Posts For Scheddled Castes, The Views Of The Founding Fathers In The Constituent Assembly Debates: An Assessment.

Dr.B.N. Bordoloi*

At the very beginning of this paper I should clarify one important matter and that important matter is like this -whatever would be spoken about the scheduled castes here would equally be applicable to scheduled tribes also since both the communities were treated on the same footing so far as the reservation matters were concerned.

In the Constitution of India the Articles which directly deal with the reservation of appointments of posts for the scheduled castes are Article 16 (4) and Article 335. The Article 15 (4) of the Constitution of India which states that nothing in this Article or in Clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement to any socially and educationally backward classes of citizen or for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes does not come under the purview of discussion in this paper.

Article 16 (4), on the other hand, provides that nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

sented in the services under the State.

Article 335 deals with the claims of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes to services and posts. It says that the claims of the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

In both the Articles, viz., Article 15 (4) and Article 16 (4) mention has been made of backward classes of citizen. But now here in the Constitution the definition of backward classes of citizens' has been given. The Article 15 (4), however, refers to three categories of people :

- (a) Socially and educationally backward classes of citizens
- (b) Scheduld Castes and
- (c) Scheduled Tribes.

The First Backward Class Commission, commonly known as Kaka Kalelkar Commission, makes the following classification of the communities who are socially and educationally backward :

1. Those who suffer from the stigma

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of untouchability or near untouchability (Scheduled Tribes).

2. Those tribes who are not yet sufficiently assimilated in the social order (Scheduled Tribes).

3. Those who, owing to neglect, have been driven as a community to crime (Criminal Tribes now known as ex-criminal tribes or denotified groups).

4. The remaining educationally and socially backward classes will be considered as belonging to Other Backward Classes.

The Mandal Commission Report (1980) lays down three indicators or criteria for determining backwardness and they are as follows :

A. Social

(I) Castes/Classes considered socially backward by others.

(II) Castes/Classes which mainly depend on manual labour for their livelihood.

(III) Castes/Classes where at least 25% females and 10% males above the state average get married at an age below 17 in rural areas and 5% males do so in urban areas.

(IV) Castes/Classes where the participation of females in work is at least 25% above the state average.

B. Educational

(V) Castes/Classes where the number of children in the age group 5-15

years who never attended school is at least 25% above the state average.

(VI) Castes/Classes where the rate of student drop-out in the age group 5-15 years is at least 25% above the State average

(VII) Castes/Classes amongst whom the proportion of matriculates is at least 25% below the State average.

C. Economic

(VIII) Castes/Classes where the average value of family assets is at least 25% below the State average.

(IX) Castes/Classes where the number of families living in kuccha houses is at least 25% above State average.

(X) Castes/Classes where the source of drinking water is beyond half a kilometre for more than 50% of the households.

(XI) Castes/Classes where the number of households having taken consumption loan is at least 25% above the state average².

Although the questions like 'who are the backward classes?', 'What constitutes backwardness?' or 'what are the determinants of backwardness' and so on have no direct relevancy with the theme of this paper, nevertheless, a clear understanding of such matters would enable us to appreciate the view of the founding fathers in the Constituent Assembly Debates where the very term 'backwardness' itself raised many controversies.

The Constituent Assembly of India

For the purpose of discussion and approval of the Draft Constitution prepared under the chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Constituent Assembly was set up with the following persons :

President : Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Vice-President : Dr. H.C. Mookharjee.

Constitutional Adviser : Sir B.N. Rev, C.I.E.

Secretary : Mr. H.V.R. Ienger, C.I.E., I.C.S.

Besides the above functionaries there were one Joint Secretary, three Deputy Secretaries, One Under Secretary and one Assistant Secretary.

Excluding the President and the Vice-President there were 205 Members in the Constituent Assembly.

The Constituent Assembly first met on 9th December, 1945 and continued till 24th January, 1950. The Constitution of India was finally adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949 and signed by the Members of the Assembly on 24th January, 1950. Thereafter the Constituent Assembly was adjourned 'sine die'.

Although the Constituent Assembly of India started functioning from 9th December, 1946, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the permanent President only on 11th December, 1946. For the first two days, that is to say, 9th and 10th December, 1946. Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, the oldest parliamentarian amongst the Members of the Constituent Assembly acted as the temporary

President.

The Constituent Assembly Debates :

The debates in the Constituent Assembly on the Draft Constitution of India were started on 20th January, 1947 and they were continued thereafter on all working days till 26th November, 1949 when the Constitution of India was finally adopted by the Constituent Assembly.

In the debates thousands of amendments by the Members were moved on different clauses of the Draft Constitution. The President of the Constituent Assembly, however, allowed only the written amendments to be moved. The verbal amendments were not allowed.

Another very interesting fact is that the serial numbers of the clauses in the Draft Constitution and the serial numbers of the Articles in the Constitution that we find today do not tally except in the case of the Articles from 1 to 5.

Debates on Clauses no 10. of the Draft Constitution corresponding to article 16 of the Constitution.

Now let us have a discussion on clause No. 10 of the Draft Constitution which has been trasted as article 16 in the Constitution. This Article deals with the question of equality of opportunity in the matters of employment and there are five clauses under it and they are as follows:

(1) There shall be equality of oppor-

tunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment of office under the State.

(3) Nothing in this Article shall prevent Parliament from making any law prescribing, in regard to class or classes of employment or appointment to any office under the Government or any local or other authority within a State or Union Territory, any requirement as to residence within the State or Union Territory prior to such employment or appointment.

(4) Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointment or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the State is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

(5) Nothing in this Article shall affect the operation of any law which provides that the incumbent of an office in connection with the affairs of any religious or denominational institution or any member of the governing body thereof shall be a person professing a particular religion or belonging to a particular denomination.

Our discussion will now be confined to Article 16 (4) only corresponding to

clause 10 (3) in the Draft Constitution.

The Debates on Clause 10 in the Draft Constitution, new Article 16 in the Constitution, were conducted on 30th November, 1948 in the Constituent Assembly.

Initiating the debates Mr. Loknath Misra, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Orissa, expressed the view that Clause 10 (3) of the Draft Constitution which refers to reservation of appointments to backward classes, was unnecessary because it put a premium on backwardness and inefficiency. State employment which ought to go by merit alone, could not be treated as a fundamental right for any citizen.

Mr. Damodar Swarup Seth, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from United Provinces, moved an amendment to delete provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution. According to him although the provision (3) appeared to be just and reasonable, nevertheless, it was wrong in principle. He argued that the reservation of posts or appointments in services would mean the very negation of efficiency and good government. Moreover it was not easy to find a suitable criterion for testing the backwardness of a community or a class. In a secular State like India, the acceptance of the provision (3) of clause 10 of the Draft Constitution would give rise to casteism and favouritism.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, a general Member of the Constituent Assem-

bly from United Provinces, moving an amendment to clause 10 (3) had stated that the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens should be confined to a period of 10 years only after the commencement of the Constitution. His reasons for moving such an amendment could be summarised as follows :

(1) The term 'Backward' has not been defined anywhere in the Draft Constitution.

(2) Clause 310 of the Draft Constitution (Article 340 the Constitution.) provides for the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the conditions of the backward classes who are educationally and socially backward. The Commission could hardly do justice to its assigned task without the definition of the term 'backward'.

(3) While granting protection to the communities that have been left behind in the race of life, special provision laid down for them should not operate indefinitely. And continuance of such reservation indefinitely would be detrimental not only to the interest of the country but to the interest of the backward classes of citizens.

(4) There would always be temptation to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and also other communities to claim that they are backward in order to get protection under Clause 10 (3) of the Draft Constitution.

Mr. Kunzru further argued that for

the operation of any special protection duration should be limited so as to enable legislature to ascertain from time to time how it has worked and how the State has discharged its duty towards the protected classes.

Then Mr. Aziz Khan, a Muslim Member from United Province, moved an amendment whereby he wanted to omit the word 'backward' from Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution. He argued that the 'minorities' who also needed protection would not be covered by Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution in the word 'backward' was not omitted.

At this stage Dr. H.C. Mookherjee who was chairing the session on this day on the debate, that is to say, 30th November, 1948 had intervened when he found that the debate had gone astray. He reminded the Hon'ble Members that it was their sacred duty to have a general discussion in regard to the question of giving special protection to the backward classes by way of reservation in posts and services. He further added that these sections of citizens who were treated very cruelly by our ancestors, would now need reparation for the evil deeds of our ancestors. His appeal to confine the discussion on the above subject only for the present had produced a favourable result and the Members whole-heartedly agreed to the suggestion of Dr. Mookherjee.

Mr. Ari Bahadur Gurung, a general

Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bengal, participating in the debate said that the word 'backward' would refer to three categories of people, namely, scheduled castes, tribals and educationally and economically backward class. He then argued that in India 90 percent people were educationally and economically backward and as such the word 'backward' would carry no meaning at all.

Participating in the discussion Mr. R. M. Nalavade, a general Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bombay, expressed his happiness for inclusion of the Provision (3) in Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution. But at the same time he expressed the apprehension that the term 'backward classes' was so vague that it could be interpreted to include so many classes including the educationally advanced ones. Mr. Nalavade, therefore, advocated that the words 'backward classes' should be replaced with the words 'Scheduled Castes' so that the depressed classes could get adequate representation in the services.

Dr. Dharma Prakash, a general Member of the Constituent Assembly from U.P., supported the view of Mr. Nalavade in a slightly different form. He stated that 'backward class' had not been defined so far and there was no possibility of defining it in near future. According to him there was no community in India which did not have a section of the people which was backward eco-

nomically or educationally or socially. He argued that whenever some backward classes were identified for the purpose of reservation in services, their present position as well as their future was the provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution might be instrumental in bringing about a great crisis even in the present circumstances unless the backward classes were defined impartially. Of course, he personally did not see any necessity for reservation. But in the Indian society there was neither generosity nor impartiality. Dr. Prakash, moving an amendment, wanted to replace the words 'backward classes' with 'depressed classes' or 'scheduled classes'. He further argued that the reservation should be for a specific period only and it should not be for an indefinite period. When the depressed classes or the scheduled classes would arrive at the same level of culture as that of the other section of the population, the reservation should be done away with.

Participating in the debates, Mr. Chandrika Ram, a general Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bihar, expressed the view that he had no objection in replacing the words 'backward classes' with 'scheduled castes'. At the same time he pleaded for the retention of the words 'backward class' in provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution since in between the caste Hindus and the scheduled caste there was a section of the people at the middle level

who could be termed as backward class. He then appealed to the Hon'ble Members to go through the Census Reports of 1921 and 1931 where the expression 'backward class' had been properly defined.

Mr. Ram criticised his socialist friend Mr. Damodar Swarup Seth and Mr. Loknath Misra for moving amendments for deletion of the words 'backward class'. Concluding his arguments Mr. Ram remarked that those who thought that there was no backward class in the country, were blind to the facts of the history of our country and conditions of the society obtaining at present.

Mr. P. Kakkan, a general Member of the Constituent Assembly from Madras, whole-heartedly supported Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution. He told the august Assembly if merit alone was taken into consideration for selection of candidates for appointments in Govt. jobs and services, no candidates belonging to Harijan communities would ever be selected since they could hardly compete with the general candidates. He, therefore, suggested that reservation of appointments for the Harijans must be provided at least for some years.

Mr. V. I. Muniswami Pillay, a member of the Constituent Assembly from Madras, participating in the debate expressed the view that the Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution had put him to great confusion since the

word 'backward' was inserted without explaining what it actually meant. According to him under Provision (3) Communities belonging to scheduled castes must be given chance for appointment. He appealed to the Hon'ble Members opposing reservation to think about the plight of the scheduled castes who had been left in the lurch and had been remaining backward socially, economically and educationally for years and decades together. Mr. Pillay, however, did not plead for perpetuating reservation for Harijan communities and what he actually advocated was that they should be given some protection in getting admission into services so long they remained backward.

Mr. T. Channiah, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Mysore, dwelt on the differences in connotations of the words 'backward class' in the North India and in the South India. Since the word 'backward' was not defined in the Draft Constitution, it had created a lot of confusion among the Hon'ble Members of the Assembly. Mr. Channiah, however supported the retention of the word 'backward' in provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution and wanted reservation of post and services for the backward classes at least for another 150 years.

Participating in the debates, Mr. Santanu Kumar Dass, a general Member of the Constituent Assembly from Orissa, pointed out the injustices shown

to candidates belonging to backward classes in selection for appointment by a Public Service Commission. He further said that if the persons belonging to backward classes were given equal rights, within two years all would be of the same level and there would be no need for extending the period of reservation.

Mr. H.J. Khandekar, a scheduled caste Member of the Constituent Assembly from Central Provinces, had not only supported Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution but also congratulated the Constitution Drafting Committee for insertion of the word 'backward'. He told the Members of the Assembly that if the word 'backward' would not have been there, the purpose of the scheduled castes would not have been served. He further added that though the candidates belonging to the scheduled castes communities would apply for certain Govt. posts, they would not be selected for the posts in spite of having their requisite qualifications simply because of the fact that the people who would select the candidates did not belong to scheduled castes communities. He also suggested that the words 'backward Classes' should be substituted with the words 'scheduled castes'. Before concluding Mr. Khandekar stated that unless the educational qualifications were relaxed for the candidates belonging to scheduled castes who were educationally very much backward, no justice

could be expected either from the Federal Public Service Commission or from the Provincial Public Service Commission.

Mr. Khandekar was followed by Mr. Mohaned Ismail Sahib, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Madras. He expressed his unhappiness for insertion of the word 'backward' in the Provision (3) of clause 10 of the Draft Constitution without any definition. Citing an example from his own province Madras, he stated that under backward classes 150 and odd communities were enlisted but unfortunately the scheduled castes communities were not in that list. He, therefore, wanted to know from the framers of the Draft Constitution whom did they refer to as the 'backward classes'.

Mr. Ismail Sahib opposed the amendment moved by Pandit Kunzru to limit the period of reservation for 10 years only from the date of the commencement of the constitution. According to him the yardsticks in any such matters should not be the period of time. The backwardness of the people, he argued, was the result of conditions which had been persisting and in existence for several centuries and ages, and it would not die off easily. Steps therefore, must be taken to liquidate the backward conditions. As soon as these people would advance and come forward as much as any other community in the land, reservation would automatically disappear. Hence there

was no need for stipulating a certain period for reservation. Concluding his speech he requested the mover of the motion to remove the word 'backward' from the Provision (3) so that minority communities could also be included within the purview of the clause.

Sardar Hukam Singh, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from East Punjab belonging to the Sikh community taking part in the debates raised a few very vital issues for discussion. He had shown with clarity that there was a conflict between Clause 10 (Article 16 of the adopted Constitution) and Clause 296 (article 335 of the adopted Constitution) of the Draft Constitution. In Provision (1) of Clause 10 there were equal opportunities for all citizens in the matters of employment under the State. But under Provision (3) of the Same clause, special privileges were incorporated for the purpose of reservation of employments or posts under the State for the backward classes of citizens. In clause 296 of the Draft Constitution there was the provision for consideration of such reservation consistently with the maintenance of efficiency in the administration of the State. He further stated that he had heard of 'depressed class' as well as 'scheduled castes' and not of 'backward classes of citizens' as incorporated under Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution. He was not aware if 'backward classes' had been defined in his own Province. Inclusion of such

words without definition made the Hon'ble Members of the Assembly belonging to the scheduled castes and the minorities most apprehensive. The Hon'ble Members belonging to the scheduled castes present here emphasised that the words 'backward classes of citizens' had applied to them only. At the same time the minorities expressed apprehension as to whether they were being included in the above category. He therefore, remarked that clarification as well as reconciliation between the Clause 10 and Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution were the need of the hour.

A very strong defender of the words 'backward classes' under Provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution was in the person of Mr. K.M. Munshi, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bombay. He clarified that 'backward' Classes would definitely include the scheduled castes among others. Drawing the attention of the scheduled caste Members on the Constituent Assembly, Mr. Munshi stated that the non scheduled caste Members of the August Assembly were advocating times and again to protect the interest of the scheduled castes. Mr. Munshi's speech in the Constituent Assembly on the question of reservation of appointments or posts for the 'backward classes' makes a very interesting reading. Below I quote Mr. Munshi :

What we want to secure by this

clause are two things in the fundamental rights if the first clause we want to achieve the highest efficiency in the services of the State - highest efficiency which would enable the services to function effectively and promptly. At the same time, in view of the condition in our country prevailing in several provinces, we want to see that backward classes, classes who are really backward, should be given scope in the State services; for it is realised that the State services give a status and an opportunity to serve the country and this opportunity should be extended to every community, even among the backward people. That being so, we have to find out some generic term and the word 'backward class' was the best possible term, when it is read with article 301, it is perfectly clear that the word 'backward' signifies that class of people - does not matter whether you call them untouchables or touchables, belonging to this community or that - a class of people who are so backward that special protection is required in the service and I see no reason why any member should be apprehensive in regard to the word 'backward'.

Then answering to a question of an Hon'ble Member Mr. Munshi clarified what he meant by 'backward classes'. In Bombay Province there was a definition of 'backward classes' and this definition included not only the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes but also other

backward classes who were economically, educationally and socially backward. Thus the scope of the word would not be confined to a particular community and whoever was backward would be covered by it.

Commenting on Mr. Munshi's argument, Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Madras said that the chapter on fundamental rights would be a paradise for lawyers like Mr. Munshi's calibre.

Participating in the debates on Provision (3) of clause 10 of the Draft Constitution, he adduced reasons for incorporation of the word 'backward' by the Drafting Committee. According to his Drafting Committee had anticipated the application of this word to cover a larger section of the community. But at the same time Mr. Krishnamachari expressed grave doubts in regard to the actual connotation of the word 'backward'. He was not sure as to whether the division between the 'forward' and 'backward' would be made on the basis of literacy or on economic grounds. And if it would be on the basis of literacy, in that case 80 percent people of the country would be covered under this category of 'backward classes', he argued. Perhaps the Supreme Court of India would be required to decide the matter finally. Concluding his arguments he opined that the Provision (3) of clause 10 of the Draft Constitution was very loosely worded. The word 'backward' might be

interpreted by different sections of the people in different ways for their own purposes till it would be interpreted by the Supreme Authority. He, therefore, refrained from congratulating the Drafting Committee for incorporation of the word 'backward' because of the potential danger inherent in it.

The last member of the Constituent Assembly who participated in the debates on different Provisions under clause 10 of the Draft Constitution was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee.

Dr. Ambedkar, in his speech, explained and clarified the reasons for inclusion of the term 'backward' under Provision (3) of clause 10 of the Draft Constitution.

Replying to Mr. Krishnamachari's observation of the use of the word 'backward' Dr. Ambedkar said that the Drafting Committee produced a Constitution and not a paradise for lawyers in the interest of some of the Members of the Committee. He admitted that this very Constitution would surely require or involve legal interpretation or judicial interpretation. He then requested Mr. Krishnamachari to point out any instance of any constitution in the world which had not been a paradise for lawyers. Dr. Ambedkar further added that he would not be ashamed at all if the Constitution hereafter for the purpose of interpretation was required to be taken to the Federal Court.

Coming to the question of the use of the word 'backward' in Provision (3) of clause 10, Dr. Ambedkar elaborately explained the importance, significance and necessity of its use. He stated that to produce a workable proposition acceptable to all, three points of view had to be considered. The first was that there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens. It was the desire of many Members of the House that every individual who was qualified for a particular post should be free to apply for that post, to sit for examination and to have his qualification tested so as to determine whether he was fit for the post or not. There should neither be limitation nor hindrance in the operation of this principle of equality of opportunity. The second view mostly shared by a section of the House was that if this principle was to be operative to its fullest extent, there ought to be no reservation of any sort for any class or community at all. The third view insisted that although theoretically it was good to have the principle that there shall be equality of opportunity, there must be at the same time be a provision made for the entry of certain communities which had so far been outside the administration. The Constitution Drafting Committee had to produce a formula which would reconcile the aforesaid three points of view. According to him the reconciled formula was embodied in Provision (3) of Clause 10.

Dr. Ambedkar reminded the Mem-

bers that the Drafting Committee had to safeguard two things, namely, the principle of equality of opportunity and the fulfilment of the demand of communities which had not found their representation under the State services. The qualifying phrase 'backward' was used because of the fact that exception made in favour of reservation would ultimately eat up the rule altogether.

The concluding part of the speech of Dr. Ambedkar was so interesting that I am tempted to reproduce here what he had said. I quote :

"Somebody asked me " : " What is a backward Community ?" Well, I think any one who reads the language of the Draft itself will find that we have left it to be determined by each local Government. Backward Community is a community which is backward in the opinion of the Government. My Hon'ble friend Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari asked me whether this rule will be justifiable. It is rather difficult to give a dogmatic answer. Personally I think it would be a justifiable matter. If the local Government included in this category of reservations such a large number of seats; I think one can very well go to the Fed-

eral Court and the Supreme Court and say that the reservation is of such a magnitude that the rule regarding equality of opportunity has been destroyed and the Court will then come to the conclusion whether the local Government or the State Government has acted in a reasonable and prudent manner ...'

On Provision (3) or clause 10 there were three amendments.

The First amendment was that Provision (3) of clause 10 be deleted. When the motion was put to vote it was negatived.

The second amendment was that in provision (3) of Clause 10 for the words 'Shall prevent the State for making any provision for the reservation' the words 'shall during a period of ten years after the commencement of the Constitution prevent the State for making any reservation' be substituted. When the motion was put to vote it was negatived.

The third amendment was that in Provision (3) of the clause 10 the words 'backward' be omitted.

This motion, when put to vote, was also negatived like the two previous ones.

Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution (Article 335 of the Constitution).

Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution which originally dealt with the claims of the minority communities to services and posts under the Union and the State Governments (now Article 335 of the Constitution) when finally amended after three days debates and deliberations runs as follows :

"The claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or a State".

The Constituent Assembly had taken up for discussion Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution on 26th August 1949 for the first time.

A few Hon'ble Members of the Constituent Assembly like Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed from West Bengal, Sardar Hukum Singh from East Punjab, etc., raised serious objections to the amendment moved by Dr. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, for drastically changing the original Clause (Article which was once discussed and accepted by the house. Dr Ambedkar wanted to get the original Clause amended by replacing the words

'claims of the members of the minority communities' with the words 'claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Dr. Ambedkar also clarified that a decision was already taken not to treat Muslims and the Christians as minority communities. The only minorities to be provided for in this manner were the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. This was an accepted decision of the House and the Drafting Committee was bound by decision and hence the proposed amendment.

Since the matter was of utmost importance and since there was difference of opinions, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly gave his ruling to the effect that the matter would stand over for consideration.⁴

On 9th September, 1949, Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution was again taken up for discussion since discussion on this clause on 26th August, 1949, remained inconclusive. But on this date also no discussion could be taken up due to the fact that some of the Members got notice of certain amendments too late. The President of the Constituent Assembly and the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee agree to postpone the discussion on this Clause

till a later date. And the House accepted this.⁵

For the last time, discussion on Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution had taken place on 14th October, 1949. At the very beginning, Dr. Ambedkar moved an amendment where by the words 'the claims of the members of the minority communities' were proposed to be replaced with the words 'the claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes'.

Sardar Bhupinder Singh Man, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from East Punjab and Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed, a member of the Constituent Assembly from West Bengal, raised two points of order on the ground that on a previous occasion the House had already taken a decision to entertain the claims of the members of the minority communities in making appointments in posts and services under the Union or a State. Both of them argued that a decision already taken by the House could neither be reopened nor reversed.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad then quoting Rule No.32 of the House said that the matter once decided by the Assembly could be reopened with the consent of at least one fourth of the Members present and the voting should be in favour of reopening the decision. He wanted to know the opinion of the House by putting the question given here under : "Is the House in favour of reopening the question ?" "Yes" was the reply

from the Hon'ble Members. Thus the motion was adopted.

Sardar Hukam Singh was the first Member to move an amendment. He wanted to restore the original proposal that had already been accepted by the House. In other words, through this amendment he wanted to replace the present wordings 'the claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes' with the original wordings "the claims of the members of all minority communities". According to him minority communities would include among others Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians and Parsees. Mr. Singh further stated that the Clause in the original form was a kind of safeguard for the minorities and now through the modified proposal the safeguard was sought to be withdrawn. The Constitution should indicate goodwill of the majority towards the minority in concrete forms.

Mr. Bajeswar Prasad, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bihar moved an amendment the main contents of which were as follows :

1. The maintenance of efficiency of administration shall be the only consideration in making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a state.
2. Parliament may by law prescribe the conditions under which the President may, if he deems necessary appoint members of the scheduled castes and

scheduled tribes to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

3. Provision mentioned in 2 shall also be applicable in respect of Other Backward Classes on receipt of the Report of the Commission to be appointed under Clause 301 of the Draft Constitution (Article 340 of the Constitution).

4. Parliament shall have the power to repeal, extend or modify any or all of the provisions mentioned above.

Mr. Prasad in support of his arguments stated that his main intention in keeping the clause or Article flexible was that with the growth of education and economic improvement in the standard of living the parliament might review the entire matter and do away with this Clause or Article, if considered necessary.

Mr. Prasad also argued that there were no minorities in India. There were backward communities who had been oppressed and suppressed for centuries together. These backward communities also would include the scheduled tribes and the scheduled castes. The claims of the backward communities shall have to be taken into account also.

Very interestingly he had also said that history alone and not the caste Hindus was responsible for the wrongs that had been inflicted upon the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Since this Clause (Article) amounted to pious declaration only, it should have

been incorporated in the Directive Principles of State Policy, Mr. Prasad added.

He, however cautioned the Members of the House that India's future as a Secular State would be quite dark if extraneous consideration like caste, creed, tribe, religion, etc. were taken into consideration in the matters of appointments to posts and services in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

The President of the Constituent Assembly then put Sardar Hukam Singh's amendment which ran as follows : "296, subject to the provisions of the next succeeding Article, the claims of all minority communities shall be taken into consideration consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a state for the time being specified in part I & III of the First Schedule" to vote.

This amendment was negatived by the House.

The amendment proposed by Mr. Brajaswar Prasad to replace the newly framed Clause 296 placed before the House ran as follows :

"296. (1) The maintenance of efficiency of administration shall be the only consideration in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

"(2) Parliament may by law prescribe the conditions under which the President

may, if he deems necessary appoint members of the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State".

(3) The provisions of clause (2) of the article shall apply in relation to such other backward classes as the President may on receipt of the Report of the Commission appointed under clause (1) of article 301 of the Constitution by order specify as they apply in relation to the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes.

(4) Parliament shall have the power to repeal, extend or modify any or all of the provisions of this article from time to time".

However this amendment proposed by Mr. Brajeswar Prased was also negatived.

The last amendment on this clause or Article was moved by Mr. Gupta Nath Singh, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bihar, whereby he wanted to substitute the words 'the claims of the Members of the Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes' with the words 'the claims of the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and such other castes who are educationally and socially backward'.

Initiating the discussion Mr. Singh categorically stated that he was dead against to any type of communalism and protection and reservation to any section of the society Non-theless, he ad-

mitted that some sections of the Indian society like the Harijans and the Adibasis who had been oppressed for centuries and tyrannised for ages would need protection as well as reservation for certain period so as to enable them to arrive on the same level to the other sections of the society.

He further added that there were some sections in the country whose conditions were no better than those of the Harijans and the Adibasis. In some parts of the country their conditions were really worse than those of the Harijans and the Adibasis. These sections also needed protection as well as reservation. He then brought to the notice of the Hon'ble members a number of instances.

Mr. H.V. Kamath, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Central Province Berrer, criticised the statement made by Mr. Brajeswar Prased that history or time alone was responsible for the sad plight of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. In a lighter vein Mr. Kamath said that Mr. Singh, instead of blaming the history or the time spirit should blame the Divine Force because it was responsible for everything that happened in the world.

Mr. Kamath argued that since adequate protection and safeguard had already been incorporated to the backward classes in the matter of job reservation in provision (3) of Clause 10 of the Draft Constitution, the backward classes should have no apprehension. With an

optimistic note Mr. Kamath concluded that within a span of ten years there would be no socially and educationally backward classes in the country.

Participating in the debates in the newly framed Clause 296, Mr. R.K. Sidhva, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Central Province and Ferrar, adduced some forceful arguments which could be summarised as follows :

1. The criteria on the basis of which the backward classes were to be identified were not known. According to Clause 301 of the Draft Constitution those who were socially and educationally backward should be treated as backward classes. Then in a country where 88% people were illiterate, meaning, educationally backward, should all of them be treated as backward classes ? he asked. He further stated that 30 years back the Bomby Government declared the Parsees, to which he belonged, as a backward class. What he actually wanted to say was that in order to get the advantages of reservation in posts and services every community would try to get itself enlisted as a backward class.

2. He would never consider the scheduled castes as a community. According to him they were a class to whom great injustice had been done by the Hindus.

3. There should be no mention of 'backward classes' in the Constitution. For those who were educationally backward, the Directive Principle was

enough. Emphasis by all means must be on education.

4. While supporting the newly framed Clause 296 moved by Dr. Ambedkar, he hoped that within a short period the scheduled classes (castes) and the scheduled tribes would catch up and there would be no mention of these two sections in the Constitution here after.

5. He was dead against to any type of reservation.

The last person who participated in the debates on the proposed clause 296 of the Draft Constitution was no less a person than Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Bomby. Sardar Patel, however, did not speak anything on the proposed Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution. His speech was rather a reply to what had been said by Sardar Hukam Singh regarding the injustice shown to the Sikhs as well as not treating them on the same footing with the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes for the purpose of reservation of posts and services in the affairs of the Union or of a State.

Since Sardar Patel's speech has no direct relevancy with the theme of this paper, I feel that its discussion is not essential so far as this paper is concerned.

The amendment moved by Dr. Ambedkar concerning Clause 296 was then taken up by the House. It ran as follows :

296. The claims of the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration consistently with the maintenance of ef-

iciency of administration is the making of appointments to services and posts with the affairs of the Union or of a State'.

The amendment was adopted by the House and the Clause 296 (Article 335) became a part of the Constitution.

Concluding Observations :

In this paper the views of the founding fathers in the Constituent Assembly Debates in respect of two articles, namely, Article 16 (4) of the Constitution, meaning Clause 10 (3) of the Draft Constitution and Article 335 of the Constitution meaning Clause 296 of the Draft Constitution, dealing with the reservation of appointments or posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State are elaborately discussed.

It is observed that many of the members of the Constituent Assembly expressed their unhappiness as well as resentment for not defining the word 'backward' and also the words 'backward classes'. Although Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and a few others had given some definitions on these words, the Members did not appear to be at all satisfied. We are aware of the fact that the First Backward Class Commission, popularly known as the Kaka Kalelkar Commission, had made an attempt to identify the backward classes with some criteria in its Report in 1953. But the adoption of the Draft Constitution as a sequence to the discussions and debates in the Constituent Assembly had taken place much earlier.

References :

1. *Report of the First Backward Classes Commission, 1953, pp 46-47.*
2. *Report of the Second Backward Classes Commission, 1980.*
3. *Constituent Assembly Debates, Book No. 2, Vol VII, pp 672-704.*
4. *Ibid, Book 4, Vol No. IX, pp - 701-703.*
5. *Ibid, Book 4, Vol No. IX, pp - 1171-1172.*
6. *Ibid, Book 5, Vol No. X-XII & Index pp 229-251.*

It is also observed that in the debates on the two articles mentioned above, there were much more references to the scheduled castes rather than to scheduled tribes. From the discussions it is obvious that the Members were more familiar with the prevailing conditions of the scheduled castes.

Most of the Members who participated in the debates on these two articles were of the opinion that the Hindu society alone was responsible for sad and pitiable conditions of the scheduled castes in our country.

No Members, except one or two disfavoured reservation of posts and services for the members of the scheduled castes as well as the scheduled tribes with the affairs of the Union or of a State.

It is also observed that while a few Members wanted the continuance of reservation only for a certain specified period, the majority Members, however, did not like to put any time frame for such reservation.

Whatever might be the trend of discussions and debates, I feel that an indepth study of the Constituent Assembly Debates not only gives an insight into the thought process of our Founding Fathers and the mental labour they put forth, but also increases our knowledge and experiences regarding the prevailing situations of country prior to our independence and just after independence. To me there can not be a better contemporary history other than the Constituent Assembly Debates.

BRIDGING GAP THROUGH GROUPS ACTION PROPOSAL FOR TRIBAL DISTRICT OF KARBI ANGLONG OF ASSAM

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1. Introduction :

Karbi Anglong is a tribal district of Assam which is inhabited mostly by Karbi people. The District Council is the head of administration for all developmental programmes. Large sized families, lack of employment opportunities, low production in terrain lands, want of adequate wet land, illiteracy, poor rural infrastructure, lack of access to credit are widespread in this tribal district of Assam. All development programmes are mostly executed through sectoral allocation of funds to departments. There is no effective linkage between administration and the people for whom these programmes are meant. As a result, the degree of leakage is very high and quality of programme implementation is always doubtful. As may be seen later, there is widespread rural indebtedness among the tribal people to meet their bare necessities.

Time and again it is reiterated to implement programmes with active involvement of tribal institutions. Because of inherent problems of IRDP particularly in a tribal district with remote villages in difficult terrains, no workable credit model has been tried so far. In a recent study of Karbi

Anglong, it has been found that some tribal institutions in the form of grain banks are in operation. They offer credit in the form of grains charging even 100% interest. Some credit models including the MYRADA operating in Southern India are some successful steps in the field of credit. In fact, MYRADA model has achieved a national reputation for its skill in forming self-help groups.

In what follows, an attempt has been made to suggest an action proposal for the District Council to study, discuss along with officials/farmers and banks so that self-help groups (SHGs) can be effectively formed for successful operation of a credit programme in a pilot area. The formation of SHGs is thought to bridge the missing link between administration and poor people at large.

We have suggested the action proposal purposefully for the district of Karbi Anglong because in this district, some grain banks are running successfully without any outside help as per recent survey conducted by Tribal Research Institute of Assam. If the action proposal is successful in the pilot phase, the same may be extended to new areas. The SHG concept may be

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responsible primarily for credit but the same may be used as a linkage for various developmental programmes being undertaken in the district.

II. Historical Background - Framing of Sixth Schedule in the Constitution - forming of District Council

The two autonomous hill districts viz. Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills (15222 Sq. Km) constitute the hill areas of Assam. Formerly these districts were known as United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and constituted on 17th Nov. 1951. In 1970, the district was bifurcated into the present district of Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills.

The present estimated (1990) population of the districts stands at 7.71 Lakh, Karbis is the dominant hill tribe in Karbi Anglong whereas Dimasas, Hmars and Zemes are the important hill tribes in N.C. Hills. The percentage of literacy in Karbi Anglong is around 20% which is the lowest among the districts of Assam.

It may be noted that these tribal areas were totally excluded in the sense that no one from the plains could go there and contact the tribal people. Some of the areas were described as War Zones and during the war the then rulers and officials developed in the minds of these people a sense of separation and isolation and gave them assurance that at the end of the war, they will be independent

states managing their affairs in their own way. Finally, it was found that certain institutions among the hill tribes are so good that it was necessary to protect them. Particular mention was made to village administration and of the manner in which disputes were settled. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said that the tribal people of Assam differed from the tribes of other areas. In the case of the tribes of Assam, their roots were still in their own civilisation and their own culture. The sixth schedule of the Constitution had provided the protection needed for these areas. Under the schedule, each autonomous district including Karbi Anglong is now administered by District Council enjoying wide ranging powers. Some of the powers are :

1. Allotment, occupation or use of land;
2. Management of forest other than the reserved;
3. Use of canals/water course for agriculture;
4. Regulation relating to Shifting Cultivation;
5. Establishment of village or town committees and their powers;
6. Matters relating to Public Health and Sanitation;
7. Inheritance of property;
8. Social Custom;
9. Power to levy and collect taxes on trade/employment/animal/vehicles/boats/etc.

In fact, District Council in Karbi Anglong enjoys enormous powers in administration, finance and implementation of schemes and in many other matters except law and order and matters involving the interest of the state as a whole.

The wide ranging powers enjoyed by the Council has made them accountable to the people of the district for all matters of development. Democratic elections for District Council is to be held every five years under the supervision of State Election Commission.

III. Economy :

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the Karbi people. Apart from this, they also resort to various subsidiary occupations. However, people employed in subsidiary occupation namely service, business, contract and daily wage etc. is extremely limited. Cottage industries particularly weaving and tailoring among women and bamboo and cane work among men are popular. However, all products are mainly utilised for domestic consumption and there is no atmosphere whatsoever to go for commercial production.

The Karbis rear cattle, pigs and poultry etc. Women are found to be industrious than the men folk. Besides domestic works, women remain engaged in agricultural activities practically throughout the year. But the economic condition of the Karbi people

is extremely unsatisfactory. In Jhum, they get minimum yield results with maximum labour. Consumption of rice beer (Horlong) leads to exhaustion of a huge portion of paddy. About 20% of the population practice jhuming and they are the poorest in the district.

As regards to the rest, it may be said that the economy of most of them is at a subsistence level and needs a lot of development.

IV. Tribal Institutions among Karbis:

The village council is an important traditional institution of the Karbis. It acts as the trial court of the village. Whenever disputes occur due to land ownership, theft etc. in the village, attempts are made to settle the dispute through the village council which consists of a headman and other elderly persons of the village. Maintenance of peace, unit and co-operation among the people is also one of the major objectives of the village council. Moreover, the welfare of the people are also undertaken through the institution. However, development programmes like NREP, JRY, RLEGP etc. are not implemented by the village council but co-operation extended by it is quite remarkable.

Another social institution known as bachelors' dormitory (Jirkedam) prevalent among the Karbis is an educational one for the youth of the villages. But this unique institution is gradually

on the verge of extinction due to various factors like spread of education, impact of Christianity, practice of settled cultivation, cultural assimilation etc. However, Jirkedam can still be found in the very remote village during the period of cultivation.

The most important indigenous institution among the Karbis is the Grain Bank (Kerung Amei). Its main functions are to preserve paddy in the granary and provide the needy or poor persons of the village with the necessary amount of paddy against interest. An executive committee is formed for effective functioning of the bank. This institution acts as the co-operative credit society and indirectly imparts training to the people for extending mutual help and co-operation towards their brothers in need. It plays a vital role in stopping any of the family members of the village from going to the Mahajams or shopkeepers who charge exorbitant rates of interest. We normally observe three types of grain banks functioning in the Karbi village.

Type I :

All of the families of the village are members of the institution and each of them has to contribute 40kg of paddy immediately after the completion of the harvest. The total amount of paddy is preserved in the granary (Apusu). When any family is in need of assistance, it collects the necessary

quantity of paddy on the condition that 50% interest could be paid in kind along with the capital after the next harvest.

However, in the cases of widows, physically handicapped persons or patients afflicted with chronic diseases etc., the interest may be exempted.

An executive committee is formed in order to manage the affairs relating to the grain bank. The village elders select a president and a secretary from the members. The village elders may dissolve the executive committee or remove any member if charges of malpractice are found to be true after proper verification.

Type II :

The adult boys of the village carry out cultivation of paddy in a specific plot of land and the produce obtained is preserved in the granary. Necessary amounts of paddy are given to the needy person against 50% interest while the surplus quantity is sold to the village people, normally at a discount of 10% of the on-going market price. This amount is either deposited in the post office or in the rural bank. Later on, they utilise a portion of the accumulated amount to acquire land on mortgage for expansion of cultivation or for some other works like the construction of village roads, improvement of school buildings or village library etc. In this event, an executive committee consisting of the president,

secretary, storekeeper and auditor takes care of the management of the grain bank.

Type III

The aged male members of the village take the responsibility of maintaining this type of grain bank. All families of the village are its members. A suitable plot of land is cultivated by them and the produce kept in the granary. As soon as the price of paddy goes up they sell the entire quantity of paddy and afterwards, offer the families who are in need of assistance, the required amount of money on condition that they have to repay the said amount with 100% interest. The executive committee consisting of president, secretary, treasurer and auditor looks after the affairs of the grain bank.

In an extensive survey made in the district of Karbi Anglong during 1990-91, the existence of grain banks is more than 50 villages within the jurisdiction of various development blocks was found. But the grain banks are not functioning effectively except in a few cases. It is interesting to note that in the Samelangsu Development Block, there are three types of grain banks :

- 1) Managed by men
- 2) Managed by women
- 3) Managed by girls only

Each bank is under the supervision of an executive body, consisting of president, secretary etc. They collect 40

kg of paddy from each member and keep in a godown. The needy member takes loan at the rate of 100% interest

The number of members was found to be 25 in the women's bank, 12 in the girls' bank and 9 in the men's bank. All of these banks are of course running effectively.

V. Tribal Institutions as a Catalyst for Development :

In the confederation of the Directors of the Tribal Research Institutes held under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India on 4th and 5th March, 1984, it was recommended that as far as possible, the tribal development schemes should be implemented through the existing traditional tribal institutions during the 7th plan period so that benefits from these schemes actually percolate to the largest groups. It was suggested that this would also give a new impetus to the tribal societies enabling them to build their inner strength which is one of the main objectives of tribal development.

Although no progress has been made since the suggestion in 1984, the matter involving tribal institutions in socio-economic institutions was again discussed on 5.8.90 in Hamren of Karbi Anglong District by Development Commissioner of Hills with District Council authority in presence of other officials. It is remarkable that Chief Executive Member (he is the

head of the District Council), Karbi Anglong mentioned that they were contemplating constitution of village Development Councils which would have statutory support. He further stated that Tesang which is a bachelors' dormitory could be involved in development work.

VI. Rural Indebtedness :

It may be noted that land contributes the highest percentage of income out of the various sources. The next source of income is paid employment including daily wage.

The Karbis derive some of their income from selling their livestock. Trade and commerce, cottage industries and fishing contribute very little to their income.

The income sources being limited for the Karbis, the extent of tribal indebtedness is quite significant. In actual household survey of 239 households spread over 12 villages in a project area called Hidipi (the average distance of the villages being 15km from district HQ Diphu of Diphu sub Division), it was found that 99 households (41%) are in the habit of taking loan for meeting their household requirements and also for carrying out agricultural operations. It was also found that out of the total amount of loan, the people obtain 56% from shopkeepers and 17% from village people / Mohajon

They have also taken 26% of loan

from DRDA, Diphu for various activities. In the case of DRDA, the rate of interest is 10% per annum. On the contrary, the rate of interest varies from 10% to 20% per month in respect of loan taken from other sources mentioned above.

The average debt per household in this area was estimated at Rs 545 whereas the average debt per indebted household was Rs 1316.

The scenario of tribal indebtedness in other parts of the district will not be better than the surveyed area. In fact, in most of the remote areas, the situation may be worse.

It is desirable that the financial institutions come forward to help them with easy terms and conditions but the number of such institutions in this district is extremely limited

As for example, Hamren is a sub-division of Karbi Anglong district but there is only one bank in this sub-division i.e. State Bank of India. Even the rural bank is not in existence in this backward sub-division. Banks are reluctant to open bank branches in this remote hilly area and as a result people in need of credit have no alternative but to approach private sources with high rates of interest.

The Paikas system prevalent among the Karbis has made them utterly poor. Under the system, a tribal settlement holder takes an advance from a cultivator, usually a non-tribal, and in lieu

of the advance taken, he alienates his land temporarily to the non-tribal cultivator for a period of one or two years. At the end of the specific period, the non-tribal cultivator is required to vacate the occupied land. But in practice, it does not happen since the tribal settlement holder takes another advance from the non-tribal cultivator even before the stimulated period comes to an end. Once a tribal enters into this vicious circle, he can hardly get out of it and the alienation of cultivable land becomes perpetual.

A close examination of the above clearly shows that poor farmers try to obtain credit from various sources. DRDA is unable to meet their credit for various reasons. Distance of villages from DRDA/bank/blocks, long procedures, corruption at various levels are some of the reasons for which the farmers are not inclined to seek for DRDA loan even though the rate of interest is low. On the other hand, the farmers can take easy loan at door-steps from money lenders or non-tribals without any difficult procedures although the rate of interest is high.

VII. Development and Credit Programmes :

The existing development schemes implemented so far by the District Council are mostly based on sectoral allocation of funds to development departments. Although, the emphasis has been laid on weaning away the

Jhumia from the primitive practice of cultivation by the departments, in reality the same does not happen because of the lack of participation from the people in the programmes. A critical evaluation study of the impact of Jhum control programmes is being carried out. Preliminary results indicate - little impact of these programmes on the people for whom they are meant. However, Dr. D.N. Majumdar, of the University of Gauhati in his evaluation study on Integrated Jhum Development Programme clearly stated that the villagers were not involved at all at the planning stage.

The credit programme is mainly performed by the District Rural Development Agency. Its coverage of population is highly limited. Difficult terrain, limited unwilling staff to work in remote areas, poor infrastructure, lack of contact organisation for people are the main reasons for the poor credit programme by DRDA. Even where the credit loans have been offered, their quality, sustainability are very much in doubt.

A number of schemes based on grants are offered by departments of fisheries, cottage industry, handloom and textile etc. Since this comes in the form of grants, nobody takes these as serious economic package. The impact of the programme on people can be said to be minimal.

VII. Where is the Missing Link :

The total allocation to the two hill districts is 7.12% of the states annual plan allocation. Out of the total share 70% is allocated to Karbi Anglong District. To give a fair idea, the district received an amount of Rs 46 crore during 1994-95. Apart from this, the district received an additional plan allocation of about Rs. 27 crore from the centre against a population of about 5 lakh.

The allocation during 1995-96 will be 7.12% of Rs 1461 crores for Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills. In spite of resource constraints in the state budget, the hill districts get their full share of allocation on a priority basis. Even though there is demand for higher allocation of funds for obvious reasons, one feels that effective utilisation of the funds could have done wonders in the hill district. So far, very few families have been completely weaned away from Jhum. Social indicators index has hardly improved over the years. The literacy in the district is still the lowest in the state.

If one analyses the whole situation, the missing link may be found to be in the absence of any effective contact between administration and the poor villagers. The villagers' needs have not been assessed properly and implementation even if it takes place comes from the top to the bottom. In a village called Borpur in Hamren subdivision, a big water body was created and

converted into fishery in '90-'91. But the nearby villagers have not adopted the scheme still. There is provision for irrigating water to the paddy fields but nobody is using the water. On close inspection, it was found that all the villagers in the village go to work for wage labour and they have not been consulted at the time of implementation of the scheme.

IX. Different Models of Credit Programmes :

Apart from the subsidy linked IRDP programme presently in operation in India, there are a number of other credit models which may be useful to the needs of the poor and also at the same time formulate a basis for drawing a link between the Government and the poor in general. We shall describe a few models being applied in various countries with varying degrees of success. However, the MYRADA model will be described in detail for the benefit of District Council/officials and farmers who might be involved in a credit programme.

1. **Swanirvar Bangladesh (SB)**
Swanirvar Bangladesh is a major national NGO that acts only as a financial intermediary for the nationalised banks and facilitates lending for the poor. Its major task is to monitor, organise and train the poor in small self-help groups of 5-10 members and finally it monitors the end use of loan money and collects

weekly instalments on behalf of the bank. The system is run with the help of 8,000 credit and union assistants. Funding of the program is done by allocation of TK2 per week per loanee for the remuneration of workers at all levels. Swanirvar Bangladesh receives no other government or outside grant for its credit program and is an entirely indigenous effort.

2. Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP)

This program is in operation in Pakistan in both rural and urban areas. External support has come mainly from the Aga Khan Foundation and other individual donors. The program has achieved success in rural improvement in a very backward northern region of the country by funding credit through self-help groups consisting mainly of small families.

3. **Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM)**
AIM is a modified replication of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh. It receives technical assistance from the institution and financial contributions from the Islamic Foundation to support the training of its self-help group members.

4. **Philippine NGO's**
These were board driven organisations established by Philippine business and professional people with a deep concern for urban and rural poor. Initially for the first five years, most of the funding for their

capital and operational costs, came from overseas official aid organisations. However, in recent years, these organisations have learned far more to the need to create self-help groups and to mobilise savings for the growth and sustainability of their programmes.

5. Credit Unions

In two countries, namely Indonesia and Sri Lanka, the participating NGO's are credit unions. The unions believe in principle of self-reliance and generate most of their required funds from their own members, both directly (within each primary society) as well as indirectly, through inter-lending with other primary societies etc. In some cases the Central Bank, with support from international agencies has provided subsidised financing of the credit unions loan capital and Central Bank re-financing.

6. Outline of MYRADA model in India.

It is useful to give an outline of the credit model of MYRADA being a new major pilot project in Southern India. District Council can well organise trip to Southern India to examine the working of this model. The participants for the trip may include Council officials and tribal people from the district. Local bank officials should also be involved in the process.

MYRADA was launched in 1968 for the re-settlement of around 15000

Tibetan refugees in the State of Karnataka. Its work was then limited to re-settlement for the first ten years of its existence. However, since 1978, MYRADA has been totally involved with programmes for the rural poor in backward districts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

MYRADA is now working directly with 48,000 families or approximately 450,000 people. It has 567 full-time staff and over 600 volunteers trained in community health care, animal husbandry, forestry, literacy and other relevant areas of community/village need. Most of the staff are village based and as such they know the small/marginal farmers, landless labourers, poor women and rural artisans in the community much more effectively to work with.

For the purpose of rural credit, MYRADA relies entirely upon formation and training of small, homogeneous, voluntary, fully participative and non-political self-help groups. MYRADA had organised more than 1600 such groups of the rural poor. The groups manage around Rs 20 million of which Rs 5 million is their own savings. Each of these groups has raised a common fund from their savings. This capital has been augmented by NABARD, CAPART and PLAN INTERNATIONAL. The common fund is lent out to the members of the group for urgent consumption

needs, small business, cottage industries, animal husbandry, poultry etc. The overall recovery rate has been 98 percent.

Vysa Bank Ltd. being one of India's leading private banks decided to take active part in financing of poor in collaboration with MYRADA. The basic levels of relationship are as follows.

1. MYRADA forms, trains and provides initial seed-funding to eight new self-help groups (SHGs) of between 15 and 30 poor village people.

2. Those groups commence a programme of regular weekly savings.

3. Those savings will be used to establish a 'Common fund' from which members can borrow small loans, mainly for emergency and 'Consumption' purposes. However, common funds are rarely able to meet the larger and more important 'productive' needs of members of the group.

4. At this point, Vysa Bank (or any commercial bank) after observing group's financial discipline, performance and accountability over a period of 6-9 months may decide to offer slightly larger loans for productive purposes.

Detailed guidelines were drawn up and agreed upon between the Vysa Bank, MYRADA and NABARD for the formation, training and initial capital seeding of self-help groups and the total cost. The cost is estimated to

be around Rs. 15,000 per group.

Regular meetings of MYRADA and SHGs take place every week of fortnight, normally in the evenings. Each member contributes from Rs 1 to Rs 10 per week at these meetings as their savings for the common fund. As common fund grows, members seek financial assistance to meet their emergency consumption and other needs. If 4-5 members seek assistance at once, the group decides to give assistance on a priority basis, arrived at through discussion and consensus. The rate of interest varies from 12 to 48 percent depending on the purpose. Loans for health or other emergency purposes attract lower rates of interest than those for other purposes.

In the pilot project, it was observed that whenever self-help credit management groups have been formed on a sound basis, group pressure and influence have contributed to effective collateral security. In some cases where a loan has not been satisfactory, the reason is usually lack of cohesiveness of the group. By building confidence and trust in the members of a cohesive SHG, MYRADA has found that loan repayments are on the very high side.

The economic impact of this programme was highly significant. Before formation of SHGs, about 80% of beneficiaries earned between 5 and 10 rupees a day and most were in debt to their employees, landlords or local

traders, paying interest between 50 to 100 percent or even more. Most grew only one monsoon crop in their limited size of land holding without having access to any agricultural inputs like fertilisers, improved seeds etc. After group formation, they gradually reduced time worked for others, utilised more agricultural inputs and after 1-1½ years were able to get at least 2 meals a day. Further, their savings in passbooks ranged between Rs 200 and Rs 800 which they never had prior to formation of SHGs. The increase in income of members of group ranged from 30 to 50% and in some cases 100% within 1 to 2 years. Average household cash income of families in the groups increased from Rs 2000 Rs 2500 before SHGs to Rs 3000 Rs 3500 per annum after joining.

Significant changes in the quality of life of the group members were also observed. Improvements in housing, food, acquisition of household equipment and items were significant. Standards of hygiene and health have gone up.

SHGs had a positive impact on social relationship and community awareness. There had been marked improvements in the status and role of women in the home and in village life. A new sense of pride has grown up among the villagers to be members SHGs.

X Self-Help Groups (SHG)

The most common thread that runs through all of the above models of credit for the poor is the basic reliance upon self-help groups for saving mobilisation and credit delivery. It is in fact the fundamental building block for a successful programme of credit for the poor. Some of the guidelines for self-help groups are as follows:

1) Member of SHG should be residents of the same area, be homogenous and number at least five persons.

2) SHGs should promote saving mobilisation. Savings should be linked to credit. Saving first, credit next.

3) Transparency among SHGs is essential.

4) Basic training and guidance are to be provided to members of SHGs

5) Autonomy of SHGs should be respected.

6) SHGs should hold regular meetings.

Formulation of SHG's in areas where there is existence of some form of tribal institutions will be much easier than where there is no such institution worth by name.

XI Can the missing link be bridged ?

This is possible only by organising the villagers around some forum of their own. The forum will be used by villages for discussion among themselves about various schemes /problems etc. What sort of forum this will

be is very difficult to answer unless the same is thoroughly discussed with the people. However, time has come to study various models already implemented in different parts of the world for upliftment of the poor. There will be pros and cons for each model but a thorough study of the same will definitely bring out a solution for the needy poor.

It is necessary to say a few words about the people to be consulted. Normally, it is the better-off groups who take advantage of any programme launched in an area. In this particular case, it is better to identify the people who are in need of credit and those who are running grain banks. The groups may be as follows:

a) Some are running grain banks - managed by men/women girls who meet their credit need from the banks.

b) People who are members of grain banks but who are not involved in operation of grain banks.

c) People who are in need of credit but are not members of grain banks.

d) People normally better off who are not members of grain banks and also are not in need of credit.

While selecting the groups for consultation, preference should be given to members of a) and b) above. The reason why the members of c) are not members of grain banks should be explored and if found necessary, they may be given due weightage. For the

members of d) above, their participation may be at a later stage. In all the cases, high weightage should be given to women as in almost all successful credit programmes, role of women is predominant.

Further, the priorities for the need of members should be decided by them and not by any external agency.

Some of the priorities other than credit may be their road linkage to the village. District Council should be mentally prepared to help them in this respect and support them from their plan allocation. For successful launching of a project of this nature, one has to approach with an open mind and never try to dump anything on people with a predetermined concept.

The people should be free to throw their ideas and express their need. The District Council should be prepared to examine their options critically and work out the modalities.

XII Pilot Approach

The feasibility of application of ideas of any model can initially be tried on a pilot basis. If the model works out well, the same may be extended to other areas of the district. It may be noted that the areas to be selected for pilot trials may be the ones where there is existence of active/semi-active tribal institutions in the form of grain banks/bachelor dormitories /village councils etc. The existence of tribal institutions would

help to a great extent in effective implementation of the model.

No one can guarantee the success of implementation of any model unless the same is tried in the field. For this reason it is safer to make a pilot approach first. If the model succeeds, the model can be replicated in other parts of the district. Even other districts of Assam may also be tempted to adopt the model where literacy is higher than in Karbi Anglong.

It may be noted that in Samelangs Block, there are at least three Grain Banks operating successfully. The district council authority of Karbi Anglong may select the area for the pilot project for formation of self-help groups among the villagers for a successful credit programme. The definite structure of the credit model has to be worked out only after proper research of the different credit models and also by discussions with the target groups for whom the programme will be launched.

The creation of SHGs will be the answer for bridging the missing link between the poor on one hand and the administration on the other.

Even if a particular model or hybridisation of models is taken, the question definitely comes regarding funding of the programme. Again this is a question to be sorted out with the target groups. May be they will not like external support. If council facili-

tates organising AHGs along with training, the model may work out satisfactorily. In case there is a necessity of funds to be created initially, the District Council with their power vested on them under the Constitution can form a trust for the help of SHGs. The District Council receives around Rs 27 crores every year in addition to other normal allocations, for funding for different programmes. Out of which they spend quite a sizeable amount in the form of grants without organising the proper delivery system.

It is felt that a system has to be developed for proper linkages with the poor and also meet their credit needs if any.

XII Steps to be Followed

District Council may like to examine the pilot project of MYRADA along with other credit models being in operation in other countries as listed above. However, to work out a feasible plan, they may like to take the following steps.

1) To identify selected representative farmers from the proposed pilot area to enable them to make an in-depth study of the MYRADA project in Southern India.

2) To identify selected officials from high /medium /lower levels who may there is also be sent to Southern India along with farmers for the proposed in-depth study.

3) District Council may send some

elected representative also for the tour of Southern India. This will enable Council to formulate policies in due course to launch a pilot project.

4) District Council if it wants to involve banks in the process may request local bank officials for the same study.

5) After in-depth study, the four groups should sit together and discuss their future strategy to launch a pilot project in the same or modified form.

6) District Council if it is satisfied and also if there is credit need for farmers may create a consolidated fund out of their additional allocation for the pilot project. Further, the bank authority must incorporate the same in their credit plan programme.

7) The trained officials must devote their time to form SHGs in the selected villagers.

8) As has been suggested above, the District Council may select the area in Samelangsu Block where some grain banks are running successfully.

9) However, it should be made clear to the farmers concerned that they will have to manage their own affairs. District Council and bank official will simply facilitate in the process. The SHGs of farmers will maintain their own accounts and all transactions whatsoever must be transparent to the members taking part in the process. The SHGs members are the sole authority in their own affairs.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GENETIC TRAITS AMONG THE KAIBARTS OF ASSAM

ANANDA CHANDRA NATH *
BANDANA DAS DEVI**

ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to study the genetic traits such as hand clasping, handedness, armfolding, tongue rolling, tongue folding, and dominant eye among the Kaibartas of Assam. The present data have also been compared with other published materials. Chi-square test has also been applied for better comparison.

INTRODUCTION

The hand clasping, handedness, arm folding, tongue rolling, tongue folding and dominant eye are behavioural morpho-genetic traits which are important characters in the study of human diversity for its simplicity in existence and diagnosis of variation among the population. Some of the genetic traits indicates the bilateral variation in their expression. Most of the scholars and researchers like Lutz (1906), Fraira-Maria et al (1958), Pons (1961) have confirmed that such traits with bilateral variations depend on genetic factors. Various investigations has also been helped the ethnic variability of such traits.

In North East India mainly in Assam a very few study has been made on such morpho-genetic factors. The scholars like Das et al, 1972, Deka, et al, 1975; Das et al, 1969, Phookan et al, 1976, has made the study on various morpho genetic traits on different ethnic groups.

Distribution of some morpho-genetic traits, such as, hand clasping, handedness, armfolding, tongue rolling, tongue folding and dominant eye, among the Kaibartas of Assam have been made in this present study.

PEOPLE

Ethnically the Kaibartas belong to the Caucasoid stock and spread all over Assam. Out of sixteen scheduled castes communities of Assam they occupy the second largest population in the state.

Regarding the origin 'KAIBARTA' there are various thoughts and opinions. In Assam both the Barhamputra and the Barak Valley the term 'KAIBARTA' is used mainly to indicate the people whose main profession is FISHING. DOM's and NADIYAL's who are living in Assam are also categorised as Kaibarta. Eminent Assamese research scholars, like, Raibahadur Kanaklal Barua, Rasaraj Lakshminath Bezbaruah and Rajmohan Nath have made some attempt to findout the origin of the Kaibartas. Moreover Montgomery Martin, Riesly and Allen also drawn the opinions between the Kaibartas and Keots on one hand and Doms and Nadiyals on the other, while William Robinson traces 'Kaibartas' origin among the Keots who are no longer treated as Kaibarta. However, it can be concluded that "FISHING" is their main profession along

with their allied occupations.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The present data were collected from various hamlets of Brahmaputra as well as Barak Valley of Assam in the year 1989-90. A total number of individuals tested for this study was 370 out of which 210 individuals were male and 160 individuals were female.

The data were collected from different age groups by observation at random. The methods for collection of the present data are narrated below.

HAND CLASPING

In this case the individuals concern asked to clasp their hands- the way normally they do was noted as his or her hands clasping pattern. On the basis of superior placement of the thumbs the individuals were regarded as "R" (Right) or "L" (Left) hand clasper.

HANDEDNESS

To findout the handedness the persons were asked to make easy their either hands the way normally they do, the individuals were grouped on the basis of the tendency to use one hand rather than the other- either in "R" (Right) or in "L" (Left) groups.

ARM FOLDING

For the purpose of armfolding the individuals were asked to fold their arms over their chest in criss-cross position. On the basis of placement of the arms the individuals were noted either as "R" (Right) or as "L" (Left) arm folder.

TONGUE ROLLING

The individuals in regards the tongue rolling, were asked to roll their tongues and extend it out from their mouth. The individuals who have the ability to roll their

tongue to a distinct "U" shape were regarded as positive (+) while the others fail to do so were regarded as negatives (-).

TONGUE FOLDING

To classify the type of tongue folding the individuals were asked to fold their tongues upto a certain position. The persons who is able to do so is noted under positive (+) group, while others unable to do so is grouped under negative (-).

DOMINANT EYE

To determine the dominance of eye the individual was asked to hold a Kaleidoscope and then asked to look through it. The individual if use right eye to look through it easily the person was regarded as a right eyed while the reverse one was classified as left eyed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All the traits of Kaibarta has been described under separate headings and comparison has been made for all the traits in one heading.

HAND CLASPING

In 1908 first of all Lutz studied the trait hand clasping and suggested that the trait is an inherited one. The studies were followed by Yamura (1940), Kawabe (1949), Freire Maria, Quitic Salgado and Freire Maria (1958) and Pons (1961) and they were agreed on the principle -the trait hand clasping is genetically controlled character. A few study has been made on this trait in North East India by Das et al (1969), Phookan and Begum (1976); Dutta and Phookan (1978-79); Das et al (1998-99); Buzarbaruah and Phookan (1981); Deka Mahapatra et al (1975); Das and Das (1978-79) among Baishya, Keot Ahom, Sema, Nepalee, Munda, Santhal, Brahmin, Kalita

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and Kaibatra of Assam respectively.

Das and Buragohain (1974) and Dutta Choudhury (1984) have studied among Aka Khowa and Miji tribes of Arunachal Pradesh respectively. Moreover, Mahapatra (1970) among some caste groups of Orissa and Bengal, while Mahapatra and Mishra (1971) have studied among the Shashana Brahmins of Orissa; Malhotra have carried investigation on the Brahmin of Maharashtra and Malhotra and Bhanu (1967) have shown the frequency of the trait-hand clasping among Izharas of Kerala.

The frequency of pattern of hand clasping (R & L) are presented in table -1. It reveals that the frequency of R (73.51%) is high than L (26.49%) among the Kaibartas of Assam.

SEX DIFFERENCE

It is observed from table -1 that the frequency of R+ (76.19%) in male is higher than the female (70.00%). It is noted among the Kaibartas that the sex difference is non-significant ($\chi^2 = 1.782$, d.f. = 1, $0.20 > p > 0.01$).

HANDEDNESS

The frequency of different types of handedness (R and L type) of the Kaibartas are presented in table -2. It reveals that R type (94.59%) is more frequent than the L type (5.40%).

SEX DIFFERENCE

Table -2 reveals that the percentage (95.00%) of right handedness female is a bit high than that of the males (94.28%), but the sex difference is statistically not significant among the Kaibartas ($\chi^2 = 0.0906$, d.f. = 1, $0.90 > p > 0.80$).

ARM FOLDING

In Assam Das et al (1972), Deka

Mahapatra and Das 1978; Das et al (1975-76); Phookan and Begum (1976); Das and Das (1978-79); Dutta & Phookan (1978-79) and Buzarbaruah & Phookan (1981) have studied on the trait arm folding among Baishya, Keot, Brahmin; Kalita; Muslim; Sema; Kaibarta; Ahom; Munda and Santhal respectively. Dutta Chaudhury (1984) have studied among Miji of Arunachal Pradesh. Moreover, Freire-Mala et al (1966) have studied on the arm folding among the Africans Negroes and they suggested that the trait is a genetically controlled character.

SEX DIFFERENCE

It is apparent from table -3 that the R type has a higher frequency (15.00%) in females than that of the males (54.76%). Chi-square test shows the sex difference which is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.941$, d.f. = 1, $0.05 > p > 0.02$).

TONGUE ROLLING

The trait tongue rolling have been studied by Das et al (1972); Deka Mahapatra & Das (1975 & 1976); Das et al, (1978-79); Das and Das (1978-79); Phookan and Begum (1976); Dutta & Phookan (1978-79) among Baishya & Keot; Brahmin; Kalita and Muslim; Muslim and Hindu; Kaibarta; Sema and Ahom in Assam respectively and Dutta Choudhury have studied among Miji of Arunachal Pradesh.

The frequencies of the trait tongue rolling (÷ ve and -ve types) are presented in table-4

It reveals that the frequency of +ve type (64.05) is more frequent than the -ve type (35.94%) among the Kaibartas of Assam.

SEX DIFFERENCE

The percentage (70.00%) of +ve type

in female is much higher than the male (59.52%), the figures appended in table -4. Regarding sex, difference the trait tongue rolling between the male and female and female is significant ($\chi^2 = 4.323$, d. f. = 1, $0.05 > p > 0.02$).

TONGUE FOLDING

The frequencies of tongue folding +ve type and -ve type are presented in table 1-5. It shows that occurrence of +ve type frequency (55.67%) is more than the -ve type among the Kaibartas.

SEX DIFFERENCE

It is observed from table -5 that the frequency of +ve type is higher in females (58.12%) in comparison to male (53.81%) among the Kaibartas but statistically not significant in sex differences on this trait ($\chi^2 = 0.684$, d. f. = 1, $0.50 > p > 0.40$).

DOMINANT EYE

The trait dominant eye has been studied earlier by Das et al (1972); Deka Mahapatra & Das (1975 and 1976) Das & Das (1978-79) and Das et al (1978-79) among different population such as, Baishya, Keot, Brahmin, Kalita and Muslim; Kaibarta and Muslim.

The frequencies on the trait dominant eye are appended in table -6 and it reveals that the percentage of +ve type is 67.29 which shows much higher than in the -ve type (32.70%) among Kaibartas.

SEX DIFFERENCE

Table -6 shows the frequency distribution of +ve type and -ve type of the trait dominant eye of which 67.62 percent in male and 66.87% in female in respect of +ve type. It is noted among the Kaibartas,

the sex difference is statistically not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.0179$, d.f. = 1, $0.95 > p > 0.80$).

Discussion as well as comparison for all the traits, such as, hand clasping, handedness, arm folding, tongue rolling, tongue folding and dominant eye of the Kaibarta of Assam are made from table-7 for the present study.

In case of hand clasping the frequency among Kaibartas (73.51%) is lower than the Muslim (86.16%); Fsd ry sl, 1975, 1976). While it is high in compared to Brahmin and Kalita (61.9% and 64.8%; Deka Mahapatra, et al, (1975); Baishya and Keot (63.7%) and 63.8%, Das et al, (1969); Muslim (68.0%) Deka Mahapatra & Das, (1976); Kaibarta (62.5%) Das & Das, (1978-79); Miji (66.67%) Dutta Chaudhury, (1984); Sema and Nepalee (51.00%) and 70.00%, Phookan and Begum (1976); Ahom and Sema (62.00%) and 51.00%, Dutta & Phookan, (1978-79) and Munda and Santhal (91.5% and 90.0%, Buzarbaruah and Phookan, 1981)

The Chi-square test indicates significant variations for the inter racial comparison. It is markedly significant when compared with other groups, such as, Ahom-Miji and Kaibarta ($\chi^2 = 5.745$, d.f. = 1, $0.05 > p > 0.02$) and Kaibarta-Koibarta ($\chi^2 = 7.435$, d.f. = 1, $0.01 > p > 0.001$).

In respect of sex difference it is observed that the percentage of Kaibarta in both the cases -male and female, is low in comparison to Santhal and Munda, in males and females (89.00%, 91.00%) and 91.00%; 92.00%, respectively, Buzarburah and Phookan, 1981). It is high while compared with Kaibartas in males and females (56.00% and 69.00%, Das and Das, 1978-79).

The percentage frequency of right handed people among the Kaibartas is high compared to Hindu and Muslim (90.24% and 82.38%, Das et al, 1978-79). The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 24.46$, d.f.=1, $0.01 > p > 0.001$) shows that the difference is statistically significant between the Muslim and Kaibartas.

In respect of arm folding it is observed that except Muslim (66.03%, Das et al, 1976) the percentage of Kaibarta (59.19%) is high in comparison with Baishya, Keot (48.1%, 47.1%, Das et al, 1972); Brahmin, Kalita (32.3%, 34.5%, Deka Mahapatra & Das, 1975); Sema (43.00%, Phookan and Begum, 1976); Ahom (59.00%, Datta & Phookan, 1978-79); Munda Santhal (23.5%, 30.5% Buzarbaruah & Phookan, 1981) and Miji (38.09%, Datta Choudhury, 1984). It is observed from table -8 the Chi-square test indicates the significant variations when compared with Miji-Ahom-Kaibarta, ($\chi^2 = 8.410$, d.f.=1, $0.02 > p > 0.01$) and Kaibarta-Kaibarta ($\chi^2 = 4.447$, d.f.=1, $0.05 > P > 0.02$).

It is observed, in case of tongue rolling, that except Sema (65.00%, Phookan & Begum, 1976). The frequency of +ve type among Kaibartas is high in comparison to Brahmin and Kalita (51.85% & 50.32%, Deka Mahapatra and Das, 1975); Baishya and Keot (49.03% & 37.88%, Das et al, 1972); Kaibarta (53.00%, Das & Das, 1978-79); Ahom (48.00%, Dutta and Phookan, 1978-79 and Miji (63.09%, Datta Choudhury, 1984).

The Chi-square test indicates non-significant variation when compared with Miji-Kaibarta ($\chi^2 = 0.0722$, d.f.=1, $0.80 > p > 0.70$) but significant among Kaibarta-Kaibarta ($\chi^2 = 6.535$, d.f.=1, $0.02 > p > 0.01$).

In case of tongue folding the percentage is high among Muslim as well as Hindus (40.26% and 34.49%, Das et al, 1978-79) in comparison to the present one. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 16.605$, d.f.=1, $0.01 > p > 0.001$) shows that the difference between the Kaibartas and Muslims to be significant.

The percentage in respect of dominant eye among Kaibartas is low in comparison to the Keot and Kaibarta (69.6% and 70.9%, Das et al, 1972); Muslim, Kalita and Brahmin (76.0%, 76.6% and 75.7%, respectively, Deka Mahapatra & Das, 1976, 1975); Kaibarta (76.6%, Das & Das, 1978-79). The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 19.66$, d.f.=1, $0.01 > p > 0.001$) indicates significant variation between Kaibarta and Kaibarta.

It is observed from the above discussion that the Kaibarta, - present study, are far distant from the Brahmins in respect of hand clasping and arm folding while it is closed to the Ahom in respect of arm folding only. In case of handedness and tongue folding Kaibartas and Muslims are quite distant from each other. The frequencies of tongue rolling among Kaibarta (present study), Sema and Miji are more or less similar. Lowest percentage is observed among the Kaibartas in respect of dominant eye compared to the other groups.

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TABLE -1
Frequencies of pattern of Hand Clasping

Sex	No. of Individuals	R-type (%)	L- type (%)
Male	210	76.19	23.81
Female	160	70.00	30.00
Total	370	73.51	26.49

Chi-square value +1.782, d.f.=1, 0.20 > p > 0.10

TABLE -2
Frequencies of pattern of Handedness

Sex	No. of Individuals	R-type (%)	L- type (%)
Male	210	94.28	5.71
Female	160	95.00	5.00
Total	370	94.59	5.40

Chi-square value=0.0906, d.f.=1, 0.90 > p > 0.80

TABLE-3
Frequencies of pattern of Arm Folding

Sex	No. of Individuals	R-type (%)	L- type (%)
Male	210	54.76	45.24
Female	160	65.00	35.00
Total	370	59.19	40.81

Chi-square value = 3.941, d.f.=1, 0.05 > p > 0.02

TABLE -4
Frequencies of pattern of Tongue Rolling

Sex	No. of Individuals	+ve-type (%)	-ve- type (%)
Male	210	59.52	40.48
Female	160	70.00	30.00
Total	370	64.05	35.94

Chi-square value = 4.323, d.f.=1, 0.05 > p > 0.02

TABLE -5

Frequencies of pattern of Tongue Folding

Sex	No. of Individuals	+ve-type (%)	-ve - type (%)
Male	210	53.81	49.19
Female	160	58.12	41.87
Total	370	55.67	43.32

Chi-square value = 0.684, d.f. =1, $0.05 > p > 0.40$

TABLE -6

Frequencies of pattern of Dominant Eye

Sex	No. of Individuals	R-type (%)	L- type (%)
Male	210	67.62	32.38
Female	160	66.87	33.12
Total	370	67.29	32.70

Chi-square value = 0.0179, d.f.=1, $0.95 > p > 0.80$

TABLE -7

Value of Chi-square test (Comparison)
(Mongoloid X Caucasoid and Mongoloid X Mongoloid)

population / Characters	X ² - value	d.f.	Probability	Remarks
HAND CLASPING ;				
Ahom-Miji-Kaibarta	5.745	1	$0.05 > P > 0.02$	Significant
Kaibarta-Kaibarta	7.435	1	$0.01 > P > 0.001$	Significant
HANDEDNESS :				
Muslim-Kaibarta	24.46	1	$0.01 > P > 0.001$	Significant
ARM FOLDING :				
Ahom-Miji-Kaibarta	8.410	1	$0.02 > P > 0.01$	Significant
Kaibarta -Kaibarta	4.447	1	$0.05 > P > 0.02$	Significant
TONGUE ROLLING :				
Miji-Kaibarta	0.072	1	$0.80 > P > 0.70$	Non Significant
Kaibarta-Kaibarta	6.535	1	$0.02 > P > 0.01$	Significant
TONGUE FOLDING :				
Muslim-Kaibarta	16.605	1	$0.01 > P > 0.001$	Significant
DOMINANT EYE:				
Kaibarta-Kaibarta	19.66	1	$0.01 > P > 0.001$	Significant

TABLE-8

Percentage frequencies of hand clasping, handedness, armfolding, tongue rolling, tongue folding and dominant eye of various population

Population	Region	No. of Individual	Hand Claspings	Handness	Arm Folding	Tongue Rolling/ +ve	Tongue Folding +ve	Dominant Eye	Anthoea.
CAUCASOID :									
Brahmin	Assam	189	61.9	.	32.3	51.85	.	75.7	Deka, Mahapatra & Das, 1975.
Kalita	Assam	310	64.8	.	34.5	50.32	.	73.6	
Baishya	Assam	361	63.7	.	48.1	49.03	.	70.9	Das, Buragohain and Goswami, 1972.
Keot	Assam	227	63.8	.	47.1	37.88	.	69.6	
Kaibarta	Assam	200	62.5	.	50.0	53.60	.	76.0	Das & Das, 1981.
Muslim	Assam	318	86.16	82.38	66.03	47.79	40.26	72.64	Das, Das & Das, 1975, 1976.
Kaibarta	Assam	370	73.51	94.59	59.19	64.05	55.67	67.29	Present study
MONGOLOID :									
Sema	Assam	100	70.00	.	43.00	65.00	.	.	Phookan & Begum, 1976.
Ahom	Assam	100	62.00	.	59.00	48.00	.	.	Dutta & Phukan, 1978-79.
Munda	Assam	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Santhal	Assam	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Buzarbaruah and Phookan, 1981
Miji	Arunachal Pradesh	84	66.67	.	38.09	63.09	.	.	Dutta, Chaudhury, 1984.

ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH EAST

M. P. Hazarika*

North Eastern Region is still at a nascent stage of economic and industrial development. Due to absence of substantial infrastructural facilities, the tempo of industrial growth is yet to gain momentum. For this apart from basic infrastructural facilities other steps are also essential. One of the important measures is the systematic growth of entrepreneurship in the region. The North Eastern Region is still devoid of entrepreneurial facilities as a result of which the economic progress and industrial growth are still handicapped.

The North Eastern Region is endowed with abundant natural resources. Raw materials are abundantly available for growth of certain industries. Scopes are very encouraging for development of agro-industrial in the region. However, entrepreneurs technically and professionally equipped and with capacity for capital investment are not available in the region. There are variety of reasons for this difficult situation in the region.

The State Governments in the North Eastern Region have taken some steps now but in a limited way. The government of Assam undertook some programs for promotion of entrepreneurship in the State. They have now adopted cer-

tain measures in collaboration with some of the specialized and professional agencies including the NISIET (National Institute of Small Industries Extension Training). This step is taken primarily with a view to motivating the young people and the youths about entrepreneurial ventures. Similar steps are being taken by other States as well. In Assam Entrepreneurial Motivation Centre has been set up at various places with the definite aim of imparting specialized and professional training to the young people and the youth about entrepreneurial skills and knowledge so that the young people could undertake self-employment venture and activities for accelerating the economic development of the region. In this particular field of entrepreneurial development, the role of NISIET and NEITCO (North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization) as also the positive role of the North Eastern Council are very encouraging features. The NISIET and NEITCO have already played a major role and these agencies have undertaken large number of entrepreneurial development programs under the sponsorship of the North Eastern Council and Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI). During the period between 1985-92

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about 1518 persons took part in these programs which itself is a very large step in the field of entrepreneurial development in the program.

The National Industrial Policy has also emphasized the need of entrepreneurship promotion in the country and so far as North Eastern Region is concerned, the need is much more greater. While laying stress on the entrepreneurship promotion, stress is given to extending support to first-generation entrepreneurs through training and encouragement of association of industries. Secondly integrating of entrepreneurship development program in other professional and technical curricula. It has also stressed the importance of giving special development effort to promote women entrepreneurs.

A study was also conducted under the auspices of the North Eastern Council in 1976 on Entrepreneurial and Managerial needs of the North Eastern Region. This study was conducted by SIET Institute and the report was submitted in 1978 highlighting the resource and entrepreneurial opportunities of the region particularly with reference to the local resources, demand, level of development of infrastructure and availability of techno-economic information. A few recommendations were also made among which it is stressed that the need of stimulatory, supporting and sustaining activities is to be stepped up in the region. Some of the important recom-

mendations are indicated below.

(a) The whole effort of entrepreneurship development consists of three group of activities, which are not mutually exclusive but complementary. These are stimulatory, supporting and sustaining. These combine to develop entrepreneurs, allow them to establish industries and provide facility to expand.

(b) Industrial Policies often stand as hurdles in the development of entrepreneurship in the region. These may be modified to permit outsiders to invest and establish their own units with their experience. The financial benefit of tax relief, capital subsidy, etc. should however be restricted to the local entrepreneurs. This will improve industrial climate of the area.

(c) North East should develop an integrated model of entrepreneurship development grouping the activities noted in 'a' above. It should also have a local level agency like the Entrepreneurship Motivation Training Centre.

(d) Due to the absence of industrial infrastructure, the region should start with smaller industrial activities with definite programs of assistance with scope to expand.

(e) Industries related to local skills and materials should be encouraged.

(f) Promotion of Industrial activities may be augmented by having an organised collective marketing cum input supply corporation for handlooms and handicraft manufacture.

(g) In order to have a macro-level picture of industrial opportunities in the region, it is necessary to conduct a complete survey of industrial potential supplemented by a market survey.

(h) Financing through banks to the entrepreneurs has not been proper experience of bankers in this is not encouraging. It is necessary to develop more workable financing system in the region.

(i) Due attention should be paid to the development of basic industrial infrastructure in the areas bordering two States.

(j) In order to promote development of entrepreneurship in the area, an entrepreneurship development advisory cell should be set up for the region.

One of the basic objectives of the plan and strategy for industrial development for the North Eastern Region is to utilize the local resources with a view to derive maximum benefit by the people

of the region and this was highlighted in the Sivaraman Commission Report of 1980. The North Eastern Council has also followed this basic objective and has reoriented its plans and policies for organizing entrepreneurial development programs particularly with regard to organization of training programs. These training programs imparted through financial assistance as extended by North Eastern Council are mainly for the following categories of industries.

However, NEC's comprehensive package of EDPs are guided by following objectives.

(i) To motivate and unforce entrepreneurial traits and abolits.

(ii) To facilitate and accelerate decision to set up new enterprise by keeping and guiding proper selection of business opportunity followed by project formulation and keep establishment of the new venture.

Category

	<u>Percentage of total industries set up by entrepreneurs</u>
1. Textile, Handloom, Handicraft, Wollen, Leather	31
2. Agro-based and Food Products	23
3. Gen. Engs., Automobile, Electronics, Electrical	10
4. Servicing	12
5. Plastics, Chemical, Pharmaceutical	3
6. Hotel/Restaurants	3
7. Printing Stationery, book binding	6
8. Road and building material	3
9. Others including trade	9

(iii) To create confidence to enable the potential entrepreneur to overcome fear of failure and plan their ventures with better assured prospects to success.

(iv) To develop managerial skill and competence for successful operation of the new project.

A crude index of evaluation of EDPs is the "success rate" in the percentage of successful trainees who have put up enterprises/industries. On analysis of the data pertaining to NEITCO, NISIET and NEDON for the NEC sponsored EDPs in the Seventh Five year plan, the over all success rate is found to be 20.800%. This is a very low figure. The analysis revealed that.

(i) only 1/3rd of the trainees of 1985-86 EDPs could put up enterprises even after lapse of about 5 years. This indicates a considerable time lag between training and setting up industries.

(ii) Hardly any enterprise could be set up by an entrepreneur within one year of training. These need rectification.

In the tribal areas of the North East, the young entrepreneurs are faced with the problems of financial supports, market facilities and other infrastructural inadequacies like power, transport and communication and other subsidies normally required in backward areas. As regards loans and bank subsidies, because of peculiar land tenure system in the tribal areas of the North East, banking institutions are not very responsive

to the needs of the young and even trained and equipped entrepreneurs who are keen to set up industries taking advantage of the availability of the local resources and raw materials in various small and medium scale sectors of industries. The banks and other financial institutions have their own limitations and in the absence of a hopeful picture of industrial tempo that can pick up, they are not readily in a comfortable position to advance loans and other subsidies as required by the entrepreneurs. Here the problem is to find out some via media. Perhaps the government can play a role in this area. Financial support and transport subsidies, etc. may be organised by the government in order to help the young entrepreneurs to undertake industrial ventures in various parts of the North Eastern Region.

Development of horticulture and plantation of commercial crops including tea are some of the areas where young entrepreneurs may take initiative. As far as the growth of small tea plantation is concerned, this could be a very profitable proposition provided the government takes initiative particularly in the shape of establishment of tea processing factories where small tea growers could have their green tea leaves processed. Alternatively, small tea plantation can be taken up on cooperative basis. Some of the tribal areas in the North East have some traditions of small scale industries like handlooms and handi-

crafts, bell metal industries and with advance techniques and processes of modernization, young entrepreneurs can take up these trades on a larger commercial basis.

ROLE OF DIC

District Industrial Centre program which has been launched all over the North Eastern States now is to play a pivotal role in the development of rural economy and to initiate the process of industrialization. The DIC is currently connected with a number of activities. It has loan and credit scheme and formulation plans for industrial development. Activities may vary from State to State in the North Eastern Region but the objectives are same. What is more important in the context of entrepreneurial development is need and urgency of the DICs getting involved in the processes of entrepreneurs in the district and bring them to the forefront. The capabilities of the entrepreneurs are to be ascertained and according to the financial and technical standing, DIC should provide the necessary resources. They should be trained on various professional skills to be acquired. Entrepreneurial trainings may be localized in the sense that such training facilities may be made available to the enterprising youth. So far, such trainings are done at certain central points in the region. Decentralization of such training programs is a very urgent step required to be taken.

There is also a need of exposing the young entrepreneurs to the working and functioning of manufacturing units located at various parts of the country. Private sector industries of all varieties and the mechanics of the running of such industries may provide inspiration and courage to the entrepreneurs in the backward areas. DIC can take initiative in these directions. Selection of persons for participating in entrepreneurial training program is important. Persons having aptitude for and interest in trade and business should normally be taken. However, persons totally unaware of the industrial activities may also be encouraged to undergo such training specially when such persons in the isolated and backward areas if properly enlightened and guided may shed their initial shyness and feel encouraged to take individual initiative.

We have seen that there are instances of persons after undertaking such training programs getting nothing worthwhile to take initiative in any specific field. The training programs should be trade specific so that a thorough knowledge and professional skills about a few specific trades can be acquired to enable them to go about setting up business and trades. NEC has conducted an evaluation and monitoring of such NEC sponsored schemes. A gist is given below.

The training methodology adopted in NEC sponsored EDPs has also been

standardized over time and it generally comprises of class room lecturers, case studies, study visit to industrial units, project preparation etc. In some cases help of audio-visual aids, wherever required is also taken. The course contents generally covers the basic core areas of achievement motivation, economic and managerial inputs, information inputs etc. The sequencing of the inputs, however vary from organizations to organizations, through the variation may be marginal.

Regarding course contents coverage and methodology, it appears that everything has been standardized, but over a period of time new requirements, new thrust areas emerge and these necessitate modifications/changes in the standardized packages. Views of various experts, agencies, State Governments and the trained entrepreneurs, were ascertained on this subject with a view to suggesting improvements in course contents, coverage and methodology. A summarized version of their views is as follows :

- (a) The EDPs have been found to be very useful and effective in creating awareness for self employment in general and in educated youths in particular in the region.
- (b) Most of the EDPs are general in nature for the target groups comprising various types of activities, the training to be imparted is also designed to be general

type.

- (c) In regard to geographical coverage, the programs are confined only to the District Hqs. There is a need for covering more of rural areas under EDPs.
- (d) The duration of the program is usually of about 8 weeks, which is considered to be short for giving motivation to the unemployed youths. Moreover, the trainees are not given any allowances whatsoever for continuing the training and taking field studies for identifying suitable industries. Besides, under the present system of training, the trainees are not supplied with upto date technology information. It is necessary to make some arrangements for acquittance of the trainees with computer systems and making available the latest data through computerised sheets, etc.
- (e) The EDPs being offered without a clear idea and information about the type of enterprises/schemes that can be undertaken in a particular area. It is, therefore, desirable that the EDP conducting agencies may take up some sort of resource and demand surveys in the districts, in order to assess the possibilities of various schemes and projects that can be taken up by the en-

trepreneurs. Further the assumption seems to be that the entrepreneurs know about the schemes they would take up and that they need to be trained only to successfully implement the schemes, this is not true in most of the cases and in the absence of clear cut idea about the feasibilities of various schemes in an area, the entrepreneurs trained in these programs may have bitter experience.

- (f) The coverage of the EDPs should depend upon the assessment of feasibilities and possibilities of undertaking a business enterprise in an area. Therefore, while deciding about the coverage, the presence of infrastructural facilities needed for the success of the enterprise(s) should be considered. It may not be worthwhile to conduct EDPs everywhere. Availability of resources, market and infrastructure should be the guiding factors for conducting EDPs.

- (g) Various EDP conducting agencies have their distinct background and areas of expertise. Therefore, the course contents and the methodology of the same program varies from institution

to institution. There is need to standardize the approach, content and methodology of EDP. Entrepreneurial development is key to socio-economic growth more particularly in an under-developed region like the North Eastern Region. North eastern Region's greatest assets is the abundant natural resources. A variety of Industrial activities can be undertaken provided adequate entrepreneurial adventures and skills are available. In view of large scale unemployment in the region, entrepreneurial ventures are required to be undertaken. Educated unemployed people are now in large numbers in the region. Unless industrial activities are undertaken with entrepreneurial skills, the North Eastern Region's socio-economic problems will not be solved. Much of the current unrest is due to lack of adequate industrial ventures where young people could be substantially and profitably absorbed. It is hoped that various Government and non-Governmental agencies will combine their efforts to bring about better industrial climate in the region for social peace and economic development.