Editor's report

April 2023

It is my pleasure to present the 14th issue of Explorations. The present issue consists of eleven papers published under the 'Articles' category, three book reviews and one conversation.

The first paper, titled ***Livelihood Issues of Trans Persons in India: A Sociological Analysis*** by Krishna Pradhan & Tattwamasi Paltasingh paper examines the legal system does not adequately protect their work opportunities and their space for exploitation is diverse. In this context, the first section provides an overview of the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. The second section focuses on a historical overview of the socioeconomic state of trans persons during Mughal and British times. The subsequent section has highlighted the livelihood issues and challenges of trans persons in the present scenarios and i.e. the major concern of the paper. The paper has also focused on some significant government schemes for better livelihood options, along with some recommendations in the Indian context.

The second paper, titled '***Men' is the Social Norm: Politics in Nagaland*** by Ilito H. Achumi's explores how the social construction of motherhood has historically served as the foundation for Naga women's political consciousness, influencing their political trajectories and the "right" behaviour for Naga women to engage in politics. Motherhood and informal politics havehistorically been the only settings in which Naga women can do politics. The primary focus of this paper is on how Naga women were denied formal political space. However, the study does not presuppose that establishing gender equality always requires "formal" political structures. The study examines how encouraging innovative and inclusive political institutions for achieving gender justice is one strategy for improving women's inclusion in political representation.

The third paper, titled ***Cyber harassments against Women: An Analysis of Social and state responses in Kerala*** by Niyathi R. Krishna & P Sivakumar's paper conducted with the major objective of analysing the social as well as state

responses to cyber harassment against women in Kerala. This is accomplished through mapping the social responses to the incidents as well as to the survivors of cyber harassment; examining the existing cyber-related legal provisions; their limitations; identifying the gaps in the effective intervention of police; and suggesting policy recommendations. From a feminist perspective, the study analyses seven prominent cyber harassment cases registered in Kerala in the past ten years and captures the lived experiences of survivors of cyber abuse, their fight for justice, and the police, judicial, and state responses in their particular cases. The findings suggest that it is not the inadequacy of cyber laws in practice that is problematic, but the social and police perception of cyber harassment as trivial that need to be addressed.

The fourth paper, titled *Impact of Population Policies on Women's Reproductive Rights by* ArosmitaSahoo & C. Raghava Reddy's paper aimed to understand the implication of population policies on women's reproductive rights in India. The main focus of the present work is to explore how the institutional interest of India's family planning meets women's reproductive rights, which provide women the right to control their reproductive bodies freely. The paper describes the nuanced understanding of women's agency in the making up of their 'reproductive rights,' which are constructed, reconstructed, and controlled by the state. The paper reviews the population policies of India and women's agencies here understood within an intersectional approach.

The fifth paper, titled *Language Apparatus: Vernacularisation of Schooling to Appropriating English in Vocational Training Institutions* by Abhas Kumar, is to examine the two dominant debates concerning the medium of instruction in schools and, later, vocational institutions. Thus, the paper aims to focus on the responses of the state and diverse social groups in making sense of vernacularising mother tongue in schools on the one hand and appropriating the English language in vocational education and training on the other, which is negotiating the power and potential of the students from diverse economic and social categories. As a result, this paper overviews the schools as a site of perpetuating vernacular language as a linguistic apparatus that reproduces a culture of ignorance of the English language that impacts the teaching and learning among the students in vocational training.

The sixth paper, titled *Higher Education among Scheduled Tribes with reference to the Lepchas of Kalimpong, West Bengal* by SandhyaThapa's study based on both primary and secondary data, the paper highlights the status of higher education among the STs with reference to the Lepchas of Kalimpong District, West Bengal. Analysing both constraining and facilitating factors, the paper concludes that Lepchas has been responding positively to affirmative action in higher education, which has reconciled the exclusionary process to a considerable extent. However, taking advantage of the constitutional provisions has not been uniformly availed of by all sections, and there is still a need to address the existing gaps.

The seventh paper, titled *Left-behind Children of Migrants in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya- Evidence-based Study from Bihar, India* by Madhumonjuri Gohain'spaper highlights the role of social networks in providing appropriate information and resources to LBC on secondary education in Bihar. Grannovetter (1985) concept of *embeddedness* is drawn to understand the network of interaction among different social ties. Data was collected from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV)-*JNV1, JNV2, and JNV3* in Bihar using a purposive sampling method through in-depth interviews and participant observation. The findings reflect social networks and their embeddedness with educational institutions (EI), and JNV provides accurate information and resources. This paper will be useful for those in Sociology, Education, Public Policy, and its like.

The eighth paper, titled *Influence of socio-demographic characteristics of migrants on out-migration: A study among the fishing community in Kerala* by John Christopher J & Sundara Raj T's paper, based on the primary data related to 250 migrants from the fishing community in Kerala examines the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants and its influence on their post-migration characteristics. We apply descriptive analysis of the relationships between variables and multivariate techniques to predict the net effects of independent variables on the dependent variables such as destination, occupation, and monthly incomes in the destination places. Our findings reveal that migration from the fishing community in Kerala is selective in terms of males, below 25 years of age, and secondary-level educated. We also regress that females, the upper-aged category, those who hail from the urban locale and are higher educated have better odds of migrating to countries outside the Gulf region and earning higher monthly incomes. However, independent variables are not found to have any profound influence on the type of occupation the migrants undertake in the destination places.

The ninth paper, titled *The Making of a 'Provincial Propertied Class': Depiction of Rurality and Caste-Class Dynamics in a Telugu Literary Text* by Chandra Shekar & Suman's paper digs into literary texts like novels and short stories in the Telugu language and uses them as primary sources to tap into the lifeworld of Kamma households. Through this exercise, the paper argues that the rural/urban dichotomy does not hold much significance when we enter the households of Kammas. Rather, the positioning of kins and relatives at different strategic locations in the village, small towns, capital cities, and foreign connections define the group's rise as the 'provincial propertied class'.

The tenth paper, titled Reverse *Migration, Migrant Workers and Livelihood Struggles A Study in the Context of Covid-19 Pandemic* by Rima Debnath'spaper focuses on the reasons behind the reverse migration of migrant workers of Udalguri District, (Assam) during the COVID-19 pandemic and different coping strategies adopted by the migrants to earn a livelihood. There are many reasons behind reverse migration, including overnight loss of livelihood, poor living conditions, and lack of social security. Some of the migrants returned to their village because most of their friends and relatives left the destination. So

they felt insecure and returned home. After returning, to support their livelihood they adopted different coping strategies. The study shows the importance of social capital like friends and relatives at the destination. The findings of the paper also reconfirm that migration is an important source of livelihood for large landless workers or the poor in general. However, inter-state migration at present is less preferred compared to before.

The eleventh paper, titled *Socio-ecological Impact of Displacement: A Study of Doyang Dam in Nagaland* by Srikanth & Athungo Ovung's paper analyses the sociocultural, economic, and environmental risks among the displaced population due to the Doyang hydroelectric project construction in Nagaland, India. This study applies the sociological concept of risk while understanding the displacement process that involves risks like landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food security, increased morbidity and loss of access to common property resources. The study argues that the construction of the Doyang dam resulted in the loss of ancestral farmlands, traditional livelihood opportunities, shortage in access to common property resources, and non-fulfillment of appropriate compensation packages as promised for the displaced community.

This is followed by three book reviews: The Idea of a University: Possibilitiesand Contestations reviewed by Ravindra K. Jain, The greater India experiment: Hindutva and the Northeast reviewed by Shravan B Raj, and Civility in Crisis: Democracy, Equality and the Majoritarian Challenge in India reviewd by Zeeshan Husain.

This issue of the journal also includes a broad interview of **Professor Kamala Ganesh** conducted by **Prof Gita Chadha**, a noted Indian sociologist, sharing her life experiences in teaching and research, and her perspectives on them as well as on myriad issues of sociological significance. Explorations invite your contributions to future issues of the journal. We will appreciate your feedback or suggestions on the journal.

All the articles reflect diverse sociological interpretations of social facts across the states in India. I sincerely thank all the authors for choosing the explorations for publishing their articles. I am sure that the explorations enrich scholars' sociological imaginations across India's states.

Thanks & Best Wishes

Prof NagarajuGundemeda

Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad,

Editor, *Explorations* (April 2023)

Article: Livelihood Issues of Trans Persons in India: A Sociological Analysis

Author(s): Krishna Pradhan and Tattwamasi Paltasingh

Source: Explorations, ISS e-journal, Vol. 7 (1), April 2023, pp. 5-22

Published by: Indian Sociological Society

Livelihood Issues of Trans Persons in India: A Sociological Analysis

--Krishna Pradhan and Tattwamasi Paltasingh

Abstract

Trans persons are those whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the sex they are biologically assigned. They encounter institutionalised biases in different socio-economic spheres, including education and employment. They are confronted with a range of challenges both in formal and informal economies. The legal system does not adequately protect their work opportunities, and their space for exploitation is diverse. In this context, the first section provides an overview of the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. The second section focuses on a historical overview of the socio-economic state of transpersons, their livelihood issues and challenges. The paper has also focused on some significant government schemes for better livelihood options, along with some recommendations in the Indian context.

Keywords: Transgender, Historical Overview, Livelihood Challenges, Sociological Reflection

Background

Since the dawn of human civilisation, the third gender, more commonly referred to as transgender or trans persons, has existed in every society. Trans persons have a gender identity that is distinct from the characteristics assigned to their sex at birth. Therefore, trans persons are those who reject society's binary gender framework (Grossman & Daugellie, 2006). Societal gender norms are so strong and pervasive that when someone openly breaches the gender norms, they are punished with some sort of penalty. The repercussions of breaking gender norms might range from mild social antagonism to discrimination in every sector of life, including livelihood, to outright violence (Turner, 2007). A livelihood is made up of the skills, resources (both material and social), and activities required as a means of subsistence (UNDP, 2017). Trans persons in ancient India sustained their livelihoods not only by singing, dancing, and offering blessings, but they were also appointed to well-known positions, such as political councils, administrators, and harem, as guards during the *Mughal* period. They had unrestricted access to all areas of the kingdom and were considered intelligent, trustworthy, and reliable. However, the Criminal Tribes Act, which was brought into effect in 1871 and classified the entire trans population as criminals, worsened their situation during the colonial era (Michelraj, 2015). Thereafter, several plans and policies have been framed by the Indian government to improve the livelihood status of trans persons. In the contemporary period, most of them earn their livelihood by working in the informal sector due to prejudice and undue stigma (Meenakshi & Abhirami, 2019) and the restrictions they face in the organised sectors. They work as domestic servants, construction workers, street sellers,

commercial sex workers, vehicle drivers, and so forth. Their quality of life has been drastically affected in India, requiring serious policy attention.

Against this backdrop, the paper gives an insight on the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings, followed by the socio-economic scenario of trans persons in the past. The subsequent section gives an outline of the contemporary livelihood issues and challenges encountered by trans persons. The last section has some reflections on the policy initiatives taken by the government and some recommendations to improve their quality of life.

Conceptual & Theoretical Underpinnings

Trans persons may express their identity in a way that is different from the gender roles assigned to them during birth. Gender is identified as a cultural phenomenon, and gender behaviour is learnt and thus can be unlearned (Anuja, 2016; Paltasingh & Lingam, 2014). In India, the terms 'transgender' (also known as '*hijras*' and 'eunuchs') refers to those individuals who transgress their sexual orientation. The term '*hijra*' is derived from the Persian word '*hiz*', which means 'someone who is effeminate, ineffective, or incompetent' (Sawant, 2017). In various parts of South Asia, they are also referred to as *hijras/kinnars, kothis, shiv-shaktis, jogtas/jogappas, aravani,*etc (Konduru &Hangsing, 2018). Similarly, trans persons are known by different names across the globe, such as *katoey (ladyboys)* in Thailand, *fa'afafine;* in Polynesia *xanith,* in the Arabian Peninsula, *berdache* in North America, *sambia boys* in Papua New Guinea, *female spouses* in West Africa, and *sworn virgins* in the Balkans (Agoramoorthy& Hsu, 2015). The use of the word 'transgender' is unpersuasive. It is used differently by different stakeholders, including researchers, the government, and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines trans persons as those individuals who are identified with a different gender than the one assigned to them at birth (WHO, 2013). According to India's National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) judgement, *hijras* and *eunuchs* are legally accepted as 'third gender'. It defines 'third gender' or trans persons as those whose gender identity, gender expression, or behaviour do not correspond to their biological sex (Sahu, 2016). However, some trans persons found the term 'third gender' as offensive. They oppose the concept of 'third gender', believing that it fails to define their true gender identity and places major emphasis on the first and second genders (Sah, 2019). Thus, there is no consensus about how to define transgender. So, one can simply conclude that trans persons are individuals whose gender identity differs from the perspective of biological determinism. Many sociologists have addressed the concept of 'transgender' differently in their theories. Some prominent theories concerning trans persons are covered in the following section.

Theoretical underpinnings

The trans concept has been discussed by different social scientists in different ways. This section discusses a few major theories, like Erving Goffman's theory of stigma, feminist theory, and queer theory. Each major sociological framework discussed here has its own perspective relating to trans identity and is directly or indirectly linked with livelihood issues.

Erving Goffman's theory of stigma

According to Goffman, society categorises people in a number of ways. Once we first meet someone, we might be able to guess their social identity. As per the practice, social identity comes under observable categorisation. When there are undesirable personality traits and sexual orientations that contradict the common assumptions about what a certain type of person should be, then the reaction differs. Goffman holds that stigma is a means by which the individual's normal identity is harmed by the expression of others (Goffman, 1963). Similarly, in Indian society, men are assumed to be masculine and to possess masculine characteristics, while women are assumed to possess feminine characteristics. As a result, trans persons are undervalued, excluded, and stigmatised by most people (who believe in the binary gender system) for not conforming to the ascribed characteristics accorded to their sex at birth.

Feminist theory

Third-wave feminists have paid more attention to the issue of gender as compared to the first and second-wave feminists. One such important third-wave feminist is Judith Butler, who formulated the theory of 'Gender Performativity'. She was in opposition to the feminists who believed in the binary division of gender. According to Butler, the binary division inevitably promotes sexism. Gender is never an essential element or essence from which gender behaviour develops but rather a series of behaviour patterns whose repetition shapes an underlying gender identity. Gender, according to Butler, is a performatively produced phenomenon. Furthermore, an individual's gender should not be determined only based on his or her sex at birth (Bettcher, 2014). Trans-feminists believe that people should be free to define their own gender identities without intervention from the medical system or cultural organisations. Trans persons, at a certain age, stop following or performing gender characteristics assigned to them at birth and start performing gender traits that are completely different from the gender assigned at birth. This tendency to embrace and persist with the new gender instils in them a strong desire to continue with the gender that they think is most appropriate for them.

Queer theory

The Queer theory rejects the idea that sexuality is an essentialist category. Queer theory embraces diverse, distinct, and alternative individuals within pre-existing binary categories that are socially produced. This perspective has

sought to act as a constant resistance to homophobia and general perspectives on homosexuality (Rothmann, 2012). The queer theory focuses on what is normal and deviant at any given time, all under the banner of what is natural, necessary, or biological. Delinking gender, sex, and sexuality from one another and establishing that these components do not have a linear relationship to one another based on biology is an essential element of queer theory (Lind, 2009). Trans persons, who live as a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth, are certainly the easiest example to understand. It challenges the notion that gender is a biological construct (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Though Goffman's theories have implications for the study of trans identity, recent theories have also evolved, like feminist and queer theory. Feminist and queer theories are more contemporary, and each perspective focuses on trans identity in a unique way.

Like other cisgender individuals, trans persons are also social beings. But, unlike cisgender people, they face major challenges to avail equal opportunities in society.The theoretical analysis has a clear indication that the trans persons in the present scenario belong to an underprivileged category, which has further implications on their socio-economic status. The historical perspective of trans issues can help in understanding the present scenario.

Socio-economic Review of Trans Persons in India: The Past Scenario

It is difficult to understand what is happening today without proper knowledge of the past. This section discusses the past living standards of people in two different historical periods, i.e., the *Mughal* era and the Colonial Period. Particularly during the *Mughal* era, the socio-economic status of trans persons was much better than it is today (Michelraj, 2015). In Indian history during the *Mughal* rule, especially during the rule of *Akbar*, trans persons, commonly known as *hijra,* hadled decent lives. They were appointed with specific job responsibilities in the monarchy. During his rule, the compartmentalised *harem* was made to give women a separate and safe space of their own. Layers of security were assigned to protect the inner circle of the *harem*. They were appointed as security guards for the *harem* (Roychowdhury, 2018). They also used to look after the administration*;* as a result, they became very close to the queens and the king and enjoyed higher status. A proper hierarchical system was maintained at the royal *harem,* where there were *hijras* in positions, called *nazirs,* who were mainly supervisors.

They also served in the private and public spaces of the *Mughal* Empire in the form of loyal personal servants and loyal governors, respectively (Irfan, 2019). Apart from this, they used to work as messengers and deliver things from the *harem* to other places. They entertained the royal females with music, dance, and jokes.*Hijras* also played an important role in Islamic religious institutions, particularly in the preservation of the sacred sites of Mecca and Medina. They had the capacity to influence the governance. Thus, according to the historical depiction, they enjoyed a very prestigious position during *Mughal* rule. They played an important role in the *Mughal* period for a long time and had a decent living standard (Michelraj, 2015). It is said *hijras* were considered to be the

servants of the royal families and identified as the favourite source of entertainment among the *Mughal* rulers (NEWS NCR, 2022). However, over time, their status has altered. They experienced a decline in their socio-economic status, especially during the British invasion and colonial era.

Colonial period

In 1860, colonial rulers implemented Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which made homosexuality as an offence. Along with that, they also listed trans persons as criminals. The discriminatory statute stayed in effect for over 149 years before being repealed in 2009 (Agoramoorthy& Hsu, 2015). The Criminal Tribes Act- 27 was passed in the year 1871, which classified trans persons as criminal tribes under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and began listing them, monitoring them, and exerting control over them. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 declared that they were involved in abduction and castration of minors, and actions like dressing up as women and dancing in public places would result in a sentence up to two years in jail and a fine, or both. This historical background has an influence on the livelihood vulnerability of trans persons in today's context (Michelraj, 2015). Since British colonial rule, they have remained marginalised and have led an excluded life.

During the initial periods of British administration in India, certain Indian states provided them with security and privileges by allowing them to work under diverse official jurisdictions. Furthermore, the benefits consolidate some livelihood arrangements (land and food rights) and a small amount of money from those families engaged in agriculture. However, the British Government subsequently restricted this facility by enacting various statutory modifications. The property previously provided to them as recompense by the states was subsequently seized by the British Government for impractical reasons, such as the fact that the land provided by the states to the trans persons was not inherited through blood relationships and thus was not legally right (Michelraj, 2015). The livelihood status of trans persons started deteriorating as many British authorities, guided by patriarchal ideology and believing in sex/gender binaries, bodies, and hetero-normative sexuality, started suppressing them. Gradually, several anti-transgender laws were enacted, which deprived trans persons of the economic advantages granted to them by the kings and *Mughals*. As a result, they were ostracised due to their non-conformity to the binary gender system. They were discriminated in public places and workplaces and denied opportunities for jobs, access to education, and health (Agoramoorthy& Hsu, 2015). Under colonial legislation, they were denied both their primary means of livelihood and any sort of rights. This further contributed to their destitution and alienation from society. Therefore, to earn their livelihood, they started begging, and some of them were engaged in prostitution.

The condition of trans persons has changed at different points of time. Government interventions have resulted in reducing the distress and agony

that trans persons have faced in the past. This section attempts to examine in details the contemporary livelihood issues and challenges confronted by them.

Lives and Livelihood of Trans Persons: Contemporary Challenges

People with low educational attainment have limited control over their lives and the livelihood resources that are accessible to them; they may experience stigma and become victims of unfavourable public perceptions (Meenakshi & Abhirami, 2019). In India, 4.88 lakh people are identified as trans persons (Census, 2011). Trans persons are considered to be a marginalised group and remain on the periphery (Divan et al., 2016). With few exceptions, most of the trans persons in India are disadvantaged and confronted with various socio-economic challenges. Their sufferings begin at home. Their relatives, even their parents, frequently treat them with animosity and rejection. They experience systemic discrimination in almost every sector, including the workplace and education (Shinu & Nagaraj, 2015; Younes, 2019). This section outlines the livelihood challenges and associated factors confronted by trans persons. Livelihood is impacted by globalisation, challenges in access to education and employment opportunities, as well as the difficulties encountered in informal sector.

Impact of Globalisation on the traditional occupation of trans persons

The traditional occupation of trans people was performing on auspicious occasions and giving blessings. Previously, trans people believed earning money through alms was disagreeable. As they have to roam around the streets and put themselves in vulnerable situations to earn a sufficient living (Nanda, 1998). Eventually, with the passage of time, begging (also known as '*Mangti*') became their additional source of income. The significance of their traditional engagement is gradually affected due to factors like globalisation, urbanization, and westernisation (Nanda, 1998). Due to this, the modern Indian civilisation is now less reliant on trans persons for blessings during different life cycle ceremonies (Panda & Nayak, 2020). Tran persons are now grumbling about the weakening of traditional occupations. They are choosing prostitution as their alternative source of income. As a result, they are gradually losing respect in society (Nanda, 1998). They are also facing discrimination within their own communities. Especially those who live in *guru-chela* relationships. The *guru*, who is the head of the community, is supposed to do the traditional occupation of performing in different *badhai* ceremonies and instruct the *chelas* to go for prostitution work (Reddy, 2006), in which they often experience sexual harassment (Khan et al., 2009).

Trans persons in India who were denied access to regular employment began seeking informal sources of income. Some major informal ways of their earning are *badhai,* which involves dancing and singing to bless a new-born child, *bazaar tola,* which includes collecting money from the market place, sex work, etc. They were refused payment after performing at *badhai* ceremonies. Modern markets nowadays are protected by securities, so they

cannot enter such markets and face difficulties collecting money from shops as they used to do earlier.

Challenges in access to education and employment

Education and livelihood are somehow interrelated and interdependent. The way to a decent livelihood is through education, which can help individuals to make a constructive contribution to society. Trans persons have a low literacy rate. Only 56 per cent of trans persons are literate, compared to 74 per cent of the general population (Census, 2011). The Indian Government's Right to Education (RTE) Act classifies this group as a 'disadvantaged group'. As a result, they should be entitled to a 25 per cent reservation under the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and the disadvantaged learners' entrance categories. But there is no such reservation policy for their education. They are bereft of their home and school environments, causing them to drop out of school, which further obstructs their future job options. If we look at the rate of school dropout cases, it is very high. The number of enrolled trans students is low, and the dropout rate is extremely high. Trans persons in India typically have a secondary or senior secondary education. Some of them are even illiterate. Those few trans persons who get into schools or higher institutions also face a wide range of discrimination. They face issues such as the continued use of previous names and inappropriate pronouns. They are frequently denied secure access to public washrooms inside educational institutions. They are abused if they use a restroom that conforms to their gender identity (Balu, 2020). Trans persons do not have adequate access to locker room facilities that conform to their gender identity. The unfavourable environments in educational institutions make trans persons and other homosexual people uncomfortable.

In addition to the challenges faced in educational institutions, trans people also face various issues in the employment sector. The majority of trans persons are not permitted to work for some companies because the company recruiters hold the perception that trans persons would sexually pollute the workplace due to their gender identity (Khan et al., 2009). The subject matter of transphobia in the workplace has been brought to light in numerous substantial quantitative studies across the world. A study conducted in USA claims that the unemployment rate of trans persons is double the rate of unemployment in the general population. Overall, 16 per cent of respondents claimed they were forced to engage in illicit economic activity to support themselves, such as indulging in sex work or selling drugs (Grant et al., 2011). Similarly, a study conducted in Australia among 189 trans adults (aged 14 to 25) revealed that 16.5 percent of them were unemployed, which is higher than the national rate for that age group, i.e. 2.5 per cent (Smith et al., 2014). Another study on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) has revealed that trans staff are still the most marginalised and excluded groups in the job sector, with discrimination occurring at all stages of the employment process, including hiring, training programmes, employee compensation, and access to work advancement. The workplace atmosphere develops a sense of negativity and

transphobia, which makes trans employees feel uncomfortable, resulting in disinterest among them in applying for similar jobs (Divan et al., 2016).

The above discussion reveals the range of challenges faced by trans persons in the educational and employment sectors. Due to the lack of education and undue discrimination at educational institutions and employment sectors, they are forced to work in informal sectors. The subsequent section highlights the challenges confronted by them in the informal sector.

Trans persons in the informal economy

In the contemporary scenario, trans persons face difficulties finding jobs in the formal sector due to a lack of education and discrimination. Many companies refuse to give jobs to even eligible trans persons. The majority of them work in the informal sector, and very few are engaged in the formal economy. Very few of them work in the private sector, and none of them work in the public sector. Also, a few of them don't even have work for a living. Figure 1 shows its statistical representation.

Figure1: Livelihood sources of trans persons
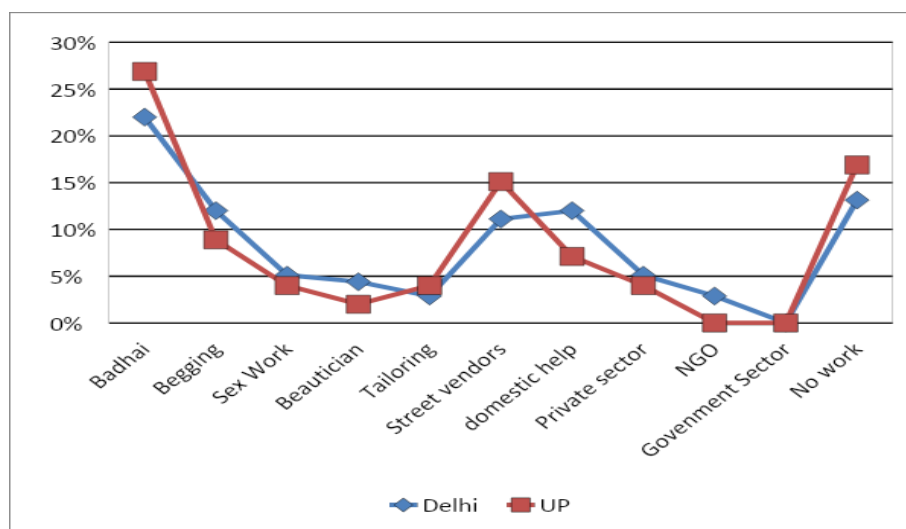
(Source-Drawn from Report of National Human Rights Commission, 2017)

A study by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) 2017, clearly shows the contemporary livelihood conditions of trans persons in India. It is revealed that 25 per cent of trans persons in Delhi and 27 per cent in Uttar Pradesh make their money by dancing and singing during *badhai* celebrations (Figure-1). Street vending comes next, with 16 per cent in Uttar Pradesh and 12 per cent in Delhi. In Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, begging makes up to13 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively. For sexual work, the rate of participation are 6 per cent in Delhi and 4 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. In Delhi, 6 per cent of people work in the private sector, but in Uttar Pradesh, 13 per cent of respondents work in the private sector. In Delhi and UP, about 14 per cent and

17 per cent of trans persons respectively, do not have even any informal work for them(NHRC, 2017). The study indicates that not even a single trans person is working in the government sector.

Also, as per the findings of the National Human Rights Commission report, 96 per cent of trans persons are prohibited from employment and are forced to engage themselves in low-wage or unpleasant informal jobs for a living. Most trans respondents (about 89 per cent) do not have jobs. Despite the fact that some of them are qualified, they are not hired. The survey also shows that 23 per cent of people are compelled to engage in sex work, which has significant health hazards. As a result, trans persons are 49 times more likely to get the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) than the general population (Outlook, February 2022). The life of trans persons in the formal and informal sectors is worse when compared to male and female workers. Hence, the majority of trans persons are engaged in the informal sector (Meenakshi & Abhirami, 2019). Their jobs are highly unprotected by labour laws and legal machinery. For them, the space for exploitation is very broad, with poor working conditions, less pay, long working hours, verbal and sexual abuse, and other forms of ill-treatment. Trans persons face numerous barriers to earning a livelihood. Some of the most significant challenges faced by them in the informal sectors are covered in the following section.

Bad working conditions and health hazards

According to a study in Philippine, transgender people who work in the unorganised sector encounter multiple challenges. They work as helpers, in restaurants, bakery shops and other food stalls. It has a negative impact on their bodies like tired muscles, muscle spasms for being exposed to heat while cooking or to water while washing dishes or cleaning. Sometimes they go hungry because of missed meals, inadequate sleep and rest due to occasional overtime. Also, dealing with inconsiderate and lazy co-workers and rude customers can be emotionally taxing. Due to the limited availability of employment, trans persons get involved in sex work (Briones, 2011). In line with the U.S. study, the stigma against transgender people is accountable for losing their homes and jobs, as a result of which they are more indulged in sex work. The study reveals that 32 per cent of trans persons were unemployed, and 77 per cent of those who were employed were underpaid. Thus, they are forced to engage in sex work, which increases their risk of getting HIV positive. Due to unprotected and unhygienic sexual practices, many suffer from HIV. The statistics show that 37 per cent of transgender people in the US have reported having HIV(Mayo-Wilson et al., 2020). In the case of India, the national HIV prevalence is 0.31 per cent, whereas the estimated trans-HIV prevalence is 8.2 per cent ;about 20 times higher than the general population and the highest among key populations (Rizvana et al., 2021).

Discrimination and Abuse at the Workplace

Within the workplace, trans workers face a slew of other difficulties like startling rates of outright abuse, untrained employers, and workplace cultures

that punish trans employees for even indirectly revealing their identity. They frequently experience targeted harassment and discrimination in the workplace. While reported rates of such treatment vary, according to a 2011 survey, 90 per cent of respondents claimed to have directly experienced harassment or mistreatment at work, 50 per cent reported being harassed by co-workers, 41 per cent said they had been asked inappropriate questions about their trans identity status or surgical status. About 23 per cent said they had missed out on a promotion, 20 per cent said they were prevented from directly contacting clients, 7 per cent reported experiencing physical violence, and 6 per cent were sexually assaulted (Sharma, 2022). In the US, 90 per cent of trans persons have encountered harassment, mistreatment, or discrimination at the workplace. Due to their gender identity or gender expression, 26 per cent of trans persons had lost their jobs. A total of 23 per cent of them claimed that they had been denied a promotion because of their gender identity or gender expression at the workplace (Grant et al., 2011).

Inadequate skills and lack of employment opportunities

Due to a lack of skill training, trans persons have limited employment opportunities to sustain themselves. Even those who are skilled and semi-skilled find it difficult to get engaged. There are primarily two reasons, i.e. uncertainty about how to incorporate current skill sets into employment prospects and a lack of government support for career opportunities and training that match their skill sets. For instance, a skill for stitching can be turned into a tailoring business with the correct guidance and training (UNDP, 2017).

Livelihood challenges confronted during the COVID-19 pandemic

As was previously mentioned, most trans persons work in the informal sector due to the various difficulties they encounter in the formal sector. Thus, trans persons already lack adequate livelihood facilities, which makes them least equipped to recover from any other catastrophe. In the recent time, the livelihood prospect of trans persons have started deteriorating as they have suffered a double blow from the recent COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing social discrimination (Kumar, 2021). The majority of trans persons are daily wage earners. They are completely dependent on interacting with the public to perform their jobs, which makes them more vulnerable during pandemics (Priyadarshini & Swain, 2020). They lost their daily income due to mobility restrictions and a permanent prohibition on ceremonial gatherings that included singing and dancing; they were in urgent need of immediate financial assistance to survive. It became hard to beg in cities and on roads, especially during the second wave when the pandemic across the nation spreaded rapidly. Hence, they are forced to rely on their savings as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic (Priyadarshini & Swain, 2020). After the second wave, trans persons were left hungry and homeless since all their earning sources had ceased (Kumar, 2021). To help trans persons meet their basic needs during COVID, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has given them a subsistence compensation of Rs. 1500 each. However, some trans right

activists called this as an eye wash. They claimed that not a single trans person had received this compensation. Aadhar, ration, and voter ID cards are the most common forms of identity proof for an individual, but the majority of trans persons do not have any of this identification, which is required to avail the government aid (Kumar, 2021).

From the above discussion, it can be said that trans persons have faced an array of discrimination in various forms, including being cut off from their families, lacking respectable jobs, and having insufficient access to employment. To address these challenges relating to livelihood, the government has passed several welfare schemes, but there are very few trans-specific initiatives taken by the government of India. The following section discusses the trans-specific initiatives taken by the central and the state governments to foster the livelihood aspects.

Available Government Schemes and Policy Recommendations

in India central and state governments have devised numerous strategies and policies to improve the lives of trans persons. However, there are very few trans-specific livelihood schemes implemented by the central as well as by the state government. One such centrally approved trans-specific livelihood scheme is 'Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise' (SMILE), and similarly, the 'SWEEKRUTI' Scheme is a state-run scheme in Odisha aiming at the enhancement of the livelihood of trans persons. Both the central and the state government schemes are comprehensively discussed.

Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment introduced the SMILE programme on February 12, 2022 (Press Information Bureau, 2022). The programme seeks to enhance the quality of life for beggars and trans persons. The programme places a strong emphasis on the development of trans persons in several areas, including education, employment, health care, and housing, among others. It offers financial aid to trans students enrolled in classes IX and above in order to encourage them to continue their education so that they can better equip themselves and find a respectable position for them in society. The post-matric/pre-matric scholarship would award qualifying trans students a lump sum of Rs. 13,500 once in every academic year. Similar to this, it offers skill development and livelihood training so that they can start their own income-generating ventures and find gainful employment in a certain field. The trans persons will receive skill development training through 'Pradhan Mantri Dakshata Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrihi Yojana' (PM-DAKSH). The candidate will be admitted to the programme for skill development depending on their eligibility for relevant work such as catering, tailoring, artificial jewellery making, working as a beautician, driving, etc. The institution also follows up with the applicant to ensure that they are not subjected to job prejudice once they have successfully completed their course and are eligible for placement. Another significant aim of the SMILE Scheme includes the

Garima Greh's Project, which strives to give them a place to live with basic amenities and promote capacity-building and skill development (GOI, 2022).

SWEEKRUTI Scheme

Similar to central government schemes, one such major livelihood advancement scheme formed by the Odisha government is the SWEEKRUTI Scheme. It is a scheme for the promotion of trans equality and justice. It has skill-upgrading training programmes and self-employment programmes among all its other objectives. In order to help trans persons to develop their own income-generating ventures or find gainful employment in a particular industry, the scheme intends to provide skill development training to them. A recipient must be a trans adult over the age of 18 years. The amount of aid will be up to Rs 15,000 for each trans trainee in each 200-hour course, with a limit of 30 trainees. A monthly stipend of Rs 1000 would be paid for each trainee under this programme in order to encourage them to apply and benefit from it. The list of skill training includes carpentry, computer skills, craft training, training for making diaries, electrical training etc. Additionally, the SWEKRUTI shesme also offered self-employment kits to those who were interested in adapting to family professions or other economic activities with conventional training and hands-on experience. These potential trans persons can be identified for this purpose, along with the vocation they are interested in pursuing, and can be given Self Employment Kits. Prior to procurement, the composition of kits and categories of kits can be offered in cooperation with the Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disability (SSEPD) Department, which can be approved by the concerned district social security offices (DSSOs). The beneficiaries can also be encouraged to group initiatives for creating self-employment-based individual income, such as production, marketing, service centres, etc. (SSEPD, 2019).

Despite numerous schemes targeted at enhancing trans persons' lives, they continue to face a number of challenges. The challenges must be addressed in order to facilitate an equitable and dignified life. Some problems call for quick action, while others require long-term preparation. Some key recommendations for their development include making provisions for reservations in the education and employment sectors; introducing inclusive welfare programmes; increasing public awareness to improve their understanding of gender variants; compensating parents of trans individuals to improve the lives of trans persons; developing trans-inclusive work environments; and advancing health care facilities exclusively for trans people. Collaboration between the government, civil society organisations is necessary to carry out strategies and policies that can support trans persons.

Concluding Remark

As history unfolds, it is revealed that trans persons have experienced different socio-economic statuses at different points of time, including the Mughal period, the British era, and in the contemporary period. Since India's independence, the government has concentrated on the growth and

development of the marginalised trans population through several constitutional safeguards and policies. Even though the Indian Government has introduced a number of legislative frameworks to empower the trans persons, they continue to face challenges due to the stigma attached to their identity. Many government and non-government efforts are extended to upgrade their economic and social status. One of the Indian Government's significant steps was to give them an identity, i.e., to consider them as 'transgender'. Despite policy initiatives, this marginalised section confronts various challenges. They still struggle to earn a living with dignity, access healthcare facilities, get equal education opportunities, and in other similar areas. The rights of trans persons can only be ensured if they are treated in a non-discriminatory, non-stigmatising, and progressive environment. It is important to spread awareness about diverse gender identities and expressions. The task of introducing inclusiveness among different categories may not be easy, for which a multi-pronged approach with a supportive environment is needed. The acceptance of trans-equality with sensitivity is a challenge that needs to be addressed with priority. Then only trans persons can dream of a world that can welcome them in all spheres, and they can lead a life with dignity.

References

Agoramoorthy, G., & Hsu, M. J. (2015). Living on the societal edge: India's transgender realities. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *54*(4), 1451–1459. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-014-9987-z

Anuja.(2016). Violation of Human Rights and Dignity: Gender Perspectives in India. *Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Sciences,21*(1), 13–23.

Balu. A. (2020). Confront Issues on Education of Transgenders in India. *Global Journal for Research Analysis,9*(2), 12-14.

Bettcher, T. (2014) 'Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues'. In: Edward N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/feminism-trans/

Briones, M. R. (2011). Crossers at Crossing: Narratives of Work and Aspirations of Transgender Informal Workers in Los Baños, Laguna. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, *39*(1), 1–21. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23645262.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A03f7bb ed6f012be968acdffc703d12d7&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC =1

Census of India. (2011). *Literacy rate of Transgender*. Retrieved from https://www.census2011.co.in/transgender.php

Divan, V., Cortez, C., Smelyanskaya, M. and Keatley, J. (2016). Transgender social inclusion and equality: a pivotal path to development. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 19(3). doi:10.7448/IAS.19.3.20803

Goffman, E. (1963). Stigma; notes on the management of spoiled identity. Penguin Group.

GOI. (2022). Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. *Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)*. Retrieved from https://grants-msje.gov.in/display-smile-guidelines.

Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J., Harrison, J., Herman, J. L., & Keisling, M. (2011). (rep.). *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Retrieved from
https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/NTDS_Report.pdf.

Grossman, A. H., & Daugelli, A. R. (2006). Transgender Youth: Invisible and Vulnerable. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *51*(1), 111–128. doi: 10.1300/j082v51n01_06

Irfan, L. (2019, August 12). *Third gender and Service in Mughal court and Harem*. Servants Pasts. Retrieved from https://servantspasts.wordpress.com/2019/08/12/third-gender-and-service-in-mughal-court-and-harem/

Khan, S. I., Hussain, M. I., Parveen, S., Bhuiyan, M. I., Gourab, G., Sarker, G. F., Arafat, S. M., & Sikder, J. (2009). Living on the extreme margin: Social exclusion of the transgender population in Bangladesh. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, *27*(4). https://doi.org/10.3329/jhpn.v27i4.3388

Konduru, D. and Hangsing, C. (2018). Socio–Cultural Exclusion and Inclusion of Trans-genders in India. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, *5*(1), 10-17. doi: 10.3126/ijssm.v5i1.18147

Kumar, S. (2021, July 18). *The COVID-19 pandemic has had a debilitating effect on transgender people*. The Wire. Retrieved from https://thewire.in/lgbtqia/the-covid-19-pandemic-has-had-a-debilitating-effect-on-transgender-people

Lind, A. (2009). Governing intimacy, struggling for sexual rights: Challenging heteronormativity in the Global Development Industry. *Development*, *52*(1), 34–42. https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2008.71

Mayo-Wilson, L. J., Benotsch, E. G., Grigsby, S. R., Wagner, S., Timbo, F., Poteat, T., Cathers, L., Sawyer, A. N., Smout, S. A., & Zimmerman, R. S. (2020). Combined effects of gender affirmation and economic hardship on vulnerability to HIV: A qualitative analysis among U.S. adult transgender

women. *BMC Public Health*, *20*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08902-3

Meenakshi , J. R., & Abhirami, K. U. (2019). Quality of Life-Transgender in Unorganised Sector: A Study on Vilamal Village, Thiruvarur District, Tamil Nadu. In *Health, Safety and Well-Being of Workers in the Informal Sector in India* (pp. 105–114). Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-13-8421-9_9.

Michelraj, M. (2015). Historical Evolution of Transgender Community in India. *Asian Review of Social Sciences*, *4*(1), 17–19

Nanda, S. (1998). Social Organization and Economic Adaptation. In *Neither man nor woman: The Hijras of India* (pp. 38-53). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). 2017. *Study on Human Rights of Transgenders as a Third Gender*. Kerala Development Society (KDS-Delhi).   Retrieved   from https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/Study_HR_transgender_03082018.pdf

News NCR. (2022, October 22). *What work did the Mughal rulers get transgenders to do in their court?* News NCR. Retrieved from https://www.newsncr.com/knowledge-utility/what-work-did-the-mughal-rulers-get-transgenders-to-do-in-their-court/

Outlook. (2022, February 16). *Transgender and unemployment in India*. https://www.outlookindia.com/.   Retrieved   from https://www.outlookindia.com/national/transgender-and-unemployment-in-india-news-182617

Paltasingh, T., & Lingam, L. (2014). 'Production' and 'Reproduction' in Feminism: Ideas, Perspectives and Concepts. *IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review*, *3*(1), 45–53. Retrieved fromhttps://doi.org/10.1177/2277975214523665

Panda, S. M.& Nayak, P., (2020). Redefining identity and expansion of livelihood options among *hijras* in India. *Gender, Technology and Development*, *25*(1), 68–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/09718524.2020.1839167

Priyadarshini, S., & Swain, S. C. (2020). Impact of covid-19 on the Socioeconomic Life and Psychology of Transgenders: Insights from India. *International Journal of Research in Pharmaceutical Sciences*, *11*(1), 126–132. https://doi.org/10.26452/ijrps.v11ispl1.2286

Reddy, G. (2006). Hijras, Individuality, and Izzat. In *With respect to sex: Negotiating hijra identity in South India* (pp. 17-43). New Delhi: Yoda Press.

Rizvana, S., K, K., & Rock Britto, T. (2021, April 29). *Health Care Services and challenges among transgender in India*. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355844807_Health_care_services_and_challenges_among_transgender_in_India

Rothmann, J. (2012). Sociology as bridge over troubled waters: Establishing a link between the principles of Lesbian and gay studies and queer theory. *South African Review of Sociology*, *43*(1), 41–61. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2012.678624

Roychowdhury, A. (2018), July 19. When eunuchs were the mid-rung of power in the Mughal empire. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from https://indianexpress.com/article/research/eunuch-security-guards-bihar-mughal-empire-history-5266102/

Sah, P. (2019), December 8. Transgender community is against the use of the term Third Gender. *INDIA TODAY*. Retrieved from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/transgender-community-is-against-the-use-of-the-term-third-gender/articleshow/72423211.cms

Sahu, M. K. (2016). National Legal Services Authority vs. Union of India &Ors. (AIR 2014 SC 1863): a Ray of Hope for the LG BT Community. *BRICS Law Journal*, *3*(2), 164–175. doi: 10.21684/2412-2343-2016-3-2-164-175

Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing gender, doing heteronormativity. *Gender & Society*, *23*(4), 440–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243209340034

Sharma, K. (2022, March 22). *Transgender Persons and workplace equality*. Leagle Samiksha. Retrieved from https://leaglesamiksha.com/2022/03/13/transgender-persons-and-workplace-equality/

Shinu, V. S., & Nagaraj, P. (2015). Preliminary problems faced in educating the third gender community. *Asia Pacific Journal of Research*, *1*(27), 20–24.

SMILE SCHEME. (2022, March 15). *Press Information Bureau Government of India*. Retrieved from https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1806161.

Smith, E., Jones, T., Ward, R., Dixon, J., Mitchell, A., & Hillier, L. (2014). From blues to rainbows: The mental health and wellbeing of gender diverse and transgender young people in Australia. Retrieved from https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/publications/from-blues-to-rainbows-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-of-gender--2

Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Department, Government of Odisha. (2019). *SWEEKRUTI (A Scheme for Promotion of Transgender Equality & Justice)*. South Asian Translaw Database. Retrieved from https://translaw.clpr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Odisha-Scheme-for-TG-Final.pdf

Turner, I. M. (2007). Sex Stereotyping per Se: Transgender Employees and Title VII. *California Law Review*, *27*(1), 561–596. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.com/stable/20439102.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2017, February 13). *Skilling for Livelihood Opportunities for Transgenders in India.* Retrieved from https://www.undp.org/india/publications/skilling-and-livelihoods-transgender-community

World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific Manila, Philippines. (2013). *Consultation on HIV, STI and other Health Needs of Transgender People in Asia and the Pacific.* 17–19

Younes, R. (2019). In *"Don't punish me for who I am": Systemic discrimination against transgender women in Lebanon*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/09/03/dont-punish-me-who-i-am/systemic-discrimination-against-transgender-women-lebanon

Krishna Pradhan is a *Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Sociology, Odisha University Research and Innovation Incentivization Plan (OURIIP Fellow), Sambalpur University,* *E-mail: pradhank114@gmail.com*

Tattwamasi Paltasingh *is Professor & Head, P.G. Department of Sociology, Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar-768019; Odisha, India*
E-mail: tpaltasingh@gmail.com

Article:'Men' is the Social Norm: Politics in Nagaland

Author(s): Ilito H. Achumi

'Men' is the Social Norm: Politics in Nagaland

--Ilito H. Achumi

Abstract

The paper explores how the social construction of motherhood has historically served as the foundation for Naga women's political consciousness, influencing their political trajectories and the "right" behaviour for Naga women to engage in politics. Motherhood and informal politics has historically been the only setting for the Naga women in which they can do politics. The primary focus of this essay is on how Naga women were denied formal political space. The study does not however presuppose that establishing gender equality does not always requires "formal" political structures. The study examines how encouraging innovative and inclusive political institutions for achieving gender justice is one strategy for improving women's inclusion in political representation. The social and political changes around the 33% female quota for Nagaland's 2017 Urban Local Body (ULB) elections are the subject of my research. A crucial component of the demonstration against women's reservations in Nagaland politics. Even in the context of state Legislative Assembly elections, there is a need to look closely at the tragedy of gender-ratio-gulf in the political representation in Naga politics. After Nagaland attained its statehood in 1963, few women contested in the Nagaland State Assembly election but they were never voted to power. In 1977, Lt. Rano Shaiza was elected to serve in the sixth Lok Sabha and she remained the sole Naga woman politician figure until 2023. It is only in 2023 that the two Naga women: Hekani Jakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse out of the four women candidates (out of the total of 183 candidates) are elected to the 60 member Nagaland Assembly. While celebrating the two Naga woman who made history in Naga politics, it is pertinent to look into the tragic ratio and to have a critical 'social' understanding of why Naga women had to struggle for 60 years after Nagaland's attainment of statehood in order to be allowed in the political space, once monopolised by Naga 'men'.

Keywords: Article 371A, Naga women[1] and political representation, Naga Customary Law, Political Reservationand Naga women.

*To protect the privacy of the participants' identities, the research maintains anonymity.

---

[1] Naga women here is not a homogenous category but a heterogenous category. The plurality of the concept 'Naga women' here is referred to the diverse Naga tribes residing in Nagaland: Angami women, Ao women, Chakesang women, Chang women, Khiamniungan women, Kuki women, Konyak women, Kachari women, Lotha women, Phom women, Pochury women, Rengma women, Sumi women, Sangtam women, Tikhir women, Yimkhiung women, Zeliang. However, in the context of this paper most respondents belong to the Ao, Angami and Sumi Naga tribes.

Introduction

Beyond the political narrativization of exalting political parties for giving gracious opportunity to 2 to 4 Naga women, there is an urgent need to critically look at the tragedy of gender ratio in political representation in Naga politics today. Where are the rest of the Naga women? The paper avoids making a claim that the only way to engage in meaningful politics is by joining a political party. Naga mother's organisations have not only shaped Naga women's political trajectories but the political behaviour and space relegated to them of 'doing politics', the only space accessible to them as against the denied formal political space. The claim that the institutional participation of women in politics does not ensure gender equality slips into the fallacy that institutional changes are not necessary to achieve gender equality. Reservation for women in political representation is one pertinent affirmation policy towards inclusive political institutions in attaining gender equality and justice.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the subject of the 2017 Nagaland Urban Local Body (ULB) Election's and the thirty three percent reservation for women. To provide some context, the 74th Amendment Bill, which established reservations for women in ULB was approved in India in 1993. The Nagaland Legislative Assembly passed the Nagaland Municipal Council Act in 2001, but the thirty percent women's which is required by article 243-T Part IX-A, was left out. In a 2005 ruling, the High Court ordered the State Government to amend the Municipal and Town Council Act of 2001 to incorporate thirty percent women's reservation. In 2006, the State Government revised the Municipal & Town Council Act to include 30% women's reservation in accordance with a High Court decision. The thirty percent reserve for women was not immediately put into effect, nevertheless, as the term for the 2004 election runs through 2009.[2] ''It was Miss Khetoli who filed a Petition at the Gauhati High Court's Kohima bench, asking the court's intervention to implement the Constitution of India's thirty percent women's reservation'' (Achumi, 2019: 7). Violence erupted in the state in 2017, following the Supreme Court's decision to 'lift the stay on a writ case' filed in 2011 (Achumi, 2019: 4). When the government announced to go ahead with the ULB election implementing thirty three percent women reservation, it sparked violent protests in 2017, where two Naga men died and the Chief Minister of Nagaland T. R. Zeliang, had to resign. The apex organisation for the Naga tribes, known as "Naga Hoho," notified their decision that Naga women candidates failing to withdraw their candidature will face the consequences, because 'reservation for women' is against Naga customs and tradition. The discourse on thirty percent reservation for women in Nagaland is complex because multiple stakeholders had their own political narratives. Nearly all of the sources, including organisations and responders requested to be anonymous in the study due to the nature of the political topic. My research

---

[2] The Morung Express, February 9, 2017.

in the Nagaland districts of Mokokchung and Dimapur provided the field data for this paper.

The Naga Mother's imagery of Nurturing mothers

Naga Mothers Association (NMA) was formed in February 1984 at Kohima (Banerjee, 2001: 160). In the early years of its formation, NMA activism revolved around alcohol and drug addiction rehabilitation, domestic violence, rape etc. It was after the 1990's that NMA expanded its political activism to human development, human security, social security, gender justice, ecology, economic issues, military violence and militarization (Luithui, 1996: 129-130). Chenoy (2002) noted that NMA has known to be 'peace groups' in the history of militarization.The Naga mother's organisation bears a nurturing mother imagery and takes pride in it. Mother's Associations have served as the only access point for Naga women seeking to influence public discourse or civil society. The Naga Mothers Association was founded in Kohima in February 1984 (Banerjee, Paula, 2001: 160). Every Naga mother and an adult unmarried Naga woman holds membership of their respective tribe's mother's organization. The political space allotted to Naga women has typically consisted of volunteer work, charitable endeavours, and community service projects like outlawing alcohol in public places, addressing domestic violence, caring for abandoned children, orphans, and dependents, as well as services that required nurturing, mothering, and caregiving. NMA has historically voiced out against militarized violence on Naga women under the Arm Force Special Power Act (AFSPA 1972) and opposed human rights violation to the Indian state appealing 'to shed no more blood' (Banerjee, 2001: 161). NMA took active part in conflict resolution, as a mediator between the state and the militants by the Indian State (Chenoy, 2002: 139). The Naga Mother's Agency served as peace mediators between the government and civil society, the different separatist group of the Nagas. The NMA's history however leads one to believe that its involvement was limited to soft politics and clearly distinct from electoral politics. Naga women's political tactics and techniques have been limited to informal politics as a result of the sociocultural segregation of men and women into separate roles, which has led to the domestication of politics. Manhood and masculinity have so far come to define electoral politics in Nagaland.

Land, Women and Article 371A

The provisions of Article 371 (A) state that No Act of Parliament shall be applicable to Nagaland in regards to Naga customary law and procedures, governance of civil and criminal justice including decision taken in accordance with Naga customary law, possession and transferring of resources and land, or Naga religious or social practises (Constitution of India, 1950).

In the mind of the Naga men who opposed women's reservation, one of the key opposition to municipal election was a violation of article 371A, as the 2017 protest wasn't just about the thirty three percent reservation for women. Two key issues with the Municipal Act led to protests: (1) the taxation of land

and buildings, and (2) the ULB's thirty three percent reservation for women. A former Naga lawyer from Mokokchung district, aged 70, claimed, that

women's reservation has to be a violation of 371A and questions: while Naga women has never had the right to property, land and resources, how can they sit in the office to make decisions on taxation and Naga land? If we let this election go ahead with the implementation of reservation for Naga women then it will be our women who will be taxing the men in the future. and go on to make crucial choices about taxation and land.

Reservation for Naga women conflicts with Naga traditions and practises in many ways, in their opinion. A larger collective protest against article 371A was founded on the hyper-masculine rationale of the Naga community against the reservation of Naga women in politics, which was never present in the ancient Naga society. The Naga Hoho and different Naga sub-tribal bodies insisted that women candidates withdraw their candidature, and they announced ostracising those Naga women who disobeyed. As the tribal organisations in Nagaland speaks for the majority of the population, it is simpler to criticise them than to renounce their authority. The Naga apex tribe's organisations have consistently served as a guardian and custodian of Naga customs and traditions in contemporary Naga society.

Three crucial components make up the Nagas' interpretation of article 371A, a) Naga customs and culture b) territory and Land (taxation) c) people: that all the resources upon Naga-Land belong to the Naga people. According to field accounts, the Nagas' resources include women, hence, in accordance with customary law, it is the Nagas' people who determine the political rights of Naga women. As they have access to the 371A right, it shields the Naga tribes from both colonial taxation and Indian taxation. According to a senior Naga attorney's legal analysis of article 371A:

If we pay taxes to the government, it follows that the land is government property. Yet, in the Naga's situation, article 371A ensures that it belongs to the people. Nagas from lower economic section will lose their land and houses because they will be unable to pay taxes if a tax of 15% is imposed on the municipally designated region. Municipal areas in Nagaland are not always considered to be urban areas. In Nagaland, the majority of the urban area are quite rural.

When this was refuted, the majority of respondents did concur that article 371A does not contain a clause specifically stating that Naga customs forbid reservations for women, but for them Naga women running politics contradicts the law of the Naga land. A young Naga man remarked,

If reservation clause in the municipal act is for gender equality then why are women given seats by demeaning Naga men. Election should be based on equal competition without any reservation.

The Naga men who were 'opposers for reservation' claims that, Naga women are treated as their equals and a foreign concept like 'women reservation', a contradictory to their customary practices may bring the concept of hierarchy in the Naga society". Such an illogical and convenient assertion that Naga civilization is an egalitarian society is problematic from both a conceptual and practical standpoint.

Village and Naga Identity: Ostracized by Patriarchy

According to the Naga interpretation of Article 371A, only Naga men are granted an exclusive right over land, structures, material resources, and intangible customary rights. Within these patriarchal perceptions, Naga women have 'no say' on the property or production of resources.

The history of town formation in Nagaland begins in the village. Out of the nearby villages, towns like Kohima, Zunheboto, and Mokokchung were formed. For instance, the land on which Zunheboto Town now resides was granted after it was purchased from the surrounding villages (Kanato and Avitoli, 2018). Three villages, Mokokchung, Khensa, and Ungma, have combined their land to form the area on which Mokokchung Town now stands. Given Nagaland's history of town development, disputes regarding village authority over the land and its inhabitants would inevitably arise between the landowners and the state's administration in these urban towns. In Mokokchung town, a member of the *lika* group responded,

The clans will continue to possess the land because the air, water, as well as atmosphere and resources remain theirs. They utilise the common expression "*harditohdianai*," which means that they just sold the exterior surface flesh of the land. The bone stays with them, proving that the land is still the clan's property.

In 2004, the Municipal election for the first time took off, but without implementing women's reservation. The protest against all aspects of the Act relating to tax on lands and buildings dates back to the legislation year 2001, but the Indian state first brought Nagaland's issue of women's reservation to its notice in 2017. Mokokchung landowners called the *'Ayim Asem Lika'* opposed the ULB election, which prevented the Mokokchung district from running in the 2004 first election. The remaining districts in Nagaland took part in the election without the thirty three percent reservation and continued to operate till 2009. The Naga patriarchal vision campaigns the denial and exclusion of Naga women's presence in politics. A prominent faculty member from Nagaland University who is a Naga lady said,

The protest scenario is being sparked by the currently in office politicians as a political ploy. Neither rural government nor customary laws are related to ULB. The decision to implement the thirty three percent reserve for women is not one that can be made by the highest tribal body. Article 371A is not a sacred card which the Naga men take it out whenever it suits them. The "Right to Equality" and Article 371A cannot be in contradiction.

In Nagaland, administratively, the rural-urban is very ambiguous even though they are geographically separated. Each urban Naga in Nagaland is a member of a village and are still subject to the quasi-law of the village. In 1945, NHDTC (the Naga Hills District Tribal Council) formally recognized various Naga tribes organizations as a consolidated organisation of Naga tribal identity. Avitoli and Kanato (2018) notes that it was during the pre-colonial India that Deputy Commissioner Charles Pawsey united the various tribes under one unit 'Naga', which later was named officially as NNC (Kanato and Avitoli and Kanato, 2018 : 18-19). Now, all of the various tribes' councils fall under the purview of the apex "Naga Tribal Council," an entity that was at the forefront of the opposition to women's reservations. Each Naga tribe's village councils make up the respective apex tribal body. How firmly the inhabitants of urban Naga towns adhere to Naga traditional laws is a crucial subject. The village is still the centre of the urban Nagas' social and political lives. Every Naga person who lives in a town can trace their ancestry to a male-dominated Naga village.

If every urban Naga inhabitant also belongs to a village, then it is true to say that every Naga is still subject to the laws and customs of the village council. Nagas traces their roots and identity to their Village, especially when "Naga" is interpreted as a nation or community. Naga women as per the patrilocal Naga customary tradition gives up the citizenship of her father's village and acquires membership in her husband's village the day she gets married. Every member of a village council, whether they live in a village or a town, is influential because they have a strong cultural, emotional, and political connection to their community. When two people choose to run for the state legislature during elections, the village council can support one of them while advising the other to withdraw. An old aged Ao Naga man who opposes the thirty-three percent reservation in public forums stated.

If men are members of village then the same applies to women. When the land is distributed by the clan, an Ao Naga will receive his plot of land regardless of whether he is an NRI or an American citizen.

Rural-urban split is not well defined politically or socially in the current overlaid politics of the Naga councils. The village council's infringement of authority over urban jurisdiction can be understood by the Nagas' belief that the social jurisdiction of the village extends to the urban areas in Nagaland. The Nagaland daily media were inundated with threats against women during the 2017 ULB election protest. Threats to expel the intended female candidates from their villages if they run for ULB were made. The question that arises is whether modern Naga society totally separates urban from rural life. In the context of the Nagas, ostracising or expulsion from the village carries an utter disgrace in the society. Ostracization from society, the community, or the village is referred to as *jendoke*r in the Ao Naga dialect. *Jendokba* is a synonym for shame and dishonour. When one's citizenship is revoked as a result of retaliatory measures outlined in customary law, Naga traditional society views it as an act of the utmost dishonour. A former government official Ao Naga claimed,

In one instance, where an Ao Naga woman was firm about submitting her candidature, we were forced to inform her husband's village that their village member's wife was disobeying the Land's customary law. The wife was compelled not to give in her nomination when the village council informed her husband. Woman are not allowed to join the *Putu Menden* (the village council for the *Ao* Naga). No woman is allowed, no matter how educated or in a high position she is.

In the urban Nagaland and its citizens, the village's quasi-jurisprudence is still strong. The cultural and structural barriers which has historically prevented Naga women from assuming formal political authority still discourages Naga women to participate in politics today, even though the constitutional laws allows them to. If we go by how the Naga tribal Hohos flawed understanding of Article 371A, Article 14's "Right to Equality" is in contradiction to article 371A. Collective women's movement in Nagaland that connects Naga women from different regions are absent. The only accepted image of Naga women is that of naturalised mothers, wives, and daughters who are incapable of engaging in politics and disengaged from violence and authority. Men are not the only ones who hold this idea; Naga women also internalise it. For many Nagas, it is not societally required for Naga women to be "politicians or policy makers" in Naga society.

Can Naga Women 'represent' Naga Men in politics?

The study focuses on politics and culture and how they interact under a patriarchal framework. The protest against women's representation in politics brings to light Naga's gendered cultural practises and gendered restrictive behaviours. The button article 371A, which evoked Naga male Nationalism served as the glue that held these many Naga tribes together throughout the demonstration. The demonstration revealed that Naga society historically has a patriarchal structure, which must be preserved in contemporary Naga society at any cost. In defending the symbolic Article 371A, the death of two Naga men during the protest were publicly lamented as martyrdom deaths. Similar to other south Asian nations, images of Naga women represent a symbol of tradition and customs. The idea of the presence of women in governance threatens this imagery. An elderly *Ao* Naga man questioned me:

Do you believe that Naga women who has never historically been a political leader would be able to make wise State's decisions?

Relationship between masculinity and politics is normalised by Naga society. With few exception to countable Naga women from higher class, for the Naga mass, it is intolerable for Naga women to cross the line from the home to the political arena because patriarchy permeates every aspect of Naga culture and tradition. She is the transmitter of Naga cultures and traditions. In Naga society, sustained patriarchy is evident in everyday sexists stereotypes, characterization, and rules governing femininity. A woman president spoke during a discussion with a group of Naga women's organisations,

Even if a woman with good education runs for political office, "her identity as a woman" will prevent her from receiving mass support. More weight will be given to a man even if he is someone who is 'mentally unfit'. His words and speeches will be heard more than a 'sound woman'. This is because "being a man" is all that matters.

In the past, Naga women have participated in politics outside of elections to influence the government. The assumption that lower female literacy is resulting in lower political representation of women is refuted by the fact that Naga women are educationally on par with men in educational qualifications and the female literacy in Nagaland is very high. Although Naga women are fairly represented in academia, active in the economy, and engaged in entrepreneurship, this phenomenon is not increasing women's representation in politics.

Naga women's groups, including the NMA and *Watsu Mung dang*[3], were represented by 'Joint Action Committee for Women's Rights' to negotiate with the state on women's reservation. JACWR was accused by the *Naga Hoho* of being disrespectful of Naga customs as if it is illegal for Naga women to run for political office. Naga women in leadership positions and the candidates were charged with attempting to manipulate political entry and power, as though Naga women are not full citizens to exercise that right permitted by the Indian Constitution. For many decades in Nagaland, it was and is considered an invasion of men's territory for a woman to run for political office. Women candidates from Nagaland who submitted their paperwork in the face of opposition were derided as opportunists and power-hungry. It is important to understand that, "talking politics" and "doing politics" necessitates being 'men' in Naga tradition. The naturalized belief is that, men have the ability to speak for both genders, but women should not overshadow men and represent them. The notion that women are physically less strong, more immobile, and less decisive than men still holds a strong belief in contemporary Nagaland. An 80-year-old Naga retiree commented,

I would not permit my wife to run for election firstly because Naga society is supposed to be a patriarchal society. Secondly, women face physical and financial disadvantages.

opposition to women Reservation in politics in Nagaland is a result of a deepened belief that women are mentally and physically inferior to men and should be confined to the domain of 'domestic'. When Naga women become politicians, the image of Naga women changes from being nurturing to being competitive and unconventional Naga woman (Baker, 1984: 621, emphasize mine). The anticipated implementation of the thirty three percent reservation provokes Naga men's fear of women's interference in politics owned by Naga

---

[3]*WatsuMungdang*is independent functionally from NMA. It is an all-*Ao* women organization. Its office is at Mokokchung Nagaland.

men, and a breach of personal and public boundaries. An aged Naga man who served as one of the tribal Hoho's advisors said,

In our generation, Sumi Naga women sat in a timid, cautious position in front of men. Our traditions and culture are in danger due to modern ideas. Family dissolution will result from introducing such an alien culture to our country. Why do women in politics demand reservations while we men don't in the kitchen?

Naga women who have been raised according to Naga customs and culture contribute to maintaining order and stability in society because of their unwavering positions in the family. Stereotypes and culturally defined behaviour include the idea that women should only have access to the private sphere and the cultural portrayal of femininity as passive, protecting, immobile, and unfit for politics. She upholds social order in the community by performing out the various expected duties assigned to her according to Naga culture.

Fighting back the politics of masculinity

The representation of Naga women as politicians throughout history has been nearly absent until 2022-23. As can be seen from Nagaland's political history, this absence is being referred to as the state assembly election. Fewer women ran for the Nagaland State Assembly after 1963, but they were never elected to office. In the 1969 state assembly elections, RL Kinghen and Ravole were the only two female candidates from Nagaland. Throughout the course of 53 years, four women in 2008, twelve further women ran for office in the Assembly until 2016.[4] Lt. RanoShaiza, who was chosen to serve in the 6th Lok Sabha in 1977 remained the only Naga woman politician for many decades. Five female candidates ran for the Assembly in the 2018 election. Only in 2023, out of the four women candidates (out of a total of 183 contestants), the two Naga women, HekaniJakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse, got elected to the 60-member Nagaland Legislature. The tragic ratio says volumes about the historical incompatibility of women and politics in Nagaland, despite the fact that the two Naga women have made history in Naga politics.[5]

Historically, Naga women activism were restricted to soft politics as mediators and peace makers viz.a.vi. mother's organisation, rather than an active actors in establishing policies. Soft politics here is contrasted with the aggressive competitive politics, in other words referred to as hard masculine politics. Soft politics is the ability to negotiate with the state and influence the policy using bargaining, negotiations, peace, non-coercive means and non-violent protests etc. Here soft politics refers to the political activity where both non-state actors and actors from the state are involved, as in this case it is the Naga

---

[4] Data as on 2016 (Moa Jamir, *MorungExpress*, August 14, 2016).

[5] Aniruddha Dhar. Hindustantimes.com. 02, March 2023.

mothers. In Nagaland's 2018 state legislative assembly election, there were 5 female candidates out of 227 total candidates, or 2.56 percent of the field. The voting results of the female candidates revealed the voters' preferences for male politicians. Wedieu-u Ronu of the NPEP party received 483 votes out of the 26921 total valid votes, while independent candidate Rekha Rose Dukru received 338 votes out of the 15199.[6] While being perceived as pitiful attempts, these actions represent Naga women's attempts to push boundaries, refusal of political subordination, and countering the politics of masculinity (Lilja, M. 2005, emphasize mine). Because of her political history and affluent region, many people believed that a well-known woman like ChubalemlaAo would triumph. ChubalemlaAo, a social worker who had received the 1981 Padma Shree ran for State Assembly in 2003 but came in last with only 928 votes, falling short of winning with 8714 votes.[7] These insignificant votes indicates that either Naga women themselves do not cast votes for women candidates or are unable to exercise their right to vote freely. The patriarchal Naga family voting style also influences the political party preferences of Naga women. The father or the oldest male relative would choose the political party and candidates that the entire family and clan would support in a perfect Naga family. The voting percentages and outcomes of Naga women candidates are being impacted by this practise in conjunction with the proxy voting system.

Voices from Naga women who were 'for reservation'

The author is not the narrator here; rather, the narrators are the women candidates who formally filed their nominations and were either forced to forcibly withdraw their candidature or were forcibly forbidden from filing in the 2017 ULB election in Nagaland.

The day we were all prepared to submit our nominations, the Naga Hoho called for a demonstration at the Commissioner's office over the deaths of two Naga youths during a protest to defend article 371A. As a result, no women in Mokokchung formally submitted any nominations. We were ready to run for election but we decided not to risk going because there were many men who were opposers of women's reservation standing outside the office. In other districts formal nominations had been submitted.[8] Threats were made over the phone and through other unofficial means to women candidates who submitted or was preparing to submit their nominations. Men with broad sticks or *lathis* stood close to the nomination centre and prevented us from submitting nominations. The ward authorities disallowed me, but the people in the party asked me to prepare for the election. All the women received instructions not to leave their homes by the ward councils. The ward

---

[6] Chakravarty. February 24, 2018. Scroll.in.

[7] Elections.in. Aonglenden Nagaland Assembly Constituency Elections. Accessed on 22 March 2023.

[8] A member of *watsüMungdang*organization. Place of interview, watsüMungdang office, Mokokchung, October 2018.

authority was looking for me, so I hid at a friend's house before heading to the office. Afterwards, my constituency party also advised us against filing our nomination because the electorate does not support female candidates. Thus, we never submitted our nomination.[9] We were significant group of women who wanted to submit the nomination in Mokokchung but we could not.

We were able to submit nominations in Dimapur, but once we did so, the tribal organizations summoned us in and forced us to sign a statement revoking our nominations. I didn't withdraw, but a friend withdrew her nomination after receiving telephone threats from the organisations. She was not prepared to give up, but her spouse who initially encouraged her had a second thoughts. Due to pressure from her family, she ultimately decided to withdraw her nomination.[10] Some female candidates were prohibited from leaving their homes, preventing them from submitting their nominations. I felt as though I was under home detention. A lady candidate in Dimapur was afraid of a mob violence because her home would be vandalised if she didn't withdraw her nomination. We were afraid of the men protesting against the reservation because we had heard that there had been violence and vandalism at the homes of female candidates in some other areas. But why do other reservations not violate Article 371A or our customs and traditions, but why only "reservation for women" do? Without or with reservations, women should participate in politics and contest decisions.

Dismantling Women's Collective Consciousness

Women from Nagaland lacked political intersubjectivity of empowerment. JACWR did not have a direct line of communication with the women candidates, and there was no dialogue between the JACWR and the numerous women's organisations. One Naga woman said, Women themselves tend to undervalue their own potential. Naga women's organisations are divided, hence there was no large-scale mobilisation.

JACWR maintained that thirty three percent women reservation in ULB neither infringes on article 371A nor the Naga customary law, because municipal councils is for towns under the state administration and not under the village council. This position taken by JACWR invited threats and intimidations. All women's tribal organisations were given the order by the Naga tribal apex bodies to sever relations with the parent organisation, the Naga Mother's Association and JACWR. The NMA's chief adviser, Rosemary Dzuvichu, stated:

Threats were made to women from several tribes who were members of NMA, ordering them to break ties with JACWR or risk losing their tribal identity. All

---

[9] A woman candidate who was forcefully stopped to file nomination from one of the wards in Mokokchung Nagaland. Interview at Mokokchung, October 2018. Anonymity is maintained in the research to keep the identity of the participants confidential.

[10] Sumi Naga woman, Notunbostidimpaur interviewed on December 2018.

of these Naga women were married, residing in families, belonging to a Naga village. We withdrew and disconnected from JACWR in response to the government's pressure and assurances from them that elections would be held.[11]

It was a calculated strategy to stop the widespread mobility of Naga women by threatening to strip them of their tribal citizenship. In order to avoid collective consciousness, this action was taken to undermine the organisation of JACWR and NMA. By severing the link connecting the Naga women's organisations and the masses, any chance of a mass movement was eliminated. When asked why no Naga women other than the volunteers, were visible on the streets during the protest? One Naga man stated, "Why should they be out? For what?" Although hierarchy of Naga organisations is not codified in law, it is accepted culturally that all Naga women and Naga mothers' body fall below the 'Naga hoho tribal bodies'-which are all Naga men members. A Hoho tribe member said,

We respect the women's organization's autonomy as long as it doesn't interfere with or affect how the all men member - Naga Hoho functions. Nonetheless, whether it be the various Naga student unions or women's organisation, any activity that conflicts with Naga Hoho's protocol or conflicts with Naga community's traditional ways faces the disapproval of the highest Naga tribal councils.

Women's organisations and the Naga tribe Hohos have a subjugating relationship. The male Naga tribe Hohos is a staunch guardian that there is a vertical hierarchy between the two. This is evident from the discussions and negotiation strategies utilised by the Naga women's groups, who submissively bargains with the male Hoho organizations. The majority of Naga men organizations preferred the nomination method over the competitive procedure of election, which implies that Naga women shouldn't run against men and battle with men. In order to preserve the gender hierarchy, the Deputy Commissioner suggested the tribal apex Hoho as the nomination conduit. As nomination carries no voting rights, Naga women who were for reservation felt that the nomination process was being forced upon them. They believed that even if they were nominated, it would not give them a voice. The issue of choosing nomination over election divided Naga women's organisations. A Women's president of a particular organisation responded during a group discussion:

Regardless of how much we converse, we always return home and make decisions with our husband's approval. It would be unnatural not to consult our husband about the choices we make.

A shared political pattern with other South Asian nations is the internalised understanding of gender hierarchy. Because of gendered traditional symbols,

---

[11]. Ashwaq Massodi, 2017.

women have always been excluded from politics by Naga customs and traditions. In their political bargains and talks, Naga women's organisations replicate these pictures. Feminist discourses are not in line with how Naga women's grassroots organisations see their empowerment as. The state government offered JACWR organisations nominations with voting rights after engaging in a series of discussions and communication with them. Feminists from Nagaland and JACWR, which is made up of highly educated and powerful Naga women demanded that elections be held in accordance with Article 243T, instead of nomination.[12] However, a scene of a few Naga women enforcing the bandh while dressed in traditional confused activists and researchers in Dimapur when the state bandh against women's reservation was called. Who were these women? and who did they speak for? A volunteer from a women's organisation who was present on the day of the state bandh said,

The apex Naga tribal body called the state bandh to protest against women reservation in the Municipal Act 2001. Representatives and volunteers in Naga traditional attire were asked to be present on the day from all organizations including from women organizations. We went because penalty was imposed everyday on organizations that did not send in representatives.

In addition, many mothers' organisations from different tribes denounced the state and joined the protest after two deaths in 2017 protest. The state and the Naga women's organisation had been working together prior to this tragedy, but there was a breach between the two after young Naga men died. Many Naga mothers took this burden upon them as mothers. Many women's opinions and perceptions of the thirty three percent reservations for women were altered after this episode. Presence of women in the Dimapur demonstration against Reservation for women and the lack of a Naga women's mass movement for reservations surrounding the 2017 ULB election indicate that a large section of Naga women were also against women's reservations. Naga women's access to formal political space has historically and currently been limited by their collective silence and political passivity.

Tokenism: False Representation

A roster mechanism is proposed to implement the thirty three reserve for women. According to the roster system, men were disallowed from contesting in the wards reserved for women. While some Naga males candidates prepared to file nominations of their wives, others had to wait until the following election. One candidate from Nagaland, a seasoned wealthy businesswoman from Dimapur recalled,

I did not withdraw my nomination because my husband was supposed to contest but with women reservation policy, my family proposed my name. I

---

[12] Op cit. *The Morung Express*, February 9 2017.

support the same party as my husband. My husband would have contested if not for women reservation issue.

Women's political participation may be influenced by social class and the family network. In this instance, a woman's involvement in formal politics serves to increase her husband's interests and status rather than to advance women's rights, since the wife herself lacks a more comprehensive feminist vision of women's rights. Even if they meet all the requirements and have a woman in the chair, these depictions exposes tokenism. In these situations, the woman's representative maintains a passive personality and speaks for her family rather than a strong female figure. Tokenism and false representation does not provide gender justice for Naga women. If men's vested interests and women's political empowerment are the primacy, then politics is still men's business.

Conclusion

An excerpt issued by the Nagaland state reflects its short-sightedness and indifference towards gender justice and inclusive political participation. It states:

Nagaland is not exempt from Article 243-T, which primarily aims to empower women. The constitution forbids holding elections without the thirty-three percent reservation for women. The state government believes that because India is a free country, anyone, including a lawyer or female activist, may re-file a petition of this nature even after the lawsuit is dropped by Naga women's organisations for now. The wisest course of action is to ask to have Nagaland exempted from Part-IXA's-thirty-three percent women reservation, which is required under Article 243T, if the government and other parties involved are unable to reach a mutually agreeable arrangement. This will put the matter to rest. (Department of Municipal Affairs, Government of Nagaland).[13] In 2023, Naga's resistance to women's reservation in ULB electionshas resurfaced afresh. Nagaland Government hasconceded to the tribal organizations and civil society groups andhas resolved not to hold ULB polls in May 2023. Nagaland Governmenthas repealedthe municipal Act 2001. The Supreme Court raps Nagaland for violation of SC's March 14 2023 orderand for violating theconstitutional reservation for women:

Justice kual observed that, "you seem to say that this is not a men and women issue, but frankly it is an issue of women empowerment. The bench asked the state counsel, for 18 years you have not been able to conduct elections to the ULB. For how long will women wait".[14]

Gender inequality will persist if we choose a narrow strategy that prioritises suppressing unrest above achieving gender justice. Women are once again the

---

[13] ibid.

[14] SC Raps Nagaland for Violating Women's Quota by Evading Polls, CM gets Contempt Notice, The Wire, April 18 2023.

"exception" in political justice. To exempt the mandatory legal requirement of a thirty three percent reservation for women will bury gender justice once more. The state needs to be reminded that resolving conflicts is not just about achieving peace but also about achieving gender justice. Even in the current State Legislative Assembly election setting, one must look beyond the deceptive political narrative that exalts political parties for generously providing chance to only 2 to 4 Naga women. The tragedy of the gender representation gap in Naga politics requires a thorough examination. Fifty nine years after its statehood in 2022, Nagaland's elected PhangnonKonyak without opposition, its first Naga woman to Rajya Sabha. Five female candidates ran for the Assembly in the 2018 election. Only four women ran for the Nagaland Legislative Assembly out of 183 candidates in 2023.[15] Out of that two Naga women Hekani Jakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse out of a total of 183 candidates was elected to the 60-member Nagaland Assembly in 2023. The tragic ratio must be viewed in order to comprehend the gender imbalance in Nagaland politics. Such a dismal ratio reveals low levels of societal acceptance and opposition to women in positions of political leadership. To provide the conditions for a more expansive conception of political citizenship and gender equity, inclusive political culture must be mass-produced. The conventional representation of Naga women as nurturers needs to be abandoned in favour of emerging paradigms that envision Naga women with new political identities outside of the traditional limits of the Nagas.

References

Avitoli G. Z., and Kanato G. C. (2018). 'Naga Tribal Councils, A Formidable Political Force', Vol. 53, Issue No.32, 11 Aug, *Economic and Political Weekly.*

Paula Baker. (1984). 'The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society', 1780-1920, *The American Historical Review,* June Vol. 89, No. 3, 620-647.

Paula Banerjee. (2001). 'Between two armed patriarchies: Women in Assam and Nagaland' in Manchanda, Rita. (Ed.). *Women, War and Peace in South Asia.* New Delhi: Sage publications. 131-177.

Ipsita Chakravarty. (2018). 'Why does Nagaland rank last on national list of women candidates contesting elections?' Scroll.in, Feb 24, 2018, accessed on 21 February 2023.

Anuradha Chenoy. (2002). '*Militarism and women in South Asia: Women and Civil Society'* (Eds.). Kali for Women: New Delhi.

---

[15]MadhusreeGoswami. 2023.

Anuradha Chenoy. (1998). 'Militarization Conflict and Women in south asia' in Jennifer Turpin and Lois Lorentzen. (Eds.). *The Women War Reader.* New York: New York University Press. 101-10.

Anuradha Chenoy. (2002). '*Militarization and Women in South Asia: Women and Civil Society'.* New Delhi: Kali for Women. 122-14.

MadhusreeGoswami. (2023). Why Nagaland Has Never Had a Woman MLA

Do traditions and cultures have a bearing on women's participation in Nagaland politics?, 21 Feb, *The Quint*, https://www.thequint.com/explainers/why-nagaland-has-never-elected-woman-mla, accessed on 21 February 2023.

Ilito H. Achumi. (2019). 'The Consequences of sustained disparities: Politics of Gender in Nagaland', published by Zubaan Publishers Pvt. Ltd 2019, in collaboration with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

ShimreichnLuithui. (1998). 'Naga Women: A Struggle for Human Rights' in Diana Vinding (ed.). '*Indigenous women: The Right to a voice'.* New Delhi: Women unlimited. 105-116.

Mona Lilja. (2005). '*Performances of Resistance: Women's struggle for political power'*,Cambodia, Copyright, INSTRAW.

Web source:

Aniruddha Dhar. 'Nagaland scripts history in assembly election, elects 2 women candidates for first time', Hindustantimes.com, 02, March 2023.

AshwaqMasoodi. 3rd November 2017, March of the Naga women, accessed on 22 March 2023.

Madhusree Goswami. 2023, 21 Feb 2023, The Quint, https://www.thequint.com/explainers/why-nagaland-has-never-elected-woman-mla, accessed on 21 February 2023.

Important events pertaining to elections to ULBS. *https://www.morungexpress.com*. February 9 2017.

Moa Jamir. 14, August, 2016. 'A right step in Right Direction', *Morung Express. https://www.morungexpress.com*.

Elections.in., Aonglenden Nagaland Assembly Constituency Elections, accessed on 22 March 2023.

SC Raps Nagaland for Violating Women's Quota by Evading Polls, CM gets Contempt Notice, The Wire, April 18 2023.

Acknowledgement

Ilito H. Achumi is Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
Email: ilito.achumi@iitb.ac.in

Cyber harassments against women:

An analysis of social and state responses in Kerala

--Niyathi R. Krishna and P Sivakumar

Abstract

This study is conducted with the major objective of analysing the social and state responses to cyber harassment against women in Kerala. This is accomplished through mapping the social responses to the incidents as well as to the survivors of cyber harassment; examining the existing cyber-related legal provisions; their limitations; identifying the gaps pertaining to the effective intervention of the police, and suggesting policy recommendations. From a feminist perspective, the study analyses seven prominent cyber harassment cases registered in Kerala in the past one decade. It captures the lived experiences of survivors of cyber abuse, their fight for justice and the police, judicial and state responses in their particular cases. The findings suggest that it is not the inadequacy of cyber laws in practice that is problematic, but the social and police perception of cyber harassment as trivial needs to be addressed.

Key Words: Cyber security, Cyber harassment against women, Covid-19, Kerala, Police, Cyber laws

Introduction

The public-private dichotomy of gendered space is restructured with technological advancement and the digital revolution. The virtual space created as a result of the internet and social media platforms has made it possible to be in public from a private space and vice versa. This has opened wider possibilities for women to channelise cyberspaces as sites of self-expression, learning opportunity, information gathering, networking and knowledge exchange, as their actions and movements are otherwise highly restricted, controlled and monitored socially. Many women, who were conveniently unheard in the past, have a voice in the online spaces, resonating with the voices of many other women sharing the similarities of their experiences. This has resulted in addressing gender issues through discussions, debates, and certain movements such as #MeToo.

The rise and spread of the COVID-19 global pandemic have resulted in the restriction, control and monitoring of human movement altogether in the public space and accelerated the expansion of the digital space in a person's life as a medium for work, learning, familial interactions and social life. However, it is unfortunate that the patriarchal nature of cyberspace has resulted in an increasing number of cybercrimes and violence against women ranging from trolling to life-threatening and bullying to virtual rapes, thereby

reintegrating itself into a male-dominated public space where women are viewed as commodities without any subjectivity.

While the exponential rise of cyber harassment against women is alarming, it is extremely significant to retain secure democratic interactions in cyberspace and, at the least, ensure they are women-friendly. On the one hand, the notions of the male gaze, anonymity and invisibility offered by fake profiles, and normalisation of verbal rape, abuses, and threats to women as part and parcel of mainstream culture induce the ingrained misogyny in cyberspaces. This also makes it necessary to probe and problematise the social responses towards cybercrimes.

On the other hand, the responsibility of the state to ensure safe cyberspace for women is paramount. Lack of provisions of appropriate laws, poor implementation of existing laws, the approach of state mechanisms, delay in securing justice etc., have exacerbated the frequency and degree of online harassment against women. Firstly, it is high time to revisit the existing laws against cybercrimes and redressal mechanisms that protect women and make possible revisions, updates and amendments in such a way that women as citizens are ensured protection under the law with a judicious gender equity perspective. Secondly, the police—the bridge between the survivor and the legal redressal mechanism—needs to be sensitised about the intensity of such crimes and the subtle yet abominable intimidation that can induce serious insecurity to the aggrieved to function in cyberspace effectively. This will enable the police to be morally accountable for ensuring the survivors' justice within their full capacity.

Therefore, the present study is conducted with the major objective of analysing the social as well as state responses to cybercrimes against women in Kerala. This is accomplished through mapping the social responses to the incidents as well as the survivors of cyber harassment; examining the existing cyber-related legal provisions; their limitations; identifying the gaps pertaining to an effective intervention of police; and suggesting policy recommendations. This qualitative study is carried out using the case study method through purposive sampling and in-depth interviews of survivors. From a feminist perspective, the study analyses seven prominent cyber harassment cases registered in Kerala in the past fiveyears. It captures the lived experiences of survivors of cyber abuse, their fight for justice and the police, judicial and state responses in their particular cases.

Further, the study probes into social responses regarding the particular instance of harassment using digital content analysis of the particular medium/media through which the harassment happened, such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and/or the platforms where the survivors decided to voice out the harassment, and/or the online portals that published the news. Interviews of the survivors are also done through digital platforms—through telephone and WhatsApp—partly because of the COVID-19 restrictions on movement and partly because digital content analysis is the crux of this study.

Cyber Space for Women in Kerala

During the beginning stage of this study, the controversy of three aggrieved women who had 'man'-handled a male YouTuber and streamed the same through Facebook Live was taking rounds all over the media. The woman threw ink on his face and confiscated his laptop to be submitted to the police as resistance to his personal insults and character assassination of these women through his YouTube channel that usually uploaded pervert, incest sex stories as content to the public. Further, they have narrated to the media that the confrontation happened because of their mounting frustration after the ineffective approach from the police and Kerala Women's Commission, which has prompted them to take the law into their hands (Express News Service, 2020).

However, the response of Kerala cyber society to such an issue was mostly associated with slut-shaming or politically correcting the actions of the aggrieved women rather than auditing the activities of the YouTuber, who is an outright pervert and verbal abuser. Interestingly, a group called the 'Men's Right Association' has protested in public, covering their faces in black clothes and marching, keeping the same anonymity they use in cyberspace. The critique of this mainstream social response, along with the discussions on the limitations of various cyber laws, has been integral in the formulation of this study.

Cyber Crime against women is one among many cybercrimes happening in the world (such as identity theft, use of ransomware, cyber terrorism etc.), under which the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) identifies the following actions: (1) Cyber Blackmailing/Threatening (Sec.506, 503, 384 IPC r/w IT Act); (2) Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials (Sec.67A/67B(Girl Child) of IT act r/w other IPC/SLL); (3) Cyber Stalking/Cyber Bullying of Women (Sec.354D IPC r/w IT Act); (4) Defamation/Morphing (Sec.469 IPC r/w IPC and Indecent Rep. of Women (P) Act & IT Act); (5) Fake Profile (IT Act r/w IPC/SLL); and (6) Other Crimes against Women (NCRB, 2019).

D. Halder and K. Jaishankaritemise ten basic types of cyber-crimes against women in India such as Harassment via email; Cyber-stalking; Cyber defamation; Hacking; Morphing; Email spoofing; Cyber pornography; Cyber sexual defamation; Cyberflirting; and cyberbullying (Halder and Jaishankar, 2011). With the advent of social media, all these crimes are attempted blatantly through public posts, comments and other responses or in secrecy through chat boxes, messages, and other indirect sources.

It is worth noting that Kerala has reported the highest number of cybercrimes during the lockdown period throughout India (Press Trust of India, 2020). Kerala also has the highest percentage of smartphone users in the country (Thomas, 2018). The number of cases registered under 'Cyber Crime against women' in 2019 was 139, which is much lesser than the national average. It is to be understood with the fact that a vast majority of cases of cyber harassment

go unreported due to various socio-cultural factors, and plenty of cases are discouraged or disposed of inside the police station, and out-of-court settlements occur before registering an FIR. Also, the rate of conviction in Cybercrimes is abysmally low. Kerala Women's Commission points out that even when thousands of complaints are received monthly, not even half of them are registered and go to the adalat. The commission agrees that no proper systems are available to curb cyber crimes against women. (Deccan Chronicle, 2020)

'Aparajitha is Online', under the charge of the Superintendent of Police, Women's Cell, is a recent initiative by the Kerala Police, introduced as "a quick response mechanism for grievance redressal of online-based harassment of women and girls" (keralapolice.gov.in). K Sanjay Kumar IPS, Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Thiruvananthapuram Range, Investigator and Cyber Crime Specialist in an interview, points out that since a cybercrime automatically leaves a digital footprint behind as evidence against the criminal themselves, there are more chances of being convicted as compared to offline harassments. He also mentions that it is important to make the 'intermediaries', i.e., social media platforms, accountable, which are currently protected under certain provisions. He also mentions:

> *The first step towards providing legal remedies for women is to ensure that the online incidents of harassment, threat, intimidation or violence caused to women are accurately detailed and explained, adopting them into the provisions of the written law through amendments. Secondly, the liabilities of the intermediaries (service providers) have to be assessed and responsibility fixed to ensure that such posts are brought down immediately and that they provide all details required for the investigation. Thirdly, many women are unaware of their rights under the law vis-à-vis cybercrimes. Raising the awareness of women is of prime importance in preventing such offences and punishing the offenders.* (Rajeev, 2020)

While reform movements in Kerala and the Kerala Model of Development are highly praised, the inevitable paradoxes—not just low incomes— in itself, such as the increasing number of crimes against women (both online and offline), higher rates of suicides, mental health issues and low female work participation rates, point fingers at the ingrained patriarchal nature of Kerala society (Arun 2019), which is constantly revived, re-established and nurtured through the unholy alliance of religion-caste-community trinity. Therefore, the strategic gender needs of Kerala women are still in question despite the quantifiable variables such as higher female literacy rate, larger political participation of women through democratic decentralisation etc. Against this backdrop, the trends and patterns in the cyber world also need to be revisited from this paradoxical perspective.

The study, "Walking on Eggshells: A Study on Gender justice and Women's Struggles in Malayali Cyberspace", throws innumerable insights into this paradox. The study categorises cyber harassment against women into three

degrees: Nuisance, Harassment, and Outright Violation. One of the most significant observations of the study is that "besides the pervasiveness of patriarchal attitudes across the state, civil society, and family, inadequacies in the law, the unpreparedness of officers, difficulties in securing evidence, the very unapproachability of the institutions of law enforcement and justice, and the very nature of the social media which thrives on 'more clicks, no matter how'" (Devika et al. 2019) also contribute the increasing incidents of cyber harassments.

The Chief Minister of Kerala recently announced that a Cybercrime Investigation Division, which will be the first-of-its-kind in the country that will streamline cyber investigation and enlist technical experts for the purpose would be established soon (The Hindu, 2021). If implemented meticulously and sensitively for handling cybercrimes against women, this could also be of great advantage to many grieving women.

Data Analysis and Findings

Using purposive sampling, the study identified seven women survivors of cyber harassment in Kerala who are active on various social media platforms. After reviewing the contents available on the incidence and nature of cyber harassment that they have faced, their in-depth interviews were conducted in virtual mode as per the convenience of the respondents during 2020-21. As the Covid-19 protocols and restrictions prevailed in Kerala during that time, data was collected through telephonic interviews, Whatsapp voice notes and chats with the respondents. The study ensured participant anonymity and confidentiality of personal details. A disclaimer was shared with participants, and their informed consent was obtained for using the data.

Along with the primary data, the contents of cyber harassment (post/video) were also analysed as secondary data for the study. Regarding some contents that were still available online, the comment section was also analysed as part of the secondary data. However, these contents are not cited or quoted in the study to ensure the privacy of the data.

Profile of the Respondents

The respondents of the study belonged to different age groups, socio-demographic profiles, educational qualifications and professions. This intersectionality brings many commonalities and differences in the nature of the harassment they have faced and the matter of provocation of the abusers. However, the present study limits itself to the lived experiences of women survivors who were attacked in cyberspace (and probably outside as well) for asserting their constitutional right of freedom of expression just like their male counterparts.

The respondents are very active in social media, now and then, and have arguably established a space for themselves in the cyber world to talk and/or write their perspectives. Such women, being vocal about a cause or a concept

that does not come to terms with the toxic masculine definitions of the ideal feminine, are regularly attacked and tried to be silenced on cyber platforms. However, considering the time and space limits of the paper, despite concentrating on the nature of abuses that they had undergone (which is captured as a capital for analysis but not narrated in detail), the study focuses on the post-harassment scenario that they had to face with the police, judiciary and society while fighting for justice.

One of the notable factors is that the majority of these respondents were harassed by a large mass of men, those who belonged to a particular political ideology, religious groups, fans group or conservative men in general, rather than individual one on one attacks. Even though a negligible number of women are also part of harassing, circulating and spreading hatred against the survivors, a vast majority engaged in these cybercrimes are men. Conspiracy, well-executed violence and intention to damage of reputation are evident in many cases as the abusers themselves made various WhatsApp/Facebook closed groups seeking support from similar men to continue harassing these women.

Incidence of Cybercrime

A 'vocal' or 'opinionated' woman is the core problem for the majority of these men. For example, the first respondent (R1), an assistant professor by profession, has emerged as a writer through social media in the past decade. Currently, she has around half a million followers on Facebook. This 'sari-clad' teacher who writes memoirs was much loved and appreciated till she started reacting to political issues. She has been cyberbullied, harassed, and threatened, and her images morphed nude and circulated many times, provoked by the critical responses to political issues that she used to post on her account. Being a daughter of a police officer, she approached the police in 2015, 2018 and 2019 with complaints about various serious offences against her, but to date; there has been no proper action taken. Interestingly, she was asked to collect evidence for those cases in which she has submitted around 110 offensive videos being posted against her. After going through all the trouble, she feels hopeless in getting justice in her cases.

On the contrary, the second respondent (R2), a Muslim, shared someone else's cartoon representing the Kathua rape case on Facebook in 2018. She was threatened to be killed by a particular political organisation member, who registered a case against her, alleging that she had hurt religious sentiments. Her parents were also alerted and threatened with murder. She has faced immense cyber-attacks as well. However, due to the political hold of her family, she was received well by the police when she registered a case against the cyber abuse and threats that she was facing. She came to know in a week that the case registered against her was withdrawn, after which she didn't pursue the case registered by her.

The case of the third respondent (R3) is a nationally discussed one associated with women's entry into the Sabarimala Temple controversy. Being a lawyer

and a practitioner of constitutional rights, she has followed the 2018 judgment of the Supreme Court of India that permitted all Hindu pilgrims, regardless of gender, to enter Sabarimala temple, which was previously restricted to women of reproductive age. After she entered the temple in 2019, she was widely attacked physically and virtually, where the threats included that rape, acid attack and murder for breaking the *Aachaaram (Tradition)*. In this particular case, a large number of conservative Hindu women were also involved in abusing her online and offline. Very recently, a murder attempt was made against her even after three years of her entry into the temple.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, the fourth respondent (R4) is one of the three women who attacked the Youtuber. However, she has been severely abused many times before for her unapologetic posts and educational videos about female sexuality. Brought up by a single mother and coming from a struggling background, she is a self-made woman. She has been vocal against and approached the cyber cell regarding many closed groups on Facebook that indoctrinate verbal violence against women and children in the name of fan fights. This confident behaviour has made many enemies to her. According to her, the inefficiency of cyber cells and gaps in existing laws make it very difficult for the survivors. While filing a complaint of cyber harassment in 2020, even the Police advised her to delete the aforementioned posts and trivialise the attacks against her.

The fifth respondent (R5) was massively attacked and slut shamed online while she posted her thoughts on the over-glorification of a scientist during his death. The harassment didn't end there. Various fake pages were created in her name, and the army of haters united in such spaces to abuse her and her differently abled child. She has received many rape and death threats on the phone. She filed a case in 2015 with the police, and there is no progress in the case.

The sixth respondent (R6) of the study is a movie reviewer, who, for criticising a particular movie by merit, was mass-attacked by the fan groups of the movie actor in the year 2018. She has received a series of rape and death threats through Facebook, WhatsApp and telephone; her Facebook account was mass-reported and suspended, and the fans widely shared her morphed nude picture. Even though the official fan group apologised to her and five accused were arrested, there was no end to the harassment. Police tried to demotivate her from filing the case and asked why she was using an online platform. The burden of proof was upon her, and by the time the complaint was registered, many people who attacked her through fake ids had blocked/deactivated their profiles. Police officials were expressively sympathetic even towards those threatening her through their original ids. She is still following up on the case and carrying the trauma of the incident that happened in 2018.

The seventh respondent (R7) is a prominent Youtubevlogger's life partner, often featured in his videos. Shockingly, she has been cyber attacked and severely body shamed in the comment section of many of their videos, using

abusive terms and questioning her reproductive capacity and body integrity without provocation. She filed a police complaint in 2020, yet no action has been taken in her case so far. She is not expecting any justice from the police in her case. The same was the case with a college student, a transwoman, who was body shamed on Facebook with rape threats. There was transphobia and homophobia in the comments. While approaching the police, they demotivated her to register the complaint and asked her to withdraw the photo from Facebook to avoid further damage. The student had to deactivate her Facebook account and face a lot of trauma associated with the incident.

The attacks that transwomen (any queer person, for that matter) face are multi-layered as compared to that of cis women. They are often prejudiced as immoral or unreliable and not treated with the dignity a citizen deserves. Even though the transgender community in Kerala is organising among themselves for visibility and citizen rights, violence against transgender people is still rising. The heteronormativity and trivialisation of cyber harassment against trans women and other queer women are apparent, making them more vulnerable than cis women while approaching legal, police and other state mechanisms. Homophobia and transphobia are additional hurdles they have to overcome.

Women who are active in social media, have strong political standpoints, respond and comment on various socio-political issues, and question misogyny in any sphere, ranging from their personal or professional life to religious and cultural practices, are cyber attacked in a deliberate manner by the concerned 'offended' group, after forming the bully group and conspiring their plan of action. This will begin by slut shaming the women, later on, issuing threats of rape and murder or even directly attacking them outside cyberspace. *Feminichi* is a term derived in the past few years in social media, originating from the word Feminist, to derogatorily name-call such women with opinions.

State and Social Responses

Whether it is a state or social response, the notions of good and bad women are still prevalent. In the recent past, when Kerala Police started an official Youtube Channel called 'PC Kuttan Pillai Speaking', the first episode was devoted to roasting, trolling and ridiculing a popular Tik Toker called Helen of Sparta, who was already cyber harassed for using a partly abuse word in her live video. The selection of this woman as a subject of ridicule, while extremely sexist and derogatory videos of many other Tiktokers are easily available for analysis, is not an innocent one, and it invited more cyber trolling to the said woman. In response to the massive criticism, the video had to be withdrawn from the channel.

If a woman is harassed and she reaches out with the 'damsel-in-distress' approach, many of the Police officers may feel sympathy towards her, which is the opposite case for women who are vocal and aware of their rights. The Devika et al. study reiterates the Saviour complex expressed by some Police

officers. The majority of the respondents in the present study replied that they did not get much help from the Police. Instead, suppose the complainants are younger, unmarried, and approach the police without a male member of the family. In that case, they are given advice by the police to not indulge much in the issue/controversy, which may affect their marriage prospects in the future. Many police officers even advised the complainants not to use mobile phones or online social media platforms. The complainants were also asked to change their phone numbers or delete the content that has resulted in the harassment, or block all the harassers and deal with the matter themselves.

On the other hand, many abusers get the support of family and friends, and often, that of police, while the complainant is treated as a nuisance. Many respondents mentioned that the police do not realise the severity of cyber harassment, and they internalise it as silly since it is nothing "physical". Even when the evidence is produced, they weigh out many of them by certain excuses, such as the comment didn't use the complainant's name, the words didn't explicitly mention rape, and the tone didn't seem serious.

The majority of the cyber-harassment cases registered are staying dormant without any arrests or the matter reaching to the court. It is often the complainant who is audited in social media and society for faults. The victim's character, past activities, friends circle, family background and posts are dissected and analysed at many levels. Friends and family advise them to stay away from social media for a while. They are also viewed with contempt by their relatives at times. Targeted virtual attacks in the future, social isolation, and negative branding are the additional trauma the survivors have to face.

The social responses, in physical and virtual forms, were mixed in nature. While many people, especially women, supported the survivors and shared similar experiences online, many others took this as an opportunity to throw stones at the survivors from behind. The mob mentality of certain people, who have nothing to do with the situation, still urged them to be part of harassing the survivor. The social responses also consisted of fear, anxiety, advice, blame, indifference and/or isolation. Very less number of people offered help and followed up on the issue.

However, the hardships these women have to undergo, that too while justice is delayed and denied, give a wrong message to the abusers and the possible prospective abusers that cyber harassment against women is something that can be easily get away with. Ever since the beginning of cyberspace interactions to date, the exponential increase of cybercrimes against women is primarily because of this notion. The inability and inefficiency of cyber laws have become a nurturing point for such abusers to engage in such crimes, which is both normalised and trivialised today. This reiterates and re-establishes toxic masculinity on the other hand. This vicious circle develops cyber-attacks as a new tool for men to teach women a lesson and show their 'place'.

Conclusion

First and foremost, it is integral to revisit the existing laws against cybercrimes and redressal mechanisms that protect women and make possible revisions, updates and amendments in such a way that women as citizens are ensured protection under the law with judicious gender equity perspective. Secondly, the police—the bridge between the survivor and the legal redressal mechanism—needs to be sensitised about the intensity of such crimes and the subtle yet abominable intimidation that can induce serious insecurity to the aggrieved to effectively function in cyberspace. This will enable the police to be morally accountable for ensuring the survivors' justice within their total capacity. Gender sensitivity and farsightedness on the issue of Cybercrime are prerequisites for engaging in effective judicial/policy interventions in this regard.

As social media platforms are free for users, each profile is a product, and any activity in the profile is contributing to profit for the social media corporates. The critically acclaimed documentary "The Social Dilemma" specifically points out why social media platforms do not take ample measures to avoid or reduce cyber harassment, but instead why their algorithms favour bullying and stalking. Controversies bring more attention to social media, which results in more time spent on social media, increasing these corporations' profit through advertisements. The platforms of cyber harassment are also made accountable for preventing and protecting women from cyber harassment.

While analysing the legal perspective of cyber-crimes against women, it is undoubtedly evident that the removal of Section 66A from The Information Technology Act, 2000, has invalidated many cyber offences against women. Even though the section is removed for its ambiguity, the IT Act may be amended with special provisions for cybercrimes against women, applicable to nuisance, harassment or outright violence of women in cyberspace. Similarly, under Section 69(1) of the IT Act, the state has the power to remove contents violative of public order, child pornography, international relations etc, through surveillance and monitoring. This should also include sexualised, objectified and defaming content of women such as morphed images, revenge porn videos etc.

Correspondingly, the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, needs to be amended in such a manner that it can accommodate cyber crimes as well. Another suggestion is incorporating online news channels and websites under the Press Council Act and Registration of Newspaper Act. As of now, there is no point of accountability for online portals and they cannot be regulated. They are equally involved in creating controversy and prompting cyberbullying; if cyber media come under the press, this will be reduced. Likewise, the community standards of social media sites depend on the policy of a specific domain. Integrating cultural differences, these community standards must be elaborated and made specific.

Most importantly, The Right to Privacy should be a statutory right, extendable to cyberspaces as well, which protects the right to privacy of the individual vis-a-vis the public interest to intrude into the personal space. IT Act amendments must strike a balance between surveillance and privacy. Above all, time-bound action is needed on cyber harassment cases from the side of the police and judiciary. Immediacy is extremely important in controlling online violence against women. The attitude of Police towards cybercrimes against women is extremely important here.

The response of the Police is part of the state and social response, because most of the time, their prejudices and belief systems negatively intervene and alter the objectivity with which the case is to be dealt. As discussed earlier, rather than approaching the survivors with either a Saviour complex or ambivalent sexism, Police should cater to their primary role of protecting the citizens, and abiding by the law. Therefore, gender sensitisationprogrammes that reiterate the citizenship and equal rights of women from an intersectional feminist perspective are extremely significant, along with awareness programmes on cybercrimes, their far-reaching consequences, and rights of the survivors, grievance platforms and legislative provisions to curb the cybercrimes against women. This should be aimed at every possible cyberspace user, ranging from pre-adolescent children to senior citizens inclusive of all genders and social classes. This could hopefully bring about social change from the perspective of attempting a cybercrime and responding to it.

References

Arun, Shobha. (2019). *Development and Gender Capital in India: Change, Continuity and Conflict in Kerala*. London and New York: Routledge.

Deccan Chronicle. (2019).Cyber crimes on women up, says Kerala Women's Commission.

https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/310119/cyber-crimes-on-women-up-says-kerala-womens-commission.html (Accessed on 5th October 2021).

Devika, J., Vijayakumar, Chithira.,Sreedhar Mini, Darshana., Resmi, P.S., and Alexander, Elizabeth. (2019). Walking on Eggshells: A study on gender justice and women's struggles in Malayali cyberspace. IT for Change. https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/1618/Kerala-Report_Righting-Gender-Norms.pdf(Accessed on 5th July 2021).

Express News Service. (2020). Activists pour motor oil on man, slap him over sleazy YouTube video.

https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2020/sep/27/activists-pour-motor-oil-on-man-slap-him-over-sleazy-youtube-video-2202445.html(Accessed on 5th July 2021).

Halder, D. and K. Jaishankar. 2011. 'Cyber Gender Harassment and Secondary Victimization: A Comparative Analysis of the United States, the UK, and India'. Victims and Offenders, 6(4): 386-398.

https://keralapolice.gov.in/page/aparjitha-is-online (Accessed on 5th October 2021).

NCRB.https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/CII%202019%20Volume%202.pdf (Accessed on 5th July 2021).

Press Trust of India (2020)

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/kerala-records-highest-number-of-cybercrimes-during-lockdown/articleshow/75865802.cms (Accessed on 10th November 2021).

Rajeev, Lekshmy. (2020). Is Kerala police dithering while dealing with cyber crimes? Police officer answers. *The News Minute*, Oct 07, 2020. https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/kerala-police-dithering-while-dealing-cyber-crimes-police-officer-answers-134773Accessed on 5th October 2021).

The Hindu.(2021). Cybercrime investigation division to be launched in Kerala.

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/cybercrime-investigation-division-to-be-launched-in-kerala/article36300372.ece   (Accessed on 5th October 2021).

Thomas, Trisha. (2018). Kerala tops smartphone penetration in India; Gujarat, Punjab close behind. *Ultra News*, June 20, 2018.

https://ultra.news/t-t/40425/kerala-tops-smartphone-penetration-in-india-gujarat-punjab-close-behind (Accessed on 5th October 2021).

Niyathi R. Krishna is Assistant Professor, Dept. of Development Studies
Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD)
Email: niyathi.iit@gmail.com

P Sivakumar is Head, Centre for Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Analysis
(CMEIA) Faculty & Head i/c, Department of Development Studies
Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD)
Email: skrgniyd@gmail.com

Impact of Population Policies on Women's Reproductive Rightsin India: A Sociological Analysis.

--- Arosmita Sahoo and C. Raghava Reddy

Abstract

The paper attempts to understand the implication of population policies on women's reproductive rights in India. On the one hand, fertility control is a legitimate aim of the family planning programme of population policies, and it gives all individuals the opportunity to control fertility freely. On the other hand, population control is a tool to preserve the institutional interests of the state. The focus of the present work is to explore how the institutional interest of India's family planning meets the reproductive rights of women, which provides women the right to control their reproductive bodies freely. The paper describes the nuanced understanding of women's agency in the making up their 'reproductive rights,' which are constructed, reconstructed, and controlled by the state. The paper reviews the population policies of India and women's agencies here understood within an intersectional approach.

Keywords: Gender, Intersectionality, NFHS, Planning Commission, Women's Agency

Introduction

Historically, around the world, women's life, sexualities, and fertility have been manipulated by the state for political or developmental projects (Correa, 1994; Rao, 2004). The population policies aim to express a relationship between development and demographic goal by the states and governments (Cervantes-Carson, 2004). In the process, women have always been at the center stage of all population policies. In the policies, women's bodies and sexuality have often been reduced to a 'reproductive body' by both the state and developmental and reformers (Anandhi, 1998). These policies have hardly considered women as active agents of development and empowerment. Initially, the Population Policies of India were to control its population for the overall growth and development of the state economy; new population policies eventually adopted methods that tried to emancipate women. These methods have attempted to increase the marriage age and allowed women to become part of the capitalist economy by providing employment opportunities. In this context, it is important to understand how the state has seen or manipulated women's agency. How do the state and other agencies create gender in the population policy of India? And how a woman's right is constructed throughout India's Population Policies in a country with high structural inequality? What do women's rights mean to the state?

Methodology

This research paper is based on secondary sources like various committee reports published by the Government of India, especially the planning commission reports, family planning reports, and from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reports. Data from NFHS survey reports are limited to NFHS-4, which was conducted till the last five-year plan of the planning commission of India, i.e., till 2017. From NFHS survey reports, four characteristics, i.e., religion, caste or tribe, education, and employment of women currently using or not using any contraceptive methods, have been discussed in this paper. The paper is divided into three sections thematically. It begins with the historical account of population policies in India from pre-independent (1920) to the early-independence period (1949). The second section illustrates a detailed understanding of the population policies of India from the post-independent period to the present. It also describes how women are located in various developmental programmes. In addition, the paper's third section maps out a new trend in population policies that have become more women-centric. The last part of the paper focuses on the conclusion and discussion regarding the state's role in constructing women's reproductive rights in the population policy.

Historical Account of Indian population policies

In the 1920s, the population of the country was often considered a problem in the Western world, and a need for a 'positive check' was likely to be recommended because of the extreme poverty prevailing in the country (Srinivasan, 1995a). Moreover, it would be worth to point here that the Neo-Malthusian League was set up in July 1929 in Madras (now Chennai) with the thought of birth control as a means of regulating rapid population growth through modern contraceptive methods (Ibid.).

The idea of controlling the population can be dated back to pre-independent India. The family planning programme was spread from Madras to Bombay and Pune. Despite their effort, it could hardly achieve its anticipated success because of the criticism of the staunch antagonist. Like others, Gandhi criticized these birth control methods and advocated the self-control method or *Brahmacharya* as the alternative form of birth control (Anandhi, S. 1998). Because of the intellectual foundation laid by the Neo-Malthusian league, along with the effort of Professor R.D. Karve to reform and empower women, four family planning clinics were established in 1930 in Mysore state under the leadership of the Maharajah (Srinivasan, K. 1995a, and 1995b). This was the first birth control clinic in the world. The effort to have a successful family planning programme was put to an end in 1939 at the beginning of the Second World War. After the Second World War, around 1949, the family planning movement gained momentum along with the Family Planning Association of India in Bombay, which is discussed in detail in the following sections. Subsequently, the Bengal Famine Inquiry Commission and the Health Survey, and the Bhore Committee report, the third International Planned Parenthood Federation, launched the Family Planning movement in Bombay under the

membership of Margaret Sanger and Lady Dhananthi Rama. Eventually, family planning became part of the Government's development plan.

Broadly understanding the debate on population control in the pre-independence period can be divided into three broad categories, i.e., neo-Malthusian, nationalist movement, and self-respect movement. While the Neo-Malthusian movement brought the development agenda into the center to defend birth control methods. Women were brought to the center stage of the national development agenda by reducing their role as mere producers, ignoring the productive activities that they contribute to the national development (Rao, 2004:29).

On the other hand, the nationalist debate idealized Hindu Brahminical ideology and glorified motherhood emphasizing women's role in nation-building (Anandhi, S. 1998). Contrary to the nationalist movement like the 'self-respect movement' started to believe that motherhood is the biggest obstacle to women's autonomy. They defended the birth control technique and claimed that these techniques are essential to control motherhood, which would eventually empower women. However, all forms of debate on women's reproductive rights are seen as the objective of developmental and political discourse, which seem to be negotiated to protect class, caste, and religion. It disseminates structural inequality and patriarchy in society (Anandhi, S. 1998). Women's subject-hood or agency seems to be missing in all spheres of debate. Unlike in the West, where women's right to contraceptive use was achieved as their fundamental right, in India, women were chosen to be the means to national development (Rao, M. 2004). Women are seen as mere reproducers than the producer of the development agenda. This role of women continued in the population policies after independence.

Population Policies in Independent India

During the 1950s, the Indian Government followed the political philosophy of democratic socialism as a federation of states and union territories. The various national economies and social development policies continued to influence family planning programmes during the post-independent period (Srinivasan, 1995b). For instance, despite the Bhore committee's concern to develop a health structure with a rural focus, the official programme for family planning was launched in India in 1952 with an urban-biased health care system and as part of the development agenda of the First Five Year plan.

Population Control: A New Development Agenda

The goal of the population policy, under the planning commission of India, was to 'stabilize the population at a level consistent with the requirements of the national economy' (First Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, 1951; cited by Srinivas, 1995b: 30). The clinical approach was started in the first five-year plan (1951-56) and continued till the second Five Year Plan (1956-61) as well. The Central Family Planning Board recommended the inclusion of sterilization, mainly male sterilization, which was facilitated to people by

providing incentives like money, land, etc. This clinical approach aimed to motivate married couples to reduce family size and spacing births. The eugenic movement achieved a considerable amount of success due to high levels of poverty and population density.

Following the recommendation of the Mudaliar Committee, the family planning programme emphasized more coercive methods to control the population. Due to the increasing interest shown by Western aid agencies, the family planning programme resulted in the burgeoning of the programme (Rao, M. 2004: 32). In 1963, the family planning programme adopted the extension methods. A 'Cafeteria' of service was offered to nearly 100 million couples in the reproductive age group so that they could select the method best suited to them. Conventional contraceptives (Nirodh, Diaphragms, Jelly/Cream Tubes, and Foam Tablets) were advocated for newly married couples. In contrast, the intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD) was advised for those having one or two children. If anyone wanted to ensure proper spacing in subsequent births, IUID was facilitated to them. Indira Gandhi led govt. introduced the IUCD, loop, and sterilization, i.e., vasectomies for men and tubectomies for women during the 1970s (Ledbetter, R. 1984). "A reinforced programme was implemented parallel to the former plan in 1965, under the supervision of the United Nations Advisory Mission. Under this programme, three courses of action were recommended, namely, an energetic loop (IUCD) programme, an intensified sterilization programme, and the promotion of the use of condoms through wider availability via commercial channels" (Rao, M. 2004: 33). 'By the end of the third plan in 1966, the government reported that over 800,000 IUDs had been inserted and 1.5 million sterilization operations had been performed' (Ibid). Consequently, a move took place from the reorganized programme with an extension education approach to a forceful loop programme. The 3rd five-year plan of the planning commission obtained an outlay of Rs 0.5 billion, while in the first and second five-year plans, the budget was allocated Rs. 6.5 and Rs 50 million subsequently (Ibid).

Population Control: A Targeted Approach

The population control programme gained momentum in 1966 when it became target-oriented and time-bounded. It was aimed by the Indian planning commission to reduce the annual birth rate to 32 by the end of the Fourth Plan and to 25 per thousand population in another 5 to 7 years. During the world economic crisis in 1966, an increasing amount of pressure from the World Bank surmounted the population policy in India. In 1966, World Bank and USAID replaced the Ford Foundation. In April 1966, the family planning programme was separated from the purview of the Directorate General of Health Service and constituted a separate Department of Family Planning with the only goal of controlling the population. With the recommendation of the U.N. Advisory Mission of 1966, the Directorate of Family Planning had withheld other responsibilities like maternal and child health and nutrition.

Both the Third and Fourth Plan periods in the planning commission put a combined effort into consolidating the family-planning programme with a shift in programme strategy in the Fourth Five Plan period. The fourth plan aimed at controlling the birth rate from around 39 per thousand to 25 per thousand within the next 10-12 years (Ibid).' It adopted a camp approach along with the methods and procedures initiated by the Government in the late 1960s. 'By the end of 1979, four million IUDs had been accepted. The device used for sterilization created a severe problem. Ten percent of women who received IUDs suffered excessive bleeding and about 6 percent experienced involuntary expulsion' (Ledbetter R.1984), which shows a lack of research done about the population control technologies and, therefore, poses doubt about passing information about the side-effect of the users (Ibid).

As it can be said from the above discussion, the state's primary aim was to control its population as a tool of its development agenda. These programs and plans have little or no concern for women's health and women's reproductive rights. The population policy took a new form in the 1970s when Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi exercised dictatorial power in India from June 1975 to March 1977 and allowed her son Sanjay Gandhi to exercise the most aggressive and repressive sterilization campaigns (Ledbetter, R. 1984). A national target of 4.3 million sterilizations was anticipated to be achieved by March 1977. Voluntary sterilization shifted to forced sterilization. From 1974 to 1979, an estimated 18,500,000 people were reportedly sterilized (Gupte, 2017). Despite adopting the coercive method, the objective of the plan was to reduce the birth rate from 35 per 1000 to 30 per 1000 by 1978-79, but it could not be achieved. That coercive strategy resulted in mass protests all around the country. Resultantly, the ruling govt. lost its power during the general election of 1977.

Population Control: Women as the Passive Agent of Development

Towards the end of the Fifth Plan in the planning commission, family planning shifted its focus from its old narrow concept of population control to the welfare philosophy. Female literacy was targeted to achieve, and legislation for raising the legal minimum age at marriage for females to 18 and males to 21 was implemented. Women in this period were considered the object of the development process rather than their actual welfare being traced (Rao, M, 2004). Dr. Rai made the worst offensive remark, describing women as 'baby factories (mentioned in Rao 2004). This was the point of departure when the focus shifted from male to female sterilization because the previous programmes focused on sterilizing men seemed to be 'politically costly' (Rao, 2004: 51) with the defeat of the Congress party. This shift from men to women-centric population control programmes seems to be a deliberate attempt of the state to fulfil its vested interest than to empower women. This woman-centric program not only targeted women but selectively chose lower-class women as its target (Ibid.). A report by ICMR-ICSSR Committee states that the greatest weakness of Indian society was poverty and inequality, which had created differential health and demographic consequences for different sections of the population (Nayar, 2012).

The population itself was blamed for the program's failure because of their poor health, poverty, and ignorance (Rao, M. 2004). Thus, the attention of the population programmes shifted from population control to health care for the people (Ibid). During the Sixth Plan, the emphasis was continued on female sterilization (Ibid). The state naturalized the patriarchal victimization of Indian women, as the Working Group affirmed that 'women are the best votaries of family planning (Ibid).

During the 7th plan, the total number of family planning accepter constantly rose from year to year from a level of 18.92 million in 1985-86 to 24.38 million in 1988-89, comprising 4.68 million sterilizations, 4.85 million IUD insertions, 12.43 million condoms and coitus interruptus (C.C). Users and 2.42 million oral pill users, which is the high record figure so far since the inception of the Programmes. The percentage distribution of acceptors of various population control methods shows a dramatic change from 1987 to 88. A total number of 24.38 million family planning acceptance rose in 1988-89 from 18.92 million in 1983-86. Of these 24.38 million highest, 46.4 percent of the acceptor of Vasectomy found among the women grouped as illiterate, following 17.9 percent had studied Below Primary, 14.2 percent acceptors studied up to middle standard, 10.2 up to Matric/ Higher standard, 8.0 percent up to Secondary and the lowest 3.5 percent acceptor of the same method were having education of graduate and above. The data shows that the more educated women (married) have accepted fewer population control methods during this period.

In contrast, the illiterate women seem to have accepted the method more readily. The same trend is founded among the accepter of Tubectomy and IUD. Similarly, among husbands, those having more education seem to be accepted fewer fertility control methods. The highest, 39.1 percent of husbands are illiterate and have received Vasectomy, following 19.9 percent having education below primary, 15.5 percent having education up to primary, 12.1 up to the middle, 10.0 up to matric/higher secondary, and the lowest, 3.6 percent acceptor have education up to graduation and above (Table No. 1). It shows that compared to men; women seem to have adopted this permanent method more in number.

Table No. (1)

Distribution of acceptors of Vasectomy, tubectomy & IUD by educational
background among husband & wife

Literacy status	Methods					
	Vasectomy		Tubectomy		IUD	
	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband
Illiterate	46.2	39.1	45.0	35.1	37.3	29.0
Below Primary	17.9	19.9	19.2	19.0	19.7	19.2
Primary	14.2	15.4	15.5	16.8	16.6	18.2
Middle	10.2	12.1		11.9	9.3	12.5
Matric/Higher Secondary	8.0	10.0	7.7	11.9	9.3	12.5
Graduate and above	3.5	3.6	1.7	4.0	3.6	5.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Family Welfare Planning in India Year Book 1988-89, Department of
Family Welfare, New Delhi.

The Eighth Plan of planning commission was launched when the international
political and economic order was restructured. Due to the financial crisis, the
Indian Government had to approach World Bank and International Monetary
Fund to contribute to its population policy programmes. In the process, trade
and the industrial economy were freed from the hand of the Government.
Indian economy received a new dimension with the initiation of the
Stabilization-Structural Adjustment Programme under the aegis of the World
Bank. This drastic change tremendously affected population policies,
including other national policies. The Government's commitment to public
health declined sharply (Kumar et al., 2011). The health sector, therefore,
merged with the profit-making programmes, where the goal was set to achieve
maximum profit. The population policy of India saw a paradigm shift with the
new alliances of Neo-Malthusians and the feminist approach.

A study conducted by NFHS (1992-93) during the eighth five-year plan of the
planning commission covered a household of 500,492 residents. This report
suggests that education has a significant impact on the use of modern
contraceptive methods. The data shows that more women with education
above high school have used more modern contraceptive methods, although a
significant difference is found between literate and illiterate women. The
purpose of selecting the modern contraceptive method was to understand the
place of women's rights in population policies, which were developed to meet
the state's modern notion of social development. But it must be understood
here that big commercial companies with an economic interest created those
modern contraceptive methods.

Further, these technologies started increasing in the Indian market at a time when the countries allowed the global market to invest in India through public-private partnerships (PPP) in the beginning. Then they shifted their interest to commercializing contraceptive methods. Such technologies were used selectively by the state to sterilize a particular segment of the population. On the other hand, safer and women-friendly contraceptives were marketized with a vested interest, which became a part of middle-class consumption later. According to the NFHS-1 report, among the population using any methods, women from all educational backgrounds, i.e., illiterate (25.7), literate (35.1), middle school completed (30.1), and women studies up to high school and above (22) percentage, have used sterilization method compare to male (refer to table 2). This asymmetric trend has also been observed before (refer to Table1), which subjugated women under the rubric of population policies.

Table No.2

Percent distribution of currently married women by contraceptive method currently used according to their education, NFHS, 1

Methods	Illiterate	Literate	Middle school complete	High school and above
Any methods	33.9	50.4	50.8	54.7
Any modern method	31.5	44.8	42.4	45
Any modern temporary method	2.1	6.1	9.5	20.9
Pill	0.6	1.7	2.3	2.8
IUD	0.6	2.2	3.3	7.3
Injection dom	0.8	2.2	3.8	10.7
Female sterilization	25.7	35.1	30.1	22
Male sterilization	3.7	3.7	2.8	2.1
Any traditional method	2.4	5.5	8.5	9.7
Periodic abstinence	1.6	3.2	4.9	5.9
Withdrawal	0.6	2.1	3.4	3.4
Other methods	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Not using any method	66.1	49.6	49.2	45.3
Total percent	100	100	100	100
Number of women	53045	15476	6280	9879

Sources:National Family Health Survey, No. 1, 1992-93.

Table No. 2.1

Percent distribution of currently married women by contraceptive method
currently used according to their religion and caste. (NFHS-1)

Background characteristic	Religion							Caste		
	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Jain	Buddhist	Other	SC	ST	OBC
Any methods	41.6	27.7	48.3	57.6	62.6	50.4	37.4	34.5	33	42.4
Any modern method	37.7	22	40.3	50	58.3	47.9	33.3	31.7	30.8	37.6
Any modern temporary method	5.1	6.1	6.5	17	22.3	5.7	4.2	2.8	2	6.4
Pill	1	1.9	1.2	2.5	2.1	1.9	1	0.7	0.7	1.3
IUD	1.7	1.7	2.5	6.4	7.9	2.8	1.4	0.8	0.5	2.2
Injection dom	2.2	2.4	2.8	8.1	12.3	1	1.8	1.3	0.7	2.8
Female sterilization	29	14.4	30.2	30.3	34.3	30.3	23.8	25.6	23.2	28
Male sterilization	3.7	1.6	3.6	2.6	1.7	11.9	5.3	3.2	5.6	3.2
Any traditional method	3.9	5.7	8	7.6	4.2	2.5	4.1	2.8	2.2	4.7
Periodic abstinence	2.4	3.7	5.2	4.2	3.3	1.9	3.1	1.9	1.2	2.9
Withdrawal	1.3	1.6	2.2	3.3	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.6
Other methods	0.2	0.4	0.6				0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2
Not using any method	58.4	72.3	51.7	42.4	37.4	49.6	62.6	65.5	67	57.6
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of women	69635	10082	1960	1606	418	665	312	10350	7422	66906

Sources: [National Family Health Survey, No. 1, 1992-93](#)

Note: SC: Schedule caste S.T.: Schedule Tribe OBC: Other backward class

A variation was found among women of different ethnic backgrounds regarding the use of the modern contraceptive method. Compared to other religious groups, the use of any modern method is found more among Jain women (58.3), following Sikh(58.3), Buddhist(47.9), Christian(40.3), Hindu(37.7), and Muslim women (22) percentage subsequently (refer to table no. 2.1)). Similarly, the use of pills and IUDs was found more among women from Jain and Sikh, following Christian, Muslim, and Hindu women. Female sterilization was found more among Jain women following Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim women.

Unlike education and religion, caste and tribe have no strong relation to contraceptive methods. Nevertheless, the use of modern contraceptive methods is observed more among Scheduled Castes (S.C.s) in comparison to Scheduled Tribes (S.T.s) and women from other backward classes (OBC) (refer to table no. 2.1).This report portrays a differential use of both modern contraceptive methods. It suggests that although the level of education induces the use of modern contraceptives, religion significantly affects the use of these

modern methods. Compared to female sterilization, male sterilization is observed more across the line of education, religion, and caste, although with variation in proportion among each category (refer to Table no. 2 & 2.1). This gender difference and availability of more female-oriented contraceptive methods imply Indian family planning programme is gender biased. This gender bias naturalizes and normalize women as primary reproductive being rather than active agents of development. It was when the National Draft Population Policy was introduced to improvise women's reproductive health. However, this goal looks skeptical in a country with huge gender inequality.

The Ninth Plan of planning commission (1997-2002) formed a more detailed population policy with weak Primary Health Care (Rao, M. 2004). The emphasis of the plan was to meet the felt need for contraceptives and reduce infant and maternal mortality. It was also aimed at reducing the desired level of fertility. The plan's estimated cost substantially increased from the previous plan from 65 billion to 151.20 billion. Following the same Neo-Malthusian ideas, it neutralized the health standard with the rapid growth of the population (Commission, P., 2002).

The second NFHS report (1998-99), which came during the ninth plan, shows that the modern contraceptive method has increased among educated women. In comparison, female sterilization remained more among illiterate women, with a sliding increase in contraceptive use, particularly of modern contraceptive methods among literate women. Like it is observed in the previous NFHS-1 report, female sterilization is practiced more across all educational backgrounds in comparison to male sterilization (refer to table no. 3). Though education has affected women to use more modern methods, religion continues to play a significant role in controlling and manipulating women's choice on reproductive methods. A similar trend to the previous NFHS-1 report suggests it is also found in the NFHS-2 report, which shows that women who belong to the Muslim religion use less modern contractive methods than women from other religions (refer to table no. 3.1). Similarly, women from the Buddhist religion, following Jain, Sikh, and Christian women use more modern methods than Hindu following Muslim women. Among SC, S.T., and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), OBCs women seem to use more modern contraceptive methods than S.C.s and S.T.s women (refer to table no. 3.1). However, the shift in the use of the modern contraceptive method from illiterate to educated indicates that women's role in fertility control has been modified in a more 'modern' way by providing more educational support. However, a women's autonomy in controlling their 'own' fertility remains challenging because their 'own' fertility is primarily determined by the family and the broader social structure as religion continues to play an actor in controlling women's reproductive choice.

Table No. (3)

Percent distribution of currently married women by contraceptive method currently used according to their education and caste/tribe. NFHS-2

Methods	Education				Caste/tribe			
	Illiterate	Literate, <middle school complete	Middle school complete	High school complete & above	SC	ST	OBC	Other
Any method	42.9	55.5	52.2	57	44.6	39.1	46.8	53.5
Any modern method	39.2	49.7	44.6	47.1	40.1	35.2	43.4	45.8
Pill	1.2	3.3	3.7	3	1.5	1.6	1.1	3.3
IUD	0.5	1.5	2.9	5.7	0.7	0.9	1.5	2.4
Condom	0.9	2.3	5	11.2	1.6	0.8	2	5.1
Female sterilization	34.4	40.8	32.1	25.8	34.4	28.8	37.2	33.1
Male Sterilization	2.2	1.8	0.9	1.4	6.4	0.8	9.1	1.4
Any traditional method	3.3	5.4	7.4	9.6	4.2	3.2	3.1	7.3
Rhythm/Safe period	2.1	3.1	4	5.9	2.7	2.3	2	4.2
Withdrawal	1.2	2.4	3.4	3.7	1.6	1	1.1	3.1
Other method	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.4
Not using any method	57.1	44.5	47.8	43	55.4	60.9	53.2	46.5
Totsl percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of women	48,018	16,257	7,073	12,291	15,178	7,176	27,529	32,957

Sources: National Family Health Survey, No. 2, 1998-99

Table No. (3.1)

Percent distribution of currently married women by contraceptive method currently used according to their religion. NFHS-2

Methods	Religion							
	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Jain	Buddhist	Other	No religion
Any method	49.2	37	52.4	65.2	65.1	64.7	48.6	30.1
Any modern method	44.3	30.2	44.9	54.7	58.1	63.9	35.2	28.6
Pill	1.8	4.1	1.2	3.7	0.2	2.5	2.8	3.3
IUD	1.5	1.5	2.3	7.4	4.3	1.4	3.9	6.3
Condom	2.7	4.2	2.8	11.8	10	2.5	1.3	2.4
Female sterilization	36.2	19.6	36.5	30.2	42.3	52.5	26.1	16.7
Male Sterilization	9.6	4.7	6.4	7.1	10.1	6.4	7.1	10.1
Any traditional method	4.7	6.4	7.1	10.1	6.4	0.8	9.1	1.4
Rhythm/Safe period	2.9	3.6	4.9	4.6	4.6	0.4	4.9	1
Withdrawal	1.8	2.8	2.3	5.5	1.8	0.4	4.3	0.4
Other method	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0	4.2	0	0.3
Not using any method	50.8	63	47.6	34.8	34.9	35.3	51.4	69.9
Totsl percent	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of women	68,443	10,477	2,072	1,365	316	601	259	38

Sources: National Family Health Survey, No. 2, 1998-99

The population policy of India under the 10[th]plan (2002-2007) became less coercive and more democratically de-centralized. It involved community participation in meeting its goal of improvising reproductive health. The above plans integrated with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aimed at reducing poverty, gender gap (in literacy), infant mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio, and fertility rate (World Health Organization, 1994, & Gulati S.C. 2005).

National Rural Health Mission was set up under the National Common Minimum Program (NCMP) mandate to provide primary healthcare, with special care to women and the girl child, and to control communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS, etc. (Ibid). During this period, female sterilization continued under the family planning programme. NFHS-3 report (2005/06), conducted during the tenth plan of the planning commission, suggests that modern contraceptive methods are primarily found among women from having no education to education beyond twelve years though with very little difference. Unlike the previous NFHS reports, NFHS-3 put forward that women with no education (39.7) and with an education of only five years (46.7) have practiced more female sterilization following education completed from five to seven years (41.1), education completed eight to nine years (33.5), education completed ten to eleven years (32.2) and the lowest education completed twelve years or more (20.6). This change in the practice of permanent sterilization among women, particularly among women with less education, suggests that the focus of population policy is permanent and mostly a one-time intervention that is easy to implement on women from lower sections of society. Subsequently, male sterilization continues to decrease in comparison to female sterilization. The use of traditional methods has decreased than the previous years. More use of modern methods also indicates the role of the extended private market and the impact of education and awareness among women to use contraceptives. NFHS 3 report provides data on women's employment level and their use of contraception. This data indicates that women employed for cash (57.7) use any modern method than those employed and employed not for cash. Similarly, women employed for cash (48.3) used female sterilization more than women not employed and employed not for cash (refer to table no. 4[1]).

Among the religious communities, according to NFHS 3, more women (69.1) from Jain have used modern contraceptive methods, following Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist women (64.7), Sikh women (58.4), Hindu women (50.2), Christian women (48.9), Muslim women (36.4), and others (21.1). Female sterilization is found more among Buddhist women (54.1) and lowest among others (14.2),

---

[1] In table number 4, 4.1, 4.2 only the most effective method is considered if more than one method is used. The total includes women without information on education, employment (past twelve months), religion, and caste/ tribe, who are not shown separately.

following Muslim women (21.3). Male sterilization remained less across all religions in comparison to the female population (refer to table no.4.1).

Table No. (4):

Percent distribution of currently married women using contraceptive method, according to education and employment. NFHS-3

	Methods	Education						Employment		
		No Education	<5 years complete	5-7 years complete	8-9 years complete	10-11years complete	12 /more Years complete	Not employed	Employed for cash	Employed not for cash
Modern method	Any method	52.1	63	58.7	58.5	59.7	62.3	53.8	63.6	52.7
	Any modern method	45.7	55.5	51.7	48.1	50.2	50.5	44.9	57.4	46.2
	Female sterilization	39.7	46.7	41.1	33.5	32.2	20.6	31.2	48.3	40.2
	Male sterilization	1.2	1.4	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.4	1.3
	Pill	1.8	3.9	4	5	3.9	4	3.9	2.3	1.4
	IUD	0.6	0.7	1.4	2.4	3.6	6.1	2.1	1.3	1
	Injectables	1.1	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Condom/Nirodh	2.2	02-Jul	4.4.	6.3	9.5	18.6	6.7	3.9	2.3
	Other modern method	0	0.1	0	0..1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0
Traditional method	Any traditional method	6.4	7.5	7	10.3	9.5	11.8	8.9	6.2	6.6
	Rhythm	4.5	4.2	4.5	6	5.5	6.8	5.5	3.8	4.7
	Withdrawal	1.4	2.8	2.4	4.2	3.9	4.9	3.1	1.9	1.4
	Folk method	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.5
	Not currently using	47.9	37	41.3	41.5	40.3	37.7	46.2	36.4	47.3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Number of women	43,931	7,776	14,018	10,735	7,704	8,921	53,238	25,601	14,234

Source: National Family Health Survey, No. 3, 2003-5.

Table No. (4.1)

Percent distribution of currently married women by contraceptive method currently used according to their religion. NFHS-3

	Methods	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Other
Modern method	Any method	57.8	45.7	57.6	66.5	67.7	75.4	25.3
	Any modern method	50.2	36.4	48.9	58.4	64.7	69.1	21.1
	Female sterilization	39.9	21.3	40.7	31.4	54.1	41.1	14.2
	Male sterilization	1.1	0.6	0.7	0.8	4.5	0.7	0.4
	Pill	2.7	5.7	1.4	2.6	1.6	1.6	4.0
	IUD	1.6	1.8	2.4	7.9	0.7	6.0	0.6
	Injectables	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Condom/Nirodh	4.8	6.8	3.6	15.8	3.7	19.7	1.8
	Other modern method	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Traditional method	Any traditional method	7.6	9.3	8.8	8.1	3.0	6.3	4.1
	Rhythm	4.9	5.6	5.4	4.8	2.6	2.6	1.5
	Withdrawal	2.4	3.4	3.4	3.3	0.4	3.3	1.8
	Folk method	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.8
	Not currently using	42.2	54.3	42.4	33.5	32.3	24.6	74.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.4	100.4	100.4	100.0
	Number of women	75,799	12,288	2,041	1,567	684	279	333

Source: National Family Health Survey, No. 3, 2003-5.

NFHS 3 suggests that among S.C.s, STs, and OBCs, a significant number of OBC women (48.0) were found to have used modern contraceptive methods, following 47.1 percent of S.C. women and 42.7 percent of S.T. women (refer to the table no 4.2). In the entire category of caste and tribe, women use more modern methods, i.e., 58.6 percent of those who do not know about their caste or tribe name, following 51.4 percent of women from other castes/tribes.

Table No. (4.2)

Percent distribution of currently married women, by contraceptive method currently used according to the caste/tribe. NFHS-3

	Methods	SC	ST	OBC	Others	Don't know
Modern method	Any method	55.0	47.9	54.2	61.8	65.8
	Any modern method	47.1	42.7	48.0	51.4	58.6
	Female sterilization	38.3	35.3	39.7	34.1	53.9
	Male sterilization	1.1	2.5	0.7	1.0	0.3
	Pill	2.8	2.2	1.8	5.1	1.6
	IUD	0.8	0.8	1.5	2.8	1.7
	Injectables	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0
	Condom/Nirodh	4.0	1.7	4.2	8.2	1.2
	Other modern method	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1.	0.0
Traditional method	Any traditional method	8.0	5.2	6.2	10.3	7.2
	Rhythm	5.5	2.8	4.2	6.0	4.1
	Withdrawal	2.1	1.5	1.6	4.1	3.1
	Folk method	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.0
	Not currently using	45.0	52.1	45.8	38.2	34.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.4	100.4
	Number of women	17,372	7,632	37,198	30,131	462

Source: National Family Health Survey, No. 3, 2003-05Note:

While Government's commitment to public health started to decline from the tenth five-year plan, the result of which is observed in the NFHS 3 report, where women seem to have used more modern contraceptive methods. On the other hand, population stabilization was implemented among working women groups in the National Commission under Eleventh Plan (2007-12). Along with the other goals framed in the previous plans, this plan incorporated the women's autonomy, health risk, and moral objection to contraceptives. More attempts were made to provide more choices of contraceptive methods, with more effective and safer methods like female condoms (GOI, 2012). Male involvement in the family planning programmes was prioritized, but the contraceptive techniques remain more women-centric (refer to NFHS-4 report).

Under the twelfth plan (2012-17), the Planning Commission has constituted a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) on universal health coverage, seven working groups, and two steering committees to define the appropriate strategy for the health sector. The goals of the Steering committee were to reduce the infant mortality rate(IMR) to 25 by 2017, to reduce the maternal

mortality ratio (MMR) to 100 by 2017, to reduce the total fertility rate (TFR) to 2.1 by 2017, to prevent and reduce underweight children under three year to 23 percent by 2017, to prevent and reduce anemia among aged 15-49 years to 28 percent, to raise child sex ratio in the 0-6 year age group from 914 to 935, to prevent and reduce the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases (including mental illness) and injuries. Despite the highly ambitious goal of the Government to improve public health in general while controlling the nation's population, the private market agencies started to dominate to distribute more modern contraceptive use. NFHS survey four conducted during 2015-16 suggests that women who have attended school only for five years have used more any of the modern methods, i.e., 55.3 percent following women attended school from five to seven years (51.9), attended no schooling (49.0), attended education for ten to eleven years (47.3), attended education for eight to nine years (46.0) and attended the last who have attended more education than the rest (40.7). Similarly, female sterilization is used by more women who have attended significantly less education or have not attended schooling and is found relatively less among women who have attended education for twelve or more years (refer to table no. 5). Like in the last report (NFHS-3), the NFHS-4 suggests that employed women have used more modern contraceptive methods than unemployed (refer to table no. 5).

Table No. (5)

Percent distribution of currently married women aged 15-49 by contraceptive method currently used, according to education and employment. NFHS-4

Methods	Schooling					Employment (Past 12 months)			
Modern method	No Schooling	<5 years complete	5-7 years complete	8-9 years complete	10-11 years complete	12 or more years complete	Not employed	Employed for cash	Employed not for cash
Any method	54	60.5	57.3	53.1	53	47.2	50.8	65	58
Any modern method	49	55.3	51.9	46	47.3	40.7	44.3	60	52.4
Female Sterilization	42.7	44.6	41.1	31.6	33.1	21.2	31.1	50.4	44.7
Male sterilization	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.4
Pill	2.6	6.8	5	6	4.2	3.3	4.5	3.2	2.2
Pill IUD or PPIUD	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.7	2	3.2	1.6	1.5	0.9
Injection	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.5
Condom/Nirodh	2.5	2.4	4	6.1	7.4	12.4	6.6	4.2	3.5
Female condom	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0.1
LAM	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0.1
Other modern method	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any traditional method	5.1	5.2	5.4	7.1	5.8	6.5	6.5	5	5.5
Rhythm	3.6	2.8	3.2	4.1	3.1	3.8	3.7	3	3.7
Withdrawal	1.5	2.5	2.2	3	2.7	2.8	2.8	2	1.8
Not currently using	46	39.5	42.7	46.9	47	52.8	49.2	35	42
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of women	1,69,590	34,039	80,785	76,254	60,386	90,320	61,054	21,567	5,400

Source: National Family Health Survey, No. 4, 2015-16

Among all religions, the highest number of both Sikh and Buddhists women (65.4 percent) have used more modern contraceptives, followed by Jain (57.6 percent), Hindu women (48.8), Christian (47.9percent), Muslim women (37.9) and others (36.7). Compared to S.T.s and OBCs, relatively S.C.s women (49.2) have used modern contraceptive methods with the highest 49.9 percent from another category (refer to table 5.1).

Table No. (5.1)

Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 by contraceptive method currently used, according to religion and caste/tribe.NFHS, 4

Methods	Religion							Caste / Tribe				
Modern method	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Other	SC	ST	OBC	Other	Do not Know
Any method	54.4	45.3	51.2	73.9	67.7	62	42	54.9	49.4	51.5	57.5	44.7
Any modern method	48.8	37.9	47.9	65.4	65.4	57.6	36.6	49.2	45	46.5	49.9	39.5
Female Sterilization	38.2	20.8	40.2	38.2	52	38.1	14.9	38.5	36.5	37.3	32	25.4
Male sterilization	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.6	1.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1
Pill	3.4	8.1	3.2	2.6	3.4	1.5	16.8	3.9	4.2	2.4	6.9	7.5
IUD or PPIUD	1.4	1.4	1.7	6.5	1.5	3.1	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.4	2	1.7
Injectable	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
Condom/Nirodh	5.2	7.2	2.4	17.3	7.5	13.5	2.8	5	5	4.9	8.4	4.3
Female Condom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAM	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
modern method	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any traditional method	5.6	7.3	3.3	8.5	2.3	4.4	5.4	5.7	5.7	5	7.6	5.2
Rhythm	3.5	4.1	1.5	5.6	0.8	2	4.2	3.6	3.6	3.4	4.1	2.2
Withdrawal	2.1	3.3	1.8	2.9	1.5	2.3	1.2	2.1	2.1	1.7	3.4	3
Not currently using	45.6	54.7	48.8	26.1	32.3	38	58	45.1	45.1	48.5	42.5	55.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of women	4,16,446	67,317	11,368	8,201	4,509	943	2589	1,03,611	1,03,611	2,23,167	1,34,375	3,514

Source: National Family Health Survey, No. 4, 2015-16

Conclusion

Motherhood has been glorified by state policies to meet the goal of 'development.' Historically, the 'structural inequality through patriarchal ideology' has prevailed in India's population policies. Women's rights have been constructed by the dominant ideology of the modern nation-state, even during the early years of independence, which ignores women's agency in making their own decisions about their bodies. The data presented so far point out the fact that population policy implementation is influenced by economic and social backgrounds like caste, class, and religion of women. Women from poor and marginalized backgrounds were targeted in the early period of population policies. Eventually, the policies shifted their goal from a target-oriented approach to a welfare programme where women's reproductive health and education are prioritized as a welfare measure. As shown in NFHS 3 and 4 data, despite an increase in the educational level among women, their choice

of contraceptive methods has been predominantly regulated by their respective religion and cultural values. There is a need for cultural action and change in the value system, which is possible through the adoption of modern educational and economic empowerment of women in general and rural poor women.

Although significant steps have been planned under state policies, the differential use of modern permanent and temporary commercial contraceptive methods over the years by women from distinct socio-economic backgrounds shows a mismatch in the goal of and implementation of the policies. Both NFHS 3 and 4 suggest that women with less education and employed for cash are adopting more modern permanent methods. This change in the shift from the previous reports indicated that women from lower socio-economic backgrounds choose permanent sterilization to protect their employment in the labor market. Besides, female sterilization has predominantly prevailed in the post-neo-liberalization period, suggesting that women remain primarily responsible as reproducers rather than active development agents. Gender-neutral measures are needed to implement through state-regulated policies to bring balanced and progressive societal development. Indirect measures are required to reach out to poor and marginalized women by informing them of the need for safe contraceptive methods. Besides, for holistic growth, maternal health needs to be prioritized through state policies, mainly for women from marginalized backgrounds.

The definition of reproductive rights has been reconstructed by different governments, with their ideology and according to the new goal of the policy. With the introduction of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) and later with the growth of the capitalist economy, contraceptive methods adopted more commercialized and technological alternatives. As a result, capitalist pharmacies' commercial interests intertwined with the modern state's developmental propaganda. In this process of contraceptive methods modernization, the neo-liberal market economy has taken over the state's role and is ruling the population dynamics. New modern contraceptive methods in the neo-liberal market economy give more choices to women. Further, this choice is subject to change based on the socio-economic of women.

The recent growth and development of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) raise a few questions about the state's passive role in shaping the commercial interest of the capitalist economy and its negligence towards women, particularly women from the lower strata of society. It raises two types of questions. Firstly, how do India's anti-natal population policies function in a pro-natal society, and how does the state look into women's reproductive rights? Secondly, how do the new ARTs legitimize and operationalize in society with such stringent anti-natal population policies?

References

Anandhi, S. (1998). Reproductive Bodies and Regulated Sexuality: Birth Control Debates in Early 20th Century Tamil Nadu'. *In* Mary E John and Janaki Nair (eds), A Question of Silence. *A Question of Silence: The Sexual Economies of Modern India.* New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Cervantes-Carson, A. (2004). Reproductive Rights: An Analytical Proposal (*In Gendered Perspectives on Reproduction and Sexuality)*. New Delhi: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Commission,P., GOI. (2001-02). *Annual Report 2001-2002*.Retrieved on 08 July 2022 from https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/reports/genrep/arep0102/ar01_02.pdf

Commission, P.,GOI. (2007-12). Report of the Working Group on Population Stabilization for the Eleventh Five Year Plan*(2007-12).* Retrieved on 08July,2022 from https://niti.gov.in/planningcommission.gov.in/docs/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp11/wg11_rphfw2.pdf

Correa, Sonia. (1994). *Population and Reproductive Rights: Feminist Perspectives from the South*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Gulati, S.C. (2005). *Population Policies and Programs Since ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development), 1994: Issues and Challenges Ahead.* (February). Retrieved on 08 July 2022 from https://iegindia.org/upload/publication/Workpap/wp258.pdf

Gupte, P. R. (2017). India: "The Emergency" and the Politics of Mass Sterilization. *Education about Asia, 22(3): 40-44.*

Kumar, A. K. S., et al. (2011). Financing Health Care for All: Challenges and Opportunities. *The Lancet*, *377*(9766), 668–679. Retrieved on 08 July 2022 from https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(10)61884-3

Ledbetter, R. (1984). *Thirty Years of Family Planning in India.* Retrieved on 08 July 2022 from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644186 IN INDIA. 24(7), 736–758.

Rao, M. (2004). *From Population Control to Reproductive Health: Malthusian Arithmetic*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India.

Srinivasan, K. (1995a). Population Concerns Before Independence. In *Regulating Reproduction in India's Population: Effort, Results, and Recommendations* (pp. 15–25). New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Srinivasan, K. (1995b). *Regulating Reproduction in India's Population: Effort, Results, and Recommendations*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Nayar, K. R. (2012). Three Decades of ICSSR-ICMR Committee Report &

the Re-assertion of Social Determinants of Health. *The Indian Journal of Medical Research*, *136*(4), 540.

World Health Organization. (1994). Programme of Action--Adopted at the International Conference on Populationand Development. Cairo: United Nations Population Fund.

***Arosmita Sahoo,** is a PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology University of Hyderabad, Email: arosmitasahoo@gmail.com*

***C. Raghava Reddy** is Professor, Head, Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad*

Language Apparatus: Vernacularisation of Schooling to Appropriating English in Vocational Training Institutions

--Abhas Kumar Ganda

Abstract

The paper aims to examine the two dominant debates concerning the medium of instruction in schools, as well as, in vocational training institutions. Most state government schools in India capitalise on language as an ideological apparatus in the process of teaching and learning, with a preference for the mother tongue or vernacular medium of instruction. In contrast, pupils who enroll in vocational schools subsequent to finishing their secondary education are anticipated to have acclimated to English as the primary mode of instruction in teaching and pedagogy. Thus, the study aims to focus on the responses of the state and diverse social groups in making sense of vernacularising regional languages in schools on the one hand and appropriating the English language in vocational Education and training on the other. The study seeks to shed light on these two distinct but interconnected phenomena. This article provides an overview of how schools utilise vernacular language to perpetuate a linguistic apparatus that reinforces an attitude of ignorance towards the English language. As a consequence, this has an impact on the pedagogical practices and educational outcomes of students enrolled in vocational education with reference to Industrial Training Institutions.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Vernacularisation, Ideological apparatus, Linguistic apparatus

Introduction

Vernacularisation of schooling refers to the use of the local language or dialect, rather than a more formal or standardised language in the school. The implementation of this approach has the potential to enhance students' comprehension and involvement with academic subjects during classroom instruction, particularly for those who may lack proficiency in the official language. In the Indian context, the official language is commonly understood to encompass English and Hindi, with English being the focus of discussion in relation to the interplay between vernacular and official languages.

The medium of learning and instruction has been a critical aspect of understanding the language policy in school education, particularly in almost all respective state governments or public schools. Each state aims to establish the practice of instructing and acquiring knowledge in the native language and dialect, with the belief that it will facilitate students' comprehension and enhance their understanding of academic subjects. In the context of Odisha, even a significant number of private schools affiliated with religious and cultural organisations and philanthropic trusts prioritise teaching in the vernacular language over English medium instruction. This is due to the belief

that prioritising English medium language over Odia may lead to a detachment of students from their cultural values and identity. Louis Althusser, a Marxist philosopher from France, posits in his essay titled "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" that the state is not solely comprised of repressive establishments such as the police and military, but also of ideological institutions or apparatuses that function to uphold the dominant ideology of the ruling class (Althusser, 1970). Thus, the language is contextualised as a part of the ideological state apparatuses in the domain of school education in Odisha. Consequently, English is considered and designed as a second language in most of the Odisha state government schools and the said above private schools.

On the contrary, students who transition to vocational institutions must acclimatise to the English language, which can present a sudden challenge. Vocational institutions frequently prioritise the instruction of competencies that are essential for a particular vocation or sector. Frequently, this entails the utilisation of specialised terminology and other abstract notions that may prove challenging to comprehend in colloquial parlance using vernacular language. Consequently, numerous vocational institutions employ English as the primary mode of instruction to facilitate the acquisition of language proficiency essential for effective workplace communication among students and teachers.

While talking about vocational education, it specifies Industrial training institute which provides engineering and technical courses. Throughout this paper, the term "vocational institution" refers specifically to the Industrial Training Institute. Thus, this research article is part of the ongoing doctoral research on the sociological study of vocational education in Odisha. It mainly focuses on the language discourse of vernacular versus the English language in two different domains of educational spaces: schools and the vocational training institutes. It further emphasizes the instrumentalisation of English as a parameter of employment opportunities and an aspiration of social and economic status.

Furthermore, within the framework of vocational education, comprehending the mode of instruction and the teaching-learning methodology is crucial, in addition to the acquisition of skill-based techniques and knowledge. The utilisation of the English language as the medium of instruction, particularly in vocational-technical education, holds significant importance in catering to the demands of the market, both at the global and local levels. Within the framework of a globalised world economy, the inability of students to proficiently communicate in languages, particularly English, represents a noteworthy concern and a fundamental deficiency in terms of professional development.

However, the students' low linguistic skills appear to be influencing the style of Education as well as the type of reading material they employ. The cause of inadequate English language proficiency can be attributed to the educational system's emphasis on mother tongue instruction during early schooling.

Consequently, transitioning to professional education in an English medium setting can pose a challenge for students as they must quickly adapt to a new linguistic environment. Nonetheless, a stratification and ranking of pupils exists with regard to their mastery of the English language, which is influenced by their cultural and socioeconomic familial background.

Moreover, it is necessary to evaluate the proficiency of students in the English language, taking into account their socioeconomic and cultural contexts, particularly those who pursue vocational education. The practise of limiting instruction to the native language in schools, without prioritising the formalisation of English language education, results in a linguistic disparity among students attending public schools versus those attending English medium public or private schools.

Methodology

This research centers on the discourse of language and the instructional medium utilised in both academic and vocational training institutions. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how institutionalising vernacular language in government schools leads to ignorance and lower self-esteem among the students who later attend vocational training institutes. In India, a social construct is present that prioritises admission to Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) for students majorly from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who primarily attend government schools. This construction reinforces the idea that vocational education is exclusively intended for students who possess lower or average academic aptitude. It is relevant to note that government schools are primarily intended to serve students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds that may face social and economic disadvantages. This is a current reality in the education system. Conversely, government educational institutions particularly schools are often criticised for providing inadequate and low quality of teaching and learning experiences.

The choice of language or medium of instruction is a topic of ongoing debate and discourse, particularly as the government advocates for the use of mother tongue or vernacular languages in lieu of English. The patronisation of vernacular language in government schools is intended not only to facilitate their comprehension but also to cultivate a sense of preservation and transmission of prevailing dominant cultural values among local students. This practise is also observed in a majority of privately-operated Odia medium schools that are managed by various cultural and religious philanthropic organisations. Conversely, it is a reality that subsequent to completing their secondary education, students who are classified as low or average in both government and private schools are typically enrolled in various vocational institutions where English is established as the principal mode of teaching. The predominant language of instruction for study materials in this context is English. It can be challenging for students who have recently graduated from high school to quickly adapt to the various platforms and systems they encounter in higher education. Conversely, a significant proportion of the Indian population regards English as a language of aspiration. The acquisition

of proficiency in the English language can provide individuals with advantageous career prospects and confer upon them social, economic, and cultural prestige.

This paper is a part of doctoral work on the sociology of vocational Education in Odisha. The fieldwork is carried out among the students of one government ITI and one private ITI located in the Koraput district of Odisha, which is supposed to offer 1 to 2 years of different technical and engineering subjects or trades. The total sample consists of 225 respondents, who are students undergoing training in various subjects/trades and 7 teachers/instructors, including the principal of those ITIs. Purposive sampling was employed as the target was to get the data to cover the entire body of students pursuing training in the two institutions. A questionnaire was circulated among all students digitally, through WhatsApp; physical hard copies were also distributed. Apart from that, structured and in-depth interviews were collected based on snowball sampling depending on the availability and accessibility of the respondents.

On the other hand, structured interviews, including individual and focused group interviews, have been taken, and the data was also collected through a detailed questionnaire circulated among the students to seek out the detailed profile of the students; including schooling, medium of instruction, marks secured in Secondary Education, language spoken in the home, their social class, social category, father education and occupation and so on. Though the students responded in Odia medium, later it was translated and transcribed into English, after which the data was coded in SPSS software and analysed. The primary focus of the paper is on language discourse, with significant emphasis placed on the nature of schooling and the dominant language utilised as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. Apart from the fieldwork, which is a primary source of data, different secondary sources have also been included in this study which includes different academic journals and books. However, a qualitative and explorative attempt has been made to bring out the sociological understanding of language with reference to schools and vocational training institutions.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: The Debate over Language as the Primary Medium of Instruction in Indian Education.

The subject of language is a highly polarising issue within the framework of Indian education. India is a nation with a democratic form of government and a diverse population that speaks multiple languages. Scholars and experts frequently engage in discourse regarding the suitability of a specific language as the primary mode of instruction, particularly for speakers of minority languages. India is geographically and politically fragmented into various states and territories. The linguistic situation is complicated both within and across states due to the presence of multiple languages and dialects. A significant number of them lack acknowledged scripts. Various factors such as religion, language, caste, race, culture, and socioeconomic status serve as divisive elements among individuals. The linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity

of mother tongues among indigenous tribes gives rise to complexities in the realm of language as well. Therefore, accommodating a specific language as a widely utilised official language amidst complexity posed a challenge.

Navigating Linguistic Shifts: The Institutionalization of English in Indian Educational Institutions

Establishing a particular language as the principal medium of instruction and promoting a standardised language that could serve as a means of communication across many domains faced substantial challenges in the field of education. The teaching of this language as a subject was also mandated (Sridhar, 1996, p. 334). English, however, replaced other languages as the official language and the medium of teaching in India under British rule for historical reasons. 11 percent of Indians claimed to be able to communicate in English in the census taken in 1991. India is a linguistically varied country with dozens of different languages, 122 of which have more than 10,000 native speakers (Census, 2001). Since the British East India Company's emergence in the 1600s, English has been more popular in India. India was governed by the British Empire between 1757 and 1947, the British East India Company between 1757 and 1857, and the British Crown between 1858 and 1947. English evolved into the language of authority and status throughout this time carrying the privilege, power and prestige (Azam, Chin, & Prakash, 2013, p. 337).

It was associated with the occupying British; the law was written in English; and, at least at the highest levels, official operations were conducted in English. Additionally, it was chosen as the main teaching method in public schools. After India gained its independence from the British in 1947, debates over the colonial language's status in the nation emerged. There have been calls to make an indigenous Indian language the official language of India rather than English in order to boost the country's sense of identity. Being the most frequently spoken language in India though restricted to Northern India, Hindi was a no-brainer. On the other hand, it was politically unfeasible to make Hindi the only official language of India. Few individuals in the south speak Hindi, compared to the majority of those in the north. As a result, according to Azam, Chin, and Prakash (2013), both Hindi and English are listed as official languages in India's constitution.

Due to the country's colonial history, English was taught in public schools. English proficiency is required for employment as a government employee or as a teacher at any grade level above elementary. Given that they are white-collar professions with reliable employment and respectable perks, these fields are desirable in India. Although it should be noted that it is possible to graduate from secondary school and college without knowing English, many courses are offered in Hindi or the state language, and exams may be written in English, Hindi, or the state language, with the possible exception of science and engineering fields. Higher secondary schools, colleges, and universities frequently use English.

Reexamining the use of the English language by various groups that are socially disadvantaged is crucial in the context of family and educational discourse in schools. The two most disadvantaged social groups in India are the scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs). The other backward classes (OBCs) are put above the scheduled castes in terms of ceremonial standing, although they are in a much worse position than the higher castes. Members of privilaged castes have better English skills than members of lower castes and scheduled tribes. In the case of scheduled tribes, geographic isolation and lower educational success are most likely to blame.

The Global Linguistic Marvel: Unraveling the Significance of English

Gary Backer's concept of "human capital" can be used to analyse the significance of English language proficiency. This concept refers to an individual's knowledge, social and personality traits, habits, and inventiveness, all of which are expressed in their capacity to perform work in order to create economic value. As Munshi and Rosenzweig (2016) contend, there is a direct correlation between Indian workers' ability to communicate in English and their income. They contend that in the year of 2000, both men and women's incomes increased by around 25% as a result of attending an English-medium school. Chakraborty and Kapur (2008, p. 2-11) utilise data from the National Sample Survey to evaluate the impact of a 1983 policy in West Bengal that banned English from primary schools as a medium of instruction. They observed that switching from English to Bengali as the teaching language considerably reduced earnings.

English allows for national mobility because to its importance and explain abilities on a global scale, whereas education in regional languages limits work options. There is no denying that English has a reputation for being a powerful and elegant language. Writing and speaking abilities are crucial for carrying out society's business, according to Estrin (1964, p. 249); without these, the professional man's professional and civic impact is constrained, regardless of his experience or knowledge. The prominence bestowed on English adds to the problem. English has "prestige" and "power." Because English is still used in national and state-level education and is the primary language of instruction in the majority of university courses, most parents are keen to enroll their children in English-medium schools (Sridhar, 1996, p. 336). A booming private sector promises to start teaching English to kids at a young age. All of these factors have come together to produce a situation where the mother tongue is no longer regarded as the ideal educational medium.

In the Indian context, the acquisition of English language skills among diverse social and cultural groups is closely linked to both cultural and human capital. Specifically, individuals with greater aptitude and more privileged familial backgrounds are more likely to possess advanced English language skills and pursue professions that require such proficiency. From a sociological

perspective, it is noteworthy to comprehend that social identity, such as caste, is deemed more crucial than economic factors, such as poverty. (Rath, 1982, p. 189, as cited in Sridhar, 1996) observed that the existence of a stereotypical belief that children from scheduled castes and tribes are considered to be less intelligent than the privileged Brahmin children.

Effective communication skills are crucial for engineers and technical experts, despite possessing quality problem-solving skills, subject-specific knowledge, management skills, and work competence. Failure to communicate effectively can result in adverse consequences. From a global standpoint within the context of globalisation, which entails the unrestricted movement of information, knowledge, various forms of capital, and other resources, effective communication skills, particularly proficiency in the English language, serve as a crucial means of communication due to the widespread adoption of English as a global language. Globalisation plays a crucial role in knowledge production and its application in education, especially for engineers. This phenomenon provides an equal opportunity for job access in any country across the globe. In the realm of information technology, a significant proportion of Indian engineers relocate to the United States for employment opportunities, a feat that would be unattainable without proficiency in the English language for effective communication.

The issue of deficient English communication abilities among Indian engineers and technicians can be attributed to the secondary school system, wherein a significant proportion of students, particularly those from the lower middle and lower classes, complete their secondary education in their native language. It is a well-established fact that the various states of India possess their own distinct regional languages. For instance, the northern states of India predominantly utilise Hindi as their primary language, while the southern states employ their own unique languages. In a comparable vein, both western and eastern states, as well as northeastern states, possess their respective state languages in addition to local and regional languages. These languages serve as the primary medium of instruction from primary to secondary and higher secondary education.

Likewise, within the state of Odisha, the Odia language has been established as an official language within all government-operated schools, as well as select private schools. Subsequent to the attainment of their secondary education, students typically enroll in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and engineering institutions to acquire diploma and degree in engineering. The language of instruction utilised in vocational training institutions is English, which poses a challenge for students who are not accustomed to this mode of instruction. Students belonging to lower classes and castes, especially those from socially underprivileged and marginalised communities, face significant challenges as their primary education is conducted in the state language or their native vernacular languages. Consequently, when they transition to vocational education, they encounter difficulties in adapting to the new medium of instruction, which is English. The following table represents the percentage of students enrolled in different medium of schools.

Table 1: Medium of Instruction in School

Medium of Instruction	Frequency	Percent
English	8	3.6
Odia	217	96.4
Total	225	100

Source: Data collected from the fieldwork

The issue of implementing a specific medium of instruction in India has been a subject of debate for a considerable period of time and is not a recent occurrence. In recent times, the topic has garnered increased controversy and has become a subject of debate. The 2020 National Education Policy places greater emphasis on the implementation of a three-language policy, with a priority given to the instruction and acquisition of knowledge in the local mother tongue language within educational institutions. Due to the vast geographical and linguistic diversity of India, it presents a challenge to determine a singular language that can be universally taught in schools. Multiple languages are utilised as the primary means of communication within each state. Distinct variations can be observed among dialects of a single language. Consequently, it is challenging to facilitate the application of any particular language as the primary mode of teaching in educational institutions.

Irrespective of variations, every state has embraced the prevailing language as the primary mode of teaching. The majority of educational institutions employ either the official language of the respective state or the English language as the primary mode of teaching. Consequently, the discourse surrounding language policies and their execution is unique. As previously mentioned, English has been a prevalent alternative medium of instruction in most private schools and some public schools. It has been noted that educational institutions that adhere to the CBSC and ICSE curricula predominantly employ English as the principal mode of teaching and learning.

Conversely, a majority of government schools in India that are administered by the state employ the language that is specific to their respective state. According to the presented table, it can be observed that a significant proportion of approximately 96.4 percent of students pursue their education in the Odia medium. The challenge that arises following the utilisation of an Odia medium of instruction is the difficulty that students in vocational education encounter when attempting to adjust to a new culture and learning environment abruptly.

The majority of vocational literature and texts are presented in the English language, which poses a challenge for students who have received their education in Odia medium through government schools with limited exposure. As a result, these students may encounter difficulties in comprehending the course material and instruction. Typically, educators endeavour to instruct

pupils in their mother tongue, resulting in a comprehensive comprehension of the subject matter by the learners. However, with regards to self-directed reading or acquiring knowledge from online sources, which are predominantly in the English language, such students encounter difficulties in comprehending the material. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant number of classes were conducted remotely, with instructional materials such as video recordings and class notes being disseminated via the messaging application WhatsApp. While these materials were predominantly presented in English, a considerable proportion of students expressed difficulty in comprehending the content not due to the instructional approach or methodology, but rather due to language barriers.

An additional illustration pertains to the distribution of English-language questionnaires during fieldwork, whereby 95% of the students requested that the researcher provide a translation of the questionnaire into Odia to facilitate their comprehension and accurate responses. Despite the provision of the questionnaire in both English and Odia, the students required the guidance of teachers to complete the forms and respond to the questionnaire. The central argument pertains to the significance of language and instructional medium in the context of education at various levels, including primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational, as well as their potential impact on students' professional trajectories.

English is regarded as possessing cultural capital beyond its function as a language or instructional medium, thereby affording access to various forms of social and economic capital. The widespread use of English as a global language has expanded the scope of possibilities in various domains such as education, employment, and socio-cultural and economic spheres. As per the accounts of interviewed students, a crucial challenge faced by those studying in Odia medium schools is their inability to clear written assessments conducted by companies during campus placements owing to the language of the questions being in English.

One additional challenge faced by students is their limited ability to seek employment and pursue improved prospects in alternative regions or nations, stemming from their inadequate linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, apart from their academic programme, the government has established collaborations with private enterprises such as the Tata Trust commonly referred to as the Tata Strive,[1] aims to equip students from disadvantaged social backgrounds with diverse skill sets. TATA is actively engaged in providing English language instruction, basic computer education, personality development courses, and other related services at the institution under study.

---

[1]Tata STRIVE is an initiative of the TCIT, aimed at actively bridging the gap between vocational education and industry needs. In FY 2017-18, Tata STRIVE began working under the aegis of Tata Trusts as a result of the Tata Group's strategy of 'Simplification, synergy and scale'. The move recognises the close synergies between Tata STRIVE and the broader community interventions of the Tata Trusts. Tata STRIVE is skilling youth from underprivileged backgrounds through innovations in technology, pedagogy, and methodology. For more details please visit athttps://www.tatastrive.com/aboutStrive.html

The paradox of privatisation in education: Expectation versus experiences of unprivileged students

Merit is an essential modern concept that has helped to provide chances to formerly marginalised and unprivileged social groups. Industrial ownership has historically been concentrated in the hands of a few dominant social/cultural groups in India and elsewhere in the world, and top employment has. Top employment has always been held within the family. Outsiders were only recruited for other tasks if the requisite manpower was unavailable within the community or wider kin group. The question is, who is a suitable applicant, and how do they assess the worth of people who are chosen for high-level private sector positions?

A survey of corporate hiring managers was conducted in Delhi in 2006 and 2007 where (Jodhka & Newman 2007, p. 4127) found that a candidate's suitability is rarely determined by their official qualifications. Almost every hiring manager agreed that one of the essential questions they ask during interviews is about the candidate's family background. The candidate's compatibility with the company's culture was determined by their family background. At the senior level, the candidate's linguistic skills or ability to speak and communicate in good English are just as vital. Another study (Thorat & Newman 2007, p. 4121-4124) found that a Dalit or Muslim candidate's odds of being summoned for an interview for a corporate position were much lower than those from the upper caste with identical CVs and Bio datas. But, the fact is that, as (Jodhka, 2008, P. 191) observed that most of the Indian corporate sector refuses to recognize the fact that there could be caste or community-based discrimination ever exists in the Indian labor market.

Privatising the educational system has created further a class and reproduced the picture of marginalisation among socially unprivileged sections of society. Particularly in the context of engineering and technical education, the educational institutions can be systematically ordered in terms of elite institutions with international standards, national institutions, state institutions, government, aided, and private institutions. However, in the context of engineering education, around 86 percent of institutions are privately owned. Here the contradiction between private institutions and the scope of enrollment among such socially depressed sections is in a condition of massive gap and creates exclusion.

In contrast to public institutions, there is a lack of affirmative action initiatives. Consequently, a significant proportion of socially disadvantaged groups, specifically those belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and backward classes, encounter barriers in obtaining engineering and technical qualifications. Notably, students who are admitted to ITI are entitled to receive free education. However, a significant number of students aspire to pursue higher education in engineering by obtaining a diploma or degree. In contrast to ITI, engineering courses and diplomas are not provided free of charge. The tuition fees for engineering programmes, including those offered by government institutions, typically require a minimum payment of 40 to 70

thousand per annum. It should be noted that these fees are mandatory and must be paid by the students. Furthermore, due to the limited number of seats available in predominantly government colleges, obtaining admission to these institutions is challenging, as the cut-off marks are typically high. Hence, a majority of students depend on privately owned engineering institutions, which charge nearly twice the amount of tuition fees as public colleges. A student who faces difficulties in gaining admission to an Industrial Training Institute (ITI) and hails from a socioeconomically disadvantaged background may feel discouraged from pursuing higher education.

In the context of the medium of instruction as well, in Indian society, English-medium education has been viewed as a key to upward mobility. On the contrary, from a societal perspective, English-medium education is considered crucial in the formation of modernised techno-managerial elite, as described by Kothari, who holds a significant influence over the discourse on development. Consequently, policies and programmes that have a detrimental effect on the nation's social structure may arise. Less visibly, from a different perspective, it can also be critically examined that English-medium education widens social fractures in Indian society by creating and reinforcing a social, cultural, economic, and discursive divide between those who are educated in English and the majority of people who do not speak English. (Faust & Nagar 2001, p. 2878).

A significant number of students belonging to disadvantaged and marginalised communities experience deprivation and a downward trajectory in their social mobility. The concept of meritocracy is not an innate attribute, but rather a socially constructed and attained outcome. In the realm of higher education, students hailing from privileged castes and classes tend to perform better due to the quality of their primary and secondary education. The cultural capital of students, including factors such as parental educational profile, peer groups, and family background, plays a significant role in fostering a culture of learning and knowledge acquisition. Private schools have become increasingly prominent in contemporary times, with parents opting to enroll their children in such institutions from an early age due to the perceived high standard of education provided. Numerous public and governmental initiatives are underway to establish government schools that provide free education to socially and culturally marginalised and economically disadvantaged segments of society. A significant proportion of the student population comprises individuals belonging to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and other marginalised and disadvantaged segments of the society. But the question is will it promise to provide the space of teaching and learning in English medium of language?

Figure 1: Caste-wise students' enrollment in English medium schools
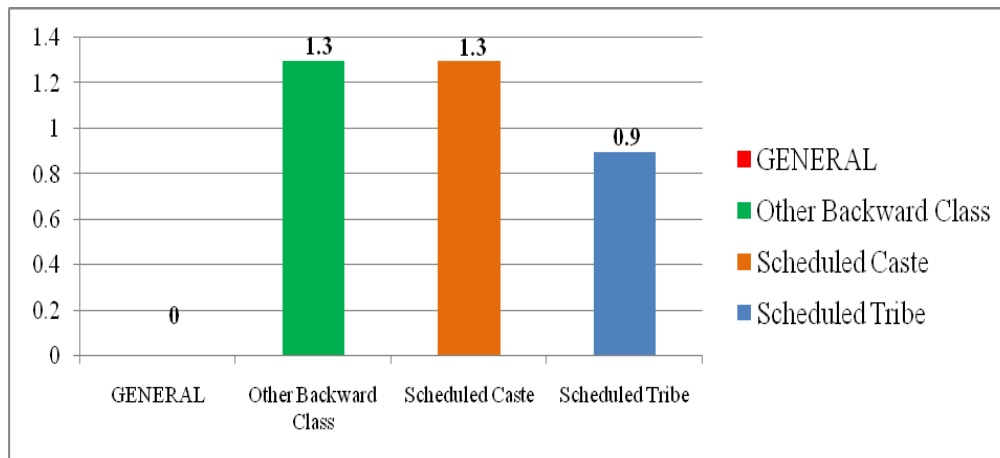
Source: Data collected from the fieldwork

The graph presented above illustrates that a mere 3.5 percent of the student population has received education from both private and public English medium schools. Further analysis reveals that out of this subset, only 6 students hail from private English medium schools, while the remaining 2 students have received education from Central Government schools, specifically Kendriya Vidyalaya. The students in question come from families with an annual income ranging from 15 to 30 thousand and whose fathers are employed in occupations such as contracting, group C/D jobs, small business ownership, and private sector employment. The incongruity between private schooling and the language of instruction is evident in the examined region. It is commonly assumed that private schools are intended to provide English-medium instruction; however, in many cases, they actually offer instruction in the Odia language.

As previously mentioned, a significant number of private schools in Odisha are operated by various cultural and religious charitable trusts and organisations. Private schools such as Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir, Vana Bharti Vidyalaya, and Aurobindo Skishakendra are among the educational institutions available. However, the predominant mode of instruction for teaching and learning is primarily conducted in the Odia language. The graph presented above indicates that there is an absence of students from private English medium schools within the general social category. As previously noted, the majority of individuals in question originate from private Odia medium schools. One possible explanation could be attributed to the strong emotional attachment and fondness towards the native mother language (Odia). Another aspect to consider is the cultural significance of the language spoken in the particular state. English is commonly regarded as a foreign language, with both state and private institutions placing a higher emphasis on instructing in the Odia language. This is done to foster a sense of statehood, patriotism, and regional distinctiveness. Regardless of their caste, a majority of parents have enrolled their children in private schools, although

predominantly those that offers instruction in the Odia language. On the contrary, a mere 8 students, comprising a mere 3.5% of the overall student population, who possess greater economic and social resources and possess social and cultural capital, have opted to enroll their children in both private and public English medium schools.

The decision of parents to enroll their children in English medium schools, regardless of their caste, identity, or region, is also shaped by the privatisation of employment and the globalisation of culture. Therefore, despite having attained academic qualifications, students' educational aspirations are still influenced and determined by their social position and class. Despite the students' diverse social backgrounds, including some from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups, factors beyond financial considerations influenced their parents' decision to enroll them in English medium schools.

Nevertheless, the standard of education provided by government schools in relation to the quality of instruction and acquisition of knowledge is considerably inferior to that of private schools. The research findings indicate that students hailing from marginalised backgrounds encounter difficulties in adapting to the contemporary pedagogical practices of higher and professional education due to their prior academic experiences. In addition, the language used as the medium of instruction poses a hindrance for these students in effectively engaging with the educational process. The utilisation of the English language as the medium of instruction impedes students' ability to engage in open communication and discourse. Insufficient communication and interpersonal abilities, even after getting degree, pose a hindrance to securing employment. In the realm of higher education, specifically within the field of engineering and technology, a significant discrepancy has arisen due to the proliferation of regional and local private engineering institutions that lack adequate instructional standards. This has resulted in a surplus of engineers being produced, yet a corresponding increase in unemployment among said engineers.

In order to address the enduring issue of educational inequality in India, a group of scholars hailing from marginalised communities have undertaken a critical examination of the Indian education system, with a particular focus on English-medium education. Kancha Ilaiah has advocated fervently for the promotion of English language acquisition and education among the Dalit community. The English language holds significant importance as a crucial element in the modernist approach that is well-suited for the globalised context of India. The upper castes have adeptly navigated the paradox and discord between the English language and their indigenous culture with regards to their personal education. Still, when teaching English to the lowest castes, however, the belief that English will ruin the "soil culture" is invoked (Ilaiah, 2015). He argues that the provision of English education, even to historically underprivileged communities such as SCs, STs, and backward castes, serves to mitigate educational inequality and broaden the professional aspirations. Like Ilaiah, a Dalit thinker Chandra Bhan Prasad (2015) also strongly argues for English education for lower castes. In Uttar Pradesh, a

temple was constructed and named Dalit Goddesses English, in honour of the English language. He believes that Untouchables were kept out of the educational loop in the pre-English indigenous system.

Often, the schools were held in temples or in the homes of pandits, where Dalits were not permitted to enter. All of that took a different shape after the contribution of Lord Macaulay. That is why the Dalits, who are the natural heirs of the English, revere Chandra Bhan Prasad. As a result, the Dalits own the Goddess English. What right does non-Dalits in India have to monopolise this language if they don't care about English or Lord Macaulay? He also stated that learning English makes it considerably easier for Dalits to abandon caste-based jobs. Will English-speaking Dalits be asked to skin dead cows? Will Dalits who speak English be required to sweep gutters and roads? Will English-speaking Dalits accept lowly jobs on landowners' farms? Dalits can be empowered by the Goddess English, allowing them to break free from centuries of oppression (Prasad, 2015). His point of view is that English education, devoid of caste influences, will empower Dalits and open up new opportunities and knowledge for a section of people who have historically been denied a chance at learning.

The above-mentioned points of view expressed by scholars hailing from historically marginalised communities provide insight into the aspirations of disadvantaged groups striving to transcend their caste-based occupations and seeking a brighter future through enhancing their linguistic and professional competencies in the context of globalisation. In this particular context, one could posit that the provision of English medium education to all students starting from primary education could potentially mitigate any disparities or inequities that may exist between pupils from varying social and economic backgrounds in India. The English language, widely regarded as a means of accessing global knowledge and perspectives, is poised to assume a pivotal role in the lives of individuals, particularly those belonging to marginalised communities in India, in the context of intensifying global competition.

Conclusion

The increasing global need for scientific and technological research and innovation, coupled with the unrestricted exchange of knowledge, ideas, economy, and technology, has facilitated the universalization of engineering and technical education. This development aims to address and bridge the divide between physical and territorial boundaries worldwide. Globalisation has facilitated the interconnection and unification of various entities. Vocational education, particularly in the context of Industrial Training Institutions, plays a crucial role in imparting engineering skills and knowledge to support the needs of a semi-industrialized nation such as India. In addition, it is imperative to comprehend whether the acquisition of said skills will pose a challenge to the issue of unemployment and contribute to the economic development of the nation. It is because, compared to other developed nations, India has only been able to offer vocational education to a mere 5 percent of its student population. Moreover, the perpetuation of class disparities among

students from lower-middle and working-class backgrounds, as well as those from socially and economically marginalised class and caste groups who pursue vocational education, is a topic of discourse. In addition to the mentioned constraints, the formal adoption of English as the primary language of education is a significant issue in a nation as diverse as India, which is characterised by a multitude of languages and cultures. Moreover, it is worth noting that a significant portion of society, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other marginalised groups, experience social and cultural exclusion, resulting in educational and economic victimisation within the context of a neoliberal economy. Poverty is observable majorly among the upper caste in Odisha as well. Providing English language education to all students at the primary education level, in addition to their native language, could potentially serve as a valuable approach to addressing the increasing inequality within the Indian education system.

References

Azam, M., Chin, A., & Prasad, N. (2013). The returns to English-language skills in India. *Economic Development and Cultural Change, 61*(2), 335-367.

Estrin, H. A. (1964). Teaching English to Engineering and Science Students. *Improving College and University Teaching, 12*(4), 249-253.

Faust, D., & Nagar, R. (2001). Politics of development in postcolonial India: English-medium Education and social fracturing. *Economic and Political Weekly, 36*(30), 2878-2883.

Ilaiah, K. (2015). Dalits and English. *The Anweshi Org*, http://www.anveshi.org.in/dalits-and-english/

Jodhka, S. S., & Newman, K. (2007). In the name of globalisation: Meritocracy, productivity and the hidden language of caste. *Economic and Political Weekly, 42*(41), 4125-4132.

Jodhka, S. S. (2008) Caste & the corporate sector. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations 42*(2), 185-193.

Munshi, K., & Rosenzweig, M. (2016). Networks and misallocation: Insurance, migration, and the rural-urban wage gap. *American Economic Review, 106*(1), 46-98.

Prasad, C. B. (2015). Hail English, the Dalit goddess. *The Anweshi.org*, http://www.anveshi.org.in/hail-english-the-dalit-goddess/

Rath, R. (1982). Problems of integration of the disadvantaged to the mainstream. In by D. Sinha., R.C. Tripathi and G, Mishra(Eds), *Deprivation: Its Social Roots and Psychological Consequences* (pp. 239-260). New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Sridhar, K. K. (1996). Language in Education: Minorities and multilingualism in India. *International Review of Education 42*(4), 327-347.

Thorat, S., & Newman, K. (2007) Caste and economic discrimination: Causes, consequences, and remedies. *Economic and Political Weekly, 42*(41), 4121-4124.

*G. **Abhas Kumar** is a PhD scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad, Email ID:* abhas.hcu@gmail.com

Higher Education among Scheduled Tribes with reference to the Lepchas of Kalimpong, West Bengal

--Shunami A Lepcha and Sandhya Thapa

Abstract

Since Independence, the structure of the higher education system has progressed considerably, and the Indian higher education system is now the third largest system in the world. Despite progress and expansion, various social groups, in particular the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes have been encountering various challenges with access to higher education and are still marginalised. Based on both primary data collected from the fieldwork and secondary data, the paper highlights the status of higher education among the ST with reference to Lepchas of Kalimpong. Analysing both constraining and facilitating factors, the paper concludes that Lepchas has been responding positively to affirmative action with regard to access to higher education, although there is still a need to address the existing gaps.

Key Words: Scheduled Tribes, Lepchas, Reservation, Kalimpong, Cultural capital

Introduction

The Indian higher education system is the third largest system in the world and has witnessed an incredible surge since independence (Sheihk, 2017). Since its inception, the Indian education system, which is regulated by University Grant Commission (UGC, 2019), aimed to provide equal educational access to all sections, hence to bridge the existing gap, affirmative policies like reservation have been accorded to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (Benjamin, 2008). The Eleventh five-year plan of the government of India (2007-2012) further strengthened the focus by emphasising an inclusive approach in the educational sector. It envisaged substantial equity and addressed inequality through scholarships/fellowships, hostel facilities, remedial coaching, as well as setting up of an 'Equal Opportunity Office' in all universities for more effective implementation.[1] Considering education as a potential tool for empowerment, Sreeramamurty, Sailaja &Appalanaidu (2012) laid focus on the need for inclusive growth in higher education in India because access to higher education is limited, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Higher Education

The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order' 1950 notified various tribes across states in its first schedule as STs. Therefore the term STs signifies certain constitutional legal status as per the provision contained in Clause 1 of Article

---

[1]https://www.educationforallinindia.com/fiveyearplans.html

342 of the Indian Constitution[2]. Being socioeconomically and educationally backward and marginalised, the government of India has implemented many inclusive measures and policies for the STs since independence, among which reservation policies in higher education and democratic bodies (Roy, 2005) are worth mentioning. Kijima (2006) remarked that historically tribal minorities in India were economically weakest, subjected to discrimination and deprivation and suffered the most from poverty. Consequently, the constitution made special provisions for their socio-economic upliftment and safeguarding them against marginalisation. Article 46 and Article 15(4) empowers the state to promote and to make special provision for the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, particularly the SCs/STs and accord reservation seats in higher educational institutions, including technical, engineering and medical colleges and in scientific and specialised courses" (GOI: NCSC, 2016). Consequently, there has been significant improvement in the literacy rate of STs, as evident in an increase from 8.5 per cent in 1961 to 58.95 per cent in 2011.

Retrospectively, although tribes were less developed socio-economically, they had authority over territory, forest and water. They started losing their sovereignty with the onset of colonialism, and their marginality further intensified during India's post-independence nation-building process (Xaxa, 2016). Various studies - Roy (2005), Kumar (2010), Padma (2011), Suresh (2011), Behera (2015), Sahu (2014) and Rasak (2016) substantiates growth in the literacy rate of STs, which was made feasible due to ameliorative measures like educational benefits, reservations etc. However, despite such measures, educational disparity and inadequate success in higher education persist. The literacy rate of STs stands at 58.95 per cent as against 72.9 per cent (Census, 2011) of the overall literacy rate of India, which shows a huge gap in literacy achievement. A similar gap has been noted in higher education. The total enrolment of students in higher education during the year 2016–2017 is 35.7 million, out of which STs account for 5.1 per cent (AISHE, 2017), which is relatively less than their population ratio of 8.6 per cent. The educational indicator like Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education in the age group 18-23 years for STs stands at 15.4 per cent, which is lower than GER of 25.2 per cent at the national level. In West Bengal, the GER of STs stands much lower at 10.1 per cent as compared to 18.5 per cent of all categories (ibid).

Deshpande (2008) and Rao (2008) argued that affirmative action had not reached all disadvantaged groups, including scheduled tribes, to the fullest, and there is an extensive gap between the disadvantaged groups and others in access to quality higher education. In a study of ST students pursuing higher education in rural areas of Tamil Nadu, Suresh (2011) demonstrates the problem faced by the students and states that the economic needs of the SC/ST should be fulfilled.' Furthermore, his finding also affirmed the gender dimension and pointed out that female students face more problems compared to male students in pursuing higher education. Roy (2005) reiterated that the

---

[2]National Commission for Scheduled Caste (NCSC), (2016)

tribal communities, who live on the fringe of society, are educationally backward, and the heterogeneity in tribal languages, culture and scattered habitations make the task of policy planners challenging to work out a uniform development policy often making tribes out of focus in the development process. In a similar study conducted on the IITs, the premier engineering schools in India,Nambissan & Rao (2013) reported that there exists a general perception among the teachers that STs/SCs students are poor in studies and are stigmatised, discriminated and are assigned labels, the former isolated from the mainstream and later in terms of purity and pollution. Bhoi & Lakra (2022) also substantiated the caste-tribal-based stigma, discrimination in an institution and systemic difficulties in availing the fellowship excluded the SCs/ STs from gaining social-economic and cultural capital. Consequently, tribal students lagged behind in co-curricular activities and other community participation (Tandi, 2019). With the state intervention, there has been a gradual positive change in the recessive character in terms of participation in higher education. However, due to their fragile financial condition, certain sections have not participated in higher education (Naik, 2022).

Xaxa (2001) argued that due to different historical development, STs have not been able to draw the benefits of protective discrimination as that of SCs. Living in isolation and not sharing the dominant language and culture, STs have never been treated as an integral part of mainstream society, resulting in the absence of exposure to the modern legal-bureaucratic structures of the state. The geographical isolation of the tribal population and low level of education indicates the severity of social exclusion and denial of equal opportunity to participate fully in the development process (Subramanyum, 2020). Nambissan (1994) viewed that the denial of schooling in the mother tongue/tribal language among the tribal communities seems unfavourable and demonstrates a poor response to formal education, emphasising the need to include tribal language, particularly in early schooling. Similarly, Putcha (2020) recommended the need for continuous assessment and evaluation of the educational programmes in the tribal region, while Ramakrishna (2022) focused on the need for holistic digital education for the inclusive growth of the tribe.

In the above contextual backdrop, the present paper focuses on higher education among STs with reference to the Lepchas of Kalimpong in West Bengal. Therefore, the following section presents a brief profile of Kalimpong and the socio-economic life of Lepchas as a background for the present study.

Kalimpong: A Brief Profile

Kalimpong, earlier a subdivision of Darjeeling district, was carved out as the 21st District of West Bengal in 2017 (Sen, 2017). The district comprises four administrative units: Kalimpong Block I, Kalimpong – Block II, Gorubathan Block and Kalimpong Municipality[3] comprising gram panchayat units and municipal wards. Kalimpong is inhabited by various ethnic groups viz;

---

[3]Kalimpong District: Administrative Division, n.d.

Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis. The Nepalis comprise various castes and communities viz; Bahun, Thakuri, Chettri, Kami, Dami, and Sarki. Newar, Rai, Yakha, Mangar and Gurung (Sarkar, 2014). The plainsmen communities consisting of Bengalis, Biharis and Marwaris are also settled in Kalimpong (Khatun, 2014). Religiously speaking, Hindus are dominant (60.9 per cent), followed by Buddhists (20.9 per cent), Christians (14.8 per cent), Muslims (1.5 per cent) and the rest are Jains, Sikhs, and other religions (Census, 2011). The population of Kalimpong district is 2,51,642 of which 29.79 per cent is the ST population (Census, 2011).

Kalimpong has a long colonial history. After the Anglo-Bhutan War in 1865, Kalimpong was administered by the British East India Company. The temperate climate of Kalimpong town led to the town being developed as a hill station and summer recreational base for Britishers, much like Darjeeling (Dasmondal, 2018).

Historically, Scottish missionaries are credited with the spread of modern education; they constructed schools, institutions, and welfare centres in the area[4]. It was around 1870 that education was started as part of mission work, and it was William Macfarlane who established the foundation of primary education (Dash, 2011). The Scottish missionaries and the Roman Catholic Church have played a very significant role in the development of many reputed educational institutions making Kalimpong a hub of educational institutions drawing students from its neighbouring state and country.

In terms of higher education. Kalimpong has four-degree colleges viz. Kalimpong College, Cluny Women's College, Pedong Government College and Gorubathan Government College. Kalimpong College is the oldest college in the district, established in 1962. All four colleges offer undergraduate science, arts and commerce courses and are affiliated with the University of North Bengal. Kalimpong has two private management institutes, viz. Good Shepherd Institute of Hotel Management and Rockvale Management College. There has been a trend of a good number of students from Kalimpong opting for various higher educational courses in different parts of the country, within and outside the state viz; Siliguri, Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore etc. being the most desired destination (Lepcha, 2019).

Lepchas of Kalimpong

Lepcha call themselves Rongkup, meaning "son of snowy peak" (Tamsang, 1983). They are considered indigenous inhabitants of Sikkim and Darjeeling (Das, 1978; Roy, Mukherjee & Behera, 2018). In 1950, on the dissemination of the Presidential Notification, Lepchas were enlisted in the Scheduled Tribes category in West Bengal (Khatun, 2014). Gorer (1938) mentioned Lepchas as a tribal population of Asian origin with Mongoloid morphological features and believed to be indigenous to the Sikkim Himalayas. In West Bengal, the major concentration of the Lepchas is found in the Kalimpong district and are found

---

[4]History of Kalimpong, n.d

to reside in different locales ranging from remote and backward areas to the vicinity of the urban centres (Mukhopadhyay, Gupta & Bhattacharya, 1996).

Traditionally the Lepcha were animistic and nature worshipers. Their ritual specialists are called Mun (female) and Bongthing (male) (Gowloog, 2013). In contemporary times, the Lepchas predominantly profess two major religions, viz. Buddhism and Christianity (Mukhopadhyay, Gupta & Bhattacharya, 1996). In the Lepcha society of Darjeeling and Sikkim, Mun-Bongthingism and Buddhism coexist simultaneously (Gowloog, 2013). Historically, the Christianisation of Lepchas in Kalimpong is said to have begun with the Scottish Missionary Reverend William Macfarlane of the Church of Scotland, who moved to Kalimpong and found the Lepcha community to be more responsive to the gospel (Lepcha, 2013), which resulted into the conversion of many Lepchas into Christianity (Dash, 2011). Further, Lepcha tribes were not socio-economically advanced then, and the development work of Christian missionaries attracted a majority of the deprived community towards Christianity (Lepcha, 2010).

Despite many conversions to Buddhism and Christianity, Lepchas still follow some of their traditional rituals (Roy, Mukherjee & Behera, 2018) pertaining to animistic beliefs and practices. The economy of the Lepcha tribe in rural areas is primarily related to land, agriculture and animal husbandry. However, they have gradually adopted new techniques of raising crops and now have a higher standard of living (Kumar, 1980). With access to education, they are now absorbed in various service sectors and have also taken trade and business too.

Lepcha (2013) pointed out the significant role of religion and missionaries in the past in bringing educational progress in Kalimpong, of which the Lepchas have been the major beneficiaries. The church supported the youth in opting for higher education. Even today, some people have reminiscences of how their pastor (church leader) used to write letters to the Lepcha *kaiya* (Marwari retailers who spoke Lepcha language fluently) to borrow money for college education. This helped many of their generations to complete higher education. The missionaries became their reference group, which did encourage them to gain the upper hand in educational attainment (Subba, 1985).

Conceptual Framework

The discourse of social exclusion originated in France. René Lenoir (1974) is often credited with coining the term in a social policy context, distinguishing unprotected special needs and deviant populations (Sliver, 2019). Giddens (1998) conceptualised exclusion as "mechanisms that act to detach groups of people from the social mainstream" - a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in society (Kabeer, 2005). Social exclusion, thus, is an institutionalised type of estrangement that systemically disadvantages certain groups due to discrimination based on their ethnicity, race, colour, religion, gender, sexual

orientation, caste, and place of origin, and the afflicted groups are successfully maintained outside the systems of power, privilege, opportunities, resources. In India, dalits/adivasis, women and religious minorities are considered traditionally excluded categories (Modi, 2015).

Sen (2000) conceptualised social exclusion from the perspective of deprivation and poverty, which lead to capability deprivation. He further differentiated active exclusion as an outcome of a deliberate policy to exclude certain groups of people from specific opportunities, while passive exclusion as an outcome of an unintended consequence of social processes or policy decisions (Nevile, 2007). Sociologically, social exclusion can be comprehended in terms of an institutional barrier to interpersonal process and interaction and access to membership, resulting in poor conditions for social integration (Sliver, 2019).

Theoretically speaking, the functionalist viewed education as a socialising agent (Ottaway, 1968) for the transmission of norms and values (Haralambos & Heald, 2014) to the younger generation, while the critical theorist argues education replicates inequality favouring the dominant hegemony of society. Bowles & Gintis (1976) articulates that schools socialise students to reproduce unequal labour reproduction, favouring the privileged section of society. Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualisation of Habitus, Capital and Field explains the way the education system reproduces inequality. His notion of capital extends beyond the notion of material assets to other forms of capital, viz. social, cultural or symbolic, which can be accumulated and transferred from one arena to another (Navarro, 2006). He viewed habitus as a determining factor of individual action; however, it is neither a result of free will nor determined by structures but an outcome of the interplay between the two; therefore, habitus is not fixed or permanent and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period (Navarro, 2006). It is a flexible, open-ended structuring system which enables social actors to have numerous creative strategies at their disposal (Richardson, 1986) to cope with unforeseen social structures. Lending credence to Bourdieu, it can be argued that the acquisition of cultural and economic capital can lead to the restructuring of habitus, which, once internalised by an individual, can influence the chances of one's success. The educational and cultural capital of parents can be advantageous for the children, making the education system a comfortable place for children's success.

In the social science circle, education is associated with the empowerment of an individual. It provides '"human capabilities' (Sen &Dreze 1999 cited in Roy, 2005), giving individual freedom of choices and transforming a human into capital by associating education with employment (Atal, 2007). The transition and collective shift of a community from illiteracy to literacy and education does not happen automatically but through constant changes in value perception and approach to life due to many exogenous forces (Roy, 2005).

In the present study, the concept of social exclusion becomes relevant in analysing the participation of Lepchas in higher education, as various studies have established how STs have experienced exclusion despite the reservation policy. Further, it becomes relevant to examine if a reservation has any impact in bridging the exclusion of Lepchas in higher education, if the acquisition of cultural capital in the form of education led to a change in habitus and whether there has been any change in the collective thought process and culture of the Lepchas in terms of educational achievement.

Objectives and Methods

The present paper attempts to examine the participation of Lepchas in higher education. It aims to identify both enabling and disabling factors in determining access to higher education among the Lepchas. The micro-level study is exploratory in nature. Taking 2.5 % of the STs population (3333 as per the 2011 Census) of Khasmahal villages of Kalimpong block I, located within the vicinity of the main town, 83 Lepcha respondents were taken using purposive sampling. The primary data was acquired by administering a semi-structured interview schedule containing both close-ended and open-ended questions. At the same time, qualitative information like case studies and narratives was collected through in-depth interviews. The primary data has been analysed within the sociological conceptual framework substantiated by secondary literature.

Lepchas of Kalimpong in Higher Education

In the backdrop of the preceding discussion on the historical and sociocultural, and economic life of Lepchas and the reservation policy, it is pertinent to examine the status of Lepchas in terms of higher education. Out of the total respondents, gender-wise, 40.96 percent are male, and 59.03 per cent are female in the age group of 18 to 40 years. The gender-wise and course-wise higher educational status of the respondents is presented in Table 1:

Table 1:   Educational status of the Lepcha Respondents

HE Courses	Pursuing		Completed		Total & %	NPHE	
	M	F	M	F		M	F
Under-Graduate	12	9	7	12	40 (48.1%)	NA	NA
MA.	3	3	1	2	09 (10.8%)	NA	NA
M.Tech.	NA	1	1	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA

M.Phil.	NA	3	NA	NA	03 (3.6%)	NA	NA
PhD	NA	1	NA	NA	01 (1.2%)	NA	NA
Nursing	NA	2	NA	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
B.Ed.	NA	2	NA	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
Management	NA	NA	1	2	03 (3.6%)	NA	NA
NPHE	NA	NA	NA		NA	9	12
Total	36 43.37%		2 6 31.32%		62 74.6%	21 25.3%	
Grand Total	83 100%						

HE – Higher Education, NPHE- Not pursuing Higher Education

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Table 1 demonstrates that 74.6 per cent of Lepcha respondents are either pursuing or have completed higher education, while 25.3 per cent have not participated in higher education due to many constraining factors. Those who could access higher education have opted for various courses like BA, MA, M. Phil, MTech, PhD and professional courses like Management, B.Ed. and Nursing. 48.1 per cent of respondents are either pursuing or completed a graduate degree, of which BA was the most preferred choice. 10.8 percent of respondents have opted for Post-Graduation or MA courses. One positive indication among the respondents was diversification in the selection of the courses; 7 per cent have opted M.Tech and higher educational degrees like MPhil and PhD. Equally encouraging was 8 per cent who have opted for various professional courses like Degree and Diploma in Nursing, B.Ed. and Management etc. Those who completed various courses are now working in different departments, viz. Bank, Teaching, Engineering, and Government services etc. Overall, 74.6 per cent of Lepcha respondents either pursuing or completing higher education reveals fair representation, which is an encouraging trend.

Higher education within and outside the district:

Coming to the question of where the respondents availed of higher education? 62.90 per cent have studied outside Kalimpong in cities like Kolkata, Delhi,

Bangalore, Siliguri etc., while only 37.09 per cent studied in various colleges within Kalimpong. The larger outflow of Lepcha students into good colleges and universities in various cities reveals a good deal of awareness among the community regarding the opportunities for higher education in the country.

Parental income and types of courses opted:

There is a significant association between parental income and access of children to higher educational opportunities. Parents' socioeconomic background impacts children gaining educational opportunities and achieving academic success (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Children from high socioeconomic backgrounds often have possibilities of greater success, as they have access to a variety of resources that facilitate their education and development (Kumar, Marbuah, 2016). The empirical finding demonstrated in Table 2 reveals a finding in a similar line and establishes a significant association between parental income and participation in different courses among the respondents.

Table 2: Parent's Monthly Income (in Rs.) and Types of Courses

HE Courses	Pursuing		Completed		Total & %	NPHE	
	M	F	M	F		M	F
Under-Graduate	12	9	7	12	40 (48.1%)	NA	NA
MA.	3	3	1	2	09 (10.8%)	NA	NA
M.Tech.	NA	1	1	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
M.Phil.	NA	3	NA	NA	03 (3.6%)	NA	NA
PhD	NA	1	NA	NA	01 (1.2%)	NA	NA
Nursing	NA	2	NA	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
B.Ed.	NA	2	NA	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
Management	NA	NA	1	2	03 (3.6%)	NA	NA

NPHE	NA	NA	NA		NA	9	12
Total	36		2 6		62	21
	43.37%		**31.32%**		**74.6%**	**25.3%**
Grand Total	83 **100%**					

Source: Fieldwork, 2018; NPHE- Not pursuing Higher Education

Table 2 indicates a significant association between parental income and participation in higher education. All those respondents who have not participated in higher education belong to the lowest monthly income range of Rs. 5,000-20,000. Only 3.2 per cent of those who opted for higher education belong to the lowest monthly income range of Rs.5,000-10,000. The data reveals that the percentage of those participating in higher education significantly increased from the income range of Rs. 10,000 to 20,000 (17.7 per cent) onwards. A significant 35.4 percent of respondents availing the higher education belongs to the parental income range of Rs. 20,000-30,000 and above. The combined percentage of the highest 43.5 percent of the respondents falls within the highest income range of Rs. 30,000 and above. This evidently concludes that parental income is directly proportional to the respondent opting for diverse higher educational courses. For instance, all those opting for professional courses of MTech and higher degrees like MPhil and PhD belong to the group with the highest monthly income range of Rs.50,000 and above. The findings corroborate with Becker and Tomes (1986) that parents with stable socioeconomic status will have a high potential to provide basic and supplementary resources for their education compared to parents with low socioeconomic status, which was empirically relevant.

 Parental education and the type of courses opted

Bourdieu's Habitus, Cultural Capital, and Field can be contextualised in the study to see the association between parental education and children opting for higher education. Bourdieu conceptualised cultural capital as the socially inherited linguistic and cultural competence that can facilitate education success (Robbins, 2004). Within the field of education, an academic credential and degree constitute cultural capital (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). The cultural capital in the form of parental education plays a determining role in children's higher education participation and attainment. The empirical data in Table 3 corresponds to the above theoretical argument and shows a strong relation between parental education and the types of courses opted by the respondents.

Table 3 Parent's Education and Types of Courses Opted

HE Courses	Pursuing		Completed		Total & %	NPHE	
	M	F	M	F		M	F
Under-Graduate	12	9	7	12	40 (48.1%)	NA	NA
MA.	3	3	1	2	09 (10.8%)	NA	NA
M.Tech.	NA	1	1	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
M.Phil.	NA	3	NA	NA	03 (3.6%)	NA	NA
PhD	NA	1	NA	NA	01 (1.2%)	NA	NA
Nursing	NA	2	NA	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
B.Ed.	NA	2	NA	NA	02 (2.4%)	NA	NA
Management	NA	NA	1	2	03 (3.6%)	NA	NA
NPHE	NA	NA	NA		NA	9	12
Total	36 43.37%		2 6 31.32%		62 74.6%	21 25.3%	
Grand Total	83 **100%**						

Source: Field work, 2018; NPHE- Not pursuing Higher Education

Table 3 reveals all 21 respondents who have not availed higher education have low parental educational attainment and were either illiterate or studied up to the elementary level. However, regardless of low parental education, 11.2 percent of the respondents were studying undergraduate and nursing courses, indicating intergenerational educational mobility. 19.3 percent who could access higher education have their parental education up to high school level,

while 27.4 percent of respondents whose parental educational level is up to higher secondary have opted for various courses, viz. undergraduate degree, MA and management courses. A significant 41.9 percent of respondents, who are in graduate degree courses, professional courses and higher education courses like MPhil and PhD degrees, belong to the category of parental education having a graduate degree and above. Therefore, the empirical evidence corroborates the relationship between parental educational level and the respondent's educational attainment.

The findings lend credence to the fact that parents with a sound educational background endow the values they have achieved from their education in their children, boosting the children's educational achievement and resulting in academic success. The study by Vellymalay (2011) also substantiates that the more educated parents are, the higher their involvement in their children's education. In light of the above empirical evidence, the theoretical argument of association between cultural capital in the form of parental education and the respondent's educational attainment appears relevant among the Lepchas of Kalimpong.

Respondents Availing Reservation and Other Educational Amenities

Rao (2008) argued that reservation policy equalises opportunities for people from low socio-economic backgrounds like SC/ST and facilitates them to overcome their low position and propagate social mobility. However, there have been arguments regarding the implications of the reservation on the ground that it benefits the economically stable section or creamy layer and not those who actually need it, implying that it deepens inequalities for the deprived section of society (ibid). Empirically, out of 62 respondents who accessed higher education, 57 respondents, that is nearly 91.9 per cent, have availed reservation in higher education. A further breakup shows that 69.3 per cent availed only of reservation, while 22.5 per cent availed both reservation and scholarship. The fact that more than 90 per cent are availing either reservation and scholarship or both is a clear indication that Lepcha ST of Kalimpong is aware of the constitutional provisions which have facilitated them to access higher education.

Discussion and Observation

Xaxa's (2001) argument regarding ST's relative isolation from the dominant mainstream society, which seeded their exclusionary process, can be contextualised among Lepchas of Kalimpong, who used to follow shifting cultivation and insulated themselves solely depending on forest for their socio-economic life in the past (Subba,1985). This historical location of the Lepcha tribe contributed to the exclusionary process, resulting in what Sen termed capability deprivation. This hindered interpersonal processes and interaction, creating a habitus which lacked social, cultural and economic capital, which further sowed the pattern of social exclusion.

However, during the development process, the socioeconomic position of Lepchas improved (Subba, 1985). Given the above facts and analysis, the empirical data provides ample evidence that the reservation facilities, which opened the door for access to higher education, further led to the acquisition of social, cultural and economic capital that restructured their habitus to a great extent. Nevertheless, passive exclusion in the form of unintended consequence is evident, with 25.3 percent of the respondents still being excluded and unable to participate in higher education due to various structural constraints. Therefore, it is pertinent to critically investigate various facilitating factors and constraints. Based on narrative analysis, the following section will bring out the dynamics of the participation of Lepchas in higher education.

Facilitating and Constraining Factors

Economic Stability of Family:

The empirical evidence confirms that the socioeconomic background of the family with stable parental income corresponds with greater participation in higher education. Also, parental income is directly proportional to the diversity of courses the respondents opted for in Higher Education. Economic stability as an enabling factor is reflected in the narratives of a 28 years old who holds a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science -

My father is a teacher in a government school and has a stable income. Therefore I attained education from an English medium school and later could access higher education in Delhi.

In contrast, the unstable family income as a barrier to the continuation of education is evident in the narration of a 28-year-old respondent:

My parents, being farmers, were financially unstable. Their income was not enough for our education. Being the eldest daughter, I had to work to support my family after my father's demise. My younger brother studied till class four, and my other siblings could not study further due to a lack of financial support and guidance.

Many narrations highlighting family income either as an enabling or constraining factor have been shared by the respondents. Therefore, the empirical evidence validates the association between stable parental income and access to higher education among Lepchas of Kalimpong.

Parental education and cultural capital:

 Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital refer to the socially inherited linguistic and cultural competence that allows success in education (Robbins, 2004). The study confirms that a family's possession of cultural capital in the form of parental education level has facilitated the respondents' access to higher education and attainment. The theoretical argument finds reflection in the narratives of a 25 years old woman who is pursuing a master's degree -

My parents hold a bachelor's degree and have always guided me in my studies. My father endorsed the importance of reading newspapers at a very young age. And I believe this has helped me a lot in my higher education to get hold of reading habits.

On the contrary, the field finding also suggests that low parental education levels or lack of cultural capital hindered higher education attainment. Dewan (2014) highlighted that in Darjeeling and Kalimpong hills, there is a lack of culture that encourages the endeavour of education as considerable numbers of parents having poor economic conditions and educational levels are not so conscious of their children's education and can hardly offer tutorship. This argument finds reflection in the narrative of 21 a years old respondent, who stated-

My father, who studied up to elementary level, tells me to study, but it is sad they cannot guide us with our studies, for example: what course to take up in higher education, which subject is apt to take, how to build interest in a particular subject etc. My parents work hard to support me financially, but I think that is not enough. My friend's father is a teacher. He guides his children by bringing newspapers and suggesting different courses available etc.

This is evident that cultural capital in the form of parental education is instrumental and has an impact on children's attainment of higher education.

Awareness about Reservation Policy and Scholarship:

Weisskopf (2004) argued that in India, along with the increasing trend of total student enrolment in higher education, the number of SC and ST students in higher education enrolment is gradually mounting up. The considerable share of SC and ST students' enrolment in Indian higher education is attributable to India's reservation policies. Lepcha being the ST, can avail the constitutional provision for higher education and employment. Hence, the awareness of the reservation policy and various provisions significantly determines their participation in higher education. Such awareness facilitating access to higher education has been found in the narratives of many respondents. One such beneficiary is a 25 year old female respondent.

I am working as a teacher in a missionary school, and yes, I am aware of the reservation policy and scholarship schemes. And it is helpful for those truly inspired to study, but there are very few seats for ST categories. My uncle works in a welfare department office, and he is aware of the scholarship schemes. I learned about it from him and availed it while in college.

On the contrary, lack of awareness about reservation and scholarships remained a constraining factor for many respondents from continuing higher education, as they lacked guidance in following the cumbersome process and were also ignorant about the timing of application etc. The narrative of a respondent's mother reveals such helplessness-

When my husband was alive, he used to do the official paperwork needed for applying for a scholarship and once my children did receive a stipend from the government. However, after his death, I could not do it because I am illiterate, "Laaj panilagcha office janu (I also feel shy to go to the office) to make papers that are needed for applying for the scholarship.

Social Capital and Networking:

Bourdieu conceptualises social capital as the potential resources an individual gains through membership in an organisation and networks or participating in certain social groups (Lee, 2010). The awareness of reservation policy and various schemes for ST depends a lot on social capital, which enables an individual to avail facilities. Since social capital also depends one's economic and cultural capital, empirically, those respondents who could continue their higher education are those with good parental income and education. The importance of network facilitating awareness about reservation and scholarships is evident in the narrative of a respondent who holds a graduate degree-

My father is a government employee and is acquainted with the reservation policy and scholarships because of his networking with his colleagues. I acquired knowledge about scholarships from my father. Another respondent opined a similar statement. I am aware of the reservation policy and other provisions given by the government. I got the information about the reservation and scholarships from my college seniors, and I availed it.

However, the empirical finding also suggests another side of the story. The cumbersome process and lack of connection to guide them have remained a critical barrier in availing reservation benefits leading to the discontinuation of studies. Such a situation is reflected in the narrative of a respondent's mother, who had little knowledge about reservation. She expressed her helplessness in the following way:

I have heard about the scholarship but am ignorant of all the paper works and zizolagcha paper haru ko kam (I used to get irritated about complicated paper works). And I don't know whom to approach because of which my children could not apply for scholarships during their schooling and discontinued their studies.

Lack of Proper Dissemination of Information as Constraining Factor:

Lack of proper channelisation and dissemination of information about the governmental resources regarding education is one of the constraining factors as revealed by the respondents. Many expressed not having clarity about the constitutional provisions, as there is no proper body to disseminate the information to the grass root level. The information is available on websites, and the internet is not accessible to those who are not familiar with smart technology and those having low levels of social and cultural capital. Many respondents specified that publication in newspapers would make the

information easily accessible, which would help in bridging the information gap among different sections of Lepchas. This would, to some extent, bring many STs within the ambit of higher education and addresses inequality within the community. The finding thus resonates with Ramakrishna's (2022) argument on the need for holistic digital education for the inclusive growth of tribes.

The information gap and lack of dissemination of information being a hindrance are revealed in the narration of one such respondent, who could not continue higher education:

I dropped school when I failed to clear the class XII final examination. I am the most educated among all my siblings. I was ignorant about the reservation policies and scholarships that are provided for the ST. Till now, I have not received any stipend or scholarships neither did my brothers and sisters because we never applied for them. No one told us or helped us in this regard.

Role of External Agencies as Facilitating Factor

Religious Organisation:

The study revealed religion as a motivating factor for higher education. Many Christian respondents revealed that the church assists them in various ways, even providing educational loans and scholarships for the needy. A 19-year-old Christian respondent stated:

I am pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Kalimpong. My Church provides moral and financial support, and when I scored a good percentage in my Higher Secondary examination, I was felicitated with a monetary reward in church, which enhanced my confidence to perform better. In youth service, our seniors guided me to higher education.

The social capital in the form of a network with church members, instrumental in promoting her higher education, can be reflected in the narrative of another respondent.

 I came to know about the reservation policy and scholarships from some of our seniors in the youth worship service who are pursuing higher studies in Kolkata. I was enlightened about different courses and institutions by my seniors, who helped me to get admission to the Visva Bharati University. Another respondent who was Catholic by religion stated: I completed my schooling from a Catholic school. Being Catholic, my father, who had just a primary level education, was given a job in D group staff in the same school, and we also got relaxation in school fees, which helped me to complete my schooling. In college, I came to know about the reservation policy and scholarships from seniors and was acquainted with official paperwork. I availed scholarship during college time.

The above narratives reveal that the religious organisation provides not just moral or spiritual support but also financial and motivational support. Many reported benefiting from guidance and the church network. In addition, the reservations in Christian missionary colleges facilitated some respondents to access higher education.

State Initiatives and Role of Community Board:

The government of West Bengal has established development Boards for different marginalised communities in hilly regions for various developmental initiatives and upliftment of the community. Under the administrative control of the Backward Classes Welfare Department, the State of West Bengal established the community board named Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board[5], which came into existence on 5th August 2013[6]. The Board's objective is "to promote education among their community". Since then, the board has been effectively working for the upliftment of the community. With regard to the function of the board, the Secretary of Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board stated, "In the field of education, schools with single rooms have been opened in various places in the district, hostels are coming up for girl students, support has been given to educational institutions, where Lepcha language and culture are promoted, coaching classes and incentives have been provided to meritorious and deserving students"[7].These factors have played a significant role in encouraging the Lepcha students. The opening of hostels free of cost for Lepcha students from economically unstable families in towns and cities of West Bengal adds plus points that provide a sense of security and confidence to the parents to send their children from rural, remote villages to the town for further higher education.

Conclusion

Based on the empirical findings, it is amply clear that the Lepchas of Kalimpong have been able to avail benefits of reservation and other provisions that have facilitated their entry into higher education, which reconciled the exclusionary process to a considerable extent. As stated by Xaxa (2001), the empirical finding suggests that reservation gave an added advantage, which unquestionably has set the trend among Lepchas of Kalimpong to venture into higher education. This shows a gradual shift in collective thought process and a reference point of aspiration for deprived sections of Lepchas. In this context, the role played by external agencies like religious organisations and community boards cannot be debunked. Further exposure to various exogenous forces like competitive environment, cross-cultural interaction while studying outside and increasing aspiration have further facilitated the acquisition of social and cultural capital over the years, which resulted in the restructuring of their habitus for many. In the process, many Lepcha respondents have broken the traditional narrative stereotypes. However, taking

[5]Registered under, West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961 (West Bengal. Act XXVI of 1961)
[6]Government of West Bengal: Backward Classes Welfare Department, 2013
[7]WBMLLBD: Annual administrative report, 2015-2016

advantage of the constitutional provisions has not been uniformly availed by all community sections, which demonstrates the presence of historical baggage embedded in their social structure, depriving a section of them of educational opportunities. Better representation in higher education among the tribe can further strengthen the economic, cultural and social capital, which can strengthen enabling factors in changing the habitus and collective thought process. What is required is proper channelisation and dissemination of information through various means, including print and social media that can be instrumental in bridging the gap within the community and combatting the exclusionary process of deprived sections among the Lepchas.

References

Atal, Y. (2007). *On education and development*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Becker, G. S., & Tomes, N. (1986). Human capital and the rise and fall of families. *The Journal of Labour Economics, 4*(3), S1-S39.

Behera, S. (2015). Access to higher education for tribals in India. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences, 4*(7), 324-328.

Benjamin, J. (2008). Dalit and Higher Education in India. *Indian Political Science Association 69*(3), 627-642.

Bhoi, D., & Lakra, N. R. (2022). Marginality, Educational Opportunity, and Access to Higher Education: Experiences of Scheduled Caste and Tribe Studentsin India. *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2455328X221129453

Bowles, S. & H. Gintis. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Education*. New York: Basic Books.

Das, A.K. 1978. *The Lepchas of West Bengal*. Calcutta, India: Editions Indian.

Dash, A. J. (2011). Bengal District Gazetteer: Darjeeling. West Bengal: NL.

Publishers.

Dasmondal, P. (2018). Physical Aspects of The Kalimpong District, Darjeeling Himalaya: Understanding from A Geographical Perspective. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 7*(9), 01-09.

Deshpande, A. (2008). Quest for Equality: Affirmative Action in India. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 44*(2), 154-163.

Dewan, D. B. (2014). *Education in the Darjeeling hills during the period of Gorkhaland Agitation: A diagnostic study on a question of imparting*

qualitative instruction for an identification of impediments. Siliguri: Gorkha Bharati Vichar Manch.

Gorer, G. (1938). *Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas of Sikkim*. London, England: Michael Joseph.

Gowloog, R. R. (2013). *Identity Formation among the Lepchas of West Bengal and Sikkim. Studies of Tribes and Tribals, II*(I), 19-23.

Giddens, A. (1998). *The Third Way and Its Critics*. Cambridge: Polity.

Haralambos, M. & Heald, R.M. (2014). *Sociology Themes and perspective*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Kabeer, N. (2000). Social Exclusion, Poverty, and Discrimination: Towards an analytical framework. *IDS Bulletin, 31*(4), 83–97.https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2000.mp31004009.x

Kabeer, N. (2005). Social exclusion: Concepts, Findings and Implications for the MDGs. *Research Gate,* 1-33.

Khatun, H. (2014). *Business and Business Communities of Darjeeling sub-division from 1835 to 1962: A historical study* (Doctoral dissertation, Centre for Himalayan Studies, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling). http://hdl.handle.net/10603/150723.

Kijima, Y. (2006), "Caste and tribe inequality: Evidence from India, 1983-1999". *Economic Development and Cultural Change, 54* (2),369-404.

Kumar, D. (2010). Higher Education of Tribals in India: With Special Reference to Jharkhand. In Sharma & Thakur (Eds.), *Indian Higher Education and Tribals* (pp.254- 303). New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication.

Kumar, G.D. (1980). Morpho-Physical Variability of the Bhutias and the Lepchas of Darjeeling District. *Indian Anthropological Association, 10*(1), 41-54.

Kumar, N. (2016). Impact of parental socio-economic factors on the performance of students in IIT-JEE. *Current Science, 110*(11), 2079-2081.

Lepcha, A. P. (2010). Social transformation and the Lepchas of Darjeeling hills: Role of missionaries, mid-19th century to 1947. *Indian Church History Review*, 130-150 http://dspace.cus.ac.in/jspui/handle/1/4081

Lepcha, C.K. (2013). *Religion, Culture and Identity: A Comparative Study on the Lepchas of Dzongu, Kalimpong and Ilam* (Doctoral dissertation, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. http://hdl.handle.nt/10603/194210

Lepcha, S.A. (2019). *Higher Education among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of Kalimpong: A Sociological Study* (M.Phil. dissertation, Sikkim University).

Lee, M. (2010). Researching social capital in education: Some conceptual considerations relating to the contribution of network analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 31*(6), 779-792.

Marbuah, D. A.-A. (2016). *Influence of parental income and educational attainment on children's years of schooling: Case of Ghana* (Master's thesis, Sociology of Education, Uppsala Universität). http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1092869/FULLTEXT01.

Modi, I. (2015). Social Exclusion and Inequality: Challenges before a Developing Society. *Sociological Bulletin, 64*(1), 3-14. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26290717

Mukhopadhyay,B.Gupta,R. and Bhattacharya,S.K. (1996). Haematological traits, religion and rural/urban residence among the Lepchas of Kalimpong subdivision, Darjeeling district, West Bengal (India*). Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 35-43. https://www.jstor.org/stable/29540574

Naik, D. (2022). Bonda Tribe and Higher Education: A Case Study in Odisha. Educational Quest. *An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences, 13(*2).

Nambissan, G. B. (1994). Language and Schooling of Tribal Children: Issues Related to Medium of Instruction. *Economic and Political Weekly, 29* (42), 2747-2754.

Nambissan, B.G. & Rao, S.S. (Eds). (2013). *Sociology of education in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Navarro, Z. (2006). In Search of Cultural Interpretation of Power. *IDS Bulletin*, *37*(6),11-22.

Nevile, A. (2007). Amartya K. Sen and social exclusion. *Development in Practice, 17*(2), 249–255.

Ottaway, A. (1968). Durkheim on education. *British Journal of Educational Studies,16*(1), 5-16.

Padma, K. (2011). *Globalization tribal's & gender*. Haryana: Madhav Books.

Putcha, C. (2020). Educational Opportunities of Scheduled Tribes In Andhra Pradesh: A Critical Appraisal. *Parishodh Journal, IX*(II), 3920-3933.

Ramakrishnappa, Dr. V. (2022). Exclusion of Scheduled Tribes in Access to Digital Services in India: Bottlenecks and the Way Forward. *East African Scholars Journal of Economics, Business and Management, 5*(9), 251–255.

Rao, J.L.N. (2008). Affirmative action in India emerging contours. *The Indian Journal of Political Science Association, 69*(3), 483-492.

Rasak, A. (2016). *Inequality in accessing higher education and social capital among backward class students of Kerala* (Doctoral Dissertation, Pondicherry University). http://dspace.pondiuni.edu.in/jspui/bitstream/1/2541/1/T6290.pdf

Richardson, J. (1986). *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Robbins, D. (2004). The transcultural transferability of Bourdieu's sociology of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 25*(4):415-430.

Roy, A.G., Mukherjee, S., & Behera, B. (2018). The Socio-Cultural Belief of the Lepchas of Pedong, West Bengal, India. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research, 6* (4), 1405-1407.

Roy, Sanjay K. (2005). *Tribes' Education and Gender Questions*. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre

Sahu, K. K. (2014). Challenging Issues of Tribal Education in India. *Journal of Economics and Finance, 3*(2), 48-52.

Sarkar, S. (2014). Tribal detour in Darjeeling hills. *Economic and Political Weekly, 49* (21).

Sen, A. (2000). *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny*. Asian Development Bank.

Sheikh, Y.A. (2017). Higher Education in India Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Education and Practice, 8*(1), 39-42.

Silver, H. (2019). Social Exclusion. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Urban and Regional Studies*, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118568446.eurs0486

Sreeramamurty, K. Sailaja, K. Appalanaidu, D. (2012). Inclusive Growth and Higher Education in India. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, 1*(2), 2277-7881.

Subramanyam, V. (2020). Social Exclusion, Inclusion, Integration and Development of Tribes in India: Anthropological Holistic Perspective. *International Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Studies,5*(10), 67-78.

Suresh, P. (2011). *Problem Encountered by the ST /SC Adolescent students in pursuing Higher Secondary Education in adi- dravidar Welfare Schools Located in Rural Areas of Tamil Nadu state* (Doctoral dissertation, Bharathidasan University) http://hdl.handle.net/10603/9546

Subba, T.B. (1985). The Lepchas: From Legends to the Present Day. *Religion and Society, XXXH* (2), 61-70

Tandi, S. (2019). Participation of Tribal Students in Higher Education: A study of Odisha.*International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, 6*(1), 43-56.

Tamsang, K.P. (1983). *The Unknown and Untold Reality about the Lepchas*. Hongkong: Luen Sun Offset Printing Co.

Vellymalay, S. K. (2011). A study of the relationship between Indian parents' educational level and their involvement in their children's education. *Kaijian Malaysia, 29*(2),47- 65.

Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Weisskopf, T. E. (2004). Impact of reservation on admissions to higher education in India. *Economic and Political Weekly, 39*(39), 4339-49.

Xaxa, V. (2001). Protective Discrimination: Why Scheduled Tribes Lag behind Scheduled Castes. *Economic and Political Weekly, 36* (29), 2765-2772. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4410888

Xaxa, V. (2016). Brown Journal of World Affairs Tribes and Indian National Identity. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs, 23*(1), 223–237. https://doi.org/10.2307/26534720

Official Documents, Reports and Census

AISHE (All India Survey on higher education) Government of India: Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2017). *All India Survey on higher education.* http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/New%20AISHE%202017-18%20Launch_Final.pdf

Census of India. (2011). *West Bengal, District Census Data Handbook Darjeeling, Village and Town Wise, (PCA).* censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/1901_PART_B_DCHB_DARJILING.pdf

Government of India (GOI) NCSC. (2016). *National Commission for Scheduled Cates*. New Delhi. http://ncsc.nic.in/files/HANDBOOK2016.pdf

Government of West Bengal: Backward Classes Welfare Department. (2013). *Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board, Resolution No. 462-BCW/6S-73/2011.* https://wbxpress.com/mayel-lyang-lepcha-development-board

Mayel Lyang Development Board. (2013). *Annual Administrative Report 2013- 2014 & 2015-16*. Kolkata Tribal Development Department, Government of West Bengal

University Grant Commission. (2019). *Annual Report 2018-2019*. New Delhi: India

Internet Sources

Five Year Plans. (n.d). *Five year Plan: 1st to 11th Plans*.

https://www.educationforallinindia.com/fiveyearplans.html

History of Kalimpong. (n.d).
http://www.bharatonline.com/westbengal/travel/kalimpong/history.html

Kalimpong district: Administrative division. (n.d.).
https://kalimpongdistrict.in/about-kalimpong/

Sen, S. (2017, February 17). *Carved out of Darjeeling, Kalimpong a district today.* The Times of India.
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/carved-out-of-darjeeling-kalimpong a-district-today/articleshow/57137909.cm

Shunami A Lepcha *is a Ph.D Scholar, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University*
Email: shunamilepcha@gmail.com

Sandhya Thapa *is Professor, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University*
Email: sthapa@cus.ac.in

Left- behind children of migrants in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya- evidence-based study from bihar, India

--Madhu Monjuri Gohain and Aditya Raj

Abstract

Male out-migration for employment results in leaving behind families, including children due to unfavourable conditions in the destination. These children are termed left-behind children (LBC). Inadequate remuneration of migrants provides less scope to invest in their children's education. They attend state-run government schools with minimum learning facilities. This paper highlights the role of social networks in providing appropriate information and resources to LBCs on secondary education in Bihar. Grannovetter's (1985) concept of *embeddedness* is drawn to understand the network of interaction among different social ties. Data was collected from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV)- *JNV1, JNV2, and JNV3* in Bihar using a purposive sampling method through in-depth interviews and participant observation. The findings reflect that social networks and their embeddedness with educational institutions (EI) provides accurate information and resources. This paper will be useful for those in Sociology, Education, Public Policy, and it's like.

Keywords: Internal migration, Left-Behind Children, Social Network, Embeddedness, Jawahar Navodaya Vidhyalaya, Bihar

Introduction

Migration is an important indicator of human development. For ages, people have considered migration as an opportunity to deal with different socio-economic and political crises and also as an opportunity for better livelihood opportunities. The Census of India (2011) estimates 453 million internal migrants which is around thirty-seven percent of the total population in India. , The majority of internal migrants practice short-term migration (Keshri & Bhagat, 2012; Deshingkar, 2006). Among these, male migrants dominate migration for employment opportunities (Rajan & Sumeetha, 2019), and majorities are from rural marginalised communities in India (Rogaley et al., 2001; Srivastava & Sasikumar, 2003). Internal male out-migration from poor households for employment activities is a predominant factor in the state of Bihar. Male out-migrants are second highest in Bihar after Uttar Pradesh (Roy, 2011).

These migrant populations are engaged in various informal sectors in low-profile jobs and survive in the poorest condition at their destination (Datta, 2020). Inadequate dwelling facilities induce them to leave behind their family members, including children. These children are referred to as left-behind children (Roy et al., 2015; Agasty, 2016). The absence of a father adversely affects their education which includes low school attendance, poor academic performance, and sometimes leading to school drop-out. This also hampers

their overall education (Roy et al., 2015; Shah, 2021). Srivastava (2003) found that the father's migration is a bottleneck toward the education of girl children in India. They are entrusted to take care of their younger siblings and are engaged in household chores (Roy. et al., 2015).

The lack of quality secondary education in rural government schools compels students to look for better alternatives. Implementing educational policies like National Education Policy (NEP) (1986) mandates the implementation of free residential institutions for rural underprivileged students in India.The establishment of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) under this policy has brought a revolutionary change by introducing free, modern and quality education. JNV, a co-educational school affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), was selected for this study.Among different government schools, JNV was selected because it provides scope for inclusive education. There are thirty-nine JNVs located in thirty-eight districts of Bihar. An additional JNV is established in Gaya, which has the highest Scheduled Caste (SC) population in the state and the highest Scheduled Caste (SC) population. The total enrolment of students in Bihar each year is 3,120 students. Thus, the chance of getting admission is relatively higher than in any other residential school in Bihar. Although such opportunities are available, LBCs from underprivileged backgrounds are unaware of these provisions and struggle to meet their educational demands due to a lack of relevant information. In such a condition, they seek support and guidance from their family members, relatives and close friends, also called social network ties. Social networks play a crucial role in accessing information, social support, and economic resources. The social network defines relations among social actors through social ties or connections. These ties represent communication in the forms of information and resources among actors and influence in the form of motivation and trust (Coleman, 1989).

The Study

Three JNVs were selected for this study based on the rationale that they are representative of Bihar as these are from three different parts of Bihar. X district is located in central Bihar. District Y in North Bihar has the highest percentage of out-migration from the province. District Z in South Bihar with highest SC population in Bihar (Census of India, 2011; Deshingkar, 2006).The strength of JNV 1 while collecting data was (355) followed by JNV 2 (578) and JNV 3 (468) respectively. Therefore, the total strength of three JNVs is 1401 respondents. In JNV 1 twenty-four, LBC was identified from VII to XII standard. They were selected because they were present in the school while collecting field data. Students from class six were exempted from the interview because their admission process was going on, and the school authority restricted the access to include them in the study. Besides, in JNV 2, thirty-two respondents were interviewed from VI to XII. In JNV3, only twelve respondents were selected from X to Xll standard, as students from other classes were absent from the school due to covid 19 pandemic. Overall, sixty-eight LBCs were considered for the study.Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents in each JNV.

Table 1 Respondents in select JNVs

State	District	Name of JNV	M	F	LBC
	X	JNV 1	13	11	24
Bihar	Y	JNV 2	16	16	32
	Z	JNV 3	06	06	12
	Total respondents		35	33	68

Source- *Compiled from field data*

In-depth interviews were conducted with the respondents using an interview schedule.As JNV maintains a strict timetable, most of the interviews were conducted during weekends, class breaks and post-evening prayers with the least interruption in their daily schedule. The interviews stretched from thirty to forty-five minutes. During most of the interviews, the respondents were uncomfortable sharing their information with their classmates and teachers. To avoid such interruption, the interviewer avoided interviews in classrooms or packed locations. Also, ethical concern was considered while conducting research. Consent from appropriate school authorities and respondents was taken before conducting interviews. Besides, the anonymity of the respondents is maintained during this study. During the interview, we collected different types of information, describing their socio-economic condition in the following section.

Socio-Economic Background of the Respondents

Analysis of the socioeconomic indicators of the respondents is an important determining factor. In this study, we have collected field data on factors such as age, educational qualification, caste, gender, and parents' (father) occupation, to provide insight into the various constraints and opportunities that can impact their education. Age is an important characteristic for defining various concerns related to students. Data from the respondents represent the age group from ten to nineteen years of age group. Around fifty per cent of LBCs are under the age of sixteen to eighteen. They are mostly from the secondary and upper secondary sections from IX to XII standard. This enabled the collection of broader and more diverse information across respondents. Apart from age, gender is a crucial factor. Among the respondents, fifty-one percent are male and forty-eight per cent are female. Srivastava (2001) reveals that female LBCs have a lesser chance of attending formal schooling than their male counterparts.

In rural Bihar, the education of girl children is a major problem. Females from poor socio-economic backgrounds have fewer opportunities to attend school for economic constraints and social discrimination. Most of the time, the parents would engage their children in different domestic chores. Moreover,

the absence of their father reduces the chances of attending school for girl children because they have to perform household chores and take care of their younger siblings and the elderly (Srivastava & Kumar, 2003). Along with illiteracy, there prevails some taboos in rural society that women are only meant to manage the home and a medium to continue their generations. Also, women's potentials are always negatively judged as compared to the males. In rural areas of Bihar, the educational concerns of female LBCs have the least priorities. As these families' income is limited, the education of girls is often neglected. Also, parents had to save some money for their marriage purpose. So, even if parents want to continue their education, they couldn't spend it on attending coaching classes. Some girls revealed that their mothers had to convince their father to allow them to be admitted to JNV.

The caste and occupation of the father are other defining factors that define the type and reason for migration in Bihar. Smita (2008, 2011) and Agasty (2016) states that LBCs from underprivileged backgrounds do not have access to adequate resources and opportunities to earn their livelihood. The majority of LBC belongs to Other Backward Caste (OBC), SC, and Scheduled Tribe (ST). This describes that they are not fortunate to have adequate opportunities for education. The study noted that fifty-two per cent of the LBC are from OBC and twenty-two per cent from SC and ST. The percentage of LBC is more among OBC because, in Bihar, the migration is higher from this category (Roy, 2011). This reflects that they are from a privileged background with better socio-economic status. Monetary support plays a substantial role in availing requisite resources for preparation in government residential schools. Father's occupation of LBC can be categorized into self-employed, private and government sectors.

While thirty-eight percent of fathers of LBC are self-employed and around fifty-three per cent of parents work in unorganized private sectors, which include working in factories as labourers, in the construction and industrial sector where they work on a temporary basis. Their earning is minimal without any provision of incentives. This is in accordance with available literature highlighting that male out-migrants in Bihar are mostly engaged in informal sectors (Datta, 2020). To overcome these socio-economic problems related to the education of LBC, they seek free residential schooling opportunities.

Reason for Joining JNV

JNV as an institution provides LBC with a holistic learning approach in a conducive environment. Scope for quality and free residential facilities lessen the economic burden on their migrant parents. This research study elucidates the various reasons for LBC to join JNV.

Inadequate Learning Facilities in State-Run Government Schools

State-run government schools are unable to fulfill the basic requirements of providing holistic education. Inadequate infrastructural facilities along with

administrative issues and pedagogical shortcomings are a major concern. State-run government schools fail to provide students with basic facilities like clean drinking water and proper sanitation. The PTR is not according to the necessary criteria recommended by the RTE 2009. A shortage of teachers induces them to teach multiple subjects, affecting the quality of teaching and learning. This creates a burden and hampers their class performance. Students believed that their learning was affected particularly in subjects like mathematics and science because the other teachers could not deliver these subjects efficiently, affecting their overall learning. Besides, teachers emphasise rote learning, which impacts their conceptual understanding. Also, teachers fail to complete the syllabus on time. The inability to complete the syllabus on time induces the teachers to set questions which are often discussed in advance and are predictable. The students mentioned that this enables them to score good marks without adequate learning. Evaluations of the students are done based on their score card. Thus, a high score in examinations becomes the criteria to evaluate their knowledge of a particular subject.

Vivek (male, LBC) stated, "*Syllabus was never completed on time…My parents are not educated to help me with my studies and they cannot afford private tuition. I could not understand the concepts and had to memorize my lessons which were very difficult, but I had no other options*".

The above narrative of Vivek depicts an unsatisfactory educational experience in the state-run government school. Hindi is the only medium of instruction for these schools. These schools do offer coaching facilities. Students from these schools mostly depend on themselves and their social ties to get admission to JNV. Some students mentioned that they received support only from the teachers whose children were studying in JNV. Teachers persuaded the talented underprivileged students to apply for JNV to avail themselves of free quality education.

The majority revealed that attending private classes was not a feasible option as their parents cannot afford to pay tuition fees. Besides, parents are not well educated to assess the quality of education and the outcome of these private classes. Therefore, a lack of economic and social capital provides fewer options for students to avail quality education. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.119) defined "Social capital as the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition". As LBCs are from marginalised societies with less established connections or social capital, they had no choice but to continue their primary education in state-run government schools. Among LBCs, sixty-two per cent were from state-run government schools, and clearing Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Selection Test (JNVST) became difficult because of inadequate guidance and lack of quality learning.

Free Residential Schooling

Free residential schooling provides better learning facilities. Around fifty-three per cent of the LBC revealed that their parents were engaged in informal sectors in low-paid jobs. The provision of free education is a motivating factor to join JNV. LBC mentioned that they joined JNV because of financial constraints, as they cannot afford to attend private school.

Dilshad (male, LBC) elucidates "*I came to JNV because education is free and this will help my parents to save money for my coaching classes after XIIth standard for joining engineering course*".

Also, residential facilities in JNV facilitate necessary guidance and monitoring of students in the absence of their parents. The hostels are arranged based on the house system- *Shiwalik, Aravalli, Nilgiri, and Udaigiri.* A house head is assigned to each house which is generally a senior teacher for proper monitoring and functioning of houses. The house system is beneficial because students can learn from their seniors and peers, providing scope for co-learning. Female students across both categories enquired about scholarships after the XII standard. Also, they wanted to pursue further education by enrolling in disciplines which would incur less educational expenses and lessen the financial burden on their families. Moreover, students from single-parent families stated that residential facilities provided by JNV alone were the only reason to join.

Location of JNV in Home District

JNV, a central-run institution, has well- security provisions. The school authority assures a safe and secure environment for its students. As the students join at a very young age providing security and assistance becomes a priority. Also, JNV offers proper guidance and supervision. Security personnel are recruited to maintain a safe environment on the school campus. They are accountable for maintaining a register with particulars of visitors in a format showing the name, address, contact number, timings and purpose of visit. No outsider is allowed on the campus without prior permission from the school authority. Students' movement outside the campus is also restricted without valid reason and permission. They are allowed to meet their guardians/parents/relatives during the weekend. A female matron is appointed to look after the students for additional support and supervision. Matrons are specially appointed to monitor female students across JNVs.

The matron is available in the hostel premise for supervision and accompanies them to participate in school events outside the campus. Female respondents revealed that JNV is located in each district and has resolved the issue of their parents sending them to far-off places to attain quality education. Convincing their parents became easier as JNV is located in the home district. Female students said their parents felt secure as they did not have to travel long distances. Also, a few female students wanted to study near their homes because they felt secure and could keep in touch with their parents/guardians.

Also, it was observed that the location of the school is important for students because it takes less time to reach home in case of any medical emergencies because hospital facilities are not adequate on the school campus.

LBC and their Social Network Ties

Social network ties are the main sources for supporting LBC from rural areas that lack access to internet facilities and print media. Parents of LBC are less educated and cannot extend necessary academic suggestions and guidance pertaining to JNVST. Thus, LBCs coordinate and seek information from their social network ties that can facilitate them with the required details needed to prepare for entrance examinations. The main sources of information and resources within the social network ties are family members, relatives, close friends and neighbours; conditions are discussed below.

Family ties are a closely knitted network of strong ties (Micheli, 2000). Students identified the role of family members as pivotal in providing information on JNV. LBCs depend primarily on the family to seek information. Father is the head of the household and fulfils financial responsibility through remittances for household expenses. However, the role of migrant fathers is restricted because of physical distance. Only six per cent receive information on JNV from their father. Within the family, the students identify the role of elder siblings as crucial. These elder siblings are currently studying in JNV or are alumni-provided information on JNV. They have experience and detailed information about application procedures and JNVST preparation. They provide suggestions regarding study material, tips, and procedures for preparation. They usually rendered guidance during vacation and informed about school functioning and the learning environment. Students also considered similar coaching centres and residential institutes for coaching purposes on the referral of their elder siblings. So, within family ties, the role of siblings was important.

After the father, the role of the mother is important. In the absence of the father, the responsibility of managing household responsibilities and educating children rests on them. As most of the mothers are uneducated, she tries to find a suitable tutor within the family members and sometimes from the neighborhood at a nominal fee. She thereby tries to assist the child so that they can improve, prepare and perform better. She realises that admission to JNV can provide a platform for better career opportunities offering national-level course syllabi and a high standard of teaching. To better the essential criteria, she visits the nearest JNV, tries to interact with the school authority and makes necessary enquiries regarding the admission process. Although mothers of LBC are not well educated, she comprehends that their economic conditions can only be improved through the quality education of their children. She also tries to contact her relatives, and friends and avail necessary information and resources regarding better schooling opportunities. She tries to save from household expenses to purchase study materials like reference books, and guides and for availing the coaching facilities. The most important role of the

mother is the decision-making part; convincing the young aged child and motivating them to join JNV requires constant perseverance

The role of relatives is significant after family in the dissemination of information. Relatives include family members- uncle, aunt, and cousin from paternal and maternal lineage. In the case of LBC, in the absence of fathers, some important functions like providing assistance relating to their preparation process, study material, and guidance for the preparation process are supported by relatives. Relatives who provided information can be categorised under three broad categories- a) relatives whose children are alumni or studying in JNV. As the children of these relatives are either alumni or students of JNV, they have access to information on JNV. They get an opportunity to interact with teachers during the parent-teacher meetings. Much information regarding JNV is received in such formal and informal meetings. Also, these relatives have experience and understanding of the requirements of the entrance preparation. Thus, this category of relatives is resourceful in providing information. b) Relatives who are in the field of academics. Parents and students receive valuable information based on the profession of these relatives. c) Relatives who themselves are alumni of JNV. Being alumni of JNV they have contacts with teachers and alumni through social media platforms. These helped them provide information on concerns related to the admission process and other activities and opportunities provided by JNV. LBC also shared instances where they had stayed with their relatives and were provided information on JNV and its preparation process. This emphasises the pivotal role of relatives.

Neighbours are individuals who share spatial proximity. They share informal social relationships. According to LBC, neighbours stay in their locality and are part of their social networks. The flow of information is particularly from those neighbouring families whose children are studying in JNV or are alumni of JNV. Rajendra, LBC from JNV2 narrated that "*my neighbour studied in JNV. I came to know about JNV from him*". He suggested that I should apply there and also provided me with some study materials. Thus, his help, guidance and motivation made me successful in clearing JNVST. This reflects that neighbours who are studying or alumni of JNV can be a potential source of information and resources to LBC. Peers include friends with whom LBC shares informal relations and are counted under close ties. According to students, these close friends are friends/classmates from previous schools with whom they have frequent contact. They have similar social, cultural, and psychological characteristics (McPherson et al., 2001). These peer groups are influential in sharing information and making decisions in preparation for the JNV entrance test. In the preparation process, they exchange study materials like books and other relevant materials for the preparation process. Shalini (female, JNV1) narrated,

"Supriya and I are from the same village and studied in the same state-run government school. Every weekend we discussed the probable questions for preparation that might come in the entrance examinations. This has helped us a lot; both of us are now in the same JNV".

As they are of the same age group or study in the same class, many apply and prepare for the same entrance test. This reflects how the exchange of ideas, resources, information, discussion and group study among peers can be beneficial in accessing necessary knowledge for entrance preparation of JNV.

Education Institution (EI) as a platform for the preparation

Educational institutions are formal organisations which act as social networks, providing LBC with information and a platform for the preparation of different government residential school entrance exams. EI includes state-run government schools, private-aided schools, and Unrecognised Private Residential Schools (UPRS), with which the immediate social ties are associated. Thus, information from EIs is disseminated through these social ties. Crucial information related to the preparation of JNVST is passed on to students, which enables them to prepare well.

Unrecognised Private Residential Schools

UPRS in this study marked a category of schools where students have studied before joining JNV. All India School Survey conducted by National Council for Educational and Research Training (NCERT) (2002) estimated that there are 2193 unrecognised private schools at the primary level in Bihar (Rangaraju et al., 2012). UPRS are not government-recognised schools, and they run classes from I to VIII standards. The objective of UPRS is to provide coaching for entrance examinations in different government residential schools in Bihar, including– JNV, Sainik School Nalanda, Simultala Awasiya Vidyalaya Jamui, and Netarhat Vidyalaya, Netarhat, located in the neighbouring Jharkhand. JNVST is conducted for admission in VI and IX standards. However, many students attempt the entrance but cannot clear the entrance test in the V standard because of high competition and the limited number of seats. These students apply for lateral entry in the IX standard. However, to appear for lateral entry, students should pass their exam from a government/government-recognised school and be between the ages of eleven to fifteen years. Besides, one important aspect of the high success rate of admission from these schools is that UPRS segregates students based on their mental abilities, which are tested through regular mock tests. Depending on the score in these mock tests and student preference, they are segregated and prepared for targeted government residential schools, including JNV in Bihar. However, as per the eligibility criteria of JNV, students studying in UPRS schools are not eligible to appear for the entrance exam because these schools are not government affiliated. But students studying in UPRS to meet the admission process requirement enrol themselves in government schools and thus produce attendance from government or government-aided schools. According to Mukesh (male, LBC),

 "I have registered in a government school for my attendance, but in reality, I studied in Bihta Public school before joining JNV…many students from my class also studied in private residential school to prepare for JNV".

 A few cases revealed that when the government school is located near UPRS, students attend once a week to mark their attendance. Students hesitated while revealing because they knew it was against the school admission process. During the interviews, around twenty-six per cent of LBCs admitted that they had appeared for JNV entrance from UPRS. The students from these schools hesitated when admitted because they knew that admission from UPRS was against the rule of admission. Students mentioned that they were sent to UPRS specifically to take coaching classes for various reputed government residential schools. When they joined the school, they were quite young, mostly six to seven years old and did not have prior knowledge regarding JNV or any residential school in Bihar. UPRS guides them to apply for different government residential schools and prepares them for residential life. Similar to UPRS, there are Private Coaching Centres (PCC) which, according to LBC, also provide a platform for JNVST preparation. These institutions differ from UPRS because they schedule classes only for limited hours. Students who cannot afford to attend UPRS or study in state-run government schools opt for private coaching classes. As these PCC provide classes on selected days, and there is no provision for residential facilities. The fee structure is less in comparison to UPRS. According to LBC, coaching classes or private guidance are crucial for appearing in the entrance exam because the JNV entrance syllabus is not covered under the regular school syllabus. Separate classes are necessary for successful preparation.

Private-Aided School

Students identify the private-aided school as an institution which offers classes for JNVST after regular classes. These schools provide coaching to students who are interested in JNVST. However, it is not compulsory for all. About twenty-nine per cent of the students of both categories came from private schools. The preparation for the entrance is done comprehensively, but an additional fee is charged. These schools, as identified by students, are Awashiya Bal Siksha Niketan, Patna, Bihta Public School Patna, and Bharati Boarding School (day cum residential) Gaya. Private unaided Schools run classes from I standard to X standard. Coaching facilities are provided only in V standard generally for a year. These privately aided residential schools deploy their mathematics, science, and language teachers to carry out comprehensive coaching programs exclusively for the students interested in appearing in JNVST. Every syllabus topic, supporting students with necessary coaching classes, recommends study materials and guides in solving previous year's questions papers. Every evening after the regular classes, they conduct their special coaching for at least two hours.

Print Media

Besides the social network ties mentioned above, print media provides LBC with substantial educational information. Print media publishes detailed information on the admission process of different residential schools. Various daily newspapers, weekly and monthly educational journals, editorials and magazines were quite helpful for LBC. Scholars and prominent personalities

from the field of education share their ideas in the form of discussion, and different quizzes, sometimes providing sample arithmetic solutions. Many LBCs shared that they received information from daily newspapers like *Dainik Jagaran* and as a result, could collect relevant details relating to entrance preparation. Also, the opening of vacancies for the recruitment process of new batches for different institutions are also published in these newspapers. This advertisement includes the process of application, the date of entrance examinations, eligibility criteria etc. As these LBCs are from poor, marginalised societies, access to electronic media is often restricted due to internet connectivity issues and financial problems. Although the benefits of print media as an educational source for the JNV aspirants cannot be denied, in our study, carried out on 68 respondents, it was found that only two respondents gathered information from print media. The major limitation of print media found during the study is that these LBCs are from poorer families and couldn't afford to spend on such resources.

The flow of Information

The flow of information relies on different social network ties. The relation that LBC shares with their network ties facilitate the flow of information regarding JNV. Different forms of social network ties, namely families, relatives, acquaintances, neighbours, and peers, offer varied information. Among these ties, few are associated with educational platforms including JNV. These ties are associated with students, alumni, teachers, and staff members. The relation of LBC with these ties facilitates the flow of information through social embeddedness. The siblings and cousins of LBC who are studying or alumni of JNV are potential sources of information. It is explained in Table 2 that the embeddedness of LBC, eleven elder siblings of which (seven are alumni students, and four are currently studying in JNV) provide them with valuable and relevant information. These ties share opinions and information on the basis of their lived experience and thus guide and motivate them. They also added that such information is more reliable and trusted. This argument is in congruence with Grannovetter's (1985), theory on embeddedness which implies that a network of social relations generates the flow of information. Therefore, a trusted and reliable flow of information is facilitated through the embeddedness of ties.

Social ties of LBCs with their siblings, either studying or alumni of JNV, can influence their decision-making in order to join these institutions. Although students clear entrance to different residential schools, they are advised to join JNV. So, it can be deduced that the decision making of LBC with regard to the preparation of JNVST relies on the embeddedness of network ties.

Sarad (male LBC) narrated that

"*I too cleared my entrance in Simultata Awashiya Vidhyalaya, Jamui but my elder brother who is an alumnus of JNV encouraged me to join JNV*".

Thus, the embeddedness of family ties (elder siblings) with EI (JNV) limits their choices for studying in other government residential schools. Similarly, table 2 shows that among thirteen relatives, two have studied at JNV, only a single friend has studied, and out of seven neighbours, two are alumni of JNV. Besides, the flow of information to LBC is rendered to social ties other than those embedded with JNV.

Table 2 Social network of LBC and their overlapping tie with JNV

SL no	Social Network	Total ties	Number of LBC and Embedded social ties with JNV
1	Family (Siblings)	25	11
2	Relative	13	02
3	Peer	02	01
4	Neighbour	07	02
	Total response	47	16

Source – *compiled from the field data*

The flow of Information from Acquaintances.

LBC also received information from ties with whom they have no direct interaction. The data from *acquaintances* is useful for LBCs who lacks information from embedded ties. Table 3 below shows that of sixty-eight, thirty-one LBCs have received information from sources that are not directly connected. As students are less connected to a wider circle of friends and relatives, this information was transferred from acquaintances to LBC through different close ties, including family, relatives, peers, and neighbours. Fourteen family members of LBC have received information from different sources not directly connected to LBC. The flow of information to the family members of LBC is varied. The parents of LBC receive this information and percolate the relevant information pertaining to the educational matters to LBC. Thus, the flow of information to LBC is through an acquaintance. Also, information from acquaintances can be useful among LBCs who lack social capital and limited technology intervention.

Table 3   Flow of information from Acquaintances to LBC

Sl no	Number of LBC	Relation (A1)	Acquaintance(A2)
1	14	Family	A
2	11	Relative	A
3	01	Close Friend	A
4	05	Neighbour	A
Total	31		

Source: *developed by researcher from field data*

Thirteen LBC had received information about JNV from the teachers of their previous school. These teachers provided them with substantial information and resources. In six cases, the flow of information was facilitated by PCC, which provided guidance for JNVST preparation. These centres are well-versed in preparing students for different government residential school entrances. In contrast, only two LBCs have received information from print media. Out of sixty-eight social network ties that provided information to LBC, sixteen ties are embedded to JNV, thirty-one LBC information from their social ties, which they received from acquaintances, thirteen from school, six from private coaching and two from print media. Thus, sixty-eight LBCs have received information from different social network ties.

The flow of Resources

Apart from information, resources are also necessary for the preparation of JNVST. Yet the capacity to access such resources is determined by an individual's economic and social capital. Resources may be in the form of material (monetary) and non-material support (guidance) that facilitate LBC to prepare for JNVST. Monetary support is required to buy study materials for availing the coaching and private classes. Besides, guidance and motivation assist in the systematic plan and preparation of each subject matter. This increases their chances of clearing the entrance exam. Motivation boosts confidence for preparation. Students for entrance to JNV require financial support. Students revealed that joining JNV requires monetary support for entrance preparation which is equally important as the flow of information. Two categories of students sought financial aid. First, students who are at present enrolled in UPRS. These students admitted that studying in UPRS requires extra financial investment. Second, who are enrolled in coaching classes or are engaged in private tutors for preparation of JNVST.

Sonu (male, LBC) narrated, "*We are two siblings, and both of us are studying in UPRS. My father works as a labourer in a tiles factory in Delhi and hence struggles to pay our fees.*"

This above narration of Sonu reflects the importance of the financial resource to avail better facilities for the preparation of JNV. Buying study materials and reference books requires money. Also, considerable money is needed to take admission in UPRS and other coaching classes. Although the remittances received from migrant fathers provide scope for availing such classes, sometimes, it alone is insufficient. Migrant fathers working in the unorganized sector earn meagre, and investing in the private education of children at a time becomes difficult. The relatives of LBC who are financially well-off extended financial help in such cases.

Among non-material support, guidance from family members, and relatives plays an important role in motivating LBC for JNVST preparation. Through proper guidance, LBC can receive first-hand information about the selection of relevant academic books, guides, and refreshers for exam preparation. Siblings, cousins and neighbours who are either studying or alumni of JNV have a proper idea of JNVST. They advise LBCs to study daily for a certain hour based on a specific routine that allows them to study and revise each subject precisely. When these siblings and cousins visit home during the vacations, they suggest necessary tips to make improvements in the preparation process. LBC revealed that joining JNV became possible only because of timely preparation and guidance from their family members.

Sneha (female, LBC) "*My cousin, who is an alumnus of JNV1, provided me with study material and motivated me in every possible way, which resulted in my success in JNVST. Today, I am here only because of him*".

The narrative of Sneha reflects that motivation and guidance are important for successful preparation that fuel students to carry out their preparation with dedication and enthusiasm.

Scope for Holistic Learning

JNV is a government institution providing a holistic education approach through various scientific methodologies and experiments. Students hail from different heterogeneous backgrounds with varying learning experiences. In this process, the assimilation of such wide ranges of experience from various groups of students and teachers is learning. LBC, after joining a state-run government school, receives ample career opportunities under the mentorship of well-qualified teachers. JNV successfully provides a congenial and supportive environment because of better understanding and bonding between the teachers and students. As a result, LBC develops a better output in all spheres of academic life. They learn new things and are motivated to perform scheduled activities on their own.

Besides, JNV stresses the overall development of a student's physical, spiritual, and mental capabilities, which enables them to deal with any adverse situations in their lives. Hostel facilities in JNV help in peer learning and teach students to coordinate group activities. Such an arrangement also builds the skill of leadership and develops a sense of unity among students. JNV offers

its students a wide range of experiential learning in a safe and secure environment. Moreover, practice-based learning is possible because of the school's sophisticated laboratory, modern library and smart education facilities. Students are indulged in different practice-based learning through participation in innovation and research works. It promotes scientific learning amongst the students and encourages them to participate in activities relating to different national and regional science congresses and seminars, thereby can showcase their talents. Interaction with eminent personalities and scientists becomes possible only because of such events. Extracurricular activities and participation in different club activities also bring students confidence and benefit them both physically and psychologically.

 In JNV, students learn discipline, punctuality and to perform a group task in an organised way to achieve a common goal by participating in different sporting activities provided under the physical training sessions. Apart from these, different literary, cultural and migration programs develop a sense of cultural integrity and unity, which helps them develop a broader mindset and wider perspective of life. Also, the strict monitoring system in JNV teaches students to perform every task within the stipulated time. Students could learn the importance of the execution of different activities within the allotted time. So, Students stress in understanding the concept rather than rote learning, which was initially practised in the state government-run schools. This helps students to prepare and compete at the national level and in other competitive examinations. This is reflected in the high success rate in various competitive examinations. In JNV, alumni associations provide students with free coaching for clearing competitive exams to continue their higher education in government institutions.

These coaching facilities train, prepare and guide students for different entrance examinations. Many students can get admission into different reputed organisations because of such initiatives by the school. JNV has a provision for career-oriented counselling. Teachers help the students in deciding their career opportunities through channelised counselling based on their merits, abilities and choices. LBC initially faces difficulties coping with different activities within JNV but gradually learns to overcome them. They also have to compete with other students to secure better academic facilities. Thus, LBC utilizes the experiential learning, confidence, self-dependence and motivation which they learned in JNV as an important armour to achieve their future goals and objectives.

Conclusion

The findings in this paper highlight the difficulties of LBC in availing of quality secondary education in Bihar. These students are admitted into nearby state-run government schools with inadequate learning facilities like poor infrastructures, low PTR, teacher absentee and poor delivery of classes. This hinders the process of teaching and learning. To address such issues, LBC explores alternatives that can facilitate quality education in rural locations. However, to access information about different opportunities, students have to

depend on social networks for relevant prospects. In this study, we have evinced the use and support of various social networks, such as close network ties and acquaintances. We have also identified other significant sources like print media for the dissemination of information. Although LBC is aware that information about the admission process on JNV is published in print media, lack of accessibility in rural areas debarred them from these facilities. Besides, these students are from underprivileged backgrounds and spending on newspapers is not economically viable. Thus, access to information from print media is negligible.

Similarly, LBC mentioned that they were aware of the availability of online information, but the lack of accessibility to Android mobile phones, computers and internet facilities are major bottlenecks. As a result, they had to rely mostly on offline sources. But when it comes to emotional and financial support, the role of close ties such as family and relatives is pivotal.

In this study, we have discussed the use of various social networks by LBC that includes both personal (close ties) and acquaintances (weak ties). From the results, we contextualize the embeddedness of LBC with immediate social ties like siblings, relatives and close friends associated with EI as a prime source of information. The embeddedness of immediate alter ties provides scope for reliable information based on social network ties and their experiences in these educational institutions. There is little scope for malfeasance in such an exchange of information (Grannovetter, 1985). The Embeddedness of network ties of LBC studying in JNV influences them to choose this institution. Therefore, the result showed that multiple siblings from the family of LBC are currently admitted or studied in JNV. While a few siblings studying who could not perform well believed that JNV has restrictions and do not provide better educational facilities after X standard. Besides, they do not get the necessary exposure to avail better career guidance. Although there are alumni platforms that provide guidance for career building, intake capacity is limited. LBCs possess less social capital, in such circumstances, information from acquaintances that are connected to a much wider group of people reaches them through their close network ties. Thus, there is much scope for the flow of information and resources from acquaintances that can help LBC in the preparation of JNVST.

This study suggests that more such central government residential schools like JNV could be helpful for LBC. Besides, NEP (2020) also recommended that the establishment of residential schools would be helpful to address the educational need of underprivileged students in rural areas. Also, there is an immediate need to upgrade the standard of state-run schools in Bihar. This will enable students from state-run government schools to compete with those from private schools and UPRS regarding quality education and to appear for any competitive examination.

 Besides, the lack of data on LBC in Bihar is a major issue. A relevant database in Bihar on migrant students can provide solutions to identify educational problems and suggest solutions for these students. Thus relevant

policies can be introduced to address their educational issues. Bihar has the highest male out-migration among all Indian states. They primarily out-migrate for employment activities leaving back dependent families. Data reveals that LBCs are from poorer socio-economic strata and constitute of marginalised category. Our research study was conducted among LBCs that include OBC at fifty-two per cent, and SC and ST together account for twenty-two per cent respectively. Besides, their parents are mostly engaged in informal sectors working as labourers and running petty businesses. They have little knowledge and information regarding residential schools, including JNV, which is a major hindrance to attaining quality education for LBC.

Note:-

Identity of the respondents used in this research paper is kept anonymous by using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Letters X, Y, and Z are used to denote different districts and numerals 1,2 and 3 are used for different JNVs.

References

Agasty, M. P. (2016). Migration of Labour and its Impact on Education of Left behind Children: A Case Study of Rural Odisha, *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 3(4), 57-63

Bourdieu, P. and L. P. D. Wacquant. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Government of India. (2011). Census of India 2011: D Series Migration Tables. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, Ministry of Human Affairs, New Delhi, India.

Datta, A. (2020). Circular Migration and Precarity: Perspectives from Rural Bihar, *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63, 1143-1163

Deshingkar, P.; Kumar, S.; Chobey, H. Kumar & Kumar, D (2006), "The Role of Migration and Remittances in Promoting Livelihoods in Bihar", Available at: www.odi.org.uk/plag/resources/ reports/0612_migration_bihar_report.pdf, Accessed on 2 October 2011.

Granovetter M. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties, *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6) 1360- 1380.

Granovetter M. (1985)."Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3), 481-510

Keshri, K. & Bhagat, R.B. (2012). Temporary and seasonal migration: regional pattern, characteristics and associated factors. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(4), (January 28), 74–81.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual review of sociology*, *27*(1), 415-444.

Micheli, G. A. (2000). Kinship, family and social network: The anthropological embedment of fertility change in Southern Europe. Demographic Research, 2(13).

National Education Policy 1986, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020. New Delhi, India: Government of India. Accessed 13 July 2021*

Rajan, S.I., & M. Sumeetha. (2019). *Handbook of Internal Migration in India*. Delhi: Sage.

Rangraju, B, James, T and Pauline, D (2012). Private School Revolution in Bihar: Finding a Survey in Patna Urban. New Delhi: India Institute /EG West Centre Newcastle University.

Rogaly, B., Biswas, J., Coppard, D., Rafique, A., Rana, K., & Sengupta, A. (2001). Seasonal migration, social change and migrants' rights: Lessons from West Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4547-4559

Roy, A.K. (2011). *Distress Migration and 'Left Behind' Women A study of Rural Bihar*, Rawat Publication

Roy, A.K, Singh,P., Roy,U.N (2015). Impact of Rural-Urban Labour Migration on Education of Children: A Case Study of Left Behind and Accompanied Migrant Children in India, *Space and Culture*, 2(4):17-34

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act, 2009)

Smita (2008). Distress Seasonal Migration and its impact on Children's education, Creative Research Monograph No.28. NEUPA. Retrieved on 12th July 2018 from http://sro.suxxex.ac.uk/1869/

--------- 2011 'Distress Seasonal Migration and its Impact on Children's Education', presentation at the UNESCO-UNICEF National Workshop on Internal Migration and Human Development in India, 6–7 December 2011, New Delhi

Srivastava, R.S. (2001). Access to basic education in Uttar Pradesh. In: Vaidyanathan, A. and Gopinathan Nair, P.R. eds. (2001) Elementary Education in Rural India: A Grassroots View. New Delhi: Sage Publications

Srivastava, R. & S. K. Sasikumar (2003). "An overview of migration in India, its impacts and key issues", paper presented at the Regional Conference on Migration, 37 Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 22–24 June 2003, http://www.livelihoods.org/hot_topics/docs/Dhaka_CP_2.pdf, accessed 12 November 2006.

Shah, R. (2021). Seasonal migration and Children's Education in India, Social and Political Research Foundation, 1-10

Madhu Monjuri Gohain is a PhD Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Patna
Email ID- madhumanjuri. gohain@gmail.com

Aditya Raj is Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Patna
Email ID- aditya.raj@iitp.ac.in

Influence of socio-demographic characteristics of migrants on out-migration: A study among the fishing community in Kerala

--John Christopher J & Sundara Raj T

Abstract

This article, based on the primary data related to 250 migrants from the fishing community in Kerala examines the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants and its influence on their post migration characteristics. We apply descriptive analysis of the relationships between variables and multivariate technique to predict the net effects of independent variables on the dependent variables such as destination, occupation and monthly incomes in the destination places. Our findings reveal that migration from the fishing community in Kerala is selective in terms of males, below 25 years of age, and secondary level educated. We also regress that females, upper aged category, those hail from urban locale and higher educated have better odds of migrating to countries outside the Gulf region and earn higher monthly incomes. However, independent variables are not found to have any profound influence on the type of occupation the migrants undertake in the destination places.

Key words: Migration; selectivity; socio-demographic factors; fishing community

Introduction

Migration is a key process wherein people move from one place or region to another for different reasons, and has attracted the attention of scholars for a long time. For Gollerkeri and Chhabra (2016), it is the oldest action against poverty. Academics and policymakers are increasingly attracted to this dynamic phenomenon because of its volume and importance in the process of globalisation (Rahman & Hussain, 2015). It has been estimated that 3.5 per cent of the world population (272 million) live as migrants in different parts of the world (IOM, 2020). Globalisation gave new impetus to Migration in recent times because of the increasing demand for and supply not only of goods, services, technology, and finance but also of skills and people. In this context, Cortina and Ochoa-Reza (2013) observe that the impacts of Migration outweigh all other aspects of globalisation.

Migration is not the uniform feature of different sections of the population with varying demographic and socioeconomic characteristics; numerous factors either promote or retard the migratory flows of people. Shryock and Siegal (1973) have rightly observed that migrants are a representative sample of the population neither at the place of origin nor destination. People in different localities and belonging to different social strata respond differently to the push and pull factors and incentives of Migration. Migrants are likely to be excessively intense in specific areas and groups. Hence, it can be rightly stated that migrants are a selected category concerning several distinctive characteristics. According to Rebhun and Goldstein (2009), Migration is a

response to elementary social changes such as technological development, urbanisation or counter-urbanisation; those who are tangled in such processes will be more mobile than others. Thus migration selectivity based on some characteristics may be observed in most of modern societies with intense modernisation.

Gender is a key demographic variable that influences the migration decisions of people. Until the 1970s, migration studies focused mostly on males, assuming that Migration was significantly a male affair, purely in economic terms. The general belief was that the proportion of women in the international migrant labour force was negligible (Zlotnik, 2003), reiterated in some recent studies as well (de Hass, 2013; Zachariah & Rajan, 2012a). Even the studies that recognised the presence of women among migrants considered them as secondary migrants who follow their male counterparts (Boyd, 1989; Chant & Radcliffe, 1992). But this thought has undergone radical changes. An increasing number of women among international migrants is observed by Cortina and Ochoa-Reza (2013). The United Nations (2011) reported that almost half of the international migrants since 1960 were women. World Migration Report 2020 estimated forty-eight per cent of females among global migrants in 2019 (IOM, 2020). However, there are regional variations in the gender selectivity of migrants. Women constitute fifty-one per cent of the total migrants in developed nations, while it is forty-five per cent in developing regions (Garcia & Velasco, 2013).

Employment (Bannerjee& Raju, 2009), domestic gender inequalities (United Nations, 2006), asserting an identity (Zlotnik, 2003), family reunification (Singh, 1986), etc., have been identified as the major causes of women's Migration. Whatever may be the reason, the Migration of females has important development implications for the sending families.

Age is yet another demographic variable that has a bearing on migration decisions. Singh (1986) observed a higher proportion of 15-24 aged among rural-urban migrants in India. The same trend of a higher proportion of lower-aged emigrants from India was observed by Gollerkri and Chhabra (2016) and Zachiriah and Rajan (2012b). Studies in other countries also support this finding (Adepoju, 1986; Oucho, 1998). Decisiveness of tender ages in the life cycle (Stone, 1969), adaptability to new situations (Petersen, 1969) and occupational changes (McInnis, 1971), and comparative easiness of being absorbed into the labour market (Stone, 1969) have been identified as the major reasons behind younger age selectivity in Migration. Sjaastad (1962) associated younger age selectivity with the cost and returns of Migration. The cost of Migration increases with age, whereas the duration of economic gains diminishes with increasing age which leads to a disproportionately higher proportion of younger aged among migrants compared to the older age.

Studies established an association between Migration and education (Bernard & Bell, 2018; Cousineau & Vaillancourt 1987; Zachariah, Mathew and Rajan, 2003). Scholars generally agree that education broadens the chances of employment and wages and enables migrants to mitigate the risks and costs

associated with mobility. Empirical evidence also suggests a positive correlation of higher education with the propensity to migrate within as well as between countries (Cattaneo, 2007; Feliciano, 2005; Machin, Salvanes, &Pelkonen, 2012; Malamud & Wozniak, 2012; Williams, 2009), including rural-urban Migration (Amuakwa-Mensah, Boakye-Yiadom, &Baah-Boateng, 2016; Ginsburg et al., 2016). Evidence suggests that with increasing development and expansion of education in different parts of the world, individuals with lower educational attainments may get trapped in areas where opportunities are limited (Catney& Simpson, 2010). Thus disparities in the degree of educational selectivity of migrants in different societies may be understood as reproducing dissimilarities in the levels of human capital.

This study focuses on the influence of socio-demographic characteristics in the Migration of fishing community members from Kerala state. The fishing community in Kerala is a marginalised community with a very low socio-economic profile. The fishing community in the state is composed of three distinctive sub-castes within the three major religious categories; the Latin Catholic Mukkuva Christians, Dheevara Hindus, and Mappila Muslims. However, the fishing community in the study area belongs to the Latin Catholic Mukkuvar caste, which constitutes 43 per cent of the total fisher folk in the state and 83.3 per cent of the marine fisher folk in Thiruvananthapuram district (CMFRI, 2010). This study becomes relevant not only because there are not many studies on the Migration of the fishing community in Kerala, but the findings of this study are also expected to act as a guideline in preparing the members of the fishing community of Kerala in particular and marginalised communities in the state in general for Migration in such a way as to benefit the most from it.

Material and method

This study is based on the primary data related to 250 migrants belonging to the fishing community in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala, India. Two localities, one rural and another urban, have been selected as sample localities, and an equal number of respondents (125 each) have been chosen randomly from each locality to form the sample size. Localities with the highest proportion of residents being fishing community members have been selected to achieve greater sampling efficiency. Accordingly, both the sample localities are 100 per cent occupied by the fishing community population. Data collection was carried out during January– March 2020 through face-to-face interviews with the respondents with the help of structured interview schedules. Maximum effort was to be taken to collect data directly from the migrants if they were available, and in their absence, the eldest member available in the family was considered as respondent. Primary data collected through interviews were supplemented with additional information collected through informal discussions and field observation.

Migrants for the purpose of this study are defined as the fishing community members who have moved out of India for occupational purposes and have a minimum of six months of migration experience abroad. Socio-demographic

characteristics (independent variables) considered are gender, age, locale, and education of migrants during their first migration journey. The independent variables include destinations, occupations and monthly income of migrants in the destination places. The influence of independent variables, otherwise called pre-migration characteristics, on the dependent variables, otherwise called post-migration characteristics, is assessed through descriptive analysis. One-way ANOVA was tested to find the statistical relevance of the association between variables. Multinomial logit regression was carried out to predict the odds of choosing a destination, occupation and monthly incomes of migrants against their gender, age, locale, and education. Equations were calculated for each dependent variable separately, presenting the independent variables together. The relationships between the variables are presented as odds ratios (Exp [B]) which express the relative odds of choice of destination, occupation, and monthly incomes in the destination places. Pseudo R^2 (*Nagelkerke R^2*) demonstrates the measure of explanatory power.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics

The majority of the migrants (82 per cent) are males, and females constitute only 18 per cent. Over half of the migrants (57.2 per cent) started their first migration journey before the age of 25 years. The educational qualifications of the respondents have been classified into three. Education up to 7 standard is considered primary, 8th to 12th standard as secondary and above 12th standard as tertiary education. Tertiary education includes various qualifications ranging from degree courses to technical and professional qualifications.

Table 1: Demographic and social profile of the respondents

Variable	Group	Number	Per cent
Gender	Male	205	82
	Female	45	18
Age at the time of first visit	Below 25	143	57.2
	25 – 35	95	38
	Above 35	12	4.8
Locale	Rural	125	50
	Urban	125	50
Education	Primary	24	9.6
	Secondary	135	54

|		
Tertiary	91	36.4
N	250	100

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

Over half of the respondents (54 per cent) have secondary education. 9.6 percent of them completed primary education, whereas 36.4 percent obtained tertiary equational qualifications.

Post-Migration Characterises

Post-migration characteristics of the migrants from the fishing community have been assessed based on the destinations, occupations and monthly earnings of the respondents in the destination places. Majority of the respondents (65.6 per cent) have migrated to the Gulf countries. Major destinations in the Gulf region include UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain. Mostly unskilled and educationally backward males from the fishing community migrate to these countries. Migrants from the study area, though proportionately low (34.4 per cent), have also reached other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Italy, the U.K., and America.

Figure 1: Destinations of migrants
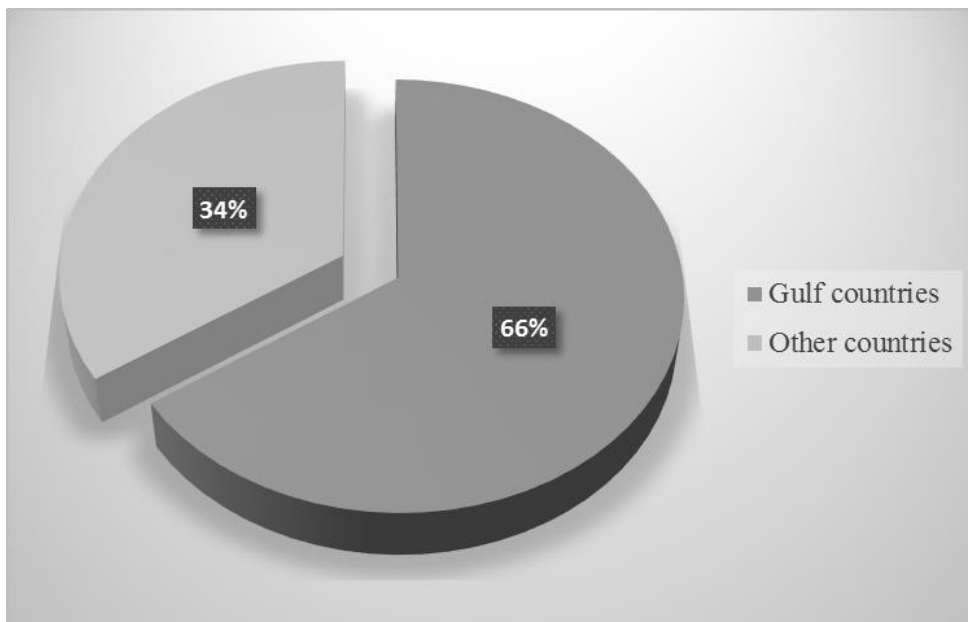
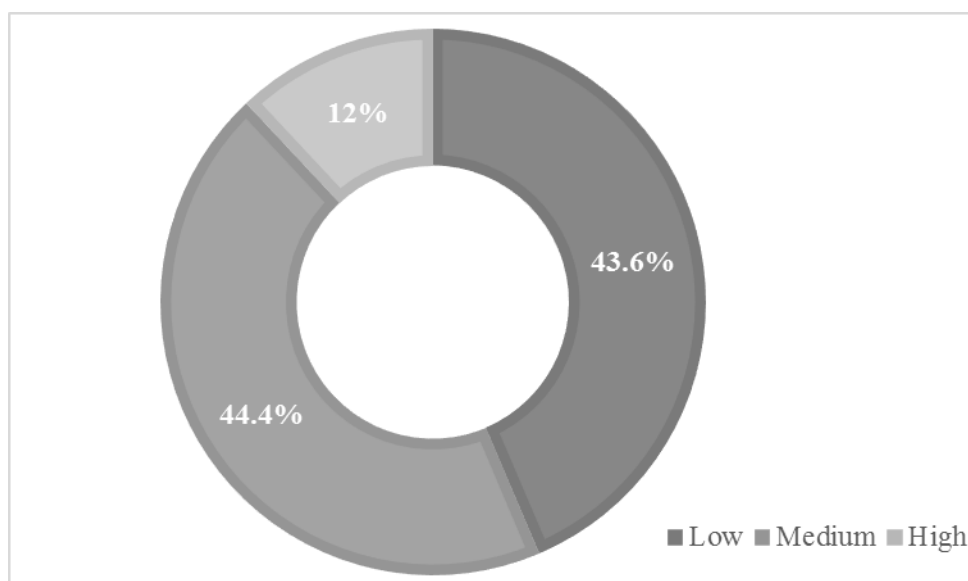**Source:** Primary data collected by the authors

Occupations of the respondents in the destination places have been grouped into five. Unskilled categories include construction work, helper/cleaner, household worker, fishing, and small vendor. Over half of the respondents (50.8 per cent) are engaged in such occupations.

Figure 2: Occupations of migrants in the destination places
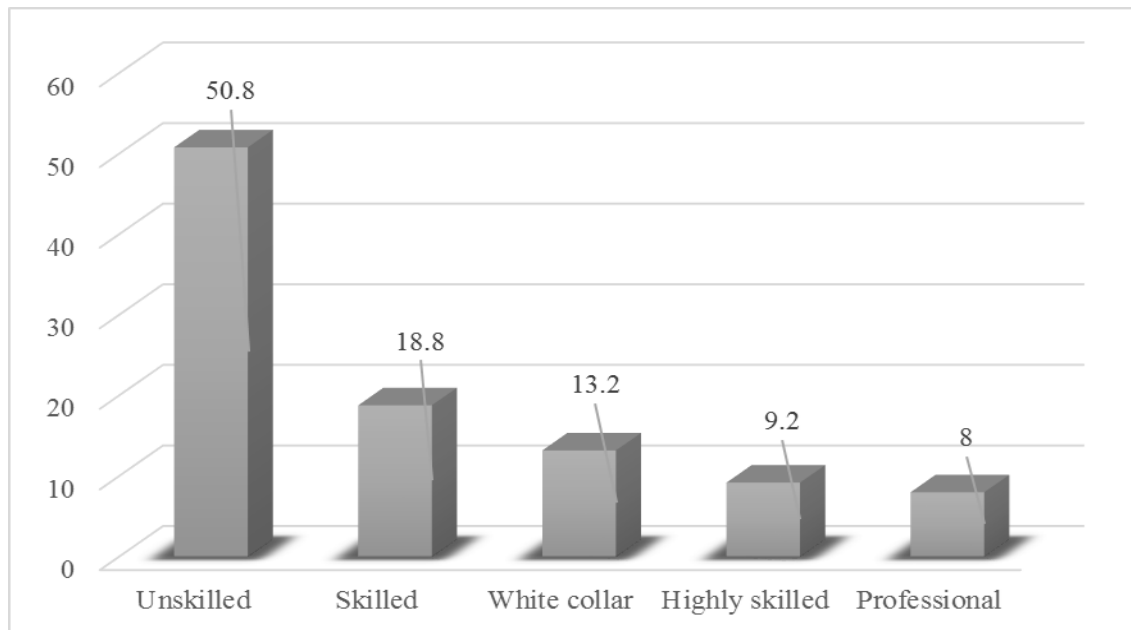
Source: Primary data collected by the authors

Skilled workers comprise carpenters, masons, welders, painters, drivers, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, tailors, and waiters. 18.8 percent of the respondents are employed in these occupations in the destination places. 13.2 per cent are engaged in white-collar jobs such as business, storekeeper, clerk, salesman, accountant, and office attendant. Those who are employed in highly-skilled occupations such as technician, computer operator, foreman, and supervisor are 9.2 per cent. The least proportion (8 per cent) are employed as professionals such as nurses, I.T. professionals, and teachers in the destination places.

According to the nature of the occupation, migrants from the study area get a monthly income in the range of below Rs. 20,000 to above Rs. 100,000, which are grouped into three. Those who earn below Rs. 40,000 per month are classified as low-income earners, between Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 80,000 as medium-income earners and above Rs. 80,000 as high-income earners.

Figure 3: Monthly incomes of migrants

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

The highest proportion of the respondents (44.4 percent) fall in the medium monthly income category. Only 12 per cent are high-income earners. A major share of the migrants from the study area gets low monthly salaries.

Role of Social and demographic characteristics in Migration

Gender influences the migration decisions of fishing community members. When the majority of the male migrants from the community (75.6 per cent) opt for Gulf countries as their preferred destinations, women migrants though few , mostly prefer countries outside the Gulf region (80 percent).

Table 2: Role of gender in migration from the fishing community

Dependent variable	Categories	Gender		df	χ2
		Male	**Female**		
Destinations	Gulf countries	75.6	20	1	50.567*
	Other countries	24.4	80		
Occupation	Unskilled	47.8	64.4		
	Skilled	21.5	6.7		
	White-collar	14.6	6.7	4	12.382**
	Highly-skilled	9.8	6.7		
	Professional	6.3	15.6		

				df	χ2
Monthly income	Low	46.3	31.1		
	Medium	42.4	53.3	2	3.528
	High	11.2	15.6		

*p<.001; **p<.05

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

Majority of women (64.4 per cent) and the highest proportion of males (47.8 per cent) work as unskilled labourers in the destination places. In the professional category, female migrants (15.6 per cent) outnumber their counterparts (6.3 per cent). Whereas in the skilled, white-collar, and highly-skilled categories, male migrants dominate the females. As expected, the majority of the women migrants (53.3 percent) earn medium-level monthly income, whereas the highest proportion of males (46.3 per cent) earn low income from their occupation in the destination places. Chi-square results indicate that gender is a determinant in the choice of destinations (p<.001) and occupations in the destination places (p<.05). But gender is not statistically proved as a factor in the monthly income of migrants in the destination places (p > .05).

Age is another demographic variable that determines the migration decisions of the fishing community members in the study area. Even though most of the respondents in all age categories opt for Gulf countries as their preferred destinations, the proportion of those who migrate to other countries increases with age. When only 25.2 per cent of the below 25 years of age category migrate to countries beyond the Middle East, it increases to 46.3 per cent in the 25 – 35 years age category and to 50 per cent for those above 35 years of age.

Table 3: Role of age in the migration of fishing community members

Dependent variable	Categories	Gender		df	χ2
		Male	Female		
Destinations	Gulf countries	75.6	20	1	50.567*
	Other countries	24.4	80		
Occupation	Unskilled	47.8	64.4	4	12.382**
	Skilled	21.5	6.7		
	White-collar	14.6	6.7		
	Highly-skilled	9.8	6.7		

	Professional	6.3	15.6		
	Low	46.3	31.1		
Monthly income	Medium	42.4	53.3	2	3.528
	High	11.2	15.6		

*p<.001; **p<.01; ***p<.05

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

Even though the highest proportion of migrants in all age categories works as unskilled labourers in the destination places, some interesting trends can be observed with regard to age differences. When the proportions of unskilled workers increase with the advancement in age, proportions in other categories of work take the reverse direction. Skilled workers declined from 25.9 percent to 9.5 per cent and 8.3 per cent, and white-collar workers declined from 14.7 percent to 11.6 per cent and 8.3 percent for the respective age categories.

Age-wise monthly income of the respondents in the destination places shows a different pattern. The majority of the lower-aged migrants (51 per cent) and the highest proportion of the upper-aged migrants (41.7 percent) earn lower monthly income. In contrast, most middle-aged (25-35 years) earn medium monthly income from their occupations in the destination places. The proportion of those who earn high income in the destination places is the lowest within all age groups. The association between independent and dependent variables is statistically significant at .1 per cent, 1 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Migration propensity and post-migration characteristics of migrants vary according to their locality. Table 4 indicates that when the majority of migrants from the rural locality (87.2 percent) migrate to the Gulf countries, the majority of those from the urban locality (56 per cent) prefer countries outside the Gulf region as their preferred destinations. But the proportion of unskilled workers is higher among urban (52.8 per cent) than rural migrants (48.8 per cent). In contrast, skilled migrants are proportionately higher in the rural area (23.2 percent) compared to the urban locality (14.4 per cent). In all other higher occupational categories, migrants from the urban locality predominate.

Table 4: Role of locale in the migration of fishing community members

Dependent variable	Categories	Locale		df	χ²
		Rural	**Urban**		
Destinations	Gulf countries	87.2	44	1	51.687*
	Other countries	12.8	56		
Occupation	Unskilled	48.8	52.8	4	3.288
	Skilled	23.2	14.4		
	White-collar	12	14.4		
	Highly-skilled	8.8	9.6		
	Professional	7.2	8.8		
Monthly income	Low	58.4	28.8	2	23.859*
	Medium	35.2	53.6		
	High	6.4	17.6		

*p<.001

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

Migrants from the urban locality earn higher incomes than those from the rural locality. When the majority of the migrants from the rural locality (58.4 per cent) earn low incomes, the majority of those from the urban locality (53.6 percent) earn medium incomes from their occupations in the destination places. In the high-income category also, the proportion of migrants from the urban locality is higher than those from the rural. Chi-square values indicate that the locality of migrants is a key determinant in the choice of destinations and monthly earnings of migrants from their occupations in the destination places (p<.001).

Education-wise, the highest proportion of Gulf migrants (71.1 per cent) have secondary education, whereas it is tertiary education for the migrants to other countries (41.8 per cent). The highest proportion of the respondents, irrespective of their educational qualifications, prefer Gulf countries as their destination places. However, the proportion of tertiary-level educated migrants is higher among white-collar (20.9 percent), highly-skilled (15.4 per cent), and professional (15.4 per cent) categories than primary and secondary-level educated migrants.

Table 5: Education and migration

Dependent variable	Categories	Education			df	χ2
		Primary	Secondary	Tertiary		
Destinations	Gulf countries	62.5	71.1	58.2	2	4.103
	Other countries	37.5	28.9	41.8		
Occupation	Unskilled	75	57.8	34.1	8	*34.485
	Skilled	12.5	23	14.3		
	White-collar	8.3	8.9	20.9		
	Highly-skilled	4.2	5.9	15.4		
	Professional	-	4.4	15.4		
Monthly income	Low	58.3	50.4	29.7	4	**16.446
	Medium	41.7	40.7	50.5		
	High	-	8.9	19.8		

*p<.001; **p<.01

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

The monthly income of migrants increases with their educational qualifications. The highest proportions of primary (58.3 per cent) and secondary (50.4 per cent) levels qualified migrants to earn low incomes from their occupations in the destination places, whereas over half of the tertiary qualified respondents (50.5 per cent) receive medium-level incomes in the destination places. The highest proportion of -income earners (19.8 percent) has above-degree level (tertiary) educational qualifications. However, chi-square results indicate that the association between education and choice of destinations is not statistically significant, whereas education is a key player in the type of occupation (p<.001) and monthly income in the destination places (p < .01).

Our analysis so far focused on the relationships between the independent variables (select socio-demographic characteristics) and the dependent variables (post-migration characteristics). These variables, however, do not operate independently; rather they function as mutually complementary. This necessitates an in-depth analysis of the variables jointly to find out the net effect of each variable on the post-migration characteristics when other variables are kept constant. For this purpose, we carry out multinomial logit regression analysis.

Table 6: Multinomial logit model predicting migration based on independent variables

Variable	Destination	Occupation			Monthly Income	
	Gulf countries	Highly skilled	White-collar	Skilled	High	Medium
Gender						
Female	.081*	.507	.786	.230***	2.065	1.872
Age						
Below 25	2.972	2.127	6.218	6.055	.320	.959
25 - 35	1.159	1.286	2.000	1.286	.699	1.939
Locale						
Rural	8.670*	.992	.895	1.743	.179*	.324*
Education						
Tertiary	.837	8.129***	9.581**	2.516	86.108*	22.7
Secondary	1.477	1.846	2.077	2.385	2.385	1.132
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	38.9%		24.3%		17.8%	
N	250		250		250	

*p<.001; **p<.01; ***p<.05

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

Reference categories for independent variables are as follows: for gender – males; for age – above 35 years; for locale – urban; for education - primary

Reference category for dependant variables are as follows: for destination – other countries; for occupation – unskilled; for monthly income – low

Among the females from the fishing community in Kerala, the odds of choosing Gulf countries is just 8.1 per cent compared to choosing other countries and male migrants, which means that the odds of women migrating to countries other than the Gulf countries is 91.9 per cent greater than emigrating to Gulf countries and males. Similarly, the odds of women undertaking highly-skilled, white-collar and skilled occupations in the destination places is lower than males and being employed in unskilled jobs in the destination places. But the odds of women earning higher incomes from their occupations in the destination places are greater than males and earning

low incomes. The odds of women migrants earning a high monthly income in the destination places are over two times, and earning medium income is 187 per cent compared to their male counterparts.

Regression results also indicate that younger ages have a significant influence on the migration of fishing community members. The odds of those below 25 years of age category migrating to Gulf countries are around three times greater than those above 35 years of age and emigrating to other countries. Similarly, their odds of getting employed in highly-skilled (including professional), white-collar and skilled occupations are much higher than their odds of being employed in unskilled occupations in the destination places and above 35 years of age category. However, the odds of earning higher incomes get reduced with lower ages. The odds of those below 25 years of age category earning high income from their occupation in the destination place is only 32 per cent, and their odds of earning medium income is 95.9 per cent compared to their odds of earning low income and above 35 years of age category. The rural background of the migrants also reduces their odds of migrating to countries outside the Gulf region (8.67 times lower), obtaining highly skilled (.8 percent lower) and white-collar occupations (10.5 percent lower), and high incomes (82.1 percent lower) in the destination places.

As expected, education plays an important role in the post-migration characteristics of migrants from the fishing community. The odds of tertiary educated migrants to countries outside the Gulf region is 16.3 percent greater than the primary educated and their odds of migrating to Gulf countries. Similarly, the odds of securing highly-skilled, white-collar and skilled occupations in the destination places and earning high and medium monthly incomes is greater for the tertiary educated. A notable observation is that the odds of tertiary educated earning a high income in the destination places are 86 times higher than those with primary educational qualifications. As a whole, the independent variables taken together better predict the variations in the choice of occupations (38.9 per cent) than the type of occupation the migrants manage to secure in the destination places (24.3 per cent) and their monthly earnings in the destination places (17.8 per cent).

Table 7 predicts the post-migration characteristics of migrants from the fishing community in Kerala.

Variable	Destination		Occupation				Monthly Income		
	Gulf countries	Other countries	Highly skilled	White collar	Skilled	Unskilled	High	Medium	Low
Gender									
Female	20*	80	6.7	22.2	6.7***	64.4	16.6	53.3	31.1

Male	75.6	24.4	9.8	21	21.5	47.8	11.2	42.4	46.3
Age									
Below 25	74.8	25.2	9.1	26.6	25.9	38.5	9.8	39.2	51
25-35	53.7	46.3	9.5	14.7	9.5	66.3	13.7	53.7	32.6
Above 35	50	50	8.3	8.3	8.3	75	25	33.3	41.7
Locale									
Rural	87.2*	12.8	8.8	19.2	23.2	48.8	6.4*	35.2*	58.4
Urban	44	56	9.6	23.2	14.4	52.8	17.6	53.6	28.8
Education									
Tertiary	58.2	41.8	15.4***	36.3**	14.3	34.1	19.8*	50.5	29.7
Secondary	71.1	28.9	5.9	13.3	23	57.8	8.9	40.7	50.4
Primary	62.5	37.5	4.2	8.3	12.5	75	-	41.7	58.3

*p<0.001; **p<0.01; ***p<0.05

Source: Primary data collected by the authors

The prediction for males from the community to migrate to the Gulf countries is 75.6 percent, whereas there is an eighty per cent prediction for women migrating to countries other than the Gulf countries. The higher prediction for both male and female migrants from the community is to be absorbed in unskilled occupations in the destination countries. Predictions relating to the monthly incomes in the destination places differ for both men and women. While 53.3 percent is the prediction for women to earn a medium income from their occupations in the destination places, the highest prediction (46.3 per cent) for men is to earn a low income. Even though the highest prediction among all age categories is migrating to the Gulf countries, with increased age, fishing community members tend to migrate to other countries. However, age does not predict a clear pattern of occupations of migrants in the destination places, even if the highest prediction in all age categories is to be employed as unskilled labourers.

The locality of individuals better predicts the destinations. A prospective migrant from a rural fishing village has an 87.2 percent chance of migrating to the Gulf countries. In contrast, a fishing community member from an urban locality has a 56 percent chance of emigrating to countries outside the Gulf region. But there is not much difference in the prediction regarding the type of occupation the migrants from rural and urban localities are supposed to get in the destination places. However, the advantageous position of urban-based

migrants is also present in their possibility of earning a higher income in the destination places. When the possibility of a migrant from the urban locality earning a medium income is 53.6 percent, the highest possibility (58.4 per cent) for a migrant from the rural area is to earn a low income in the destination place.

The tale also gives some indication regarding the role of education in migration. Even though higher prediction in all educational categories is to migrate to the Gulf countries, the prediction rate is lower for the tertiary educated persons. There is 41.8 percent chance for a fishing community member with above-degree level qualifications to migrate to countries outside the Gulf region. This advantageous position, though not visible in the type of occupation of migrants in the destination places, is explicit in their monthly earnings. The highest prediction for an individual with tertiary education (50.5 per cent) is to earn medium income in the destination place, whereas, for the secondary (50.4 per cent) and primary (58.3 per cent) educated, it is low income. All the independent variables better predict the destinations of migrants from the fishing community in the study area. But with regard to the type of occupations the migrants are expected to get in the destination places, our results do not provide a clear pattern in terms of the socio-demographic profile of fishing community members. However, there is a better possibility that higher educated individuals will be able to earn more in the destination places.

Discussion

Our findings reveal migration selectivity from the fishing community in terms of males below 25 years and those with secondary education. Comparatively few women migrants from the community, though contradicts the general trend of Migration across the world (Cortina & Ochoa-Reza, 2013; Garcia & Velasco, 2013; United Nations, 206, 2011), has the advantage that most of them are primary migrants who migrate in search of occupations abroad and agrees with the gendered pattern of Migration from Kerala (Rajan & Zachariah, 2020; Zachariah & Rajan, 2012). The proportion of secondary migrants who accompany the primary migrants is comparatively very few. The most important reason for this is the predominance of Gulf countries as the preferred destinations, which offer very few chances for women migrants and that too as professionals like nurses. Since the educational background of women from the community under investigation is very low, these opportunities are not accessible to them. Moreover, as mostly less educated members of the community migrate to the Gulf countries and work as unskilled labourers for low wages, they are unable to afford to bring women as their dependents. All these factors inhibit women's Migration from the community.

Comparatively, younger ages of migrants from the community support the previous findings in related studies (Pregi& Novotny, 2019; Rebhun& Goldstein, 2009). Our findings also reveal that the majority of the migrants from the fishing community are secondary educated. The proportion of higher-

educated migrants is comparatively low. Especially migrants with technical qualifications are very few. This not only contradicts the educational selectivity of migrants found in different parts of the world (Bernard & Bell, 2018; Greenwood & Hunt, 2003; Lall &Selod, 2006) but also prevents the migrants from the community from finding better paid professional and technical jobs in the destination places. Studies reiterate that higher-educated migrants have the advantage of being better informed about the possible destinations and job opportunities (Bernard & Bell, 2018), and will be able to better estimate the costs and benefits of migration (Greenwood, 2014; Greenwood & Hunt, 2003), will have wider social networks that facilitate their migration process (Palloni et al., 2001), and will be able to economically integrate more easily in the destination places (Lall &Selod, 2006). Educational backwardness prevents migrants from the fishing community from enjoying these advantages.

Though the number of women among the migrants from the fishing community is very low, gender is a key demographic factor in the choice of destinations. When the majority of the male migrants from the community (75.6 per cent) migrate to the Gulf countries, women (80 percent) migrate to diverse destinations in Europe, America and Asia. The predominant reason is the lack of opportunities for less skilled women in the Gulf countries. Unskilled women from the community, though few in number, migrate to different parts of the world. Even though these women take up unskilled jobs like domestic servants in the destination places, they earn higher incomes on average than the males from the community who migrate to the Gulf countries. This finding prompts that the type of occupation in the destination countries is not the only factor that determines the monthly earnings of migrants, rather the choice of destinations itself is highly significant.

Migration to countries in Europe, America and Asian countries like Israel, is economically more beneficial than to the Gulf countries, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Our regression results also favour women from the fishing community who migrate to other countries and earn high and medium incomes. However, men have better chances of emigrating to Gulf countries and being employed in highly-skilled, white-collar and skilled occupations. The prediction for women from the fishing community to migrate to other countries is 80%, and their possibility of earning a high income is 5% greater than the possibility of men from the fishing community earning the same monthly income level in the destination places.

Our results reveal that with an increase in age, the proportion of migrants to the Gulf countries declines, and the proportion of those who migrate to other countries increases. There is a very clear reason for this tendency. Mostly unmarried males and those unable to afford the higher costs of migration to other countries prefer Gulf migration. Migration to other countries is mostly long duration, one-term and couple migration. Couples together migrate to these countries in search of low-end jobs and stay there for a longer duration. Once they return, they may not be able to return to the same destinations again because of the nature of their visa or, in most cases, their visas have expired.

We also regress that younger aged migrants have better possibilities of migrating to the Gulf countries (3.97 times higher) and obtaining highly-skilled, white-collar, and skilled occupations (2.12, 6.21 and 6.05 times respectively) than the upper-aged category. But their possibility of earning higher monthly income is lower than the upper aged group as with increasing age, the proportion of migrants to other countries is found to increase. However, the prediction for a below 25 years aged fishing community member to migrate to the Gulf country is 74.8 per cent, but his possibility of earning a high monthly income is just 9.8 per cent only. But for a person above 35 years of age has 50 per cent possibility of migrating to other countries and 25 per cent possibility of earning a high monthly income from abroad.

The locality of migrants is yet another key determinant in migration from the fishing community. When the majority of migrants from the rural locality (87.2 percent) migrate to the Gulf countries, over half of the migrants from the urban locality (56 per cent) prefer other countries. This finding points to the pivotal role of accessibility to resources and other support networks in migration decisions. The urban environment ensures all the support systems for its residents. Hence the fishing community members who live in urban localities have the edge over their brethren in the rural areas with regard to access to information regarding diverse destinations, agency support that facilitate Migration to such destinations and other professional support.

Due to the non-availability of these facilities in the rural fishing villages, residents follow the chain path of migration to their traditional destinations in the Gulf countries. This is evidenced in the regression results as well. The odds of rural-based fishing community members migrating to the Gulf countries is 8.67 times greater than that of the urban-based migrants, and the odds of migrating to other countries and their chance of earning high monthly income is only 69.9 percent compared to urban-based migrants. In other words, a fishing community member from an urban locality has an 87.2 percent chance that he will migrate to the Gulf countries and 58.4 percent chance that he will earn a low monthly income. On the other hand, an individual from an urban locality has 56 percent chance of migrating to countries other than Gulf countries and 53.6 percent possibility of earning a medium monthly income.

Though migration selectivity in terms of higher education is not found among the fishing community in the study area, education is seen as a key player in the post-migration characteristics of migrants from the fishing community. Even though the majority of the migrants from all educational categories migrate to the Gulf countries, the proportion of tertiary-level educated who have migrated to other countries is higher than the primary and secondary-level educated ones. This advantage of the higher educated is visible in their occupations in the destination places and subsequent monthly incomes as proportions in white-collar, highly-skilled and skilled occupations are higher among tertiary educated migrants, and those who earn medium and high incomes from their occupations are higher than the proportions in primary and secondary educated categories. This finding agrees with many of the earlier

studies that have established the importance of education (Bernard & Bell, 2018; Greenwood & Hunt, 2003; Lall &Selod, 2006).

The higher-educated migrants from the fishing community are able to make informed choices related to the destinations and occupations in the destination places and thus benefit the most from this process. This is evident in our regression results. The odds of tertiary educated migrants from the fishing community migrating to other countries is 16.3 percent higher than the primary educated and migrating to the Gulf countries and have better odds of securing highly-skilled (8.1 times), white-collar (9.5 times) and skilled (2.5 times) occupations than the primary educated and securing unskilled occupations in the destination places. Their odds of earning a high income are also 86.1 times higher than primary educated. In other words, a fishing community member has only a 37.5 percent chance of migrating to other countries if he is primary educated and 28.9 percent chance if the individual is secondary educated. But the chance for tertiary education is as high as 41.8 per cent. Correspondingly, there is a 19.8 percent chance that he will earn a high monthly income and an 8.9 percent chance that he will earn a medium-level monthly income in the destination. It is almost certain that a higher educated person will not earn a low income from his/her occupation in the destination place as the prediction to earn a low income is zero.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to find out the influence of demographic and social characteristics of international migrants from the fishing community in Kerala. Our results reveal that Migration is not the common characteristic of all categories of fishing community members in the study area. It favours certain categories with specific demographic and social characteristics. Migration from the community is found selective in terms of males (82%), aged below 25 years (57.2 per cent), and secondary educated (54 per cent). Due to the presence of social capital and comparatively low cost of Migration, the most preferred destinations of migrants from the community are the Gulf countries (65.6 per cent). As the educational levels and skill attainments of the members of the community are poor, a sizable proportion of migrants from the community (50.8 per cent) are forced to take up unskilled occupations in the destination places. Hence their monthly incomes in the destination places are either low (43.6 percent) or medium (44.4 percent).

Though the number of women migrants is comparatively few, gender plays a key role in the choice of destinations and, thereby, their monthly incomes in the destination places. Our results reveal that the majority of women migrate mostly to countries other than the Gulf countries (80 percent), while men from the community opt for Gulf migration (75.6 per cent). Choice of destinations, though, does not have much influence on the type of occupation they undertake in the destination places, has an impact on the monthly earnings. Migration outside the Gulf regions fetches women migrants higher monthly incomes compared to the male Gulf migrants from the community. The same benefit is enjoyed by upper-aged migrants as their streams of Migration are

found to be more diverse. These findings highlight the importance of choosing destination places while making migration decisions.

Results also indicate that urban locality gives an edge to their residents over the rural-based ones in the selection of destinations and monthly earnings in the destination places. Higher education thus ensures an upper hand to migrants in the type of occupations they are supposed to get in the destination places and the monthly earnings from such occupations. Our multinomial logit model also suggests that females, individuals above 35 years of age, from the urban locality, and tertiary educated from the fishing community have higher odds of migrating to other countries, obtaining highly-skilled, white-collar, and professional occupations and thus earn higher incomes.

References

Adepoju, A. (1986). *Rural Migration in Nigeria*. Ile-Ife: Department of Demography and Social Statistics, University of Ife.

Amuakwa-Mensah, F., Boakye-Yiadom, L., and Baah-Boateng, W. (2016). Effect   of education on migration decisions in Ghana: A rural-urban perspective. *Journal of Economic Studies,* 43(2): 336–356. DOI:10.1108/JES-09-2013-0138

Bannerjee, A., & Raju, S. (2009): Gendered mobility: Women migrants and work in urban India. *Economic & Political Weekly,* 44 (28): 115-23.

Bernard, A. & Bell, M. (2018). Educational selectivity of internal migrants: A global assessment. *Demographic Research,* 39, 835-854. DOI:10.4054/ DemRes. 2018.39.29

Boyd, M. (1989). Family and personal networks in international Migration: Recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review,* 23(3), 638-71. DOI:10.2307/2546433

Catney, G., & Simpson, L. (2010). Settlement area migration in England and Wales: Assessing evidence for a social gradient. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35(4), 571–584. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40891009

Cattaneo, C. (2007). The self-selection in the migration process: What can we learn?
Castellanza: LIUC University (LIUC Papers in Economics 199).

Chant, S., & Radcliffe, S. A. (1992). Migration and development: The importance of gender. In S. Chant (Ed.). *Gender and Migration in developing countries* (1-29)*.* London: Belhaven Press.

Cortina, J., & Ochoa-Reza, E. (2013). Women, children and Migration: Development considerations. In: J. Cortina, & E. Ochoa-Reza (Eds.). *New perspectives on international Migration and development* (139-160). New York: Columbia University Press.

Cousineau, J. M., & Vaillancourt, F., (1987). Investment in university education: Regional income disparities and regional development. In: W. J. Coffey, & M. Polese. *Still living together* (357-379).Montreal, Quebec: The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

de Hass, H. (2013). Migration and development: Lessons from the Moroccan experience. In J. Cortina and E. Ochoa-Reza (Eds.). *New perspectives on international Migration and development* (169-190). New York: Columbia University Press.

Feliciano, C. (2005). Educational selectivity in U.S. immigration: How do immigrants compare to those left behind? *Demography,* 42(1), 131-152. DOI:10.1353/dem.2005.0001

Garcia, E. A., & Velasco, S. A. (2013). Family and school reconfiguration: The case of Ecuadorian highland migration to Spain. In J. Cortina, & E. Ochoa-Reza (Eds.) *New perspectives on international Migration and development* (111-35). New York: Columbia University Press.

Ginsburg, C., Bocquier, P., Béguy, D., Afolabi, S., Augusto, O., Derra, K., Odhiambo,
F., Otiende, M., Soura, A., and Zabré, P. (2016). Human capital on the move: Education as a determinant of internal Migration in selected INDEPTH surveillance populations in Africa. *Demographic Research,* 34(30): 845–884. DOI:10.4054/DemRes.2016.34.30.

Gollerkeri, G. & Chhabra, N. (2016). *Migration matters: Mobility in a globalizing world.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Greenwood, M. J. (2014). *Migration and economic growth in the United States: National, regional, and metropolitan perspectives*. Cambridge: Academic Press.

Greenwood, M. J., & Hunt, G. L. (2003). The early history of migration research. *International Regional Science Review,* 26(1), 3–37. DOI: 10.1177/0160017602238983

IOM. (2020). World Migration Report 2020. International Organisation for Migration, U.N. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/ wmr_2020.pdf.

Lall, S.V., &Selod, H. (2006). *Rural–urban Migration in developing countries: A survey of theoretical predictions and empirical findings*: Herndon: World Bank Publications. DOI: 10.1596/1813-9450-3915

Vol. 7 (1), April 2023 ℯ*xplorations*

E-journal of the Indian Sociological Society

Machin, S., Salvanes, K.G., and Pelkonen, P. (2012). Education and mobility. *Journal of the European Economic Association,* 10(2): 417–450. DOI:10.1111/j.1542-4774.2011.01048.x.

Malamud, O. and Wozniak, A. (2012). The impact of college on migration evidence from the Vietnam generation. *Journal of Human Resources* 47(4): 913–950. DOI:10.3368/jhr.47.4.913.

McInnis, M. (1971). Age, education and occupation differentials in interregional Migration: Some evidence for Canada. *Demography,* 8(2), 195-204. DOI:10.2307/2060609

Oucho, J.O. (1998). Recent internal migration processes in Sub-Saharan Africa: determinants, consequences and data adequacy issues. In R. E. Bilsborrow (Ed.). *Migration, urbanization and development: New directions and issues* (89-129). New York: UNFPA and Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Palloni, A., Massey, D. S., Ceballos, M., Espinosa, K., &Sittle, M. (2001). Social capital and international Migration: A test using information on family networks. *American Journal of Sociology,* 106 (5), 1262-1289. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/320817

Petersen, W. (1969). *Population* (2nd edn.). New York: Macmillan.

Pregi, L., & Novotny, L. (2019). Selective Migration of population in functional urban regions of Slovakia. *Journal of Maps,* 15 (1), 94-102. DOI:10.1080/17445647.2019.1661880

Rahman, M. M., & and Hussain, Z. Z. (eds.) (2015). *South Asian Migration: Remittances and beyond.* Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Rajan, S. I., & Zachariah, K. C. (2020). New evidence from the Kerala Migration Survey, 2018. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 55 (4). https://www.epw.in/journal/2020/4/special-articles/new-evidences-kerala-migration-survey-2018.html

Rebhun, U., & Goldstein, S. (2009). Demographic and socioeconomic selectivity in Jewish internal Migration in the United States. *Contemporary Jewry,* 29(3), 279-300. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23455435

Shryock, H.S., and J.S. Siegel. 1973. The methods and materials of demography, vol. 2. Washington D.C: U. S. Bureau of the Census.

Singh, J. P. (1986). *Patterns of rural-urban Migration in India.* New Delhi: Inter-India Publications.

Sjaastad, L.A. (1962). The costs and returns of human Migration. *The Journal of Political Economy* 70(5), 80–93. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1829105

Stone, L. O. (1969). *Migration in Canada*. Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

United Nations (2006). *2004 World survey on role of women in development: Women and international Migration*. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

United Nations (2011). Trends in international migrant stock: Migrants by age and sex. *POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev. 2011*. New York: United Nations, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, Population Division (DESA).

Williams, N. (2009). Education, gender, and Migration in the context of social change.
Social   Science   Research,   38(4):   883–896.
DOI:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2009.04.005

Zachariah, K. C., & Rajan, S. I. (2012a). *Kerala's Gulf connections, 1998-2011: Economic and social impact of Migration.* New Delhi: Orient Black Swan.

Zachariah, K. C., Mathew, E. T., & Rajan, S. I. (2003). *Dynamics of Migration in Kerala: Determinants, differentials and consequences*. Delhi: Orient Longman.

Zachariah, K.C., & Rajan, S. I. (2012b). *Inflexion in Kerala's gulf connections: Report on Kerala migration survey, 2011.* Thiruvananthapuram: CDS.

Zlotnik, H. (2003). The global dimensions of female Migration. Migration Policy   Institute.   Retrieved   from:
http://www.migrationinformation.org/featured/ display.cfm?ID=109>

John Christopher J *is a Ph. D Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Periyar University*
E-mail: jjohnchristopher@gmail.com

Sundara Raj T *is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Periyar University*
E-mail: drsundararj@periyaruniversity.ac.in

Article:The Making of a 'Provincial Propertied Class:

Depiction of Rurality and Caste-Class Dynamics in a Telugu Literary Text.

Author(s): A Chandrashekar Reddy and Suman Damera

The Making of a 'Provincial Propertied Class:

Depiction of Rurality and Caste-Class Dynamics in a Telugu Literary Text

--A Chandrashekar Reddy & Suman Damera

Abstract

As a by-product of the green-Revolution technologies and land reforms in the post-colonial period in coastal Andhra Pradesh, the Kamma caste emerged as a 'provincial propertied class'. The surplus generated in agriculture was used by them to spread their kinship networks and, further, demand state patronage for their entrepreneurial activities, which helped them to invest in agribusiness, transport, cinema, private educational institutions, real estate, in the IT industry in the post-1990s. Unlike the Brahmins of the same locale, whose ties with rural areas got snapped with the implementation of land reforms and the emergence of agrarian castes like Reddys, Kammas, and Kapus, the Kammas have followed a rural-urban continuum. Their kinship linkages range from rural bases to the USA.

Scholars in agrarian studies in India and elsewhere have documented this 'great 'transformation' among Kammas. However, they have done so unidimensionally by talking about economic changes and kin networks without getting into the lifeworld of the Kamma households to document the hopes and despairs of this transition. To fill this gap, the present paper digs into literary texts like novels and short stories in Telugu and uses them as primary sources to tap into the lifeworld of Kamma households. Through this exercise, the paper argues that the rural/urban dichotomy does not hold much significance when we enter the households of Kammas. Rather, it is the positioning of kins and relatives at different strategic locations in the village, small towns, capital cities and foreign connections that define the group's rise as the 'provincial propertied 'class'.

Keywords: Provincial Propertied Class, Telugu literature, Kamma's, Agrarian Change, Caste-Class Intersections.

Introduction

'Plato's idea of 'imitation' is one of the earliest conceptualisations that drew parallels between literature and society. In the history of thought, the arts, particularly literature, offered a path of 'secular 'spirituality in the post-Enlightenment era, leading the way in time to the birth of a 'sociology of literature'. The discipline understands literature as a consumer product and a reflection of social reality. To put it simply, a particular society both consumes and produces literature.

The sociology of literature has not become popular as a discourse in India, a country that boasts a number of languages across different cultural contexts. The literature written in the various regional languages also reflects the perceptions that a particular society holds about itself. Such a reflection might indicate conformity and subservience, denial, disapproval or a combination of the same. In any case, such a text provides a glimpse into the values that are upheld in the society where the text is produced and embedded. Therefore, literary works of all genres can be used as tools for sociological analysis, as they describe and explain the lifeworlds of people and their social relationships.

The subject matter and the creative process of literature have undergone changes, particularly in the modern period. Realism has become the undertone of literary works instead of pure imagination, especially when an author is acutely sensitive to the social events and phenomena in their immediate contexts. Thus, a discernible social consciousness can be read through in literary works, indicative of the sensibilities of their contemporary events. They become a medium for expressing sublime themes and thoughts in society. Theories in the sociology of literature perceive the text, especially novels, in this manner. The paper has chosen a novel for critical sociological analysis, and the reasons behind why such an exercise will be fruitful from the perspective of social scientists are outlined below.

The relationship between literature and society is neither simple nor direct; rather, it is multi-dimensional. Several factors mediate this relationship, including the author's childhood socialisation, experiences, especially their participation in political and socio-cultural movements and the logic of the publishing industry itself. These factors influence literary creation both directly and indirectly. Therefore, a text is very much situated or embedded in its economic, political, cultural and social context. In this manner, the paper attempts to examine one such literary work closely in order to understand how the economic, political and social dimensions are described and used in the given work and whether the text is indeed reflective of the social reality and, thus, useful in understanding the dominant social relationships of its space and time. The sociology of literature is based on the fundamental assumption that 'the social context of a cultural work affects the cultural 'work' (Templeton A 1992), and so, a text should give a glimpse into human behaviour during various historical junctures without impeding upon the realm of imagination.

This paper attempts to critically engage with a novel- a literary work of fiction in Telugu that belongs to a specific region, Telangana, as well as with its author and their viewpoints. The given texts were selected for such a sociological analysis because of their storylines which, in our opinion, throw light on the political and socio-economic changes, particularly with respect to the agrarian relations of a given region. In the novel of approximately 400 pages, the narration depicts the cultural and social life of the region and is written by an author from outside the region. Though the Novel was written in

the Telangana region, it is rooted in the life worlds of Kammas- a dominant upper caste from the coastal Andhra region, which has migrated to different parts of Telangana.

The Novel selected for analysis here is *RegadiVittulu*, which was written by Chandralata, and published in the year 1997. As mentioned earlier, the Novel fits the theme of analysis here, more so because it is the only Novel in popular Telugu fiction in the 1990s that touched on the changes that came about with the introduction of Green Revolution policies in Telangana. It was well-received by literary critics and social scientists alike at that time. However, it must be noted that there are quite a few works that were centred around agrarian changes that preceded the Green Revolution in Telugu literature, including *Malapalli*, which was written by UnnavaLaxminarayan in 1922, *KavyaKaaluva* (which translates to 'The Field and the 'Canal'), written by Karunakumar in 1936, and *Yagnam*, written by Kalipatnam Rama Rao in 1964, the last of which inspired other authors to employ a rural backdrop to their stories. Another significant work worth noting here is *Mattimanishi*(or 'The Son of Mother 'Earth'), written by VasireddySeetadevi in 2000, which was also set against a rural backdrop.

The paper proceeds, first, by giving a brief history of Telugu literature; the next section outlines the socio-economic conditions of the regions where the Novel is situated. The following sections provide a brief outline of the story of the Novel from the point of view of the protagonist Ramanadham and the analysis of the Novel in four sections.

Telugu Literature through the Ages:

The long history of Telugu literature is divided into three periods based on the cultural tradition and writing styles of the prominent works in these eras. The first period is known as the pre-age, which lasted from the 3rd century BC to the 11th century AD. This phase was dominated by oral and folk literature completely and was popularised by word of mouth, which is referred to as the 'tradition of 'orality'. While there are some debates among Telugu literary historians on whether this oral narrative tradition can be called literature (Bhanu 2011: 5), most acknowledge their importance in influencing later works, including those in the Middle Ages. Scholars like JayadheerTirumalRao (1994) underline the importance of this literary tradition in the pre-age by arguing that the tradition of orality was the prominent form of literature before the written word came into being and took over. The latter was influenced to a large extent by the former, and even today, it is used to get a sense of the pre-historic societies that are described in them, especially in the absence of any other source of evidence.

The middle age in Telugu literature is generally taken to begin from the 11th century, marked by the translation of the Mahabharata epic from Sanskrit to Telugu by Nannaya, and lasted until the 18th century. This age is subdivided according to the different trends that rose and went in literary writings. During the *NannayaYugam* or Nannaya period, many Sanskrit texts were translated

into Telugu. Prominent authors of the age, like Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana, translated Mahabharata, while Potana translated Bhagavatam from Sanskrit to Telugu. The important feature of this period is that most of the translations or literary creations were done under the patronage of their kings, like Raja RajaNarendra and so on. One can broadly describe the society of the age as feudal under Kingship rule. Other notable traditions or sub-periods in the Middle age include the *ShivakulaYugam* or Shivakavis period, based on the domination of Shauvite literature and the *PrabhandaYugam* or Prabhanda period, based on the literary form.

The modern turn in Telugu literary history occurred in the 18th century. The concept of "'modernity' in this era can be understood in two ways: firstly, the "'contemporary' became synonymous with the modern, which means that all works that were produced in this era, set in their own frame of time came to be known as "modern'; and secondly, the dominant themes of the works themselves began to include the aspect of change, whether in terms of the economic, political and social conditions or in terms of acquiring a perspective of change or development in society.

The modern age also coincides with the arrival of the British in India, and the introduction of Western education and English literature into the cultural milieu of the subcontinent, which also introduced new directions in the regional literary scene. The contemporary political reforms and events made it into Telugu writing as well; for instance, at the time that British reforms were introduced to abolish some of the more regressive practices in India, some progressive Telugu writers took the opportunity to voice their opinions. Examples of such authors and their writings include the popular drama, *Kanyashulkam* or Bride Price, which was written by GurajadaApparao (1862-1915) in 1892 against child marriage, and the autobiography, *Sviyacharitramu*(1982), and the Novel *RajasekharaCharitramu*(1969) of KandukuriVereshalimgam (1848-1919), one of the most prominent modern social reformers of Andhra state which argued for widow re-marriage and ''women's education. *Sviyacharitramu* is also the first known autobiography in the Telugu language.

Autobiography and Novels developed simultaneously as literary genres, the genealogy of which can be read with the emergence of individualism in Europe in the 18th century. The ideas of colonial modernity and the developments in the Western literary scene also made an impact on the development of regional literature in India, especially in the development of Novels and autobiography, which were interrelated. As Rajagopal V. (2005) observes, the two genres were the products of the material conditions of imperialism and "evolved through an imitation of modular literary forms available in English even as they drew upon and improvised indigenous fictional traditions" (46).

There have been different changes in literary practice and forms from the 18th century onwards. The main form of *'Padyam'* (poem) with a certain grammatical rigidity has largely been discarded as the main form of literary

practice with a new form of poetics with less or no grammatical rules. *Navala* (Novel), a Western influence on almost all Indian languages literature, has become the major form of literary expression. The paper is not going to deal with these changes. The novel as a literary form is very conducive for understanding the changes in society. As a form, it lends to a long-term depiction of social realities. It is one such Novel that this paper will analyse sociologically. Before going into the Novel, the next section will give a social background of the region that the Novel was written in.

Locating the Context of the Novel:

The state's policies in agriculture, particularly in third-world countries, have a significant impact on both the economic and social organisation of agrarian communities. The introduction of land reforms, irrigation systems, cooperative credit societies, intermediaries, and infrastructure facilities by the state has significantly influenced the social structure of villages. Since the 1970s, the Indian economy has significantly changed the economic and social relationships between the agriculture and industrial sectors and within agriculture itself. The State's political character has shifted from a welfare and developmentalist perspective to a neoliberal form of economic regulation, becoming more deeply integrated into the global economy.

The Green Revolution was a critical phase in India's agricultural history, introduced to achieve self-sufficiency in food grain production. It brought many changes not only in agriculture but also in Indian society. The Green Revolution introduced new technologies, such as high-yielding seed varieties and agricultural mechanisation. At the same time, new irrigation projects were emphasised, making it the period of modernisation of Indian agriculture, introducing mechanisation, developing irrigation facilities, transportation, communication, and more. The Green Revolution was seen not only as something that could transform Indian agriculture but also as a catalyst for social change and mobility. Several studies indicate that the benefits of the Green Revolution were limited to areas with good irrigation facilities, resulting in regional imbalances in the country. The Green Revolution also resulted in class imbalances, as those who owned and controlled significant amounts of land and proper irrigation facilities could reap the benefits. In contrast, those without access to such facilities lagged in utilising these technologies. The Green Revolution also helped locally dominant caste groups consolidate their position in the rural hierarchy and regional power structure.

The paper's narrative focuses on an area that was left behind during the Green Revolution period - Telangana. Understanding agrarian change is essential for analysing political change, agricultural transformation, or social institutions and values changes during this period.

The conditions that existed in Telangana during the late 1960s to late 1980s.

The region of Telangana, which was under Nizam's rule until 1950, had limited agricultural development during that period. After merging with the Telugu-speaking Andhra region in 1956, it became part of the newly formed State of Andhra Pradesh. The landlord class in Telangana was characterised as semi-feudal by some and feudal by others, and during this period, they were selling their lands in the villages and moving to towns. As a result, some proportion of the land got transferred to other people, and the ownership of land, to a small extent, started to shift into the hands of the middle castes.

These new middle castes began questioning the hegemony of the old ruling classes, and practices like "*vetti*" were disappearing. There was a de-concentration of considerable land holdings and a strengthening of small and middle holdings through the assertion of backward caste peasants. Semi-feudal practices were being replaced by new labour relations based on free-wage labour. However, due to the stark inequalities and half-hearted land reforms, the region witnessed a Maoist movement during this period.

The efforts of the governments in developing the region were very ineffective in the realms of education, irrigation and water distribution, and employment generation. As a result, there was an agitation for a separate state of Telangana from 1968-1972, which was later taken up during 2002-2014 and culminated in creating the separate State of Telangana.

During the same period, small farmers migrated from coastal Andhra to Telangana. These were the people belonging to the Kamma caste, who sold the one or two acres of land they had in their native places and bought 20 or more acres of lands in the irrigated blocks of Telangana, in places like Nagarjunasagar, SriramSagar, KC canal, and Tungabahdra river basin. This led to the transformation of agricultural practices in the region from subsistence to commercial agriculture.

Overall, the period of Telangana's history from the late 1960s to the late 1980s was marked by significant changes in the social and economic landscape of the region. The emergence of new middle castes and the assertion of backward caste peasants led to a shift in power dynamics. At the same time, the migration of small farmers from coastal Andhra to Telangana transformed the agricultural practices in the region. The ineffective government policies and stark inequalities also resulted in social and political movements for change.

The situation in Coastal Andhra during this period:

The region of Coastal Andhra had a long history of British colonial rule, and the Krishna and Godavari rivers heavily influenced the economy and polity of the region. After India gained independence, the region underwent significant changes in land use, leading to a transformation of the Zamindari system and the feudal agrarian relations. The introduction of commercial agriculture

practices was further accelerated by the Green Revolution, which led to the penetration of capitalist development into the agriculture sector. As a result, a new capitalist class of farmers emerged, reaping huge profits through agricultural reforms. However, this period also witnessed a growth in regional imbalances, with North-Coastal Andhra remaining underdeveloped and class inequalities increasing. Additionally, there was an active suppression of lower castes who questioned the hegemony of the landed upper castes, leading to peasant uprisings like the Srikakulam peasant rising.

Against this backdrop, the Novel *RegadiVittulu* by Chandralatha depicts the agrarian changes that took place in the village of Nadigadda in the Mahaboobnagar district of Telangana. Through this Novel, one can gain insight into the major trends of agrarian change in the region during the Green Revolution era, even though it may not necessarily reflect the changes that took place across the region. The Novel was published in 1997 and won first prize in the novel writing competition of the Telugu Association of North America (TANA).

Analysing the plot of the Novel presents a vivid picture of the agrarian changes that were taking place in the village of Nadigadda during the period of the Green Revolution. The Novel portrays the struggles of the lower castes against the dominant upper-caste landowners, who were reluctant to part with their land and adopt modern agricultural practices. The Novel highlights the tensions that emerged between different castes and classes due to the changes in the agrarian structure. The Novel's depiction of the struggles of the lower castes against the upper-caste landowners and the class conflicts that arose from the agrarian changes make it a valuable source for understanding the dynamics of the Green Revolution in the Telangana region.

In conclusion, the Novel RegadiVittulu provides valuable insight into the major trends of agrarian change during the Green Revolution era in the Telangana region. Through the Novel, one can understand the struggles of the lower castes against the dominant upper-caste landowners and the class conflicts that arose from the agrarian changes in the region. This Novel serves as an important resource for understanding the complex dynamics of the Green Revolution and its impact on the region's social and economic structure.

RegadiVittulu– A novel about Agrarian Change

RegadiVittulu is a novel in Telugu written by Chandralata in 1997. It achieved fame by winning the prize for 'the best 'novel' in a contest conducted by the Telugu Association of North America, or TANA for short. Some have hailed it as one of the best novels written in Telugu in the 1990s. It has also been severely criticised by the advocates for separate statehood for the Telangana region on the grounds that it glorifies the impact of the migration of groups of farmers (*kammas*) to Telangana from the more advanced coastal region of Andhra state. The paper will attempt to carefully delineate the important themes in the Novel and discuss them at some length.

Ramanadham is the chief protagonist of the Novel who hails from Repalle, a village in Guntur district. He is the farmer who takes the initial decision to migrate to Telangana. He comes from an agricultural family background. The economic status of his family can be described as middle class. His father is an enlightened farmer who helped found a high school and a library in their village. His mother taught women in the village to hand-spin cotton, revealing a clear impact of the national movement on the family. Ramanadham's is one of the families that underwent a modernising social change in the early twentieth century.

While some members of the agricultural community, like Ramanadham's elder brother, stay in the agricultural occupation, others, like the protagonist, take advantage of the modern avenues of education and employment. Ramanadham went to Madras for his collegiate education in the early 1950s, presumably, a phase during which a popular agitation for setting up a separate province for Telugu-speaking areas was gaining momentum. He supports this agitation and is influenced by other modern ideas. He marries his cross-cousin in a non-traditional reformative wedding. Through his educational training, Ramanadham gets the job of an auditor in a cooperative society in the Mahaboobnagar (Telangana Region) district. Jobs in the modern sector can take one far away from one's native place of origin. Through this job, he comes to know of the availability of fertile land in that region. He decides to give up his job, buy land in that region, and migrate permanently to that region as a farmer.

Ramanadham is a capitalist farmer here, more advanced in his outlook than the peasants of Telangana, as well as many of the peasants and farmers of coastal Andhra. To give an example from Ramanadham's own family, his brother owns a limited amount of land and makes only a modest profit out of it, but he is not looking for more profitable returns on his investment. He is attached to his piece of land like the peasants of the olden days.

Ramanadham is portrayed as a pioneer of modern agriculture in the Telangana region. He advocates for agricultural production for profit and favours contemporary agricultural methods such as the cultivation of cash crops through irrigation, the use of fertilisers and pesticides, and modern equipment such as tractors. He emphasises strict accounting principles for all income and expenditure and prioritises scientific agriculture. Ramanadham takes soil samples from his land to the local research station to determine the suitability of the soil for various crops. He prefers to cultivate crops that command a high market price, such as paddy, cotton, chilli, and groundnut, over subsistence crops like Jonna (sorghum) and sajja (millets). He closely examines the farming practices of Telugu migrant farmers in Karnataka to learn from their experience. Ramanadham notes that they achieve greater production and higher quality using hybrid seeds, so he also starts using them. Despite the inadequate water supply in the region, Ramanadham cultivates paddy using meagre local resources initially and later with the arrival of canal irrigation. The land he purchased is fertile, contributing to his success in agriculture.

In his pursuit of modern agriculture, Ramanadham has to overcome many obstacles. Some of these are in the form of the attitudes of people. The person from whom Ramanadham buys land – Narasimham Dora – is an erstwhile landlord who is only eager to get rid of the land and move to the town rather than initiate himself into some of the modernising changes that Ramanadham is proposing. Many of the local peasants are content to continue with subsistence farming. Some local farmers like Balayya are more receptive but have misgivings about the new cash crops and the impact of development. Their misgivings can only be overcome through Ramanadham's patient explanations. He has to win over the conservatism of his brother as well to motivate him to migrate and join his new farming enterprise. There are more such obstacles described later. While the arrival of canal irrigation is a boon, the corrupt irrigation department makes progress difficult. This bureaucracy is in league with the unproductive members of the erstwhile landed elites such as Narasimham Dora. Having left their land, these elites have now diversified into new and profitable avenues such as liquor contracts and local politics. The new roads in the region, due to development, are also bringing in negative influences, such as liquor shops.

Overcoming these obstacles, Ramanadham's experiment of commercial agriculture in Telangana turns out to be somewhat successful. The high prices of cotton, the suitability of the local soil for its cultivation, and the success of his experiment with hybrid seeds persuade some local farmers to go in for commercial cultivation. However, this success brings in its wake another set of associated problems. Local middlemen (Dastagiri) are manipulative and stand in the way of higher prices for a better quality of cotton. These middlemen also sell fake hybrid seeds to local farmers, leading to huge losses for them. Some of these unfortunate farmers commit suicide. Meanwhile, Ramanadham's success attracts new migrants into the region. Some of them are his relatives. Others arrive in the wake of lucrative cotton prices. As a result, the local land prices and wages go up. However, when problems such as new pests affect agricultural production and profit adversely, they are quick to pull their investments out and move elsewhere.

The local elites are jealous of Ramanadham's success. They fan separatist sentiments and try to incite the local residents against the migrants. Narasimham Dora, a member of the erstwhile landed elite, now a prominent politician, wants Ramanadham to support his son's candidature in the elections. When Ramanadham refuses to support them, he sets about destroying Ramanadham's crops. The Novel ends on an ambivalent note. On the one hand, there is the positive note of Ramanadham's determination to get on with his farming experiment, come what may. He is ever ready to experiment with new crops, such as sunflowers that are not dependent on irrigation. If necessary, he is prepared to migrate elsewhere to pursue his agricultural dream.

On the other hand, the outlook at the end of the Novel is very pessimistic. After all the trouble Ramanadham takes to overcome the obstacles in instituting commercial agriculture, he is nothing but defeated. With all the problems and troubles, his family has become weakened compared to what it was in the beginning.

II

While RegadiVittulu is a work of fiction, it bases itself on the real historical developments of Andhra. There are explicit references to the Visalandhra movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s and the Telangana movement of the late 1960s. The novel deals with the migration of farmers from the coastal region to Telangana. It is reasonably clear from the Novel that it is describing the migrational experience of one community in particular – the caste of Kammas.

The rise of Kammas as a caste can be traced in modern Andhra history to the middle of the nineteenth century, a time just after the construction of irrigation dams on the rivers Godavari and Krishna. Farmers of the districts of Godavari, Krishna and Guntur benefited mainly from the construction of these dams. The Kammas, a prominent caste in these districts, played an important role in the rise of commercial agriculture in Andhra, paddy being the main crop cultivated on the irrigated lands. As a result of their success in commercial agriculture, the Kammas strove for upward social mobility. Like other upwardly mobile castes in Andhra, the Kammas also resorted to the twin but somewhat different strategies of 'modernisation' and 'sanskritisation' to achieve their objective. Some of them claimed a ritual status equal to that of Brahmins- - some Kammas decided to wear the sacred thread and called themselves kammabrahmins. Some of them also began to eagerly pursue Sanskrit, hitherto exclusively reserved for the brahmins. The strategy of claiming social status was a total repudiation of the traditional ritual hierarchy with a preeminent status for Brahmins. Opposition to Brahmins took the shape of the non-brahmin movement and the politics of the Justice Party. In Andhra, the agenda of non-brahmin politics was successfully subsumed under nationalism. TripuraneniRamasvamiChaudari, an intellectual of the Kamma community and a leader of the non-brahmin movement in Andhra, was an <u>avowed</u> nationalist. In the story, Ramanadham's parents came under the influence of nationalist politics. Chaudari critiqued the epics and puranic tales for their Brahmanical bias. He critiqued the rituals of Brahmanical Hinduism conducted in Sanskrit and proposed their replacement with simple and secular ceremonies conducted in simple and intelligible Telugu. Again, in the Novel, we see the impact of these ideas in the performance of Ramanadham's marriage in a non-traditional and reformative manner. The repudiation of Brahmanical religion also made leftist politics attractive to some members of the community.

After achieving success in agriculture, the community began to invest in agriculture-related and other small industries in the towns. The growth of agriculture slowed down along with the slowing down of the expansion of irrigation after the 1940s. New opportunities, especially for the middle classes, needed to be sought elsewhere. Ramanadham's family farm, for example, was a relatively small one. It did not promise a great deal of profit. The high caste position gave him access to 'social 'capital' in the form of education. Not only to him, we see that in the case of many of the Kammas who migrated to other countries. Education was one of the important means of achieving social mobility. It gave access to the more highly paid and secure service jobs in towns and cities, both inside and outside the state. That is why when Ramanadham gets the job of an auditor in a cooperative society, the family encourages him to keep it and discourages him from giving it up for agriculture. Or else, one had to take agricultural investments to new areas outside where commercial agriculture had not yet expanded.Ramanadham's migration to Mahaboobnagar interestingly coincides with the migration of Chalapati, his friend from the same village, to the United States of America as a doctor. This moment would have occurred in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. (Migration of farmers to Sindhanur in Karnataka also occurs around the same time)

The community continued to make steady economic progress in agriculture, town-based economic activities, education, services, and migration opportunities in the subsequent decades. The story of Ramanadham gives us a unique picture of relatively less studied aspects of the lower classes among the peasant upper castes. This section of society is less studied and brushed under the larger analysis of the upper castes. It provides a unique case of upper caste and lower class. Understanding this economically weaker but socially superior position category of people, though relatively small, gives us the actual workings of caste as an institution. The caste status provides access to resources other than economics, which are very important. Access to quality education, social networks, and kinship relations will all work in tandem and enable the process of social and economic mobility. These are the things that people at the lower end of the social hierarchy do not have the privilege of access.

This economically successful community's political aspirations were realised when NT Rama Rao led the newly formed Telugu Desam Party to victory in the 1984 elections. This period also saw the emergence of reasonably prominent industrialists from the community, such as the newspaper tycoon RamojiRao. The members of the community who moved to the US, many of them doctors and engineers, achieved wealth and contributed to the community's overall success. It appeared as though the Kamma community had come of age. The community continued to ride the crest of its economic success wave by migrating to new regions and pursuing new and different economic opportunities.

III

Corresponding to this trajectory of the economic experience of the community, our Novel also emphasises the notions of 'hybridity' and 'migration'. To convince his family to migrate along with him to Mahaboobnagar, Ramanadham tells them that migrations have always happened in history. Migration can theoretically happen to any place on the globe, but it is more feasible within the political framework of a nation-state, as in the case of the Telugu-speaking farmers migrating to Sindhanur and other places near Tungabhadra in Karnataka.This could be possible with even fewer obstacles compared to other districts within the same province. Migrations, however, force interaction with other cultures, just as it happens with Ramanadham's family. When that happens, there are issues of unfamiliarity, and even mutual suspicion sometimes, between both sides that need to be sorted out. Some extent of commingling is the price at which successful migration is achieved. The result is hybridity. Ramanadham gives his niece Anuradha in marriage to Mallesh, the son of the local farmer Balayya belonging, presumably to the Golla caste (OBC caste). It is an inter-caste and inter-regional marriage. In his agricultural experiment, hybrid seeds had succeeded where traditional seeds failed. So why not try a hybrid experiment in family relationships as well as the thinking of Ramanadham?

IV

So, in the Novel, we celebrate the mobility/movement of the community. It is a movement from peasant agriculture to capitalist agriculture, from agriculture to non-agricultural fields and occupations, a movement from coastal Andhra to other parts of the State, in India and the world, and also a movement from the traditional ideas of kinship and family to newer ideas about the same.

This may be the place to discuss the ideas about kinship and the joint family system at some length. While Ramanadham appears to celebrate hybridity in the interests of the migrant community, it is not as if he did not cherish the value of the joint family. He married his cross-cousin. When the couple initially moved to Mahaboobnagar, the temporary split in the family did not happen along nuclear lines. Their children stayed back with his brother's family. The first to join them in Mahaboobnagar is Sivudu, his nephew sent by his brother to help them. In fact, Ramanadham is attached to Sivudu more than he is to his son and looks upon him as his successor. Sivudu does not pursue education and stays committed to farming all his life. Sivudu's wife, Bharati, lives in and maintains an establishment in Kurnool where all the joint family's young children are stationed for schooling. Bharati, hailing from a similar peasant/agricultural background, fits well into the framework of a joint family, but Gita, the wife of Ramanadham's son Sudhakar, is not so. Hailing from a more urbanised background, she longs and strives for separation. Thus, a crisis of the joint family is unfolding in Ramanadham's family. Sudhakar may be partly under the influence of his wife, who advocates abandoning the whole agricultural enterprise and investing in real estate in Kurnool instead. He even wants his father to politically support Narasimham Dora's son, Bhupalu. Other

than Sivudu, there is no one else to support Ramanadham in agriculture. Even the hybrid marriage experiment between Malles and Anuradha is somewhat of a failure, given the serious crisis of trust between them.

The Novel is riven with deep ambivalence. The ambivalence of the ending has already been noted. When the experiment of commercial farming appears to become successful, there are a host of external factors and some internal factors which seem to be dooming it to failure. We can sense this tension not merely in the conclusion but in the Novel as a whole. On the one hand, there is a celebration of a set of new changes - capitalist farming, migration, and hybridity, but on the other hand, there is also a glorification of a set of older traditions – rural culture, traditions of the joint family, etc. These different sets of issues are parts of mutually exclusive packages. Older peasant agriculture and the institution of joint family are closely bound together, and if one goes out, the other goes with it.

This brings us to the question of the crisis of identity in the Kamma community, which we posit is connoted by the ambivalence of the text itself. The identity of the community is strongly defined by its rootedness in a peasant economy and culture, with concomitant social institutions such as the joint family. However, in the larger context of limited growth and opportunities in the agricultural sector and the changing relations of production, the community has to move away from peasant production and sometimes altogether away from the agricultural sector. By moving to new sectors of the economy and geographical areas, the community has been able to hold its own in terms of its economic power and even increase it significantly. However, this very success also brought a crisis of identity in its wake. The newly rich Kammas could not quite fit into the mould of Kammas in the way that the old Kammas could. When the process of migration brought them into contact with other people and communities, inter-community, inter-religious or inter-racial marriages could occur, further diluting their sense of identity in the process.

A critique can be said about the Novel here that it portrays the people of Telangana in general as a passive lot who were only responding in an unsatisfactory way to the stimulus provided by the incursions of migrant farmers. One can also point out some details in the text that reveal the author's bias. For example, Mallesh, son of the local farmer Balayya, who ends up marrying Ramanadham's niece Anuradha, does not speak in his dialect but in Ramanadham's family's dialect. Did he undergo acculturation through education, or did he adopt the new dialect to make himself more acceptable to Ramanadham's family?

Valid as some of these critiques may be, in our view, they miss the larger point, for this Novel is not really about Telangana; it is about the Kamma community. Ramanadham, the protagonist of the Novel, is an 'organic intellectual' of the community, to use a Gramscian term in a somewhat loose sense. To the extent that the Novel justifies migration and glorifies the community's economic success, it is a hegemonic text of the community. In

the way that it brings the issues and dilemmas regarding the community's identity into sharper focus, it is an ideological text of the community.

Conclusion

The paper tried to understand the dynamics of migration, mobility and becoming a "class'. This is done by using a literary text – a novel, rather than using the traditional methods of fieldwork in sociology. The use of literary text provided us with a unique perspective into the life worlds of Kammas that too lower class Kammas. It gave insights into how they negotiated the change and how they used their networks in real life, which has been established in the general social science literature. Novel provided us with the representation of the negotiations of individuals and the community at large with agrarian change- from subsistence farming to commercial farming, changes in the family- a transition from a joint family to a nuclear family, and changes associated with migration. These changes have been in a holistic manner, not as an isolated case of each of them, as is the case with the studies in social science in general.

References

Balagopal. K. (1987). An Ideology for the Provincial Propertied Class.*Economic and Political Weekly,* vol.22.No.36/37.Pp-1544-1546.

Chandralata, (1997).*RegadiVittulu (Seeds of Black soil),* USA, Telugu Association of North America

Jodhka, S.S., (2014). Emergent Ruralities: Revisiting village life and agrarian change in Haryana. *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp.5-17

John Hariss, (1987). The State in Retreat? Why has India Experienced Such Half-hearted 'Liberalisation' in the1980s? *Institute of Development Studies*.vol.18 no. 4,.Susex. pp. 31-38

Prasad Purendra N (2015). Agrarian Classes and Caste Relations in `United Andhra 'Pradesh' during 1956-2014. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 50, No. 16 pp. 77-83

Rajagopal V. (2005).Fashioning Modernity in Telugu: Viresalingam and His Interventionist Strategy.*Studies in History*.Vol. 21 no.1, pp-45-77.doi:10.1177/025764300502100103.

Templeton, A. (1992). Sociology and Literature: Theories for Cultural Criticism. *College Literature*, vol. 19 no.2, pp-19–30.

Tirmal Rao, Jayadheer. (1994). *Jānapadacāritrakagēyagādhalu,* Hyderabad, Sahiti Circle.

Udayabhanu, D. (2011). AadhunaikaTelanganaSaahityam – RenduSandharbhalu. *NadustunnaTelangana.*

*A **Chandrashekar Reddy** is a research scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad.*
Email: chandrashekarreddy0@gmail.com
.
***Suman Damera** is Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Puchhunga, University College, Mizoram University, Aizawl.*
Email: sumandamera22@gmail.com

Reverse Migration, Migrant Workers and Livelihood Struggles:

A Study in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic

--Rima Debnath

Abstract

This paper focuses on the reasons behind the reverse migration of migrant workers of Udalguri District (Assam) during the COVID-19 pandemic and the different coping strategies adopted by the migrants to earn a livelihood. There are many reasons behind reverse migration, including overnight loss of livelihood, poor living conditions, and lack of social security. Some migrants returned to their village because most of their friends and relatives left the destination. So they felt insecure and returned home. After returning, in order to support their livelihood, they adopted different coping strategies. The study shows the importance of social capital, like friends and relatives at the destination. The findings of the paper also reconfirm that migration is an important source of livelihood for landless workers or the poor in general. However, inter-state migration at present is less preferred compared to before.

Key Words: COVID-19, migrant workers, reverse migration, informal sector

Introduction

Migration refers to a change in residence, either permanent or semi-permanent. There is no limit on the distance of the movement. Migration can be national or international, voluntary or involuntary. Thus, a move from one place to another can be termed migration (Lee, 1966). Migration should also be differentiated from labour migration. Labour migration implies the movement of people from one place to another in search of employment. Labour migration may include movement from one district to another, from one state to another or from one country to another. Though the term 'economic migrant' is used as a synonym for the terms 'labour migrant' or 'migrant worker', there exists a difference between them. The term 'labour migrant' implies the movement of people to earn a livelihood (Rajeswaran, 2015). Migrant workers are the main pillar for the development of urban areas in India. The number of migrant workers in India, which includes daily wage workers, seasonal migrants, long-distance migrants and local migrants, is more than what is computed.

Most of the migration falls under distress migration, and the main motive behind migration is subsistence and survival (Dandekar & Ghai, 2020). Over the years, many migrants have been seen to return to their place of origin for several reasons. The unusual pattern of urban-rural migration caught the attention during the COVID-19 pandemic when a large number of migrant workers returned to their place of origin. Their return can be termed as reverse

migration, where they were seen to leave the city due to uncertainty about their livelihood (Sen, 2020). Reverse migration is a new phenomenon, and there is a scarcity of literature on it. Little focus has been given to the problem of reverse migration by the government, planners or think tanks (Mohapatra and Jha, 2019). But the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus the issue of reverse migration and the sufferings of migrant workers. A large number of migrant workers became unemployed when the lockdown was announced. Consequently, many migrant workers returned back to their villages.The returnee migrants fall into the category of vulnerable circular migrants. Both short-term as well as long-term circular migrants belong to the vulnerable category. Based on 2007-2008 NSS data, Srivastava (2020) stated that there were 59 million short-term circular migrant workers in 2017-18. The number of long-term circular migrants was 69 million in 2018. Thus the number of migrant workers was 128 million in the year 2017-18. There is no doubt that the number has increased. So it can be said that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected more than 128 million migrants. It is difficult to get the exact number of returned migrants as many migrants reached home on foot. Besides, many of them died on their way home. However, a list of the migrants who returned during the COVID-19 pandemic has been found from a source of the government of India which is given below:

Statement referred to Part (a) to (e) of LokSabha USQ NO. 197 due for reply on 14.09.2020

S.No.	Name of the State	No. of Migrant workers who have returned to their home state
1	Andhra Pradesh	32571
2	Andaman and Nicobar	-
3	Arunachal Pradesh	2871
4	Assam	426441
5	Bihar	1500612
6	Chandigarh	-

7	Chhattisgarh	-
8	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	43747
9	Delhi	-
10	Goa	-
11	Gujarat	-
12	Haryana	1289
13	Himachal Pradesh	-
14	Jammu & Kashmir	48780
15	Jharkhand	530047
16	Karnataka	-
17	Kerala	311124
18	Ladakh	50
19	Lakshadweep	456
20	Madhya Pradesh	753581
21	Maharashtra	182990
22	Manipur	12338
23	Meghalaya	4266
24	Mizoram	-
25	Nagaland	11750

26	Odisha	-
27	Pondicherry	1694
28	Punjab	515642
29	Rajasthan	1308130
30	Sikkim	-
31	Tamil Nadu	72145
32	Telangana	37050
33	Tripura	34247
34	Uttar Pradesh	3249638
35	Uttarakhand	-
36	West Bengal	1384693
	Total	**10466152**

Source: Government of India (2020)

From the table, it is seen that the number of returned migrants in Assam is 426441. Out of 426441, the number of returned migrants in the Udalguri district is 10839, according to the district report. The district is known for different kinds of ethnic conflicts as well as political instability and bandh culture. Such problems created uncertainty for investment opportunities in this area. In the midst of all these challenges, large-scale reverse migration in this area has created challenges for livelihood for many people. The present study was conducted in Udalguri District. The main sources of earning a livelihood in the region are agriculture, street vending and business. Apart from unemployment and poverty, another reason behind migration from this particular place is political instability. In the presence of different kinds of conflict, the return of migrants from different parts of the country raised questions about their survival. So, the paper tries to understand: 1. What is the reason behind reverse migration during the COVID-19 pandemic? 2. What are the challenges they face in earning their livelihood at the place of their origin

after their return? 3. What are the different coping strategies that the returned migrants adopted to overcome the situation?

Review of literature

Migration has become an important source of livelihood for many people. The movement of the people can be mainly seen from rural to urban areas. There are different reasons behind migration which include economic as well as non-economic factors. Economic factors include providing financial support to the family in order to meet their needs, education of children, construction of houses etc. (Reja and Das, 2019; Tucker et al., 2013). Whereas non-economic factors are the commitment to crime at the place of origin, discrimination on the basis of caste and so on (Gugler, 2010). These are push factors responsible for migration. Sometimes geographical factors are also responsible for migration. People living near river areas migrate due to the problem of river erosion (Uddin and Firoz, 2013).

There are pull factors which attract migrants to the cities. Higher wage rates, lower unemployment and availability of different income opportunities are the pull factors responsible for rural-urban migration (Buch et al., 2014). Sometimes employment policies introduced by the urban government also attract migrants from rural areas (Basu, 1998). So, only push and pull factors cannot be held responsible for the migration process. When people realise their prevailing situation and at the same time they get information about the opportunities in the cities, migration is the consequence. So between the push and pull factors, there exists another factor called the migration network that helps in the migration process. Migration network refers to the connection between the place of origin of the migrants and their destination area. These connections are mainly provided by the friends and relatives of the migrants who are working at the destination (Jewell & Molina, 2009). Apart from friends and relatives, family and communities are also important sources of migration networks. The current migrant member from the family and community helps to acquire information about migration. Their experience plays an important role in migration decision-making (Winters, Janvry, & Sadoulet, 2001).

Labour migration in an international context

A large number of people migrate outside their country in search of employment. International labour migration creates decent work and a labour market as the migrants want work opportunities by abiding by the law of the destination country. Again it is also the backdoor for many low-skilled workers. Recruitment of international migrant workers is done through a highly commercialised private recruitment industry (Wickramasekara, 2016). Information from friends and relatives working overseas has a positive effect on the probability of migrants working overseas. Apart from that, labour recruiters or middlemen play an important role in international migration. A middleman plays a significant role in those places where there is limited access to labour recruitment agencies. (Christinawati, Pudjiharjo, & Pratomo,

2013). Sometimes fraud recruitment and abuses in many Asian countries lead to the vulnerability of workers abroad (Castles & Wise, 2008).

India and internal labour migration

People from rural India migrate to cities in search of work. The reasons behind their migration mainly include slow growth of agriculture, fragmentation of land holding, poverty and unemployment. At the same time, rapid industrialisation in urban areas and higher wages attract the rural poor to migrate to the cities. In India, there is growth in the construction sector. So a large number of rural people are seen to engage in the construction sector (Cooke, 2007). Most of these migrants reach their destination with the help of the information provided by their family and friends. Sometimes they migrate to the destination place with the help of labour contractors for which they receive an advance payment (Sarkar & Mishra, 2020). In India, urbanisation is taking place at a rapid rate, and the contribution of migrant workers to urbanisation is really significant. Labour migrants in India, mainly daily wage labourers, local migrants, seasonal migrants and long-distance migrants, are larger in number than what is computed. These migrant workers are mainly engaged in the agriculture sector, construction sector, brick kilns, street vendors etc. (Dandekar & Ghai, 2020).

Labour migration in the context of the Northeast

There are different push and pull factors responsible for migration from North-East India to different parts of the country. The push factors are insurgency, conflict in the region and corruption, the rapid expansion of illegal or semi-legal economies, capital flight and low levels of investment. But lack of availability of livelihood is the main reason behind migration apart from all these factors. The pull factors are the availability of work in urban areas, higher standard of living, and quality education and so on. The demand for labour from the Northeast is more because of their English language, limited knowledge about the labour market, ability and physical appearance etc. (McDeui-Ra, 2012).

Challenges faced by migrant workers

Suffering of migrant workers is not a new phenomenon. But the pandemic has made it more visible. In the meantime, the suspension of labour laws has added another burden. Rural migrants are engaged in different working sectors like construction sites, different foreign-owned factories, private enterprises, etc. Rural migrants constitute a major portion of the total workforce in the secondary and tertiary sectors in the urban areas. They also contribute to the economic growth of a country. However, they are not provided with enough labour protection and social position in return. They have to face a lot of challenges at their workplace. The majority of the rural migrants do not receive their wage payments on time. This happens especially in the case of construction sector workers. The majority of the migrant workers receive wages below the average wage level of the province. In non-state-owned

sectors, the number of work-related injuries is more in terms of rural migrant workers. The majority of them are found to be working and living in extremely poor conditions. The most important part is that some are not trained or say that they have never received any training (Cooke, 2007).

Migrant workers have to work long hours without any payment for extra work. The wage they receive is not sufficient to meet the needs of their families. Sometimes due to a huge workload, their bodies are not in a position to work. So, they return to their home, and after taking rest for four to five days they come back to the place of destination (Jain & Sharma, 2018). The majority of the migrant workers are found living in concentration camps where a single room is occupied by a large number of migrants. Sometimes the employer's food and lodging are provided, which most of the time serves the interest of the employer rather than the needs of the workers. Apart from that, health insurance exists only in name. After the new legislation that gives the right to recover the expenditure on medical treatment from the employer, migrant workers are less encouraged to seek treatment. Because if they do so, it will hamper their wage (Amin, 1998).

Temporary migrant workers who possess low skills and are engaged in low-paid jobs are seen to suffer from the problem of wage theft or underpayment. The problem mainly arises because of the government's unwillingness or inability to solve the issue and bring efficiency to the labour market. Another reason for the exploitation of migrant workers may be information asymmetry between the migrant workers and their employers. Especially temporary migrant workers may lack access to information about the conditions prevailing in the labour market (Wright & Clibborn, 2018). Intermediaries between migrants and the employer are also responsible for the exploitation of migrant workers. The involvement of unscrupulous operators makes migrant workers more vulnerable and thus easy prey to exploitation (Van den Broek, 2016).

Many times, migrants are seen to work in unsafe environments where there is a risk of injury or death, various health problems etc. Slum settlements built on vacant private land or government vacant land located in low-lying areas have the risk due to flooding and other natural disasters. Despite such risks, they remain in these jobs as they have no alternative in the city. The urban poor have no access to any type of health insurance or safety health coverage (Uddin & Firoj, 2013). Sometimes the workers are exploited through the different policies of the employers. Employers adjust the hiring of workers depending on demand and technological changes. Most of the time, they hire workers with no security of employment. Again they have the capacity to adjust the wage levels depending on the competition and cost reduction motives. Sometimes employers exercise flexibility by withdrawing workers during the low season and increasing the working hours of the workers during the high season. Thus providing no costs for seasonal variations in production (Sen & Dasgupta, 2009). The above discussion has shown the sufferings of migrant workers in normal times and how vulnerable they are. Now the pandemic has made their life more miserable.

Migrants and informal economy

A large number of workforces are engaged in India's informal economy, and it constitutes 93% of India's total workforce. A majority of migrant workers are seen to be engaged in the construction sector, and most of them are daily wage earners (Dandekar & Ghai, 2020). These migrant workers are seen to form a part of the lower middle class in cities (Mohapatra & Jha, 2019). So, it is crucial to understand the interlinkage between migrants and the informal economy. The informal economy can be understood in terms of its components, including barter exchange, employment without proper bookkeeping, volunteer nature of work, household-based work activities, illegal activities, social exchange services such as self-help networks from the neighbourhood etc. Variations of activities in this sector may depend on their capital and labour intensiveness, the existence or absence of monetary exchanges and finally, their scale of operation (Gaughan & Ferman, 1987; Singh, 1990).

The concept of the informal sector lies in the fact that it includes those activities which are not officially registered (Singh, 1990). People in India rely on the informal economy for their livelihood (Bhattacharya & Kesar, 2020). Despite industrial growth in India, absorbing surplus labour is difficult because of the slow growth of output and the adoption of capital-intensive techniques in production. Finally, the surplus labour is seen to absorb in marginal and low-productivity works. Entry into the informal sector is easy compared to the formal sector. So, the existence of both the formal and informal economy is permanent rather than temporary (Mitra, 1990).

People with better education and skill are able to manage jobs in the formal sector. Those who are not equipped with better skills and education remain unemployed or find some employment in non-modern sectors, continuing with the job search (Saha, 2017). According to Breman (2013), the informal economy acts as a waiting room for this segment of the population. The importance of migration cannot be denied in the expansion of the urban informal sector. Landless workers, and marginal farmers searching for better income opportunities migrate to urban areas. The informal sector can be regarded as home for these sections of people. Thus, the number of participants is increasing day by day. The shift in production techniques from labour-intensive to capital-intensive resulted in a reduction of the industry's absorption capacity. Again, some economic crisis creates the worst situation for the workers engaged in the industrial sector by throwing them out of work. These situations have given rise to the growth of the informal economy (Gaughan & Ferman, 1987). Illegal immigrants constitute a major share of an informal economy. Illegal immigrants, due to lack of proper documents, are seen to engage in the informal economy. So, they are an important source of labour in the informal economy. Employers also prefer illegal immigrants as they are cheap compared to native workers (Maroukis, Iglicka, & Gmaj, 2011). The presence of immigrants in different parts of the world has resulted in the expansion of the informal economy. But only the presence of immigrants does not contribute to the growth of the informal economy. The

immigrants may also be in a position to avail the opportunities provided by the informal sector (Sassen, 1994).

Return migration before the COVID-19 pandemic

The reasons behind return migration are strong family ties, the need to look after elderly parents, the death of parents, higher cost of living, recession, pathetic housing, poor working condition, social rejection at times, and failure in adapting to the social way of life at the place of destination, etc. Thus, there are several socioeconomic factors behind return migration. These socio-economic factors reflect inappropriate urban policies and a lack of special attention to the needs of the migrants. The government is also partly responsible for that because it has failed to provide a quality life to the migrant workers in cities. Some people return to their place of origin because they have succeeded in fulfilling their motive behind migration (Gmelch, 1980). Some migrants are forced to return to the place of their origin for not being able to secure expected earnings at the destination. In other words, the migrants who fail to calculate the cost and benefit of migration become unsuccessful migrants and return to their homes. Thus, return migration includes both successful as well as unsuccessful migrants (Cassarino, 2004).

Return migrants are an important determinant of the migrant population in the host country. The migrant population of the host country not only depends on the inflow but also the outflow of the migrant population. A migrant's stay at the place of destination is influenced by wage differentials between the place of origin and the place of destination. The larger the difference larger the possibility of staying at the place of destination, especially the number of migrants, decreases at the place of destination when economic disparity arises in the host country. Apart from this, migrants from poor countries want to stay for long in the host country than migrants from wealthy countries (Christian, 2001). The decision behind reverse migration depends on future income streams, both at the place of origin and the place of destination. The income stream is affected by uncertainty, especially for the informal sector migrant workers (Dustmann, 1997). The number of returned migrants was large, belonging to the informal sector or those not working under any contracts or those whose contracts were about to end (Khanna, 2020). The informal sector workers have no job security or social protection. Migrants belonging to the informal sector face a lot of challenges. The coronavirus pandemic has added to their existing problems.

Research methodology

The present study is based on multi-sited ethnography. Ethnography can be defined as a long-term data collection process which takes place under naturally occurring settings relying on participant observation or personal engagement. It emphasises the significance of the meanings people give to objects, including themselves, in their activities (Hammerseley, 2018). Multi-sited ethnography stresses on the fact that sometimes ethnographic studies are not limited to single-site locations (Marcus, 1995). The method is useful in

migration studies. It uses innovative techniques and refuses the site-specific ethnographic study. The method attempts to extend traditional ethnography (Marcus, 1999).

The area of the study was the Udalguri district of Assam. Data was collected from those migrants who had returned home from the quarantine centre. Since it was difficult to reach each and every corner of the district, so few areas were selected where the number of returned migrants was large. The areas mainly included No. 2 Rowmari village, Tangla, Bhergaon, and Khairabari. An in-depth interview was conducted with the returned migrants in order to understand different reasons for their return and also their struggle for livelihood after the return. Purposive sampling was used in the study, as only returned migrants were included. The collection of data was a difficult task in this situation. The visit to the field was during the month of August 2020, when there was little relaxation in the guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approaching the migrant workers was challenging during that time. People did not feel comfortable allowing a stranger in their area during the time of the pandemic. So the researcher had to convince them that she would maintain social distancing and obey all the rules related to the guidelines of the COVID-19 pandemic. By looking at the situation, the researcher decided to stay in their area so that they do not have the fear of being infected by an outsider. During data collection, the main focus was to understand the different reasons behind reverse migration and also the struggles they were making to support their family. Data were collected from 20 returned migrants. Deductive thematic analysis was used in the study.

Results and Discussion

The first case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported on 30 January 2020 in India. Due to the contagious nature of the disease and with no promising medicine to cure it, the only remedy was to announce a nationwide lockdown. The lockdown was announced on the evening of 24th March, and initially, it was declared for twenty-one days. The lockdown limited the movement of people and adversely affected the economy due to restrictions on economic activities. The lockdown was extended till 31st May 2020 in various phases. Though this initiative taken by the government helped to slow down the spread of the disease, but it adversely affected the people belonging to a low-income category. The announcement of the lockdown took away their earnings and also raised tension regarding their survival in the city.

The findings reveal that most of the returned migrants were daily wage workers. Before migration, they were working as agricultural workers. But their earning was not sufficient to meet the needs of their family. So they decided to migrate outside their village with the help of their friends and relatives working at the destination. But the pandemic forced them to return from their destination.Some of the reasons behind reverse migration were overnight loss of livelihood, poor living conditions, no social security and so on. Some migrants returned to their village because most of their friends and relatives left the destination. So they felt insecure and returned to their home.

Fear of getting infected was another reason behind reverse migration. Even Chowdhury & Chakraborty (2021) stated in their study that migrant workers are more vulnerable to contagious diseases because many migrants live in crowded labour camps, thus making social distancing difficult. Though some migrants did not face any problems at their place of destination, they still returned. Because there was an irregularity in their work and they were not getting sufficient income. A relief package of 1.70 lakh crore under the Pradhan Mantri Greeb Kalyan Yojana was announced. The relief package covered MGNREGA workers, health workers, economically vulnerable populations, unorganised sector workers, Ujjwala beneficiaries and Jan Dhan account holders. Twenty crore women Jan Dhan account holders were given an amount of five hundred rupees per month for a period of three months. There was an increase in the wage of MGNREGA workers from rupees one hundred eighty-two to two hundred two to benefit 13.62 crore families (Datta, 2020). However, this was not enough to deal with the situation.

Struggle for livelihood after return

After returning from their workplace, they faced serious challenges in terms of earning their livelihood. Landless migrants suffered more compared to those who had the land. The landless migrant workers were left with the only option of looking for work in local areas (rural areas) or migrating to other areas for work. Those looking for work in local areas did not get regular work due to the slow development process. One migrant worker said, 'I have not got any work for one and half months. It became very difficult to manage a two square meal a day now'. Some of the migrant workers decided to return to their workplace as they had no option left to earn their livelihood. Another migrant worker said, 'I have borrowed money from the village money lender for the travelling expense to the place of destination. I returned during the lockdown, and after finding no work here, I am compelled to migrate once again. Otherwise, my family will die out of starvation. Also, I have to repay a huge loan that I took to support my family during the lockdown'. These instances show how migration has become an important source of livelihood for many people in society. One migrant worker was about to cry while saying that how his migration decision was a total failure. He migrated to Karnataka for work one month before the lockdown. He earned rupees twelve thousand by working as a wage worker in a construction company. But when the lockdown started the company provided only the expenditure for food, which was not sufficient. So he asked for money from his family. His family provided him with a reverse remittance of rupees fourteen thousand to bring him back home. They sold the little paddy they kept for their consumption and also borrowed money from a money lender. Now after returning from his workplace, he was not getting a regular source of income. Sometimes he got work for two days a week, and sometimes he did not get any work for the whole week.

Another problem they faced was a lack of skill. Though they worked in urban areas for a long time, but little focus was given to their skill development. This may be regarded as one technique of the employers as they have to pay higher wages to skilled workers. Thus, low-skilled workers are mainly in demand to

keep the cost of production low. For example, one migrant worker said, 'We had worked in a construction company where the ratio of skilled to unskilled worker in work was 1:10. One skilled worker is assigned with 10 low-skilled workers and on the side of skilled workers, the production continues'.

The nature of work in which the migrants were engaged in the destination before the pandemic created problems for them to adjust to their place of origin. One migrant worker said, 'I had my own catering service in Mumbai where I had a good earning. But due to this pandemic, I have returned to my own place. Now it has become very difficult to engage in work where the nature of the work differs from my earlier work. At the same time, I cannot return to my earlier place due to the uncertainty of the situation'. Likewise, young migrants also faced difficulties. Most of them were not interested in agricultural work. For that reason, they left their place of origin. After returning from their workplace due to the pandemic, some of them who had little land were compelled to work there. At the same time, yield from small plots of land was also not sufficient.

Variations in the struggle of migrants

Struggle of the return migrants for their livelihood varied from migrant to migrant. Some of the migrants had small savings to start a new business. But they faced the problem of decision-making, for example, where to invest. Migrants who were not principal breadwinners did not face any problems. Though their income stopped, still the principal breadwinner was bearing the expenses of the family. These migrants were waiting for the situation to become normal so that they could migrate again. Those migrant workers who were breadwinners and had no savings or land suffered the most. It became difficult for them to manage two square meals a day. Some migrant workers got calls from their employers to return to their place of destination. So they looked for loans from the village money lenders, friends and relatives for the travelling expense.

Coping strategies adopted by the migrant's

Migrants who returned adopted different coping strategies for their survival. They visited the Block Office frequently to avail the financial help from the government. Migrant workers had land and tried innovative methods of farming. The main sources of earning a livelihood in the Udalguri district are agriculture and weekly market street vending. Due to the fragmentation of land holdings and decline in agricultural productivity, it is difficult to undertake agricultural productivity. Though street vending requires less capital and less skill but most of the migrant workers suffer from the problem of capital constraint. In the Udalguri district, weekly market street vending is popularly compared to mobile and stationary street vending. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for many goods, especially non-essential goods, fell down, and people cut their expenditures. So, there was uncertainty about investment in non-essential items. In this situation, even street vending was not a suitable source of earning a livelihood. Landless migrant workers

were trying to become self-reliant. But they faced the problem of capital constraint. In urban areas, there was no shortage of work. People easily employment in the informal sector. Unfortunately, in rural areas, there is a lack of such opportunities and is thus unable to absorb a large number of people. So, it becomes difficult for the migrant workers to survive in the place of their origin.

Conclusion

Migration has provided a livelihood for many people. Most of the people from rural areas were dependent on migration for their survival. The flow of remittances helps to meet many needs of the migrant's family. But large-scale reverse migration due to the COVID-19 pandemic raised the question of survival for many migrants. The pandemic has proved how vulnerable migrant workers become, especially the informal sector migrant workers. Their return which was unplanned, has proved to be a shock for them. The struggle of the migrants to earn their livelihood has shown the shortcomings of the labour market on the one hand and the slow process of development on the other. The migrants who are dependent on their families for reverse remittances have shown the importance of insurance for migrant workers. This makes the migrant worker less vulnerable. There is an urgent need for help centres for migrant workers in different parts of the country. This is because, during the time of crisis, their problems can be addressed. India faces a scarcity of migration data. For that reason, even the government faced difficulty in dealing with the problems associated with migrant workers during the pandemic. So there is an urgent need for a policy focus on migrants. First of all, a proper record of the migrant workers is needed. So that it is easy to estimate the number of migrant workers working in different parts of India. After that, an estimation of returned migrants in different parts of the country is needed. Skill mapping of these migrants is really important in this regard. So that the government can create job opportunities for these migrants based on their skills. Effective implementation of employment generation programmes, especially in rural areas, will be an important step to deal with the present situation. For example, the failure of MNREGA due to the caste system, money power and the hereditary system has benefitted everyone except the really needy ones (Agrawal, 2019). Focus on self-employment should be given importance, so the provision of a one-time loan may be helpful for the returned migrants to start their own set-up. Migrant workers constitute a large portion of India's workforce. They have contributed to the growth of urbanisation as well as to the economy. So, special focus should be given to their problems.

References

Agrawal, G. K. (2019). Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: Design failure, implementation failure or both. *Management and Labour Studies,* 44(4), 349-368.doi: 10.1177/0258042X19871406.

Amin, R. Al. (1998). Migrant workers in the Gulf. *International Union Rights,* 5 (4), 12-13.

Basu, K. (1998). *Analytical Development Economics: the less developed economy*, New Delhi: Oxford.

Bhattacharya, S., & Kesar, S. (2020). Precarity and development: Production and labor processes in the informal economy in India. *Review of Radical Political Economics,* 52(3), 387-408.

Breman, J. (1996). *Footloose labour: working in India's informal economy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Buch, T., Hamann S., Niebuhr A., & Rossen A. (2014). What makes cities attractive? The determinants of urban labour migration in Germany. *Urban Studies,* 51(9), 1960–1978.

Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorising return migration: A revisited conceptual approach to return migrants. *EUI Working Paper RSCAS No. 2004/02.* Retrieved from https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/2744/2004_02.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

Castles, S., & Wise, R. D. (2008). *Migration and development: perspectives from South.* Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

Chowdhury, M. B. & Chakraborty M. (2021). The Impact of COVID-19 on the Migrant Workers and Remittances Flow to Bangladesh. *South Asian Survey,* 28(1), 38-56, doi:10.1177/0971523121995365.

Christian, D. (2001). Return migration, wage differentials and the optimal migration duration. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10419/21114.

Christinawati, E. L., Pudjiharjo, M., & Pratomo, D. S. (2013). The role of networks in international labour migration: The case of returned migrants in East Java. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics, 25(1-2), 95–116.* doi :10.1177/0260107914524666.

Cooke, F. L. (2007). Migrant labour and trade union's response and strategy in China. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations,* 42(4), 558-588.

Dandekar, A., & Ghai, R. (2020). Migration and reverse migration in the age of COVID-19. *Economic and Political Weekly,* LV (19), 28-31.

Dustmann, C. (1997). Return migration, uncertainty and precautionary savings. *Journal of Development Economics*, 52, 295-316.

Dutta, A. (2020).Covid-19: FM announces ₹1.70 lakh crore relief package for the poor. *Fortune India,*https://www.fortuneindia.com/macro/covid-19-fm-announces-170-lakh-crore-relief-package-for-the-poor/104326. Accessed on 02.02.23.

Gallin, D. (2004). Workers in the informal economy. *International Union Rights,* 11(2), 4-5.

Gaughan, JP., & Ferman, LA. (1987). Toward an understanding of the informal economy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 493, 15-25.

Gmelch, G. (1980). Return migration. *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 9,135-59.

Government of India (2020). *Loss of Jobs: Look Sabha Unstarred Question No. 197, to be answered on 14.09.2020.* Retrieved from http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/174/AU197.pdf.

Gugler, J. (2010). On the theory of rural-urban migration: The case of Subsaharan Africa. In Jackson, J.A., *Sociological Studies2: migration.* New Work, Cambridge University Press.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* London and New Work: Routledge.

Jain, P., & Sharma, A. (2018). Super exploitation of adivasi migrant workers: The political economy of migration from Southern Rajasthan to Gujarat. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics*, 31(1), 63-99.

Jewell, T. R., & Molina, D. J. (2009). Mexican migration to the U.S.: A comparison of income and network effects. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 35(2), 144-159.

Khanna, A. (2020). Impact of migration of labour force due to global COVID-19 pandemic with reference to India. *Journal of Health Management,* 22(2), 181–191.

Lee, E. S. (1966). A Theory of Migration. *Demography,* 3(1), 47-57.

Luo, R. (2016). The emergence of informal institutions among internal migrants in Urban

China. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 45(2), 83–112.

Marcus, G. E. (1995). 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography,' *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24:95-117.

Marcus, G. E. (1999). 'What Is At Stake–And Is Not–In the Idea and Practice Of Multi-Sited

Ethnography,' *Canberra Anthropology*, 22(2):6-14, doi: 10.1080/03149099909508344.

Maroukis, T., Iglicka, K., & Gmaj, K. (2011). Irregular migration and informal economy in Southern and Central Eastern and Central Eastern Europe: Breaking the vicious cycle. *International Migration,* 49(5), 130-58.

McDuie-Ra, D. (2012). *North-east migrants in Delhi: Race, refuge and retail*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Mitra, A. (1990). Duality, employment structure and poverty incidence: the slum perspective. *Indian Economic Review,* 25(1), 57-73.

Mitra, A. (2015). Informal economy in India: Persistence and meagreness. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 4(2), 216–231.

Mohapatra, A.K., & Jha, S. (2019). Determinants of reverse internal migration in India: A behavioural perspective. *Indian Journal of Economics & Business*, 18(1), 383-393.

More than 138 Shramik Special trains reach North-East, (2020, July 08). Retrieved from https://www.sentinelassam.com/guwahati-city/more-than-138-shramik-special-trains-reach-Northeast-487373.

Rajeswaran, M. (2015). *Inter-state migrant workers in India with special reference to construction industry in Chennai a socio legal study*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Tamil Nadu: Dr. Ambedkar Law University.

Reja, M. S., & Das, B. (2019). Labour migration within India: Motivations and social networks. *South Asia Research*, 39(2), 125-142.

Saha, D. 2017. *Informal markets, livelihood and politics: street vendors in urban India,* New York, Routledge.

Sarkar, S., & Mishra, D. K. (2020).Circular labour migration from rural India: A study of out-migration of male labour from West Bengal. *Journal of Asian and African Studies,* 00(0), 1-16.

Sassen, S. (1994). The informal economy between new developments and old regulations. *The Yale Law Journal*, 103(8), 2289-2304.

Sen, S. &Dasgupta, B. (2009). *Unfreedom and waged work: labour in India's manufacturing industry*, New Work, SAGE Publications.

Sen, S. (2020). *Pandemic and the reverse migration of labour in India*. Retrieved from https://www.networkideas.org/news-analysis/2020/06/pandemic-and-the-reverse-migration-of-labour-in-india/.

Singh, N.G. (1990). Linkages between formal and informal Sectors. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 25(33), 1859-60.

Smith, J. D. (1987). Measuring the informal economy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 493(1), 83-99.

Srivastava, R. (2020). Vulnerable internal migrants in India and portability of social security and entitlements. Delhi: Institute for Human Development.

Tucker, C. M., Torres-Pereda, P., Minnis, A. M., & Bautista-Arredondo, S. A. (2013). Migration decision-making among Mexican youth: Individual, family, and community influences. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 35*(1), 61–84. doi.org/10.1177/0739986312458563.

Uddin, M., & Firoz, M. (2013). Causes and consequences of rural- urban migration in Bangladesh: An empirical study in Chittagong City. *International Journal of Ethics in Social Sciences,* 1(1), 89-104.

Van den Broek, D. (2015). Commercial migration intermediaries and the segmentation of skilled migrant employment. *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(3), 523–534.

Winters, P., Janvry A. D., & Sadoulet, E., (2001). Family and community networks in Mexico-U.S. migration. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 36(1), 159-184.

Wright, F., &Clibborn, S. (2019). Migrant labour and low-quality work: A persistent relationship. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 61(2), 157-175.

Wickramasinghe, A.A.I.N. and Wimalaratana, Wijitapure 2016. 'International Migration and Migration Theories,' *Social Affairs,* 1(5):13-32.

Rima Debnath is a PhD Scholar , Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati, Assam
Email ID: rimadebnath25@gmail.com

Article: Socio-ecological Impact of Displacement: A Study of Doyang Dam in Nagaland

Author(s): Yamsani Srikanth and Athungo Ovung

Socio-ecological Impact of Displacement: A Study of Doyang Dam in Nagaland

--Yamsani Srikanth and Athungo Ovung

Abstract

Dam building is one of the major causes of the displacement of a vast population in India, especially for the indigenous people since independence. Northeast India has been identified as India's 'future powerhouse', and large dams are believed to be the most significant 'development intervention' in this ecologically and geologically fragile, seismically active, and culturally sensitive region. In this background, this paper analyses the sociocultural, economic, and environmental risks among the displaced population due to the Doyang hydroelectric project construction in Nagaland, India. This study applies the sociological concept of risk while understanding the displacement process that involves risks like landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food security, increased morbidity and loss of access to common property resources. The study argues that the construction of the Doyang dam resulted in the loss of ancestral farmlands, traditional livelihood opportunities, and shortage in access to common property resources, and non-fulfilment of appropriate compensation packages as promised for the displaced community.

Keywords: Common property resources, dam, development, indigenous communities, risk, Nagaland

Introduction

In India, displacement due to development has been a historical phenomenon from the colonial period, post-independence, and present times. The forest land, river systems, and mineral base have been the most attractive operation zones for mining, industries, and large dams. Dam building is one of the major causes of the displacement of a vast population in India, predominantly indigenous people. Northeast India has been identified as India's 'future powerhouse' because of the enormous hydro resources its topography provides to the region. Due to its potential to generate vast amounts of hydroelectric power, India's Government has proposed at least 168 large dam projects in this region. The development planners believe that large dams could be the most significant 'development intervention'; however, this development model fails to understand the northeast region regarding its ecological and geological fragility, seismically active, and culturally sensitive nature.

Development-induced displacement leads to several disadvantages for the indigenous tribal communities in India. The developmental projects resulted in the

displacement of tribal communities depriving their access to common property resources and further disrupting culture in terms of communal life (Mathur, 2009). Displacement not only results in physically uprooting people from their centuries-old settlements, but their entire existence is disturbed regarding living patterns, social space, economic status, kinship pattern, and health (Judge, 1997). It is hard for the indigenous population to face economic and cultural deprivation in the country's quest for prosperity (Mehta, 2002). Large dams resulted in devastating negative social-cultural impacts on migration and resettlement, changes in the rural economy, employment structure, and gender relations (Tilt et al., 2008).

The draft national policy for Resettlement and Rehabilitation considers resettlement only as an extension of development programs instead of making it an integral part of the development process (Sah, 1995). Legal reforms and improved legislation are required to reassess the human costs of development projects (Usha, 1996). There is a need for policy dialogue before deciding on large dams because of several anti-dam movements worldwide (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2002). We find a contradictory line in this development model, where it justifies the forced eviction of people and aims to achieve equity and social security goals (Kothari, 1996). There are many limits and flaws in compensation payments for development projects' resettled population (Cernea, 2008). These studies highlight various dimensions of displacement and resettlement policies while highlighting loopholes.

The question of who gets benefitted from the present development model is a highly debated issue worldwide. In India, a district where a dam is built results in no increase in agriculture production but poverty. In contrast, districts downstream of the dam have benefitted from increased irrigation, resulting in increased agricultural production and decreased poverty (Duflo & Pande, 2005). India's development model, reflected by large projects, has resulted in the transfer of resources from weaker sections to privileged ones. Moreover, large dams created the victims of development, mainly the tribal population, who never share development gains (Mohanty, 2005). Hence, it becomes crucial to have a human-centred approach while preparing large dam projects, given the goals of sustainable development (Parlak, 2005). Most communities in the world have a gender bias in land ownership laws. This scenario is further reflected in resettlement packages where women become more vulnerable to development-induced displacement (Enakshi, 1996). Women bear more burdens in a household, and their vulnerability is ignored in the name of the household's collective interests when it comes to displacement due to large projects (Parasuraman, 1993).

Northeast India has become a significant development focus in the last few decades to produce hydro-based energy from the region's vast natural resources. Unfortunately, the development projects have resulted in deprivation among the

northeast communities who otherwise enjoy a sustainable relationship with their environment (Fernandes, 2003). The construction of large hydroelectric projects in India's northeast region has resulted in land alienation and social and environmental impact on the indigenous communities, depriving them of their age-old habitat areas (Menon, 2009; Vagholikar & Das, 2010). Northeast India is unique in terms of not just 'geographic' sense but also of its history, culture as well as politics; thus, the hydro-electric projects have resulted in producing a regional pattern of conflict around the issues of culture, identity, and indigenous rights (Chowdhury & Kipgen, 2013).

The literature highlights the various aspects of development-induced displacement in policy loopholes, gender neglect, and physical and cultural disruption among indigenous communities. Nevertheless, more empirical studies are required to understand the threats and risks these communities undergo in displacement. Knowing the role of different social actors within the community is crucial while facilitating new development projects.

Objectives

This study aims to understand the impact of displacement due to dam construction in the areas inhabited by indigenous communities from northeastern India. The present study analyses the impact of displacement on changes in the socio-economic and cultural spheres of the affected community's lives. The region's people are closely associated with physical environments like land, forest and hills. All these elements of nature have been essential in maintaining their identity since immemorial. Also, the natural environment plays a vital role in their lifestyle in terms of their economic survival. The present study attempted to analyse these dynamics due to the construction of the Doyang dam in Nagaland.

Research Methods

The study covers the displaced population of the Doyang dam project in Wokha district, Nagaland. Wokha is the traditional homeland of the Lotha Nagas tribe. Out of the thirteen affected villages, the two most affected villages, namely, Pangti and Changsu, were selected in terms of territorial land loss, and three villages, namely; New Changsu, Asha, and Ekhyoyan, were chosen as the resettlement of displaced population took place in these villages. Data is collected from 253 households from the above six affected villages for this study during 2019-20. Semi-structured interview schedules, observation and focus group discussions were employed as data collection tools in this study.

The present study used Michael Cernea's (2000) Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model while analysing the impact of displacement among the indigenous population due to the Doyang hydroelectric project in Nagaland.

The present study engages the sociological concept of risk while understanding the displacement process involving landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food security, increased morbidity, education loss, access to common property resources, and community disarticulation. All these risks are an intrinsic part of the indigenous population's lives that go through the displacement phase due to the construction of dams, including the Naga people in the vicinity of the Doyang dam construction site.

Background of Doyang Hydro Electric Project (DHEP)

The Doyang Hydro-Electric Project (DHEP) is located in the Wokha district, around 105 km from northeast of Kohima, the state capital of Nagaland. It is around twenty km from Wokha town on the Wokha-Merapani road. The dam site is approximately two km upstream of the Lotha Bridge at the meeting point of Chubi (the main tributary of the Doyang River in Wokha district) and Doyang River south of Pangti village to harness the waters of both rivers. It is a Government of India Undertaking sponsored and financed by the North Eastern Council (NEC) and being executed by the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO).

The Doyang Hydro Electric Project envisages the construction of an 87.50 m high rock-fill dam with an impervious core across the river Doyang. It creates a reservoir having a live storage capacity of 370.0 m cum between FRL (Full Reservoir Level) 330.0 m and MDDL (Minimum Draw Down Level) 306.0 m. The reservoir water will be fed through a 427 m long, 6.0 m dia underground water conductor system to a surface powerhouse with an installed capacity of three units of 25 MW each. To facilitate the construction of the rock-fill dam, the Doyang River's flow is diverted through a 12.0 m concrete-lined tunnel of length 6330.0 m. There is also a provision for a chute spillway design for a peak flood discharge. This will be provided through II.0 m radial gates. The total catchment area of the reservoir is 2600 Sq. Kms. and the reservoir submergence area is 2424 acres of land (Sangma, 1994, pp.21-22).

Process of Land Acquisition

The Government of Nagaland did the preliminary works of the project, such as demarcation and acquisition of land, etc. and other continuing investigation works. It has decided to pay a fixed amount to compensate the owner for land acquisition. Initially, the landowners had strong opposition to part with their lands. However, specific terms and conditions were finally agreed upon after negotiations between the government representatives and the landowners. According to Phyosao Jami (1996), President, Landowner's Union, DHEP, 'in order to acquire the requisite 14000 acres of land for DHEP, the Government of Nagaland made several appeals through many agencies to the landowners with

many promises such as land compensation, employment facilities, contract and supply works, and also rehabilitation schemes to the affected people. Thus, it was difficult for the people to part with their land, especially the traditional land. Parting with their land is parting with their pride and tradition. Their pride and sentiment are attached to their land. This is why disposing of land to outsiders and outside the village is prohibited by tradition. Thus, with so many difficulties, they agreed to part with and provided the required land for the Doyang project.

**Table 1 Land acquired from different villages**

Sl no.	Name of Villages	Area acquired & handed over to NEEPCO (in Acres)
1	Sanis	147.85
2	Yonchuchu	134.92
3	Sunglup	169.22
4	Lakhuti	154.08
5	Pangti	2264.42
6	Aree	1296.41
7	Litami	345.49
8	Rephyim	1664.10
9	Yikhum	10.34
10	Chungsu	1856.32
11	Nuniung	185.54

12	Seleku	111.43
13	Tsingiki	80.29
Total		8420.41

Source: NEEPCO

Map 1: Wokha District
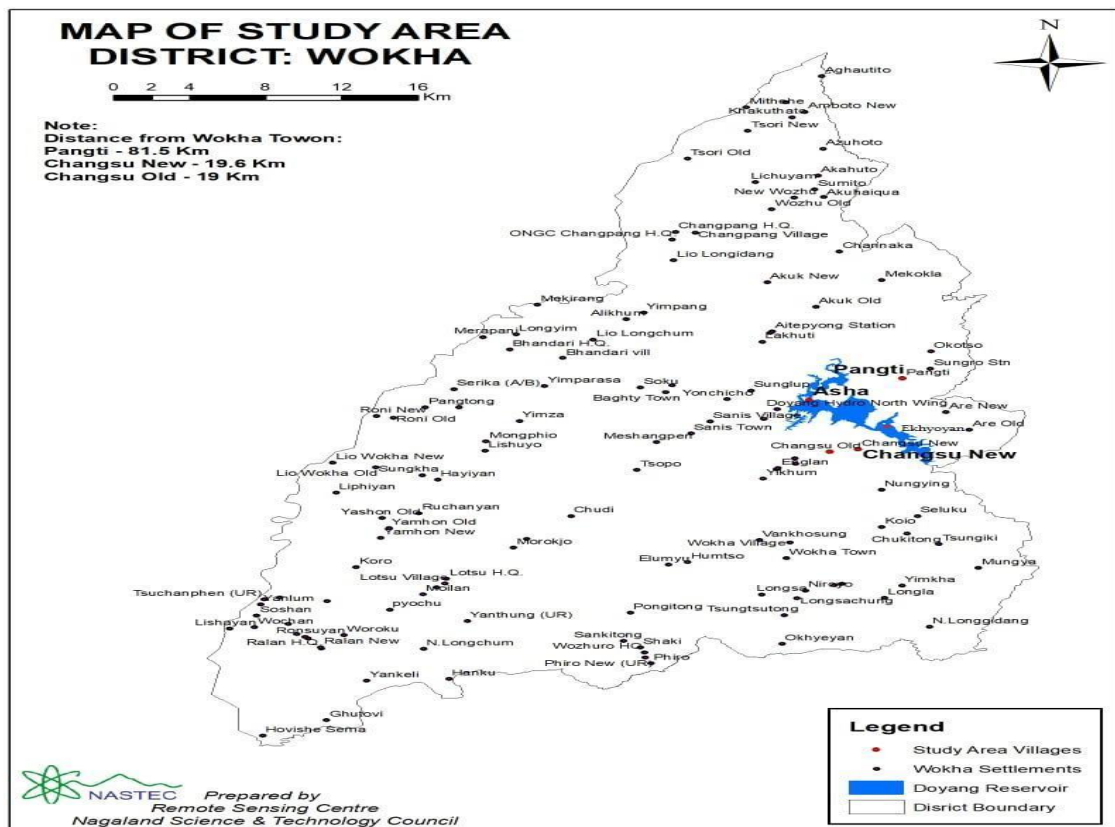
Source: NASTEC

The study focused mainly on the affected villages in the Project area under the district of Wokha. Out of thirteen affected villages amounting to 8420.41 acres, the two most affected villages in the territorial land loss were Pangti (2264.42 acres) and Changsu (1856.32 acres). Three villages as an offshoot from the native place, i.e., New Changsu (a new village created before the construction of the dam

with settlers from Changsu village), Asha Village (a new village built after the construction of the dam with immigrants from Pangti village) and Ekhyoyan (new village created after the construction of the dam by the settlers from both Old Changsu and New Changsu village) were selected for the present study.As per the findings of the two new settlements, i.e., Asha and Ekhyoyan villages, the former has road connectivity, whereas Ekhyoyan village still lacks road connectivity.

Table 2: Village-wise distribution of respondents

Sl. No.	No of Households	Village	Percentage (%)
1	164	Pangti	64.82
2	52	Old Changsu	20.55
3	24	New Changsu	9.48
4	10	Asha	3.95
5	3	Ekhyoyan	1.18
Total	253		100

Source: Field Data

Outline of study villages

As per the study's objective, the research scope is limited to the reservoir-affected population of the Wokha district, Nagaland. Out of the thirteen affected villages amounting to 8420.41 Acres, the two highly affected villages, namely, Pangti and Changsu, were selected in terms of territorial land loss. Also, three other villages, namely New Changsu, Asha and Ekhyoyan, were selected as they belong to the new settlement area of project-affected people from the former villages.

1. Pangti village

Pangti village is one of the oldest and largest villages in the Wokha district, located 81.6km (via Mokokchung district) and 35-37 km (via Doyang Hydro Project Reservoir) from Wokha town. The village is situated 2km away from the Sub District headquarters, Sungro and 50 km from the district headquarters, Wokha. Pangti Village is located in Sungro Circle of Wokha District with 1209 families. As per Census 2011, it has a population of 7825, of which 3826 are males, while 3999 are females. The literacy rate, as per Census 2011, is 77.13 per cent. The male literacy rate is 83.40 per cent, while the female literacy rate is 71.02 per cent.

The village is believed to have been established during 1365-1370 AD. Twelve clans[1] are in the village-*Humtsoe, Jami, Kikon, Merry, Murry, Ngullie, Odyuo, Patton, Shitiri, and TsopoeYanthan.* Pangti village is an internationally spotted place for its conservation of flora and fauna. The Pangti Village Council (PVC) plays an active role in preserving wild animals and birds. The PVC has been selected for the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) Earth Heroes Award 2014 in the "Save the Species" Award Category for leading innovative and extensive efforts to protect the Amur Falcons. With the hunters of migratory Amur Falcon birds turning into protectors, the Pangti village community are the major contributor in earning the title for Nagaland as the 'Falcon Capital of the World' by an international team of ornithologists. Because of this, in 2017, Nagaland was listed among the ten best birding destinations in the world. The Village has two health centres, four schools- two Government primary schools, one Government middle school and one private school, and five Anganwadi centres.

2. Changsu (Old) Village:

Old Changsu village is also one of the oldest villages in the Wokha district, located 19km from Wokha town and the distance of the village to the sub-district headquarters, Englan, is 4km. Changsu (old) is one of the largest villages with the highest number of households under the Englan Circle of Wokha District, Nagaland. There are eight clans: Shitiri, Ngullie, Patton, Yanthan, Odyuo, Humtsoe, Ennie and Kithan. As of the 2011 Census, Changsu village has 556 households and is home to 2515 people. Among them, 1236 (49 per cent) are male, and 1279 (51 per cent) are female. A total of 2023 people in the village are literate; 1088 are male, and 935 are female. The literacy rate (children under six are excluded) in Changsu (Old) is 85 per cent. Ninety-three per cent of the male and 78 per cent of the female population are literate here. There are two

---

[1] These are kin groups of families or households who trace their descent from a common ancestor. The clan is the principal unit of social organisation among the tribal communities in Nagaland.

government primary schools, one dispensary, one private taxi and one private bus available in the village.

3. New Changsu Village:

New Changsu village is also one of the oldest villages in the Wokha district, located over 19 km from the Wokha town near Old Changsu village, which was established nearly 200 years after Old Changsu village was formed. According to Census of 2011, the village has 212 houses with a population of 1146. Of this, 582 are males, whereas the females count 564. The literacy ratio in Changsu New Village is 82 per cent. Nine hundred forty out of a total of 1146 population are educated here. Among males, the literacy rate is 85 per cent, while the female literacy rate is 78 per cent in this village.

4. Asha Village:

Asha Village is the offshoot village of Pangti Village, located around 20-25 km from Wokha town. Asha village is located in Sungro Tehsil of Wokha district in Nagaland. It is situated at a distance of five km from the sub-district headquarters Sungroa. It was created in 2009 (per the government registration year). According to the population census 2011, it has a total population of 420, of which 228 are males and 192 are females. The literacy rate is 87 per cent, whereby male literacy is 47 per cent and female literacy is 39 per cent.

5. Ekhyoyan Village:

Ekhyoyan is a small village located in Englan Circle of Wokha district, Nagaland, with twenty households living in the village. Ekhyoyan village is another newly created village by the inhabitants from both Old Changsu and New Changsuvillages' respectively. It was created in 2007 (as per the year of government registration) with a total population of 136, of which 76 are male and 60 are female, as per Census 2011. Ekhyoyan village has a higher literacy rate compared to the Nagaland state average. In 2011, the literacy rate of Ekhyoyan village was 92.65 per cent compared to the average of 79.55 per cent in the state. Male literacy is 96.05 per cent, while female literacy is 88.33 per cent in the village.

Among the two new villages, Asha and Ekhyoyan, the former has road connectivity, whereas Ekhyoyan village still lacks road connectivity. In order to reach the new village, one has to take the route from either the mid-way of Wokha-Merapani road, estimated around 14 km from Wokha and reach the village by boat or arrive at the fishermen hub/Juncture (Voro-Emen) located in the Pangti Village at 22 km from Wokha and ply to the new settlement by boat.

The study found that the displaced indigenous population faced the following risks when constructing the Doyang reservoir in their villages.

Table 3: Nature of Displacement

| Sl. No. | Village | Nature of Displacement | | | | Total |
		Voluntary	%	Involuntary	%	
1	Pangti	118	72.0%	46	28.0%	164
2	Old Changsu	30	57.7%	22	42.3%	52
3	New Changsu	15	62.5%	9	37.5%	24
4	Asha	6	60.0%	4	40.0%	10
5	Ekhyoyan	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	3
	Total	171	67.6%	82	32.4%	253

Source: Field Data

There was a divided opinion among the project-affected population on the issue of 'voluntary' or 'involuntary' displacement. Regarding the nature of displacement from their ancestral habitat, sixty-eight per cent of the respondents opined that it was a 'voluntary process'. In comparison, thirty-two per cent of respondents stated it was an 'involuntary process'. The respondents from better-off households said it was a 'voluntary process' of displacement for them. All these households have migrated to the nearby towns and built new homes with the cash they received from the project authorities. They justified their opinion by saying they left their native villages for better avenues in the town. However, members from poor households stated it was an 'involuntary process.' Those who mentioned that it was an involuntary process mainly belonged to poor economic backgrounds who could afford to purchase meagre amounts of agricultural land in the nearby areas of their native village. They do not possess specialised skills other than agriculture as their livelihood source, which pushed them to search for new lands for cultivation and other income sources like fishing and starting small businesses like shops in and around the project area. Displacement thus resulted in varied impacts among different sections of the project affected people.

Table 4: Participation in Decision-Making

| Sl no | Village | Participation in decision making | | | | Total |
		Yes	%	No	%	
1	Pangti	33	20.1%	131	79.9%	164
2	Old Changsu	6	11.5%	46	88.5%	52
3	New Changsu	4	16.7%	20	83.3%	24
4	Asha	3	30.0%	7	70.0%	10
5	Ekhyoyan	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3

Total	47	18.6%	206	81.4%	253

Source: Field Data

More than eighty per cent of the respondents said they were not consulted about displacement due to the project. This study found that only a few sections of the project-affected community have actively participated in the decision-making process during various displacement phases. Most of these belong to the elite strata of Lotha Nagas, who were official and executive members of different village decision-making units; for example, Land Owners Unions, Village Councils, *Gaon Bura*[2], *Khel*[3] and *Khel* representatives. Menon & Saravanan (1996) point out that the right to information is crucial in executing development projects where the affected public should access information. On the other hand, the project-affected population was not consulted in this displacement process by the project authorities. Lack of information has become a routine procedure in the displacement strategy. Nevertheless, it is a grave matter that is more unforgivable due to the incomplete and false information provided to the displaced population in the case of most of the projects in the country (Negi & Ganguly, 2010). This situation highlights the challenges ordinary people face who were unaware of the possible consequences of a dam project. In the present study, it is observed that most project-affected people did not know the amount of land they were about to lose. Also, they were ignorant about their compensation package, making them clueless about their future life. Thus, the displaced population had to undergo severe socio-economic and psychological stress and dilemma in displacement and rehabilitation.

Mode of Compensation

The displaced families only received cash compensation; moreover, most households received payment for their loss after waiting four to seven years. Around 60 per cent of the households found compensation unfair, while 37 per cent stated it was unsatisfactory. Only three per cent of the respondents mentioned that the payment was satisfactory. The majority of the Households received only 75 per cent of the compensation, so they found it unfair on the part of the project negotiations and promises to the affected community. Moreover, the project authorities did not make the cash compensation payment in a single instalment. This resulted in the mischievous use of money by Lotha Nagas, who lacked knowledge of the importance of cash in the present economy. Surprisingly, the cash compensation was disbursed in two rupees and five-rupee currency notes that

---

[2]Gaonburas (GBs) are village elders nominated by the village councils and authorised by the Government to assist the Deputy Commissioners in village administration. Gaonburas are empowered with law and order responsibility in their villages/clans/locality and their community's spokesmen.

[3] Village wards or local residential units are inhabited by the same clan or dialect-speaking group families.

played a significant factor in fooling the village community, forcing the project-affected people to carry the amount in gunny sacks.

Moreover, the study also found many irregularities from measurement officials who later marked additional land for project purposes. The displaced population was not compensated for this further land acquisition from the submerged villages. As Menezes (1991) explains, ignorance of the market economy and cash transactions results in more deprivation among the displaced population, a severe concern for providing justice to the displaced people.

As part of the compensation package offered to the project-affected community, jobs were offered at the project site, ranging from white-collar jobs (technical and professional) to messenger, peon, and sweeper. However, as promised, the study found that only a few jobs were given to the local community, with most employment opportunities confined to fourth-grade jobs only. Implementing the scholarship program for the bright students of the project-affected people was also unsuccessful. As drafted and planned by the central and state authorities of forest resources and management, the compensatory plan for various forest items did not meet the people's expectations.

Loss of Home

The study observed that the construction of the Doyang reservoir did not damage or submerge the residential homes belonging to the local people. Nagas traditionally build their houses on the hilltops to protect their villages from enemies' attacks and wild animals. However, due to submergence, most have lost their houses in their agricultural fields. These houses are resting sheds, simple huts, kitchen facilities, and temporary homes built for cultivation in the farmlands. Many households were forced to abandon these shelter houses as they had no time to vacate during the submergence. Otherwise, the residential homes remain unaffected in all the studied villages, as they are generally located among their hilltops.

Table 5: Loss of Agriculture Land

Sl no	Village	Participation in decision making				Total
		Yes	%	No	%	
1	Pangti	33	20.1%	131	79.9%	164
2	Old Changsu	6	11.5%	46	88.5%	52
3	New Changsu	4	16.7%	20	83.3%	24
4	Asha	3	30.0%	7	70.0%	10
5	Ekhyoyan	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3
Total		47	18.6%	206	81.4%	253

Source: Field Data

Table 5 shows that out of the total respondents for the study, the majority (74.3 per cent) experienced displacement from their ancestral land. The background of these households comprises the male landowning respondents who were married, had individual land holdings in a typical family, and engaged actively in farming activities before constructing the dam. In the case of the remaining (25.7 per cent) respondents, who did not experience the loss of ancestral land opted are mostly comprised of female-headed households who do not possess any land ownership nor inherited ancestral land or lacked knowledge of the background of land loss in general. This scenario brings in the absence of land rights for women and a lack of information on the impact of displacement on the farmlands. "Despite international and national recognition of rural women's contribution to food production and their rights to own land, attempts to incorporate this principle in land-development and land distribution policies have remained marginal" (Sharma K, 1989, quoted in Thukral GE 1996).

Nagas, in general, and Lotha Nagas, in particular, being patriarchal societies, do not confer inheritance of ancestral land to women in the family. Under these circumstances, those households headed by the female were the most deprived of compensation benefits since there is no male member in the family for reasons of divorce or death. The land is central to tribal life; when lost, the owner and its other dependants lose their economic support, food, livelihood and sociocultural relations (Bharali, 2006). For Lotha Nagas, the land is the core part of life, wherein their entire support mechanism of survival depends on the land. With the construction of the Doyang reservoir, the affected population has lost individual family land and other categories of land like clan land and village land. The loss of land is further extended to yielding and non-cultivating fields, nurseries, matured plantations and orchards. The study findings show that all those individual households who owned land in the project-affected villages have lost their lands.

Shortage of foodgrains and supply

Rice is the major crop cultivated by the people in the region. Due to the loss of agricultural land, it was found that there was a shortage of rice cultivation, production and supply among the project-affected households. A considerable decline in food grain production is reported since the people have lost the most potential and yielding cultivating land due to the reservoir's construction. On the other hand, the food supply problem to the affected villages became another problem. During submerging, road connectivity was cut off from the nearby urban towns and hubs for almost five to six months.

The project-affected households witnessed a rapid decline in the yield of crops with the dam's construction. Shifting cultivation is the predominant practice of agriculture in Nagaland and the entire region of hills parts of northeast India. As a result of the shortage of cultivable land, the cultivation gap of seven to eight years maintained before the dam's construction was decreased to three-four years, which exploited the available and already cultivating land resulting in the reduced yield of crops. This shortage of food production further aggravated the demographic change caused by the rise in population in the last few decades. After exhausting the food stored in their household granaries, they had to purchase grain from nearby villages and towns.

Loss of Access to Common Property Resources

All the respondents agreed that loss in terms of their accessible forest cover/area was due to the dam's construction. In this response, many Households supported their views that searching for new fertile lands and forest areas for starting agricultural practices was never easy, mainly due to the lack of new pathways, which became a significant challenge for the farming communities. The dam construction has resulted in a shortage of common property resources like firewood, bamboo, and other house reconstruction items. These common property resources play a vital role in fulfilling the basic needs of tribal people in their everyday lives. However, the non-recognition of community lands in the displacement deprived the livelihoods of tribal communities of northeast India who depend on such common property resources (Bharali, 2006). Some of the essential and indigenous bamboo species that have become a limited forest resource for house construction, in general, are *Bambusabalcooa, Dendrocalamus* family ranging from Gigantues(baby bamboo shoots also consumed as an indigenous cuisine), *Hamitonii, Hookeri* and *Schizotachyum*families such as *Dolloa* and *Polymorphum.* All these varieties of bamboo are the primary material for house construction, along with making wooden bridges on water streams, roofing, ceilings, walls, fencing, water containers, mugs, pipes, mats, handicraft items, and fishing and in domestic home utilities like baskets and boxes, walking sticks for the old and needy. Bamboo plants are an integral part of the local

population, and the non-availability of such a vital material would deprive them badly in their everyday life.

The Doyang reservoir has changed the local natural habitat and biodiversity regarding animals and plants. As a result of the dam, there is a loss of particular aquatic and terrestrial habitats; however, it provides new habitats to new species like migratory birds and fish (Garandeau et al., 2014). In the case of the Doyang reservoir also, it has been proved. Most respondents experienced the problem of access to fresh drinking water after the dam's construction. Except for Pangti village, which has a pipeline from a distant place, all the studied villages face access problems to safe drinking water in the area. Collecting water, firewood and edible fruits and vegetables for domestic consumption is a regular part of women's lives in the region. Loss of access to such resources has adversely affected the community's womenfolk who have to walk long due to the reservoir.

Emerging Health Issues

The villagers have observed the emergence of more malaria cases, Typhoid, Cholera, and skin diseases and infections due to humid and warm weather conditions resulting from the dam's construction. Such health problems occurred more frequently among the villagers farming near the waters and the fishermen's community. The local people revealed that the fishermen and those cultivating farmlands near the reservoir face health problems, including skin infections like rashes, ringworms, scabies, unusual pre-mature skin pigmentation among men and women, common fever, and influenza problems in children. Those who shifted to fishing started experiencing slight hearing loss issues due to crude fishing practices. These findings show that the dam's construction has resulted in several new health problems among the project-affected population.

Community Disarticulation

The present study found that folksongs and traditional festivals are no longer strictly practised or adhered to in social life. Elderly members of the community often pointed out that the migration of the people from villages to towns and cities, enabling the changing lifestyles and living standards of the people, led to the loss of folk songs and the folkways that were kin to the homogeneous society lost its importance in due time. It mainly included those cultural rituals and ceremonies the village communities adhered to in their social and economic well-being. *Pikhvü-ChakShikü, Among Enan, Eng Sonron, RayuEmong, Langkhum, SariEammvü*(Incest Taboo)*, OsüEsü*(Monoliths) are some of such community traditions that are no longer practised, or minimalist practice has adhered even though the native people culturally value its importance. This trend, in general, however, does not mean that it is lost or forgotten by people. Some handful of older people can still remember their traditional ways of life, and fellow

community members respect the knowledge of folklore and folkways as a source of wisdom in the present times.

Conclusion

The construction of the Doyang Hydro Electric Project has undoubtedly negatively affected various aspects of the indigenous population's socio-economic lives. Physical dislocation is relatively minor since the Lotha Nagas traditionally build their houses at high altitudes. Lotha Nagas, like other hill tribe communities from northeast India, depend entirely on natural resources for their livelihood. The project has affected the local population in terms of loss of agricultural land, work opportunities in agriculture, loss of home in the farmlands, loss in staple food crops, and rich common property resources available in the forest for ages. The absolute lack of information about the extent of displacement among the project-affected households led to their unpreparedness for future survival. The monetary compensation could never compensate for their losses since the affected population has to search for new agricultural sites for cultivation. Even the promised compensation amount was not completely paid to the displaced people, which show the development planners' careless attitude toward the displaced people.

The study findings reveal the devastating consequences of displacement among the indigenous population. With the upcoming of many more planned hydroelectric projects in India's most ecologically rich Northeast region, the socio-economic impact will have a lasting effect on the indigenous population beyond our imagination. Hence, the development planners need to take the people's confidence before themselves rather than forcing involuntary displacement among the most marginalised sections of society. Providing preliminary information and engaging in continuous dialogue with all sections of the project-affected community should be prioritised to avoid any communication gap. Women folk's concerns need to be addressed while taking them into confidence at every project implementation stage. Given global environmental degradation, development planners must avoid projects that result in population displacement and look for alternative sustainable development models. A balance between poverty alleviation and ecology conservation is required to promise better living conditions for future generations.

References

Baijal, P., Singh, P.K. (2000). Large Dams: Can We Do without Them? *Economic and Political Weekly,* 35(19): 1659–1666.

Bandyopadhyay, J., Mallik, B., Mandal, M. &Perveen, S. (2002). Dams and Development: Report on a Policy Dialogue. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 37(40): 4108–4112.

Bharali, G. (2006). Development Projects Threat to Tribal Livelihood: Case Study. *Bulletin of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Caste,* Guwahati:1(16).

Census of India. 2011. *District Census Handbook (Wokha).* Series-14, Part XII-B. Directorate Census Operations, Nagaland.

Cernea, M.M. (2008). Compensation and Benefit Sharing: Why Resettlement Policies and Practices must be Reformed. *Water Science and Engineering,* 1(1): 89–120.

Chowdhury, R.A., Kipgen, N. (2013). Deluge amidst conflict: Hydro-power development and displacement in the North-east region of India. *Progress in Development Studies,* 13(3): 195–208.

Duflo, E., Pande, R. (2005). Dams, *Center Discussion Paper, No.923*. Economic Growth Center (EGC), Yale University.

Fernandes, W. (2003). Development Deprived, the Environment and the Livelihood of the Poor in the Northeast. *Social Action,* 53(3): 242-255.

Fernandes, W. (2009). Displacement and Alienation from Common Property Resources. In Lyla Mehta (ed.): *Displaced by Development – Confronting Marginalisation and Gender Injustice.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 105-129.

Fernandes, W. (2017). Internally Displaced Persons and Northeast India. *International Studies,*50(4): 1–19.

Garandeau, R., Edwards, S., Maslin, M. (2014). Retrieved December 4, 2018, from https://www.ucl.ac.uk/hazard-centre/sites/hazard-centre/files/mega-dam-overview.pdf.

Jami, Phyosao. 1996. *A Brief Report on Doyang Hydro Electric Project.* A letter of Representation of Landowner's Union to the Chairman-cum-Managing Director, NEEPCO, Shillong.

Judge, S. Paramjit. (1997). Response to Dams and Displacement in Two Indian States. *Asian Survey,* 37(9): 840–851.

Kabra, A. (2003). Displacement and Rehabilitation of an Adivasi Settlement: Case of Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(29): 3073–3078.

Kothari, S. (1996). Whose Nation? The Displaced as Victims of Development. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 31(24): 1476–1485.

Mathur, H.M. (2009). Tribal Land Issues in India: Communal Management, Rights and Displacement. In Perera J (ed*.), Land and Cultural Survival – The Communal Land Rights of Indigenous Peoples in South Asia (pp. 163–192).* Asian Development Bank, Philippines.

Mehta, S. (2002). Derailed Development: Review of Development and Rehabilitation Models for Tribal India. *Anthropologist Special Issue,* (1): pp. 213–226.

Menezes, A. (1991). Compensation for Project Displacement: A New Approach. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 26 (43): 2465–2469.

Menon, M. (2009). Land Alienation Due to Large Hydro-Power Projects in Arunachal Pradesh. In Fernandes W, Barbora S (eds). *Land, People and Politics: Contest over Tribal Land in Northeast India (pp. 128–141).* North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati.

Menon, M., Kohli, K. (2005). *Large Dams for Hydro-power in Northeast India – A Dossier,* Kalpavriksh: New Delhi.

Menon, A., Saravanan, V. (1996). Displacement and Rehabilitation Policies: Case of the Kolli Hills Hydroelectric Project. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31 (43): 2854-2855.

Mohanty, B. (2005). Displacement and Rehabilitation of Tribals. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 40 (13): 1318–1320.

Negi, N.S., Ganguly, S. (2011). Development Projects vs Internally Displaced Populations in India: A Literature-Based Appraisal. *Center on Migration, Citizenship and Development,* Working Paper No, 103.

Parasuraman, S. (1993). Impact of Displacement by Development Projects on Women in India. Working Paper Series No. 159. Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

Parlak, G.Z. (2005). Dams and Sustainable Development. *International Congress on River Management*, pp. 283–293.

Ramanathan, U. (1996). Displacement and the Law. *Economic and Development Weekly,* 31(24): 1486-1491.

Sah, D.C. (1995). Development and Displacement: National Rehabilitation Policy. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 30(48): 3055–3058.

Sangma, V. (1994). Doyang Hydro Electric Project Importance and Urgency of its Early Completion. *Warrior*, Government of Nagaland Publication: Kohima.

Singh, N. N., Ganguly, S. (2011). Development Projects vs Internally Displaced Populations in India: a Literature-Based Appraisal, Bielefeld: COMCAD.

Talwar, P.K., Jhingran, A.G. (1991). *Inland Fishes of India and Adjacent Countries* Vol. I. and II. Oxford and IBH Co Pvt. Ltd New Delhi, (1 and 2) 1158 pp.

Thukral, G.E. (1996). Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation: Locating Gender. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 31, (24): 1500-1503.

Tilt, B., Braun, Y., & He, D. (2008). Social Impacts of Large Dam Projects: A Comparison of International Case Studies and Implications for Best Practice. *Journal of Environmental Management,* 30: 1-9.

Vagholikar, N., Das, P.J. (2010). *Damming Northeast India.*Kalpavriksh, Aaranyak and Action Aid India. New Delhi.

Acknowledgement

Yamsani Srikanth is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Nagaland University, Email: srikanth.yamsani@gmail.com

Athungo Ovung is Professor, Department of Sociology Nagaland University

Book Review: *The Idea of a University: Possibilities and Contestations* by D. V. Kumar

Author(s): Ravindra K. Jain

BOOK REVIEW

The Idea of a University: Possibilities and Contestations by D. V. Kumar (ed.)., London and New York : Routledge (Taylore and Francis), 2022; pp. 189, Rs. 995 (South Asia Edition)

--Ravindra K. Jain

This edited volume-- though it strays in different directions-- is symptomatic of a felt need for the retrospect and prospect of higher education in India. The assessment is partisan--and advisedly so-- as the majority of contributors are the products of a sterling institution in our country, the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

Why should I say that the review attempted in this book is "partisan" and "advisedly so"? Ayesha Kidwai's essay about the contemporary evolution of two bodies-- JNU and UGC-- says it all. Whereas "before February 2016" the small but bold national experiment that is JNU was torch-bearer for higher education in the country, the UGC (that gargantuan body of governmental centralization) was, and remains, the prime example of all that has gone wrong with the 'manipulation' in our democratic debate and planning for university education. Another interesting paper by Avijit Pathak brings out the genesis and discontents of an encroaching "instrumentalism" , taking university education far away from being "inspired by love and guided by knowledge."

Of course, there are also two other papers, by Romila Thapar and Prabhat Patnaik respectively, that are expertly well-argued and representative of the trenchant thought of the authors. Neither of them refers to their association with JNU but the contributions of their students and the wide-ranging social scientific ideas emanating there from hold a mirror for how we must analyze the present conjuncture of higher education in the country.

Pieces by the editor, D.V. Kumar and Vijaylakshmi Brara (incidentally both direct students of mine) deserve notice for the commitment. Energy and concern with which they write. These young guards of our academic establishment take a leap out of the silos and ivory towers of books and lectures into the fresh pastures of actual fieldwork and participant observation. Maitrayee Choudhuri surveys the minefields of radical thought in the current social sciences in India, particularly sociology, but astutely averts the whiff of toxic air that may emerge from unsuspected leaks. That is, she avoids going overboard in her well-constructed satirical ruminations about the contexts of higher education in "smart India". Readers will also gain an overall conjunctural perspective from Sajal Nag's commentary on nationalism while V. Bijukumar's writing on the crisis of public universities reaffirms much of the critique of commodification by other authors. K. Srinivasulu's article about Osmania University in a princely state and Binod Kumar Agarwala's summary of Gadamer on university education are two case-studies, empirical and

theoretical respectively, which complete the architecture of this admirable collection.

Ravindra K. Jain, *Former Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Dean, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*

Book Review: *The greater India experiment: Hindutva and the Northeast,* **by Arkotong Longkumer**

Author(s): Shravan B Raj

Source: Explorations, ISS e-journal, Vol. 7 (1), April 2023, pp. 215-217

Published by: Indian Sociological Society

BOOK REVIEW

Arkotong Longkumer, *The greater India experiment: Hindutva and the Northeast*, by, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2021, ISBN 978-1-50-361422-2

--Shravan B Raj

"The Greater India Experiment: Hindutva and the Northeast" maps the growth of the Hindutva brigade in Northeast India as a cultural, geopolitical, and visual narrative. Northeast region is the easternmost part of India which comprises of eight states and shares its borders with neighbouring countries Tibet, China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan which makes it multicultural and politically different but sensitive. The book focuses on the notion of Greater India, which is shaped from the ancient Hindu literature from the perspective of the activists of Hindu-right groups. The book goes into different aspects of the broader scholarship of Hindu Nationalism and how the right-wing organization, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its Parivar, or the 'family' organizations, establishes the idea of Hindu-state by highlighting the transnational geo-ethnic idea of Akhand Bharat (undivided India) keeping Northeastern states as the center. This book delineates singular Indic identity- rooted in Hindi, Hindu, and Hindustan. This book is about the author Arkotong Longkumers immersion as an ethnographer as it is about Sangh activities and their mission to transform this region into their vision of "one India. The author had travelled and socialized considerably across the Northeastern states of India. He has succeeded in expressing a wide range of his findings on Hindutva and the works of the Christian missionaries, and the cultural history of indigenous groups of Northeastern India through his work. Longkumer highlights the indoctrination of Hindutva ideology in the Northeast by the RSS-run schools and how the future generation is moulded.

The book brings out the discussion on the religious conversions and throws light on how the Hindu culture is being imposed in northeast India, which is a Christian dominant region. The representation of iconic Naga leaders like Jadonang Rongmei, Rani Gaidinliu as the proponents of nationalism in this book signifies the Hindutva-indigeneity to the region, which gives the base for the narrative that India shared an ancient culture for the Hindutva worldview. Here Hindutva being considered as an indigenous religion by valorising the traditional culture of Bharat and bringing it under the umbrella of Indic civilization also by bringing out the discourse of 'locality'. This book tries to document the struggles faced by Hindutva actors in Northeast in expanding their ideology. Moreover, the author tries to throw lights on the historiography of Northeast India. Furthermore, it tries to put an attempt to understand the region's politics of homelands competes with a political perspective based on a singular idea of national oneness. The author has managed to step into the socio-political views towards the last part of the book when he analyses the growth of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Northeastern states. The gradual understanding of the region's territorial and ethnic politics is clear from the issues surrounding immigration, identity, and the political discourse around nationalism in Northeast India. The coalition politics of BJP with the regional political parties represents another phase of Hindutva politics that makes an electoral mark across

northeast India, which has historically been hostile to RSS ideology. This book considers the Northeast as a laboratory that performed the experiment of Hindutva politics, which was once separated emotionally from mainland India.

Moreover, it talks about the structure of operation, Ideology, and activities of the Sangh Parivar organizations in Northeast India. The central argument in the book is the idea of narrating Hindutva as an indigenous culture in the Northeast who fought against colonial rule and lost to Western ideas and to Semitic religions. The book wraps up its contents in a satisfying manner, providing an insightful analysis of the growth of Hindutva ideas across the Northeastern regions. With the reflections of how indigenous movements can be utilized for reaching out the broader goal of uniting nations, fulfilling the idea of Akhand Bharat.

The book spoke solid but left something to be desired. The only shortcoming might be the omission of the service activities, for example, the start-ups of one-teacher schools, tribal development programs, and other positive aspects of RSS-BJP interventions in Northeast India. The book is notable for its multifaceted reflection of and on the Northeast's complicated socio-political and religious context. Fifteen years of extensive research have helped the author to evaluate the book came into being, which will significantly impact the young researchers and scholars interested in studying Hindutva politics in general, historical aspects, and the rise of the RSS as an ideological force in detail. This work could be considered a revelation and one-of-a-kind addition to the audience's knowledge of Northeast India's political dynamics whilst also deconstructing, recreating, and reassembling the Ideology.

Shravan B Raj *is a PhD scholar, Department of Education and Education Technology, University of Hyderabad,* Email: shravanbabauraj@gmail.com

Book Review: *Civility in Crisis: Democracy, Equality and the Majoritarian Challenge in India*, **by Suryakant Waghmore and Hugo Gorringe (Eds)**

Author(s): Zeeshan Husain

Source: Explorations, ISS e-journal, Vol. 7 (1), April 2023, pp. 218-226

Published by: Indian Sociological Society

Suryakant Waghmore and Hugo Gorringe (eds.) 2021. *Civility in Crisis: Democracy, Equality and the Majoritarian Challenge in India*. **New Delhi. Routledge. xi+172 pp.**

--Zeeshan Husain

Book Review

In 2014 and 2019, India voted for a Hindu right party, the second victory being even larger than the first. Its vote percentage was very high, and people across regions, caste, class and gender voted for BJP. There were no major lapses in the procedures of elections, nor physical violence, control over mass media or any such mishaps. Only one group was targeted- Muslims. Yet, we observe that crimes against women, Dalits, Adivasis, and other marginalised groups have been increasing steadily. While the world experienced Covid once, in India it struck twice, and just like BJP's victory the second one was more powerful. Bone-chilling images of dead bodies were circulated across news media. Hindus cremate their dead but due to lack of money as well as lack of space in cremation grounds, they buried the deceased, and some even threw their dead to the Ganga River. This news came from the same state which had voted for BJP in a high percentage- Uttar Pradesh. Jats voted *en masse* yet protested against the party's new Farm Laws. It was as if votes are not transforming into aspirations. Despite following all procedures of a functional democracy, we see a certain crisis. It is this paradox that the book *Civility in Crisis* (2021) by Suryakant Waghmore and Hugo Gorringe has tried to explain. As they say it is a story of 'high democracy and low civility'.

In the following essays, the book encapsulates the paradox of *high democracy but low civility*. It is a book of paradoxes and all the essays present here try to narrate those paradoxes one way or the other. By civility, the editors broadly mean what BR Ambedkar meant by social democracy. One can have all formalities of a democracy fulfilled, yet the society may lack trust, empathy, shared feelings, free marriage choices, and a healthy relationship between individual and the social group. The book at hand is an argument against 'violence of indifference' and an appeal to inner conscious humanity.

Caste, Gender and public life in Kerala

The book starts with extremely well argued ethnographic reflections by Sharika Thiranagama. It is based on one year fieldwork (2015-16) in Palakkad district in Kerala. Sharika's fieldwork has two physical sites- rural libraries/ reading rooms and Dalit households. While libraries are considered as public spaces, houses are considered as private. Using the Dalit feminist lens, she problematises the notions of caste, gender, public and private.

In case of rural libraries and reading rooms, we are explained the subtle difference between calling a space caste-free and calling it caste-blind. Libraries were an important site through which communist ideas were spread. The author states how libraries never eliminated caste but merely re-organised it. Library activists were mostly dominant castes (Nairs, Ezhavas, Asaris) who claimed to be atheists but

practised Hinduism privately. Libraries were located in high caste Hindu localities, had books which were anti-caste but no Dalit members. At one place the author states how certain library activists told her that Tamil Brahmins are inferior to Namboodiri Brahmins! These library activists added that caste and Hinduism are private affairs and must remain so. They also shared their dismay with inter-caste and inter-faith marriages. All of this while discussing progressive novels, plays and cinema! Thiranagama criticises Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty for neglecting the role of reproduction of caste within private domains.

This brings us to the second field site- Dalit localities. Land redistribution has caused upward mobility of Ezhavas. Ezhavas became landlords and neighbours with Dalit labourers. Using the concept of 'visiting practices' by Karen Hansen, the author states how untouchability was practiced by Ezhava women against Dalit women. It got increased with Hinduisation when a shrine got converted into a temple which now had a Namboodiri priest appointed by Ezhavas. We read how for the collection of donations for making the temple Dalits were labelled as Hindus and after the completion, Dalits were treated as untouchables. Men could eat at each other's places, not women. "Women keep honour of the caste". The author uses Jurgen Habermas' concept 'private-public' which she says is akin to Hugo Gorringe's concept of 'semi-public'. This overlap has been missed by Sudipta Kaviraj, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Partha Chatterjee in their conceptualisation of public versus private domains. Hindu supremacy, untouchability and patriarchy all three get their safe haven in private domain and its ramifications are felt in public. The essay ends beautifully by stating that the communist party brushed all social evils under the carpet of private domain and now Hindutva parties simply present those evils as public virtues.

Incivility of caste among Christians

Rowena Robinson's essay introduces us to the ideas of Dr. BR Ambedkar. Robinson quotes from Ambedkar: "We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well". Just like civility is about morality, social democracy is about fraternity. For Ambedkar fraternity is 'sharing in the joys and sorrows of birth, death, marriage and food'. One can say that what is fraternity for BR Ambedkar is civility for Waghmore and Gorringe. Just like Ambedkar was looking beyond Constitutional democracy, Waghmore and Gorringe are aspiring for a society beyond procedural aspects of democracy. It is in this context that BR Ambedkar said, "My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science." Perhaps Ambedkar was looking for local roots of Western liberal traditions. Nevertheless, fraternity, civility, social democracy and Buddhism are key categories for this chapter, all of which point towards 'shared lived experience'.

In the hope of bettering their socio-economic conditions, many Untouchables and middle ranking castes converted into Christianity, which, like Islam and Sikhism, values social equality. Does it translate into 'shared lived experience'? Robinson finds out that casteism ails Christians of rural Tamil Nadu. There are separate churches and cemeteries for untouchable rural Tamil Christians. "In the places where the domination of Vanniyars is more, Paraiyar communities still cannot enter the churches", she writes. Even the position of priests (catechists) is mostly held by

Vellalars. Thus we see that Tamil Christians follow the same social order as Hindus, where dominant sections of the middle ranking castes practice untouchability. Does it mean casteism among Christians is equivalent to the casteism among Hindus?

Robinson tells us that the exclusionary methods practiced by state machinery are easily normalised. She elaborates that Dalit Christians (like Dalit Muslims) do not get Scheduled Caste status. This, in turn, denies them to get any kind of affirmative action policies like representation in legislatures, reservation in government jobs, scholarships in state run educational institutes, and protection under SC-ST Atrocities Act, 1989. The Hindu bias in Indian legal apparatus is unravelled when we read that reservation of religious minorities was disbanded and only social minorities (SC/ST) were accepted. Even then, Jerome D'Souza and others petitioned the government to include Dalit Christians in the SC list. However, little came out of it. Dalit movement in general and Dalit Christian movement in particular have also repeatedly argued for SC status and various positive discrimination policies like fee subsidies in Christian schools. Nevertheless, Robinson acknowledges that 'for Dalit Christian respondents, discrimination by the state is perhaps a degree less galling than the humiliation of exclusion within the Christian community'. Civility, as the essay states, is about trust, equality and fraternity; it is anchored in religion and morality, which is beyond the purview of law.

Imaginations of dignity in Bihar

Indrajit Roy's essay on the politics in Bihar is about middle-ranking castes (Yadavs) and their form of mobilisation (Rashtriya Janata Dal party). Roy looks at the promises of the RJD since its inception and the charisma of its chief, Lalu Prasad Yadav. RJD ruled Bihar for just 15 years and yet Lalu's charisma is intact till now. Roy observes how 'low' caste Hindus in rural Bihar always talked about social justice, equality and dignity while talking about RJD's ascendance to power. RJD was critical of the domination of high caste Hindu men in Congress and Jan Sangh. Failure of proper implementation of affirmative action programs and land reforms by BP Mandal and Karpuri Thakur in 1970s is due to this clout of *savarn* men over Bihar polity.

Roy terms Lalu Prasad rule as 'substantive deepening of democracy'. He highlights some of the most crucial aspects of RJD's work, "[Lalu] Yadav provided institutional support to popular struggles for equality in the state. Specific policy interventions included the elimination of tree and toddy tax, regularization of slums and allowing milk suppliers to establish cowsheds freely in towns and cities. Bihar University was renamed as B. R. Ambedkar University.... State holidays were declared to mark the birth anniversaries of Ravi Das, a sixteenth-century saint who champion[ed] social equality. Yadav's government extended official support to fairs commemorating the Dalit hero Chuharmal credited with battling dominant caste oppression. In line with Janata Dal's promise of greater representation for the state's communities in public life, 50% seats were 'reserved' for OBCs in university level decision-making bodies." All these together make Lalu's rule as a time where identity and representation became keywords which actually reached grassroots. One must note, this is happening at a time when in 1991, high caste Hindu men of the Savarn Liberation Front gang raped and killed ten Dalit women.

For Roy, politics in Bihar can neither be looked from the lens of liberalism (as done by Stuart Corbridge) since an individual is always embedded within its caste, nor can it be seen from the vantage point of postcolonialism (as in the works of Partha Chatterjee) because subalterns never upturn legality but demand proper legality. Borrowing the concept of 'agonistic of democracy' from Chantal Mouffe, Roy proposes that negotiations and conflicts within a symbolic framework are not only inevitable but also desirable for the proper functioning of democracy. Backed by ethnographic details, the essay definitely makes a dent in our understanding of democracy.

Hindu citizenship among Dalits in West Bengal?

In chapter 4, Praskanva Sinharay describes the ramifications of a new law, Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and its impact on the Dalits of Bengal. On paper, the CAA is about giving Indian citizenship to all non-Muslim refugees from the neighbouring countries of India. Does it mean that Hindutva really cares for *all* the Hindus throughout the world or is it just a political gimmick? This essay rips apart the myth of Hindu unity and brings to the fore the fissures along the lines of caste, class, ethnicity and language. Sinharay tells us that even on paper, the CAA is exclusionary of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Having seen it implemented in the form of NRC in Assam, we found that not only Muslims but also Dalits got excluded from getting citizenship. Looking back in history, the author finds out another example where tribes (Bhils) of Rajasthan were denied citizenship rights for decades after they migrated from the bordering Pakistan.

The facade of inclusion is taken down again while discussing the history of West Bengal. Untouchability and casteism was/is so strong there, that Jogendranath Mandal, the All India Scheduled Caste Federation leader, had to ally with the Muslim League at the time of Partition. We are told again that 'in 1979, for instance, hundreds of Dalits (Namasudras) were brutally massacred by the police at Marichjhapi in the Sundarbans when they tried to return to West Bengal'. Thus, while the Hindu label is extended to Dalits and Adivasis, trust and civility are denied to them. Sinharay is sharp enough to understand the politics behind the Hinduisation of vulnerable groups. He writes, "In the 1990s, communalising the migrant became one of the key electoral strategies of the BJP and its allies, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, to mobilise Hindu votes in states like Assam and West Bengal."

Sinharay's ethnography with Dalits (Namashudras) of West Bengal shows that many migrants from Bangladesh are hopeful about getting citizenship rights after the implementation of the CAA. Yet, he finds many other voices which are sceptic of such claims. Some Dalit (Matua) organisations are supporting the CAA while few others are opposing it. Leaders like Mamata Bala Thakur and initiatives like Citizenship Security and Struggle Forum working in favour of Dalit-Muslim unity are aptly described. This chapter illustrates what is 'adverse incorporation' where vulnerable groups like Dalits (Adivasis and women?) are denied their basic human rights on the pretext of saving Hindu (bhodrolok?) culture.

Cosmopolitanism sans civility

The fifth chapter is a delightful read for those who relish urban studies. Cities such as Mumbai are considered as a melting pot because many cultures have been living together for generations. Suryakant Waghmore, from his fieldwork with two caste associations located in Mumbai, helps us understand the present form of cosmopolitanism in India. He coins the neologism 'Hindu cosmopolitanism' and argues that this can help understand Indian cities better. To many, this term might appear to be an oxymoron as any genuinely cosmopolitan person cannot be blinkered by his/ her religious identity. Citing a work by Colin McFarlane, Waghmore argues that 'all forms of cosmopolitanism are, to varying extents, inclusive or exclusive'. Hinduness within cosmopolitanism is not anti-cosmopolitanism but a unique feature of contemporary Indian society. It is here that we see a critique of the liberal definition of cosmopolitanism where it signifies inclusion of all sorts. Waghmore takes leaves from two leading figures on cultural studies- Sheldon Pollock and Partha Chatterjee- and helps in furthering their projects. Both lay emphasis on looking at cosmopolitanism from below and posit that India has a unique form of cosmopolitanism. Waghmore's essay pushes the boundary set by Pollock and Chatterjee and he posits that it is the Hinduness that makes Indian cosmopolitanism unique in history.

This chapter is based on the study of Desastha Brahmin and Nair caste associations. Wealth, status, elite education, and cultural capital symbolise these two castes. Yet there was substantial anxiety and a sense of loss among the members of both the associations. While Brahmins cast aspersions against Marathas, Nairs were irritated by the rise of Ezhavas. Such enactment of hierarchies took a humorous turn when Deshastha Brahmins alleged that they were progressive while Konkanastha Brahmins were conservative! Maintenance of rigid social hierarchies came at a cost- it drew anxieties in elderly men and it subjugated unmarried women. Detailed interviews with the senior male members of the two caste associations show how, despite living a consumerist lifestyle, one is left to maintain caste purity against other dominant castes. What we see is that while non-Hindus are discredited at the outset of the Hindu cosmopolitanism, it also entails the maintenance of parochial social norms among Hindus. A Hindu self cannot exist without mooring itself to the immediacy of caste. Sadly, women remain the biggest victims of this response to modernity. The pressure of Hindu patriarchy was such, that even women have normalised it and feel proud to marry within their own caste. Like Partha Chatterjee, Waghmore too finds that in India, community supersedes individuals. The workings of high caste Hindu associations tell us that Hindu cosmopolitanism has all elements of an urban cosmopolitanism, except civility.

Feminist debates

Meena Gopal's essay engages with the debates within women's movement. Her focus is on 'the case of the ban on the dance bars in Mumbai and the state of Maharashtra in 2005'. While Savarn feminists opposed this ban because it would hamper the only source of income for poor bar dancers, Dalit feminists supported it as it would help poor women to come out of the stigmatised occupation of bar dancer. The debate was alive for more than a decade, as Gopal notes. Through this

debate, a point was noted that women's movement needed much more conversations around the theme of gender justice from various social positions. During such conversations, it came out that Savarn feminists remained silent after Khairlanji massacre where a family of Buddhists (Dalits) were killed by Hindus (Kunbis/ dominant OBCs). What also came out was the lack of trust between Savarn women and Dalit women, and a need to overcome differences for larger solidarity of women across the lines of castes and religion. Gopal, however, has not stated the reason behind the mistrust; nor has she said whether this distrust is also found among Muslim and Adivasi women. Nevertheless, she is sensitive to the fact that differences of opinions are sometimes healthy and one must accept many unresolved issues. Indeed a meeting was held in 2009 between Savarn and Dalit women to resolve issues and build larger solidarities. One successful outcome of such solidarity movements happened in 2017 when 'thousands of women, tribals, Dalits, Muslims, differently abled, sex workers, and LGBTKHQI persons from diverse social locations gathered in Nagpur under the slogan 'Chalo Nagpur' to celebrate the 120th anniversary of Savitribai Phule, considered the first woman teacher in Maharashtra'. Gopal, borrowing from the work of Valerian Rodrigues on BR Ambedkar, finds the idea of 'civic republicism' extremely useful for having 'dialogues across differences'.

Nominal civility in rural India

Understanding caste, democracy and civility, one might assume that we must understand the events, actions or phenomena when a rupture happens. Rural conflict is given supremacy over rural peace. James Manor urges his readers to focus on negotiations, accommodations and dialogue among various castes during rural peace. This is in line with the lessening of caste conflicts over past two to three decades. Manor asks why conflicts are resolved, how dialogue happens, who are the major stakeholders and what ramifications do such accommodations have on future. The essay is based on five years of fieldwork between 2011-16, consisting of semi-structured interviews and focussed group discussions spanning across nine diverse Indian states. Manor proposes that slowly Dalits are being extended some civility from high caste Hindus due to many external factors. Manor cautions us that this cannot be overemphasised because violence is now shifting from local to regional level, when backed by political parties. He adds that this is merely *a change of mind, not heart*. Extension of civility towards Dalits by high caste Hindus is about strategy, not about empathy.

Tensions and the ensuing physical violence happen when there is 'a dispute, an unsettling incident or what ... the higher castes... perceive as a serious affront'. Leaders from both the camps try to avoid any actual confrontation. Manor elaborates that this involves a series of calculations like foothold of caste leaders, local politics, external pressure like police and media, economic interdependence of high castes and Dalits, reputation of the village, and coming local elections. Dalit leaders remain extremely pragmatic and willing to compromise more than the high caste leaders. Each side knew that failure of peace talks will harm both sides. Leaders have their own personal stakes as it will boost their authority in their respective caste, and this social capital can be further utilised. Manor notes that younger generations would see such accommodations as a compromise and they allege that high caste would

find 'new forms of domination'. Nevertheless, Dalits gain modest amount of civility and outward courtesy. That high castes are willing to merely talk to a Dalit, accept him as the leader and listen to village affairs from a Dalit viewpoint, are remarkable changes that could have never been imagined just three decades ago. Manor states how reservation for SCs in village panchayats has also pushed high caste leaders to seek support from Dalits for votes or from Dalit *sarpanch* for various village affairs. Similar positive role has been played by symbolic value of SC/ ST Atrocities Act. The only thing missing in Manor's analysis is the role of patriarchy and Hinduism over the village affairs during both rural peace and conflict.

Delhi: an uncivil city

India might be ranking as low as 131st out of 189 countries as per 2021 HDI, but Delhi elites aspire to re-make its capital a 'world class city'. Amita Baviskar's essay narrates this contradiction in an extremely page-turner style. She talks about how neoliberalism is engulfing Delhi. It is a city where efficiency trumps over equity, where cars and cows screech past one another, where women are asked to return home before sunset, where Muslims and Sikhs are looked at with suspicion and where heat-island effect makes it a furnace during summer. Baviskar locates these within the growing inferiority complex of the Delhi elites vis-a-vis West. The logic of capital gobbles anything which crosses its path. She tells us about the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and business class for taking over public land for private purposes. She tells us about the three monsters- cars, construction and commerce- much loved by elites. Bourgeois environmentalists support private cars but oppose plastic straws! Megaprojects are built from public money. Every nook and cranny of the city is crowded with highways, flyovers, malls, multiplexes and airports. Everything is in complete mess yet comfort of the automobile-owning classes is driving Delhi over the edge. What adds insult to the injury is the activism and urban planning methods employed by bourgeois environmentalists. Their half-baked knowledge exacerbates the already grim situation; for them the poor, and not poverty, is the problem. Their environmentalism being blinkered by consumerism never lets them think that they themselves are part of the problem.

It is against this havoc of consumerism exhibited by people with low self-esteem (Delhi elite) that she proposes her own idea of Delhi. A Delhi where she was born and bred, where she lives and wants to live; a Delhi where commons and commoners matter; a Delhi which provides 'basic amenities like housing, clean water and sanitation, health and education'; a Delhi which is dotted with small commercial hubs catering to all basic necessities. She proposes a Delhi where 'urban commons— land, water, air, green areas—are shared, used, managed and transformed', where bastis are formally recognised, where strangers are assumed to be kind not cold, where nation is actualised as a large family beyond waving tricolour during public holidays and where dissent remains the hallmark of democracy. At one end, we have the Hindu rich advocating for the removal of cows from roads and on the other, we have the Hindu poor recruited as *gau rakshaks* (cow vigilantes). From this din, we hear the author's appeal to save *her* city. Her Delhi- our Delhi- has to be like Begumpura- a city which respects diversity, differences and inclusion. Begumpura, as the Untouchable saint Ravi Das proclaimed, will be a city of civility.

Conclusion

Overall, the book is an attempt to tell us that democracy has to be looked beyond its institutional and procedural aspects; that liberal democracy might have illiberal values, and what is assumed to be a peaceful society may have normalised violence. It hints that today's fascist regime in India has roots in the social order which has been already held for centuries. Elections, media, institutions, development, economic inequality, citizenship, minority rights, equality, etc. were the key categories to understand democracy across the world. Waghmore and Gorringe have introduced another category- civility- in the discourse surrounding democracy. If lack of civility characterises democracy in India, what about democracies across the globe? Hope social scientists working on the anthropology of democracy will take up the baton of civility and test it in their respective societies.

Zeeshan Husain is independent researcher, Email: zeeshanhusain@gmail.com

Conversation: Kamala Ganesh in conversation with Gita Chadha

Source: Explorations, ISS e-journal, Vol. 7 (1), April 2023, pp. 227-246

Published by: Indian Sociological Society

Kamala Ganesh in conversation with Gita Chadha

(Excerpts from the interview held on April 24, 2023)

Introduction

Kamala Ganesh was formerly Professor and Head, Dept. of Sociology, University of Mumbai. She has taught Sociology at St. Xavier's College and SNDT Women's University. Her fields of interest include Gender and Kinship, Women's History and Archiving for Women, Culture and Identity, and Indian Diaspora Studies. She has been ICSSR Senior Research Fellow, Scholar in Residence at Shiv Nadar University, and Fellow and Visiting Professor at Leiden University, The Netherlands, and Muenster University in Germany. Most recently she has been Prof. M.N. Srinivas Chair Professor at the Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bangalore. Her academic outreach activities have been through elected positions in associations like the Indian Sociological Society, the Indian Association of Women's Studies, The Asiatic Society of Mumbai and the Commission on Women, International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. Her book 'Boundary Walls: Caste and Women in a Tamil Community' was awarded the Silver Medal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay. The book 'Zero Point Bombay: In and Around Horniman Circle', of which she is co-editor was featured in the list of 10 best books set in Mumbai by the Guardian, London.

For a full profile see www.kamalaganesh.in

Gita Chadha is a feminist sociologist who works in critical science studies. Her work lies at the intersections of the sociology of science and the sociology of knowledge. She was formerly at the Department of Sociology, University of Mumbai. Presently, she is Visiting Professor at the Azim Premji University, Bangalore. She occupies the Obaid Siddiqui Chair at the National Centre of Biological Sciences from August 2023-24.

Gita Chadha (**GC**)**:** Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. I am indeed delighted, and honoured, to be in conversation with you. I strongly believe that autobiographical accounts reflect social maps and I am sure your journey will reflect on the experience of women in sociology.

To begin with, Kamala, tell us a little bit about your journey into sociology. We see many people pursue a bachelor's in the sciences - because that is what most 'bright' people do - but then move into the social sciences, apparently with ease. You did a bachelor's degree in Chemistry. What were the challenges of moving into social science?

Kamala Ganesh (KG): It is very nice to have this conversation with you, Gita. We have known each other for a long time, and our professional paths have intersected at several points.

Both of us have had a long association with Bombay University from well before the time it was renamed Mumbai University in 1996. In my answers to your questions, I use the name that applies to the specific time I am talking about.

My schooling was mainly in Delhi in the Higher Secondary system. Standard 11 was the final year. But in Standard 9 itself, one had to choose between the Arts and Science streams. Those considered bright were expected to take Science. If you went into Arts, the subtle signal was "She is not up to the mark"! I was a good student. I don't remember any discussion at home on what I should choose. Almost automatically I joined the science stream. But I had a liking for reading novels, writing essays, and debating. I slowly started rethinking my commitment to science. Not questioning it, but feeling that it was not for me. Around that time, my father was transferred to Bombay. Here the system was different. After Standard 10, one had to leave school to go to college for the two-year Intermediate course. After that was the two-year Bachelor's degree. So four years in college before one got the Bachelor's degree. But since I had done Higher Secondary, I could get direct admission into the second year Inter in Elphinstone College, provided I didn't change my subjects. Otherwise, I would have had to start again from the First Year. But 'losing' a year was not an option in my family. I was also not sure about my preferences. After Inter Science, I moved to Madras where my father had been transferred. There, after the final year of school which was Standard 11 or SSLC, one studied in college for a three-year Bachelor's degree. My father pulled strings to establish that Inter-Science in Bombay was equivalent to a first-year BSc in Madras. I was admitted directly to second-year BSc. Had I switched to Arts, I would have had to 'lose' a year and start from BA First year. Unthinkable.

Such fierce commitment to education should be seen against the backdrop of families who were preoccupied with learning as the sole pathway to livelihood. Where grandmothers migrated to "Pattanam" as Chennai was known. To set up a second household in a congested Triplicane. To educate sons to appear for ICS, while grandfathers remained in the village, as accountants. Cash flow was meagre. Almost everyone I knew of my father's generation and economic background had a story of studying under the light of the street lantern or walking a long way to school without chappals. Stories of double promotions. Cousins who had finished SSLC at 13 and 'sat at home', too young to join college. Others, who never went to school, were tutored at home and appeared directly for SSLC.

It was a straight-jacketed system. I was unable to extricate myself from the Science stream which I had joined when I was thirteen years old. I ended up getting a BSc degree in Chemistry, Physics, and Botany.

While at college in Madras in the early 1970s, reports and articles on the Women's Lib movement as it was called then caught my attention. I remember reading Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and Greer's *The Female Eunuch* and being thunderstruck. I suddenly looked at my own hitherto sheltered and complacent life with a question mark. My newly awakened feminist consciousness propelled me to do a course in journalism. But soon, I started feeling that my skill in writing was not enough. Nor was it enough to feel outraged at patriarchy. At that time, we used to call it 'male chauvinism'. We must go to root causes, I thought. Radhika Ramasubban was a family friend. I met her while she was a Ph.D. student at the Bombay Department of Sociology. I was dazzled by the subject. Sociology would open up a way, I felt certain, for the framework I was seeking.

Then I married and moved to Bombay. I went to the University Department of Sociology at Kalina to inquire if I could do an MA. No, I couldn't, they said, since I had come from the Science stream. The kindly Prof. A.R.Desai who was Head said why don't you just attend a few lectures here and see how you like sociology? We'll see after that.

For a few months, I immersed myself in the lectures, though not as a registered student. I could not make head or tail of most of the lectures because I was unfamiliar with the content of sociology. I couldn't grasp what exactly its scope was. My science background had not prepared me for it. But I was drawn to the academic aura of the Department. The atmosphere of freedom and debate which prevailed then was a contrast to my conservative women's college in Madras. I liked the way students argued with teachers in class. The way boys and girls talked to each other. Desai's sweeping breadth of analysis was impressive. Prof. Manorama Savur's affable charm and accessible, simple explanations were appealing. Prof. J.V. Ferreira's dramatic allusions to the Vienna school and Prof. D. Narain's complex expositions made an impact on me. But without an undergraduate social science background I was definitely at a disadvantage.

I then registered for an MA in Sociology via Distance Education at SNDT Women's University. It was the only way I could get into sociology. The downside was that there were no classroom lectures or discussions, and no peers to learn from. When I later registered for a Ph.D., I struggled because I did not have this primary grounding. My self-taught sociology was uneven and patchy, geared only to the topic I had taken up.

GC: That's an interesting account. It is good to hear a candid articulation of the difficulties faced by a science graduate who wishes

to undertake the study of social science. Most accounts make this transition seem to be smooth and seamless.

Your PhD was at the oldest department of sociology in India, the Mumbai University Department of Sociology. You worked with Prof. J. V Ferreira, an anthropologist at the Department, right? Prof. Ferreira had a close association with the Institute of Indian Culture set up by Fr. Stephen Fuchs. How was it to work with him?

KG: Ferreira was a Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the Department. He became Head after A. R. Desai retired. His PhD was from the University of Vienna supervised by Wilhelm Koppers, who was a student of Wilhelm Schmidt, the main exponent of the *Kulturkreise* theory which broadly aligned with the Diffusionist School. Ferreira was close to the Austrian missionary and anthropologist Stephen Fuchs who was also Wilhelm Schmidt's student. He worked in Central India for many years. Fuchs had set up the Indian branch of the *Anthropos Institute* in Bombay in 1950.

Prof. G.S. Ghurye was Emeritus Professor when I first visited the Department. His contemporary Prof. N.A.Thoothi, an anthropologist of religion, had passed away long ago. Ferreira was the only senior anthropologist in the Department. Prof. A.R.Momin, also an anthropologist, was a junior faculty member at that time. I approached Ferreira through the ever-helpful Manorama Savur. The research topic I stumbled upon demanded ethnographic fieldwork. I felt that I needed guidance from an anthropologist. I had always been more comfortable with micro-level rather than macro-level work. Probably because of my training in experimental science where step-by-step processes and verifiable findings were worshiped. Ferreira readily accepted me as his doctoral student. But he confessed he did not know much about the region and issues I had chosen. He gave me general guidelines on doing fieldwork and recommended some readings. We would meet every few months. I was largely left to my own devices. But he never interfered with the direction of my thinking and did not object when I told him about the scholars on Tamil history and culture whom I took guidance from. I felt encouraged by him but missed a more academically engaged interaction.

GC: That's what they say, isn't it? Research can be very lonely, I suppose.

You were a young mother of two then. How did you do your fieldwork, leaving the children? I know we never ask this question to men, but as feminists, we must document our challenges of being women in sociology

KG: When I started the Ph.D., my first son was a few months old. I had my second child only after I finished my thesis. I remember being

in advanced pregnancy during my viva. The external examiner Prof. M.S.A. Rao must have been nervous. He let me off lightly!

For the bulk of my Ph.D., I was in Bombay, with a research table at the Kalina campus. I had no close relatives here. There were hardly any creches at that time. We lived in a small flat. We were not able to find full-time help. Anyway, we could not afford it. So, it was really difficult. When my son was around three years old, I started making trips for my fieldwork to the southern tip of Tamil Nadu. I would drop my son at my parent's home in Madras and go to Tirunelveli for a few weeks at a time. I would return for a week to be with my son and then go back to the field again. This went on for a year. It was not easy. My family was vaguely supportive. But except my father, no one saw the point of doing this kind of fieldwork instead of teaching in a college. There was no one to share my travails with. But then I got involved with a feminist organization in Bombay called *Forum against Rape*. It was as if I had been thrown a lifeline. The Forum had been set up in 1980 following the widespread protests against the Court's judgment in the Mathura rape case. Later, it morphed into the *Forum against Oppression of Women*, taking up a wider range of issues. I got to know feminist activists in the city - Vibhuti Patel, Padma Prakash, Nandita Gandhi, Nandita Shah, Sonal Shukla, Indira Jaising, and many others. I had never before interacted with women like them. The intensity and camaraderie of those gatherings were special. Their bold articulation of issues that had been simmering within me, shored up my spirits. Their critical analysis of patriarchy sharpened my understanding of my situation as also that of my subjects in the field. In 1981, I attended the first National Conference on Women's Studies in India held at SNDT Women's University. Here I met women scholars and activists from all over the country and from neighboring countries. It was exhilarating. Women like Lotika Sarkar, Ela Bhatt, Devaki Jain, Vina Mazumdar, Leela Dube, Maithreyi Krishnaraj. A few men like Ashok Mitra. Of course, Madhuri Shah and Neera Desai, as hosts, were steering the conference. This was also the time I worked closely with the artist and feminist Chandralekha. All this catapulted me into a whole other worldview. I was slowly learning to look beyond my situation.

I had been living my everyday life, grappling with the challenges of domesticity while engrossed with the micro details of my research. I was preoccupied with my difficulties. Pondering over the reactions from kith and kin to leaving my small child behind and traveling to remote areas for fieldwork. But with this exposure to the breadth and depth of what used to be called 'the problem with no name', I did not have to feel guilty or conflicted. My problem stemmed from a deeper structural issue.

GC: Our journeys with women's studies and feminism often open up different worlds, don't they? It's quite liberating. The MU Department

is the oldest in the country. How did it feel like being a research scholar here? My own experience in the 80's was interesting. While the structural functionalist school prevailed in the department, we had a strong Marxist presence too.

KG: I have been in and out of Mumbai University's Sociology Department for more than four decades and developed a cumulative memory. It is my sociological home, just as Mumbai has become my home. In the early 1970s, I was just hanging around the campus, attending random lectures, and assisting Savur in preparing a documented history of the trade union movement in India. Desai was the general editor of that series sponsored by ICHR (Indian Council of Historical Research). By the way it was published only thirty years later!

From 1976 to 1982 I was a doctoral student at the Department. Then, after a gap, I joined the faculty in 1994 and retired in 2014. So my impressions of these different phases have turned into a cumulative memory.

When I first visited it in 1972, the corridors of the wing of the social sciences in Ranade Bhavan echoed with famous names. C.N.Vakil, P.R.Brahmananda, P.N.Lakdawala, Usha Mehta, Aloo Dastur, G.S.Ghurye and others. The Department, established in 1919, collectively carried an awareness of itself as the oldest Department of Sociology in the country. The big international conference in 1969 to celebrate its golden jubilee was still being talked about. Luminaries like Robert Merton had been present. Ghurye's imprint was still fresh. His championing of sociology and social and cultural anthropology as a unified discipline had shaped the way the Department had grown. But his students and colleagues had been at the receiving end of his abrasive personality and quirks. There were mixed feelings towards him. A more sustained critique of his work came later, only in the 1990s.

Desai was Head till 1976. His Marxist approach had a powerful impact on students and young faculty. His genial, encouraging manner towards all students added to his appeal. A group of scholars and activists coalesced around him – Manorama Savur, Sharayu Mhatre, Apu Nair, S.S.Jha, Vasanthi Raman, Radhika Ramasubban, Indra Munshi, and others. They cumulatively produced a considerable body of work broadly inspired by him. And yes, a kind of modified structure-functionalism was also there with Prof. Narain and his students. Ferreira's student A.R. Momin was Reader in Cultural Anthropology. The two anthropologists, Ferreira and Momin, were in a rather different world. So it was an eclectic atmosphere in those days but, yes, Marxism was a strong presence.

GC: Were there tensions between individuals or did the collegiality and the camaraderie overcome ideological differences?

KG: Well, of course, there were differences. Maybe some underlying tensions too. However, as a newcomer, I felt that they were courteous towards one other. They cooperated in the interests of the Department and the well-being of students. Also the psychological weight of 'legacy'. It was a pleasant change from departments where some faculty had not spoken to each other for years. They would constantly run each other down, even in the presence of students! Our faculty members were open-minded about their Ph.D. students' topics and approaches. No objections to theoretical or ideological positions at variance with their own. But arguments had to be substantiated. Desai had been hassled by his supervisor Ghurye's temperament, but the latter did not come in the way of his Marxism. Vasanthi Raman and Radhika Ramasubban, both influenced by Desai, did their PhDs under Ferreira's supervision with no undue interference from him. Savur had several students who did not follow her ideological preferences.

Underneath the collegiality, Desai, Ferreira, and Narain espoused different sociological and ideological positions. But, it is a pity they did not take each other's work seriously, in the sense of constructively engaging with and critiquing it. Within each group, there was academic interaction but across the silos, there was indifference or dismissal. This came in the way of fashioning a significant intervention to the discipline, or maybe a productive debate.

Another thing. There were several Ph.D. theses on topics like caste, tribe, and women, but on the whole, during my Ph.D. years, little critical focus was on Dalit, tribal and feminist issues at the cognitive or structural level. And of course, no question of taking up issues of queerness and disability, since no one thought of these as academic issues at that time.

GC: In the 1970s and 80s, the women's movement had gathered momentum, and feminist campaigns on a range of issues were happening in the public domain. How did the Department respond?

KG: The Department was slow to problematize gender. The PhDs on the 'status of women' were generally descriptive. Mostly about the challenges of women's dual role at home and work. Notable exceptions were Chandrakala Hate, Irawati Karve, Neera Desai, and Suma Chitnis. All were students of the Department and associated with women's issues in some way. But their professional life was in other institutions. Hate was among the first generation of women who did elaborate survey work on women's status in India. Her Ph.D. thesis was under Ghurye's supervision, published in 1948 as *'Hindu Woman and her future'*. Her professional life was with SNDT. After retiring she set up *Kutumba Sakhi,* an NGO that trained working-class women

to prepare and sell wholesome Maharashtrian snacks. Karve's MA was obtained through submitting a research thesis under Ghurye's supervision in 1928. But all her later work was in Deccan College, including an incisive analysis of women in kinship systems that has inspired feminists in India. Sumatai was our MA student and also briefly taught here but most of her professional life was in TISS where, in 1984, she set up a Unit for Women's Studies. It is now an advanced centre.

Neeraben had completed her MA through a research thesis in 1951 in our Department under the guidance of Prof. K.M.Kapadia. Later published as '*Women in Modern India'*, it was ahead of its time in analyzing discrimination against women as systemic rather than looking at it piecemeal. Neeraben joined SNDT and was head of its Sociology Department. She was deeply engaged with the issue of women's rights and gender discrimination and was close to the women's movement. She set up the first Women's Studies Centre in India at SNDT.

Our Department faculty did not engage with women and gender issues for a long time. In the 1970s and 80s, 'class' was the overriding analytical category. Caste and gender were subtly sidelined as deflecting from real issues. I got the feeling that academic work on women was treated as a lower order concern. Those researching the subject were seen as lacking theoretical rigor.

Neeraben's spouse, A.R.Desai was sensitive to women's issues. But it got subsumed in his overwhelming involvement with Left politics. Savur, in her personal interactions with women students, was empathetic to their problems – in love, family and work. She was quite a champion of their rights. But she did not take up the topic professionally.

When I joined the faculty in 1994, only Nasreen Fazalbhoy, who had joined a few years earlier, showed interest in feminist issues. She was working then with a group of Muslim women to draft a Nikahnama or marriage contract. What existed earlier was vague and rarely utilized. Nasreen and others prepared a document that stipulated the precise conditions and rights of both the parties. The objective was to make women realize that they had enforceable rights in marriage.

My own PhD work, completed in 1983, directly addressed the relationship of caste with control over women's sexuality. In my later researches, I have remained broadly within the framework of feminist anthropology. In the mid-1990s, Nasreen Fazalbhoy and I collaborated to draft a course on the Sociology of Gender which has since been part of the electives offered by the Department. Currently among the faculty, only you, Gita, have directly worked with a feminist perspective, combining it with your serious engagement with Science

Studies. However, today among all faculty members, there is recognition that gender issues should become a part of the syllabi of various papers, not just crammed into one single paper. This has been implemented.

GC: When you joined the Department as a faculty member, there was an increasing Ambedkarite consciousness too. I know that when I joined in 2013, it was very strong and I learnt a lot. What do you think are the challenges of an ideology based sociological practice?

KG: Yes, from the 1990s onwards, due to the University's drive to fill reserved positions, the composition of the Department started changing. The faculty is now much more diverse. So are the various perspectives. That is a good thing. It is not just about diversity and inclusion, but also about shaking up pre-existing views and approaches. It began with Prof. P.G.Jogdand joining the Department in 1997. With his background in Ambedkarite political action in the renaming of Marathwada University to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University, he brought in a sharp perspective on Dalit issues, along with Prof. Ramesh Kamble who joined the same year. This was strengthened by four other faculty members – two of them women- who joined subsequently. Cumulatively they brought in a focus on critical caste and tribal studies. Sociology of marginalized communities became a thrust area of the Department. The difference now from the 1970s is that faculty members are more inclined to directly challenge each other's positions and debate issues. This is also a good thing. The challenges to both substance and modes of articulation made me acutely conscious of the difference between academic empathy and the weight of lived experience. I also realized that being a woman or even a feminist did not necessarily ensure being specifically sensitive to caste issues. *Vice versa* is also true. Theoretically yes, the experience of being marginalized on any dimension could provide the cognitive tools to understand various other marginalizations. But in a quotidian sense, putting it into practice is not easy. Competing principles come into play. Also one's own marginalization tends to get more priority in one's consciousness than others'. It is a constant, day by day, case by case challenge to work out these issues constructively.

GC: Let us return to your early work. For your doctoral work, you converged onto an ethnographic study of the *Kottai Pillaimar*. Do tell us a bit about that experience. And how do you revisit it today or what would its relevance be today?

KG: After my MA, the question arose, what next? A PhD possibility lurked somewhere in my mind. By chance, I came across a newspaper report about a community called Kottai Pillaimar (literally 'Fort Pillais') who lived in a 20-acre mud-walled fort in a small town called Srivaikuntam in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Since you are

asking about my approach then and now, I have to tell you a bit about what attracted me to this topic. The women of this community never came out of the fort; they lived and died within its precincts. Outside males including civic and judicial authorities could not enter. There were specified families from specified castes who had hereditary socio-economic ties with this community. These men - potters, agricultural workers, priests, carpenters, barbers, and so on - could enter the fort to render specific services. That's how the fort could physically function. Its privileges were sanctioned by a Pandyan king in the 15th century, said the report. All this sounded like a shocking fairy tale to me.

Within the high-ranking caste of Saiva Vellalas, they were an endogamous sub caste of large scale landowners, with links to both traditional institutions like the classical Saiva and Vaishnava temples in the region and with contemporary institutions like the Panchayat and educational bodies. The in-marrying rule had led to dwindling numbers. They were on the verge of disappearing, since some had started intermarrying with other Saiva Vellalas outside and had moved to Tirunelveli city. This was when I heard about them, in 1976. I soon discovered that there had been many such reports on them over the decades, but no deep study.

In my naïve imagination, the Kottai Pillaimar were no less than the Trobriand Islanders or the Coorgs. The legend-like story of women in a fortress and a dying community in the heart of Tamil Nadu seemed to be crying out for anthropological investigation. But in a few months, my forays into reading, fieldwork and archival material changed my initial media-created perception of a peripheral community with exotic practices. Seclusion in a fort was a dramatic manifestation but it actually represented something fundamental to caste society in premodern South India - the construction of caste purity and honour as depending on control over women's sexuality. Eventually this became the central theme of my thesis. The connection between caste and female sexuality was taken up for elaboration by feminist scholarship only in the 1980s.

My commitment at that time was to scientific ethnography. I have written elsewhere about anthropology's obsession with defining itself as a science. It was still strong in the 1970s. It led me on a path to first establish the historicity of the fort through temple inscriptions, palm leaf manuscripts, oral traditions and documents in the Tamil Nadu State Archives. Then through ethnographic fieldwork I looked at the relationship of the Kottai Pillaimar to their regional and caste setting – as upper caste landholders in a fertile river valley region with socio economic ties as *jajmans* to an elaborate network of service castes. Only then did I take up the issue of seclusion of women in the fort, even though it was upper-most in my mind. There was an unspoken assumption at that time that sociologists who worked on gender were

somehow less rigorous in their research. My aim was to disprove this through my thesis. Scholarship on gender is now taken seriously, but only after decades of struggle.

Looking back, how would I do it now, I have wondered. I have gone back to the 'Fort' a few times over the years. In fact, a group of us feminist anthropologists from various countries published a volume in 1993 on the impact of gender on their own fieldwork, in which I revisited my work on the Kottai Pillaimar. In hindsight, rather than just query about the norms of seclusion, I should have given more thought to women's life worlds and their transgressions, their own perception of their fort's rules, I should have devised other methods to dialogue and develop insights. But substantively and methodologically, I think the core of the work was sound. I would say my attempt to go beyond the seeming uniqueness of the community was a good starting point. Connecting the idea of women's purity to control over their sexuality and both as central in upholding the hierarchy of caste society was an important intervention. Relevance? It was like a lab demonstration of premodern Tamil society, to use my extinct science vocabulary. Or as I now prefer to say, like a fable. By some freak chance, the Fort got left out amidst the changes sweeping through the country in the 20th century. I felt like this then as I do now.

GC: That is indeed a fascinating journey. Let me ask you the question I ask you often. How do you see the relationship between anthropology and sociology? While in some parts of India they were conflated, in others they were set apart. We often construct anthropology as more conservative than sociology since the former is associated with colonialism and empire building while the latter is seen as part of the enlightenment modernist project of critique. Marcuse and Fischer speak of how sociology was about looking at your own society and anthropology was about looking at the 'other'. How do you see it?

KG: Well, you can't talk about this relationship in India without going back to its origins in Europe. Both emerged, along with other social sciences, after the enlightenment and industrial revolution. Sociology was about European society looking at itself as it was leaping into modernity. Anthropology grew in the context of colonialism. It became the study by western scholars of cultures other than their own - small-scale cultures labeled as primitive. In far flung geographical regions, usually colonies. Its scope encompassed the archeological, linguistic, biological and socio-cultural aspects of human societies. All this is well-known. In western academia, the two disciplines were treated as separate but cognate. In recent times, especially in Britain, there is occasionally a close convergence of sociology and social anthropology.

In India, sociology and anthropology developed as formal disciplines in the early 20th century. Initially they were separate, like in Britain,

but in both cases, trained Indian scholars were studying cultures and societies within their own country. This went against the definition of anthropology as the study of other cultures. British and European scholars who had studied Indian society were either orientalists or anthropologists, not often sociologists. And as Beteille put it, in India we are sociologists, but when we go abroad, we are called anthropologists. In India, social and physical anthropology started being separated quite soon. All these facts taken together made the distinction between sociology and social anthropology not relevant here. From the time sociology got professionalized, there were strenuous efforts to integrate social anthropology with it. Ghurye was the initiator, but many others supported this position. There is a longstanding debate on it. Not so much on principle but about balance. Social anthropology was seen as dominating sociological space at the expense of macro analytical frameworks.

So, to answer your question, amidst all this confusion, sociology departments in India, named as such, usually include some social anthropology courses. There are fewer separate anthropology departments, with or without including social anthropology.

Social anthropology in the west has over the last half a century or so, introspected over its problematic relationship with colonialism. The dynamics of the ethnographic encounter has been critiqued threadbare, leading to much internal churning. So contemporary social anthropology has become reflexive, and self-critical. Sadly, the Marxist influence in our Department in the 1970s and 80s, precluded a critical engagement with these internal churnings in anthropology. Hence, our understanding then was one dimensional. Subsequently, in the last two decades, things have changed somewhat.

GC: Could you also say something about your work in the Netherlands? The 'reverse ethnography' that you did, provided some important insights into post-colonial practice of ethnography, didn't it?

KG: The foundational equation of the European anthropologist studying non-western cultures got ruptured with decolonization. In India, after independence, Sociology - and I include social anthropology in this - got professionalized and institutionalized extensively. It is a popular choice for students within the 'Arts stream' and a favourite for Civil Service exams. Still, for the most part, field research is done only within India. Due to a host of political and economic factors, what we call 'reverse research', for example, Indians researching societies and cultures outside India - is quite rare. I was fortunate to get a chance to do this and in the process, shine a light inwards on my own prejudices.

We were a team of two anthropologists and one feminist economist collaborating with a Dutch anthropologist at Leiden University on a project about the changing welfare state in the Netherlands. This was at the turn of the century. The era of munificent state subsidies for care established after the Second World War, was over. My research segment was on the elderly in and around Leiden, living alone at home, managing with an unsatisfactory patchwork of care from family, state and private resources. My two anthropologist colleagues were working respectively on single parents in and out of welfare and friendship networks in care giving. The state's exhortation to families that they should rally around the care needy was seen by the Dutch as going against their cherished value of individual autonomy. Dependence was frowned upon as an undesirable state. Social norms discouraged asking for help from adult children and offering help to elderly parents. This is the stereotype about family relations in the west which we as Indians espouse almost automatically. It is an oversimplification. Actually, I found children giving a lot of practical help to old parents especially if they were single – bringing food, doing laundry, help in home cleaning, looking after finances and so on. There were families which would make detailed time tables for the entire year, taking turns to visit elderly parents over the weekends. The issue was about adult children sharing a home with elderly parents, which was seen as simply outside the realm of possibility. Paradoxically, dependence of wife on husband was not seen as dependence but as natural. At that time Netherlands had a relatively low proportion of working women.

Care at many levels was gendered. The most economically vulnerable elderly were   disproportionately female. So were care givers, whether from the family, or state institutions or private organizations. So while culturally, autonomy was valued, actual social relations were much more nuanced. In practice interdependence was accepted. My own ethnocentric gaze got punctured by the field experience.

Such bias was also present among the informants in the 'field'. As Indians researching Dutch culture, we became a talking point for them. They had assumed that our study findings were meant to take back to India to improve things there. When they found that the findings were to be shared with Dutch academics, policy makers and care personnel, as inputs for them, they expressed polite surprise. It was difficult for them to believe that Indian professionals were here to advice Dutch policy makers.

GC: Let me return to the question of method. Our disciplines are distinguished from common sense or from other knowledge/ belief systems like theology or ideology on the basis of their 'scientificity' . By that I mean we validate ourselves by claiming to be 'objective' and scientific, much likes the natural sciences. And yet in the social sciences, particularly in sociology and anthropology this claim has

been debated. How do you look at this debate about the scientific nature of sociology and anthropology?

KG: The social science disciplines, in their early stages, distinguished themselves from the humanities, and aligned with the natural sciences. The scientific method, embedded in positivist philosophy, was important to every social science, although the specific methods were not the same across disciplines. In sociology, the goal was to arrive at universal laws of society, and the methodology was empiricism – with tools being evolved for precise and meticulous data gathering. In physical anthropology, there were measurements and classification of the visible variations in human bodies. In social anthropology, too, the study of cultures was initially influenced by the biological model. Data gathering in ethnography was geared to precise and meticulous observation and recording of social norms and human behavior in varied cultural settings. The scientific method was the basis for uncovering social and cultural truths that were presumed to have an objective reality. In social anthropology, more than in sociology, the method of knowledge creation itself – ethnography in its existential dimensions - sowed the seeds for the debate on objectivity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

GC: Returning to ideology, when did you start actively engaging with feminism, both at the personal and the political level? And when did it start influencing the way you started practicing your sociology/anthropology.

KG: I have broached this topic obliquely earlier when you asked me about my entry into sociology. To put it more succinctly, I started thinking about feminism as a young college student while reading about the women's liberation movement in the west. I felt that studying sociology would add depth to my understanding of discrimination against women. That's why I chose it. For my PhD too I chose a topic on women. So, my concern with issues affecting women was, right from the start, at the heart of my practice of sociology/social anthropology. Around that time I was also involved with the women's movement in Mumbai city. It was my first encounter with activism. It affected me deeply. It made me look at social and political activism in a different way. But eventually, I chose to be in academics, retaining a sympathetic connect with feminist activism.

GC: At this juncture, I'd also like to ask you the question about retrieving the works of women in sociology. We both think it is important to speak of our own 'missing revolution' as Judith Stacey and others have spoken of, for the west, yet we know there are then the opposite challenges of essentialism and ghettoisation. What do you think of this conundrum?

KG: Unlike some other social sciences, women were in fact part of the subject matter of sociology and anthropology for a long time. But only in particular and limited ways. The 19th century evolutionists were preoccupied with the status of women historically and across cultures. They asked sharp and direct questions on a macro scale. But it was speculative and value laden, talking about civilizational levels. In the decades after the Second World War, structure functionalists were writing about women's position, role conflict and the stress of combining domestic work and paid work. But it was mostly about middle class women. They did not deal with power and hierarchy but used the concept of instrumental division of labour. The idea of women's own voices was absent. On the whole, they did not problematize gender as an issue.

Questions on systemic and structural discrimination started being asked by the feminist movement from the 1970s onwards. It had an impact on the academia which started noticing the cognitive invisibility of women and sidelining of gender in the different disciplines. In the west, feminist historians and anthropologists made early and significant interventions. The latter revisited old ethnographies done mostly by white male anthropologists. They highlighted the way women's roles in various societies had been interpreted through western cultural biases on gender. Information had been gathered by speaking largely to males of the community. Women's own voices had not been heard. Feminist anthropologists gave this a name – androcentrism. That means constructing social reality through a masculine lens. Secondly, they retrieved and reread fieldwork accounts by past female anthropologists, arguing that the emotional qualities and listening and interpreting skills required for fieldwork were found more often in ethnographies done by women. Thirdly, they experimented with doing and writing fresh ethnographies in which biases were consciously identified and minimized.

Remember, Gita, I did a project for the Avabai Wadia Archives for women when you were there. I was archiving the Cancer Institute at Adyar, Chennai. I argued that a feminist history of an institution did not hinge merely on the presence of women in it. The interpersonal dynamics of the helming team of Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, her son Dr.S. Krishnamurthi and Dr. V. Shanta was crucial to the genesis and growth of the Institute. It was shaped by the idealist, reformist zeal of Reddi and the deep emotional connect among the three protagonists. In other words, micro and macro worlds are inseparably linked, as feminists have maintained time and again.

To your question on essentialism and ghettoization, the debate has been pretty thorough. Without going into details here, I would simply say that there are many voices in the field which provide for checks and balances.

GC: You have held important positions in two professional bodies, the ISS and the IAWS. How did you approach the two? Were there differences that you saw in the way these two organizations function?

KG: Among professional social science associations in India, both ISS (Indian Sociological Society) and IAWS (Indian Association of Women's Studies) are relatively well-run and efficient. Their differences have to do mostly with the smaller size, relative newness and idealism and direct and explicit links to activism of the IAWS.

The Indian Sociological Society is the biggest association of sociologists in India, set up in 1951 by G.S.Ghurye . It has more than 5000 life members, from all parts of the country. Its flagship journal *Sociological Bulletin*, along with a digital journal *Explorations* and a Hindi journal *Samaj Shastra Sameeksha,* have a significant presence in the discipline. With its scale and reach, ISS is truly representative of the kind of sociology being done in various parts of India. During the huge annual conferences, apart from the big names, one gets to meet college teachers and students from every corner, from metros to small towns and rural areas, from various class and caste backgrounds, speaking many languages, engaged in a variety of local and regional issues. For some it is a vocation, for some a profession, some are also explicitly political. Sociology is on the one hand, more and more, a tool for social justice. But for most, sociology is also a bread and butter issue. During my tenure as EC member, I could see the pulls and pressures emanating from the diversities and differences of approaches and personalities. It was difficult to always achieve consensus and balance. The Society constantly reviews its procedures and protocol, periodically reinvents itself and conducts fiercely contested democratic elections. ISS is a touchstone for sociology as it is practiced in India today. This is who we are.

In contrast, IAWS is a younger and smaller organization. It was established in 1982 soon after the First National Conference of Women's Studies. The intensity and passion of the women's movement and policy developments from the 1970s spilled over to academe and the field of Women's Studies emerged. IAWS was part of this wave. Women's studies, unlike the academic discipline of sociology, kept strong links with activism as a foundational principle of the field. IAWS activities were sharply focused on women and gender. Transformation towards a gender equitable society was an explicit goal. When I was an EC member, I experienced the special flavour of the committee meetings which were full of passionate debate but there was also a sense of urgency to act. Feminist skepticism towards organizational power structures and hierarchical functioning were internalized by many members. There were sincere efforts to put these into practice in the conduct of meetings and conferences.

GC: You have actively engaged with the Asiatic Society of Mumbai, again as an important functionary. How do you see this kind of work in relation to your academic work? This 'stepping outside of academia' is an important way of occupying the space of civic society, isn't it?

KG: In a commerce and business-oriented city like Mumbai, students are absorbed into the corporate world without much difficulty. Dedicated scholarship, especially in humanities, has little institutional backing, although I do see some change in the past two decades. The Asiatic Society of Mumbai is one of the few Learned Societies in this city. It has survived for more than two centuries. It is a classic example of a colonial institution of knowledge-making, with systematic and meticulous information gathering and collating. But it is not without motivations and agendas for creating and utilizing the knowledge. After independence, the Society was recast along nationalist, secular and democratic principles. It is now a Trust managed by elected volunteers. It is peripheral to my specific research interests but is a treasure trove for tracking the way India was recreated in the orientalist imagination. I see my involvement in the Asiatic Society of Mumbai as part of my commitment to academic outreach. Membership reflects the diversity of the city. It has a strong civil society component and functions largely through voluntary service.

I took the initiative to launch the ASIATIKA project to celebrate the Society's bicentenary, in 2002-03. You were very much part of it, Gita. We had organized year-long activities to reach out to the general public through performances, heritage walks, publications and discussions. The building and the steps are an iconic presence in the city. Do you remember, how for the first time in the Society's history, we used the magnificent steps as a performance venue to reach out to the public? A music concert by Shubha Mudgal and a play reading by Tom Alter. I am gratified that since then, these outreach activities have caught on. I am essentially a migrant to this city. I have lived here as a child and then again after marriage. It was my outreach activity at the Asiatic Society that really gave me a feeling of being a citizen of Mumbai.

GC: Academic spaces have changed dramatically after the advent of the concept of intersectionality. How has it impacted your work? Considering that you come from a position of privilege on most axes that accompany gender, that of class, caste and sexuality, how do you navigate your way? I ask this also because intersectionality has become a tremendous challenge for me, and a way of continuous self-examination, personally and as a sociologist?

KG: We live and learn. Every decade or so, a fresh axis of hierarchy and discrimination comes to the forefront, as those affected find a voice and draw attention to their condition and underlying structures. Previously unrecognized areas of deprivation, discrimination and

disenfranchisement keep getting revealed. There is no doubt that intersectionality is a powerful concept that has helped us navigate the challenges of recognizing and challenging a range of overlapping marginalities. Sociologists in India, familiar with its tremendous diversities, have been talking about class and caste, region, religion and multiple identities for long. Of late on gender and queerness too. Yet intersectionality brings in another way of approaching this. It highlights how intersecting axes of marginalization are not merely additive but create a different level of misrecognition, privation and struggle. Personally, I find myself accepting that I have enjoyed many social privileges, but they have not prevented my experiencing marginalization in several other ways. One is conscious that the injustices of history have to work themselves out of the system. One has to learn to accept the churning that accompanies this process, and steer it towards positive resolutions.

GC: My last question pertains to the relevance of our disciplines - whether sociology or anthropology or even women's studies - today. While employability has always been a question we have faced, our purpose of developing a transformative critique is also coming under threat. How do you see the future of sociology/ anthropology and women's studies?

KG: Sociology in its institutional teaching avatar has multiple purposes. Survival that means training for the job market. Success. That means preparation for the professional world. Then, sociology as vocation – that means catalyzing and supporting efforts for social change, development and transformation.To remain a relevant and robust discipline, all three are needed. How to balance and prioritize these? That largely depends upon on the context.

One of the major gains for the discipline in recent decades is the dissolving of a rigid definition of academic neutrality. The taboo on activism, engaging with societal issues and taking sides is no longer tenable. The strengthening of Public Sociology is a hopeful sign for the future. It provides ballast to resist censoring forces. That said, there is no denying that it is a sobering moment for those committed to transformative critique.

On another key, I do not subscribe to the view that as teachers our role is not to find employment for our students but only to inculcate a spirit of critical inquiry. The capacity to critique constructively is not incompatible with developing skills of writing, communication, fieldwork, digital technology. Together, they enable employability without which the discipline will not survive.

Women's studies has a much more direct and urgent engagement with transforming society. That goal is part of its very constitution. It also does not have to bear the heavy cross of disciplinary legacy.

Interdisciplinarity is inherent to it. With its close links to policy and activism, women's studies will remain relevant for a long time to come, although emphases may keep altering.

GC: Thank you Kamala, for this valuable conversation. It will, I am sure, resonate with many.

Kamala Ganesh was formerly Professor and Head, Dept. of Sociology, University of Mumbai. Email id: kamala.s.ganesh@gmail.com

Gita Chadha is a Visiting Professor at the Azim Premji University, Bangalore. Email id: gita_chadha@hotmail.com