

Intercultural Philosophy

Prof. Anthony Savari Raj

Professor of Philosophy, Manipal University Jaipur

Key Note Address

Philosophy is etymologically defined as “love of wisdom.” But our present times indeed demand that it is not only as love of wisdom, but also becomes a “wisdom of love!”

It is Karl Marx who criticized that the philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point however is to change it!

To Karl Marx, we may perhaps offer a gentle reminder that the task of philosophers is not only to interpret or change the world, but more importantly to *love* the world, without ceasing to interpret or change the world.

After all, an enlightened, a loving and a healing involvement with the world has been the three-fold task of philosophy, traditionally, in almost all cultures. And this task seems to become much more urgent and crucial in our present cross-cultural human situation.

As you know, the *novum*, the novelty of our time seems to be the increasing meeting of people and cultures. Karl Jaspers would call it the second axial age, an age in which cultures, religions, worldviews, disciplines are meeting on a scale as we have never experienced before. There seems to be a cross-cultural wind blowing. There is a realisation that in our contemporary cross-cultural human situation, no single culture, no single religion, no single worldview and no single discipline and no single person can even face - let alone solve, any of our human problems single-handedly. We need a cross-cultural sharing, and even a cross-cultural healing.

And yet, there seems to be a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, there is a meeting and mingling of cultures which globalisation well represents. There seems to be equally an experience of closing in and closing up – the experience of fanaticisms and absolutisms of all sorts with the conviction that “truth is one, and I alone have it.”

This *reductio ad unum* – reducing everything to one unit seems to have come a very long way in the history of humanity as human mind would like to unify and homogenise reality

in an effort to understand. And this effort has had a very long history in the history of human thinking starting from the quest towards one God, one empire, one church, one pope, one civilisation, one economy, one development and so on. Everything is passé. Now, we have a representation, translation of these ideals into the contemporary version in the name of one technological network of everything. And the strength and weakness of this reduction of everything into one network is that everything can be reduced to calculation. Reality is reduced to calculus.

When Galileo Galilei stated that “nature is written in mathematical language”, was he really in praise of nature? His one other statement seems to betray his real intent: he also has stated that “Nature is an enemy whose secrets are to be extracted.” Therefore, it boils down to his basic belief that the entire fish in the ocean of reality can be captured by the mathematical and calculating net.

This is in very striking contrast to the traditional wisdom of cultures on “what it means to be a human” which has resisted this kind of *reductio ad unum*, a reduction of reality to one form (monomorphism).

And the traditional understanding of the human is very revealing in this regard. A human is one who walks on earth, under the sky, joyfully and consciously. Now if we notice, there are three symbols emerging in this understanding of what it means to be a human – the symbol of the earth which is corresponding to our body. And then we have the symbol of the sky which corresponds to whatever in ourselves or a dimension of *evermore* and also there is the dimension of consciousness or rationality, of human one who walks in between.

There is, therefore, the affirmation of the three dimensionality of reality – the material, the cosmic and the divine (cosmotheandric, we may call it, to use Raimon Panikkar’s neologism). The divine is the evermore or inexhaustible dimension of reality which is represented by the sky. The cosmic is the material or the tangible dimension of reality. And we have the rational, the human or one who qualifies to be human by being rational. On the one hand there is the affirmation of the three-fold reality of cosmic, human and divine. Equally in human, there is the affirmation of sensation, understanding and intuition or intellect.

These three-dimensionality of being and knowing was maintained by almost all cultures including the western tradition until the recent modern, western, technological mentality which has reduced reality of human, divine, cosmic into human beings. Further there is a reduction of human beings to being male and, further, a reduction of male to his thinking and then his thinking to reasoning and, finally, reducing reasoning to calculation. Reality, therefore, is reduced to calculation. Anthropocentrism (human centrism), Andocentrism (male centrism), Logocentrism (reason centrism) and Technocentrism may be the summarising words for this reductionistic experience.

This reductionism has tremendous implications for the environment and eco-crisis because the reductionism believes firmly in a kind of hunter's epistemology which is assisted by the conviction that we are rational beings and the world is just a blind stuff and is meant for resources. We, therefore, can make use of the rifle of our reason to shoot the bird, called nature, which either falls wounded or dead. Behind the hunter's epistemology the reductionism of reality to calculus seems to be operating.

What would be the response of traditional cultures in facing this overpowering, bulldozing reductionism of reality to calculus? How can they respond creatively to this new situation?

In facing, however, this alluring, attractive, and most of the time dominant, monochromatic, bulldozing technocratic vision – the traditional cultures do have a very ambivalent attitude towards this vision, that is, wanting the material blessings of this technocratic civilization at the same time equally feeling deracination, alienation and impotence.

The question is what is the way forward for cultures, particularly the traditional cultures? I humbly submit that the way forward is a kind of a cultural innovation and not merely an aesthetic surgery (cosmetic, temporary and symptomatic solutions). By cultural innovation, I understand the ability of the traditions to not only learn from *within* but also from *without*, going beyond the symptomatic and temporary approaches and solutions.

In concrete, what this cultural innovation means for traditional cultures? It would mean that the traditional cultures are invited and expected to sing their own song and do their dance and re-assert and universalize their priorities, values and vision – keeping in view the spirit of the situation and certainly not in splendid isolation but in a mutual criticism and dialogue.

In responding to this worldwide hegemony of the modern technocratic and epistemocratic world-view, I believe, all cultures, with no exception, are invited and even expected to perform a double task, overcoming a double temptation: The double temptations are *colonialism*, on the one hand and *cultural apartheid*, on the other: Colonialism is the mentality that we can represent or express the totality of human experience through the notion of a single culture, and cultural apartheid is the opposite which thinks that there can be no communication possible between diverse cultures and traditions. Avoiding solipsism without falling into colonialism, overcoming monism without falling dualism, becomes therefore a cultural imperative.

The required double tasks are: Number one, universalizing the truth experiences of a tradition and number two, overcoming the blind spots.

Universalizing the truth experiences, of course, does not mean to proclaim universality. It only implies an effort to present one's heritage and wisdom to a wider universe

in such a way that a person belonging to another clime, time and tradition might be able to have some kind of resonance in his or in her own tradition of what is being presented by the other.

The Indo-Spanish philosopher Raimon Panikkar has something very interesting to tell, in this regard. He makes a crucial distinction between what we may call human invariants and cultural universals. Human invariants are those human acts in which all humans invariably participate irrespective of the clime or time they belong to. For instance, all of us are born, we eat, sleep, love, hate and will die. But the meaning, the interpretation that may be given to each of these human acts is going to be culturally different. The interpretation, therefore, will be culturally specific, tinged and coloured by the ground or the culture from which it is offered.

The second important task: overcoming of blind spots. It basically boils down to a belief that nobody can have a 360 degree view of the world. The perspectives of our tradition, therefore, have to be relativized, corrected and complemented. Here the metaphor of a window is helpful.

The window of a house reminds that we always have a window view of the world. The window of the house permits the nature and extent of our view of the world. Our view will depend on the shape, size, colour, and filter of the window.

The window also limits our view of the world. Some time it keeps us into a delusion that what we see is the only view, which is, in reality, limited. What we see from our own window is limited. It limits our perspective towards what reality is. It may happen that our view of the world from our window is so panoramic and full that we may feel or even proclaim that it is *the* best possible view in the world. While granting that possibility, a person who stands outside our window may perhaps situate better our limited view of the world and even find that our view of the world through our window is, after all, only through a peep hole.

This also implies that at no point of time we can, or are even expected to, leave our house. All that we have is a view available from the window of our house. We are, thus, able to see all that we can see though our culture, religion, discipline or any other belongingness. But since there are also other windows and houses available in the world, differing and different perceptions and viewpoints are perfectly possible. In this condition, on our part, what is required is to keep our ears open so that we can listen to descriptions made by our neighbour from his/her house. As a result, we become not only seeing but also hearing beings. We practise humility, which is only another word for courage, and in this way, we keep ourselves in a state of readiness to learn from others.

We keep our window open also for the other important reason, so that fresh air may flow in, and we may not die of suffocation. Thus, as Gandhi said, we need to keep all the

windows and doors of our tradition open so that fresh air can come in. But we should refuse to get flown off or uprooted by the wind that comes from outside. This only means that while standing on our own ground, we flourish by receiving fresh air from outside.

It all amounts to a realization of *contingency*: a recognition and an experience that we are not sufficient in constructing the picture of reality all by ourselves and that the universal range of human experience cannot be represented or exhausted by a single human phylum, however ancient, glorious or powerful it may be. Humility and receptivity, therefore, become the key words.

After all, it is only in *receiving*, even *conceiving* takes place!

THE PROBLEM OF ONE AND MANY: PLURALISM A WAY FORWARD FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Dr. Dominic Meyieho

St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Jakhama

Introduction

The problem of 'One and Many' has a perennial philosophical concern since the pre-Socrates era. The Ancient Greek philosophers spoke of the *Arche* as the 'fire,' 'water,' 'air,' and even as 'change.' The great philosopher Plato whom Whitehead remarked as the whole Western philosophy as the footnote of Plato, spoke of *form* or *ideas* as the reality and spoke of the 'Many' as the prototype or copies of the 'One'/reality. Aristotle, student of Plato deviated from him and spoke of the reality of both matter and form, affirming the importance of 'One and Many' (Universality and Particularity). Thus, since the time of Ancient Greece thinkers and philosophers there has been a debate on the 'One and Many.' The shade and the muddle of the 'One and Many' are not restricted to speculative pure philosophy alone, but seen and experienced even in other fields and disciplines. The problem of 'One and Many' has haunted and muddled politics, religions, societies, economies etc., however, one scarcely stop to think and reflect what they mean. What is the meaning of being 'One'? And, what is the measure of 'Manyness'?

One and Many

Like any good concept, the 'One and Many' are capable of stretching in many directions. Their meanings have amplified from time to time depending on the time and situation with hermeneutics as its aid and play. The political meaning - from many states, one nation (Eck, 2004, p. 29), and one may speak of Indian diversity even in this term of, from many cultural backgrounds and races; one nation. Thus, to speak of the world, everyone is a player and each play his/her own diverse games in his/her set discipline, yet, not forgetting the goal of "One World, One Dream" (The motto of the Beijing Olympics, 2008). One may also assign this even to cultural dimension that is from many peoples/races/ethnicities/nationalities, one people/one nation/one world.

Today, one's differences especially one's cultural differences are magnified with new challenges - that is to create a rainbow (pluralism of Oneness) from the 'Many' (plurality) is challenging more than ever, especially with the surging concept of globalization, the super power on the one hand, and fight for identity on the other hand. In our times, the "oneness" (pluralism) is in the danger of disappearing amid the "manyness." Disunity and tension prevailing around the globe, and especially among the diverse ethnic groups of North Eastern India; there is too much of plurality and diversity, but not enough of pluralism. How can one balance the rich particularities of the "manyness" (plurality and diversity) and the common commitment of the "oneness" (pluralism) (Eck, 2004, pp. 29-30) is the contemporary cultural challenge and a greater task and commitment for philosophizing in a culturally diverse situation of North East India.

Multiculturalism and multireligious beliefs are the facts of the pluralist of the postmodern era. The 'differences' - being different and many including religious belief is in the whirl wind of ever expanding. In contemporary times, the 'differences' are often signaled by cultural/religious language and symbol. It is becoming clear that any analysis of political and civil life will have to include religion along with race, ethnicity and language. Secularism or being secular is a new religion and a new identity. Being secular does not place a person outside the religious ideas of belief and symbolization. Secularism does not only cherish the freedom to practice religion but also freedom not to practice, this open freedom to conduct one's life and thought. Today, religious identities, beliefs, ideas and symbols shapes one's life and civic

climate whether or not one is in a religion or outside of it. Thus, today, creating and sustaining 'oneness' (pluralism) even in religion in the face of 'manyness' is a challenge.

In the contemporary times, can one still speak of *one* story as *the* story, *one* religion as *the* religion, *one* culture as *the* culture, etc.,? Historically, Greek philosophy and Christian religion dominated the world scene, but, today from a 'unity of uniformity' there is a paradigm shift to 'unity of differences,' whereby pluralism is the goal i.e., the 'many' making the 'one' without losing its individuality. In other words, come and be yourself, come as you are, with your differences to marble the diversity.

The 'manyness' poses no threat if understood in the sense of pluralism. However, it will be a threat to the 'oneness' if understood in the sense of plurality - being plural, where each difference is isolated in and by its being different. Plurality or being plural (manyness) without pluralism may lead to exclusivism. But in pluralism, each 'difference' is shaped by the encounter and engagement of the 'many.' Thus, pluralism is neither exclusivism or inclusivism or assimilation, but it is the middle way where one's 'differences' are realized and acknowledged. In other words, it is a symphony of 'differences' (a rainbow of many colours) i.e., a rainbow is a rainbow because of its many colours making the one.

Pluralism is moulded not by uniformity nor is it the melting pot but it is the freedom to be oneself, without erasing the distinctive feature of one's own difference. Horace Kallen wrote a much-discussed article in the *Nation* entitled "Democracy versus the Melting Pot," where he spoke of America's plurality and its unity in image of the symphony, not as the melting pot, but a harmony, with all the distinctive tones of many cultures, which he called it "Cultural Pluralism (cited in Eck, 2004, p. 57)." "Cultural pluralism" is an 'orchestration of humankind' because it preserves the inalienable right to the 'ancestral endowment' of selfhood imparted by one's ancestors and be different without ceasing to contribute to the whole. Developing the orchestra image in his 1915 Article he wrote:

As in an orchestra, every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society each ethnic group is the natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization, with this difference: a musical symphony is written before it is played; in the symphony of civilization the playing is the writing, so that there is nothing so fixed and inevitable about its progressions as in music, so that within the limits set by nature they may vary at will, and the range and variety of the harmonies may become wider and richer and more beautiful... (Eck, 2004, p. 58).

In the symphony of society, each retain its differences with all sounding together as one, with an ear to the music of the whole. Thus, it is a 'play of differences', a 'play of opposites' – some low and others high. Diana L. Eck (2004), modifying the symphony image writes:

A symphony is usually written in its entirety before it is played, and no society or nation has such a script. The work of cultural pluralism requires revisiting and reclaiming the energy and vision of democracy in every generation and with every new arrival. Perhaps we need to stretch our imagination to something more akin to jazz, for in jazz the playing is the writing. And because it is not all written out, it requires even more astute attention to the music of each instrument; it requires collaboration and invention among the players. Learning to hear the musical lines of our neighbors, their individual and magnificent interpretations..., is the test of cultural pluralism. Our challenge today is whether it will be jazz or simply noise, whether it will be a symphony or cacophony, whether we can continue to play together through dissonant moments (pp. 58-59).

Pluralism of "We": Unity with Differences

One need not only play but also need to listen to others as well. The range and variety of harmonies must become wider, richer and beautiful for which each one has to reciprocate to the other; playing one's own and listening to the other. If this pluralism of playing and listening to one's own and the other that is reciprocating is upheld, then, there is no fear that the

society/state/region/nation/world be fractured by 'differences' but marbled by 'differences'. Thus, one may, speak of diversity of differences that is a 'unity of differences' and not 'in spite of differences.' In such a case, the "cult of ethnicity" is not a problem but a call to live together with "one's deepest differences", so, as to enrich, nourish and enhance. Therefore, should the different ethnic/cultural groups of North East India be moulded in a melting pot of uniformity? If ethnic/cultural groups are moulded in the melting pot of uniformity, can the "we" have its desired meaning without 'differences'?

It is only when one can live together with one's deepest 'differences' and reciprocates each other's 'differences', then, the "we" becomes meaningful and can meaningfully refer to diversity which is made up of multitude of 'differences' - cultures, politics, religions, etc. The "we" of pluralism is wider than the "we" of plurality which is defined in a narrower term of the "we" of we of ethnic, religion, or national chauvinism. It is only in the "we" of pluralism one can speak of diversity. The 'we' of pluralism is a communion of 'differences' and not of uniformity. Therefore, what does one mean when one says "we" or what does the "we" of the North East of India refers to?

The North Eastern region of India to be at peace, harmony and maintain its 'differences' need the "we" of pluralism, which while retaining one's own identity marbles the whole with its 'differences'. The "we" of pluralism is, while being rooted to one's own extend beyond its 'differences', beyond its boundary, society, culture, history, politics, philosophy etc. In short, it is a mutual existence - 'live and let live' because the other is pre-given and one's life is always a happening with the others. It is a sharing, a "we" feeling of felt unity that is being at home with 'others' and 'differences'. The "we" of pluralism is an engagement and an entwinement with others.

Explaining pluralism in the image of a tree, Pratima Bowes (1986) states, the elements that make up a tree, the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits etc., grows out of a seed and are not put from outside (cited in Amaladoss, 1998, p. 145). Likewise, pluralism is from within, it is a break opening from within, which necessitate and allows growth and development. Pluralism is a language not just merely of 'differences' but of engagement, involvement, and participation. It is a language of bartering, exchanging, dialogue, debate (Eck, 2004, p. 69), communion and enhancement. Pluralism is a communion, a dynamic process through which one engages with 'other differences' in and through one's deepest differences. Thus, pluralism is not a mere relativism or assimilation, tolerance or ideology or even inclusivism, but a dynamic process that is reciprocating each 'other differences' to enrich and to enhance etc.

Pluralism and Tolerance

The dynamic process of pluralism is not given but it is to be created needing human endeavours, innovation and novelty. It is an engagement which constantly needs human innovation to meet the demands and challenges of time and situation. In other words, it is a participation, and attunement to life and energies of one another. In this perception, we may say, pluralism is not another word for diversity, but goes much beyond diversity and mere plurality and manyness (Eck, 2004, p. 70). All diversities are not pluralism but all pluralism necessarily dwells and posses' diversity - engaging, involving and participating with one another in and through one's deepest differences:

Diversity and pluralism are not the same, and although you can have diversity without pluralism, you cannot have pluralism without valuing diversity. Diversity can simply mean counting the variety of people. Pluralism means that we value people for the variety they bring to the group (Eck, 2004, p. 77).

Pluralism is an engagement with real 'differences', and tolerance is not its other word. Pluralism is not a grand relativism, valueless relativism as most critics may point it to be. It does not undermine or sacrifice one's own or particularity in the interests of universality.

Pluralism is a dynamic act of balancing one's own with that of the others, and particularity with universality. Diana L. Eck (2004), points out:

Pluralism is engagement with, not abdication of, differences and particularities. While the encounter with people of other... lead one to a less myopic view of one's own..., pluralism is premised not on a reductive relativism but on the significance of and engagement with real differences (71).

Pluralism is never complete, but it is a dynamic process which is ongoing and *be-ing* (continuing *to be*). It is a dialogue – a vigorous engagement: the engagement of real 'differences', which is not aimed at achieving agreement, but at achieving relationship (Eck, 2004, p. 72). John Courtney Murray (1960), a Catholic thinker in the late 1950's writes:

By pluralism here I mean the coexistence within the one political community of groups who hold divergent and incompatible views... Pluralism therefore implies disagreement and dissension within the community. But it also implies a community within which there be agreement and consensus (p. x).

Finally, pluralism is a diversity of real 'differences', which is not a point of weakness but a source of strength and a power house. It is a dynamic process of understanding, which allows communion of real 'differences', while maintaining its own different identity. To summarize, pluralism is the equilibrium of "One" and "Many", and "Particularity" and "Universality."

Pluralism: A Quest for Harmony of 'Differences'

Diversity, variety, manyness is a fact of the Cosmos; the plants, animals, rivers, lakes, deserts, rocky crests, seas, mountains etc. All of these make the Cosmos in which Human find themselves. Therefore, human's search for unity must begin with a joyful acknowledgement of pluralism as rich and not as deterioration or impoverishment. Pluralism is a sign, an acknowledgement of the individuality, creativity and independent of the diversity in the Cosmos. The diversity in the Cosmos points to the fact that the Cosmos is a house - a locus and a place for a harmonious existence.

'To be' in the Cosmos is not survival of the fittest, but engagement and relationship of 'differences'. The continual search for wholeness, harmony and unity of life is a constituent feature of most cultures. There is an ineffable and universal rhythm that unifies everything into a harmonious whole which binds together pluralistic reality. The Asian sages perceived this unifying principle of harmony as *Tao*, *Rta*, *Dharma* (Amaladoss, 1998, p. 146) and *Nanyü* (*Angami Naga*), *tip blei* (Khasi). Diversity is that which shape the reality and keep life moving on - alive, active, creative and at peace. The *mono* tendency is a threat to existence, it destroys creativity with the ever flooding of ready-made products of machines, which have less human's innovations/endeavours, and ebbs out peace in the competitive survival of the fittest and the strongest.

Harmony is never in spite of 'differences' but because of 'differences'. It is a 'communion of differences' and not uniformity. The 'communion of differences', however, should not be mistaken for uniformity or identify with it, as harmony is always with 'differences'. Perhaps, the symphony of music could best explain the importance of coming together of 'differences' and how vibrant these 'differences' are when they come together. In music, although, the different notes are harmonized, yet each of the different notes is distinct and maintains its individuality enriching the whole and itself. Harmony in this sense, is a fusion of the different others, which create and re-create a symphony/relationship. It is call 'to' and 'for' a fellowship/communion with the others.

In harmony one becomes indispensable to the other and vice versa. It is one of inclusiveness but not inclusivism; each becomes inevitably important of itself and to the 'others'. The 'other' becomes one's ethics, it is here obligation and responsibility to self and others emerge. The human body here would be an apt example:

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a

part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it (1 Corinthians 12: 14-17, 19-23 & 25-26).

Fellowshipping of the 'Different Others'

The concept of 'pure' or 'one' is utopia. The 'other' is pre-given even before an individual attempt at understanding the other. The foreignness of the other is a phenomenon an individual is confronted with in one's own home cultures and philosophies (Huang, 2005, p, 16). An individual is no more one's own and one's own is not only for itself but being open i.e., the 'other' becomes part of oneself and vice versa. The 'other' possesses a constitutive reciprocity. The consideration and acceptance of the 'other' as the 'other' is the way forward in the context of the North East India. The North East must not be perceived in the line of plurality but in the line of pluralism – 'many' making the 'one'. The 'other' is as important and necessary as an individual is, not a contingent being whom one can take for a ride, but one must seriously consider the 'other' and 'otherness' and thereby realize one's fullness in the face of the 'other'.

One cannot close one's eye or reject the others but give a space and live along with them. The 'other' and the 'otherness' is a discovery, a new found reality which one has never got better off. The North Eastern Region need to overcome the fear of the 'differences', the 'others' and the phobia of the changing dynamics. Becoming and engaging with the 'differences' has to be the engagement and life style of the North easterners as exhibited by the dialogues of the time which affirms, believes and admits the existence of the 'others' as the 'otherness'.

The meeting of 'differences' - cultures, philosophies, religions, societies etc., calls for the reciprocity of the 'others' (Huang, 2005, p, 160). The spirit of pluralism affirms that the 'other' becomes indispensable, and the need to be open to the 'other', that is 'live and let live,' where the dialogue partners meet to differ and differs to meet without ceasing to be fellowshipping (Furtado, June 2004, p. 161). The 'other,' 'alterity' is the alchemy of pluralism - the meeting of 'others' enriches, promotes, communicates and makes fellowshipping a possibility. It asserts and re-asserts the social nature and dimension of one's being - a communicating being and with other beings (communion/fellowship).

Pluralism, positively stating is 'a name of a theoretical conviction, an attitude, and an insight' that no culture is *the* culture. Such an insight and conviction prevent absolutizing of one's culture and thinking (Furtado, June, 2004, p. 160). Pluralism, thus, resides in different cultures, transcending the narrow limits, but tie on to the 'others,' making culture a cross-cultural phenomenon (Mall, 2000 p. 1). Pluralism defy all *mono* tendencies - *the* culture, *the* government, *the* economy, *the* truth, *the* race, *the* language, etc., but a communion of many - a mutual dependency while not sacrificing one's independency and identity, but the 'other' as that enriches and enhances oneself.

In the past, cultures have come into contact with one another either in the form of peace or in clashes, but in contemporary times, meeting of cultures is faster and easier by means of technology and communication. Not watering down the greater history when cross-cultural happenings were slow in the past few decades, mainly after the World War II, a fundamental change has occurred in the way different cultures meet and address each other (Mall, 2000 p. 36). The so-called 'age of reason' and 'universal rationality' are being replaced by 'local,'

‘ethnic’ rationalities and emotional characteristics of human’s existence. As a result, there is a return to the particular, contextual and local characterized as a ‘plurality’ in all areas of life - in thinking processes, communication, politics, culture, religious beliefs, ethics, races etc. Thus, pluralism as a way forward for in perceiving the North East India has to be well grounded on ‘differences’ and advocates openness to the ‘others’ in one’s particularity.

Often there is a tendency to define social truth in terms of a particular culture or tradition, nevertheless, no tradition, no culture has the whole, complete of philosophical *perennis*. Every culture lives in their specific world; they have an environment they can handle (Panikkar, 1995, p. 85). However, the greed and arrogant to pose a particular tradition as a treasure house of *the* philosophical *perennis* has led to endless disputes and misunderstanding among different philosophical world views - *Weltanschauungen*.

Pluralism in its approach of understanding life and various social issues, it is not desirable to talk of *the* truth, *the* culture, *the* society etc., as all cultures, societies, religions etc., develops and exists in the limitation of its own givenness (*Dasein*) - *spatio-temporal* reality of its own. It is not desirable to speak of universal in cultural and philosophical universality. Although, culture and traditions are similar in their attempt to explain reality in universal terms but they also bring to light the differences among themselves (Furtado, June 2004, p. 160). Nothing is given to an individual in absence of one’s perspectives/prejudices. These prejudices or different perspectives without any claim of absolute reconcile the different perspectives in one grand prejudice (Mall, 2000, p. 31) by way of fellowshipping of the different prejudices and perspectives. Pluralism, thus, avoids the extremes of both a radical relativism and an exclusive essentialism.

Beings meet to differ and differ to meet, pointing to deep-rootedness in the ‘others’. Therefore, the ‘differences’, the ‘otherness’ in an individual is not fully and totally exclusive. The ‘differences’, the ‘otherness’ in the others and culture, stimulates, act and make understanding and communication possible (Mall, 2000, p. 25). The fact is that universality co-exist with particularity - every culture attempt to explain reality in universal terms and at the same time bring to light their ‘differences’ among themselves. However, no mutual understanding, communication is possible among the different culture and different ‘others’ if there is ‘total difference’ and ‘total identity’. This concept of ‘total difference’ and ‘total identity’ is not desirable, especially for a region like the North East India where there exists many ‘others’.

‘Total identity’ makes understanding superfluous, redundant, and total difference makes it impossible. ‘Total identity’ sound a death knell to the spirit of diversity of culture, and pluralism and fellowshipping suffers a discord. ‘Total identity’ is the idea of a “concrete universal” (Hegel) i.e., a call for monism, *mono-cultural*, one philosophical truth, one historicity etc., ushering the reign of hegemony and uniformity. ‘Total identity’, in short is a fight for supremacy, a tendency to absolutise oneself exclusively when confronted with ‘others’, automatically relativizing themselves (Mall, 2000, pp. 31-36).

The history of colonialism, imperialism, missionarism, holocaust of Nazism, and globalization, democracy, insurgency and terrorism of the present times testify to this fact of ‘total identity’. ‘Total identity’ locates *philosophia perennis* in a particular race, culture, or philosophical convention (Mall, 2000, p. 29). The claim to possess *philosophia perennis* has been explicitly or implicitly visible nearly in all traditions - the Christian, sees salvation as only through the Church (Pre-Vatican Council II perception of salvation only through Jesus Christ), Hinduism claiming to be the eternal religion - the Vedas as authorless and as *Sruti* (what is heard), and the Muslim monotheistic belief that Allah is the Supreme Lord, and belief in any other God other than Allah as infidelity.

The wave of ‘total identity’ was high in the then Europe, although it is not totally over, as even today the wave is sweeping the globe in one form or the other. The then Euro-centrism

was marked by colonization, imperialism, missionaryism and claiming itself to be *the* - the 'White Man's burden.' Ironically, the very idea of culture was identified with European culture (Mall, 2000, pp. 11-30). The bias of Euro-centrism and superiority of the West also did not escape the indologist like Max Müller to whom India owes much. He writes,

People do not yet see the full importance of the Veda in an historical study of religion. The bridge of thoughts... that spans the whole history of the Aryan world has the first arch in the Vedas, its last in Kant's Critique. While in the Veda we may study the childhood, we may study in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* the perfect manhood of Aryan (Roy, 1993, p. 67).

The 'total identity', the one sidedness is also found in the Indian side too, which claims that Indian culture is essentially spiritual - it is a *dharma* (Monhanty, 1992, p. 290). Even within the diverse cultural groups in India, there is a tendency to speak of one culture as the home of all that is good and being Indian, thus one is tempted to echo the slogan of *ghar wapsi*. This matrix of 'total identity' is exclusive; the diversity of culture and differences has no place and has no meaning. It relegates the 'others/differences' as in its primal form and encourages *mono-culturalism*. Can such a perspective of *mono-culturalism* and its tendencies be applicable to the North East which pride itself of cultural diversity?

The parallel opposition of 'total identity' is 'total difference'. It is a radical difference among cultures. It is radical of 'manyness's, a plurality of differences, the other and other, but not pluralism - no meeting points, differing, division, separation and parting. Such differences/plurality without pluralism nips the very possibility of mutual understanding among culture.

The exclusive plurality is a mere tolerance without being open to the reality of the 'other'. Pluralism cannot exist in mere tolerance/exclusive plurality, but where there are 'differences' and the *inter-action* (interaction) of 'differences' without ceasing to be its own and yet without separating as the absolute 'otherness', inviting fellowshiping of the 'different others'. Reclining in the context of North East India, mere tolerance without being open to the differences of other cultural/ethnic groups will go nowhere. A way forward for a diverse cultural groups with varied perspectives as in the case of the North East is the fellowshiping of all 'differences' and dialogue of the different others of the region.

Centricless Approach: A Way Forward

No genuine cultural engagement/exchange is perhaps possible without being open in dialogue with other culture. Thinkers and scholars may then be convinced that truth is exclusively nobody's possession alone. The truth is in fact multifaceted, i.e., it has many faces. It is from 'where' (*topos*/space) and 'when' (*chronos*/temporal) we look at it. The 'where' (*topos*) and 'when' (*chronos*) are equally true of every culture. No culture escape or transcend the *spatio-temporal* reality of its own. Therefore, the question of absolutizing *the* truth from a *mono-cultural* perspective have no ground and most especially for a diverse cultural setting like the North East of India.

Pluralism goes beyond all centrisms. This does not mean one should cease theorizing from a cultural centre. A centre does not necessarily mean to be centric but to avoid making oneself as the absolute - negating, discrimination and exclusivism. The impulse here is that while being rooted in one's own world-view - in a centre, one need to be open to the world-views of 'others' (Furtado, pp. 160-161). Theorizing and cultural engagement should not only be restricted as the activity of the mind - thinking (*logos*) alone but also take seriously the dimension of the heart - understanding if culture is to be perceived as a way of life of a collective consciousness of particular cultural.

Pluralism as an approach of cultural engagement is a multifaceted phenomenon, and such an exercise cannot be identified with the culturality of a particular ethnic/cultural group. It should not be mistaken as an eclecticism of a manifold of cultural philosophies. It is not to be

equated with mere abstraction. It is not an anesthetization of cultural philosophies, nor cultural romanticism or exoticism (Mall, 2000, p. 5). It is also not a reaction to the pluralistic philosophical traditions of the present time rather that which resides in all different cultures - a way of life - a lived experience, refusing to absolutise a culture, but to *stand-under* (understand) the different cultural experiences and thoughts, that which will enrich oneself, knowing one's 'otherness' and the 'otherness of the other'; opening the windows of dialogue and communication. Such cultural engagement/exchange cannot be fixed, but a share-lived experiences of mutuality. Pluralism acknowledges the 'differences' and the 'others', but without degree - who has more and who has less. The 'other' remains the 'other' because of its 'way of life,' 'lived experience,' and the '*spatio-temporal*' in which it finds itself and it can never be identified with any other. In such a perception, unity *of* and *for* 'differences' is a reality and not unity *of* and *for* uniformity.

Conclusion

Pluralism is a serious search and admittance of the 'other and otherness', not as separating, estranging but as perception that is a coming together of many 'differences' for mutual enrichment, enhancement and development. It is a genuine search for diversity but not without unity. It is a unity of perception of many 'differences' and not a blind or mere unity, but a conscious 'unity with differences'. Therefore, it is not a unity of uniformity but a 'unity with differences' - a unity with differences. It is, thus, a consciousness of openness to the 'other' and their 'differences'. It seeks moral grounds for common action that is 'to understand the other and to be understood by the other.' It is an attitude to respect the perspectives of the 'other' and not reducing or absorbing into our own perspectives. The fact is nothing is given to anyone in the absence of perspectives. No culture can empty the endless reservoir of the *philosophia perennis*. It has been the dream of many theologians, thinkers, scholars and metaphysicians to possess and claim exclusively the one eternal truth in its entirety, but led to endless misunderstanding and even wars (Mall, 2000, p. 31). No particular culture can ever exhaust the immense richness of the reality itself, but demands a multiplicity of cultural engagement as responses. The hermeneutics of pluralism without denying one's own culture let go the claim of absolutism and seek to promote, 'I am because we are, and we are because I am' (Shenk, 1995, p. 86). Thus, for a multicultural context like the North East India, pluralism is a way forward, where 'differences' must be perceived as beautiful. 'Differences' do not separate us, but the differences beckon us and marble our unity. Thus, unity is not in spite of difference but 'because of difference.'

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Distinctiveness and Inter-connectivity of Ethnic Identity, Tribe, and Clan Manifestation in Northeast India

Eniro Murry

Department of North East India Studies

Assam Don Bosco University

Sonapur, Assam

Dr. Dominic Meyieho (Co-Author)

Controller of Examinations

St. Joseph's College (Autonomous)

Jakhama, Kohima, Nagaland

For correspondence concerning this article kindly address to **Eniro Murry**,

Email: orromurry@gmail.com

Abstract

The Northeast India stands out for its uniqueness and richness in ethnic background, cultural vibrancy, tribal distinctiveness, clan manifestation, linguistic variance, and religious diversity. The region is regarded as one of the hotspots of ethnic assertiveness in retaining and protecting their distinctive identities having complex historical backgrounds over the centuries. The ethnic issue involved not just the natives within the Indian subcontinent but also a fight against illegal immigration.

The Northeastern states developed a keen feeling of nationality as an outcome of real kinship founded on clan affiliations rather than fictive kinship. While the dominant tribal group fostered clan activism among its members by acting as a functional kinship group and instilling a sense of camaraderie, the minority groups are also inspired to work together as a group of competent kinship units, oftentimes in contradictions to other clans, which eventually promotes the growth of kinship activism. The emergence of comparable informal institutions that permit people to transit across ethnic lines is underlined by the significance of the clan presence amongst many tribes. The aforementioned unparalleled but intriguing analysis elevates multiple questions concerning the region's ethnogenesis and assertion of rigorous ethnic identity.

Keywords: *Clan, Ethnic Identity, Ethnicity, Kinship, Northeast India, Tribe*

Introduction

The Northeastern borders of India are among the most turbulent areas in South Asia. This 263,000-square-kilometer territory shares a relatively porous and volatile border with Myanmar to the east, Bangladesh to the southwest, China to the north, and Bhutan to the northwest (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2004). Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim constitute Northeast India, which is comprised of native inhabitants as well as people from Tibet, Burma, Thailand, and Bengal, who inhabited the region at various times throughout history (Inoune, 2005). Most ethnic communities currently residing in Northeast India originated from the east, and many still share significant sociocultural and kinship ties with people in Thailand, China, and Myanmar (Burling, 2007). The Northeast region is distinguished by its diversity in terms of Mongoloid ethnic heritage, linguistic variations, and religious diversity. This ethnocultural traditional lineage marks the ethnic communities and Tibeto-Burman languages' prominence in Northeast India (Das, 2009). India's Northeast is profoundly a multi-ethnic region, comprising 75 major ethnic communities, other minority groups, about 400 languages, and dialects, and about 30 percent of the area's population comprises tribes with distinct social and cultural customs (Dev, 2004). Unlike the valley inhabitants of Northeast India like the Kacharis, Ahom, Meitei, and others who are known for their monarchical system of governance, the hill tribal populations practice their respective type of republican government (Kamei, 2011). The terms ethnic, tribe and clan thrive within the larger spectrum of the term identity. It is, thus, essential to understanding the concept of identity.

The Concept of Identity

Clearly defining identity would demand a considerable deal of scholarly discourse. Having a concise definition of identity that can be acceptable universally seems to be an unending endeavour, especially with human society dealing with diverse problems. Its multifaceted and intrinsic character necessitates contextualisation. The notion of identity is beset with uncertainty (Snow & Anderson, 1987). There are undoubtedly a lot of other connections that might be made in a field as wide as identity (Deaux & Burke, 2010). In humanities and social sciences, the phrase identity politics is frequently applied to characterise a broad range of concepts, which includes multiculturalism, the feminist movement, civil rights, lesbian and gay uprisings, separatist mobilisations in Canada and Spain, the hostile ethnic and nationalist crisis in postcolonial Asia

and Africa, as well as in the erstwhile communist states of Eastern Europe (Bernstein, 2005). The term identity originates from the Latin word *identitas*, which means "the same" (Wyld & Partridge, 1961). It also contains a technical connotation in mathematics and logic, which has been applied in English since the 16th century and has been linked to philosophy's age-old mind-body conflict since John Locke's period (Gleason, 1983). To gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the essence of identity, the notion of sameness would look relatively inadequate, ambiguous, and complex in the absence of appropriate assessment and interpretation from different standpoints.

The significance of one's identity symbolises how relevant one is compared to others. Otherness is a primary perception without which diversification would be irrelevant. All would have been the same in the absence of otherness. Identity is simply the non-presence of otherness and otherness is something that exists (Savery, 1942). Without highlighting the two well-known theories of identity - the social identity theory and identity theory, the basis of identity is incomplete. The former describes one's position on grounds of determining the personality traits of the group's self-definition which is a depiction of the self-image, while the latter explains social conduct in terms of the mutually supportive interactions between the self and society. Identity theory is a branch of sociology that examines how people's identities are structured and how those identities connect to the social functions they perform in terms of behaviour, and the concept of social identity theory and self-categorisation has its roots in psychology and examines how people's involvement in groups affects the pattern and functionality of identity (Hogg, *et al.* 1995). Psychologists tend to prioritise their theories on social or group-based personalities, whereas sociologists have positioned their theoretical focus on role identities as intertwined with an intricate social system and this significant difference validates the distinctiveness between psychological and sociological approaches to the study of identity (Deaux & Burke, 2010).

The concept of identity encompasses more than just one component, with group identity being another. Examining some of the key components of group identity would be desirable. The primary unit of group identification may be considered to be the family. It is essential for maintaining the members' perception of group identity. Families have distinctive bundles of identities, such as the family's collective identity, the intrapersonal identities of smaller groups such as siblings, spouses, parents, and children's relationships, and the identities of each family member (Epp & Price, 2008).

The magnitude of group identity increases and ultimately includes a broad spectrum of numerous claims. It is not unusual for several intergroup identity rivalries amongst religious communities considering that religion typically provides the identification drive more effectively and extensively than other components of identity (Seul, 1999). According to Dashefsky (1976), an ethnic group may be a collection of people who embrace a feeling of identity based on presumptive common sociocultural experiences and/or physical features. Such groups may be perceived as social, national, linguistic, religious, or territorial by their members and/or outsiders. Members of ethnic groups thus have a commonality in their ethnic background or feeling of belongingness, which is a reflection of their shared experience.

People who have lived in the same location or neighborhood for many generations usually form close bonds with one another. The Israeli government's constant evacuation threats and the resilience of the Gaza settlers illustrate how important geographical location is to identity, and the empowering of the settlers' self-images and identities were greatly impacted by their mobility, and the sense of place in everyday life was more important to the settlers than the imagined one (Schnell & Mishal, 2008). A study undertaken by Christopher (2006) on the identity-related issues in the Commonwealth census, which included 71 states and dependent territories, paints a very challenging image by revealing that out of the four topics undertaken for study-religion, citizenship or nationality, language, and race or ethnicity-the most debatable one was ethnicity. Such research unequivocally establishes the diversity of identity politics globally.

Unlike regional, religious, and ethnic identities, racial identities are distinct as they take important presumptive biological characteristics into account (Dikötter, 1994). In civilisations where race categorises the social structure, group identification based on race has become the main component of identity (Smedley, 1998). The black immigrants' perception of their racial identity in the American social structure (Benson, 2006), the denouncement of institutionalised apartheid and the establishment and impactful regulation of racial classifications in modern South Africa (Cornelissen & Horstmeier, 2002), the German claim of the pure Aryan race, and the Chinese yellow race (Dikötter, 1994) are among the most notable examples in this context. Our focus is similarly directed to the problems of indigenous movements around the world that are reasserting their inherent native identities, whether among the indigenous Bribri Indians of Costa Rica in

reclaiming their heritage and safeguarding their own culture despite the challenging conditions of subversion (Nygren, 1998), or amongst the native tribes of the Nagas, Mizos, Ahoms, and Apatanis in Northeast India who are facing similar challenges (Nibedon, 1981).

Compared to the observation above, identity contention based on gender issues is remarkably different. Since the beginning of the women's movement during the 1970s in the contemporary United States of America, the manifestation of feminist identity has gained popularity. Feminist identity embraces gender-role beliefs, feminist awareness, and feminist self-identification. Perceptions regarding the implication of the women's movement and the root causes of gender inequality are highly correlated with feminist self-identification (McCabe, 2005). The campaigns for lesbian and homosexual rights demonstrate how responses between political opponents, state actors, and social activist group organisations shape the identities that are used. The 1993 Lesbian and Gay March on Washington, as portrayed by Sidney Tarrow, brings out a significant paradox regarding identity politics (Bernstein, 1997).

The oldest profession known to humankind is prostitution, which is unique in the domain of identity proposition. One of the prerequisites for keeping women in prostitution, it is contended, is that the problems and discrepancies in their lives are addressed and considered rational in a manner that makes it credible which means subjectively meaningful. Such an acceptance makes sense through the conception of a particular prostitute identity shaped by and within an evolving pattern of perspectives for men, money, and violence (Phoenix, 2000).

The question of caste, one of the most important determinants of identity in the Indian sociopolitical realm, is another distinctive element of group identification. For instance, the election triumphs of the self-proclaimed Dalit party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, have dramatically politicised Dalit identity and radically transformed the political fabric of North India. The Bahujan Samaj Party has instilled political assertiveness and self-respect into the essence of Dalit identity (Beth, 2007). The issue of caste identity and politics has been discussed more elaboratively in the preceding theme under the Indian political system on caste and clan.

The preceding analysis supports the contention that identity constitutes a multi-dimensional concept. It may simply be defined as a person's unique traits, moral standards, and attitudes or as common features embraced by group affiliations. In modern social science, identity permeates many fields of study, including psychology, sociology, psychoanalysis, history, and political science. The extensive use of the word identity, however, obscures the wide range variability of conceptual connotations and theoretical functions it performs, and variation remains apparent even when confined only to social psychology and sociology (Stryker & Burke, 2000). It may be observed that numerous ethnic conflicts and violent acts of severe nature have proliferated around the world since the end of the Cold War era, whether in the contexts of Haiti, Somalia, and Kosovo in the 1990s or Georgian and Ukrainian issues in the 21st century. Statistics reveal that ethnic conflicts make up 75 percent of all active conflicts in the post-cold war period, which is disturbing (Amar, 2011).

Ethnic Identity in Northeast India

India is perhaps one of the world's most diverse and highly complex societies, and examining ethnicity in this region is a serious concern and poses a significant challenge. Its intricacy creates a much tougher and riskier applicability of the term here in India than anywhere else (Manor, 1996). One of the hotspots of ethnic assertiveness in maintaining and guarding their unique identities with multifaceted historical development over the generations is the Northeast zone of India, which is also strategically situated midway between Southeast and South Asian countries. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura represent this region.

Northeast India is regarded as a highly complex region in the world. There hasn't been much peaceful political condition since India gained its freedom. The above viewpoint may be explained by the presence of many inhabitants with different cultural attributes, customs, traditions, and linguistic constraints. Due to these factors, it is important to consider paying appropriate attention to recognise the complexity of Northeast India, which is a heterogeneous society rather than a homogeneous one (Handique, 2011). The conflicting dynamics of integration and the high tendency for ethnic identity preservation have kept the ethnic furnace of Northeast India simmering for generations. The socio-cultural environment of the region is characterised by several ethnic

communities whose social behaviours vary to different proportions owing to the endorsement of their respective ethnic belief structures (Singh, 1987). According to Cline (2006), several ethnic groups have engaged in violent, protracted separatist struggles in Northeast India in the past generations. Following decades of insurgency issues, the region is often described as highly diversified, with a perplexing array of politically notable ascriptive identities (Baruah, 2005; Hazarika, 1994; Mukherjee, 2007).

The Northeast region has a large presence of meta-ethnicity and ethnolinguistic communities. Metha-ethnicity refers to a degree of homogeneity that is broader and more dispersed than ethnicity but falls short of correlating to nation or nationality, yet sometimes it may surpass both, and thus it often denotes a bigger cluster of identical ethnic groups that recognise each other in everyday life (Singh, 2000; Turchin, 2003). Encyclopaedia Britannica defines ethnolinguistics as a branch of anthropological linguistics that examines the connection between a language and the nonlinguistic cultural practices of its inhabitants. It is also referred to as cultural linguistics. Perceived notions and cognition influence language, and ethnolinguists investigate how this is related to various cultures and social systems, and a related field of linguistics termed cultural linguistics studies how language and cultural concepts interact (Sharifian, 2011). Acharya (1990) discovered a range of metaethno-linguistic groups (metaethno-linguistic is a combination of meta-ethnicity and ethnolinguistic communities) in Northeast India, all of which relate to the South Mongoloid ethnic stock and Sino-Tibetan linguistic group and they typically comprised the Naga methaethno-linguistic module in Nagaland, that consists of 20 or more Naga ethnic groups, the Mizo metaethno-linguistic unit, representing a similarly considerable presence of Kuki-Chin groups in Mizoram, the Bodo entity, including the Bodos or Bodo-Kacharis and the Koch-Rabha-Rajbangshi intricate ethnic communities in the Western Brahmaputra plains in Assam, the Assamese Misings groups, the Hill Miris and a handful of other ethnic groups of Arunachal Pradesh, and the Khasi-Jainti tribal communities in Meghalaya, which, although having South Mongoloid racial traits, follows Austroasiatic expressions.

Language

Language has a big impact on how various ethnic groups interact with one another in a multi-ethnic community like Northeast India. The diversity of its ethnocultural mosaic and the

geographical dispersion of many linguistic communities are both reflected in linguistic complexity. A variety of linguistic groups make up the region's population, which is both varied and heterogeneous with each group having its distinctive way of life and traditional culture, and many of them seek to have their own political identity (Prabhakara, 2012). By the early 18th century, Assamese society had undergone a significant homogeneity and cohesion, mostly based on language. This process had begun in the latter half of the Ahom period when Assamese culture and language had become well-established. However, the establishment of the British administrative power and the inception of Bengali as the official language of Assam in 1838 upset this development (Nag, 1990). The Assam Official Language Act of 1960 recognised Assamese as the official language of the state which was finally adopted after more than a century, mainly under the leadership of the Asom Sahitya Sabha, the foremost literary and cultural organisation of Assamese citizens (Misra, 1988).

Religion

Religion is also a significant aspect of ethnic identity in Northeast India. Christianity is practiced and propagated by the majority of people in Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, whereas in Assam, Manipur, and Tripura, the majority of the people follow Hinduism, and in Arunachal Pradesh, several indigenous religious practices predominate instead of widely well-known religious doctrine professed among the majority population of the mainland India (Dasgupta, 1997). Muslims in Northeast India can be divided into two broad categories based on their cultural identities. The first group, commonly referred to as the Assamese Muslims, originated in northern India and immigrated to the Brahmaputra valley, they were of Afghan and Mughal descent, while the second group, the Bengali Muslims, entered from East Bengal during British colonialism and the association between the Assamese Muslims and Assamese Hindus were relatively amicable, however, despite speaking the same language, the relationship between Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims were adversely affected by intercommunal strife (Singh, 1987). The tension remained primarily ethnic, but it developed into a more sectarian tone as groups affiliated with Hindu and Muslim communities took advantage of one another's vulnerabilities. While the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu nationalist organisation that popularised and warned of the danger of Muslim infiltrators taking over Assam, had considerably increased its activities in the state, the Islamic fundamentalist organisations, mainly the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Tabligh

Jamaat, have become more operative among the Muslims (Hardgrave, 1983). In all fairness, it may be noted that in addition to traditional religious adherents and conversions to Christianity, several tribal people also practice Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism, and many of them converse in Assamese, the state's official language (Crowley, 1997). Ethnic classifications in Assam cannot be perceived as a primitive outcome that converges on defined political patterns. They may be viewed more as political activism: an attempt to coordinate a specific ethnic coherence. However, not all of these initiatives are successful, as ethnic boundaries are malleable. For instance, there may be moments when religiously oriented ethnic cohesiveness becomes relevant; other times, linguistic-based ethnic camaraderie may display its significance, and yet at certain times, none of the two may be relevant (Baruah, 1986).

Illegal Immigrants: A Threat to Ethnic Identity

The ethnic issue involved not just the natives' resentment against the influx of population in the Northeast region from other states within the Indian subcontinent but also a fight against illegal immigration. Assam and its neighbouring states of Tripura and Manipur saw a substantial expansion of the anti-foreign agitation. An anti-immigrant campaign that began in Assam in 1979 led to outbreaks of extremely violent acts, thereby creating social unrest. The 1985 Settlement facilitated the formation of an anti-immigrant government in Assam that was led by a students' organisation, and the brief rule of the United Liberation Front of Assam over several regions in Assam, which erupted in 1990, was a novel and significant challenge to the centers' policy of expanding their dominance across the Northeast regions (Lacina, 2009). Indigenous tribal communities in Tripura spearheaded violent assaults against the upsurge of Bengali refugees and settlers, whose population significantly surpassed the native residents and gradually started to dominate even the state government, similarly Manipuri students resented and launched a severe attack against the Biharis, Punjabis, and Bengalis, and the extensively increasing affluent Nepali cattle and dairy farm owners and in Meghalaya as well, following the footsteps of the Assam campaign, students initiated protests and demonstrations against the outsiders Bengalis and foreign Nepalese; eventually, the migrant-ethnic crisis has divided the entire Northeast region (Weiner, 1983; Hardgrave, 1983).

Tribe and Clan Manifestation

In Northeast India, identity politics is one of the most prominent political themes. Identity politics have been confronted with violent retaliation throughout the region. Political beliefs constructed upon traditional social recognition are defined as identity politics (Ford, 2005). This politics of social identification is primarily concerned with social group classification founded on indicators like gender, caste, ethnicity, and tribe (Tajfel, 1981). Ethnicity serves as the foundation for understanding the complexities of Northeast hostilities. Ethnicity is defined as a shared ancestry, racial, territorial, linguistic, and kinship relationship that is assertively linked to identity politics (Chattopadhyay, 2021). The establishment of three forms of community and political entity as a chieftdom, tribe, and state had occurred in this major ethnic territory, which had a long history of isolation, harsh landscapes, and an absence of extensive inter-ethnic connections (Das, 1989). The claim for nations in Northeast India is founded on ethnic grounds; an identity generated in fighting competing identities and manifested in democratic agitation, anti-state armed struggles, ethnic expulsion, and similar activity (Roy, 2005).

For administrative and political convenience, the colonial administration created the term “tribe” to encapsulate the social diversity it faced, and to accomplish this, enumeration and categorisation were used (Suan, 2011). When tribal groups unite as one for shared identification, they develop ethnic powerhouses and increase their claims for the entire region. The competition for dominance of territories occupied by various tribes is one severe effect of this quest for land (Meetei, 2014). The development or wanting to join together to form an ethnic state, more recurrently to perceive itself through these actions, would surely have to be contradictory to its own state (Gellner, 1983). A further consideration is that tribal conflicts frequently take the shape of struggles for territory and related assets linked to the manifestation of their ethnic identity and status (Aheibam, 2005). Northeast India has been plagued by insurgency for decades and is often portrayed as remarkably heterogeneous, with a dizzying array of politically notable ascriptive ethnic identities (Baruah, 2005; Hazarika, 1994; Mukherjee, 2008). In reality, no specific criteria unify or relate to the region, whether cultural, linguistic, religious, environmental, economic, or agricultural aspects, except conceivably a unified sense of marginalisation from the mainland (Subba, 1998). Regardless of the fact that the Northeast region shared an international boundary with Asia-Pacific nations like China and Burma, neither Hindu nor Muslim monarchs had any desire to conquer the region (Mukherjee, 2014).

Northeast India, amidst its transnational sociocultural and historical linkages, has also shown trends that challenge the validation of identities from within the state (Sharma, 2021). The former might be depicted as a common political and historical awareness of cohesiveness in a larger idealised ethnic homeland. It might take the shape of greater or more powerful homeland demands, such as states within India's union or a separate sovereign state. The latter may be seen as a region of ethnic origin for individuals residing within the state of India and could seek Scheduled Tribe (ST) status while claiming to be a member of an ancient tribal community. Both objectives are based on the same interconnected past. While the state determines regional politics, society forms the state. Due to the region's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual complexities, there are growing aspirations for self-determination or statehood based on ethnic identities. Parochial ethnic concerns have impeded even the urge for regional socio-economic growth. On the one hand, the ethnic identification rationale incorporates a philosophy of exclusion; on the other, it contains a philosophy of dismissal of other ethnic communities. Establishing a state based on ethnicity frequently entails the accomplishment of one ethnic group's ambition while simultaneously excluding and oppressing minor ethnic populations in the area, and this ethnicity quest appears to have no ending (Inoue, 2005).

Despite the diversity of the social context in India's Northeast, the rural area is largely characterised by intra-ethnic, cohesive, informal networks of civil society instead of the formal institution, and informal networks are also extended across ethnicities in urban settings (Banerjee, 2009). The rural Northeast evolves on informal networks instead of formal ones, often under a specific ethnic group, whereas urban centers favour formal alliances of inter or intra-ethnic affiliations. However, both types of connections in the urban Northeast recognise ethnic diversity owing to the abundance of opportunities to participate in at least informal connections with the diverse ethnic communities in an urban context. The present concepts of civil society may arguably be augmented by collecting the informal entities in India's Northeast. In this region, inter-ethnic official and informal institutions appear to cope with conflicts rather effectively (Banerjee, 2009). Although the term conflict is often used in Northeast India, limited research has been done on the subject (Mukherjee, 2014).

It was real kinship based on bloodline in the Northeastern states, and not just fictive kinship as may be witnessed in other regions, that resulted in developing a strong sense of nationalism (Guite, 2021). The dominant tribes tend to reap most of the advantages from such situations. They assembled, lived, believed, bargained with one another, and ultimately integrated through such collective imagination as an effective clannish community. Intense nationalism results from such kinship engagement, as observed in most parts of the region. As a functional kinship group, the influential community instilled a feeling of solidarity in its members, resulting in kinship activism. Conversely, members of minority groups based on informal networks get motivated to collaborate as an ensemble of active kinship units, often in opposition to other clan groups, thereby enhancing the emergence of kinship activism (Guite, 2021). Clans that are common among numerous tribes or inter-migrations between and amongst tribes indicate the presence of similar institutions that allow individuals to move across ethnic boundaries, and this astounding yet intriguing analysis raises several issues about the region's ethnogenesis and rigid ethnic identity claims (Barkataki-Ruscheweyh & Lauser, 2013).

As a comprehensive concept, Naga tribal emergence in Nagaland flourished during British colonialism and was a reaction to the increasing colonial focus on the tribe as the societal root of Naga society. In the model of Evans-Pritchard's (1940) age-old fragmented kinship structure, degrees of Naga national awareness, solidarity, and coordination remained subsidiary to the urgency of the clan and cooperative relationships of various tribes, including villages. In Meghalaya, a tribe acquires a tribal ethnic identity based on mutual bonds amongst the state's three tribes - Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos and these identities served as the foundation of the state and formation of identity in opposed to the migrant population (Chattopadhyay, 2021). Despite the Karbis' (a prominent tribe in Assam) increasing linguistic and socio-cultural integration into the Assamese cultural context, cultural assimilation was hardly conceded. Furthermore, the Karbis' quest for autonomy was aided by the kinship-based tribal political structure, geographical association, preservation of Karbi folksongs and narratives of their separate origin, tribal burial customs, and colourful tribal attire (Das, 1989). The intra-clan loyalty in Sikkim is very profound. The lineage progresses from one generation to another, gaining greater authority and territories brought into the clans through marital ties, and the ever-expanding kinship ties meant a greater number of governmental and religious positions that might be secured by lineage (Tran, 2012).

Prior to its admission to the Indian union in October 1949, Tripura may be the only Northeast Indian state with a tribal monarchy in its existence, having been controlled by tribal kings for about 1300 years (Ghosh, 2003). Unfortunately, the tribal population was adversely threatened, and the native tribes of the state of Tripura, which constituted about 95 percent of the tribal people in the 1931 census, were drastically reduced to 31 percent in the 1991 census (Phukan, 2013). While addressing the numerous Lushai–Kuki communities, Shakespeare (1912), who served as an Indian political service officer for about 20 years in the Lushai hills and Manipur, invariably used the term clan rather than tribe. In certain ways, he continued on the views of Dun (1886), who wrote that the term clan is unquestionably the most appropriate way to refer to the Kuki subgroups.

Conclusion

Even after independence, the Indian government has failed to respond appropriately to the complex circumstances of the Northeast; instead, it appeared to pursue the colonial strategy of alienation and disconnectedness, perceiving the Northeast differently than the rest of the states (Savyasaachi, 1998). There is a great deal of discourse over the efficacy of Indian democracy in general, and its inadequacies are typically considered more rigorous at the regional level (Weiner, 1989). What has been provided here is only a modest analysis of the numerous concerns raised and the many challenges that should be examined in the region concerning tribal and clan politics.

Analysing the development of ethnic identity in Northeast India is undoubtedly not a simple task. Apart from the observations mentioned above, the lack of historical records, particularly on the genesis of the hill tribes, makes it much more challenging to contemplate the issue. While much is discovered concerning the Northeast, far more research needs to be undertaken, newer and innovative investigation techniques to be explored, several previous works to be revisited in light of new information, and more current empirical discoveries to be made. To achieve this, several scholars and researchers will need to further interpret the region's past narrative based on observable and empirical facts to better understand the present and eventually envisage something about the future outcome.

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**FORCES OF MODERNIZATION AND TRADITION
&
ITS IMPACT ON NAGA WOMEN OF NAGALAND**

Submitted by;

Charles Mhonthung Ezung

St. Joseph University, Ikishe Model Village
Chümoukedima Nagaland.

Supervisor;

Dr. Kekhrieseno Christina.

FORCES OF MODERNIZATION AND TRADITION: ITS IMPACT ON THE STATUS OF NAGA WOMEN IN NAGALAND.

Introduction:

Since time immemorial the propagation of the myth about men as the masters in economic, cultural, political and intellectual life, while women play a subordinate and even submissive role has continued. This domination has been upheld and perpetuated by the system of private property, the state, the church and the form of family that served men's interests (Evelyn Reed, 1954 p.58). Throughout the world, the patterns of social stratification are gendered, based on differential evaluation of the two genders. Social and Economic indicators for developing countries consistently show that women bear the brunt of hardship in poor communities. It is a known fact that women do not enjoy an average quality of life equal to that of men in terms of life expectancy, developmental intervention, health, morality, access to education, access to employment, access to legal freedoms and the meaningful exercise of civil and political rights. No doubt Women and men are physically different based on the biological factor. However, the physical attribute is not the only factor for determining the role and contribution towards the progress of human society.

The role of women in the progress of human well-being since the beginning of human evolution cannot be denied. Women have been and are still the closest partner of men and have been the most contributing partner in the human progress. In fact, women have and are still the primary contributor to the progress of human civilization through their intellect and physical labour. There is no doubt about the capabilities of women in contributing ideas for the betterment of human kind. However, when we consider their status alongside men there is a huge margin of disparity between men and women in almost every human society. In the context of the Naga society of the state of Nagaland the status of Naga women seems to be no different than the other human societies around the globe. This paper attempts to understand the reason for achieving gender parity and analyse the impact of modernization of the Naga society upon the status of Naga women. Naturally this analysis will also include the reference to the new concept of '*Development*' and status of Naga women before the onset of modernization, as well as after, so that outcome of this inquiry provides a precise picture.

Naga society practices the patrilineal and patriarchal system where the norms and attitudes of patriarchy affect the status of women. Institution and tradition are inspired by the belief in male dominance and female inferiority. Patriarchy persists in all contemporary societies but its impact on the society varies. Looking back at the era before the dawning of the 20th century, it is observed that history has been presented with the perspective of the dominant male and women has been excluded and denied participation. Women are viewed as distinctly different creature from men and usually considered to be inferior in intellect as well as physical

strength (Kathryn Hughes, 2014). Today, the academic inquiry into the broad-based relationship, covering every field of human activities, between women and men of any given human population has assumed significant interest in the world of academics. Gender equality is a basic human right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 10 December 1948. Gender equality and women's rights has been cited in many international conferences, organised by the UN, as a critical element to development efforts and peace building. From the historical perspective there are four key international conferences organised by the UN, on women issues. The first international conference on women was held at Mexico in 1975, the second was held at Copenhagen in 1980, the third was held at Nairobi in 1985, and the fourth was held at Beijing in 1995. There after a series of five-year reviews on the implementation of action plan for women welfare, were conducted by the UN. No nation-state can ever hope to achieve development of the highest degree without addressing gender discrimination or absence of women participation in all strata and fields of decision making process. It implies that gender discrimination creates gender disparities and which ultimately results in lopsided socio-economic development in a given nation-state. Gender discrimination adversely affects development. The relationship between gender discrimination and sustainable development cannot be over-emphasized.

New Concept of Development of the 20th Century: Inclusive and Participatory

No matter how vociferous men may claim to represent women interest or welfare in the decision making process covering the social, economic and political fields, only women themselves will understand their interest better. Thus the policies rolled out with the active participation of women will address the welfare of the entire human society of a given nation-state. In other words, to achieve holistic and meaningful socio-economic development of a nation-state or its regions, men alongside women must participate on equal footing in the decision making process for socio-economic development. In fact the new concept of development as envisaged by Gunnar Myrdal, Amartya Sen, and Joseph Stiglitz stressed on inclusion of all primary stakeholders in the planning process as well as in the implementation of the developmental plan. No nation-state can claim with legitimacy that it has achieved holistic development covering economic, socio-cultural, and political sectors, without including women in the decision-making and implementation process. Therefore the 20th century concept of development possesses the features of participatory, inclusive, sustainability and to focus on human development. Therefore, discrimination or exclusion of women in the socio-economic and political fields will invariably contradict this new concept of development.

TWO MAJOR VIEWPOINT ON THE STATUS OF NAGA WOMEN IN THE STATE OF NAGALAND

The Colonial Era:

It is essential to delve into the background of the Naga society of Nagaland in order to understand the current status of Naga women of Nagaland clearly without ambiguity. Before the Naga society of Nagaland state came into contact with the world outside their villages, the Naga people were living in a primitive stage with no definite political system. In this stage each village was like a city-state and were at war against neighbouring villages even of their own tribe. After the British colonial power set foot on the Naga territory, a certain form of political cohesion started to take shape amongst the Naga villages. British colonial officials introduced a system of limited governance in which the traditional practices of village administration of the Nagas were retained along with their customary rules which regulated inter-personal relationships within a village as well as outside their village. The British colonial officials did not interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the Naga people and they were more interested with protecting the British colonial economic assets in the neighbouring region of present day Assam which were plundered during the raids conducted by the marauding Naga warriors from different Naga villages bordering the Ahom kingdom (present day Assam state). With this key political development of the presence of the British colonial power, the Naga people were now exposed to the outside world resulting in the phenomena of academic interest of studying the primitive Naga society by the European scholars as well as the colonial officers, in every aspect.

Out of these academic inquiries conducted by various European historians, ethnographers anthropologists, sociologists, colonial administrator-historians, etc. we will refer to few prominent individuals who had recorded their findings. Quoting Haimendorf-Furer (1933) concerning the status of women before the advent of modernization in the land of the Nagas,

...many women in more civilized parts of India may well envy the women of Naga Hills, their high status and their free and happy life and if you measure the cultural level of the people by the social position and personal freedom of its women you will think twice before looking down on the Nagas as savages. (p. 101)

The quotation presented above assigned a higher status to the tribal women compared to their counterparts in nontribal societies. The former is considered powerful, courageous and independent (Mishra 2007: 63). The British colonial administrator J. H. Hutton (1921) has found that the Naga women enjoy considerable freedom and high social status. They have the right to choose their husbands and are never forced to marry against their will. Even Elwin (1961) "... alluded to the freedom enjoyed by Naga women and contended that the latter exercised significant decision-making power within their societies".

These scholars and colonial administrator-historians studied the primitive Naga society with reference to the mainland Indian society, which was characterised with the practice of social evils upon Indian women such as Sati, Dowry, Child marriage, etc. and as such reflects a positive note on the status of Naga women during the British colonial rule.

However, the practical reality does not reflect such a positive note concerning the status of Naga women in relation with their counterpart. The Naga society as a patrilineal and patriarchal society assigns predominant position to the Naga men in all aspects of human life.

Post – Colonial Era:

The second viewpoint reflects the thoughts of contemporary scholars across the academic disciplines. In this segment the common observation debunks the viewpoint of the scholars and writers of the British colonial era concerning the status of Naga women. They contend that Naga women are discriminated and denied of certain rights as compared to the Naga men. The contemporary system that exists today seems to be bias, discriminatory, obsolete and inimical to the welfare, uplift development and progress of our state and society especially of Naga women (Monalisa Changkija, 2004). The central point around which the discrimination against Naga women were practice was the traditional belief that women are home-makers and men the bread earners and protectors. This fallacy was legitimized through customary laws and the system of taboo ensured their compliance (Vitso, 2003: p.58).

The study presented by Eyingbeni Humtsoe (2012), on the issue of the social, cultural, and political status of Naga women from the perspective of the role of the religion of Christianity. According to Eyingbeni, Christianity has so far failed to establish the biblical principle of equality of men and women and thus prevail over the status prescribed by the customary laws of the Nagas. The paper states that,

Christianity has succumbed to the discrimination of women in Naga culture by failing to address two issues: absence of women in leadership positions proportionate to their membership in every aspect of life be it in the church, village or community gatherings; and perpetuation of male chauvinism by refusing to have women in roles that transcend traditional feminine tasks. (Eyingbeni Humtsoe, p.93-105)

The paper closely associates the role and status of Naga women in the church and society with the cultural norms and expectations of the Naga society. Dolly Kikon also perceives the non-participation of Naga women in the traditional indigenous village institution called the *Gaonburas* and the apex tribal body called the *Hoho*. According to Monalisa Changkija,

Naga tradition and culture totally bars women's participation in the decision-making process right from the village council level, which was carried on/spilled over to the

modern system of decision-making with the introduction of the parliamentary form of government after statehood was declared. (The Telegraph, Calcutta. 19th March 2004).

In a nutshell the picture presented by the contemporary scholars both Nagas as well non-Nagas, show a dismal condition of the Naga women of Nagaland. This condition pertains to both socio-cultural and political spectrum. To briefly elaborate this statement let us take each field separately and examine it from the perspective of the status of Naga women in these three fields of social, cultural and political. Socially the Nagas are organised on the basis of tribes and each tribe has its apex organization to regulate the conduct of its members and its relationship with other tribes. However, we need to understand that this social apex organization was formed only after the different tribes became conscious of their commonality and which was possible only after the British extended their colonial rule beyond the then Ahom kingdom (Present day state of Assam). Now to look at the jurisdiction of the various apex tribal organization which is called *Hoho*. The tribal *Hoho* regulates the conduct of all members both male and female. However, when we observe the executive body of the *Hoho* which is headed by a Chairman/President and several other officials chosen by the executive body, we understand that women are not eligible to hold such post neither be part of the executive body of the tribal *Hoho*. Even though the women folk of every Naga tribe of Nagaland are allowed to form their own separate organization exclusively for women, this women based organization is subjected to the authority of the apex tribal *Hoho*, which is spearheaded by men only.

Even in matters dealing with religious affairs we observe the same pattern of male dominance. Almost every Naga of Nagaland follow the religion of Christianity and majority of the Naga Christians are members of the Baptist denomination. Therefore, the discussion on religious matters will reflect mostly about the organization and functioning of the Baptist church.

Traditionally men dominated the public decision making process in the village. This attitude continues in the church with men similarly opposing the involvement of women in decision-making process. Thus in most of the churches women do not serve on the Deacon Board, which is the main administrative organ of the church [Baptist] (Narola Imchen. 2004 p.56).

The glaring statement by Imtjungla Longchar, a prominent author, sums up the overall condition of the Naga women of Nagaland.

“Socially, I am not satisfied as many of the Naga women prefer to stay indoors; economically, our business is run by others. No women entrepreneurs except few,

religiously no spirit-filled mighty preachers, no writers, and no zeal. Politically the status is zero". (<https://nagalandpost.com> 21st October 2022)

From the brief account on the position and role of Naga women covering key areas in the socio-cultural fields, we understand that women are prohibited from holding leadership position in both the social and religious organizations. This denial to the Naga women the opportunity to hold leadership post is enforced through the application of the Naga Customary law. The provisions of the Naga Customary laws did have their utility and justification during the period when the Nagas were living in the primitive era. During this era physical strength was the only determining factor for survival of an individual or the society as a whole.

Considering the political field, there is no such overt act of preventing Naga women from contesting in the election process for electing members to the State Legislative Assembly as well as to the Village Council which is the primary political unit in Nagaland. According to Monalisa Changkija, "Though there is no written law that women cannot participate in this form of government, in practice, because old traditional systems are fully exploited to win elections, women were naturally marginalised" (The Telegraph, Calcutta. 19th March 2004)

Since the formation of Nagaland as the 16th state of India on 1st December 1963, the Nagaland State Legislative Assembly, which is the highest law-making body for the Nagas of Nagaland, not a single Naga woman was elected as Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) till date. After the enactment of the Nagaland Village Councils Act, 1978, all government recognised villages in Nagaland constituted their respective Village Council through the process of election. Since the institution of the Village Council in every village, only one woman was elected as the chairperson of the Village Council of Naharbari in Dimapur district. Moreover the Nagaland Village Councils Act, 1978 also provides for the creation of the Village Development Board (VDB) to function under the direct supervision of the Village Council. In the composition of the VDB, 25% of the total strength of the VDB should be filled by women members from the village. Only a handful of Village Development Board in Nagaland has complied with this statute enacted in the State Legislative Assembly.

As mentioned earlier that there is no law or customary rule which overtly prohibits women from participating and contesting in the modern electoral system, yet only a handful of Naga women has contested as a candidate during the State Legislative Assembly election. It was on the second Nagaland Legislative Assembly election two Naga Women contested for the first time. Till the 2018 State Legislative Assembly election only 21 women contested.

There could be several reasons for this apathy. Let us examine few thoughts from prominent Naga scholars of both genders.

“We need to introspect how and why is it that generation after generation of Naga women/ men feel they need to be the custodians of patriarchal Naga cultural/traditions whereby they teach their sons/daughters that the status of women is always below men. Or do we have thinking Naga women/men who teach their families – sons/daughters/brothers/sisters – that social relationships are based on respect, equality, and working together as partners.” (Dolly Kikon, Morung Express 9th January 2020).

As the Naga society of Nagaland state steps into the 21st century, the condition of the Naga women of Nagaland is no different than their condition during the 19th century. Therefore, it is high time to assess the impact of the forces of modernization on the overall Naga society and in particular upon the Naga women. One of the key factors responsible for the all-round development of individuals and groups is the process of modernization. Nagas came into contact with the modern culture during the colonial rule and over the years has experienced a conflict of modern values with the traditional practices. Briefly consider the main central theme is that modernity represents an attribute that governs social relationships. This attribute that guides a social relationship include universality, accountability, rationality and commitment to a scientific worldview. It demands a line that people live with equality and dignity (Gupta 2000:2). On the other hand traditions are the various socio-cultural practices rooted in customs and conventions. However, both tradition and modernity are in continuity and old tradition and beliefs have not been completely displaced by modernisation.

Modernization:

According to 2011 census, Nagaland's total literacy rate stands at 79.55%. Despite the increase in total literacy rate, a huge gap of 82.14% among males and 65.46 % among the females in 2011 is observed at the national level. In Nagaland, male literacy rate stood at 82.75% while female literacy rate stood at 76.11% according to 2011 census. Education is identified as one critical indicator for measuring societal progress. A prominent feature in the field of education within the Naga society of Nagaland is that 'girls and boys are given equal opportunity'. Initially boys were preferred to receive higher education, especially in families with financial constraints. In the olden days, girls would voluntarily choose to stay at home or forced to stay at home to help their mothers in the household chores which their brothers would get all the opportunity to get the education. Daughters in the family would support their brothers achieving the proper education so they could come back home and

take care after their need with the education received (K. Easterine, 2019). Today we observe that more girls are pursuing higher education than boys and thus preparing themselves for better job opportunity. Modern education has also enabled Naga women to achieve success in competitive examination for recruitment to government jobs and this competition also includes Naga men. Even though Nagaland has a high literacy rate yet there is not much of a change in the patriarchal mind-set of Naga men which is evident from the outright opposition to the proposal to reserve 33% of the post in Urban Local Bodies for women.

Along with western system of education the British colonial power also introduced to the Nagas the religion of Christianity. As early as in 1839, Miles Bronson was the first missionary to the Nagas, also, the arrival of the American Baptist missionary E.W. Clark and his wife, Mary Mead Clark established the first school. Rev C.D King, Dr Rivenberg, Rev Dr.Witter were the other Christian missionaries who worked among the Nagas. They brought the needed transformation in the lives of women and girl child in Naga society through Biblical teaching and modern education. However, as Vitsou Yano and Rekha Pande rightly argues,

“It failed to break the age old traditional patriarchal character of Naga society. It failed to replace the nature of traditional man-women relationship dependence. The church did not really change the structure of the society. The role played by patriarchy in relation to both the traditional patriarchal assumption of the missionaries did not allow women to attain full equality with men in church, where church itself acted as an agent of patriarchy.”

The male domination of the Church is nowhere more evident than in the large convention and association meetings. The leadership roles are held by men. Occasionally women are appointed as assistants, but no more. They are permitted to preach in small groups, but not in the large meetings. Despite the many advances that women have made, the majority of men still seem to think that their proper place is doing household work. (Moanaro Imchen Jamir, p.54)

One of the positive outcomes of education is that it has enabled Naga women of Nagaland has competed with Naga men on equal footing in various Civil Services Competitive examinations and secured top position both in the Centre as well as the State government Civil Service. Even in the field of technical career such as engineering, scientific research, Naga women have achieved great success. In the profession of teaching both at the School and College levels, Naga women dominates the work force as teachers. Coming to the point of gender equality, it has been observed that with all the positive impacts of education the status of Naga women is still no better than their status during the 19th century. During the primitive era the dominant position of Naga men in a given society was based on their physical strength and its related skills.

Biologically women are physically less endowed and because of which they were made to look after the domestic affairs within the family. Today, the nature and culture of work or profession has changed due to the introduction western pattern of education. The primary nature of work has transformed itself from physical exertion to the exercise of the intellect.

Along with education the new political system of governance based on the principles of Democracy was also introduced in the state of Nagaland post – Indian Independence from British colonial rule. The primary principles of democracy – people’s participation in the system of governance through the process of free and fair election, Universal Adult Franchise, Equality, Rights and Liberties, system of checks and balance in order to prevent abuse of political power, justice, etc. Democracy also involves the governance of the state through the enforcement of laws enacted by the legislature. It means the constitution of modern legal process which is expected to maintain a fair and just society. The Law-making power and process is invested in the body of law-makers called the legislature whose members are chosen by the common citizens through the system of free and fair election. The 21st century human society has experienced revolutionary changes due to the progress achieved in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This has enabled the world to be closely connected with each other through various platforms of media such as print media, electronic media, social media, seamless connectivity through voice communication, etc. Therefore, Naga women of Nagaland are well aware of the existing condition of women in different countries of the world.

CONCLUSION:

The complete presentation on the status of Naga women in the state of Nagaland clearly explains the status of Naga women before the advent of modernity and after the introduction of the forces of modernization. There is no doubt that the status of Naga women in the state of Nagaland has undergone changes with the introduction of the various forces of modernization, especially education and democracy. However, these changes are not ground-breaking because Naga women of Nagaland still remain un-represented in the highest law-making body of the state and in the primary unit of the state political system i.e. in the village. Let us examine briefly the reasons for the ineffective impact on the Naga women by the forces of modernization.

Normally, the forces of modernization should have improved the status of Naga women in a holistic manner but we have witnessed limited impact by the adoption of modern system of education on the status of Naga women. The adoption of the western pattern of government based on the principles of democracy also created limited impact on the status of Naga women. The one significant factor of tradition has impeded the normal process of changes within the Naga society and thereby on the status of Naga women. The single factor which has impeded the process of change within the Naga society is the operation of the Naga Customary Law in every

aspect of the socio-cultural life of the people of Nagaland. The most glaring adverse impact of the operation of the Naga Customary Law is seen in the field of politics. Even after the passage of 59 years of Nagaland securing statehood not a single woman has made it to the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. Even though the Indian Parliament has enacted laws to protect women from discriminations and provisions of protective discrimination in the form of reservation of elective posts in the local self-government structures, the application of Naga Customary Law has negated these positive laws aimed at women emancipation in the state of Nagaland.

Therefore, the key change to be applied in the state of Nagaland in order to uplift the status of Naga women is to enable the women to hold and use political power. In the absence of women representatives in the law making body the actual interest or welfare of Naga women will remain unaddressed. Women are needed in politics because a woman knows their own problems and women issues can be taken up only by a woman who will represent women of all sections of the society. Without Naga women representation in the law-making body and the executive policy-making body the principle of equality in true sense will continue to remain deceptive. Equality will emerge only when both men and women enjoy equal sharing of political power and equal access to the material resources. Dolly Kikon, a Naga scholar, recognizes the disparities between the insubstantial statement of Article 371 (A) and the rather vehement agitation on women's role in the political process. She attests to the power interplay by stating:

If Naga customary law is seen as the foundation of justice, the exclusion of women from these powerful decision making- bodies negates the entire notion that these are pillars of justice... Article 371 (A) is a prime example of the patriarchal nature of the Indian constitution that bestows the Naga male bodies to have full authority and power to interpret customary affairs covering social, religious, and criminal cases. (Kikon, 'Gender Justice in Naga Society,' Raiot: Challenging the Consensus, February 2017, accessed on November 3, 2022).

Maximum of the nation-states have adopted democracy as the basic framework for regulating the society as well as defining the form of government. It implies that the inter-relationship between individuals and between the individual and the state are regulated by the established principles of democracy. The central principle of democracy for both the social and political system is the principle of *equality* without which the claim of adopting social and political democracy is rendered irrelevant. After India attained political independence from the British colonial rule in 1947, adopted democracy as the guiding principle for establishing its society and the government. Nagaland as the 16th state of the Indian union automatically comes under the operation of the principles of democracy in both the social and political spheres at the state level. However, the incorporation of the

provision of Article 371 (A) which is the bedrock in the creation of the state of Nagaland has resulted in a number of conflicts between the provision and the principles of democracy.

In the aftermath of the 2017 bloody agitation against the policy for reservation of elective posts in the Urban Local Bodies, several questions have emerged concerning the relevance of Naga Customary Law in this modern era of human civilization, which is built on the universal democratic principles. A very crucial query that emerged relates to the manner in which the 'reservation policy' disregards 'Naga Customary Law'. Modern political institutions and processes, which are based on democratic norms, cannot be subjugated under Naga Customary Law, which is traditional in its very nature. The argument is based on the inviolability of the principle of equality to democracy. In other words, in order to protect and sustain the rights and liberties of all citizens of the country certain adaptation must be undertaken in the application of the Naga Customary Law. There is no doubt that the Naga customary law, so far, has been preserving or protecting the identity and the geographical territory of the Naga people. However, we need to accept that there are certain provisions of the Naga customary law that has become *archaic*. In order to ensure that the provisions designed to protect the Naga people and their land with resources, the entire concept of customary law can be categorised into three distinct parts, socio-economic, cultural, and political. Thus in order to negate the provisions of the Naga customary law which opposes women empowerment, the political part of the Naga customary law can be amended by enabling Naga women to participate in all social and political decision making forums. Nevertheless, the provisions dealing with inheritance of the ancestral properties and land must be preserved, since the identity and survival of the Naga people as a distinct community is tied with our land. This argument is based on the ideas of British legal historian Theodore Plucknett who considers customary law as a flexible law, so as to suit the needs of the changing time.

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Immersive dimensions of festivals with special reference to Phesama Village

Keleno Tacü

Asst Prof

Japfü Christian College

Phesama Village is located under Jakhama circle of Kohima district Nagaland. It is eight kilometres towards South from the district Headquarters Kohima, with a population of 3061, of which 1511 are males while 1550 are females. The literacy rate of male is 89.53% and female 77.33%. (Census of India 2014) The livelihood of the village is agricultural farmers, government servant, business, working in private sectors. With the coming of education and changes, many people have left farming and focus on the jobs that give them a sustainable life. Its neighbouring villages are Kigwema village in the south, Kohima town in the north, Pfuchama village in the east and Mima village in the south-east.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, as a result, the various festivals celebrated in the village are based on agriculture and revolves around agricultural activities. There are various agricultural festivals celebrated throughout the year. There are seven major festivals, they are:-

Ngonyi,
Kerünyi,
Sünyi,
KhoKho,
Tekenyi,
Terhunyi and
Sikrenyi.

Each festival plays a vital role in the social life of people, binding the people as a whole in the observation of these festivals; it is also a time for forgiveness and mending old relations. These festivals are also a reminder to the people about the ancestral practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. It is not only about merry making, but it teaches the people about respecting the Mother Nature. By observing the festivals people come together to show their feeling of oneness. The festivals are interlinked with each other, each festival teaching the people the ways of life, the presence of a supernatural being through the rituals. During the festivals praying to the spirits to bring prosperity for the crops, vegetation and livestock are done on the first day of every festival.

NGONYI:- *Ngonyi* is celebrated in the month of February. This festival is the first to be celebrated and the rest follows. This festival is associated with the sowing of millet, after millets are sowed the festival is observed and it is celebrated for four days. On the first day the mother of the family will observe ‘*Ki De (House blessing)*, where she will perform the ritual early in the morning. It entails the mother covering her head with a piece of cloth and wrapped in a shawl. All the doors will be closed and guests, visitors will not be hosted or entertained.

Then she will pray and seek the blessing of the spirits and asked for bountiful blessings for the rice, wealth, and livestock and good health for her family members. When she does *Ki De*, she will soak a little bit of rice grains and then grind it, mix it with boiling water and make rice beer. She takes a plantain leaf folded in the shape of a cone, fill it with the rice beer and hang it on a string of rope made from bamboo strip, which is tied on a plank of wood placed in the middle of the house. She then places two cups, one for the father and one for the mother of the house. This festival is usually observed by the village as a whole. For the first two days the whole village rest without working and celebrates by spending time with family. On the third day if anyone wishes to work, they can go to work but they can do so in the form of clearing weeds, cutting wood, but no actual field work in the form of tilling the soil is done. On the fourth day '*Tena*' is observed, where no one in the village is allowed to work. It is done so to avoid casualty in the future while working, as it is believed if anyone works on that day, he will face casualty while working.

Ngonyi holds an important significance for those who could not celebrate *Sikrenyi* due to death in the family, sickness or being away from the village during this period. *Sikrenyi*, is a major festival for the Angami people which is celebrated in the month of December. This festival is important for males because this is the time when all the male members of the village purify themselves during *Sikrenyi*. It is important for a male to purify himself and this festival gives him an opportunity to purify himself and seek blessing for prosperity of wealth, crop and good health for his family. In the event of sickness, staying away from the village or due to a death in the family, where the family is going through a period of mourning, they observe and perform the rituals of *Sikrenyi* during *Ngonyi*. But during *Ngonyi* the head of the family will observe the rituals of purification of *Sikrenyi* only on the first day of the four-day celebration of *Ngonyi*. He performs all the rituals to purify himself which is supposed to be observed in December of the previous year during the *Sikrenyi* festival.

Early morning the male goes to the well and purify themselves by washing their feet and hands. They also splash water over their face and head while seeking the blessings of the gods and warding off evil spirits and bad lucks. After this process, they draw water from the well and will bring it home to be used in cooking. After this early morning ritual, they will sacrifice a rooster by strangling it and observe the feet of the rooster and if the right feet cross over the left it is taken as a good sign. They then proceed to make a new hearth in the courtyard (this is an important process of the purification process where new utensils will be used for cooking, and women of the house are forbidden from touching it), the sacrificial rooster is cooked and consumed only by the male members of the family. There are dishes and plate meant for the festival and the cups for drinking beer will be from plantain leaf, and the male purify himself in doing the rituals.

At the end of the day before the sun sets, the husband will break the rituals by placing his cup on the ground asked his wife to fill the cup with rice beer, she takes a mug draw the rice beer and the whole family takes a sip from the same mug, in doing so his rituals is done as he have shared the beer with his family, the father along with the other male members sits together with the females and eats the dinner. On the second day, they will distribute meat to their loved ones and friends who have given them meat during *Sikrenyi*, in doing so they show

their love to those who remembered them in their troubled days. After that they look forward for a better future and leave behind the past to start a new beginning of joy and peace.

TSAKI:- *Tsaki* is a ritual where the elder of the village sow a handful of millet and perilla seed to seek blessing and to begin the sowing of millet. After this is done the people will start sowing millets, until the elder perform *Tsaki* the sowing of millet or any other crops cannot be done. The first crop to be sown is millet after the sowing is done people come together and celebrate *Ngonyi*. With the celebration of *Ngonyi* people are also reminded about the seasons of the crops and plantation that is to follow. It is a time of merry making and preparation towards entering a new phase of hardworking. It is a time of joy, love and feeling of oneness.

After the harvest of millet another festival is celebrate called *Sünyi* “*sü*” means millet. Wine made from millet will be prepared, livestock will be killed, and meat will be consumed in large amount as it is considered to be nutritional for the body. The millet harvested will be dried on top of the hearth so that it can be consumed. Millet is mixed with rice and cooked; this is done in order to consume less rice, as rice was also very scarce in the olden days. Millet is used to make bread, feed the livestock. During *Sünyi* the people rest and do not work for five days, on the fifth day the two village elders take live rooster, one elder takes it towards the jungle the other towards the field, and free them. The village elders will seek blessing, prosperity, good health of the villagers and ward off evil spirit. They will observe the rooster and if they crow or peck on the ground it is taken as a good sign and the village will prosper. If the roosters don’t return back to the village it is considered as a good sign but if they return to the village, it is a sign of bad omen and they instantly kill the rooster.

Significance of the festival

With the advancement of time this festival is not known to many people, the elders or the *Krünama* (those who follow animism) are the few people who know about it but observing and celebrating it have lost its significance. With the coming of Christianity, education, seeking job to other places many have forgotten about it. *Sikrenyi* and *Terhrunyi* are still well known and people still observe them, but still these festivals have also lost its significance, like no male do the rituals to purify himself during *Sikrenyi*, it is all mostly about merry making, having good time with family, visiting relatives.

Ngonyi is not celebrated like in the olden days, expect for the *Krünama* who observed it and follow the rituals or else the rest do not observe it. The young youths of today have no idea or very little knowledge about it. With the fast-changing world and the rapid pace of development where people are more inclined towards seeking jobs rather than engaging in agriculture, the importance of agriculture as a major economic activity has lost its place in society today. The scale of agriculture has also been considerably reduced. The number of people dependent on agriculture as their main form of sustenance is almost equal to none. With the changing times, the crops cultivated have also considerably reduced. Millet and the festival associated with its sowing and harvest has almost disappeared from the village.

The 21st century has not spared the traditional customs and practices of the past. However, retaining the past traditions, rituals and customs has also got its own appeal. The people in the past were hard working who found joy, happiness and contentment in the simplicity of life. Reviving the past practices may not transform society entirely. But the values and culture of hard work, contentment, self reliance and respecting nature sure does hold an important place. Through the careful observation of the traditions and customs, food security was ensured. It also assured the crop protection through their continuous cultivation, even though it was usually for sustenance rather than for mass production.

The pandemic of 2020 was an eye opener for the Nagas. It was a time when people realise how dependent it has become on others when it comes to agriculture and agricultural production. It may seem to be pointless to revive all of the past traditions and customs of our ancestors which were intricately linked with the observation of various rituals and sacrifices. However, the values of hard work and self reliance which formed the very foundation on which they withstand the test of time are certainly worth emulating.

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PORTRAYAL OF MOTHER-SON RELATIONSHIPS IN TONI MORRISON'S NOVEL SULA

Laly Varghese

Assistant Professor, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Jakhama, Nagaland

sabsanita68@gmail.com

Abstract

Toni Morrison is an American author who published her novel *The Sula* in 1973. It tells the tale of two black women who became friends and of the Medallion neighbourhood in Ohio. The racism of the larger society has stunted the community and turned it inward. It is believed that the town residents' anger and disordered lives are a response to their dashed expectations. The story follows Sula and Nel's lives from childhood to adulthood to death.

The mother-son bond varies greatly among races, and this has nothing to do with feminism, whether it is black, white, or any other. Indian and black mothers react very similarly. Toni Morrison, an American author renowned for her analysis of Black experience, especially that of Black women within the Black community. Morrison was raised in the Midwest of the United States in a household that had a deep love and respect for Black culture. She has harsh words for women who abandon their families or turn away from them. She claims that they have suppressed their feminine traits and forgotten their capacity for nurturing. Because the majority of the father figures in her novels are typically absent from the home, she has a good reason for accusing those women of trying to act like males.

KEY WORDS:-Feminism, racism, culture, suppression, community.

The mother-son relationship varies significantly from one race to another, and this is unrelated to black, white, or other feminism. Black moms react very much like Indian moms. They talk about their sons defying parental authority rather than getting into mischief outside the house. As their sons grew older, the black mothers emphasized strong parental supervision rather than the use of a guidance-and advice approach.

Halfway through writing her ninth book, *Home*, Morrison lost one of her cherished sons. Her youngest son Slade passed away from pancreatic cancer at the age of forty five. Morrison was eighty three at that time. One can see a blank page with the word "Slade" printed on it when they open the first page of their *Home*. Mourning for a mother's beloved son, like all of the mothers in her fictional works, Morrison saw her kids as "an extension of their limbs and wounds to express the bondage of their relationship" (Hirsch 1). She regrets,

“the fallout from not being able to save my son” (Kachka 5). In a similar vein, not every literary representation of mother-son relationships she creates is successful.

One of the old stories of Jocasta and Oedipus, which is still popular today, sheds light on the mother-son bond by enforcing parental erasure and forced mother-son separation. On the other hand, it is idealised as the bond between a mother and son and is elevated to its most pure and fulfilling state in a woman's life and to an unquestionable source of love in a man's life; on the other hand, it is denigrated as mother's love, which is portrayed as oppressive, stifling, or even emasculating.

Although mothers and sons are among the longest-lasting and most significant relationships in life, little research has been done on them. “Considering the particular vulnerability of black males in this society and the role that mothers typically play as primary nurturers, this focus on black mother-to-son parenting is long overdue”(Dance123).Black mothers' concern for their sons' safety and emphasis on survival are racially determined. Black mothering varies in its need to impose an awareness of a racially oppressive society with its poverty, the disproportionately high rate of incarceration of black men, and how to survive in a setting that is frequently hostile to the existence of blacks, especially black males.Black mothers raise their sons in ways that deviate from the normative ideology of motherhood. Because of this particular black mothering practise, black mothers can raise their sons to be men who are proud of their Black ancestry and identity while also keeping them safe in a hostile environment.

The major challenge to a black mother raising sons today is survival.... Racism, discrimination, and oppression define the childhood of a Black male. Mothering for an African American woman is defined by fear for her male child. Therefore her approach and relationship with her son must be different. (King & Carolyn 56-57)

Black people have a rich cultural heritage of family that has endured slavery, segregation, prejudice, and forced poverty. Due of this, a Black mother must raise her son differently than she would a white mother or her daughter. It stems from their Black boys' drive to live in a society that minimises and dismisses their existence.

According to *APolitics of the Heart*, "mothers who whip their sons brutally 'for their own good' and mothers who love their sons to destruction through self-sacrifice and overindulgence" (O'Reilly 16) are two diametrically opposed modes of mothering. The first seeks to shield the child from all that is deemed harsh and upsetting. Unfortunately, both tactics harm the son—the first by destroying his spirit and the second by preventing his

development into a fully realised adult. How can Black mothers "help sons develop the character, personality and integrity a black male child needs to transcend these forces?" is the question they ask when parenting their sons (O'Reilly 16).

Women who neglect their responsibilities to their families and communities are criticised in Morrison's novels. Women who do run away are looked down upon and rejected by their peers and communities. Morrison has harsh words for women who abandon their family or turn away from them. She claims that they have suppressed their feminine traits and forgotten their capacity for nurturing. Since the majority of the father figures in her novels are typically absent from the home, she has a good reason for accusing those women of trying to act like man. For instance, single mothers raised Cholly, Plum, Ajax, Guitar, Howard, and Buglar. Some of the fathers aren't present because they've passed away, like Halle and Guitar's father, or because they broke up with their children's mothers and left when the kids were still small, like BoyBoy, Jude, and Samson Fuller did. BoyBoy moves away from home when Plum is still a baby, and he only pays a visit to Medallion after his son is three years old. In the novel *Sula*, the two do not establish a father-son bond during that visit because "BoyBoy didn't ask to see the children, and Eva didn't bring them into the conversation" (Morrison 34).

It surprises me how Morrison feels about the desertions of black boys. She freely admits to being enthralled by their willingness to up and leave:

Although in sociological terms that is described as a major failing of black men—they do not stay home and take care of their children, they are not there—that has always been to me one of the most attractive features about black male life. I guess I'm not supposed to say that. But the fact that they would split in a minute just delights me. It's part of that whole business of breaking ground, doing the other thing. They would leave, go someplace else. There was always that possibility. They were never— I don't say they were never, obviously there were expectation to all of this—but they didn't just let it happen, just let it happen. That's a part of the interesting magic I was talking about. (Stepto 26)

Morrison uses her life experiences as "fodder" for her literary imagination even if her novels are not autobiographical. In *The Seams Can't Show* quotes her as saying, "I will use what I have seen and what I have known, but it's never about my life" (Bakerman 39). Morrison started to focus more intently on the masculine gender after the loss of her father. For the first time I was writing a book in which the central stage was occupied by

men, and which had something to do with my loss... of a man(my father) and the world that disappeared with him"(Morrison 123).She adheres to the viewpoint that a man experiences life differently than a woman. She firmly believes "maleness tends to be inherent", (Bakerman 48)based on what she noticed about her father, two brothers, and two sons. She draws the conclusion that men "relate differently to architecture and space than girls," and they have "different spatial requirements than girls"(47).For instance, she claims that her sons "were attracted to danger and risk" (47).In a way that she was not, and regarding the issue of dominance, she claims that men have "a definite need to exercise dominance over place and people," (48)whereas women do not. Morrison's experience as the mother of two kids helped her when she discussed mother-son relationships in her books. She says:

It was curious-I found the boys useful when I was doing Song of Solomon, because having watched them grow up, I was able, I think, to enter a male view of the world which, to me, means a delight in dominion-a definite need to exercise dominion over place and people. "(Bakerman 47- 48)

Morrison believed motherhood to be a liberating experience, but it is challenging to locate what one may consider the quintessential (ultimate) excellent mothers since she recognised the challenges of raising kids, especially men.

According to Daryl, Dance, *Black Eve or Madonna*,the black mother who is always selfless and giving is referred to as the Madonna, "The mother who brings life and salvation." On the other hand, the black mother who falls short of this standard is referred to as an Eve, "the other who brings death and destruction"(123).For black women, it is problematic to be cast as either Eve or Madonna.A thorough study at Morrison's writing indicates that she deliberately avoids away of the Madonna -Eve division in her portrayals of mother figures. Morrison's mother characters appear equally capable at taking away life at the same time as they are giving it. Morrison's examples show how mothers serve as matriarchs, carers, and culture bearers in addition to being nurturers, murderers, and deserters.

Morrison is not a supporter of any certain type of black motherhood. Her books feature a variety of biological mothers, often known as blood mothers, as well as surrogate mothers, other mothers, and community mothers. Morrison never gives mother-son advice about how to raise their sons despite the fact that her literature is subtly didactic. Instead, she wants to open a dialogue between mothers and sons, and her writing is focused on this broad, all-encompassing idea of the mother.

More biological mothers appear in Morrison's fiction. In *The Bluest Eye*, Mrs. Breedlove and her son Sammy, as well as Geraldine and her son Junior: Morrison's black biological mother-son couplings include Eva and her son Plum, Ajax and his mother in *Sula*, Ruth and her son Milkman in *Song of Solomon*, Halle and his mother Baby Suggs in *Beloved*, Joe Trace and his mother Wild in *Jazz*, etc..

Morrison's novels feature a variety of other mothers and community mothers in addition to biological mothers... "Other mothers are key not only in supporting children but also in helping blood mothers who for whatever reason lack the preparation or desire for motherhood"(Collins 120). She also has other mothers—Jimmy in *The Bluest Eye* and Pilate in *Song of Solomon*—and communal mothers like Rhoda Williams in *Jazz*.

In the novels, these women raise infants who have been abandoned by biological mothers who are mentally ill or unable to adequately care for their offspring. However, the level of care provided by the adoptive parents to the kids is on par with what biological mothers do for their offspring. Because community mothers and other mothers do not differentiate between adoptive children and their biological children, there is no difference in the care adopted children receive. Most community mothers and other mothers typically become mothers by becoming pregnant, although there are times when circumstances force the needs of children upon them and they are unable to decline to help.

Mothers as nurturers and carers are prevalent in Morrison's portrayal of mothers. The birth of the child imposes certain obligations upon the mother because the more of the Negro community it make the relation between the mother and child the most sacred of the human relations," states the proverb. "A child's worth is determined by the virtue of his mother as the morality of the mother reflects upon her family" (Frazier 318). The community feels that Cholly's mother and Joe's mother Wild must be insane or deranged to abandon their children because it is assumed that a good black woman will always be a mother.

In Morrison's novels, the mother is "problematized rather than romanticised" (Davies 145). One example is Eva Peace. Her care is not uniform, not what one would expect from a mother. In Morrison's canon, mothers exalt their sons because they think men have the capacity to make up for shortcomings and make up for disappointments experienced in their relationships with fathers, lovers, and husbands. For instance, after five years of marriage,

Eva's husband BoyBoy abandons his young wife and children in *Sula*, leaving them to fend for themselves.

Additionally, Eva's problematic marriage, which is detrimental to her, has devastated her. "BoyBoy took off after five years of a depressing and unhappy marriage. He was incredibly preoccupied with other women during their time together, spending little time at home. He did whatever he pleased, preferring to womanise, drink, and abuse Eva in that order (Morrison. 47). She only has very little money, five eggs, three beets, and no idea what or how to feel when BoyBoy abandons her with three children—two daughters and a son. She had a responsibility to the kids, a need for money, and a need to move on with her life. However, she was forced to delay of her departure because of the pressing need to provide for her three children. Plum, Eva's son, is one of Morrison's novels' most inept (incompetence) sons. Regardless of the inconvenience Plum is experiencing, Eva takes all the necessary steps to comfort him. Eva can go to any length as a mother to make sure that her kids are healthy. When Plum is a new-born, her attempts to save him are one of the hallmark challenges of her life. He stopped having bowel movements, and it is winter. In "freezing stench, she squatted down, turned the baby over on her knees, exposed his buttocks, and shoved the last bit of food she had in the world up his ass"(49). Eva decides to take one final step for her son's relief. Eva deprives herself and her two children of food in order to alleviate the physical suffering and anguish her son is experiencing after being forced to use the last of the family's "lard" (50) to extract the compacted stool the infant boy is unable to rid himself of. While his mother concerns about how she would be able to continue to support for her children, "the thankful Plum slept" (50), relieved.

Hannah hears from Eva that, having males is difficult. You wouldn't realise they are "She admits that sons are challenging to conceive, carry, and rise to adulthood" (95). If "man love"(59) is what caused Eva to leave her daughters. The next is her son Plum, "to whom Eva hoped to bequeath (give) everything"(63), followed by Hannah and Pearl. Plum will inherit Eva's house, land, and material possessions. She wants to turn him into the kind of man who can support his family but who his father was unable to. Eva eagerly awaits his return from the front lines. However, due to his heroin addiction, Plum does not inherit the house that his mother built on Carpenter's Road. Eva just waits for Plum to return from the wharves' strict drug prohibition.

Eva plays the roles of life giver, nurturer, protector, dictator and a compassionate destroyer to the fullest, unparalleled by any other woman character in the novel. She stands out as an example of a strong, forgiving woman. Hannah, Plum, Sula, and numerous other motherless children are loved and cared for by Eva in her capacity as an intriguing, unconventional, but assertive mother in a free maternal space. Plum is “trying to get back up in my womb, therefore I'm worried” (95). Eva thinks that her mothering responsibilities to hers on will never cease. He could pass away like a man, not all cramped up inside my womb (96). As a result, Eva's attempts to leave her possessions to her son are thwarted by death. She murders Plum by dousing him in kerosene and setting him on fire after learning about his addiction. “I done everything I could to have him leave me and go on and live and be a man but he wouldn't and I had to keep him out so I simply thought of a way he could die like a man not all squished up inside my womb, but like a man,” (96) Eva says of dying Plum.

She would be referred to as a murderer in legalese, but is she? More than anything in the world, she adored her son. She would give anything for him, but she was unable to watch as drugs destroyed her son. Eva responds, “Is,” when Hannah explains that Plum is on fire and they are unable to open the door. My child? Burning? ”(67). Eva does not come across as a cold-blooded killer because she is so loving and devoted to him. Her behaviour does not come across as calculated or intimidating. Instead, one gets the impression that she would have made a snap decision if she had been aware of the alternatives.

Morrison does not always portray black mothers in a positive light. In fact, she sometimes paints frightening portraits. The Lord stated to man, “Thou shalt not kill” (Bible). No matter the circumstances, no one has the right to take another person's life. Sadly, “Eva finds herself stuck between a rock and a hard place” (King, Joyce Elaine & Carolyn 18).

Eva is forced to select between two terrible and tough options: she can either kill the child she loves deeply or she can helplessly watch him suffer as a result of the dehumanising effects of drug misuse. Eva experiences dilemmas as choices that make her feel as though she has no good options and is stuck in a predicament for which there is no decent solution: Eva is damned-if she acts and damned-if she does not. According to King Joyce Elaine & Carolyn, The African American mother is “forced to teach some qualities that should ideally be imparted in a positive manner, in a seemingly inhumane and terrible way” (King, Joyce Elaine & Carolyn 31).

Eva chooses to respond to events that, no matter how she reacts, she is unable to overcome in a way that appears brutal and negative—murder. Morrison gives the impression that Eva killed Plum out of mercy by equating it to putting a dog with a broken leg to sleep because he is hurt. Morrison does not support Eva's behaviour, but neither does she.

In conclusion Morrison depicts imperfect mothers in her works, whether they are killers, matriarchs, caregivers, abandoners, nurturers, or cultural bearers. When depicting her mother figures, Morrison refuses to fall into the good mother versus bad mother dichotomy since she is aware of the hardships and difficulties of parenthood for black women. While some of her mothers are successful and some are unsuccessful, they all have flaws.

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MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE ANGAMI TRIBE: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE AFFINITY OF VOCABULARIES AND CULTURAL TRAITS

Dr. (Fr.) George Keduolhou Angami
Principal
St. Joseph's College (Autonomous)
Jakhama - Nagaland

Abstract

The efforts to establish and ascertain ethnicity and identity of tribes in Nagaland have experienced steady and progressive achievements. But when one has to speak of place of origin and migration, there are innumerable hurdles that one has to encounter. To state that Naga people in Nagaland belong to mongoloid race is collectively agreeable but to establish and assert their place of origin and migration becomes a herculean task. One of the ways to research into the place of origin and migration of the people in Nagaland is to cautiously investigate and examine the vocabularies of the spoken languages, the food habits, the choice of food and taste and cultural traits. Why investigate these aspects of the tribe? Because these attributes could lead the researcher into the social fabrics and structures of society and social life of the tribes and through comparative study of social ethos of people living in other parts of the world (Asia), it is possible to derive, if not absolutely at least an agreeable conclusion acceptable to many. The prevalent social ethos in Nagaland will serve as lineage and provide ample evidences to ascertain and claim the place of origin and migration. The investigations and findings presented in this paper serve only as clues and sign posts for researchers to challenge themselves and delve deeper into research to discover, determine, and crystallize one's root of migration and settlement.

Key Words: Migration, Settlement, Boat (*Rou*), Go-Cart (*Bagei*), Brewed rice beer (*Zutho*, *Thutshe*), Snail (*Noulà*), Bamboo Shoot (*Kesé*), Carnilean Necklace (*Cüzie*), Conch and Cowry-shells (*Kesü*), Bamboo baskets (*Merha/Khorü/Khodi*), Granary (*Khi/Chü*), and Rope/strap (*Kepho*)

Introduction

A puzzling and perplexing challenge that confronts the Angami tribe living in the capital district of Nagaland is the search and quest to determine the original place of migration and settlement. The subject matter of migration and settlement of the Angami tribe always provokes debate, dispute and arguments with hardly any definitive conclusions. While all the Naga tribes (in general) in Nagaland claim of unique and distinct ancient history, often discourses and discussions on the same and the search into the authenticity and substantiation of the claim gradually get diluted; facts, proofs, and

evidences get shrouded and finally it becomes difficult to be strong and assert the claim. It is acknowledged that there are sensitive matters which can arise when a village or clan make claims which are not unanimously received by all as every researcher has valid arguments and viewpoints. To this fact it is clear that there are reasons why it is difficult to agree upon and establish a unanimous, undisputed and undivided account of the migration and settlement of the Angami tribe. Therefore, this paper presentation aims at treating some of the relevant aspects which would give traces of the migration and settlement of the Angami tribe.

The focus of this paper presentation is to investigate and treat some of the vocabularies, food habits, costumes and habitats of the Angami tribe to trace and connect the route of migration and settlement. The vocabularies like boat (*Rou*), go-cart (*Bagei*), used by the Angami tribe could point to the ancient migratory route. Through the food habits such as consumption of snails (*Noulà*), bamboo shoot (*Kesé*) and drinking locally brewed rice beer (*Zutho*, *Thutshe*), it is more or less possible to trace back the place of origin and migration of the Angami tribe. The extensive use of carnelian necklace (*Cüzie*), conch and cowrie-shells (*Kesü*) as precious ornaments, and bamboo baskets (*Merha/Khorü/Khodi*), Granary (*Khi/Chü*), and Rope/strap (*Kepho*), give the clues that the Angami tribe had once upon a time travelled and temporarily dwelled in places where the habit, practice and culture of the Angamis in present day are practiced.

This paper presentation does not aim at unanimous acceptance, approval and support of all the Angami people dwelling in different locations in Nagaland and elsewhere. It is highly hypothetical and purely from personal perspectives. The reader may take note that this is not the theory and voice of all the Angami people and the views and observations presented here are neither exhaustive nor bigotry. The intention of the author is to harness knowledge and, in some way, provide possibilities to consolidate the history of migration and settlement of the Angami tribe.

1. Theories of the Origin, Migration and Settlement of Nagas in Nagaland

The Angami tribe forms one of the biggest Naga tribes in Nagaland. For this reason, to give an account of migration and dispersal of the Angami tribe, it becomes necessary to deal with the contentions of the origin, migration, and dispersal of the Nagas in Nagaland as a whole. It is a known fact that there are different theories, hypotheses, folktales, legends and myths about the origin, migration and settlement of the Naga tribes. In fact, every tribe and even every village has its unique and distinct story-telling and oral tradition which gives account of the origin, migration and settlement. It may be noted that the Angami tribe is inclusive when dealing with the Naga people.

Be it a hypothesis or a statement of fact, if Nagas accept the argument that they belong to Mongoloid race, then they have to agree upon the premise that the origin of Mongoloid race is probably from East Asia (Siberia). This premise can be supported with the argument from the physical features of Mongoloid race. Like Mongolians, majority of Nagas have narrow eyes, scanty eyebrows, very little body odour, and relatively short limbs (not very tall in height). There are substantial and significant monographs on Nagas of Nagaland where the authors give account of Nagas from diverse perspectives. Chatterji, one of the well-known authors who made extensive studies on the Indo-Mongoloids and their contribution to the history and culture of India, says that the ancient Hindu literature speaks of the various Mongoloid groups speaking dialects of the Sino-Tibetan and their presence in Eastern India was as early as 10th century BCE., when the Veda books were compiled (Chatterji, 1950; Alemchiba, 1970). Further he argues that “the Mongoloid tribes represent at least three distinct physical types – the primitive long-headed Mongoloids, who are found in the sub-Himalayan tracts, in Nepal and mostly in Assam; the less primitive and more advanced short-headed Mongoloids, who are found mostly in (Myanmar) Burma and have expanded from Myanmar (Burma) through Arakan into Chittagong; and finally the Tibeto-Mongoloids, who are fairly tall and have lighter skins and appear to be the most highly developed type of the Mongoloids who came to India. These Tibeto-Mongoloids are the linguistically characterised Tibetans and their various off-shoots who arrived in India through the Himalayas, in comparatively recent times, spreading from Bhutan and Sikkim to Ladakh and Baltistan” (Chatterji, 1950, p. 20). One of the Mongoloid features which can be connected to the Nagas is the spoken dialect. Tibeto-Burmese dialects which include the Ao, Angami, Konyak, Lotha, Sangtam, Tangkhul, Mao, Manipuri, Bodo, Mech, Rabha, Garo, Kachari, Khasi, Jaintia etc., are quite a consistent and reasonable nomenclature of Mongoloid dialects but difficult to make them generally acceptable (Chatterji, 1950).

It has been said and even today it is difficult to say exactly when some of the Nagas entered into the present Nagaland. Among the Nagas in Nagaland, it is so difficult to agree upon and establish or decide the time and year when some of the Nagas settled in Nagaland. The limitations and constraints before the people are that there are no written records to determine and resolve the issue. The people are left with just the option to resort to oral tradition, the transmission of tradition and culture from generation to generation. The first mention of the Nagas as people living in their present land (Nagaland) was made by Greek geographer and historian Claudius Ptolemy in 150 BCE. The term he used was *Nagaloι* which is translated as “the realm of the naked.” *ναγαλογοι ο σημειει των γυμνων* - *Nagaloι* means the naked (Ptolmy, 150 AD).

Speaking about the origin and migration of Nagas, it is generally acknowledged that the Nagas wandered about until they settled in their present land. The Nagas has similar traits and cultures with the Dayaks (Dyaks), the natives of Borneo. The Nagas and Dayaks had the tradition and practice of headhunting and are known as fierce warriors and headhunters. Like the Nagas, the Dayaks were animists. In Philippines, the Igorots in the Province of Benguet (Baguio) and the indigenous people of Ifugao and Taiwanese in Formosa have the common system of terrace cultivation as is practiced by the Nagas even today. The Indonesians use the loin loom for weaving cloth. The embroidery on the cloths by the Nagas and Indonesians resembles each other (Horam, 2016). In his book, *A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland*, Alemchiba (1970) treated the origin and migration of the Nagas and provided illustrative account of tribals in different countries in central Asia. He compared and contrasted the central Asia socio-religious organization, tradition, culture and tribal traits with that of Nagas in Naga Hills. He concluded that at least separate waves of migration took place. The first stock, starting from the centre of dispersion in Sikiang (Chinese autonomous region) province first moved westerly and upon reaching the head-waters of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin (in Myanmar) rivers, bifurcated in several directions. The dispersion ultimately led to Tibet, Assam, the hill ranges between Assam and Myanmar and the dispersion which came to the hill ranges moved further west and entered Naga Hills. Another wave came from the South East Islands taking a north westerly direction and entered Naga Hills using Myanmar as a corridor (Alemchiba, 1970). In his compare and contrast survey, Alemchiba took into consideration the tribals in Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines, New Guinea, Formosa (Taiwan), and Dayaks and Kayans of Borneo. It is possible that much of the culture of the Naga Hills might have come overland from China by one route or another. It is also likely that much seem to have come from south-east Asia or from Indonesia, instead of west, north, or north-east (Alemchiba, 1970).

In dealing with the Naga affinities outside of the Asiatic Mainland, Smith took the Dayaks and Kayans of Borneo, the Battak of Sumatra, certain groups of Formosa, the Igorot and the Ifugao and several other groups in the Philippines as typical examples and carefully made a comparative study of the cultural traits and physical characters of the Nagas. He then classified the Nagas as Indonesians (Smith, 1925). In order to substantiate and validate his classification of Nagas as Indonesians, Smith gives thirteen outstanding characteristics of the Tibeto-Burman tribes of Assam which he attaches racially to the 'Indonesians' that is the people of Malaya and the Islands of Indonesia. They are: (1) Head-hunting; (2) Common Sleeping-houses for the Unmarried men, which are taboo to women; (3) Dwelling Houses built on posts and piles; (4) Disposal of the Dead on raised platforms; (5) a sort of Trial marriage, or great freedom of intercourse between the sexes before marriage; (6) Betel-chewing; (7) Aversion to milk as an article of diet; (8) Tattooing by pricking; (9) Absence of any powerful

political organization; (10) The double-cylinder vertical forge; (11) Simple loom for weaving cloth (12) Large quadrangular or hexagonal shield; (13) Residence on hilly regions with a crude form of agriculture (Smith, 1925). According to Smith, the immigrant tribes took different routes to settle in the Naga Hills. Some took the Himalayan section which extends down through the Patkai, Arakan Yoma, and Banda Arch towards Sumatra and Java, and some took the Pacific section which extends from Formosa through the Philipines, Borneo and on to Japan (Smith, 1925).

In his book, *The Rising Naga*, Yonuo (1984) took account of the physical features of the Mongoloids and established that a Naga bears the Mongolian physical features and cultural traits. In general, a Naga has these features as a Mongoloid; a complexion of light, light dark, golden brown and even black with a yellowish tinge, black hair, straight, coarse, vigorous, wavy and negrito frizzy in some cases. Majority of Nagas have scanty hair on face, short stature or below average in the standard, nose fine to broad, face characteristically flat, eyelids often oblique (Yonuo, 1984; Smith, 1925). For Yonuo, Nagas are Tibeto-Burman speaking people who belong to Mongolian race. The Nagas came from Myanmar and gradually spread to the present Naga-inhabited mountainous massif where they entrenched themselves, preserved their customs, beliefs and dialects. Their nomadic life stopped when they found good land for cultivation and for their animals. Some of the allied tribes of the Nagas like Karens, Kachins, Singphos, Chin, Shan, and others settled in Myanmar permanently after they had come from Western China (Yonuo, 1984). Chasie says that the Nagas reached their present geographical locations from possibly three eastern routes: one from the southeast and south to north, the second from straight across the Irrawady-Salween-Chindwin region and a possible third from the north-east. According to him, all the routes came through present day Myanmar (Chasie, 1999).

There is an oral history which connected the migration of the *Tenyimia* (Among the many Naga tribes in Nagaland and Manipur, a group of ethnic tribes, Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Zeliang, Pochury, Poumai, Maram, Mao, Thangal, and Zeliangrong), upholds a sense of affinity, kinship and belongingness to one another based on socio cultural and political life. These tribes (the number of tribes is inconclusive) claim to have common and comprehensive unique cultural entity and call themselves *Tenyimia*. According to the theory of Chasie, the *Tenyimia* groups were earlier known as “*Tayiemia*” (descendants of those who managed to run away). He traced back the history of *Tenyimia* to Qin Dynasty of China (220-210 BCE) most probably during Qinshi Haungdi who built the Great Wall of China around 215 BCE to protect from Mongol’s invasion. To escape from this forceful construction work, some people escaped and went down to the south of China-Myanmar border. It is believed that Nagas were one of those groups who came from Yunnan province and ultimately reached the North East Hills of India. However, there is no historical record, legend or folk tale

supporting this version. And this theory seems to have made its appearance only after the return of some Naga Undergrounds from China. Some writers expounded the theory that the Nagas might have come from somewhere in north-west China between the Huang-Ho (Yellow River) and the Yangtse-kiang (in China) rivers because the Tibeto-Burman language is supposed to have sprung from this region (Chasie, 1999).

2. The Angami Tribe

A striking similarity of the Angami Nagas with the Igorots of the Philippines is seen in terrace cultivation. Other similarities are seen in the village arrangements and style of building, language and love for marine ornaments and shells. The practice of head-hunting amongst the Nagas has something in common with the Dyaks of Borneo (Nagaland District Gazetteers, 1970). “The Angami Nagas are, according to tradition, one of the earliest settlers of Nagaland. They are also one of the major Naga Tribes with past history. The Angami Nagas are predominantly settled in the Southern part of the Nagaland State. They are bounded by Chakhesang in the East, by Manipur in the South, by Zeliang and Assam in the West and by Assam, Rengma and Sema in the North. Most of the Angami villages are generally situated on sloppy hills about 1,444.12 metres”, (Basic Fact, 1994, p. 3) above sea level and the people enjoy healthy climate. It is neither too hot nor too cold.

From the above- mentioned accounts, there are two possible affirmations that we can conclude. Firstly, it is possible to argue and establish that the Naga people migrated from China through the Patkai section and settled on the way in the Naga Hills of North East India, popularly known as the Land of Seven Sisters (*A journalist, Jyoti Prasad Saikia, was the first to use the sobriquet “Land of the Seven Sisters” in reference to the Seven States of North East India, in 1972, in the course of a radio talk show*). The accounts and descriptions given by scholars and authors indicate and provide clues that the Angami Nagas were among those tribes who migrated from China, even though place of origin of migration is not categorically recorded. Secondly, if we look at the tribal ethos in Philippines, Borneo and Formosa, there are tribes who still have the traditions, culture, and tribal socio-religious organizations like that of the Angami Nagas in the Naga Hills. Therefore, it wouldn't be just a hypothetical jargon to state that the Nagas and Angami Nagas are Mongoloids who migrated from different parts of South East Asia but a relevant contention that the Angami Nagas took different routes in different waves and settled in the Land of Seven Sisters.

3. Affinity of Vocabularies

In the spoken language and now gradually developed in written script of the Angami tribe, there are certain vocabularies which point to the old and ancient place of dwelling and suggest the routes of migration. The language spoken by the Angami people is known as *Tenyidie*, which is also considered as the *lingua franca* of *Tenyimia* tribes. Among the many Naga tribes in Nagaland and Manipur, a group of ethnic tribes (Angami, Chakhesang, Rengma, Zeliang, Pochury, Poumai, Maram, Mao, Thangal, and Zeliangrong), upholds a sense of affinity, kinship and belongingness to one another based on socio cultural and political life. The above-mentioned tribes (the number of tribes is inconclusive) claim to have common and comprehensive unique cultural entity and call themselves *Tenyimia*. There is an oral history which connected the migration of the *Tenyimia* with the Great Wall of China. According to it the *Tenyimia* group were earlier known as “*Tayiemia*” (descendants of those who managed to run away). It traced back the history to Qin Dynasty of China (220-210 BCE) most probably Qinshi Haungdi, who built the Great Wall of China around 215 BCE to protect from Mongol’s invasion. To escape from this forceful construction work, some people escaped and went down to the south of China-Myanmar border. It is believed that Nagas were one of those groups who came from Yunnan province and ultimately reached the North East Hills of India. However, there is no historical record, legend or folk tale supporting this version. And this theory seems to have made its appearance only after the return of some Naga Undergrounds from China. Some writers expounded the theory that the Nagas might have come from somewhere in north-west China between the Huang-Ho (Yellow river) and the Yangtze-kiang (in China) rivers because the Tibeto-Burman language is supposed to have sprung from this region (Chasie, 1999).

According to Grierson (1967), *Tenyidie*, the language spoken mainly by the Angami tribe and the *Tenyimia* tribes serves as an indication of possible route of migration. The Angami Naga language is of the Tibeto-Chinese family. The Angami Nagas are connected with the second wave of migration from North Western China between the upper waters of the Yangtze-Kiang and Haong-Ho rivers. If the language is of Tibeto-Chinese family, then the presumption is that the Angami Nagas migrated either from Tibet or China.

3.1 Vocabulary *Rou* (Boat)

In the language of the Angami people (*Tenyidie*), the term boat/*Rou* is used. This word *Rou* poses multiple questions to discuss and research. The mountainous land presently inhabited by the Angami Nagas has neither big lakes nor rivers where the need of boat is felt. The biggest rivers in Nagaland are Doyang (in Wokha), Dikhu (between Mokokchung and Tuensang districts), Dhansiri (in

Dimapur), Tizu (in Zunheboto and Phek districts), Milak (in Mokokchung), Zungki (in Noklak, Shamator and Kiphire), Sidzü (in Mao gate and Pfutsero), Dzü-ü (in Kohima) and Chathe (in Chümoukedima). Some of the other smaller rivers are Dzüza, Manglu, Tsurong, Nanung, Tsurang or Disai, Tsumok, Menung, Tapi, Miki (river of salt), Lanye, Likimro etc.. The rivers which flow into Brahmaputra are Doyang, Dikhu and Dhansiri. Tizu river flows into Chindwin River in Myanmar. Doyang as the longest and biggest river of Nagaland originates from the Angami area (Japfü Hill) and passes through Kohima district (Sidzü and Dzü-ü), and then flows to Zunheboto district and Wokha district. The river then flows into Dhansiri river in Assam (Sibsagar district) and finally joins the river Brahmaputra. The location and land mark of these rivers in Nagaland show that there is no possibility to use boat/*Rou* as the rivers are formed in deep ravines and narrow valleys. The only possible river where boat/*Rou* can be used is the river Brahmaputra in Assam. There are hardly any Angami people who live near the river Brahmaputra. The biggest natural lake in Nagaland is Shilloi lake in Phek district, on the way to Phokhungri village. It was originally called as *Lütsam* meaning, “a place where water is collected.” Although it forms the largest lake in Nagaland, it was not accessible to the Angami people. Furthermore, it is of late development that the department of tourism in Nagaland constructed recreational boats at Shilloi lake to promote tourism.

Therefore, looking at the topography and landscape of the Angami inhabited area, there is hardly any clue that the Angami tribe has any connection with any big river, lake, sea or ocean where boat is required as means of transportation. Even today, the Angami people don’t use boat anywhere except in some private recreational parks where mini boats are provided for leisure and amusement. Even though boats are not produced or used by the Angami tribe yet the term *Rou* exists in the vocabulary of the language (*Tenyidie*) spoken by the Angami tribe. This gives the speculation and assumption that at some time of their past history of migration and sojourn, the Angamis might have dwelled by the sea or big river where they have seen or used boat. Of course, it is possible to infer that the term boat “*Rou*” has some connection with the costumes and jewelleryes of the Angami tribe. Until this day, cowries, conches, and marine shells which are available and found only on the sea shores or big lakes are used by the Angamis and protected as precious assets to decorate their dresses and worn as ornaments. Therefore, from the vocabulary of the word boat/*Rou* and the love for sea shells, the inference is that the Angami Nagas might have migrated from the main land of China to South East Asian countries inhabited by Mongoloid race (Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Brunei, Timor-Leste) and finally settled at the Naga Hills. The journey might have been through the sea route or big rivers and then to the mountainous hills in Nagaland. However, the hypothesis that the journey through the sea route is very unlikely as the main land of Nagaland is extremely far from the nearest sea/ocean (Bay of Bengal). From geographical point of view, it is likely that the Angamis migrated from Yunnan province of China and passing

through Myanmar via rivers Irrawaddy and Chindwin and reached the Naga hills. There are three main reasons to substantiate this theory. The first reason is that in the Yunnan province there are three big lakes namely Dianchi (Dian), Erhai (Er Hai), and Fuxian. The Dianchi (Dian) lake forms the largest highland lake, Erhai lake as the second largest lake and Fuxian lake been the third largest lake in Yunnan province in China. As the lakes are very large, the people (Naxi tribe) living in the surroundings of the lakes used boat(s)/*Rou* as means of transportation. The Angamis who migrated to Naga hills too must have lived in the surroundings of these lakes, developed the skill of making boat and thus built up the vocabulary boat/*Rou*. Secondly having known the art of making boat/*Rou* the Angamis might have journeyed through the land and having reached the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers in Myanmar might have built boat/*Rou* and used them as means of transportation. The third reason could be that the climate and weather temperature in summer at Dali, Kunming, Lijiang, Nujiang Lisu (in China) nearest to Myanmar is hot. In winter the climate is cold in Baoshan and surrounding region. Therefore, to escape from the hot climate and weather and looking for cooler habitat, the Angamis might have moved out and landed in and around Baoshan. Since the climate becomes very cold in this area in winter, they might have moved further and reached Myanmar (probably at Myitkyina) and subsequently journeyed through the rivers Irrawaddy and Chindwin and settled in the Naga Hills.

3.2 Vocabulary *Bagei* (Go-Cart)

Another vocabulary in *Tenyidie* is *Bagei*. This word is used today to mean vehicle. *Bagei* is a traditional Angami Go-Cart with three wheels; one wheel at the front and two at the rear. An example of traditional *Bagei* in modern day is pulled Rickshaw or Auto Rickshaw driven mainly in the plains of Dimapur. *Bagei* wheels were made of wood, cut in circular shape (like modern vehicular tyre). It has to be pushed and rolled back and front. In Chiechama village (Northern Angami village) *Bagei* was used by children and youth to play as entertainment and sport. It was also used like the modern car race for sports and competition. But how did this word *Bagei* develop or come into the language? The Angami ancestors recounted and described that in China, the Chinese made *Bagei* and rolled it in the middle of the main street (Liezetsu, 1982). In Chinese, *Bagei* is called *Dongyangche*, meaning “east-foreign-vehicle” or *Huangbaoche* meaning, “yellow carriage for rent”. Even before the arrival of the British in the Naga Hills, this word, *Bagei* was used by the Angamis. The Angami ancestors built *Bagei* and used it. The Angami ancestors might have used it and termed it and transmitted the use of the term to the younger generations. The inference is that the Angamis must have once upon a time lived in China, probably in Beijing, Shanghai or Hong Kong (the oral traditional story telling does not mention the name of the place), engaged in business trade, travelled in the main street in

China and used or witnessed *Bagei*. They found out that the climate in the main land of China was very hot and therefore moved out from the hot climate region to look for cooler land in the direction of Yunnan province. Having lived at Yunnan province and experienced life surrounding the lakes of Dianchi (Dian), Erhai (Er Hai), and Fuxian, moved towards river Irrawaddy and Chindwin in Myanmar and finally settled at the Naga Hills. Even today, *Bagei* is used as one of the most exciting traditional sports in Nagaland, in particular by the Angami tribe. The vocabulary *Bagei* is one of the evidences that points to the place of origin of the Angamis. It may be noted that it is not possible to claim who first invented *Bagei* in Nagaland. The only possible conclusion we can derive is that the Angami ancestors who lived in another place and have seen and used *Bagei* might have remade it and used it for sports and handed over to their younger generations.

4. Affinity of Food Habits

Food habits are never universal. What is considered to be an acceptable food custom and practice in one country or culture is not the same in another country. What is considered delicacy in one country or culture is considered repugnance in another country or culture. However, it cannot be denied that food habits are linked to place of dwelling, geography, culture and history. The Angamis too have their special food delicacies which are not only just distinct to them. What the Angamis consider to be delicacies are also consumed by people in different parts of the world. An investigation into some of the food habits of the Angamis gives the clue of their original habitats and routes of migration.

4.1 Snail (*Noulà*) as Gastronomic Delicacy

Having lived in a small world of Angami land in Nagaland, I was under the impression that snail is eaten only by the Angami people as snail cuisine is so common and a special food delicacy. In fact, ask any non-Naga from the main land of India, “Have you eaten snails?” and the reaction is not very appealing and pleasant and the expression on the face is almost disgusting. But now I understand that snail cuisine is a gastronomic food delicacy not only to the Angami people in Nagaland but widespread in different parts of the world. For people who have not tasted snail cuisine, consuming snails sounds particularly unappealing but for those who have taste for snails, they know that snails cooked with smoked pork, garlic, ginger and bamboo shoots can be impressively savoury and delicious. Snails as food have been consumed by humans for centuries. In several parts of the ancient world including the Roman Empire, snails served as part of their cuisine. Snails are considered edible in areas such as Mediterranean region, Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe etc.. In some parts of the country, including Nagaland, snail dish is considered as one of the main course of food. To mention

a few, the French serves snail (Escargot) as ‘starters’ or ‘appetizers’. In Germany the snail soup is called *Badisches Schneckenstüppchen* (snail soup from Baden). In Italy I had snails in tomato sauce (*Lumache al sugo*) with a priest, Fr. Sanzio at San Mauro. In Austria the dish is called *Weinbergsschnecken im Bierbackteig* (snails in beer batter). In Czech Republic there are dozens of snail farms and in Poland the people eat fried snails. In Morocco, snail soup is considered street food. Snail is also considered a main course food in Australia. Australia has large snail farm and commercially export edible snails to countries that serve snail as escargot. Some African countries consider snail as traditional food. Snail is eaten as dish in Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar and South Western China.

Among the Naga tribes in Nagaland and Manipur, snail as gastronomic food is mainly consumed by the *Tenyimia* tribes and in particular the Angami and Chakhesang tribes. The reason why snail cuisine is discussed here is to infer and trace the migration of Angami tribe as affinity of food habit can indicate the route of migration. In *Tenyidie* (Angami language) edible snail is called *Noulà*. The point of departure is the question, how did the Angami people develop the habit of consuming *Noulà*? Just as the vocabulary *Rou* (boat) has reference to large lake or river as discussed under point 1.1 Affinity of Vocabulary *Rou/boat*, the food habit and food cuisine of *Noulà* might point to the place from where migration of the Angami might have taken place. The topography of Nagaland (Kohima district) shows that there are no large lakes or rivers where *Noulà* (snail) grows easily. Heliculture (farming of snail) is a recent development in Nagaland. Snails are naturally found in large lakes and rivers where water gather or in marshy lands. While in the South West of China (Yunnan Province), where the people consume snails as food, there exist large lakes of Dianchi (Dian), Erhai (Er Hai), and Fuxian. In Myanmar, the large rivers are Irrawaddy and Chindwin and people in Myanmar eat snails as food. Therefore, the Angami people, having lived in Central China and migrated to South West (Yunnan Prince), lived around the large lakes of Dianchi (Dian), Erhai (Er Hai), and Fuxian, might have developed the habit of eating snails as food. One may wonder why the Naga people in Nagaland eat variety of living creatures which are not common to other people. The simple and uncomplicated reason is that when faced with situation of survival of the fittest, it is likely that the Angamis had to take resort to eating living creatures in the lakes, rivers and forests during their migration and sojourn. Speaking of the Cantonese cuisine (Southern China), it is said, “They eat anything with legs except table – and anything with wings except an airplane.” This axiom is very much applicable even with the Angamis in Nagaland.

As snail (*Chinese Mystery Snail-Cipangopaludina chinensis*) also known as *Bellamya Chinensis*, is considered food delicacy among the *Tenyimia* tribes, the Angamis have learnt the art of snail farming

(Heliculture) with the practice of terrace cultivation (paddy field). Since big lakes and rivers are not found in the Angami areas, where snails can be found naturally, where did the Angamis learned to eat *Noulà* as gastronomic food delicacy? Today, the Angamis practice Heliculture in small marshy lands and ponds. The terrace cultivation (paddy field) is usually done on sloping terrains and narrow valleys with natural water source (small ponds) and marshy lands. The snails are grown in these ponds and fields and snails are normally collected after the harvest of paddy (grains) as the muddy water during the summer cultivation gradually gets settled and water becomes cleaner. It may be noted that the habitat of snails is shallow ponds, marshy lakes, canals, ditches and slow-moving rivers. The female snails can reproduce each year up to 130 offspring a time, the reason of which snails are readily available in the market throughout the year. The benefit of *Noulà*/snails as food cuisine is that besides the content of protein and low amounts of fat, snails act as good source of iron, calcium, and Vitamin A. The food preference of snails is mainly on fresh leaves of cultivated plants, dead animals, decaying matter, plant and animal detritus, green algae, bacteria on decaying plant material in addition to mud. Under forced conditions of starvation, snails feed themselves on humus, fungus, decaying wood pieces, and dead individuals of their own species. Occasionally snails consume sand for the proper functioning of the gizzard in the crushing of the food particles (Valarmathi, 2017, pp.91-93).

There are many cultures and traditions which are developed from the practices of trials and errors. But many of such cultures and traditions are also learned and transmitted from generation to generation. It is unlikely that the Angamis learned to cook and eat *Noulà* without having seen other people cooking and eating it. As mentioned earlier, snails/*Noulà* are easily available in big lakes, seas and rivers. Therefore it is highly possible that the Angamis, before their migration and settlement in Nagaland, lived in places where snails were found and consumed as food. The vocabularies, *Rou* and *Noulà* take us back to Yunnan province in China and rivers in Myanmar, giving us the route of migration. The most commonly consumed *Noulà* by the Angamis is the *Chinese Mystery Snail* also known as *Bellamya Chinensis*.

4.2 Bamboo Shoot (*Kesé*) as Aromatic Recipe

Bamboo shoot or Bamboo sprout (*Riepou*) is eaten as edible vegetable by many people in East Asia, South Asia and South East Asia. In India, bamboo shoot (*Riepou*) is eaten mainly in the North East states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya. Although bamboo shoots are edible, the Angamis don't eat all species of bamboo shoots. The most common species of Bamboo shoots eaten by the Angamis is *Bambusa*. The processed Bamboo shoot is called *Kesé* in *Tenyidie*. The shoot of *Bambusa* eaten by the Angamis has numerous branches emerging from the nodes with lots of clumps.

It does not grow vertically straight. Although the Lotha tribe in Nagaland is largely associated with Bamboo shoot recipe, the Angami tribe use both fresh and fermented bamboo shoot (*Kesé*) practically every day as one of the ingredients of curry. One may wonder why the Angamis are very fond of bamboo shoots. How did the Angamis develop the habit of eating bamboo shoots? Have they learned to eat bamboo shoots from other people or naturally invented it as edible food item?

In the search to trace and connect the place of migration and settlement, it takes the Angami people back to China where bamboo shoot is considered to be one of the main food items. China is known as the “kingdom of Bamboo”. China is the world’s richest country in bamboo resources. Bamboo shoot is widely consumed by the Chinese as delicacy and as treasured dish due to its high nutritional value and bioactive compounds. The freshly collected bamboo shoots are regarded as the health beneficiary food due to the high abundance of amino acids, phytosterols, vitamins and essential minerals (Mo RunHong et.al. 2021, p.1). The Chinese eat bamboo shoots in different forms such as fresh, dried, canned and flavoured shoots. Bamboo shoot is a unique ingredient that has been used in Chinese cooking for thousands of years. It is a good source of dietary fibre and has low fat content and calories. Scholars have investigated and found that bamboo is found as food in Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and other Asian countries and have developed several commercially available products in the market (Weiyi Liu et.al. 2018, pp.134-141). The Angamis may not know scientifically the dietary benefits of bamboo shoots but eat bamboo shoots in forms such as fresh, dried, and fermented as one dish item. The juice squeezed from smashed bamboo shoots is preserved in earthen jars and used as aromatic ingredient of food. The food habit of eating bamboo shoots in different forms gives indication that the Angamis might have lived in China, knew the food habit of eating bamboo shoots and carried the habit to the present habitat.

4.3 Zutho as Traditional Beverage

Come Hornbill Festival of Nagaland (from 1st to 10th December), the land of festivals, and the centre of attraction is the local brewed glutinous/sticky rice beer called *Zutho* and *Thutshe*. To many visitors and tourists who come to witness and participate the Hornbill festival, *Zutho* and *Thutshe* are new indigenous drinks worth sipping and a regret to miss it. Though almost all the tribes in Nagaland make brewed sticky rice drink, the terms *Zutho* or *Thutshe* in *Tenyidie* has become *lingua franca* for locally brewed rice beer. To the Angamis, *Thutshe* is a thicker and tastier local brewed rice drink. The delicious milky rice drink (*Zutho/Thutshe*) is the favourite starch drink in Nagaland and in particular for the *Tenyimia* tribes. It has refreshing natural flavour of sticky/glutinous rice. This rice drink is appreciated by people from all generations at any moment of the day. It is 100% organic with

no added sugar, contains natural sugar that occur during the fermentation process of the rice. The natural sugar produces certain amount of alcohol in rice drink. If rice drink is consumed in larger quantity, then one may get intoxicated. The fermentation process is done with powdered germinated sticky paddy. The rice drink (*Zutho/Thutshe*) has pleasant flavour and natural semi sweetness of fermented rice. Rice drink is a favourite customary drink, consumed by people of all walks of life. *Zutho/Thutshe* can be used in many different ways within the context of a balanced daily diet. It can be enjoyed as such, hot or cold, at meals time, during work in the jhum and terrace field cultivation, at bed time, during festivals, dialogue between parents and children, weddings and parties, social and political gatherings and meetings. Rice drink has no special ingredients. It contains water, sticky rice and semi germinated paddy as yeast. Since it is rice drink, it is rich in starch. It is 100% agricultural drink from organic farming. The result of drinking rice beer on daily basis may increase the growth of belly which for the *Tenyimia* humorously call *Zutho vadi* (rice beer belly). Rice drink if consumed in large quantity may lead to intoxication although not as harmful as liquors produced from laboratory known as Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL).

If rice is used to brew rice drink, then where and when did domestication of rice start? Archaeological studies have shown that bits of rice were first found at least 9,400 years ago in China. Archaeologists unearthed bits of rice at a site called Shangshan. The finding shows that around 10,000 years ago a group of hunters gathered at China's Yangtze River and started to grow rice (Sarah Zhang, 2017). In Asia, there has been a history of rice-based brews. "In fact, a chemical analysis of pottery residue found in northern China's Henan province showed that rice-based beverages were brewed as early as 9000 years ago. An international multi-disciplinary team detected alcoholic drinks which have traces of rice, honey, and fruits. These ancient pots were discovered on burial grounds indicating that the dead were buried with a pot of rice-based alcoholic beverages in ancient China" (Dutta, November 22, 2022). China has a long history of brewing alcoholic beverages. Brewed rice beer is one of the rice beverages. What is traditionally known as Laoli/Yujiang and now known as Choujiu can be traced back to the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD). Like *Zutho*, Choujiu is a Chinese fermented alcoholic beverage brewed from glutinous rice. It is thick in content and milky white in colour which is like *Zutho/Thutse* of the Angami tribe. The oldest archaeological evidence shows that rice was found in the middle and lower Yangtze River valley region of China (Sweeney & McCouch, 2007). As the various regions of Yangtze River adopted rice as food grain, they also indigenously learned the art of brewing rice beverages, although the percentage of alcohol in the beverages vary from region to region based on the type of rice species used. To name a few, the South East Asian countries like Japan calls *Zutho* as Sake or Mirin; Thailand calls it Sato. In Vietnam it is called as Rou Nep Cam. While in Cambodia *Zutho* is called Sra Peang, in South Korea it is known as Soju, Maekegoli.

There are two significant evidences to substantiate the hypothesis that the Angamis might have migrated from the main land in China and in course of time settled in the Naga Hills. The first evidence is that of the tradition and art of brewing rice drink (*Zutho*). The researcher is of the opinion that the practice of making *Zutho/Thutshe* and habit of consuming *Zutho/Thutshe* has lineage with the original place of migration. *Zutho* is made of glutinous rice. Rice is the largest food crop in Nagaland. The Angamis have developed methodical system of cultivating rice in the form of Jhum or shift cultivation and terrace cultivation. Besides the practice of Jhum/shift cultivation, every family in the Angami villages has either big or small plot of terrace field to cultivate paddy/rice. While the non -glutinous paddy/rice is usually cultivated in the Jhum fields, glutinous paddy/rice (*kemenya lha*) is grown in the terrace field commonly called as *paddy field*. Rice is the most stable food to the Angamis. Rice (non -sticky rice) is consumed as main course of food, at least twice in a day. Before the arrival of Christianity in Nagaland (150 years ago), the sticky rice (*kemenya lha*) was used to make *Zutho/Thutse* as stable drink by the forefathers. *Zutho* was consumed in the house, in the meetings, in the fields, and in any work place just as mineral water or other soft drinks are served today in the meetings, gatherings, and work places. Of course, the practice of making *Zutho/Thutshe* is still prevalent in all the Angami villages, although the culture and tradition of making *Zutho* has reduced much due to the presence of Christianity in the land. Today, *Zutho/Thutshe* is also commonly called as local/country rice beer. The question that confronts us is when, where and how did the Angamis learn to use glutinous rice and make *Zutho/Thutshe* as local brewed rice drink? These thought-provoking questions lead us back to the places and regions where there were the practices and culture of making brewed rice drinks. The making and consumption of brewed rice drink (*Zutho*) by the Chinese in China, where rice was first domesticated and the same tradition and practice among the Angamis in Nagaland gives us inference that some time ago the Angamis lived in the land (China) where rice drink was made; learned the art to cultivate paddy and made *Zutho (Choujiu)* out of glutinous rice and in the process of migration to Nagaland continued and transmitted the art of making and consuming *Zutho*. Teramoto et.al., in their “Characteristics of a rice beer (zutho) and a yeast isolated from the fermented product in Nagaland, India” give a detailed method of the preparation of *Zutho* and the materials used and the process of making *Zutho*. The materials used for making *Zutho* and methods of making *Zutho* are not presented here as it would be too lengthy to take it up in this paper work (Teramoto et.al., 2002).

The second evidence to substantiate and validate the hypothesis of *Zutho* as a proof of migration from China is the practice of placing *Zutho* and cooked meat on the tomb of the dead. The archaeologists found, as mentioned earlier, in the pottery residue in northern China’s Henan province that rice-based beverages were brewed as early as 9000 years ago. The discovery showed that alcoholic drinks were made of rice, honey, and fruits. The findings also showed that the

ancient pots were discovered on burial grounds and that the dead were buried with a pot of rice-based alcoholic beverages. Very much similar to the archaeological findings, the Angamis in Nagaland too had the traditional practice of placing *Zutho*, contained in plantain/banana leaves in conical shape, and cooked meat kept on the tomb of the deceased. The rationale behind this practice is that the spirit of the deceased need food supplement during their journey to the seventh stage of heaven. It may be mentioned that for the Chinese gourd is a symbol of good luck. It's a symbol of blessing. Dried bottle gourds called as Hulu are decorated with beautiful paintings (pyrography). For the Angamis, in the ancient days, dried gourds in different shapes and sizes were used to carry water and *zutho*. Before the arrival of aluminium water jars, larger dried gourds were used as water containers.

5. Affinity of Cultural Traits

In all known cultures and societies, we find the adornment and decoration of the human body. Each culture develops its own costumes and ornaments not only to adorn and embellish appearances and individual attractiveness but also to indicate the social roots of the person. The costumes and ornaments mark the identity of a person as belonging to a distinct cultural unit and status within a community. It is also significantly visible and important that in almost all the Naga tribes, ornaments are used to mark social status, celebrations, power and authority.

5.1 Cowry Shells Theories and Migration of the Angamis

Many authors consider the use of cowry shells by the Nagas in the North East region of India as one of the pieces of evidence of their migration. Among the many tribes in North East India, the Angamis have great attachment to their ornaments and costumes. Within the Angami society, ornaments also reveal the wearer's economic and social status. Some of their ornaments and costumes are made of shells, precious stone, ivory, feathers of birds, bronze and glass ornaments. Indo-Pacific beads are used in large quantities on the south east coast from the third century BCE to perhaps the 17th century CE. It is unlikely that the Angamis originally lived near the Indian Ocean but there is a strong tradition of using sea shells and beads which are found on the sea coasts (Kanungo, 2006).

The Angami Nagas and other tribal people of North East India use lots of sea shell ornaments and their costumes are embroidered with sea shells. According to Shimray, the movement of Naga population had been first southward from the Asiatic mainland. Then from the Archipelago eastward to the Pacific. The Angamis were one of the groups from Asiatic mainland who migrated southward direction but retreated to North West direction to the Naga Hills after reaching the southern seas of

Moulmein (Mawlamyine). Some other groups went down further from Moulmein to Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines. The inference is that the Angamis and other Nagas followed the southward movement and later on reached some other coast or islands (Shimray, 1985). Chasie speaks of two divisions/groups of Nagas, namely the kilted and non-kilted Nagas. The kilt (*Keshiinei*) of the Angamis is decorated with cowrie-shells. Chasie calls the kilted Nagas as *Tenyimia*, who largely pursue democracy in varying degrees. The non-kilted Naga group follow a combination of tribal and a sort of pseudo-feudal system, though traits of the *Tenyimia* are more visible and widely practiced (Chasie, 1999). The kilt of the *Tenyimia* with cowrie-shells infers that the ancestors of the Angamis and *Tenyimia* tribes had lived at Sea Coast in the remote past. The Angami Nagas and many other Naga tribes love marine-shells even though they are not found in Angami villages (Shakespeare, 1914). The Angamis treasure cowrie and conch shells as precious ornaments and wealth as they use them for beautifying their dresses. An Angami who wears a kilt with three rows of cowries is identified as a warrior and one who wears four rows of cowries is acknowledged and recognized as a veteran warrior. The many customs and way of Angami life are very much similar to Borneo, Dayaks, Kayans, Indonesians and Malaysians which indicate that their ancient abode might have been near the sea or island (Shimray, 1985).

5.2 Cowry Shells as Traditional Ornaments

Wherever we go we carry our tradition with us. Our tradition is our heritage. If we take account of the vocabularies and food habits of the Angamis and trace the route of their migration then we are obliged to consider their ornaments which are used and preserved carefully even today as precious treasures especially by women. The traditional ornaments of the Angami tribe consist of multi-coloured designs with variety of shells, ivory, carnelian spacer beads, glass, feathers, bronze etc. among which cowry shells and conch shells are most common ornaments worn by men and women. A survey of the topography and geographical location of the present region of the Angamis shows that there are no big lakes, rivers, and seas as mentioned earlier, where cowry shells or conch shells are easily available. In fact, these ornamental shells and goods are commercially imported into the state from other mainland states in India. The question that challenges the readers is, where and when did the Angamis develop the practice and culture of using cowry/conch shells as precious ornaments?

To trace the route of migration of the Angami people, it would be very relevant to retreat to Yunnan and Sichuan provinces in China and explore the cultural and traditional traits of the people, in

particular the Naxi (Nakhi) tribe in China and the life style, food habit and commercial business of the people living in the surroundings of the lakes of Erhai, Dianchi and Fuxian and the flora and fauna of the rivers Irrawaddy and Chindwin in Myanmar. The Malaysians trace back their history and origin to Yunnan province in China. From the evidence of extensive use of cowry shells, like the Malaysians, it is highly possible to trace back the history, origin, and migration of the Angamis. One of the most reliable and visible fact about the Angami men (and *Tenyimia*) is that they use the cowrie shells and conch shells in decorating their dress (kilt) though the cowries-shells and conch-shells are not found in the hills. The main and possible inference is that the Angamis and other Naga tribes must have lived around the lakes of Erhai, Dianchi and Fuxian. As these lakes are big with natural flora and fauna and the inhabitants of these lakes might have developed the use of cowry shells for adornment and used cowry shells as monetary exchange for essential items needed for living. Before the discovery of bronze, cowries were used as money in exchange to purchase things. Peng and Zhu state that, "For long periods in ancient China, large numbers of cowry shells were used as money and ornamentation" (Peng & Zhu, 1995, p. 1). The Angami women consider even today their ornaments as extremely precious and expensive. The possession of an adult Angami woman would be incomplete if she does not possess carnelian glass necklace called *Cüzie* (seven strand carnelian necklace). Since cowry shells were used as *monetaria moneta* (money cowrie), and having experienced the value of cowry shells, it is obvious that the Angamis still consider the cowry shells as precious and valuable assets in the family.

Of course, if the route of migration is to be connected with the river Irrawaddy in Myanmar, then it is known that the river Irrawaddy originates from the tributaries towards the south most of Myanmar which has Bay of Bengal and Andaman sea as sea shores. The river Irrawaddy flows towards North and from Magway Region the river Chindwin originates which then flows towards Manipur and Nagaland. It is likely that the Angamis and other Nagas, taking a longer route might have lived near the ocean (south most of Myanmar), developed the use of cowry shells as ornaments and even cultivated the habit of consuming snails.

As Chinese Mystery Snails are found in the lakes of Erhai, Dianchi and Fuxian and consumed by the people, it is also possible that cowries were also found in these lakes. Therefore, the first hypothesis is that the Angamis might have lived near the large lakes, had the practice of collecting cowry shells to decorate their attires and worn them as body adornments. The second premise is that the Angamis and other Nagas must have lived near the sea coast or must have come from the sea coast. When they moved away from the lakes and sea and migrated to the Naga Hills they continued the traditional practice of adornment with precious cowry shells.

5.3 Bamboo Craft Baskets

Bamboo belongs to the subfamily *Bambusoideae*. It is mainly grown in any temperate climate zones in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. China has the most abundant bamboo resources and diverse species and the richest bamboo culture. The area of bamboo forest resource distribution in Yunnan province is not large in China, but Yunnan is considered as one of the original bamboo centres not only in Asia but also worldwide. Yunnan province, people widely use bamboo in clothing, food, shelter, transportation, and in all its aspects in the long-term practice. Bamboo has a profound and unique influence on life and China has a unique special ethnic bamboo culture. Bamboo is used for construction of buildings as in remote southern mountains of China, some ethnic minorities live in bamboo houses. Bamboos are used as roofs and walls of houses, fences, domestic, and agricultural implements such as water containers, food, and drink containers, hats, arrows, quiver etc. (Liu et.al., 2018, pp.134-141).

Nagaland is also rich in bamboo growth. The bambusa species which are grown big are used to make bamboo baskets (*merha/khorü/khodi*) granary (*khi/chü*) and rope/strap (*kepho*) to carry heavy loads. The study of Liu and his colleagues shows that Yunnan has 26 minority nationalities. The people of all nationalities widely use bamboo as food, shelter, and transportation. The Chinese have a unique special ethnic bamboo culture. Bamboo is used to construct buildings. In southern mountains of China, some ethnic minorities live in bamboo houses. Bamboos are also used as roofs and walls of houses, fences, and agricultural implements. Bamboos are used as water containers and food and drink containers (Liu et.al. 2018, pp.134-141). The use of bamboos in southern mountains of China is greatly similar to the use of bamboos by the Angamis in Nagaland. If this is so, how did the Angamis develop the art of making bamboo crafts and baskets? Did they learn the art of bamboo craft from elsewhere or naturally invented the skill of making bamboo crafts? Not very far away from Myanmar, in the province of Yunnan in China, the Naxi (Nakhi) tribe use bamboo crafted baskets to carry portable goods and items. Our hypothesis is that the Angamis once upon a time lived in the land of bamboos. They used bamboos for all kinds of domestic works. They consumed bamboo shoots (*Kesé*) as special food item. The variety of bamboo baskets used by the Angamis gives a clue to postulate that the migration of the Angamis took place from the region where people knew the art of bamboo craft in different forms.

Conclusion

The Angami Nagas are still in the process of searching for well-founded theories and evidences to establish and determine their roots of migration. The theories and hypotheses given by various authors on the migration and settlement of the Angamis and Nagas in Nagaland are valuable, constructive and useful as long as they serve the purpose of giving opportunities and possibilities to search, debate, and harvest knowledge of the origin and migration. From various and different perspectives, the search to find the root of migration and settlement must to be continued. Language, tradition and culture get developed in the process of civilization and evolution of society. The aspects dealt with in this paper works are innate and inherent in the social ethos of the Angamis have impact from their past history. Therefore, one of the surest ways to examine and investigate the road-map of migration and settlement is to take into account the prevalent practices of tradition, culture and inherent habits and return to the original sources and history known and undiscovered.

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Redefined ethnicity in the fray of diverse modern concepts

Dr. Natalie Jo-Anne Diengdoh

Asst. Professor

National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Shillong

The essence of accord that emanates from a rich social heritage is well versed in North East India. It's diversity in religion, language and culture ushers a feeling of coherence by coexisting for centuries. Multiculturalism is a powerful strength as it encourages tolerance, cooperation and mutual understanding. It familiarizes people with customs and ways of living, and encourages individuals to participate and excel in multifaceted roles within and outside families.

A deep-rooted understanding of culture is vital as loss of culture is loss of identity. Culture and cultural practices are governed by norms that are rooted in mythology. In the diversity of traditional knowledge, belief systems, recitation, repetition, religion, languages, art forms and so on; truth in tradition is a fundamental norm for true belief. We inquire about the authenticity of concepts and practices and not mere 'hypothesis and confirmation'¹ due to an urge to believe. An absolute and sound understanding of true belief is an essential criterion in the achievement of goals of life and to disseminate perceptions.

The region offers an array of ethnic wear that is experiencing on the one hand a conscious effort of conservation, and on the other an interesting transformation and improvisation due to the influence of contemporary thought and convergent media. An evolution of ideas has emerged far from constraints of the old schools of thought. The newness of apparel and design is a positivity of science and creativity that has rapidly negotiated a niche in the clothing sphere. It is evident that the nature of fashion in Shillong the capital of Meghalaya has shaped and laid pathways towards several founding ideas of modernism. It presents interesting possibilities and directions for re-signifying fashion, transforming its social and cultural function toward more sustainable paradigms.

¹ Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species, 1859

Handloom weaving of Ri Bhoi District of Meghalaya is an age-old unique technique that faced near extinction due to mass conversion to Christianity. The converts steered away from the art form as they believed that most traditional textiles bear religious overtones of the vernacular religion of the area. The Bhoi people turned to agriculture as their only source of income. With the advent of climate upheaval turnovers became inconsistent and deprivation struck hamlets. As women had to tend to toddlers and household chores, they were unable to accompany the menfolk to the fields. In course of time, they returned to weaving and around 2010 attempts to revitalize handloom industry was made by providing women with new yarns, looms and loom sheds. The awakening modernized and transformed the handloom weaving industry in mixt magnitudes. It empowered women and associated their exquisite intricate designs in weaves as cultural identities. Over time with the support of family, friends and community members, Self Help Groups were formed. The importance of weaving in women's lives in shaping cultural identities has proven beneficial. Its revenue enforcement has improved livelihood as most women weavers cater to household chores, take care of their toddlers and work in the fields



As a guardian of tradition Mrs. Regina Rynshon from Umkon village in Raid Nongtluh started weaving as a cottage industry since 2014. Skilled by her mother through shared knowledge and experience she aims to conserve traditional weaving techniques. The rise in demand for *eri silk* called *ryndia* a heritage fabric in the market has encouraged her to expand her work. She formed a society called Women Eri Silk Weavers, Farmers & Allied Cooperative Society Ltd. She practices the age old method of rearing silk worms known as *khñiang ryndia* for its cocoon extract. The silkworms are reared in homes, placed in baskets and fed on castor leaves for about 30 days. In about 15 days they spin themselves into a cocoon. When matured the worm is separated from the cocoon known as *sop ryndia*. The worm is either consumed as a delicacy or sold in the market. These empty cocoons are then taken for yarn production. The cocoon is boiled in

alkaline solution of soap, soda and water for an hour to degum the coating produced by the silkworms. After cooling, they are patted into small cakes resembling cotton pads and kept in mud houses or layered on a standee for drying. When dried, spinning (called *thir ksai*) is done with the use of a hand spindle which is followed by dyeing process. Natural dyeing of thread is

derived from organic plants like leaves, fruits, stems, barks, flowers, seeds, roots, insects, minerals and so on.



Traditional colours of the Khasis like yellow is derived by boiling turmeric (*shynrai*) with barks of barberry tree (*diengrynong*), red colour is extracted from *laha* which is a resinous secretion of lac insects. *Laha* is first pounded in a pestle and mortar (*thlong* and *synrei*) and then soaked in water to extract the red dye. The solution is then sieved to separate the resin. Resin is called *sping wait* when it is used to set traditional weapons and tools like a heavy large bladed knife (*wait*) with a crooked head called *waitbnoh*. Resin is also used by gold smiths as filling in traditional jewelry making in Meghalaya. The lac



solution is then boiled with *baccaurea ramiflora* leaves (*sla sohkhru*) for colour fixation on eri silk. Blue colour is derived from *strobilanthes cusia* (*nuli*). Precision in time and method of plucking and processing is essential so that absolute yield is derived from the plant within a season. Caution must be taken as maturity of the plant and seasonal changes may affect the colour shade and yield. Motifs and creative designs of the weavers are encouraged to improve client requirements.



Mrs. Iaineh Khymdeit of Mawlong village spoke with pride about her ability to weave traditional garments and modern designs as per the ever-evolving market. She acquired a basic understanding of the art form from her ancestors and fine-tuned her work through sheer hard work, talent and experimental techniques. She pompously talks about her experimental discoveries of the colour wheel. She asserts that in the past colours commonly used for weaving were red, yellow and black. In recent years colours are mixed to produce new shades that are used in items like shawls, stoles, mufflers, traditional costumes and sling bags. Interestingly Iaineh makes a remarkable attempt to improvise by documenting combinations of organic ingredients for thread colour and elaborate embroidered designs in garments. As a trained master trainer, she apprentices and encourages the youth to consider colouring of threads and weaving as a career. She initiated the start of Kynjoh Shaphrang Handloom SHG on 8.2.2018 with a strength of 10 (ten) members. As single parent Iaineh's efforts have enabled her to singlehandedly raised and educate her children.

There appears to be good clientele for traditional designs as it dominates the market. However there is lack of consistent market linkages in the state and the demand does not suffice to sustain the industry. Garments that are woven on traditional floor looms called *thaiñ madan* are still the optimal choice as compared to modern looms. A traditional design known as *khyndai khnong* that may be translated to nine pillars is a



design on garments worn by men to mark their stature. If a man wears a garment that bares only six pillars, then he is considered



incomplete. It is believed that if a man desires to be respected in functions and public gatherings he has to drape a *ryndia* with *khyndai khnong*. Women drape a garment called *thoh-ru stem* (yellow checkered cloth) and a wrap-around called *syrla*. These wears are used on auspicious occasions

and on an annual traditional dance called *ka shad rah kynthei* meaning lifting a woman. As the name suggests the men folk dance on both sides of the woman and lift her. The dance is usually held before the sowing of seeds in fields. Obeisance to God the Almighty along with pledges for good harvest is made after which *shad krud lyngkha* (dance of toiling the field) follows. The outfits are also used at an annual dance festival known as *ka shad paskha* hosted by Parishes of the state on every Easter Sunday to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The dance is an interesting display of cultural nuances fused with catholic attributes that has remarkably gained acceptance in the state.

With a diploma in handloom and textile technology Mr. Saipyrkhat Majaw a young enthusiastic and resourceful lad started Warp & Weft in the year 2019. The main objective of W&W is quality service to clients and improved livelihood of the weavers in remote villages. The brand empowers weavers by conducting trainings in most of the handloom belt in Ri-bhoi District and West Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya by undertaking projects on weaving, marketing of handloom and hand-woven products. The company has successfully created market links for weavers in different outlets in and outside the state. An eminent client amongst the others is Janessaline M. Pyngrope Manager and partner of Daniel Syiem's Ethnic Fashion House (DSEFH). Having gained remarkable experience of working at the grassroot level with weavers and artisans Janessaline teamed up with Daniel Syiem to promote tradition and culture of the North East through slow fashion. With a moto "Come return to nature" they started Shillong's first fashion house called Daniel Syiem's Ethnic Fashion House (DSEFH). Established in 2011

DSEFH aims to protect, revive and uplift the traditional fabrics of North East India. Highlight of the brand is its attribution and sentiments to *ryndia* as it is the most respected fabric of the Khasis that speaks culture and attributions to mother earth. The fabric is worn by men and women on auspicious occasions. The versatility of the fabric is favoured by DSEFH as it can be converted into any design and apparel based on the client's aesthetic requirement. They engage in natural processes that sustain eco-systems like environment-friendly fasteners made with natural materials like wood and bamboo. The label derives a lot of natural dyes from items like turmeric, charcoal, different kinds of berries, tea leaves and even cow dung. Fabrics are reused and recycled creatively to reduce wastage by making earrings, neck pieces, sling bags, cushion covers, and patchwork. The fashion house is making an earnest attempt to save the fabric from slow death by innovating at the yarn stage to create beautiful patterns, designs and vegetable dyes, conserve culture by preserving the heritage crafts through reinvention and



innovation and introduction of safe weaving through elevated floor looms and seated weaving. Inspired by diverse traditional outfits, gears, folktales, traditional dance, music and colours of the North East, the label showcases designs to attract and accentuate the abundance of the region in the main stream. The traditional attire of the Khasis called *Jaiñsem* which is worn by

draping two pieces of cloth from the shoulders has been artistically designed as a dress (*Jaiñsemdress*) to make wearing easy and comfortable. DSEFH is negotiating through the challenges of modern-day fast fashion. It aims to generate employment for weavers, artisans and safeguarding the ancient art form by using fabrics woven by the weaving communities of mostly Umtngam, Birsiej and Umkon. Based in Shillong the label has been launched in New York, Toronto, London and Rome.



After 10 years of its existence DSEFH launched an online store on the 25th of November 2022. Their innovative, modern, contemporary creations have gradually carved a niche clientele from across the globe that have occupied center stage at renowned fashion shows like Lakme Fashion Week in Mumbai, Toronto, Rome, Geneva, Tokyo, London and New York.

The snowballing demand for newness and trending fashion have created avenues to revival and reinvention of diverse ethnic traditions. The diversity and availability of fabrics and body types in runways, stage performances, movies, music videos, business wear, casual wear, influencers, advertising campaigns and advertisers has shaped new ways for fashion designers

and brands to package their products. Ethnic elements like colour, pattern, shapes, motifs etc play a dominant role in redefining and shaping the future of fashion of a nation. Traditional clothing and accessories in recent years are redefined with modern original concepts and are gaining new forms that are accepted by niche clientele. A motif or elements of any ethnic group may attract a consumer and individualistic tastes are personal. However care must be taken not to hurt the sentiments of respective ethnic groups. It may be pertinent to determine that national culture is the direction for future growth, national integration and international linkages. Neatly packaged by different media technologies fashion brands use the internet and social media aggressively to package, advertise, promote and influence purchase of their collections. The evolution of digital media marketing has lifted the face and legacy of ethnic wear irrespective of geographical origins and settings.

Status of Cultural Intelligence among the Postgraduate Students: An Analytical Study

Agnes Humtsoe

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Assam Don Bosco University India

agnes.humtsoe@dbuniversity.ac.in

Abstract

The current study is an attempt to examine the status of cultural intelligence among the postgraduate students of Assam Don Bosco University. The study adopted a descriptive survey method and a cross-sectional research design. For the purpose of data collection, the investigator used a scale on cultural intelligence developed by Linn Van Dyne, Soon Ang and Christine Koh (2008). The population of the study covered all the postgraduate students of the arts and science stream which comprises of 1054 postgraduate students. A sample of 152 postgraduate students was selected using a random sampling technique. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the postgraduate students cultural intelligence lies between low to average level (64%) and only a significant per cent of about 36% possess a high level of cultural intelligence. A significant difference in cultural intelligence was found between male and female postgraduate students. On the contrary, no significant difference was found between arts and science students concerning to their cultural intelligence. Similarly, no significant difference was found between male and female, arts and science postgraduate students in any of the sub-dimensions of cultural intelligence-Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence, Cognitive Cultural Intelligence, Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Behavioural Cultural Intelligence.

Keywords: Cultural intelligence, status, postgraduate students

I. Introduction

Cultural intelligence (CQ) signifies the competence of an individual to adjust and function effectively across diverse cultures (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Similarly, Schmidt and Hunter (2000) remarked that cultural intelligence is a specific type of intelligence that focused on a person's ability to understand and think critically in situations marked by cultural differences. According to Thomas and Inkson (2004) cultural intelligence comprises of three key components-

- i. Cultural sensitivity, or having a strong grasp of how to communicate with someone from a different culture, includes knowledge of other cultures.
- ii. Awareness or mindfulness: It means the capability to be mindful while coming across multicultural settings. This can assist a person to establish an insightful approach during intercultural exchanges.
- iii. Behavioural skills: This includes a set of skills shown in an individual after acquiring knowledge and awareness. This encourages a person to select suitable behaviours and adaptable abilities that could be successful and efficient in unfamiliar cultural settings.

As stated by Earley and Ang in 2003, cultural intelligence is a multidimensional notion which includes metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural concepts. This notion was based on the framework of the multiple foci of intelligence put by Sternberg and Detterman in 1986. Thus, cultural intelligence is made up of four separate but interconnected parts: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural. It is believed that these elements define a person's capacity for learning about other cultures, their capacity for learning how to learn about cultures, their willingness to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, and their capacity for effectively altering their behaviour (Brancu, Maunteanu & Golet, 2016).

Metacognitive cultural intelligence describes the mental procedures people employ to learn and comprehend cultural information. It has to do with the degree of conscious cultural awareness of the individual (Flavell, 1979). It involves activities including planning, monitoring, and updating assumptions about the cultural norms of various nations or ethnic groups. Individuals with high metacognitive CQ are able to question cultural assumptions and modify their mental models in intercultural contexts during and after conversations (Ang & VanDyne, 2008). They are conscious of the cultural preferences of others (Brancu, Maunteanu & Golet, 2016).

Cognitive cultural intelligence is the understanding of cultural norms, practices, and conventions that is gained via education and personal experience. High cognitive individuals are aware of and comprehend the economic, legal, and social circumstances of various cultures. Additionally, they are aware of the current cultural models and are knowledgeable about the particular norms, beliefs, and traditions of the cultures they engage with.

Motivational cultural intelligence is a crucial part of CQ because it is the source of interculturally appropriate activities. It represents the capacity to focus attention and energy on understanding and navigating situations marked by cultural differences.

Behavioural cultural intelligence is the capacity to interact with people from diverse cultures while using appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues. Based on their wide variety of verbal and nonverbal talents, people with high behavioural cultural intelligence demonstrate behaviour that is acceptable for the given circumstances (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008).

Thus, the capacity of a person to adapt to new cultural norms and respond to them appropriately through acceptable behaviour is known as cultural intelligence. It improves our comprehension of appearances and relationships across cultures (Ng et al., 2009; Suharti et al., 2019). Cultural intelligence is also alike but distinct from general cognitive ability. Performance across jobs and settings is mostly predicted by general cognitive ability. Similar to how IQ predicts performance, cultural intelligence does so more specifically in intercultural settings. Understanding of appearances and cross-cultural interactions is developed through cultural intelligence (as cited in Gandhi, 2020).

II. Related Literature

The impact of cultural intelligence and its subdimensions on other variables have been extensively studied and linked in recent years, according to a wide body of literature. Since cultural intelligence is one of the most recent additions to intelligence, many researchers have made a concerted effort to investigate how cultural intelligence interacts with other factors. These investigations have included looking at cultural intelligence's antecedents, acting as a

moderator or mediator, and looking at cultural intelligence as an independent variable that influences outcomes.

Deng and Gibson (2008) in their research findings revealed that expatriate leaders' cultural intelligence can positively impact the effectiveness of cross-cultural leadership. Moon (2010) revealed that self-awareness of emotional intelligence (EQ) was positively related to meta-cognitive CQ. Similarly, self-management was found to correlate to three dimensions (metacognitive, behavioural and cognitive) of CQ excluding motivational CQ; relationship management was positively associated with all three facets of CQ (meta-cognitive, behavioural and motivational) except cognitive CQ; social awareness was positively associated with behavioural CQ and motivational CQ. Additionally, social competence (social awareness, relationship management) within EQ was found to be more closely related to CQ. Further, Harrison and Brower (2011) revealed that cultural intelligence was positively related to adjustment and negatively related to homesickness and a significant positive correlation was found between overall psychological Hardiness and homesickness. Gorji and Gharesefloo (2011) in their study exposed that emotional intelligence and its dimensions were positively related to cultural intelligence and employee's performance. In contrast, behavioural and motivational cultural intelligence was not found to be significantly related to employee performance. Evola (2012) in its findings exposed that teachers' cultural attitudes and beliefs and overall cultural intelligence (CQ) as well as all four dimensions of CQ (Metacognitive, Cognitive, Motivational, and Behavioral) were found to correlate positively. Likewise, Saneiee et al. (2017) also revealed that there exists a significant correlation between primary school managers' cultural intelligence and efficiency. However, no significant difference was found concerning the managers' efficiency in relation to age, gender, and education. Further, the dimensions of cultural intelligence- cognitive, motivational, and behavioural were found to be correlated to the efficiency of managers while metacognitive CQ was found not related to the efficiency of managers. In 2020, Barnatt et al. looked into the intercultural competency of American pre-service teachers and revealed that language proficiency was not a significant factor in raising the cultural intelligence score. Moreover, it was found that programme components affected both the interactive ability and the developmental trajectory of learning.

III. Significance of the study

The students in educational institutions come from diverse cultural settings and sometimes because of the students varied cultural backgrounds it leads to a stressful environment (Tsui & Gutek, 1999), causes emotional weariness (Ferguson et al.,) and affects their well-being (Suh & Oishi, 2002). They may also confront other problems like cross-cultural adjustment, language difficulty, academic problems etc and these difficulties show negative outcomes on the students' health and academic achievement (Kilinc & Granello, 2003). However, students who are culturally intelligent can avoid these problems since cultural intelligence is the ability which helps a person to understand and behave correctly across a variety of cultures (Thomas, 2006). Further, the practice of cultural intelligence in the learning environment is necessary at present due to the changing demographics of the student population and the challenges of a multicultural society in the educational process (as cited in Ellis, 2017).

Therefore, it has become a necessity for an individual to possess the social skills to relocate oneself to a diverse cultural situation. Some of the research studies also portrayed that high cultural intelligence impacts the effectiveness of cross-cultural leadership and is

positively related to individual performance (Deng & Gibson, 2008; Gorji & Ghareseflo, 2011). Moreover, with a mind towards attaining sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially SDG 16 (promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (UN, 2015) and SDG 17 (revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development...to ensure no one is left behind (UN, 2015) it is imperative to possess cultural intelligence among young minds. Both culture and education are intertwined. Each benefits the other. Re-examining this relationship will help it better respond to the opportunities and difficulties of the present.

As mentioned by the famous anthropologist, E. Adamson Hoebel (1906–1993) culture is the sum total of integrated learned behaviour patterns (Shah, n. d.) and as such education is inadvertently a significant component of culture. This provides much scope for the present study where the researcher aims to find out the status of postgraduate students' cultural intelligence and the impact of gender and streams of study on CQ. The findings of the present study can guide further decisions as to whether the target students need any specific training to enhance their CQ either based on gender or streams of study.

IV. Objectives of the study

1. To assess the status of cultural intelligence among the postgraduate students of Assam Don Bosco University.
2. To study the difference between the cultural intelligence mean score of postgraduate students in relation to gender and stream of study.
3. To examine the difference in metacognitive cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students
4. To study the difference in cognitive cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students
5. To study the difference in motivational cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students
6. To study the difference in behavioural cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students

V. Hypotheses

H₀(1): There will be no significant difference between the cultural intelligence mean score of postgraduate students in relation to gender and stream of study.

H₀(2): There will be no significant difference in metacognitive cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

H₀(3): There will be no significant difference in cognitive cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

H₀(4): There will be no significant difference in motivational cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

H₀(5): There will be no significant difference in behavioural cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

VI. Methodology

For the current study, the researcher implemented the descriptive survey method and a cross-sectional research design (Koul, 2009). The nature of the study is quantitative in approach. The population of the present study comprises of all the postgraduate students of arts and science streams of study in Assam Don Bosco University. It has been recorded that a total of 1054 postgraduate students have been enrolled. Arts postgraduate students comprise 610 and science students comprise 444. From the total population, a sample of 152 postgraduate students was drawn using a random sampling technique out of which 76 are male and 76 are female and 56 are from the science stream and 96 are from the arts stream.

VII. Tool Used

For the purpose of collecting the data a Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Linn Van Dyne, Soon Ang and Christine Koh (2008) was used. The scale consists of 20 items covering four sub-dimensions- Meta-cognitive Cultural Intelligence, Cognitive Cultural Intelligence, Motivational Cultural Intelligence, and Behavioural Cultural Intelligence. The Metacognitive CQ consists of four items with an α value =0.72, the Cognitive CQ contains six items with an α value =0.86, the Motivational CQ consists of five items with an α value=0.76, Behavioral CQ consists of five items with an α value=0.83. Overall, the CQ scale displayed a reliability α value of 0.90. The scale was based on 5 points Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The total score of the cultural intelligence scale ranges from 20-100. A person's higher scores indicate that they have a high level of cultural intelligence.

VIII. Statistical Techniques Used

Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for analysing the data.

IX. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

1. Status of cultural intelligence among the postgraduate students of Assam Don Bosco University.

Table-1: Status of Cultural Intelligence among the Postgraduate Students

Level of Cultural Intelligence	Scores	No. of Students	% of Students	Overall Mean Score
Low	Below 62	52	34%	66.30
Average	Between 63-69	45	30%	
High	Above 70	55	36%	

Interpretation: As shown in the above table the overall mean score of cultural intelligence of the postgraduate students came out to be 66.30 out of the total score of 100 marks. For interpreting the level of cultural intelligence P_{33} and P_{66} were computed and the following categories were made: Scores below 62 falls under the low level, scores between 63 –69 falls under the average level and scores above 70 falls under the high level. As per the computed

result, it is revealed that only 36% of the postgraduate students were found to have a high level of cultural intelligence, 30% of the students were found to have an average level of cultural intelligence and 34% of the students were found to have low-level of cultural intelligence. This result indicates that about 64% of the postgraduate students fall between the category of low to average level of cultural intelligence.

2. Difference between the cultural intelligence mean score of postgraduate students in relation to gender and stream of study

H₀(1): There will be no significant difference between the cultural intelligence mean score of postgraduate students in relation to gender and stream of study.

Table-2: Shows the Result of Mean, SD, N, and t-value of Cultural Intelligence of Postgraduate Students in relation to Gender and Streams of Study

Variables	Sub-Groups	Mean	SD	N	t- value	Remark
Gender	Male	67.80	9.86	76	2.085	p<0.03
	Female	64.78	7.83	76		
Streams of Study	Arts	66.64	9.15	96	0.625	p>0.53
	Science	65.69	8.79	56		

Interpretation: From table 2, it is evident that the t-value in relation to gender is 2.085 which is significant at 0.05 level with df=150. It shows that the mean scores of cultural intelligence of male and female differ significantly. Hence the formulated hypothesis is rejected. Further, the mean score of male postgraduate students is 67.80 which is significantly higher than that of female postgraduate students whose mean score of cultural intelligence is 64.78. therefore, it may be said that male postgraduate students possess higher cultural intelligence than their counterpart. Whereas on the other hand, the t-value in relation to streams of study is 0.625 which is not significant at 0.05 level with df=150. It shows that the mean scores of cultural intelligence of arts and science postgraduate students do not differ significantly. Thus, the formulated hypothesis got retained. It may, therefore, be said that the postgraduate students of arts and science were found to possess the same level of cultural intelligence and streams of study do not have any bearing on cultural intelligence.

3. Differences in Metacognitive cultural intelligence, Cognitive cultural intelligence, Motivational cultural intelligence, and Behavioural cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students

Table-3: Shows the Results of Mean, SD, N, and t-value of Metacognitive cultural intelligence, Cognitive cultural intelligence, Motivational cultural intelligence, and Behavioural cultural intelligence of Postgraduate Students in relation to Gender and Streams of Study

Variables	Sub-Groups	Mean	SD	N	t- value	Remark
Metacognitive CQ	Male	14.69	2.74	76	0.901	p>0.36
	Female	14.30	2.66	76		
	Arts	14.71	2.56	96	1.312	p>0.19
	Science	14.12	2.90	56		
Cognitive CQ	Male	18.15	3.56	76	1.689	p>0.09
	Female	17.15	3.73	76		
	Arts	17.69	3.74	96	0.175	p>0.86
	Science	17.58	3.59	56		
Motivational CQ	Male	18.55	3.41	76	1.579	p>0.11
	Female	17.67	3.47	76		
	Arts	17.98	3.15	96	0.569	p>0.56
	Science	18.32	3.95	56		
Behavioural CQ	Male	16.39	4.23	76	1.129	p>0.26
	Female	15.65	3.80	76		
	Arts	16.23	3.95	96	0.854	p>0.39
	Science	15.66	4.17	56		

H₀(2): There will be no significant difference in metacognitive cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

Interpretation: As shown in table 3, the computed t-value of Metacognitive cultural intelligence of postgraduate students in relation to gender and streams of study came out to be 0.901 and 1.312 which is not significant at 0.05 level with df=150. This indicates that the mean scores of Metacognitive cultural intelligence of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students do not differ significantly. Thus, the formulated hypothesis got retained. Hence it is interpreted that male and female, arts and science postgraduate students were found to possess the same level of Metacognitive cultural intelligence.

H₀(3): There will be no significant difference in cognitive cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

Interpretation: As indicated in table 3, the computed t-value of Cognitive cultural intelligence of postgraduate students in relation to gender and streams of study came out to be 1.689 and 0.175 respectively which is not significant at 0.05 level with df=150. This denotes that the mean scores of Cognitive cultural intelligence of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students do not differ significantly. Hence, the formulated hypothesis got

retained. From this, it is interpreted that male and female, arts and science postgraduate students do not differ concerning to Cognitive cultural intelligence and were found to possess the same level of Cognitive cultural intelligence.

H₀(4): There will be no significant difference in motivational cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students.

Interpretation: The computed t-value of Motivational cultural intelligence of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students came out to be 1.579 and 0.569 which is not significant at 0.05 level for df=150. These t-values depict that the mean scores of Motivational cultural intelligence of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students do not differ significantly. Thus, the formulated hypothesis got retained. Therefore, it is interpreted that male and female, arts and science postgraduate students possess the same level of Motivational cultural intelligence.

H₀(5): There will be no significant difference in behavioural cultural intelligence mean scores of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students

Interpretation: The calculated t-value of Behavioural cultural intelligence of male and female, arts and science postgraduate students as shown in table 3, came out to be 1.129 and 0.854 which is not significant at 0.05 level for df=150. This mean scores of Behavioural cultural intelligence of postgraduate students in relation to gender and streams of study show that they do not differ significantly and the formulated hypothesis got retained. Hence it is interpreted that male and female, arts and science postgraduate students hold the same level of Behavioural cultural intelligence.

X. Conclusion

The findings of the current study indicate that the majority of the postgraduate students cultural intelligence lies between low to average level (64%) and only a significant percentage of about 36% possess a high level of cultural intelligence. Further, a significant difference in cultural intelligence was found between male and female postgraduate students, where the mean score of male students was found higher than that of female students. On the contrary, no significant difference was found between arts and science students concerning to their cultural intelligence. Similarly, no significant difference was found between male and female, arts and science postgraduate students in any of the sub-dimensions of cultural intelligence that is-Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence, Cognitive Cultural Intelligence, Motivational Cultural Intelligence and Behavioural Cultural Intelligence, which indicates that gender and streams of study do not influence any of the sub-dimensions of cultural intelligence. In view of the findings, there is a need to make some reformations to enhance the students' cultural intelligence through various programmes and activities in the teaching and learning process. Focus on imparting diversified knowledge, attitude, and skills for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies should be strategized accordingly to cultivate cultural intelligence among the learners. Also, some components of diverse cultures may be incorporated into the existing courses of the students or knowledge can be disseminated in the

form of value-added courses which are expected to assist them in adjusting to different cultural settings. Further, teachers need to be oriented and trained to impart the skills and abilities of CI to the learners.

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Students' inclination towards culture.

Sungjeminla
Department of English
Kohima college Kohima, Nagaland
e-mail:aienkck123@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A study on students' inclination towards cultural practices was undertaken for the students of Kohima College Kohima during the year 2022. The responses were received from 133 students who had their education from different rural (21.8%) based schools, Semi –urban (66.9%) and Urban (11.3%) schools. It was found that 76.7 percent of the students spoke in their mother tongue fluently for communicating purpose while 53.38 percent used local dialect for thought processing. Cultural activities to be learned first as a student were Cooking (38.35%) and handloom/handicraft (15.79%) making which were taught by elders when at primary school level. Gender difference does not exist when it comes to learning cultural activities, however, significant difference ($p < .05$) was observed from the students coming from semi urban schools between genders. It concludes that the participation level of students comes under medium to low category.

Key words: Culture, local dialect, handicrafts, handlooms, rural schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nagaland a Tribal dominated state lies in northeastern part of India and has its own unique culture and tradition. It has 16 different tribes with distinct and fascinating cultures and speaks their own local dialect. Some of the commonly spoken dialect are the Tenyidie, Ao, sumi, Lotha, Sangtam, Konyak, Chakhesang, Chang, Phom etc. The tribes also practice handicraft making which is imbibed in their culture and form a part of their daily life style. Carvings made out of wood, bamboos and cane products having unique design is used for daily house hold chores each depicting their own identity. Delicious cuisine prepared by different tribe using a variety of local herbs and spices also helps to savor one's taste buds. According to Hutton (1965) the differences in language, customs, dress, appearance and psychology, seemed so marked that the inherent unity of the Naga tribes tended to be obscured by their differences.

Nagaland is also famous for numerous festivals where each tribe celebrates their own district festival with dance and music which are essential parts of Naga identity characterized by folk song and dances. Another important aspect of the rich culture and tradition are the indigenous games of different tribes which are preserved within the culture of the tribe. Hornbill festival organized by the Govt. of Nagaland every year during the first week of December is a way to showcase this culture to outside world through organizing the festival.

II. OBJECTIVE:

The main objectives of the study are

1. To study the behavior of students towards cultural adoption.
2. To identify the relation between learning institution and social environment that promotes cultural learning.

III. METHODOLOGY.

i) Method

The research was designed as a descriptive survey. Google form was used for structuring the questionnaires. The link for the survey was circulated to the student community of Kohima College Kohima through WhatsApp group.

ii) Study sample

The total strength of students enrolled at Kohima College Kohima during the time of survey was 1319 during 2022. The total responses received for the survey was 133.

iii) Data collection and analysis.

The questionnaires were framed in Likert style and assigned points from 1-5 against strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data collected were electronically transferred into excel spread sheets and analyzed using different statistical methods like percentage, mean, standard deviation, co-relation and regression analysis.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION.

i) **Profile of the students based on location.**

Early schooling of a student's life, is the stepping stone for progression. It can begin at different geographical location based on parental settlement, choice, area of development and financing power. Three locations namely urban, semi urban and rural based schools were taken into consideration for the present study (Table 1).

The study reveals that 66.9 percent of the students under survey had their early learning experience from semi urban based schools followed by 21.8 percent of the students who attended schools in rural based setup while only few students (15) had studied from urban schools. It was also found that maximum of the respondents were girls (64.7%) as compared to boys (35.3 %).

Table 1: Profile of the students' schooling based on location.

Schooling	Gender		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Urban school	2 (1.5)	13 (9.8)	15 (11.3%)
Semi urban	33 (24.8)	56 (42.1)	89 (66.9%)
Rural based	12 (9)	17 (12.8)	29 (21.8%)
Total	47 (35.3%)	86 (64.7%)	133 (100%)

ii) Profile of the students' based on medium of instructions.

Teaching- learning process to be effective needs a strong communication channel and it becomes successful when medium of instruction is clearly understood by the pupil. Spoken Languages such as Nagamese, Local dialect (based on caste/tribes) and English were taken up as a medium of instruction. Students' profile based on medium of instruction is reflected under Table 2. It is understood that English being the State's official language and schools emphasizing on English medium as instruction mechanism, it was found that more than 95 percent of the students were communicated and taught in English language during their class X, class XII as well as in their Bachelor's degree courses. The National Education Policy (GoI, 2020) tries to bring changes in many areas in education and one of them is the medium of instruction in which education will be provided in primary schools. This policy states that the mother tongue will be the medium of instruction up to class 5 in all schools.

Table 2: Medium of learning instruction

Medium of instruction	Standard		
	Class (X)	Higher Secondary (XII)	Degree (B.A)
English	129 (97)	129 (97)	132 (99.25)
Local dialect	4 (3)	1 (0.75)	-
Nagamese	-	3 (2.25)	1 (0.75)
Total	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)

iii) Profile of the students based on medium of communication.

Students' profile based on medium of communication commonly used for conversation by the students were taken into consideration with respect to their fluency to speak, write efficiently, read fluently and understand fluently or none of the above. It was found that (Table 3) 76.7

percent of the students spoke in their mother tongue fluently for communicating purpose followed by Nagamese (60.2%). However, few (8.3%) students preferred speaking in other language for the same. The table also reveals that none of the students were efficient to write in their mother tongue despite majority of them speaking in their mother tongue. Mother tongue is vital in framing the thinking and emotions of people, early education of mother tongue enable teachers to teach, and learners to learn more effectively. (Rathurai Nishanthi, 2020).

Table 3: Language as a means of communication.

Spoken Language	Medium of communication					Total
	Speak fluently	Write efficiently	Read fluently	Understand fluently	None	
Mother tongue	102 (76.7)	-	4 (3)	20 (15)	7 (5.3)	133 (100)
English	33 (24.8)	22 (16.5)	42 (31.6)	34 (25.6)	2 (1.5)	133 (100)
Nagamese	80 (60.2)	3 (2.2)	4 (3.0)	38 (28.6)	8 (6)	133 (100)
Hindi	20 (15.0)	3 (2.3)	11 (8.3)	58 (43.6)	41 (30.8)	133 (100)
Other language	11 (8.3)	7 (5.3)	10 (7.5)	28 (21.1)	77 (57.8)	133 (100)

iv) Profile of the students based on medium of thought process.

Level of thought processing based on one's spoken language is indicated in Table 4. More than half (53.38%) of the students were found to use their mother tongue extremely well in processing their thought. Whereas, it was found that 33.8 percent of the students do not process their thoughts in English language. A small percentage (13.5%) of students use Nagamese and Hindi language to some extent for thought processing while, more than one fourth (36%) of the students use other language in processing their thoughts. A student who accepts other language as medium of instruction have been found to suffer from anxiety, stress and depression.(K.B.Dipti, 2014)

Table 4: Profile of students thought process.

Language	Level of processing					Total
	Extremely well	Very well	Fairly well	To some extent	Not at all	
Mother tongue	71 (53.38)	22 (16.54)	18 (13.5)	19 (14.29)	3 (2.2)	133 (100)
English	4 (3)	7 (5.3)	38 (28.6)	39 (29.3)	45 (33.8)	133 (100)
Nagamese	23 (17.3)	44 (33.1)	47 (35.3)	18 (13.5)	1 (0.8)	133 (100)
Hindi	33	45	33	18	4	133

	(24.8)	(33.9)	(24.8)	(13.5)	(3)	(100)
Other language	4 (3)	12 (9)	38 (28.6)	48 (36.1)	31 (23.3)	133 (100)

v) Profile of the students' involvement in cultural activities based on institutions of learning.

Participation and involvement in cultural activities marks the daily lifestyle of a tribal student. Early teaching on culture starts at home, by learning the cultural do's and don'ts from parents, by participating in cultural activities organized by the community and also through participatory learning from institute of learning. Profile of the students' involvement in cultural activities based on institutions of learning are provided in Table 5. The obtained data shows that, during the early part of a student's life more importance is provided to cooking(38.35 %) and handloom/handicraft (15.79%) making which are basically learned at the primary schools level . Later during high school days nearly equal importance is given to handloom/handicraft(41.35%) followed by cooking(45.1%) local cuisine, singing indigenous songs(29.3%), dances(28.6%) and indigenous games (21.05%) respectively. At higher secondary level of education, the students give more emphasis on learning indigenous songs (29.3%) followed by indigenous games (21.05%) and traditional dances (20.3%). At the Degree level, the cultural activities are minimized drastically which appears to be less than 10 percent as compared to lower level of education.

Table 5: Profile of the students' cultural activities based on institutions of learning.

Learning institute	Cultural activities.				
	Dances	Songs	Games	Handlooms/handicraft	Cooking
Primary	8 (6)	5 (3.8)	6 (4.51)	21 (15.79)	51 (38.35)
High school	38 (28.6)	39 (29.3)	28 (21.05)	55 (41.35)	60 (45.11)
Higher secondary	27 (20.3)	39 (29.3)	28 (21.05)	11 (8.27)	9 (6.77)
Degree Level	3 (2.2)	12 (9)	11 (8.27)	-	4 (3)
None	57 (42.9)	38 (28.6)	60 (45.12)	46 (34.59)	9 (6.77)
Total	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)

vi) Profile of cultural activities based on performance

To know the attachment of students towards cultural activities based on their recent performance in terms of months and years was identified for the study. From the Table (6), it is found that majority of the cultural activities were performed over one year ago i.e showing less activity during the present time of study. It also highlights that 51 percent of the students did not participate in any cultural dance events for more than two years which was also true for playing indigenous games (49.62%) and making of handloom/handicraft (45.11%) items.

Table 6: Profile of cultural activities based on performance.

Months/ Years of performance	Cultural activities			
	Dances	Songs	Games	Handlooms/handicraft
6 months ago	6 (4.5)	10 (7.52)	10 (7.52)	6 (4.51)
1 year ago	8 (6)	16 (12.03)	22 (16.54)	27 (20.30)
2 years ago	21 (15.8)	31 (23.31)	16 (12.03)	14 (10.53)
More than 2 years ago	30 (22.6)	31 (23.31)	19 (14.29)	26 (19.55)
Not participated	68 (51.1)	45 (33.83)	66 (49.62)	60 (45.11)
Total	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)

vii) Profile of the students' cultural activities based on frequency.

Students' cultural activities based on frequency of involvement on regular basis is highlighted. The least activities (Table 7) performed once or twice a year were handloom/handicraft (43.61%) making followed by playing indigenous games (36.9%). It is also good to know from the data that 15 percent of the students make it a habit of preparing local cuisine regularly, followed by singing cultural songs(3.7%) and playing indigenous games (2.2%) respectively. It can also be concluded that the students perform at least one activity throughout the year ranging from once a week, months or a year to preserve their choice of activity.

Table 7: Profile of the students' cultural activities based on frequency

Frequency	
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	Cultural activities				
	Dances	Songs	Games	Handlooms/handicraft	Cooking
Regularly	-	5 (3.7)	3 (2.2)	2 (1.5)	20 (15.04)
Once a week	1 (0.8)	9 (6.8)	11 (8.3)	2 (1.5)	13 (9.77)
Once a month	6 (4.5)	17 (12.8)	13 (9.8)	8 (6.02)	18 (13.53)
Once or twice a year	7 (5.2)	17 (12.8)	49 (36.9)	58 (43.61)	31 (23.31)
Not participated	119 (89.5)	85 (63.9)	57 (42.8)	63 (47.37)	51 (38.35)
Total	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)	133 (100)

viii) Students' perception towards cultural identity.

Perception regarding cultural identity (Table 8) of the students was to know which cultural items could be appropriately identified for a student to be claimed as culturally sound. Based on the ranking scored against each item it was found that speaking local language was found to have obtained maximum score which means that the speaking ability of a student in mother tongue to be culturally sound and therefore, it was ranked no-I. Likewise the ability to write in local dialect (II), preparing local cuisine (III), making handicraft/handlooms (IV) and least importance was given to knowing indigenous games (No. V). It can be concluded that the ability to speak and write effectively in local dialect has been rated the most by maximum students and negligible differences in the mean is observed. Therefore, importance needs to be given to learning one's own local dialect.

Table 8: Students' perception towards cultural identity.

Particulars	Mean	Ranked
Speaking local language/dialect	4.42	I
Ability to write in local dialect	4.32	II
Preparing local cuisine	4.12	III
Making handicraft/handlooms	4.05	IV

Knowing indigeneous games	4.01	V
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ix) Categorization of students based on cultural participation.

The overall categorization of students based on their participation and adoption is referred to identify their inclination towards cultural activities. It (Table 9) is observed that more than half (56.72%) of the students fall under medium level of participation, followed by low (27.61%). It can be concluded that the participation of students belonging to Kohima College Kohima falls under medium to low level of participation.

Table 9. Level of cultural participation.

Level of participation	Scores	Percentage (%)
High (50-66)	21	15.67
Medium (33-49)	76	56.72
Low (16-32)	37	27.61

x) Performance of cultural activities based on gender.

In order to know the behavior of both boys and girls with respect to their cultural activities (Table 10) a regression analysis was done and it was found that there is no significant difference between the genders in adoption of cultural activities.

Table 10: Performance of cultural activities based on gender.

Cultural activities	Gender	Mean	SD	t-value
Dance	Boys	5.529	0.6242	0.29163 ^{NS}
	Girls	4.454	0.6875	
Song	Boys	8.5094	0.7499	1.96 ^{NS}
	Girls	8.526	0.9112	
Games	Boys	10.6975	0.60208	0.309 ^{NS}
	Girls	11	1.4142	
Handicraft/handlooms	Boys	3.423	0.621	0.249 ^{NS}
	Girls	3.145	0.634	
cuisine	Boys	3.479	0.601	0.278 ^{NS}
	Girls	4.21	0.512	

xi) Performance of students based on location.

To know the difference in behavior of students coming from urban schools, semi urban schools and rural schools, a regression analysis was performed (Table 11). It was observed that there is no significant ($t=1.97^{NS}$) difference in the opinion between boys and girls who had their early education from Rural and Urban schools. Similar findings were also reported by Ranjeeta and Agnihotri (2015) when a Comparative Study of Learning and Thinking Styles and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Smart Schools and Government Schools were conducted in Chandigarh.

The findings from the Table 10, however shows that the boys and girls who studied from semi-urban schools were found to be significant ($P<.05$). It could be due to various reasons like schools, established in semi-urban areas which are run by both private and public sector management system, offering different curriculum. Some schools may emphasize on the importance of cultural identity while some may not and thus the difference.

Table 11. Performance of students based on location.

Location	Gender	SD	t-value
Urban schools	Boys	0.239	1.97 ^{NS}
	Girls	0.243	
Semi urban schools	Boys	0.481	1.97 *
	Girls	0.413	
Rural schools	Boys	0.498	1.97 ^{NS}
	Girls	0.481	

- Significant at 5% level.

V. CONCLUSION.

The present study is carried out to know the behavior of students towards cultural adoption. One third of the students belonging to Kohima College Kohima are culturally sound. It was observed that at least one activity is being performed on a daily basis, once a week, once a month and once or twice a year. A significant difference existed between boys and girls in cultural competency for those coming from semi urban schools. However, in terms of adoption of cultural activities there seems to be no difference between boys and girls. Cultural adoption of the respondents was found to be in medium to low category.

VI. SUGGESTIONS.

To address the lack of involvement of college students in cultural activities, the following suggestions are made.

- Sustainability in the preservation of cultural heritage through education should be encouraged and as such cultural activities need to be given importance even at higher level of educational institutions.

- b) Various cultural clubs- such as indigenous dance club, ethnic cuisine preparation club, handicraft clubs etc may be formed at higher level of learning institutions, through which cultural knowledge can be imparted.
- c) Various competition programmes in cultural activities needs to be organized at higher level institutions to encourage and motivate the students to be informed and active culturally.
- d) Student exchange programmes in cultural events needs to be emphasized.
- e) Local language of different tribes needs to be promoted and taught at the higher level as a subject.
- f) Government may also set up linguistic Directorate in near future to promote local dialect.

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Title: An Insight into the (Unique) Tradition of the Sümi Nagas on Sacred Meat

A. Husca
Asst Professor
Japfu Christian College, Kigwema

Abstract

Traditions are imperiled to development and change conferring to the course of time. People adjust to changing situational environment and also mend their style of living. These forces of the changing trends and modernization will definitely add new environments to society and culture. Therefore, while we propagate development and change in all fronts it is essential to preserve and document the rich cultural heritage and traditional practices of our forefathers.

The rich Naga traditional value systems are fast waning which is a matter of concern and regret. At this trend, the traditional values will become extinct and it would be difficult for the future generations to remember the past cultural traditions unless they are meticulously researched and documented urgently. Many Naga youths are forgetting their roots or are even shy to trace back to their villages, not realising that the moment they do that, they are losing their identity. As a matter of fact many of these cultural heritages are been forgotten and posing a threat to our identity. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to re-emphasize the importance of Sümi Naga tradition on the importance of sacred meat in the relation/unity of clan members, the difficulty and challenges in its path of preservation.

Key words: Tradition, Clan, Sacred Meat

Introduction

The Sümi Nagas are commonly referred to as the adventurous tribe of Nagaland. Sümi's are accessible to upward mobility in social status. Among the 17 tribes of Nagaland, Sümis are more prone to migration comparing to the other tribes. There are as many as 400 Sümi villages across Nagaland and upper Assam including the unrecognized villages by the government. This paper is an attempt to document the uniqueness of how the sacred meat binds the clan members and why it is important to preserve its traditional practices.

The social life of Sümi tribe is closely connected with the religious beliefs. All the daily activities are linked with the pleasing of the spirit for blessings. Migration process, head taking culture and feast of merit are all done by following very strict instructions on rituals and observing gennas. Therefore, the tradition of sacred meat among the respective clans of the Sümi tribe cannot be comprehensively understood without a discourse on Naga traditional religion which is usually described as animism, a belief that all objects, both animate and inanimate are inhabited by spirits. Nagas purported that after death, the spirit of a person goes to the land of the dead. But a close examination of Naga traditional religion shows that it is much more complex in nature than animism.

For Instance, Naga traditional religion includes a belief in a Supreme Being who is the creator and sustainer of human and other living beings. Another complex element of their traditional religion was the observance of *genna* days. Therefore, religious aspect cannot be ignored in the study of rich culture and tradition among Sümis.

Clan System of the Sümi Nagas

Clans are the backbone of the village structure. The clan is linked with all the basic institutions of economic activities such as, administration and marriage ceremonies in the village (Lohe, 2011:87).¹ The clan system is an important characteristic of the tribal social organization. It gives a sense of belongingness, security and moral responsibility. According to (Najekhu, 2005).² Sümis being one of the major Naga tribes among the Nagas also have maximum number of clans under two distinct heads known as *Tukuu* and *Swu*.

‘Tukuu’ Clan:

Awomi, Ayemi, Chophimi, Kinimi, Nurumi/Murumi, Chiqh, Yeputhomi

‘Swu’ clan:

Achumi, Asumi, Jimomi, Katilimi, Khujimi, Kibalimi, Shohemi, Shoshomi, Tsuqumi, Wokhami, Wotsami, Kapomi, Nunumi, Khakhomi, Lalami, Suchomi, Khutimi.

Tukuu and *Swu* were brothers; *Tukuu* the elder brother was a simple man who was not particular about performing the rituals in detail like *Swu*. However, the younger one carefully carried out all the ritual performances as instructed to them by their mother and is known for that (Najekhu, 2005).³ From these two brothers, came the two major clans of the Sümis because it is basically an interpreted term of the ritual differences. Till the advent of Christianity, the rituals differed between *Tukuu* and *Swu*, especially with the number of days. The *Tukuu* clan usually had about 3 days’ rituals but *Swu* clan observed rituals up to 30 days. Since Sümi villages are mostly named after the founder’s name, his subjects were mostly from the same clan. Some important characteristics of the Sümi clan system can be discussed as follows in order to understand compressively on how the sacred meat and its practices have kept the tradition alive in unifying the clan members.

What is (Achineshi) sacred meat?

Sacred meat is referred to a prescribed portion of the pork given to the eldest male member of their respective clans. There are three prescribed portions of meat; *Anheghu*, *Akive* and *Ashibo*:

The literal translation of the term *Anheghu* is snout (the frontal part of the nose and mouth of the pig connecting with the tongue) *Akive* is referred to the pigs' stomach and *Ashibo* is referred to the anus/rectum - large intestine terminating at the Anus). It is the digestive system of the pig's anatomy ie mouth to eat, stomach to store and anus to let pass out, its waste. Likewise, the prescribed portion of meat could, perhaps, be the most unwanted part of the meat for other people but it was considered important in the context of Sümi tribe. It was reserved for their respective eldest clan member as a sign of respect and loyalty. "Sacred meat is not just a piece/portion of meat but it is the life line of male members in a family/ clan".⁴ Important features of the traditional practices of sacred meat among the Sümi tribes can be discussed as follows.

a) Identity

Every individual should have his/her own identity and the sense of belongingness through membership of a particular clan. No one can change to any other clan of his/her choices but have to be in that clan to which his/her biological parent belonged. Throughout generations it will remain so unless in some unpleasant circumstances like adoptions and fostered sons, there is no provision of changing one's own clan. There are some instances where divorce takes place and the children lived with the mother but as the children grows up and comes to know about their father, they go in search of their biological father and thus, takes the father's title and become the clan member of his/her father. Thus, the clan gives the identity of a person and maintain close relationship (Singh, 2005:40).⁵

b) Marriage

Marriage is one factor that allows women to take their husband's clan; a Sümi woman once married adopts the clan of the husband thereby becoming part of the man's family (Singh, 2005:40).⁶ The Sümis do not practice inter-marriage between the members of the same clan and any kind of incestuous relationship between them is strictly forbidden. Marrying from the same clan was a taboo and has serious consequences like being excommunicated from the village. It is also believed that it leads to infertility of the offspring with physical deformities, poverty and premature death. In case a courtship takes place between the same clan member and they decide to marry; the partner must be of

over seventh generation. Today many tolerate intermarriage on condition that they are of the seventh generation and belonging to different ancestors although they are from the same clan. The clan members also play an important role in the process of marriage from the time of engagement till the settlement. The consent and the blessings of the clan members are very much necessary in marriage.

c) Inheritance

The Sümi social organization is patriarchal and patrilineal. Clan is the wider unit and family is the basic unit of the society. Father, being the head of every family enjoys headship status in the family but the eldest male member of the clan will have more powers and functions and enjoys the respect of the rest of his clan members. When it comes to inheritance, ancestral properties like land, fields, reserve forest and house are never divided (Achumi, 2012).⁷ The properties are inherited by the kin male members only exclusive of women. Respective head of the clan is responsible to give shares of land to their clan members for jhum cultivation every cycle.

d) Moral Obligations

All the respective clan members share equal privileges as well as obligations. It does not only strengthen the unity among the clan members but also binds them together. They help each other particularly during natural calamities, epidemics, diseases, fire havoc, hail storm, flood, etc. (Lohe, 2011:88).⁸ During marriage, child birth, naming ceremony as well as during feast, the clan shoulders the responsibility for all the necessary arrangements. It is also the responsibilities of their respective clan members to take care of the poor families. The clan members become the social security in every difficult situation.

When unfortunate death takes place, the clan members mourn together in the funeral rites in support of the deceased family members and help out in repaying the debt if the person had left any. They even go to the extent of selling off the property to clear the debt, and so people usually talk about the wealth or the debt left behind by the deceased.

e) Responsibility and Status of Clan Head

There are as many as 21 different clans among Sümi tribe. Irrespective of being from the same clan all the members are not from the same blood line/ ancestors. Therefore, there can be many elderly people in a village from the same clan. However, only the eldest member of a clan enjoys the sacred meat in their respective blood line irrespective of his social or economic background. The only qualification required to enjoy the clan head status is the age.

There are different ancestors from the same clan. Therefore, every individual and family had to trace their ancestors thus; the same ancestor forms a single unit. The strong bonded traditional practice of sacred meat binds the clan members as they pay respect to the eldest male. The rigid practice is strictly followed so, when a pig is killed, they cut out the snout attached with the tongue, stomach, and part of large intestine with the rectum/ Anus and is given to the respective eldest male member. The adopted sons strictly pay their respect to their foster father by giving the sacred meat till they are released from the bondage of sonship.⁹

‘It’s a taboo to claim the sacred meat ahead of the elders because it has a negative consequence of early loss of eyesight, tooth fall, grey hair and cut short of life’.¹⁰ However, it is not a taboo to partake the sacred meat shared by the rightful person. The eldest male enjoys respect and honour of the clan members till dead and subsequently passes on to the next eldest male. It is practiced by all the clans of the Sümi tribe. However, the prescribed portion of meat is different for *Yeputhomi* clan, since they give the pig’s head along with a cut piece of the liver and fats instead of Snout, Stomach and Anus.¹¹

Conclusion/Changing Trends

Kinship relation is a very strong etiquette of the Sümi tribe, particularly the respect for elders. The culture does not encourage addressing elders by name; today it has become more convenient to address in English - mummy, daddy, uncle and aunty, so on and so forth. However, there are certain obligations where elderly people cannot be ignored because they have a special place in social life. When it comes to marriage, it is important to know the bloodline and identity of the boy and girl because it is a taboo to intermarry from the same blood line or from the same clan unless there is a gap of 7 generations. There are few instances of marriage amongst the same clan. However, it has been allowed with proper confirmations from the elders.

The relatives and the clan members continue to help each other both in good and bad times, particularly when it comes to properties inheritance, debt, marriage, death etc. Most of the clans in every village have their welfare unions. They are accountable to oversee the welfare of their own clans. The able clan member throws feasts on certain special occasions and during annual festival celebrations. However, the strongest bond of holding the clan members together is the culture of giving sacred meat. Many changes have taken place due to various influences; however, certain traditional values should be preserved at all cost. It has serious consequences which have been amplified by the elders at the time of the study. A clan member who does not adhere to the traditional practice of sacred meat is excommunicated from that particular clan and will have no claim of share in their ancestral property. The study shows that the traditional practice of honouring the elders was strictly observed. Therefore, it should be encouraged and documented meticulously for the younger generation.

Change being a natural phenomenon and continuous process, Sümi Naga culture is undergoing considerable changes in recent times particularly with the change of administration after the colonial expedition, spread of Christianity, western education and introduction of a foreign religion in the land where indigenous religion was practiced. The findings of the past and present will be of tremendous resource and importance to the Indian historical society at large and particularly to the Naga society. The heritages and traditions of the Sümi community are unique but getting archaic posing a threat to their very identity. As the study indicates the rich Sümi cultural heritages and its traditional value systems are fast waning which is a matter of concern and regret. It has to be understood that at the present trend, the traditional institutions will become extinct and it would be difficult for the future generation to remember the past cultural traditions unless they are meticulously researched and documented emergently, which this paper has attempted to do it.

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Towards a multicultural classroom vis-à-vis NEP 2020

Dr. Baldwin B. Sumer

Asst. Professor

Dept. of Education (PG)

Synod College Shillong

9612558808

baldysumer@gmail.com

Schools are a microcosm of society. They are often seen as the arenas of intercultural tensions but they are important sites of ethnic-racial socialization. Students spent a great deal of time interacting with peers often in cross-cultural circumstances. This affords them a safe space within which students learn about cultural diversity, and their own cultural identity and develop their sense of belonging within a multicultural society. Schools thus assume a pivotal role in the development of strategies aimed at multicultural understanding and combating racism and any conflicts that may erupt out of cultural differences. It is in this context that multicultural education could play an important role to help students develop the knowledge, attitude, and skills essential to function within their own and other micro-culture and within the global community. This paper aims to examine and highlights the prospects and challenges that the new Indian educational policy 2020 reasserts and reaffirms the importance of multiculturalism in the classroom in the context of India.

Keywords: *Intercultural, Multiculturalism, Cultural diversity, NEP 2020*

Introduction

Globally, India has often epitomized as a land of ‘unity in diversity.’ Its’ multiculturalism ranges from geographical diversity, religious communities, languages, and ethnic groups, to cultural practices and beliefs. Thought diverse yet organically linked. The concept of multiculturalism is critical for India’s harmonious and progressive future. Therefore, valuing diversity and multicultural becomes important and they should be deeply rooted in every child from the very beginning of his life (Singh, 2022). Educational institutions are the formal means by which society transmits and shares its knowledge, skills, languages, and culture from one generation to the next. Besides, students bring to school not only differing racial and ethnic heritages but also a wide range of approaches to learning. Cultural differences often create conflicts be it intrapersonal conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, or inter-group conflicts as human history had witnessed in the past and will continue to do so in the near future (Mutiani, 2017) but it has to be acknowledged here that cultural differences do have an impact on student’s education (Gay, 1994) and teachers need to bring students’ different cultures in the classroom to narrow down the cultural gap of students’ academic performance (Yusof, 2008). It is in this context that James Banks’ multicultural education approach becomes essential as the road ahead for creating a culturally responsive education to bring about harmony and development of all in the pluralistic society.

Multicultural Education

The concept of multiculturalism emerges towards the end of the 20th century against the background of diverse circumstances which are unavoidable at the same time undeniably have positive and negative dimensions in society. Multiculturalism as a concept was developed essentially to bridge the plural and heterogeneous conditions to bring about a directional twist that will ultimately lead to the courage to unite in diversity rather than unified in uniformity. Hence the basic tenet of multiculturalism lies in the existence of

empirical reality of diversity and difference but at the same time, there should be equality, tolerance, respect for democracy, human rights, and solidarity (Sedyawati, 2006). India a land of diversity, all the more call for a concerted effort from all stakeholders to establish itself as a strong multicultural society showcasing the celebration of differences and harmony of co-existence. Schools (educational institutions) are an ideal place for nurturing the student's value for multiculturalism from where it will have its rippling effect on the entire society. Education is often considered an activity that is more directed at teaching how to think rather than what to think. A multicultural classroom challenges us that learners should be taught to understand all kinds of knowledge, activities discussing the construction of knowledge (knowledge construction), and different interpretations (Banks, 1993).

Multicultural education is essentially a systematic effort to instill multicultural values and form citizens into multicultural people. It is a set of beliefs and explanations that admits and assesses the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity (in the form of lifestyle, social experience, personal identity, educational opportunities) in the life of individuals and groups, and nations (Banks & Banks, 2010).

Multicultural education is an idea, movement, education reform, and education process whose main purpose is to change the structure of educational institutions so that students irrespective of sex, special needs, race, ethnicity, or culture come will have the same opportunity to achieve academic excellence in school and multicultural competence. It is the type of education where learners are taught to accept differences, and criticism and have empathy, and tolerance for others regardless of class, status, gender, and skills (Hanum & Raharja, 2007). As a result, the students will have elasticity and mental flexibility in addressing the conflicts in society. The main objective of multicultural education is to change the approach of teaching and learning towards giving the same chance to every child where nothing is sacrificed for the sake of unity. In other words, the classroom becomes a place where peace exists, mutual understanding supersedes, and students' implanted lateral thinking diversity, and uniqueness should be appreciated. This entails a change in attitude, behaviour, and values among the academicians but should embrace the differences that the students bring to the classrooms.

Dimensions of multicultural education

Banks (2008) observed that teachers should not only understand that multicultural education is an integration of diverse issues into the curriculum but they should also know, understand and perceive that multicultural education is a multidimensional concept. He believed that the dimensions of multicultural education must be clearly defined and practiced so that teachers can respond to multicultural education in appropriate ways. After a deeper analysis of previous research regarding multicultural education, Banks (1993) came out with the five categories of multicultural dimensions. These include (i) content integration, (ii) knowledge construction process (iii) prejudice reduction, (iv) empowering school culture and social structure, and (v) an equity pedagogy.

Content integration: This dimension relates to the extent to which teachers' capability to use examples and contents from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline. In a multicultural classroom teachers should have to capacity to tap into the various sources (inclusion of contents or curriculum and pedagogical techniques) that support diversity in the classroom and academic achievement (Gay, 2010). Banks (2008) conceptualized four approaches to integrating multicultural content. The contribution approach is the first level of integration.

The focus of the contribution approach is on inserting cultural elements such as heroes, holidays, festivals, and celebrations into the curriculum. This is the easiest and most frequently used by schools; however, it can lead to a superficial understanding of other cultures (Appelbaum, 2002). The second approach is the additive approach. In this approach ethnic content, concepts, perspectives, and themes are added to the curriculum. Though ethnic contents are added to the curriculum, the basic structure, aims, objectives, and principles of the curriculum remain unchanged. The primary purpose of this approach is to permit ethnic and cultural content to take place amidst the curriculum. The third approach is the transformation approach. In this approach, the goals, objectives, and structure of the curriculum are changed (Banks, 1988). In changing the structure of the curriculum students can view concepts, events, and issues from the perspectives of diverse groups of people. This approach provides an opportunity for students to become more critical thinkers and develop skills that will confirm what they have learned from the course. The fourth approach is the social action approach in which students are taught to view society through a critical lens and take action when necessary. In the social action approach student become active members of society and learn not to accept existing ideologies without questioning them first (Banks, 1988).

Knowledge construction process: It relates to the way how teachers help students to understand, investigate and determine how the biases, frame of reference, and perspectives within a discipline influence how knowledge is constructed (Banks, 1995). This dimension encourages teachers to teach students to construct their knowledge without prejudices or any external influences. So multicultural education does not only incorporate ethnic content in the curriculum but also focuses on the construction of new and diverse knowledge. Hence it visualizes students as knowledge producers and not mere knowledge consumers.

An equity pedagogy: This dimension relates the ability of teachers to use a variety of teaching styles and approaches that are consistent with the wide range of learning styles within various cultural and ethnic groups to facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social –class group (Banks and Banks, 2010). This would be possible only if teachers are educated on how to adapt their methods based on students' differences to create an environment where equal educational opportunities are provided to all regardless of students' gender, race, religion, or ethnic differences and ensure all to achieve (Tucker, 1998).

Prejudice reduction: It includes practices and learning by students that help them to rightfully modify their behaviour and attitude and embrace diversity without prejudices. It incorporates teaching-learning activities that help students to appreciate and to develop a positive attitude towards the beauty of differences and plurality of life. In other words, it encourages students to develop democratic racial attitudes (Stephan and Vogt, 2004).

Empowering school culture: The dimension stipulates that the school management and administration must play a vital role in ensuring students coming from diverse background experience equality in their schools. This dimension dictates that students irrespective of which background they come from should be provided an equal opportunity which includes equal access to school and equal treatment after being enrolled (Foster, 1990). The empowering school culture should necessitate that all its stakeholders imbibe the values of pluralism, diversity appreciation, and national integration so that we can create an empowering, equitable, and knowledgeable society.

The goals of multicultural education

The broad goals and objectives of multicultural education are to facilitate educational opportunities to all equally irrespective of students' association with any community, gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language religion, or exceptionality. It aims to create an ambient in the school that is responsive and reflective of the diversity of the classroom. The following are some of the goals of multiculturalism education:

1. According to Banks (1994), the goal of multicultural education is to bring out an educational reform movement through which the educational institutions and the classroom will be truly a reflection of society's diversity.
2. Multicultural education aims to make education a mechanism to achieve social justice in a society that is deeply rooted in critical pedagogy (Nieto and Bode, 2008)
3. Multicultural education also attempts to take education beyond the four walls of the classroom. It aims to make education an agency heralding social changes in society (Nieto, 2009).
4. It aims to promote equity and achievement for every child (Cumming-McCann, 2003), especially those coming from historically underserved communities.
5. Grant (1994) states that multicultural education seeks to address the unique needs of culturally diverse students and ensure equity and social justice.

The bottom line of multicultural education as proposed by Banks is to help students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively within their own cultures, the country, and the global community. This will call on the teachers to adopt multicultural teaching practices, an approach in which teachers work by way of multidimensional perspectives, make use of materials and methods that will appeal to students of different cultures, rearrangement of learning environment for students coming from different cultures such that those learning environments become more conducive to successful learning and become more innovative (Riedler & Eryaman, 2016).

Locating multicultural values in Indian education

India believes in multicultural values and seeks to promote and preserve its plurality through the various constitutional provisions such as the fundamental rights, fundamental duties, the fifth schedule, the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes act of 1989, the eighth schedule, and many more for safeguarding and conservation of its diversity. The very first sentence contained in the preamble 'we the people of India' reflect the fact that the constitution is not specifically for any one community rather every citizen of India is covered and protected under it irrespective of caste, creed, race, region, colour, or religion. India as a country has always welcomed any policies, laws, and systems that propagate legal pluralism whether concerned with granting territorial autonomy for different minority groups or reserved quotas in the legislature, government institutions, and educational institutions for caste and tribal communities. Though we are proud of these constitutional provisions these are not sufficient for safeguarding and accommodating diversity. What is also essential is the political will to implement them and to recognize and solve conflicts amicably for ensuring oneness in the country (Bajpai, 2015).

India had inserted multicultural values in its education system from the very first educational commission of 1948 and the subsequent commissions and policies that follow after. The **University Education Commission 1948** emphasized the use of regional language in teaching-learning practices and encouraged students' participation in socio-cultural activities to sensitize them to the cultural diversity of the country via arts, music, handicrafts, or architecture. Similarly, the **secondary education commission 1952-53** acknowledged the

role of education in helping its citizens to understand the value of cultural diversity. School education should create awareness and cultivate among its youth openness of mind and heart to appreciate and accommodate differences of ideas and behaviours and prepare them to live in harmony within the school community and in the wider community outside the school.

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) pushed forth the idea of a ‘common school system’ for the amalgamation of cultural values in schooling practices. The commission called for restructuring of the school curriculum to bridge the cultural barriers and to bring students together irrespective of their differences to provide quality education to all.

The national policy of education 1968 stressed ensuring that every child should be enrolled in schools at the earliest and equal educational opportunities reaches across the different regions and areas of the nation. It also stressed the need to develop Indian languages for the educational and cultural development of the country. It recommended the use of three language formulas as the medium of instruction.

The national policy of education (1986-92) sought to build a connection between the formal schooling system and cultural diversity. It aimed at inculcating understanding among students of the diverse cultural and social ethos of India. To realize this end the policy stressed promoting link languages and the translation of a substantial amount of textbooks into regional languages and publishing a multilingual dictionary besides re-orientation of the curriculum and course content for the cultural enrichment of education. **Programme of Action (POA) 1992** accentuated the importance of linking education and culture. It recommended for incorporation of diverse images and natural and cultural heritage in the school curricula.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) flagship programme of the government of India was launched in 2001 to provide universal access to basic education for children to attain respectable grades. It aimed at eliminating gender differences and gaps within social categories. **The curriculum framework for teacher education (2004)** stressed that curriculum transactions should be culturally specific. It stipulates the need to integrate educational theories and practices with the socio-cultural, social psychology, and social-linguistic context of the students. It emphasized and encouraged teachers to devise cultural specific pedagogic practices.

The National curriculum framework 2005 acknowledged the cultural diversity of India as one of the greatest gifts of the nation. It called for the urgent need for radical change in the center verse periphery perspective on the intercultural relationship in our country. Similarly, **the Central Advisory Board of Education committee 2005** stressed the need of integrating culture into the curriculum. It pointed out the loophole in the chalk-talk approach in the classroom as depriving ample opportunity for the student to develop a multicultural attitude. It advocated that children should be encouraged from a tender age to work in groups to narrow down biases relate to grades, gender, or any differences that may get embedded in their minds.

National knowledge commission (2007) regarded the universalisation of primary education as the backbone for transforming India into a knowledgeable society. This accessibility of school education to all necessitates the integration of children from diverse backgrounds or any differences based on disability or gender. Further, the commission also batted for a flexible school system to accommodate the specific needs of students.

The NCFTE (2009) recommended locating the education process in the socio-economic and cultural context with an emphasis on accommodating diversity. It stressed that pre-service teacher training programmes should be drawn from the immediate classroom context, learner diversity, and the societal context. **The RTE act (2009)** provides for free and compulsory education to all children of the age group of six to fourteen years. The act ensured equal education opportunities to all especially to children belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes or educationally backward classes or those that have disadvantages owing to social, cultural, economic, and geographical factors. This act also makes education the right to life.

National Education Policy 2020 from a Multicultural perspective

Multicultural education has found its place in Indian education policies in bit and pieces though the policy may not have state direct reference to it the meaning derived from key concepts point it toward making education sensitive and responsive to the varied differences that exist in the country. The NEP 2020 reiterated the need for its citizens to learn to live together through the spirit of mutual understanding and respect. This will be made possible only if education strives to develop in its citizens, values of pluralism, cultural appreciation, and peace. Its vision is to make education India –centric that contributes to transforming our nation into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all.

Access and equity in education

The policy reaffirms and commits to bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcome at all levels of education, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged groups that are broadly categorized based on gender identities, sociocultural identities, geographical identities, disabilities, and socioeconomic conditions. It advocates for the creation of *Special education zones*. These zones will include those regions of the country with large populations from educationally, socially, and economically disadvantaged groups. For universal access to high-quality early childhood care and education, the policy endorses that special attention and priority will be given to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged. *Anganwadi* centers and workers will play an active role in achieving this end. Concerning children with special needs (CWSN) the policy suggests that assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials will be made available to help CWSNs integrate more easily into the classroom and engage with teachers and their peers. Further, it also stakes at making Indian sign language to be standardized across the country where local sign languages will be respected and taught as well wherever possible and relevant.

Curriculum and pedagogy in schools

The policy envisages that all curriculum and pedagogy will be strongly rooted in the Indian and local context and ethos in terms of culture, traditions, heritage, customs, languages philosophy, geography, ancient and contemporary knowledge, societal and scientific needs, and indigenous and traditional ways of thinking. The curriculum should integrate essential subjects, skills, and capacities that will enhance students to a good grip on fundamental concepts and principles, and ideas, and apply them in solving problems in their everyday life. The policy also envisions high-quality national textbooks with local content and flavor which will be made available in the home language to bridge the gaps that exist between the language spoken by the child and the medium of teaching. This will go a long way resulting

in cultural enrichment as well as national integration. Schools are encouraged to contact professionals trained in local vocational trades and facilitate a platform where they can interact with students and inculcate practical skills and local knowledge, culture, arts, and traditions. The policy aims at providing a joyful learning experience to the students wherein they are encouraged to participate in fun projects/activities on ‘the languages of India’ under the ‘*Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*’ (EBSB) initiative. Through this project, students will be allowed to learn about the major languages in India and also get a sense of the nature and structure of tribal languages to develop in the students to develop a sense of unity and the beautiful cultural heritage and diversity of India.

Medium of instruction

The policy recommends a three-language formula at the initial stage of schooling with the motive to promote multilingualism and national unity. It envisages that the medium of instruction to be the home language/ mother tongue/local language/regional language at least until grade 5 but preferably till grade 8 and beyond. The choice of languages has been left to multiple actors of the education system – states, regions, and students. Teachers are encouraged to use bilingual approaches which also include the use of bilingual teaching-learning materials, especially for students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction.

Conclusion

In a rapidly changing world and with the ever-increasing complexity of our society, the need for schools to promote tolerance and diversity is now needed more than ever. Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning based on democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing a curriculum that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combating oppressive practices. The incorporation of multicultural concepts or approaches into schools makes them fertile grounds for the development of new opportunities for sharing each individual's values and for understanding each other in society. A thorough attempt to understand multicultural education is necessary for teachers to be better equipped to face or tackle the challenge of multicultural classrooms. The national education policy 2020 emphasizes making education inclusive for all sections of society. It has recommended numerous measures to achieve its target. Mere provisions and an increase in student enrollment are not helpful until the environment becomes students friendly and conclusive. Exclusivity is a great challenge to translate NEP 2020's dream of inclusive education into a reality.

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Traditional attires and its changing significance among the Ao Naga youths: A sociological study in Kohima district.

Repakaba tzudir¹ & Purlemla Longkumer²

Abstract

The process of social change is universally evident in every society, it is a pervasive and constant phenomenon. Naga society is no exception to such social transformation, it was once a land flourishing with rich cultural and traditional practices governed by rigid customary laws. At present, such indigenous values are rapidly receding as an outcome of cultural appropriation. Subsequently, the introduction of Christianity in the Naga hills, along with the spread of education and the establishment of statehood, pushed Naga society into a new era, sparking a revolutionary movement that influenced the Naga community in matters of belief system, lifestyle, and values. One such aspect which seems to have made a transition over the years consists of Cultural emblems, which represented individuals' status and identity that were originally held in high regard by the community members but appear to have changed with time. The changing significance of the attires worn by the Ao Nagas has been formed by today's complex and ever-changing combination of social, political, and cultural influences. Cultural symbols among the Ao Nagas have changed, with the power structure appearing to have given way to what the youth of the Ao Nagas identify as their material identity. This article thus examines the components associated with the changing values of traditional attires and how such attires were once entitled to wear by undertaking certain customary procedures including headhunting and feast of merit vis-à-vis now concentrated merely to clothing on distinct occasions. Furthermore, it tries to shed light on how those clothing values of traditional attires are changing among the present generation and critically contend the dominant assertion of Christianity as the paramount objective for cultural transformation.

KEYWORDS: Traditional attires, changing values, youths.

Introduction

During recent decades, there has been a growing significance and assertion of cultural artifacts and its emblems for protection and preservation, owing to the threats faced in a vast

1. Ph.D. Scholar Department of Sociology, Nagaland University, E-mail: repa.tzudir@gmail.com. Phone no: 9774103795

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Kohima College Kohima, E-mail: purlemla2017@gmail.com. Phone no: 8131936545

changing era. Such requires a need to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural threats and the changing significance which has undergone over the years. While we examine the Naga society, the cultural symbols hold a deep significance that depicts the origin, growth, and lifestyle of what is known as the glorious past. Cultural symbols in this study deal with the material culture which represents a shared experience distinct to any tribe or tribal group. The shared meanings and experiences connect the members as each shares a found heritage. Over the years, the extent of acculturation has influenced the opinions, knowledge, and ideology of the Naga youths regarding the Naga culture. The UN categorizes the age range of 15 to 24 years based on the shift from dependency to independence when identifying who represents the young. The definition of youth in this study, however, is based on the usage of the local context, where the current Ao Naga society adheres to the traditional Ao Naga society context, whereby upon entering of age group after crossing teenage years until a person gets married has been classified as youth. The study of culture among youth is an important matter because young, as agents, play an important part in intracultural understanding and operate as cultural agents. At the same time, popular culture has become increasingly prominent among today's youth, posing a danger to local culture.

The spread of media and entertainment has a high appeal to the Naga youths, especially what is known as the popular culture, which embodies the cultural products alien to one's high cultural products. Examples of popular culture are seen in the taste of music, whether be it pop, jazz, dressing patterns which has the appeal of fashion from the west, south Korean dramas and Japanese animation, the food habits like Korean cuisine, American fast food chain restaurant KFC, Domino's etc. and consumption to the new types of entertainment. Such has dominated the cultural portraits of today's youth. The spread of popular culture has an adverse impact among the youths, especially in the disembodiment of high cultural symbols and its values. The dissemination and diffusion of the popular culture has challenged the spread of the high culture as a slower phase and often threatening its existence and leading to the disembodiment of folk culture. The sociological analysis of this paper aims to understand the themes underlying the meaning of the cultural artifacts and its related practices and the extent to which the youths understand the significance in a society dominated by popular culture.

A large number of academic papers produced during the colonial period in the Naga hills provide a detailed description and study of the Naga material culture as seen in the writings of Andrew c. west (1985), Elwin, V. (1969), Mills, (1926), who saw the material

culture as a unifying element which paved way for status through feast of merit and headhunting practices and thereby the right to certain cloths, insignia, ornaments and different design in textiles which record the status to be worn by individuals. The attainment of the status reflected the Naga life which was interlinked with the ideas of fertility, prosperity, and protection of the village and the continuation of life however, the insignia for headhunting and feat of merit underwent a change owing to British administration, the Christianization as such practices were curbed. In addition to the previously mentioned forces, the quest to raise the savages to a higher level led to the introduction of the alien culture as highlighted by Thong (2011) leading to the withering and gradual demise of the peripheral culture as the dominant western culture spread on accounts of westernization through missionary activities and the introduction of imported belief systems, ideology, hymns, and democratization of the political institution, which is seen in continuity until this day. The phenomenon of the demise of the culture cannot be said to have been attributed to a single cause however, many factors is said to have perpetuated it. Over time, the Nagas' transition from the colonially mediated era to a time of struggle led to a spike in their sense of identity and allowed them to interact with the outside world. Chaise, (2005) When examining the transition of Naga society, it was noted that the current era, which is characterized by globalization and has led to the deep encroachment of cultures of all kinds, threatened the community's shared beliefs and practices. For instance, wealth, which was once used for serving the community and gaining prestige, has now become an end.

The study of material culture and cultural symbols thus gain significance in this study as we analyze the transition and changes taking place in Naga society owing to the above-mentioned force. An understanding of material culture in sociological discipline exemplifies cultural construction, its tradition and the storytelling of past events of a tribe or a community. Material culture may include physical items, and artefacts that are particular to a community or group. Such are used to express a community's shared beliefs and ideas. An understanding of material culture as a mode of cultural investigation is seen in the works of (Prown 1982, 2) whereby, the underlying premise defines that the objects modified by man reflects the beliefs of the individuals and the larger society. Ogburn in his study of social change set forth to explain material culture as material conditions of life and the social heritage of man which precede changes faster than the adaptive culture. (Ogburn, 1922 202). His analysis thus makes a point about how quickly large-scale cultural changes are occurring in contemporary society, which frequently results in new inventions, replacements, and

consumption patterns. In addition, Ogburn highlighted material culture as changing rapidly, the great accumulation of material culture, and the fact that material culture contributes to other changes in society as three more grounds for the replacement of one material culture with another.

Objectives of the study

Cultural symbols of a tribe are crucial for conveying social norms, common behavior, and meanings; yet, it is apparent that the attached meanings are eroding at the moment. The goal of the current study has been carried out to explore the factors leading to the changes in traditional attires and to understand the perception of Ao Naga youths on traditional attires and their changing values.

Research Methods

The study has been undertaken in Kohima district under Nagaland. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample area based on the following parameters i.e., Kohima as an urban area inhabits several tribes that co-exist in cultural unity and diversity. Consecutively, It is the capital of Nagaland, a hub for cultural appropriation as a result of exposure to cultural diversity in a heterogenous society, unlike the homogeneous rural society. Furthermore, the youths are well exposed to modern culture as a result of globalization, paving way for cultural assimilation.

The respondents were purposively selected from Kohima Ao Baptist Arogo [KABA] youth, the sample size comprises of 20 youths, 10 youths from the age of 18-27, and 10 senior youths from the age of 28 and above inclusive of both males and females. Questionnaire, Likert scale, and focused group discussions were applied as a tool for data collection.

Brief profile of the study area

Kohima is situated in the south at an altitude of 1444m above sea level and is considered as the capital of Nagaland. As per 2011 Census, Kohima district has a population of 267,988. Angami Naga tribe are the indigenous inhabitants of kohima, however, the region as a cosmopolitan city is inhabited by several other Naga tribes and non-Nagas. (GON, 2011)

Amidst the different tribes that are found in Kohima district, the Ao Naga tribe are among them. Despite being native to Nagaland's Mokokchung district, the Ao Nagas

settlement in Kohima district can be traced to the colonial era when they were hired to build roads and a few of the Ao government employees settled in Kohima. The history of the Kohima Ao Baptist church accounts that during the earlier part of 1939, around 10 Ao Naga families and few students inhabited Kohima. Later, the Nagas' search for identity and political challenges established the groundwork for migration. Furthermore, the recognition of Kohima district as the capital city paved way for the Ao Nagas to Kohima in quest of job possibilities at government offices, better educational chances for children, and a means of subsistence. At present, the survey conducted by the Kohima Ao Baptist church indicated that the number of Ao family households residing in Kohima has a number 3500 household.

Ao Naga traditional attires in the past

The Ao Naga tribe was governed by age-old customary practices that have been encrypted in the community since time immemorial. Traditional attires were of high value and established a strong sense of social identity in the community. Like any other naga tribe, weaving is part and parcel of the Ao community and has established a prevailing cultural continuity. Subsequently, spinning and weaving inspiration was drawn from a supernatural being which radiates through the oral Ao naga legend of a lady called *Longkongla* who was perceived as the grant weaver. It was believed that through her magical powers, she invented the technique to separate the clans from each other through textiles, therefore giving birth to different clans in the Ao naga social structure. (Adangla, 2017, p. 33-34)

Historically, the traditional attires of the Ao tribe signified substantial cultural values and meanings whilst it portrayed the status of the individual. One could easily identify if a person was rich or poor by basically looking at the attire being worn. Another significant aspect of the Ao traditional practices was the process or ceremonies involved in owning or earning the right to wear the traditional attires. A striking example would be that of the shawl that was worn by the male folk, though every menfolk wore it, there was a remarkable difference between the designs of the shawls based on certain criteria. *Tsunkotepsü* for instance was considered as the warrior's shawl and could only be worn by male members who have been part of the headhunting profession. However, women from *Anichar* clan from longkhum village have been permitted the right to wear the *Tsunkotepsü* as a tribute to the legend of a woman from *anichar* clan who defended and beheaded an attacker/ enemy head-hunter. (Ibid, p. 36)

Alternatively, *Tapensasü* was a well-decorated shawl, considered the highest honour by an Ao naga community, and could be worn only by an individual who out of his richness has drawn a community feast by sacrificing a mithun. The feast of merit cannot be merely dismissed as a feast but rather it was a very significant event for the entire village in general and the person performing it in particular, as not all rich men could initiate the ceremony. The process involved was rigorous and observed with strict sanctity and once accomplished gave social standing and status to the wearer. Besides that, *Rongsü-sü* was a special man shawl that can only be worn if both the grandfather and father performed the feast of merit. The names, designs, and colours may vary from clan to clan or even villages, but the process involved was identical. (Ibid, pp. 35-36)

The material culture of the Ao Naga women comprises of *Itsungsü* which was wrapped around her chest which is dark blue in colour and a garment which is wrapped around a waist known as *Süpeti*. The different kinds of textiles and symbols signified the age group, status and clan membership among the women. For instance, the women from the *Chungli*-speaking group wrap around threads called *Kupok* which was black in color to wrap her hair which was made from the starch of cotton threads. On the other hand, the *Mongsen* group would wrap white threads around her hair. Such distinguish women of the *Chungli* and the *Mongsen* women. The feather of the hornbill which is worn on a women's hair bun signifies the number of the feast of merit initiated by her along with her husband. For every feast of merit initiated known as *Sü-chi* which involved feasting Mithun to the villagers, a hornbill feather was adorned.

Furthermore, Mills in his study of the Ao nagas recorded that the daughters and wife of the initiator of the feast of merit would adorn themselves with extra ornamentation on the wrapper called *Süpeti* often called as *Takar sü* which was easy to distinguish the status of hailing from a rich family. (Mills 1926, p. 39). Women also adorned layers of beaded ornaments made of beads and brass in the design of trumpets. Women from the rich families would adorn several pieces of ornaments round her neck, while the others would wear a single strand around her neck. The wife of the initiators of feast of merit would around brass belt across the body along with brass earrings around her ears and hands. The art of tattooing among the Ao Naga women on the calves signified the entry of women into their teenage years once they completed 10 or 11 years of age and thereby, is considered a full and fledged member of the community and thus were considered eligible for marriage.

However, at present, such cultural symbols and emblems are receding as a result of cultural appropriation and assimilation.

Findings

Social change in Naga society

The advent of Christianity has brought about phenomenal changes in the traditional and cultural practices of the Nagas in general and the Ao nagas in particular. Colonial modernity and the impact of American missionaries in the Naga hills triggered a paradigm shift creating a wide outlook on the cultures of the west. It is an ongoing influence that has been exerted by trends of globalization, modern media, and technology, gradually replacing the naga traditional values with western values (Thong, 2012, p. 893). Such influential factor has further captivated the mindset of the present generation youths.

However, the agents of social change cannot solely be pinned on the advent of Christianity alone, though it remains a significant historical process and an initial gateway that transformed the socio-political history of the Nagas. Angelova in studying the contemporary identity of the Sumi nagas identifies the factors of change and continuity through the lens of social impact of Christian conversion and the legacies of missionaries. Furthermore, contenting the dominant assertion of Christianity being the major agent of social change at present but rather should be perceived “as an intrinsic part of a new Sumi identity and tradition reinventing and reasserting itself, one which is ‘creatively embedding Christianity within a solid substratum of cultural reproduction’”. The Naga people at present are lured by many other agents in terms of social change, one of the permeating factors is that of technological advancement as a result of globalization. Subsequently, Naga youths are part of this cultural wave of social transformation, promoting a dominion outlook on the material culture of western societies. Such factors further contributed to the perception of the youth in terms of lifestyle choices, food habits, clothing, etc.

Changing significance in Ao traditional attire

In the present context, the usage of traditional attires has been reduced to certain occasions such as tribal festivals, cultural functions, and special occasions. It is no longer worn daily or as a matter of prestige or status but rather as an attire that portrays one’s identity among the different tribes. Synonymously, traditional attires underwent tremendous ramifications in terms of designs which are influenced by western outlook and the pace of

commercialization. The market economy is now open to new ideas and innovation in terms of modern designs and fashion (Karolia & Prakash, 2014, pp. 416-17). The Ao Naga youths in Kohima district are well aware and have been part of the ongoing trend. Yanger, male, 25 (pseudonym) a member of the Kohima Ao Baptist Arogo (KABA) stated that *“I want to wear traditional attires but only if they have modern touch”* (interview). Interestingly, a vast number of respondents have shown preference for wearing cultural attires with modern designs during cultural or special events.

The values and norms of wearing traditional attire have changed with the passage of time, and the practice of headhunting and feast of merit is no longer relevant. Traditional attire that was once part of the everyday life of the Ao naga community is now reduced to be worn only on special occasions. Aben, female, 28, (pseudonym) a former youth leader of KABA explains that *“to wear traditional attires every day would be quite demanding because it is costly and heavy”* on the other hand Asen, female, 35, (pseudonym) a member of the senior youth KABA, states that,

“the cultural influence of the west is so phenomenal that we give less importance on wearing our own attires thinking that the western clothing fashion is more popular than our own” (Interview).

Thus, the limitation of wearing traditional attire in everyday life is well defined through the responses received from the youths.

Ao Naga youth’s perception of traditional attires

The study entails the significance of traditional attires among the Ao Naga youths with an aim to understand if cultural meanings associated with traditional attires are fast receding or rather being enforced by the community. The findings show that 100 percent of the respondents agree that the authentic meaning behind cultural attires is disappearing. On being asked, whether the youths are aware of the meanings of the attires they wear on special occasions.

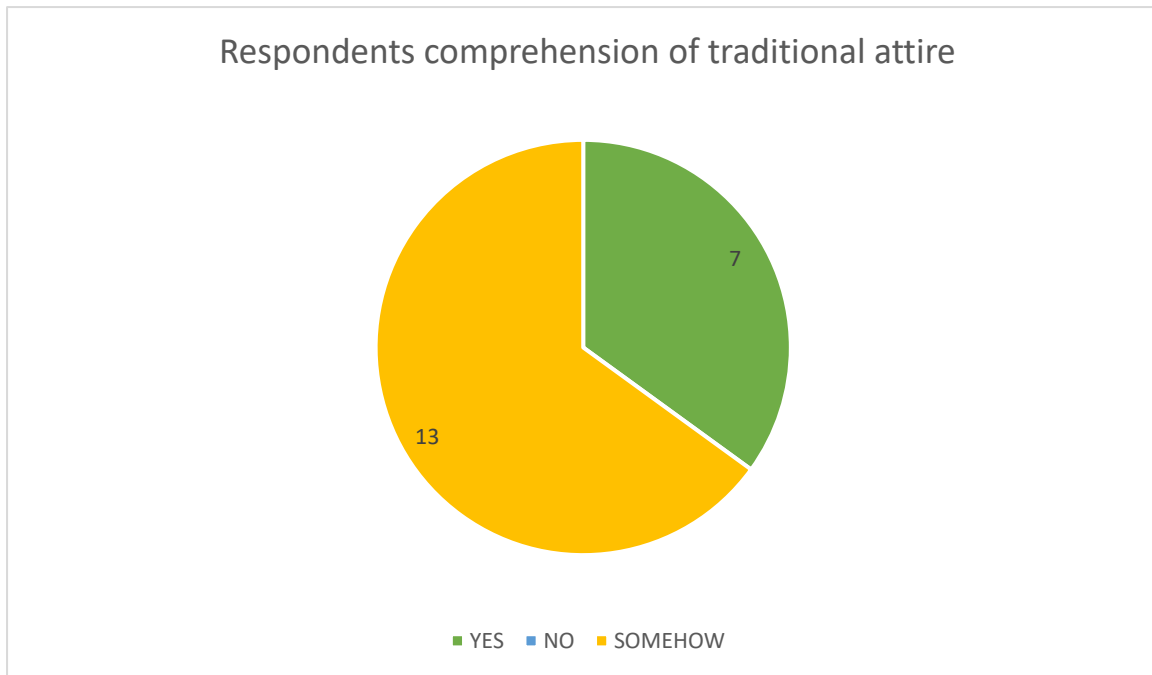


Fig:1.1

From the above figure, it is clear that only 35% of the respondents know the meanings of the cultural attire they wear. The remaining 65% of the respondents only know it somehow. There are several factors associated with the youths failing to learn the meaning of their traditional attires, some of the leading reasons include the failure of the older generation to educate the youths on attires, Ben, male, 36, (pseudonym) a senior youth member who justified that,

“My village elders are not coming up with any programs or events to educate the youth about our culture and traditions which is why we don’t have the urge to learn” (Interview).

Subsequently, another youth member Liro, female, 26, (pseudonym) refuted this by explaining that,

“We the youths are just very ignorant because of the distraction from social media and the influence of popular culture has lured us away from our traditional roots, making us ignorant to learn the meanings of our traditional attires” (Interview).

On the other hand, the process of cultural appropriation and the influential role of social media has driven the youth to assert western values in terms of lifestyle, clothing, food habits, etc, as the dominant culture in comparison, conferring lesser attention to one’s own traditional practices or in this case, learning the meanings of traditional attires.

Influence of social media

The role of social media is a vital component in understanding the influence of popular culture among the Ao Naga youths in Kohima. Majority of the respondents are acquainted with different types of media, some of the notable ones include Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc, such platforms are filled with graphic presentations of diverse cultures globally. Ena, female, 20, (pseudonym) a member of the KABA youth said,

"I am updated about modern trends through social media like Facebook and Instagram, and other media like TikTok and YouTube".

Present-day youths have been known to invest a lot of time in social media. The influence of media is seen in the consumption pattern of the individuals. For instance, the supremacy of the Korean, Chinese and the Thai drama and its advertisement which started as early during the 2000's through the cable network and later flooded with DVDs in the market. The superiority in the consumption patterns was seen when the school and college going students were thrown to a wave for learning the Korean language and songs with peers tend to identify in the Korean fashion and lifestyle. Cultural invasion in the form of "Annyeonghaseyo," "Sarangee," and "Oppa" becoming a standard terminology among youths is seen while youths become uninterested in learning the dialect of other Naga tribes. This was followed by trends of gang fights among the young men in schools and colleges, hair straightening fashion appealed among the young girls leading to the importing of the Chinese made hair straightening creams with beauty parlours blooming in the capital city. Later, the Hornbill festival's celebration of Naga culture gave special treat to the K-pop fans when the K-pop band Monty rocked the stage on 2018. And while the K-pop culture was on the rise, Japanese culture made way among the Naga youths with the organizing of the Cosplay festivals for the anime loving group. Over time, new commercial cultural trends have emerged. The most recent trends include the craze for Korean skin care and its craze of "glass skin" to the success of the K-pop group BTS as WhatsApp status shows birthday wishes of its members, and the emergence of the "Finger heart" trend. The emergence of new cultures among youths raises the question of whether Naga culture loses attraction as a result of bringing up a generation that favours popular culture.

Role of the Church in strengthening the usage of traditional attires

The advent of Christianity is viewed quite negatively from the lens of the traditional and cultural practices of the Nagas. It is often targeted for causing the loss of customs and

cultural heritage of the Naga community. In many cases it remains unrefuted by Naga scholars, however, at present, there are numerous scholarships that attempt to critically examine the causes leading to social change in Naga society. In the case of wearing traditional attires among the Ao Naga youths, the church plays a prominent role in encouraging the youths to learn the cultural meanings and embrace the usage of traditional attires by organizing various cultural programs for the youths. Sanen, male, 26 (pseudonym) a former youth leader said,

“As a youth leader at church, we too organize cultural programs. Once we choose one month and took different cultural events on different Sundays. Like spelling bee competition (Zulumensem), idioms and phrases competition (Olong ratet), traditional song competition, and clothing of cultural attire competition (All in Ao dialect)” (Interview).

Substantially, the Kohima Ao Baptist Arogo [church] reserves certain days annually for the youths to engage in learning traditional cultures and significance. Furthermore, the church does not restrict any individual from wearing traditional attire in its vicinity.

Suggestive measures to learn the meanings of traditional attires

Despite the great effort made by various institutions to retain the cultural practices and heritage of the Ao Naga community, the process of social change as an influential factor remains inevitable in any society. The trend of globalization in a multicultural society cannot simply be replaced and at a given point of time, every community must go through social transition. Considerably, the aboriginal traditional practices cannot be revived entirely as it would contradict the existing social system. Ostensibly, the clothing of traditional attires in the everyday life of the people remains impractical however, preserving the actual meaning of the cultural symbols, emblems, and rituals acquainted with traditional attire is still attainable. One of the respondents, Lanu, male, 38 (pseudonym) suggested that,

“We should include the knowledge associated with traditional attires, the symbols, meaning, emblems and rituals in the academic curriculum of schools, colleges or even universities so as to keep up with the modern trend and for the present generation to be updated about their own culture” (Interview).

Another respondent Tia, male, 24 (pseudonym) added,

“Since everything in our society has meaning, we must try to learn those meanings similarly even in our traditional practices it is the same. Thus, we must seek the advice and council of the elders from our village to learn those meanings” (Interview).

Besides this, social media is a growing influential factor for the present generation, one can also make use of such platforms as a mode of cultural exchange to promote traditional culture by revisiting the existing literature and practices.

Conclusion

The increasing interaction of the popular culture among the youth today accompanied by the support of the state runs the risk of cultural loss and indigenous knowledge system among the Naga youth today. Despite the fact that the numerous agents of globalisation have inspired young people to investigate their cultural similarities and differences, the colonisation of popular culture in music, fashion, knowledge, and language has led to a loss of local culture. The material culture of the local culture which include the traditional attires has undergone a significant changes among the Ao Naga youths in view of cultural appropriation and the advancement towards western modernity. The age-old traditional practices such as headhunting and feast of merit that were performed to attain the right to wear a prestigious traditional shawl and gain better status are impractical to replicate in the present society. Furthermore, the social transition and the influence of modern technology such as social media have diverted the attention of the Ao Naga youth establishing a sort of popular culture which has exposed the vulnerabilities that the local culture faced in its stand against popular culture.

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Cultural Values and preference towards organic food in Kohima, Nagaland

Seyievono Savi

Research scholar, Assam Don Bosco University, Assam

&

Dr. Rashmita Barua

Assam Don Bosco University, Assam

Abstract

Demand for organic food is increasing as it is considered healthy, tastier and environment friendly. Food culture is an important aspect of Naga culture and agriculture a way of life, particularly in the past. Consumers' preference for organic products is increasing because it is considered to be healthier, tastier and environment friendly. The research aims to study consumers' value associated with preference for organic food. Multiple regression technique was used to find the determinants which explain the preference to buy organic food among consumers in Kohima. The result shows that demographic profile plays an important role in the preference of organic food. Consumers prefer to buy organic food because it is considered healthier, tastier, promote local farmer. Integrated supply chain of organically grown crops will give greater access and diversity of food products to the consumers and also benefit farmers to earn stable income. This will improve socio-economic development in the state.

Introduction

Naga culture is an agricultural society particularly in the past. Agro based food items were all organically grown and valued. Naga festivals, especially, the

Tenyimia groups, are all based on the life cycle of paddy, millet and other staples that are grown for everyday food. With globalization, food systems are changing with greater availability and diversity of food choices. Increasing health consciousness and awareness on conservation of environment are the major factors that led to the growing interest in alternate forms of agriculture and its consumption. The demand for organic food is steadily increasing both in developed and developing countries with an annual average growth rate of 20-25% (P. Ramesh et al., 2005). Organic farming may benefit the farmers in India in the long run since there are evidences from across the world on soil, environment and health improvement.

Significance of the study

Organic products in India are growing in domestic market. The increase in awareness has caused shifts in consumers' tastes and preferences which led to the domestic as well as the global rise in demand for organic food products. Consumers prefer organic food over conventional food because the former is considered as healthier, chemical free and environment friendly. Therefore this study is to gain knowledge about the demographic characteristics of respondents and about the level of preference towards organic food.

Statement of the problem

The global demand for organic products is growing at a very rapid rate. In recent years interest towards organic products and buying has increased among consumers, it has a positive approach. It is essential to understand about consumers values and preference of organic food products. Thus, this research study has been undertaken in Kohima town of Nagaland and focuses on the level of preference towards organic food.

Review of related literature

Conner et al. (2003) did research related to consumer attitude and preferences for organic products and concluded that health-conscious consumers have positive attitude and high preference towards organic food.

Hustvedt.(2006) the subjective expected utility model of decision- making assumes that an individual is motivated to choose the alternative(behaviour or object) that affords the highest overall utility(value).

Bellows et al.(2008) studied purchasing behaviour and production values to understand the consumer interest in organic products. They pointed out that the reasons households are willing to pay vary, quality is the most important factor, health come second, and environmental concerns lagging far behind.

Joris Aertsens.et.al.,(2009) the study attempt to provide an overview, within a framework lining Schwartz value theory and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). It seeks to focus on the values –emotions, personal custom, involvement,consumers relate to organic food consumption

Priska Dietrich, (2010), study concluded that In developing countries, urban and informed consumers are interested in organic agriculture, often for health and safety reasons. Organic markets not only offer a better price; they are usually a safer place for smallholders in markets where they have to compete with large-scale mechanized producers.

Sonia Attanasio.et.al.(2013) their paper examines the consumers' intention to purchase organic food products in Pontina Province, Italy. The result of the study indicates that the intention to buy organic products is influenced by the perception about the value of organic products and belief on the health and safety of the product.

Sivathanu,(2015) from the study concluded that demographic characteristics of consumers is an important factors in the preference of organic food. The result concluded that gender, income and age are factors which play an important role in the purchase of organic food.

Vega-Zamora(2020), in a survey in Spain concluded that organic food consumer had a different value than non-consumers. The study highlighted that values play a central element in consumer behavior.

Objective of the study

The objectives of the study are

- To analyse the demographic profile of the consumers
- To examine the consumers' value in relation with the level of preference towards organic product

Research methodology

The research study is descriptive and survey method is used for the study to analyse the consumers' preference towards organic food. Both primary data and secondary data are employed for the study. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire using Likert scale. Open -ended interview was also adopted to gather additional information on the status of organic farming and crops. Secondary data has been obtained from journals, website and books. Twenty respondents were approached in 2022 for the purpose of the study. Kohima city of Nagaland has been selected as an area for the study. The data collected from the respondents have been analysed with the help of statistical package, namely IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 software

Limitations of the study

- The study is confined to the geographical region of Kohima
- The sample size is limited to 20 respondents only
- The analysis is made based on the opinion given by the sample respondents in the study area

Analysis, interpretation and discussion

The data received from the respondents on the questions were tested for reliability and the reliability coefficient. Cronbach's α was calculated using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 software. The result of reliability analysis is given below.

Reliability test	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
.71	41

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The result revealed that consumers preference of organic food product on five-point Likert scale is found reliable at $\alpha = .75$

Demographic profile

The demographic profile is analysed with the help of variables like age, gender, educational qualification, annual income, frequency of purchase of organic food. The result of the analysis are discussed below

Factors	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	6	30
	Female	14	70
Age	26-40	10	50
	41-60	10	50
Educational Qualification	Primary	3	15
	Secondary	8	40
	Master	6	30
	PhD	3	15
Income	Less than 10,000	1	5
	20-30,000	4	20
	30,000-40,000	9	45
	More than 40,000	6	30
No. Of person in the family	one	1	5
	two	1	5
	three	5	25
	four-five	12	60
	more than five	1	5
Frequency of shopping	everyday	2	10
	once a week	9	45
	1-3 times in a month	8	40
	Few times in a year	1	5

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that the 50 percent of respondents are between the age group 24-40 and 50 percent between the age group 1-60. About three fourth of the respondents (70 per cent) are female. Most of the respondents have completed secondary level of education (40 per cent). Majority of the respondents (45 per cent) earn a monthly income between Rs 30,000-40,000. Majority of the respondents (60 per cent) have 4-5 family members who consume organic food. Majority of the respondents (45 per cent) make their purchase of organic products once a week.

Value and preference to consume organic food

To determine which factors could explain the preference among consumers to buy organic food product, Multiple Linear Regression technique was subsequently conducted using SPSS.

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.994 ^a	.988	.982	.04392

a . Predictors: (Constant), not harmful for environment, healthier, prevention and treatment of certain diseases, free from pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other additives, higher nutritional values, taste better

Table 1 shows the multiple regression model summary. The Adjusted R^2 of the model is .982 with R^2 value of .988 means that the linear regression explained is 98% of the variance in the data.

Table 2. ANOVA ^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	1.916	6	.319	165.582	.000 ^b
Residual	.023	12	.002		
Total	1.939	18			

a. Dependent Variable: I prefer to buy organic food

b. Predictors: (Constant), not harmful for environment, healthier, prevention and treatment of certain diseases, free from pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other additives, higher nutritional values, taste better

Table 2 shows that the F test is highly significant, thus it proves that there is a linear relationship between the variables in our model.

Table 3. Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std.Error			
1 (Constant)	1.625	.307		5.286	.000
healthier	.172	.010	.611	18.051	.000
prevention and treatment of certain diseases	.121	.024	.190	5.114	.000
free from pesticides,chemical fertilizers and other additives	.165	.030	.418	5.587	.000
Higher nutritional value	.526	.094	.858	5.594	.000
Taste better	.923	.174	1.581	5.293	.000
Not harmful for environment	-1.236	.338	-1.577	-3.658	.003

a. Dependent Variable: I prefer to buy organic food

Table 3 show multiple linear regression estimates including the intercept and the significance levels. The independent variables are healthier (x_1), prevention and treatment of certain diseases(x_2), free from pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other additives(x_3), higher nutritional values (x_4) taste better(x_5) and not harmful for the environment(x_6). The mathematical equation of multi-regression model is

$$\hat{y} = b + m_1x_1 + m_2x_2 + m_3x_3 + m_4x_4 + m_5x_5 + m_6x_6$$

Conclusion

It is clearly seen from the above analysis that consumers prefer to buy organic food products, there are various values impacting the preference including demographic characteristics of consumers. It has been observed that female have more preference for organic food. Education also plays a significant role where informed and educated consumers have more inclination towards purchase of organic food.

Organic crops grown in the state of Nagaland like rajma(kholar), millet, ginger , wild basil, yam etc needs to be promoted which can bring forth stable income to local farmers and more products to choose from for consumers. The perception of the consumers of organic food that it enhances good health ,taste better and environment friendly can be capitalised by working on strategies and improve supply chain so that the products are easily available to the consumers. Creation of a consistent and smooth supply chain benefits all the players –farmers, suppliers, which lead to sustainable economic development.

In current times, the man-made problems affecting health and environment (pollution, loss of biodiversity, climate change etc) need urgent shift towards sustainability. One of the ways these problems can be addressed is the promotion of organic farming which will boost organic food consumption.

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Women's Gender attitude in Nagaland

Hovisiito Khieya

Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus,

Meriema, Nagaland.

hovisiitokhieya@gmail.com

Abstract

An important step to promoting gender equality is an understanding of the attitude towards gender. In Nagaland where a section of the population is voicing their concern for gender equality, there is still a clash of opinion regarding the changing gender roles. The study examines women's gender attitude in Nagaland, in the context of their opinion towards the roles of women and men and the extent to which they support the rights of women. The sample for the study consisted of 320 women in the age group of 18 to 57 years of age. The findings of the study indicated a slight majority of the women showing lesser support for rights of women. A significant difference in gender attitude among women was found with regard to age, with younger women showing greater support for rights of women. A significant difference was also found with regard to marital status, with more percentage of unmarried women showing greater support for rights of women. No significant difference in gender attitude among women was found when compared across 3 levels of educational qualification (higher secondary, graduate and post-graduate).

Introduction

Gender equality besides being a fundamental right is essential for sustainable development. Where democracy promotes human rights, development, peace and security, true democracy is said to exist when both gender women and men are given equal opportunities with regard to decision making and access to various socio-economic resources. Ojha (2014) also states that, true development can happen when both gender equally contributes in all spheres and at different levels of decision making. Where women are under-represented in the decision making levels all around the world, it is important to encourage participation of women to achieve liberty with men thus reducing the gender gap.

Nagaland is one of the smallest states in the North-Eastern part of India. It is a tribal state with 16 major tribes cohabiting together with their own distinct culture and tradition. A distinguishing feature of the various tribes in Nagaland is the system of patriarchy, where most aspects of the society is dominated by men. Although women in Nagaland are treated fairly in terms of opportunities they receive in the realm of education, economic and certain social activities, yet when it comes to the decision-making processes in the society women are largely denied participation. Patriarchy is still found to have a stronghold with the traditional practices treating women and men differently, where women are denied an equal status as men. Ovung (2009) also rightly stated that, the traditional values and practices are still found to be hindering women from full and active participation in the society.

Ojha (2014) has rightly stated that, democracy cannot be talked about when women are kept out of the political structure. Although in recent times education has greatly advanced the position of women in Nagaland with women occupying high positions in offices and institutions, the dominant patriarchy still denies women in the decision making and politics of the society. In order to promote gender equality in Nagaland, sensitization of gender is necessary to affect changes to the old traditional customs and traditions. It is essential to understand the attitude of the society in order to sensitize about gender and to encourage the participation of women, and this is more so for the case of women (Ojha, 2014). As Singh, et.al. (2013) states, to promote gender equality the rigid gender norms that men and women internalize needs to be changed. It thus becomes pertinent to understand the gender attitude, the views people hold regarding the roles of women and men.

A quick review of the literature did not show any documented studies on gender attitude in Nagaland. Where studies on gender attitude have been conducted elsewhere, studies that have

specifically focussed on women is also limited. Where Hansson (2011) explored the gender role attitudes of young Russians and Estonians (18-35 years of age), the study found better educated women to be having more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. Similar findings were reported by Manganaro and Alozie (2011) in their study with Afghan adults, with education leading to more egalitarian attitudes. However, in another study by Mensch, et.al, (2003) on gender attitude among Egyptian adolescents, education was found to have no effect on liberalisation of gender attitude. Age was found to have an effect on gender attitude with older women having more conservative attitude (Manganaro & Alozie, 2011)

In Nagaland where a section of the population is voicing their concern for gender equality, there is still a clash of opinion regarding the changing gender roles. This study is aimed at exploring the gender attitude of women in Nagaland, and the effects of age, education and marital status.

Method

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of 320 women in the age group of 18 to 57 years of age. The sample for the study was based on convenience sampling and included participants from two districts of Nagaland i.e., Kohima and Dimapur. Of the 320 women, 173 were younger women (18 to 40 years) and 147 were older women (41 years and above). Based on educational qualification, 113 were higher secondary level, 100 were graduate and 107 were post-graduate. Based on marital status 209 were unmarried and 111 were married. Exclusion criteria for the sample included those women who were below the age of 18 years and who had educational qualification below higher secondary level. The sample was collected after obtaining their consent. Effort was made to include participants from all the major tribes of Nagaland.

Tool

The Gender Attitude Scale-Nagaland (GAS-N; Khieya & Longkumer, 2020) was used for the study. The scale is a 5- point Likert type scale and gives a brief assessment of the views people hold regarding the roles of women and men, highlighting the extent to which they are willing to understand and support the rights of women. Higher score on the scale indicates greater support for rights of women.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data on the GAS-N. Table 1 shows the percentage of population expressing high and low gender attitude, the mean score and standard deviations.

Of the total sample of women in the study, the mean score on the GAS-N was found to be 4.11 with a standard deviation of .47512. A slight majority of women showed lesser support for rights of women.

Table 1: Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviations

Demographic variable		N	Mean	SD	Low	High
Age (N=320)	Younger Women (18 - 40 years)	173	4.222	.441	45%	55%
	Older Women (41 years & above)	147	3.982	.482	63%	37%
Education (N=320)	Higher Secondary	113	4.107	.486	54%	46%
	Graduate	100	4.164	.435	49%	51%
	Post-Graduate	107	4.068	.498	56%	44%
Marital Status (N=320)	Unmarried Women	209	4.178	.459	48%	52%
	Married Women	111	3.987	.480	63%	37%
Total Sample		320	4.112	.475	53%	47%

Welch's t-test was used to assess the difference between younger and older women on gender attitude. A significant difference between the younger and older women was found on gender attitude ($t= 4.605$; $p<.05$). As shown in Table 1, younger women showed significantly greater support for rights of women ($M=4.222$) compared with older women ($M=3.982$). Similar findings have also been reported by Manganaro and Alozie (2011), with age being a significant predictor of gender attitude. With regard to support for rights for women, younger women were found to be more liberal whereas older women were found to be more conservative (Manganaro & Alozie, 2011).

Using Welch's t-test a significant difference was also found between unmarried and married women on gender attitude ($t= 3.429$; $p<.05$). From Table 1, it is seen that unmarried women ($M=4.178$) showed significantly greater support for rights of women compared with married women ($M=3.987$) who were more conservative in their attitude towards rights of women. The findings indicate that marriage may be a contributing factor that leads to conservative views about gender roles of women.

Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to assess the difference on gender attitude across three levels of educational qualification. The test revealed insignificant difference ($H=1.354$; $p=.508$) on gender attitude across the three levels of education. The study indicates that education has no significant effect on gender attitude (Higher Secondary ($M=4.107$); Graduate ($M=4.164$); Post-Graduate ($M=4.068$)). In a study among Egyptian adolescents, the effect of education on gender attitudes was also found to be insignificant (Mensch, et.al. 2003). In another study where Egyptian married women were interviewed, education was found to be unrelated with empowerment of women (Kishor, 1999, as cited in Mensch, et.al. 2003). This indicates that although education may play a significant role in creating opportunities for women, it does not challenge the traditional attitudes. The findings of this study contradicts with the findings of some earlier studies, where better educated women were reported to be more liberal in supporting the rights of women (Hansson, 2011; Manganaro & Alozie, 2011). More studies are required to explore the effect of education on gender attitudes in Nagaland.

Conclusion

The study is not without limitations, but it is an important step to understanding gender attitude of the people in Nagaland. Nagaland being a state with strong cultural ethos and its commitment to protecting its cultural practices may be hindering women from full and active participation. The patriarchal system of the society in Nagaland which limits the role of women to the domestic sphere may also be a contributing factor for the poor confidence among women to stand up for their rights. In order to promote gender equality and support women's rights in Nagaland, gender sensitization is necessary to affect changes in the old traditional practices.

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