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# Emerging Trends in Development Research

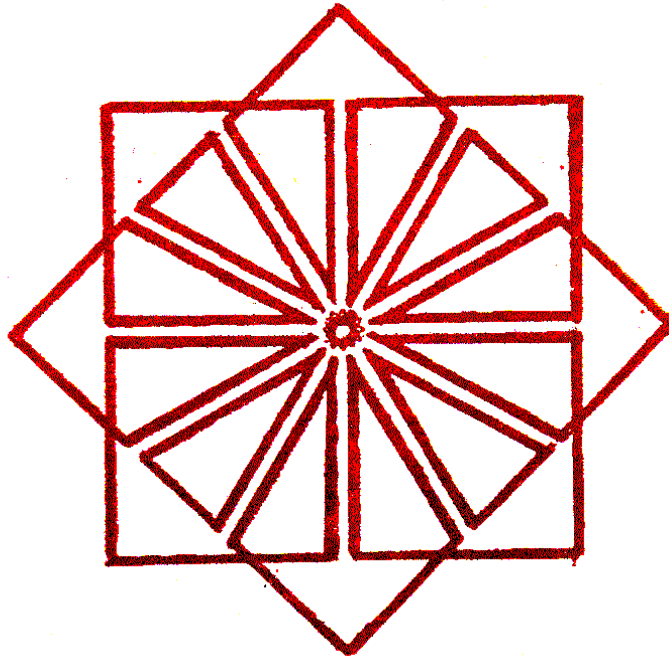
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## **Globalization, New Media Technologies and Socio-cultural Change in India**

**Virendra Pal Singh**

Societies throughout the world are now passing through the process of profound and rapid change. This change is closely related with the process of globalization. In last one decade, this process is taking place in most of the countries of the world. Globalization refers to 'the increasing interdependence of the people across the world, it refers to the increasing impact of living and working in a single, global market place, but more fundamentally, it refers to a basic shift in the institutions of our lives' (Giddens 1999). It has given rise to a debate among the social scientists, on the one hand and the policy makers, on the other, to assess the impact of the processes associated with this wider phenomenon on the social and cultural institutions of the societies not only in the developed societies but also in academic and political forums of the developing societies particularly those who have adopted policy to privatize and liberalize their economy in the recent past.

### ***The Concept of Globalization***

At the most general level, globalization refers to a process of change, which affects all regions of the world in a variety of sectors including the economy, technology, politics, the media, culture and the environment. According to Held et al. (1999: 2) 'globalization may be thought initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual'. There is a general agreement among the scholars on the 'interconnectedness' dimension of the process of globalization. But they differ from each other on other dimensions of globalization. The commentators on globalization, following Held et al. (1999), can be identified into three broad categories: hyperglobalisers, skeptics and transformationalists.

*Hyperglobalizers* believe that globalization represents a new epoch in human history, in which all types of relationships are becoming integrated at the global level, transcending the nation states and making it increasingly irrelevant. Ever-increasing cross-border flow of capital, commodities, people and ideas are a defining factor of the new age. Hyperglobalisers can be further divided into two sub-categories: *positive* hypoglobalizers, mainly those who advocate for open, global markets

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and believe that these will guarantee optimal economic growth and will, in long run, bring about improved living standards for everyone (Ohmae 1991,1995); and *negative* hypoglobalisers, mainly critical theorists and neo-marxist scholars (Martin and Schumann 1997, Reich,1991, Beck 1997, Schnapper 1994, Wiseman 1997, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1996), focused upon negative impacts of globalization in a critical manner and rejected the notion of globalisation in its totality.

The skeptics who also focus on economic aspects of globalisation argue that there is nothing new about this international economic integration. It is comparable to the period preceding to First World War. They generally prefer the term 'internationalisation' to globalisation (Hirst and Thompson 1996, Weiss 1997). They also argue that the role of the nation-state remain as strong as ever.

Transformationalists, however argue that globalisation is the central driving force behind the major economic, cultural, social and political changes that are affecting virtually all the world's people today. Globalisation is seen as the overall consequences of closely inter-linked processes of change in the areas of technology, economic activity, governance, communication and so on. Developments in all these areas are mutually reinforcing or *reflexive*, so that no clear distinction can be drawn between cause and effect. Transformationalists regard contemporary patterns of cross-border flows (of trade, investment, migrants, cultural artifacts, environmental factors, etc.) as without historical precedent. Such flows integrate virtually all countries into a larger global system, and thus bring about major social transformations at all levels.

Thus, the process of globalization is not confined to economic and political concerns of these societies. Its impact can also be observed in the field of mass media communication and other social and cultural institutions of the society.

### ***Globalization in India***

The globalization in Indian economy started in early part of 1990s with a shift in economic policies from a mixed economy adopted after independence in which both the public and private sectors were given due consideration. The priority areas were established in the form of public enterprises owned and controlled by the national government. It helps in giving a boost to some of the sectors of economy but at the same time the inefficient management of some of these public enterprises turned them into non-profitable units and a burden on the government. The downfall of USSR as one of the model of economic development through state owned public enterprises and the emergence of some of the countries of East Asia who have adopted free market economy into Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) has compelled the planners in India to review the economic policies. Thus, in 1990s India adopted the policy of Globalization, Privatization and Liberization, which initiated the process of economic reforms in India. The political leadership at that time was keenly interested in signing the GATT and to become the member of World Trade Organization (WTO). This has brought some new dimensions to the Indian economy. The Multi-national Companies (MNCs) found the Indian market very attractive where they could sell their products.

Another attraction for them in India as in other Less Developed countries (LDCs) was the availability of cheap skilled labour.

### ***Recent Developments in Communication Technologies***

New communication technologies such as satellites, cable television, wireless telephony, the Internet and computers are bringing about noticeable changes in Indian society. *Communication technology* includes the hardware equipment, organizational structures and social values by which individuals collect, process and exchange information (Singhal and Rogers 2001: 31). The new communication technologies have certain characteristics that are similar in some respects to those of both interpersonal and mass media communication, but that are different in many other respects. Interpersonal communication consists of face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals. The message flow is from one to a few individuals, feedback is immediate and usually plentiful and the messages are often relatively high in socio-emotional content. In contrast mass media communication includes all those means of transmitting messages that enable a source of one or a few individuals to reach a large audience. Some type of hardware equipment is always involved in mass communication, feedback is limited and delayed, and the messages are often relatively low in socio-emotional content. The *new media* integrates the characteristics of both interpersonal and mass communication. Communication that occurs through these media often links two individuals or a small number of people. In this sense, the new media are like interpersonal communication, in that the messages are targeted to specific individuals (de-massification). But interactive communication through the new media is somewhat like mass media communication in that hardware equipment is necessarily involved. Information exchange via the new media is *interactive*, meaning that the participants in a communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse (Singhal and Rogers 2001: 31; Mc Quail 2000 : 128).

In the late sixties, some important developments have taken place in systems of communication. The advent of satellite communications marks every bit as a dramatic break with the past. The first satellite communication was launched only just over 30 years ago. Now there are more than 200 such satellites above the earth, each carrying a vast range of information. For the first time ever, instantaneous communication is possible from one side of the world to the other. Other types of electronic communication, more and more integrated with the satellite transmission, have also accelerated over the past years (Giddens 1999).

Interactive technologies of communication are at the heart of the communication revolution that is occurring in India. The computer and its various application in satellite and cable television, telecommunications and the Internet are the main driving force of communication revolution taking place in India.

Firstly, during the decade of 1980s modernization of Telecom sector particularly use of satellite technology to connect the telephone and availability of telephone connection with STD and ISD facilities not only helped in smooth and faster communication both at the national and international levels but also provided better connectivity to rural areas. The establishment of PCO/STD/ISD

booths even in small towns and urbanized villages can be taken as an important parameter of the development in Indian society. This development of communication services in India provided new employment opportunities to the people both in urban and rural areas.

Secondly, the advent of Cable television in India was an important event of 1990s which provided the Indian television viewers a new opportunity of watching on their television new channels beamed from satellite originated from private global media tycoons like Rupert Murdoch (owner of STAR TV Network) in association with its Indian counterpart Subhash Chandra Agrawal (owner of Zee channel). The gradual popularity of these channels posed a challenge to government owned DD channels which were having a monopoly in TV world. The competitive atmosphere created by the advent of new media technology has initiated debate both in academic and political circles about the impact of these channels of foreign origin, bold in their contents and highly professional in production and style of presentation (Singh 1995; Singh 2002). Some of the media experts called it as 'Cultural Invasion from Sky'. It also faced a severe criticism from the leadership of some political parties. But last one decade witnessed some important changes in the field of this media. Thus globalization of television in India is an important process in reinforcing the processes associated with globalization in India.

Thirdly, advent of mobile and cell phone in recent past enhanced the process of globalization, privatization and liberalization in India. The popularity of mobile phone in Indian middle class is one of the pre-requisites of globalization process.

Fourthly, the Internet, which was initially computer mediated communication technology, has now revolutionized the world of communication. The availability of Internet on mobile is a new development in the field of communication. The popularity of E-mail, Internet chatting and use of Internet for educational and commercial purposes has opened a new era of communication in Indian society.

In the initial years, Internet in India was meant for only the educational and research communities, which was established almost 10 years ago, as ERNET. On August 15th 1995, Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) launched the Gateway Internet Access Service (GIAS) for the first time on commercial basis in the country. VSNL has setup 6 nodes that were established at Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Calcutta, Bangalore and Pune. VSNL has got other access nodes at Ernakulam, Keonics and Cochin. VSNL has also launched Internet services at Lucknow, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Chandigarh, Dheradun, Jaipur and Guwahati. At present, the number of Internet users in India is touching 4 million and is expected to double every year for the next four years. According to a McKinsey-NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) survey conducted in mid-2000, India will have an estimated 23 million online by 2005. This could mean 100 million Internet users by 2008. These changes in the field of information and communication technologies in India have important bearings on different social processes in Indian society.

All these changes in economic and communication technology are the part of the wider process of globalization. This gives rise to some theoretical questions which have yet to be addressed by



the social scientists in India. What are the possible consequences of these changes in the field of economy and communication for social and cultural processes in India? Whether these changes will enhance the process of development in India or will lead towards the further underdevelopment of Indian society. Although, it is too early to examine the consequences of these changes but sociological insights into these processes can enable us in understanding the direction of the social and cultural changes in Indian society in coming years. In the remaining part of the paper an attempt is made to focus on some of these issues.

At the economic level, the debate is on two major issues: firstly, about the consequences of the globalization for the various sectors of the economy particularly for the primary sector (agriculture) of the economy. The Marxist scholars have raised doubts that rapid transformation of the economy will affect the agriculture and peasantry in a negative manner and the gulf between the rich and the poor both in the rural and urban areas will be widen. Therefore, they suggests to check these changes. But the process of globalization is irrevokable and it is very difficult if not impossible for the state to resist against the forces of globalization. What is in fact needed is to make necessary adjustment in the institutional structure of the society rather than to oppose these changes. The globalization can open new avenues for the developing economy like India. The growth of IT sector is one of the vital example of the success story. Bio-technology may be another sector in which India can do better. The application of new Information and Communication technologies such as Internet and mobiles can also facilitate the process of rural development in India (Jain 2003a , Jain 2003b, Singh 2004, Singh and Roopa Rani 2004).

At the political level, the power of the state will be diminished. The political leadership will be less effective and it will weaken the authority of the state. NGOs and private sector institutions have to play a major role in socio-political processs. The ethnic crisis and sub-nationalism will increase.

In the religious sphere, the communalism and fundamentalism may increase as the new communication technologies can also be used by these forces to spread the partition values and the effect of the events may be tremendously multiplied by these new media technologies. As a result public opinion on certain issues may be shaped by the media more effectively. It is now evident that during the Kandhar Crisis, Kargil War the media played a very effective role in shaping the public opinion. However, during the Gujrat's Communal riots media facilitated both for the spreading of the communal incidents in variouys parts of the state at a faster rate as well as the condemning of the lathery of the state machinary in controlling the riots.

In the field of education, the globalization with its associated processes of communication technologies have great potential to transform the structure and functioning of the educational institutions at every level right from the primary to higher and professional levels. The new communication technologies have opened the new avenues of e-learning for the students, teachers and researchers. It is also affecting the print media and publication industry in various ways. The growth of Private Universities and Foreign Universities may pose a great challange to the Central and State funded educational institutions and universities where the quality of the education has been deteriorated in last few decades.

The employment opportunities which have to be generated as a result of globalization, privatization and liberalization will demand highly qualified professionals. The demand for the reservation of jobs in private sector and unwillingness of the private sector agencies to oblige the state is an indication of the weakening of the state in discharging the duty of a welfare state. Thus, the globalization will marginalize the weaker sections and inefficient sections of the society in coming years. But, on the other hand if handled with care it can bring a good fortune for the developing societies and facilitate the fast growth of the economy and other institutions of the society by setting a new path of development.

*Note: The first draft of the present paper was presented in a session of RC14 on 'Culture and Communication' at XXVIII All India Sociological Conference held at Kanpur in Dec.2002.*

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## Knowledge as Power

Rajesh Misra

Most of the traditional reflections on power originated with Francis Bacon who said, “Knowledge is Power”, most of the radical views on power began with Karl Marx (1967) who proclaimed, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”, and most of postmodernist thinking on power commenced with Michel Foucault (1973) who thought, “the production of knowledge and the exercise of administrative power intertwine, and each begins to enhance the other.” Nevertheless, all of them articulate sociology of the interplay between knowledge and power with their evident philosophical standpoints. In this presentation the sociological aspects are being highlighted.

The interlock between knowledge and power has been a widespread feature of all known societies. Our own society is well-known for the dominance by a knowledge wielding producing group/caste over all spheres social life for a long period in our history. In modern times also the Creation, dissemination and application of scientific knowledge, technical expertise, administrative proficiency, managerial acumen and computer skill have assumed tremendous significance in all types of societies. This has been influencing and altering power dynamics in many ways, two are of much significance. Firstly, there is rise and growth of a new class of knowledge producers, wielders and functionaries, and secondly there is a reciprocal, mutually reinforcing relation between the circulation of knowledge and subsequently the control of conduct. In this situation all aspects of modern social life come to be a network of knowledge/power relations. This calls for both - a sociological analysis and a philosophical reflection.

The relationship between knowledge and power has been examined from a variety of perspectives. The Neo-Marxists and the postmodernists have dealt with this problem more effectively. Here is an attempt to explicate relative efficacy of these two positions to analyze the dynamics of today’s society.

In sociology usually power is defined as the capacity/probability existing within a social relationship to impose one’s will on others, even if others resist in some way. It is a chance of a man, or a number of men to realize their own will in communal/group action, even against the

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resistance of others. The basis from which such power can be exercised may vary considerably according to the social context, that is, historical and structural circumstance.

Marx affirms a necessary connection between the material conditions of existence and the content of individual cognition including knowledge. Political relations, processes and institutions form a superstructure, and are primarily contingent upon actions and structures in the economic sphere, though able to effect change within it. This can be seen in Marx's argument that: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class, which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class, which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.

Though not an economic determinist, Antonio Gramsci provides a meaningful modern extension of Marxist theory in his development of hegemony. Hegemony, as "cultural leadership exercised by the ruling class," is internalized by the general population, permeating the entirety of consciousness and knowledge. Acting as a mechanism of ideological control, hegemony allows for the ruling class to guide the praxis of the proletariat without directly intervening in personal affairs. The production and dissemination of knowledge and ideas facilitate in creating consent. In this way, the existing social order is affirmed in a manner that appears to be natural and transcendent of institutions. As a result, hegemony provides a vehicle for the constant assimilation of change and necessity in culture, appropriating the discourse of social movement while promoting the agenda of the dominant group. In the Marxist tradition, the role of cultural hegemony in ideology as a means of bolstering the power of capitalism and of the nation-state is emphasized. Power is seen as ascendancy exercised, in a direct or indirect manner, through the ideological (knowledge) apparatus and repressive state apparatus keeping the proletariat in their place.

When the production of knowledge and its application become the foremost and significant condition of the political economy, the new class consisting of the producers, circulators and functionaries start wielding power. There emerges a new tie between knowledge and power. This has been explained by the neo-Marxists as 'the control from the middle' or 'the managerial revolution', i.e. there is power shift from the capitalist class to the new middle class. It is mainly due to the fact that the production of theoretical knowledge becomes indispensable to the post industrial societies. It is argued if the factory has been 'the epitome of the industrial society, as the main source of the production of commodities', the university as the axis of knowledge production has become the focal point of the post industrial society.

In the Marxist perspective knowledge (scientific and technological) has been considered an aspect of the forces of production as well as a part of ideology, an apparatus of class domination. Moreover, Marx has also dwelt with revolutionary power of the proletariat class. In this reference he discusses at length the growth and production of revolutionary knowledge and ideology. Thus he identifies two fold role of knowledge in power dynamics – ruling and revolutionary.

Employing Nietzsche's perspectivist approach, Foucault argues for the existence of a multiplicity of theoretical standpoints and the need for micro theory rather than holistic macro theory of power. He considers power as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization. It is not a thing/capacity that is held and used by individuals or groups. Rather, it is complex flow and a set of relations between different groups of society which changes with circumstances and time. Power is not an institution, and not a structure, neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with, it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. It is a process which, through ceaseless struggle and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or even reverses them. It can be a set of the strategies whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, and in the various social hegemonies. Thus, power must not be sought in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate. It is local and unstable. "Power is everywhere not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere."

Much of what Foucault has to say about power stresses the systemic nature of power and its presence in multiple social relations. At the same time, however, his stress on heterogeneity (differing forms) and the specificity of each situation leads him to lose track of social structures and instead to focus on how individuals experience and exercise power. Individuals, he argues, circulate among the threads of power. They "are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power." It is not appropriate to see power as an attribute single individual dominating others or as one group or class dominating others, as has been the case with the Marxist tradition. Foucault frequently uses language that argues that power "pervades the entire social body" or is "omnipresent."

Knowledge, for Foucault, made up of ideas, beliefs, narratives, commentaries, perspectives, rules, laws, terms, definitions and explanations produced and valorized by disciplines, fields and institutions through the application of scientific principles. Different and new knowledge keeps on emerging from the struggles between different areas/spheres within a culture. Knowledge is something that makes us its subjects, as we make sense of ourselves by referring back to various bodies of knowledge.

Foucault's works analyze the link between power and knowledge. He outlines a form of covert power that works through people rather than only on them. Foucault claims belief systems gain momentum (and hence power) as more people come to accept the particular views associated with that belief system as "common knowledge". Such belief systems define their figures of authority, such as medical doctors or priests in a church. Within such a belief system or discourse, ideas crystallize as to what is "right" and what is "wrong", what is "normal" and what is "deviant". Within a particular belief system certain views, thoughts or actions become unthinkable. These ideas, being considered undeniable "truths", come to define a particular way of seeing the world, and the particular way of life associated with such "truths" becomes normalized.

For Foucault to unfold the relationship between knowledge and power it is important to know the way in which people make sense of their world which depends on an order of reason and

episteme – periods of history organized around and explicable in terms of world-views and discourses. Knowledge and truth are not essential and ahistorical, but are produced by epistemes and, at the same time, hold that episteme together. This means that knowledge and truth are tied up with the way in which power is exercised in our age, for instance, governments use the human sciences to help frame laws and policies. Moreover, the need for an administrative apparatus has led to different policing institution – not only concerned with, the need for an administrative apparatus has led to different policing institution – not only concerned with criminal activity but also with health, education and welfare, and has taken their theories and knowledge from human sciences.

In this context Foucault explains the discipline in two senses: one is tied to punishment i.e. an action, and second is related to a body of skills and knowledge i.e. thought. Foucault stresses that such discipline is not simply imposed from above. Rather, people submit themselves to be able to operate within institutions. That is how discipline contributes to producing docile normal and healthy bodies that can be utilized in work and regulated in terms of time and space.

These two positions on conceptualizing knowledge as power deal with two different aspects – macro and micro. Marxist view is manifestly tied to revolutionary ideology and practice, while Foucault's ideas are post modernist and implicitly nihilist, nevertheless, provide a pluralist critique of knowledge as power. Both the views can be considered complimentary as far as the nature of domination in post industrial/post modern society is considered.

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## **Changing Patterns of Health Culture in Rural Society**

**N.R. Kahlon**

India, being an agricultural country, is a land of villages. There are Nearly 5, 96, 000 villages in India which are scattered over larger areas as compare to urban areas. Thus, it will not be wrong to say, that Indian Society has its roots in villages and in the rural people. Culture as an environment is deeply related with the health of human beings. Human culture everywhere includes patterns of social organisation, designed to regulate a particular Society, the members can understand the behavior of most of the people, and they predict how an individual will react in a given situation (Hassan : 1967).

The domain of health and illness is full of contrasts. Each Society has evolved its own mechanism, to cope with the problems of health and illness and in which always has been defined (Morris: 1973). Every Society experiences illness and Prescribes treatment compatible with its own social and cultural background. Illness is viewed as a departure from normalcy over which one does not have any control, but the response to which is governed by societal values and customs. There is a growing feeling that illness and its treatment are biological as well as social phenomena (Kakar: 1977). This explains the different perceptions, interpretations and modes of Treatment of the some disease in societies with different socio-cultural background. So, is the case with the varied effects on individual family, society and economy commensurate with the intensity, duration and severity?

By and large, the history of medicine has shown, that three types of medical systems are practiced till today. On the one hand, is “Primitive medicine” i.e. medicine of the Primitive tribes. It has its basis in the magico-relligious theory of disease. Causation and the relief are sought through supernatural forces (Ackerknecht: 1942). On the other hand, is the scientific medicine of the technologically advanced people where natural causes of disease are recognized and the methods of diagnosis and treatment are rational? In between two systems, is the medicine of villages folk where physical causes of sickness are recognised along with supernatural causes. It involves both supernatural and physical therapy and is found to exist side by side. This method is known as “Folk medicine”. It is a strange mixture of true primitive traits with degenerate high cultural elements.

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Charles Leslie, who has been working on the Asian systems of medicine, has said that two types of health cultures are existing today: professional health culture (Refers to cosmopolitan scientific medicine) and the popular health culture (it embraces the health values, knowledge, roles and practices of specialist in Folk medicine) (1967). Folk medicine is held in high esteem in the villages.

Cultures are never static and unchanging. One generation is usually different from the next in the same human group. But cultures do not change at the same rate. Changes in one culture may be noticed as an effect of either one or both of the forces. Introduction of the allopathic system of medicine in the rural communities is the example of planned changes. Healing practices as well as ideas regarding the etiology of disease very considerably. Besides professional health culture, popular health culture (local deities, exorcists, ojhas, shanas or priests etc.) often play an important role during illness, they control, treatment and prevention in rural societies.

Popular health culture (Leslie 1967) is the oldest one. This is a traditional medical system regarding medicines and health. It doesn't mean that this is only a heap of different beliefs but these are related magnificent traditional worldviews. With the help of which man determines different relations and inter-relations between man and nature. Under Folk medicine, medicine is largely mixed with theology and has Magico-religious nature to begin with. Diseases are recognised as capable of treatment both by exorcism, spirit medium (Puchhan-denewale), Fatalism, work system, herbalists or jari booti wale and on the other hand a huge treasure of knowledge about indigenous system medicine. Beliefs regarding popular health culture influenced people's behavior in rural Punjab most strongly (Kakar: 1977). In indigenous system of medicine, roots, stamps, flora and fauna are used in the treatment in minor ailments. These are the cultural heritage of every rural family.

The principle emphasis of ancient Indian medicines appears to have changed many times. Besides indigenous system of medicine (primitive medicine), Ayurvedic medical theology has also played a significant role. Ayurvedic medical theories came into existence and developed during Vedic period about 3500 years ago. In the development of ayurvedic medical theories, a great deal of help was taken from religion and philosophy to integrate empiricism with thought. Later, Muslim invaders introduced their own 'unani' medical system in India. At last, allopathic (modern) medicine came to India with the country's colonization; a lot of modern medicines were accepted without much criticism (Bannerji, D.: 1986). Due to urbanization and industrialization modern medical system is expanding. This is (Expansion of modern medical facilities) an important organ of modernization and effects.

Traditional ways regarding sickness and health. Our sociologists have given little attention to the socio-cultural perspectives of health and health care. (Taylor: 1963). Modern health care system has influenced the life pattern of people (Zola, 1972). Now medical sociologists have realized the importance of socio-cultural factors in the emergence of disease and health care.

So, the study of health culture of rural society gives us important information about Indian and foreign aspects of medicalisation, and is helpful for telling us about medical and health care facilities in the rural areas.

### ***Methodology***

Health culture has very wide concept and it is not easy to discuss all its aspects. In order to study the changing patterns of health culture in rural areas, an effort has been made to concentrate on the etiology of disease, efforts for curing, following of magico-religious systems and some traditional suppositions of rural people. The universe of the study is focal point village of Gurdaspur district in the state of Punjab. Purposive random sampling technique has been used. List of households were obtained from the Block Development Panchayat Officer. Out of that list, after determining the first number through lottery method, every sixth community member on the list was selected for the interview purposes, by following systematic random Sampling technique. The sample came out to be hundred community members. Socio-economic status and education are two important factors of social change in rural society. Therefore, an attempt has been made to study the changing the patterns of health culture in rural society in light of two important factors: socio-economic status and education.

### ***General Causes of Disease***

There is different important perception in different communities and societies. The sickness and ways followed to get remedies are based on the perception of human being has made in his mind and society about the existence development of disease. In the field of sociology of health, the study of social epidemiology of the disease is very important to study the ways followed to destruct disease. Modern education, development of medical science, urbanization, modernization, westernization and especially development of modern medical science has influenced the traditional system of Indian culture. So these factors have influenced sickness and curing. With the study of Indian rural society sickness and its causes, the evaluation and perception of socio-cultural changed in this society can be of major help. The data related to the causes of sickness are shown in Table 1. The data indicate that the respondents of the present study have reported four main causes of disease. The majority of respondents (46.66) considered lack of Nutritious diet, as the total belief is the general cause of sickness. Whereas, more than 60% totally believed that it is only after entrance of microbes in the body one gets sick. More than tow third of respondents attributed total belief of sickness to “evil eye” or “evil mouth”, a belief that is widely prevalent regarding the causation of many diseases.

They considered it as a consequence of someone’s envy. Spoones (1970) notes how well known the “evil eye” belief is to us all. He said, “..... the concept of the ‘evil eye’ is reported throughout Europe, middle east, and north Africa, and so many cultures elsewhere that it may be regarded as a universal phenomenon. Further, it is reported in circumstances, which show it be undoubtedly of the same order of phenomena as witchcraft’. While Foster (1972) in his careful

**Table: 1 – Extent of Respondents’ beliefs regarding the causes of disease.**

S.No.	General Causes of Sickness	Extent of Beliefs			
		Total Belief	Partial Belief	No Belief	Total
1.	Lack of nutritious Diet	14 (46.66)	3 (10.00)	13 (43.33)	30 (100.00)
2.	Entering of microbes in body	16 (61.53)	2 (11.53)	8 (30.76)	26 (100.00)
3.	Sins or bad deeds in previous & present life	12 (57.14)	2 (9.52)	7 (33.33)	21 (100.00 )
4.	Evil Eye	16 (69.56)	3 (13.04)	4 (17.39)	23 (100.00)
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b> <b>(58.00)</b>	<b>10</b> <b>(10.00)</b>	<b>32</b> <b>(32.00)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Figures given in parenthesis represent percentages.

analysis of envy, defines as ‘the act of looking maliciously upon someone: looking askance at; casting on evil eye upon; feeling displeasure and or/ill-will in relation to the superiority of another person’. He states that envy, along with the closely associated feeling of jealousy, “involves a dyad .....whose relationship is mediated, or structured by an intervening property or object’. “Thus a jealous person is always jealous of what he possesses and fears he might lose, while an envious person does not envy the thing, rather envies the person who has it. More than fifty percent respondents totally believed sickness to be the result of sins or bad deeds. If one is guilty of these either in the present life or in the previous life then one suffers from sickness, the degree of which depends upon number of sins committed. Sinful acts not only brings sickness upon oneself but also on the members of the family or the community.

The first two cause of sickness, viz. lack of notorious diet, and entering of evil eye and sins or bad deeds of previous or present life are the social causes or the central perception of socio-cultural society.

So under the influence of development of modern medical science of the one hand and rural society beliefs in microbes has spread, but people still believe in theory of Karma, disease is often regarded as a punishment for one’s deeds in previous birth. Sickness to villagers is as much mental as a physical crisis, that is, in their conception; the roots of illness extend in to realm of human conduct and cosmic purpose. The first two causes are because of modern medical science influences, but other two are still influences of traditionalism. These two are deep rooted. The data has also shown that modern medical science has entered in rural society as 61.53 percent respondents totally believed in microbes, but this has not been accepted as it is Modern medical

science believes that these microbes are so micro, that we cannot see them with naked eye, but villagers stated that they see them as worms of small size, as from the early childhood everybody see in his secretion worms like thread and round worms and similarly from the wounds of Animals, some magatus like worms. So villagers have taken them as microbe as medical science tells.

### ***Folk Medical Systems***

As respondents have accepted the microbe system, it can be said that they have accepted the modern interpretation of sickness and now they won't believe in traditional ways. But the case is not so, there are still some respondents who believe in 'evil eye' and sins etc. Besides believing in the scientific causes of sickness, respondents are found consulting indigenous practitioners or traditional faith healers for diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Table 2 shows that magico religious activities are still prevalents and they being used as easily as other medical techniques. So with the belief and development of modern medicalisation it dose not mean that now they are not using traditional ways but they have expanded their knowledge. The respondents irrespective of their socioeconomic status are using techniques of Folk medicine. The data indicates that believers and non-believers of medical system and traditional systems are walking side by side.

**Table:2:- Family socio-economic status index of respondents and Folk medicine techniques. (N=100)**

Technique of Low	Family Socio-economic Status Index			No. of	Folk Medicine
	Medium	High	Respondents*		
Magic	34 (94.44)	45 (90.00)	(78.57)	11	90
Exorcism	35 (97.22)	50 (100.00)	12 (85.71)		97
Hath-Hola (Faith healing)	36 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	13 (92.85)		99
Others	33 (91.66)	47 (94.00)		3 (21.42)	83

• **Multiple responses.**

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### ***Concept of Prevention and Cure***

Positive health should emphasize on preventive and promotive rather than on the curative aspects of health. Prevention medicine means to take medicine and follow the instructions of the doctors and also rules and norms of the nature, region, spiritualism and materialism. This has a important role to play in the emergence of the sickness and its destruction and these can be found

in whole society. Under preventions comes non-uses of some eatables, limitation of eating something, control over sexual deeds, cleanliness etc. many diseases are consider to exist due to non following of the prevention, but modern medical science has limited belief in it. Modern medical science is more cure oriented than the prevention oriented. Rural society respondents to which system is shown in table 3.

**Table: 3 – Comparative account of prevention and cure and respondents educational level.**

Imp Factors	Level of Education				Total	
	Illiterate	Middle	Matric	Graduate		
Cure	6 (18.75)		4 (12.05)	9 (28.12)	13 (40.62)	32
Prevention	29 (42.64)	22 (26.47)	18 (16.17)	11 (14.70)	10	68
	35	22		20	23	100
	(35.00)	(22.00)	(20.00)	(23.00)		

(Figures given in parenthesis represent percentages)

$\chi^2 = 13.35, df . 3, p>0.05$

As many as sixty eight percent respondents believed in prevention and thirty two percent believed in cure. A surprising effect emerged after making comparison between these two factors. Majority of illiterates (42.64) found believing more in prevention and less in medication. The chi-square value has shown a significant relationship between respondents’ educational level and prevention and cure factors of sickness.

**Conclusion**

The above study directs one to believe that health is as much a socio-cultural phenomenon as it’s a biological explanation. Religion values such as deeds in the past and present, attributing diseases to sins committed by people and treatment sought through magico-religious practices along with modern medicine as indicators of the influence of our traditions and cultural life. The process of change health culture has its important place in rural society. Modernization and modern medical science has influenced this change, but these changes are not revolutionary changes, where traditional walls of the beliefs collapse. Through villagers are believing in modern medical systems but at the same time but they are leaving their tradition Folk medical system. They are giving their own interpretation to modern medical system. There is no doubt that villagers look forward to modern medicine for relief from pain, sufferings for physical ailments, but the limitations of the medical sciences to prevent death still instills in the mind of the people an inclination towards faith healing. In way, they are modernizing their traditional beliefs, and at the same time, a case for, and against modern medicalization is also going side by side in rural society.

It is a matter of thought that villagers still have co-ordination between modern Folk medical systems, when a country is entering in 21<sup>st</sup> century. They stay lend spot to the physician’s efforts or skills to care or cure the patient, with their prayers and propitiation of God and Goddesses. In

other words, this mix of scientific temper and faith healing in medicine needs to be understood in the context and situation in which it operates. Besides, modern medicalization should accommodate the culturally based indigenous system of health care and synthesis of these, perhaps, may be better saviour of mankind than anyone system alone. Again, this would suggest a new cultural conception of health.

**Note:** *Family Socio-economic status index has been made by computing respondents 'own and their spouses' Educational level, Occupational level and Per-annum family income and are grouped in stratified order. The average score comes out to be 7.5, which has been taken as central cut off point and the lower and the higher groups are built up by equal interval scores on both sides. Broadly, the Socioeconomic grouping of the respondents has been stratified in 3 vertical groups: Group I and III represent the lower and higher family socio-economic status index respectively. These relative status of the respondents are indicative of the differential socio-economic status for the comparative Purposes.*

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## **Development with Social Justice Search for Alternative Strategy**

**R.D. Singh**

In post-independence period, the democratic institutions-legal, political and developmental-were initiated to achieve development with social justice. The new constitution was framed and the parliament (political process) and Planning Commission were constituted to initiate developmental planning and process in India. Despite the cherished goal of Five-year plans for achieving socialistic pattern of society the social conditions which have emerged deny the political, legal, economic and social opportunities as well as the accessibility to these opportunities to more and more people. A large number of people have become poor and more oppression is committed on vulnerable social groups (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, women, children, labour, and the poor). The rate, magnitude and dimension of social injustice have increased both in time and space, in quantity and quality. Where have we failed? What has gone wrong in the process of achieving the so-called socialistic pattern of society? Are some of the issues which need to be probed seriously and the strategy of development with and for social justice has to be reframed to move in the desired direction for achieving faster development.

Development may be defined as the qualitatively progressive increments of social, economic, institutional benefits so as to achieve quality, security, opportunities and accessibility to the larger sections of society. This is holistic and balanced approach of development.

The legal meaning of social justice is for security or protection of an individual against oppression under the law laid down in the constitution of a society. By this, social justice is both a condition and a process whereby objectives of equality (social, economic, political) and freedom (of speech, work, or economic well being) are attempted to be achieved.

Social justice tries to provide institutional condition whereby equality-social, economic, legal and political- is progressively achieved with qualitative changes in society . Hence, development and social justice are rather complementary and directed to the same goal rather than contradictory.

The planning goals were misspecified at objective levels or the level of setting development strategy through planning. The partial approaches under misspecified priorities created social

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imbalances and contradictions in the society. Heavy reliance on industrialization through public sector and large investment under the conditions of mass poverty, feudal social structure and socio-economic backwardness, high population growth rate and diverse socio-cultural conditions have created a complex (new) set of problems which seems to be insurmountable. There is a tiny modern sector with very huge capital investment, on the one hand, and a vast traditional sector on which very huge urban and rural sector depends, on the other. The flow of capital is from the traditional sector to the modern sector, though price or market mechanism is totally imperfect and inelastic. A vicious circle of cumulative causation is working between the so-called modern sector and the vast traditional and marginal sector. This sea-wide gap seems to be insurmountable with the built-in structural (economic, social and institutional) rigidities which have confused, misdirected, perpetuating the unrealistic development strategy.

The social structure and change has been totally ignored at the strategy and implementation levels, which have, therefore, remained only a political will. There is virtually a population explosion, but the structure based on caste-class and status hierarchy manifesting feudal and semi-feudal characteristics is hardly changing. The contemporary political and economic ideologies of capitalism and socialism were infused to create the mixed economic system without considering the inherent social and economic fabric. Though the new institutions were implanted from above these didn't mobilise the very huge proportion of population that got mobilized during the freedom movement and the Khadi and indigenous movement. M.N. Roy's model of development based on people's participation and the Gandhian model of developing basic education and skill for large traditional sectors and population have been the case of failures. Though much time has elapsed and opportunities missed, the felt realization for people's participation and creating basic education for skill generation still seems relevant for achieving the desired economic development. This would involve decentralized planning and development strategies by involving the people by developing their skill in the process of restructuring the traditional sector on desired objectives. The following hypothesis has been put forward for testing:

- (1) The development strategy did not take into consideration the social structure in the development planning and programmes.
- (2) The development strategy has weakened the horizontal social and economic linkages and resulted into conflicts among the centralized sectoral and sectional organizations.
- (3) The development strategy has led to regressive impact on the process of development itself by creating structural imbalances in society.

### **Social Structure versus Development Strategy**

Indian society is organized in a hierarchical manner on rigidly and differentiated caste/class social strata, impermeable to one another, whereby the dominant caste/class has the control over decision making and factors of production. Though attempts were made through political process to change the hierarchy during freedom movement, not much could be achieved because of high economic dependence of the lower caste/class on the upper classes. During post independence period, various welfare programmes were initiated particularly for Scheduled Castes



and Scheduled Tribes by providing political representation, free education and job reservation in organized public sector. This could marginally impact occupational mobility in small segment of the lower caste population, which has been highly resented by the upper classes. The vulnerability of lower social strata because of the economic bondage and helplessness belies freedom, security and protection for them. In fact, the social structure is inflicted with the increasing social distance between different castes/classes.

The modernization taking place through industrialization and urbanization has not very much affected, except for the occupational change, their living conditions. The push and pull theory indicates a deteriorating condition of the migrant rural labour in marginal occupations and unorganized sector, which is not much different from that in the agricultural sector as the urban poverty is the result of the distributed rural poor. The studies on the migrant labour force largely of the population of the lower social strata suggest some improvement in wage conditions but also deterioration in other social conditions like living standard and social security conditions. Dandekar and Rath (1970: 44) observed that the condition of the bottom 20 percent of the rural poor has remained more or less stagnant; the condition of the bottom 20 percent of the urban poor has definitely deteriorated and that of another 20 percent of the urban population has remained more or less stagnant. The large capital intensive industrialization strategy has failed to impact development and structural changes in Indian economy. The metropolitan industrial economy is parasitic rather than generative. In a study on Calcutta metropolis along with Durgapur-Asansol area, Dr. A.N. Bose (1971) observes: "The Calcutta metropolis along with Durgapur-Asansol area has been able to put up indisproportionately large share of national savings and surplus, but almost no part of this investment was oriented towards developing our agriculture or our rural areas, and this industry, despite huge investment, is now in crisis." The relationship of population with development, quite alarming, virtually shows population explosion during last four decades. The accelerating rate of population growth, the slow economic growth and the consequent structural stagnation of economy calls for a deeper understanding of the role of industrialization in a country like India. The inability of urban-industrial sector to absorb the surplus labour from rural area and the stagnation of rural economy has bottled up socially and economically deprived population in increasing slums and rural areas. The social mobility particularly in the lower strata is questioned and the increasing poverty and tension is leading to widespread conflicts in the society.

To what extent the structural stagnation of Indian economy and society is the product of continuation of deep-rooted historical forces and/or the consequence of general failure in economic and social planning is a debatable point. The partial outlook of development in the heavy industrialization and urbanization has ignored the social reality in terms of its totality. Here, the ideas of Gandhi and Ambedkar seem more relevant. According to B.N. Ganguli (1973: 187), "Gandhi's views of urbanization have been widely misunderstood in India as elsewhere, Gandhi looked upon urbanization as an evil insofar as it was based upon the exploitation of the countryside and was totally divorced from the rural way of life rooted in nature. To quote Gandhi "I regard the growth of the cities as an evil thing, unfortunate for mankind and the world, unfortunate for England and certainly unfortunate for India. The British have exploited India through its cities. The latter have exploited the villages. The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is inflating the arteries of the cities to run once

again in the blood vessels of the villages. I don't want to depopulate the cities and send the city folk back to the villages. All I want is that they should readjust their lives so as to cease to sponge upon the poor village folk and make to the latter what reparation is possible, even at this later hour, by helping to resuscitate their ruined economy".

The vulnerability of women, children, illiterates, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and vast deprived in populations can be understood in the slowing down rate of employment opportunities and growing stock of unemployed persons to add to the misery. A social and income accessibility of the socially deprived section is questioned in view of the increasing rural and urban poverty particularly in the vulnerable sections of society. This supports the views of Gandhi and Gunnar Myrdal (1964) about the "vicious circle and cumulative causation" in the Indian society and economy. Unless this vicious circle is broken by a big push it is difficult to attain development.

The vertical organization of economy is being politicized on the caste and community lines. Indian social and cultural structure is seemingly ridden with the inter-caste and inter-cultural conflicts in many parts of the country which is counterproductive to development. However, there does not seem to be any sizable impact on the development strategy and police and military are used to find solutions to these socio-economic problems.

**Table 1 : Statewise Percentage of Person below the Poverty Line**

S.No.	States	1960-61	1970-71	1972-73	1977-78
1.	Andhra Pradesh	47.40	47.85	54.92	42.19
2.	Assam	13.80	32.95	46.90	51.10
3.	Bihar	37.60	54.06	54.58	57.49
4.	Gujrat	25.00	44.88	48.18	39.04
5.	Haryana	13.60	32.24	23.03	24.84
6.	J. & K.	-	-	39.03	34.06
7.	Karnataka	34.20	49.44	50.70	48.34
8.	Kerala	56.70	62.25	56.79	46.95
9.	M.P.	47.20	57.50	58.57	57.73
10.	Maharashtra	40.10	43.99	47.68	47.71
11.	Orissa	68.90	67.50	68.58	66.40
12.	Punjab	13.60	21.62	21.55	15.13
13.	Rahasthan	33.50	43.50	46.00	33.76
14.	Tamilnadu	46.50	60.71	59.44	52.12
15.	Uttar Pradesh	39.52	50.38	52.76	50.09
16.	West Bengal	22.10	62.28	56.90	52.54

(Source : Adapted from K.C. Shingal and H. S. Gill & H. S. Gill "Adapted Percapita Income and Per worker sectoral Income", *I. J. R. S.* Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1991, Table 1, page 5.)

### **Development and Social Condition**

The development strategy based on modern capital goods industries than people's employment, based on higher education than mass education and urban biased and elite oriented

than population centred has virtually broken the horizontal social relations. Villagers are divided on party lines without any social and economic direction. Those rural elites who could relate to the ruling power structure in the hierarchy could benefit and take the lion's share of development investment. The exploitative vertical power structure has spoiled the social and economic relations at the village level to further divide the population politically and economically. The evidence of differentiated caste conflicts in different regions is the testimony of society getting horizontally divided on ethnic, caste, class, religious, economic, political, professional, community and regional lines. The process of social differentiation and centralization of power are contradictory to development process trapped in the circle and cumulative causation process. On a larger scale, this problem reflects regional conflicts, communal disharmony and polarization of caste, creed, religion, ethnic group conflicts with each other.

So long as the problems of increasing and perpetuating poverty, unemployment and mass illiteracy persists, the solutions to these ethnic and belief centered conflicts would persist and despite the constitutional and development goals, the problems would persist, because of broken channels of communication and conflicting and differentiating social valuation.

The planning yet remains sectoral, centralized and directed from top to down without organic, functional and social linkages of need and demand. The hue and cry for decentralization of power, planning and development is negated by more centralisation. The larger illiterate society is befooled before every election. In the midst of gathering momentum of centralisation and decentralisation forces generated within the vicious circle, the conflicts are developing into alienation and disintegration of masses.

The strategy of planning is such that projects and programmes are against the social and economic interests of the people in the local and regional economy which horizontally integrate the people. This threatens the natural and social ecosystem in many parts of the country. Large scale deforestation, mining and large dams constructed in backward areas for industrial interest of urban economy have endangered sensitive ecosystem of Himalayan region, other forests, tribal regions and backward regions.

### **Development and Social Inequality**

Unbalanced growth strategy based on Mahalanobis model still persists on, which hankers on technology transfer, modernization through heavy industrialization. However, this concept has already been disapproved empirically and on the basis of theoretical premises developed in numerous studies in seventies and eighties. Vicious circle and cumulative causation of underdevelopment, dependency theory, and core-periphery theories have been proved true in the midst of existing social situations. Furthermore, the situation seems to be more alarming in view of a very high population growth and low levels of economic and social development. The series of studies by Hicks (1971) Minhas (1971), Dandekar and Rath (1970) concluded a situation of increasing poverty and income inequalities in sixties and seventies, which is still persisting because of the failure of family planning efforts, the failure to achieve the laid down objectives of full literacy, institutional and social rigidities and on top of it misdirected planning and development strategies.

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5.	Haryana	13.60	32.24	23.03	24.84
6.	J. & K.	-	-	39.03	34.06
7.	Karnataka	34.20	49.44	50.70	48.34
8.	Kerala	56.70	62.25	56.79	46.95
9.	M.P.	47.20	57.50	58.57	57.73
10.	Maharashtra	40.10	43.99	47.68	47.71
11.	Orissa	68.90	67.50	68.58	66.40
12.	Punjab	13.60	21.62	21.55	15.13
13.	Rahasthan	33.50	43.50	46.00	33.76
14.	Tamilnadu	46.50	60.71	59.44	52.12
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Increasing poverty and widespread illiteracy is alienating and marginalizing more and more population in the development process and accessibility of these people to the created infrastructure is rather becoming difficult. There lies a vacuum between the large traditional sector and the modern capital intensive sector. Whereas the millions of illiterates are churning in unending poverty and social injustice, we are talking of keeping pace with the world technology. How to take these millions with us? what are the mechanism which can take up these millions to our 21st century romanticism of a new world order? Let us ponder how to restore our social order, national order and priorities.

### **Search of Aternative Strategies**

Let us summarise the foregoing analysis concretely as follows:

1. Development strategy which has created a modern sector based on foreign technology has become exploitative because of the lack of social conscientation of large masses.
2. The development strategy has been elite oriented, highly centralized in a nation of diverse cultural and social heritage, and the fruits of development have reached to selective few.
3. The development strategy didn't take into account the vast population resources and existing social structure while setting the objectives, priorities and programmes in last fifty years of planning.
4. The development process has increased social and income inequalities and more people have come down below poverty line and there does not seem any concerted effort to bring them up.

5. There is widening structural gap (both social and economic) between the vast traditional sector and the so called modern sector.

6. Process of development has differentiated and is differentiating the society on the basis of caste, class, creed, community, religion etc. and these are resulting into increasing incidence of conflicts, crimes and separatist tendencies.

7. Though there is increasing hue and cry for decentralization of power, planning and development, the centripetal forces are increasing in conflict.

8. The planning and development have been meaningless, unrealistic and mere hypocrisy because they have ceased to be based on the needs and aspirations of the people.

9. The injustice to vulnerable sections like women, children, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, backward areas has increased due to the structural break and conflicting social order and valuation.

In the light of the foregoing summary, one has to be very cautious to suggest new strategy. However, the new strategy must be power decentralizing, people oriented, around needs and aspirations of masses, holistic, horizontally and vertically linked. The immediate objective could be reorganize the traditional sector, generate more and more employment in intermediate sector, diversify traditional sector, hook up with or rather make modern sector more responsive to traditional sector. For doing so, some of the priorities could be listed.

1. Mass education could be taken as the first priority.

2. Creating labour intensive small and intermediate sector in different regions, areas and centers based on local skill and resources. Developing resources could be one of the priorities. In nutshell mass employment programme should be taken up.

3. Decentralization of planning through people's participation rather than the rigid public sector administrative mechanism.

4. Transfer of appropriate technology to vast intermediate and small sectors in different parts of the country.

5. More and more participation of vulnerable sections in the decision making as well as development process.

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## **Social Groups and Political Formation in Mixed Village Panchayats**

**Prahlad Mishra**

The aim of present paper is to understand the process of political formation in tribal region of India. Government of India through its statutory agency called Panchayati Raj (1955) encouraged different social groups of villages to interact and compete each other for sharing the attitudes of power of regional level. Panchayati Raj system (1994 ) is currently empowered with massive resources for rural development and directed to transfer it to the regions through the elected leaders as people's representative at Village, Janpad and District Levels. For state, Panchayati Raj System is an instrument for extension of bureaucracy at village level. It is meant to mobilize the members of little communities and to provide them political opportunity for participating in the electoral process of democratic India.

To understand the dynamics of politics at village level ; three consecutive elections of Panchayats have been focused upon. The process of co-operation and conflict found among contestants belonging to different tribal and non - tribal communities have been analyzed. Villages under studies are uniquely placed where Gond tribes are numerically pre-dominant followed by an another tribe called Baiga. Baigas are one among seven classified primitive tribes i.e. Ayujhmariya, Baiga, Bhariya, Birhor, Kamar, Pahari, Korwa and sahariya of Madhya Pradesh (INDIA). State and Central Government have made special provisions and established Pradhikarans for their socio-economic upliftment in society.

Observation on three elections held over a period of ten years of two mixed village Panchayats namely Jamuniya Panchayat and Udaipur Panchayat have been made. These Panchayats are consisted of two villages each. Jamuniya Panchayat includes Jamuniya and Dobhi village and Udaipur Panchayat includes Udaipur village and Baiga Tola. In Baiga Tola and in Dobhi village Baigas are pre dominant in numbers while in Jamuniya and Udaipur village Gonds are numerically predominant. Data gathered on elections of these two Panchayats reveal some interesting facts. First contestant belonging to Gond Community won the Sarpanch elections thrice in Jamuniya Panchayat while contestant belonging to Baiga Community won the Sarpanch elections twice in Udaipur Panchayat. Second, contestant of Baiga community in both the village Panchayats was short handed not only in respect of numerical strength, level of education, land ownership, political and administrative linkages with outer world but also lacking in other modern amenities considered essential for winning a successful election at village level.

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To find the rationale behind such results of the Sarpanch elections, are four villages were reinvestigated. Election results are given below.

#### Elections of Village Panchayats

S No.	Year	UdaipurBaiga	PanchayatGond	Jamuniya Baiga	PanchayatGond
1.	1995	+	-	-	+
2.	2000	-	+	-	+
3.	2005	+	-	-	+

Study of mixed village Panchayat is interesting and some time become complicated when a candidate of weaker community compete and wins the Panchayat election while a candidate of stronger community loses the race. How has it happened ? Traditional tribal Panchayat and to an extent community's history provide an explanation. First election (1995) of Udaipur Panchayat for Sarpanch post was open to all communities. Candidates belonging to General Castes, other Backward Castes, Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and Muslim Community were contesting the election. The result of election went in the favour of Baiga candidate. After the election when winner candidate of Baiga was approached he revealed some interesting facts that all communities of the region were divided. He approached the factional groups of Muslim community as well as Hindu Communities. Baiga Panchayat on the other hand had decided that all voters of Dobhi village have to vote in the favour of Gond candidate (Jamuniya Village) of Jamuniya Panchayat in lieu of Gond voters of Udaipur Village have to support the candidate of Baiga (Baiga Tola) in Udaipur Panchayat. This understanding became the crucial for winning the first election to Baiga Candidate.

The second election (2000) of Udaipur Panchayat for Sarpanch was reserved for women. Contestants belonging to different communities specially Gond and Baiga were opposing each other. Women candidate of Gond Community of Udaipur village won the sarpanch election while women candidate of Baiga community lost the election. When the loser candidate of Baiga community was approached her husband (an ex – Sarpanch of Udaipur) had pointed out that his own community had deceived him. The third election (2005) of Udaipur Panchayat for Sarpanch post was reserved for tribes. Constants belonging to Baiga community and Gond community were facing each other. The result are Sarpanch election was in the favour of Baiga candidate. Interesting enough ex - Sarpanch of Udaipur Panchayat (1995) was contesting and opposing his own cousin (father brother son). But cousin of ex – Sarpanch of Udaipur won the present election of Udaipur Panchayat. When present Sarpanch was approached he told that during the election Baiga tribal Panchayat was held and his candidature for Sarpanch post had been decided collectively.

To understand the scenario of election, regional history has attracted the attention. Once upon a time the total region of Mandla and Jabalpur was under the domain of Gond dynasty. During the Mugal period especially the time of Akbar, Gond king was over throne. Today Gonds are agriculturists and most of the land of Mandla district is under their possession. Baiga mainly the

Binjhawars settled in the region are an off spring of rural of Bilaigarh state (9<sup>th</sup> century) of Bilaspur (Chhatisgarh state). Now Baigas are recognized most backward tribe of this region. During the British period the region came under the control of British Government and was under the possession of local Zamindars i.e. Hindu and Muslim communities. Most of the Hindu Castes came in this regions during the British period and are owners of land and other local resources. Mandla district is still recognized as the region of Gond kingdom.

Survey of region reveals the fact that castes and tribes are having better understanding with each other. They make political alignments with different social groups to win the Panchayati Raj elections. On the local level domain of Gond tribe is challenged but still continue. While Baiga tribe makes alignment with Gond and castes groups depending on demand of situation. Competition and some time conflict during election period promote co-operation among different social groups that is sign of healthy living. Traditional castes and tribal Panchayats operating in the area are crucial in the integration of communities. It is further strengthened through the introduction of formal institutions called Panchayati Raj which provides opportunity for different social groups to elect their representatives at local regional (Janpad) and district levels apart from the general election held for representing the people representatives at State and Central levels.

From the above discussion it is clear that study of a little community i.e. hamlet or tola in political action is inter weave not only with its own tribal community but also is linked with castes and religious communities of the region. Internally it expresses its personality that is result of a long history of the community of which it is a part. Externally it projects its image in the broader society and in turn timely shapes itself according the demand of the situation of its surrounding.

Community studies are conceptually and methodologically very sound (Redfield, R.1956). Systematic description of a community provides massive information on human life. These can be used to develop common understanding on organismic system of the community as well as its dynamics due to the factors introduced externally. Impact of government policies and social change is a part of community studies as its approach is holistic which incorporates applied science to verify some of the facts of social life.

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## **The Shifting Paradigms in the Education of the Disabled**

**Ranjita Dawn**

Despite the evolution of consciousness of human rights the notion of disability being associated with the embodiment of sin in the family or of sin itself, the result of anger of gods etc is widely prevalent. It has been the normal tendency of laymen to view disability as a source of pity, charity and helplessness. In traditional societies the disgrace of giving birth to a disabled child was unanimous irrespective of the state, region or religion. The disabled have been stigmatized, marginalized and discriminated in almost all the societies (Karna, 1999, Hudson, 1988).

In numerous situations the disabled people have been 'objectified' by cultural impairments. They have been regarded as objects, on to which artists project particular emotions, or which are used to represent specific values or evils. Means of providing charities has been another medium of objectifying the disabled thereby highlighting on the ways of filling the gaps left by the unwillingness of statutory bodies to meet their obligations to disabled citizens. Epilepsy, restricted growth and sensory impairments together with the figures of the cripple and the leper are the common stock of cultural representations of disability having specific resonance and literary utility.

The treatment of the disabled was not similar in all societies. They varied from being outcasts through being attributed high social status primarily depending on the amount of economic surplus. Wall carvings on some of the Egyptian tomb depict blind harpists and singers. In European history the careers of court poets, entertainer, jester, circus performer and sideshow exhibition have been assigned to exceptional people. The Ancient Spartans considered the children to be a property of the state. Hence the newborn infants who were deformed were regarded as an indication of displeasure of the gods and were disposed. In Ancient Rome deformed children were drowned in the Tiber. In countries like Kenya there have been reports of families setting up their disadvantaged at street corners to appeal to public sympathy and provision for the survival of the people with visual impairment. They were referred to as wasiojiweja meaning those unable to take care of themselves (Kiarie, 2004).

With the coming in of the Eugenic movement the emphasis shifted to the hereditary nature of defects, which led to wholesale incarceration and segregation. Techniques of sterilization and wider use of birth control came into the forefront.

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During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the attitudes towards disability was reappraised as a result of increasing importance of labour power and the need to have better ways to segregate the disabled from those who did not wish to work. The disabled were increasingly subjected to institutionalization and were seen as being dependent.

In analyzing disability various viewpoints and approaches came to the forefront. The medical model emanated from the disease model of medicine, which predisposes practitioners to think of a 'condition' that needs appropriate treatment. It is believed that the medical model appeared as a consequence of the WHO (1980) debate on the usefulness of the terms such as 'handicap', 'impairment' and 'disability' whereby disability came to be defined as the effect of impairment on everyday activities thereby reducing the origins of disability to individual pathology. It upholds the assumption that all children with impairments are automatically handicapped or handicap their family and that the society has not been constructed to include disabled people and make provisions for this diversity.

Criticising the medical model on being narrow and reductionist in nature whereby the individuals are made to feel receptive, passive and compliant, the Social model/approach to disability came into the purview. Though the social model did not deny the problem of disability, it laid more emphasis on the failure on the part of the society to take into account the needs of the people with disabilities and provide appropriate services to them. The social model encompasses a number of theoretical perspectives: Functionalism, Conflict, Interactionism and Post-modernism. The Functionalists regard people with disabilities as deviants, who are unable to adjust and meet the demands of the social setting in which they live and were hence subjected to classification, regulation and treatment.

Emphasizing on social control, the Conflict perspective focuses on power and domination of one group over another. It views the people with disabilities as a vulnerable group, oppressed and controlled by the larger population i.e. the so called 'normal' people, who exclude them from the various mainstream activities.

Interactions with others hold the focus of the arguments of the Interactionist perspective. The role of the 'significant others' which Scott (1999) referred to as 'those people who have the greatest influence on an individual's evaluation of himself and who have the greatest impact on his acceptance and rejection of social norms', facilitates the manner in which people with disabilities give shape to their 'self'. The nature of interaction can extend from acceptance and compassion to labeling and stigmatization. Referring to the concept of stigma Goffman maintained that the physically impaired, those with mental disorder, homosexuals and members of racial and religious minorities are viewed by the society as 'not quite human' as they deviate from the 'anticipated norms' (Vernon, 1999). In the classroom situation too effective social interaction in terms of ability to reciprocate to others actions affects the 'concept of self' of the children. Labeling too can further result in self-fulfilling prophecy thereby preventing child from realizing his/her potential.

The Postmodernist perspective was applied to the study of disability as an attempt to develop a radical sociology of impairment. Postmodernists like Foucault (1971) in their attempt to study the

power exercised by 'normal' people over the disabled people held that medicine and psychoanalysis in addition to the penal system provide examples of disciplinary and regulatory controls leading to the criterion of new norms. It is diffusion of the medical discourse that has enabled the medical model view of disability to become widespread at all levels of the society, affecting the manner in which institutions from the government to industry treat disabled people (Chadwick, 1996). In this relation 'normal' people use the power of fixing what Sartre calls their 'gaze' on the disabled people for not conforming to what they consider 'valid' behaviour. The disabled thus experience an act of 'invalidation'. By becoming the object of others gaze the disabled are reduced to status of an object itself and are condemned to an 'identity'. Allan (1998) also emphasized on the concept of 'gaze' whereby the disabled are placed under constant surveillance of others. Though the process aims to ensure their welfare by permitting teachers and other professionals to acquire knowledge about their disability but at the same time places the aspect of power or control that remains inherent in the situation as they can enforce their perception of the situation on the children.

Finkelstein (1980) based on his own experiences and those of other people with disabilities further held that the able bodied people have for centuries made decisions for them, decided appropriate behaviour pattern for them by means of rehabilitation programme, designed equipment for them etc with assumed expertise thereby deriving them even the right to question their objectivity to make decisions on their behalf.

Among the other viewpoints maintained within the framework of the Social model of disability are the Systems model and the Transactional model. The systems model, regards disability as the communication in functionally differentiated systems of the difference between impairment and no impairment. Each system indicates specific codification, whereby individuals are observed in different ways in different systems and all the other aspects of the person are ignored except those that fit the system-specific form of communication. Hence there is the need to observe young people with physical disabilities in different contexts and environment at different points of time before making a clinical or psychological judgement and to interpret the assessment of the competencies of any person with disability in the light of the culture or subculture in which the person has been brought up (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

The Transactional model also emphasized on the need to understand the environment as an interactive structure and view individuals as active synthesizers of information from the environment due to the impact that the perceptions of significant others can have on the development of a person with disability.

The above approaches are thereby in conjunction with the Social Constructivist and Social Creationist perspectives on disability which hold that disability is seen as based on interaction between individual and the society and holds that whether a person is being labeled as disabled depends on how the society arranges the circumstances in order to compensate for individual impairments. It is held that the feeling of inferiority is largely engrained in the societal attitude and the various materials associated with them. For instance, in case of blind people their level of self-esteem is lower due to the fact that they require using items that continuously display their stigmas

(canes, Braille reading). These necessities create in them a feeling of disability and dependence and create confusion among them as to which group they belong to (Calvo, 1995). This is also in accordance with Brofenbrenner's (1992) viewpoint on the Personal Attributes Model, which maintains that in comparing disabled individuals with the non-disabled, an individual's outcomes are understood primarily on the basis of the static concept of disabilities with little information being provided about the joint function of the person and environment. He emphasized that the idiosyncratic biological, physical and psychological characteristics of an individual interact in reciprocal manner to produce developmental change.

Apart from these both the materialists and post-structuralists have explored and highlighted the importance of the culture and media of a society in justifying and maintaining the exclusion of those defined as 'other' (Abberley, 1987; Barnes, 1991; Shakespeare, 1994). The material theorists hold that a change in the position of disabled people will come only with the removal of capitalism (Oliver, 1990; Finkelstein, 1980). Barnes (1996) maintained that there is the need to see current social responses to impairment as the cultural product of the interaction between the means of production and central societal values. Other theorists have emphasized on how cultural images have been used as a medium to socially construct the unwelcome 'other'. The operation of such processes are revealed in the use of negative imagery in the general media and in literature which portray difference as unacceptable, evil or a punishment from God (Barnes, 1991; Hafferty and Foster, 1994; Shakespeare, 1994). For instance, charity advertisers are shown to be especially fond of using images of people with impairments that are designed to evoke feelings of guilt, pity and sympathy in non-disabled people, as a means of persuading the mainstream population to make more donations (Hevey, 1992).

The use of stigmatizing language and metaphors by the medical profession lends further support to this perspective (Peters, 1996; Swain and Cameron, 1999). Bogdan and Taylor (1982) believe that labels create barriers in understanding the handicapped individuals by encouraging the non-handicapped people to define them in terms of a single dimension, which in turn is used to generalize about the labeled person's character and ability.

The assignment of labels has the potential to limit one's view of the student by focusing on the negativity of the disorder. Moreover they have little functional value in the education of the students with disabilities other than to give a global indication of the place where they need to be educated. This may in turn prove detrimental as it limits the approach in providing the least restrictive environment.

### ***Policy Issues***

There is lack of adequate documentation about the educational needs of the people with disabilities during the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the pre-independence era in India. There were sporadic interest in the education and training of the handicapped by way of adhoc grants and voluntary efforts. The earliest attempt in this direction was made with the establishment of a school for the deaf in Bombay in 1883 and for the blind in Amritsar in 1887. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in 1944 emphasized that efforts should be made not to segregate the handicapped children from the normal children unless required. The years that followed witnessed the emergence

of quite a number of schools and institutions for the blind. However education in these institutions was confined only to the primary level and in most cases the students were not admitted before the age of seven. It was only after independence that any major change was brought about in the educational scenario of disabled among the education professionals, voluntary agency administrators and government officials

After independence numerous policies emphasized on the education of the disabled such as The Kothari Commission (1964-66) which accepted that 'experimentation with the integrated programme is urgently required and every attempt should be made to bring in as many children into integrated programme as possible' The two advantages underlined by the commission are the 'reduction of costs' and promoting mutual understanding between handicapped and non-handicapped children. As a means of implementation, the Ministry of Welfare launched the Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme in December 1974 that aimed at providing educational opportunities to CWSN in regular schools, facilitating their retention in the school system, and placing children from special schools in common schools. The scheme also emphasized on pre-school, training, counseling for the parents and special training in skills for all kinds of disabilities. In spite of all these facilities the IEDC met with limited success.

The National Policy of Education (1986) was a turning point especially in the area of disability. It laid down certain guidelines to facilitate the welfare of the people with disabilities It mentioned about – Inclusive education possibilities for children with mild disabilities in regular schools, provision for the training and education of children with severe disabilities in special schools and vocational training as being a part of the education for the disabled and also reorientation of teachers training programmes to include education of the disabled.

Later there was a shift in strategy from a school based approach to a Composite Area Approach and in 1987 the Ministry of Human Resource Development adopted the Projected Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP, 1994) towards the universalization of primary education wherein the children with special needs are also included. The PIED primarily focussing on decentralization of education has been tried out in selected blocks of various states and have revealed not only a noticeable increase in enrolment but also in the retention rate among the disabled children. It also brought about a greater awareness about the diverse needs of the disabled children among the educational professionals and teachers. The DPEP aims at including education for all children with mild to moderate disabilities upto the primary level with suitable teacher preparation, infrastructural facilities, aids and appliances community mobilization and resource support.

The Programme of Action (1992) also stressed upon the inclusion of educational needs of the handicapped children in planning for Universal Elementary Education by maintaining that children whose educational needs can be met in common with others should not be placed in special schools and those placed in special schools should be integrated to general schools as soon as possible. The disability movement is still in its infancy (Karna, 2000) and culminated into the enactment of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992) and the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act) 1995. The 1995 Act assigned

the responsibility to the local governments to ensure access to free education to each child till the age of eighteen years and proposed a variety of options including integrated education, special education, non-formal education and vocational training. Though it was envisaged through the 1995 Act that the quality of persons with disabilities could be improved as it addressed the issues like education, literacy levels, employment, social security, assistive devices and barrier i.e. free environment, training of teachers, etc but the implementation leaves much to be desired.

In ensuring equalisation of benefits to the disabled, International agencies like United Nations through the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1989), 'World Declaration on Education for All' (1990), 'The Standard Rules for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities' (1993) and World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994) also emphasized on the need to provide children with disability educational opportunities equal to those of the non-disabled children. Among the other international agencies working for the welfare of the disabled are UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and ILO.

### ***Barriers***

Even though several of the educational policies from the Kothari Commission (1966), National Policy of Education (1986) to the Programme of Action (1992) and Persons with Disabilities Act (1995) have laid down certain guidelines for the education of the children with disabilities within their policy framework, the basic concerns of the disabled individuals such as the issues of accessibility, education and employment have not been adequately addressed (Nagarajan, 2001; A Reporter, 2000; Veeton, 1999).

Despite various attempts to ensure integration of the people with disabilities into the mainstream there is a dichotomy between intent and practice whereby although emphasis is being continuously laid by the governments on integration they are accompanied by the segregation policy at the parallel level. There is lack of adequate community sensitization towards the disabled. The effort of the government in providing the educational facilities remains minimal. Moreover mandatory changes made in the educational systems and services also do not suffice to cater to the needs of the disabled. Even today separateness is confined not only within the purview of the segregated classes but also in the "separate standards" used to evaluate the attainments of these students. Despite the attempts towards integration the efforts fail to meet the requirements of the "basics" of curricular aspects of such children such as facilities for reading, writing, field trips, standards of attendance, participation, etc. In a recent attempt by the government to evaluate the curricular issues in CBSE schools it was observed that not only there were difficulties related to the provision of barrier-free environment for such children but also lack of adequate and appropriate study materials such as rarity in the availability of Braille books, necessary support services as well as adequate transport services.

Moreover government's conceptualization of the problem remains ingrained with the belief that education and management of disabled children relies on voluntary organizations. Though a number of special schools for the blind, deaf, cerebral palsied, mentally handicapped and slow learners are maintained by NGOs there are limitations to their functioning. Their functioning is limited only to the micro level, whereby the geographical logistics of the subcontinent, coupled

with the expenditure act as barriers to frequent contact between the NGO groups hence resulting in fragmented and piecemeal services. This largely blurs the intention and efforts made towards mainstreaming. Moreover much of the efforts are carried out more at the micro level and the initiatives taken by the governments and voluntary agencies suffer from lack of continuous funding and good infrastructural support. Besides these the changing governmental policies further limits the functioning of the various agencies. Hence there is the need to depoliticize the field of special education by establishing a network of collaboration among the various bodies, governmental policy, administrators, professionals, community, parents, etc.

### **Conclusion**

The very existence of all human life is subjected to various exogenous factors that largely affect the functioning of each person. The philosophy of society is thereby epitomized in the way individual members live and function in relation to the various parameters of behaviour laid down by the social condition. In this context any deviance from the accepted norms are regarded as 'misfits'. The mainstreaming of the 'disabled' into the society of the 'able bodied' necessitates not only a supportive environment in terms of placing them in the company of 'able' population but also requires eradication of negative ideas, adequate and appropriate facilities for education, counselling and training. Numerous efforts are being made in this direction. Recently a circular was issued by the authorities of the CBSE specifying certain guidelines to be followed by the schools for "conscious shift being made from mainstream schooling of education for children with disabilities" as well as the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development to make all schools disabled friendly in the country. The Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) has been launched by different NGOs to provide simple aids, appliances and training to the parents of the disabled children. Simultaneously the National Open School (NOS) has taken up the responsibility for providing Home Based Education for the disabled. Special cells or units have been started in various Institutes to promote the cause of welfare of the disabled such as the Department of Special Needs Education in National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) which emphasizes on the training of resource teachers, develops print and non-print materials and works on curriculum adaptations and classroom strategies. Though efforts are being continuously made by both the governmental as well as non-governmental agencies to facilitate the total rehabilitation of the disabled persons, it still awaits much initiative.

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## Inter-ethnic Formations in the Diasporic North East India

G Ram and Prem Kanta Borah

### The Problem

The human populations dispersing inside and across the national borders have, all through the historical times, added to the ethnic complexity of especially the large societies like India, USA, UK and others. In these societies one perceives a consciousness of kind; i.e., self identification or labeling among various groups based on a factor or some combination of factors like language, religion, caste, community, race, tribe, region, sect, sub-culture, symbols, traditions, common historical experience, creed, national minority, ritual, dress, diet, boundary and national origin. This (ethnic) consciousness defines a group's ethnicity or self-identity as a set of distinct socio-cultural practices acquired through a particularistic socialization that varies from one group to another (Hutnik 1991; Rastogi 1986). In 1953 David Riesman first used the word 'ethnic' derived from ancient Greek's *ethnikos* and, in 1972, it appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary (Glazer and Moynihan 1975). The Short Oxford English Dictionary (1980) defines 'ethnic' as pertaining to nations, not Christian or Jewish, 'ethnicism' as heathenism or paganism and 'ethnography' as the scientific description of nations or races of human beings, their customs, habits and differences. Like 'ethnic group', the term 'nation' is also used in various contexts, though it generally describes the inhabitants of a country. A certain degree of similarity does exist in the definitions of 'nation' and 'ethnic group'. But the term 'nation' has mainly the ideological premises of its relationship with the state (Phadnis 1989:20–21). The ethnic populations when migrate across territorial boundaries give rise to diaspora of various kinds. The word *diaspora* first used to label the dispersion of the Jews from ancient Palestine refers to a group living in a foreign nation without protection from its own government, e.g., Indian émigrés living in UK and USA (Bhushan 1989; Oxford English Dictionary 1996). Jain (1998:337–58), Patricia Uberoi (1998:305–36) and Goulbourne (1991:126–69) have used it to examine the settlement pattern, diversities of political culture, minority identity and feelings of we-ness among the overseas Indians. Hence, the occurrence of multiple diasporas in a social space is *diasporism* and the society engendering diasporism is a *diasporic* society wherein the ethnic groups perceive themselves in a majority-minority relationship. The number, size, settlement pattern, social interactions, culture and economic development of ethnic groups determine inter-ethnic formations in a diasporic society. India makes a society of about 4635 communities comprising 2,000 to 3,000 caste groups, about 60,000 of synonyms of titles and sub-groups and about 40,000 endogenous divisions (Singh 1992:14–15). All through the history Indian sub-continent as a whole,

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especially North Eastern India has experienced the multiple overlaying of the populations dispersing in South and South East Asia. The stepped up transborder and internal circulation of the people in search of better opportunities in the post-Independence times has given rise to more complex, inter-ethnic and diasporic formations in India. A question springs up: What inter-ethnic formations are perceived in India, especially the diasporic border situation of North Eastern India?

### **Theoretical Paradigms**

To attempt the question the existing literature offers mainly five paradigms; namely, (i) the primordialist, (ii) the cultural pluralist, (iii) the relative deprivation, (iv) the Marxist and (v) the structural-functional. The primordialists consider ethnic identities as the cultural givens of the past, rather than the chosen, and emphasize on certain cultural attachments in individual's personality formation and development, which persist through out life, consciously or unconsciously. Such an affiliation of culture and personality provides impetus and impulse for social and political mobilization of the individual and impedes his adjustment in a multi-ethnic situation. The cultural pluralist approach, initially evolved by Furnivall and further developed by M.G. Smith and others, emphasizes not only the ethnic distinctiveness of a group as such but also focuses on the dominant-subordinate pattern of interaction among various ethnic groups. Smith (1986) makes a comparative analysis of data from 27 African states to determine the relative significance of pluralism, race and ethnicity for social order and political stability. His cultural pluralism encompasses a single society constituted by co-existence of multiple groups of mutually incompatible social structures, value systems and belief patterns. The structural requisites of a political order in the society lead to subordination of one group by the other. Such societies characterized by domination, separation and instability are generally pregnant with conflict and dissensus. The relative deprivation approach, developed by R.K. Merton (1957) and Ted Gurr (1980), refers to relative deprivation as a gap between expectations and perceived capabilities of a person vis-à-vis his economic situation, political power and social status in relation to others. In the context of ethnic plurality the concept is used to refer to the feeling of relative deprivation of a collectivity rather than an individual. The Marxist perspective views that, firstly, ethnic consciousness is based in a group's belief in common origin—real or mythical; secondly, ethnic groups are 'pre-national' and, thirdly, ethnic consciousness is usually found in small ethnic groups. The historical movement of ethnic consciousness towards national consciousness occurs through the operation of objective factors such as common language and common territory, economic ties and, finally, affinity of roles in social production. In the growth of consciousness, common language is perceived as one of the major components for its arousal while caste and communalism are perceived as the forces disrupting the formation of nationality or nation in a multinational state like India (Phadnis 1989:16–35). Lastly, from socio-anthropological viewpoint A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functional framework (1976:178–204) has been widely employed to understand, analyze and interpret ethnic realities of mostly simple societies. In Indian situation, R.S. Mann (1992) has applied it in his work 'Some Theoretical Concerns of Ethnicity in the Laddakhi Situation of Jammu and Kashmir State'. Phadnis (1989) has applied in her work all but the structural-functional approach. Obviously, each paradigm provides a partial understanding of inter-ethnic relations whereas the ethnic phenomenon consists of various dimensions; viz., cultural primordialities, domination in cultural pluralities, relative deprivation of groups, ethnic consciousness, and functions and dysfunctions (conflicts) in a multi-ethnic situation.

### Ethnicity in the Making of the Diasporic North East

The North Eastern region consisting of 8 states; namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim lies between 22°19' and 28°16'N longitudes and 89°42' and 97°12'E latitudes. It abuts with Bhutan and China in the north, China and Myanmar in the east, and India's West Bengal and Bangladesh in the west. It constitutes 7.97% of India's total area and 3.77% of its total population. The hilly terrains cover 72% of its total area. The plains comprise the Brahmaputra and the Barak valley of Assam and small plains tracts in Manipur and Tripura. A large number of groups interspersed in the diverse terrains form the diasporas of almost all ethnic varieties of Indian race, life style, culture, language, religion, beliefs and tradition. Mainly five factors determine the ethnic plurality in the region; namely, (i) race (ii) tribe, (iii) caste and /or non-tribe, (iv) language and (v) religion.

#### The Race

B.S. Guha has mentioned six main races surviving in India; namely, Negrito, Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean, Western Brachycephal and Nordic. On the basis of hair form and certain elements of material culture, Hutton, Mills and other authors have pointed to the existence of the Negrito branch in Assam. S.K. Chatterjee, Guha, Hutton and others have related some Nagas in Assam and few south Indian tribes to the Negrito type (Barpujari 1990). The Australoids referred to by different names such as pre-Dravidian, Proto-Australoid, Nishada and Veddid by several authors have dolichocephalic head, broad nose, dark brown skin, short height, wavy head hairs and less developed and slightly retreating forehead, which are noticed among almost all castes of India yet more concentrated among the lower castes. Some of physical anthropologists have indicated the existence of Australoid type in the North Eastern India while some of them believe that this type exists only in some parts of the middle and south India. The Khasis of Meghalaya, the Wanchoo tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, Garo, Rabha and Kachari tribes of Assam speak Austric languages and match their physical structure with Australoids. The ancient dolichocephalic-platyrrhine (pre-Dravidian) type, mentioned by Haddon in 1924, is strong among the North Eastern tribes such as Kuki, Khasi, Manipuri, Kachari, etc. In 1925 Buxton also assumed the pre-Dravidian type among the aboriginal people in the eastern frontier of India. Sarkar and Bhattacharjee (1958) and Guha and Basu (1958) identified certain skulls of Australoid type found in Nagaland. The recent researches have found some characteristics of the Australoid in the Assamese castes. Besides, in the British period some of the tribal people; namely, Munda, Gond, Santal, Savara and Oraon brought to Assam from the states like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, etc. as tea garden workers are of Australoid origin (Barpujari 1990).

Basically, all the tribes of North East India belong to the Mongloid type, popularly the Indo-Mongoloids, who entered this region from north, northeast and southeast at different times. They have yellow, yellow-brown skin and black, flat, wavy, coarse head hairs, broad face and fewer hairs on face and body. The Indo-Mongoloids who speak different languages of Sino-Tibetan group are divided into two major branches; viz., (i) Tibeto-Burman and (ii) Siamese-Chinese. From their original homeland in the North East China, the Tibeto-Burman speakers at one time migrated towards south, somewhere in the north Burma, and diversified into several groups who separately entered the North East India. The North Assam group of languages consists of the speakers mostly from the Arunachal tribes; namely, Aka, Monpa, Nishi, Sherdukpen, Apatani, Adi, Mishimi, Nocte, Wanchoo, Tangsa, etc. Another sub-group of Indo-Mongoloids called Assam-

Burmese group includes three groups; namely, Bodos, Nagas and Kuki–Chins. The term *Bodo* denotes a large number of people such as Garo, Rabha, Kachari, Koch, Mech, Karbi, Hajong, Lalung, etc. Even the Mizo-Kukis of Mizoram and the Meiteis of Manipur are also included in the group. The Naga groups; namely, Ao, Angami, Sema, Konyak, Lhota, Rengma, Phom, Chang and others belong to Indo-Mongloid type. The anthropologists have found many heterogeneous physical elements in the tribes and therefore their race is yet to be decided. The last sub-group of the North-Assam elements is the Kuki–Chins comprising the Thado Kuki and Purum Kuki in the southern part of Assam and other Kuki–Chin tribes in Manipur; viz., Aimol, Hmar, Paite, Thado, Vaipei, etc. The original inhabitants of Tripura or the Tripuri; namely, Riangs, Maghs and Chakmas who migrated from Mizoram and Burma once upon a time belong to the Tibeto–Burman language family (Barpujari 1990; Gait 1926). One of the sub-divisions of the Siamese-Chinese is Thai-Ahom – the Shan group of speakers- who entered Assam in 13<sup>th</sup> century. Some other Thai groups who lately followed the Ahom’s migration path are basically the Buddhist such as Khamtis, Khamyangs, Aitongs, Phakials and Turungs (Barpujari 1990).

The Caucasoids who entered the North East India from the west following the Ganges and the Brahmaputra river are mostly confined in Assam only. The human races of Assam form two broad categories; namely, (i) the Indid and (ii) the Mongoloid Assamese as discussed before. The term ‘Indid’ Assamese, Caucasian in origin, includes several types and sub-types. The Mediterranean is the one of its types originated in the South East Asia in ancient time. The ancient Indus Valley civilization is said to be a product of Mediterranean race. In general, they are a people of medium height with delicately built body and long head visible among the Assamese people of the present times. In contrast, the Alpino-Armenoid are the broad headed people who have come to Assam through the sub-Himalayan region and, at present, found very scarcely among the Assamese people. The Indo-Aryans is another longheaded and tall-stature people who entered India sometimes in 1200 B.C., now frequently observed in many high caste Assamese populations. At the time of Indo-Aryan migration, Irano-Scythians followed the Indus course to arrive at Gujarat-Maharashtra region through the Son and Narmada river valleys and, then, via Bengal they entered Assam. The anthropologists report the medium head and medium stature characteristic of Irano-Scythian family (Barpujari 1990; Gait 1926). Haddon found six ethnic groups in the region; viz., (i) Dolichocephalic platyrrhine type such as Khasis, Kuki, Manipuri, Kachari, etc.; (ii) Dolichocephalic–Mesorrhine type among the Naga and other hill tribes; (iii) Mesocephalic–Mesorrhine type among the Lepcha and the Murmi; (iv) Brachycephalic–Leptorrhine type migrated from the North; (v) Brachycephalic-Platyrrhine- a variety of the Pareoan; and (vi) Dolichocephalic–Leptorrhine migrated from rest of the Indian territories. R.B. Dixon also mentioned four main types; namely, (i) Brachycephalic–Leptorrhine, (ii) Brachycephalic–Platyrrhine, (iii) Dolichocephalic–Leptorrhine and (iv) Dolichocephalic–Platyrrhine. The first migrants to North East India were the Australoids followed by the Mongoloids and the Caucasoids such as Indo-Aryans, Irano-Scythians, Mediterraneans and Alpino–Armenoids. Of the four Caucasian sub-groups, the Mediterranean and Alpino–Armenoids first entered the region. The Mongoloids are popularly known as tribes and the Caucasoids as castes whom the majority of population of Assam belongs to. However, the Australoids may also be living in this region. Evidently, Assam is the meeting place of diverse ethnic strains, which contributed to the evolution, assimilation, and development of multi-racial population and culture in North East India (Barpujari 1990).

### The Tribe

Diverse tribal segments constitute one of the most significant ethnic features in region. According to Census 1991 there are in all 213 tribal groups and sub-groups in the region. Of these 101 are found in Arunachal Pradesh and their least number is in Sikkim (04) followed by Mizoram (05). A number of tribes are found variously in the remaining states; namely, Manipur (28), Assam (23), Nagaland (20), Tripura (18) and Meghalaya (14). In the region, the largest share of Scheduled Tribes' population is from Assam (35.30%) followed by Meghalaya (18.64%) and the smallest share is from Sikkim (1.11). The remaining states with their shares are Nagaland (12.88%), Tripura (10.36%), Mizoram (7.74%), Manipur (7.68%) and Arunachal Pradesh (6.68%). By individual states the Scheduled Tribes constitute most of the populations of Mizoram (94.8%), Nagaland (87.7%) and Meghalaya (85.5%); a majority in Arunachal Pradesh (63.7%); around one third in Manipur (34.4%) and Tripura (30.9%); one fifth in Sikkim (22.4%) and over one tenth in Assam (12.8%).

The tribes are classified into two categories; viz., (i) the hill tribes; namely, Rengma, Lalung, Montai, Zemi, Liangmei, Rongmei, Kuki, Thadou, Hmar, Baite, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Angami, Sema, Ao, Konyak, Lotha, Chingman, Mosang, Mishmi, Nisi, Akas, Apatani, Miji, Sherdukpen, Khawas, Adi, Hill Miri, Sulung, Tagin, Monpa, Memba, Khemba, Nokte, Wanchoo, Tangsa, Tangkhul, Halam, Chaw, Langrong, Thado, Sokte, Ratte, Paite, Mizo, Lakher, Riang, Chakma, Musasing, Aslong, Khalisa, Komd, Lowang, Moira, Moite, Moriang, Phadag, etc. and (ii) the plain tribes; namely, Bodos, Mishing, Sonowal, Dimasa, Rabha, Mech, Rajbanshi, Kachari, Lalung, Morans, Tripuri, Karbi, Khanti, Phakial, Aitonia, Turung, Barman and Hojai. The major plains tribes are found mostly in Assam whereas the hills tribes are found more or less in each state of the region. Besides, there are a number of tea tribes who were brought as indentured labour from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa in the British period, and they have permanently settled in Assam (Dubey 1978).

### The Non-tribal Groups

The non-tribal and caste groups are mostly found in the plains of the region, particularly in Assam, Tripura and Manipur. Sikkim is the only hilly state where the caste and non-tribal ethnic groups are found. The main caste groups are Meitei, Bishnupriya, Kayastha, Kalita, Keot, Koch, Nath, Moran, Chutiya, Dom or Kaibert, Ganak, Lohar, Kumar, Barber, Brahmins, etc. Besides, there are some other non-tribal groups including Hindus and Muslims who migrated to the region in the colonial and post-colonial period from other Indian states (Bihar and West Bengal) and neighbouring nations (Bangladesh and Nepal). The non-tribals are largely from the upper and middle castes, who form a small group as compared to the population of 103 Scheduled Castes constituting 6.85% of the region's total population and 76.77% in Assam followed by Tripura (20.87%). Nagaland has no Scheduled Castes population.

### The Linguistic Groups

India is a multi-lingual society that has about 1,652 mother tongues. Of these, 19 languages are recognized as the Scheduled languages in the constitution; viz., Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Indian languages are mainly grouped into four families; namely, (i) the Austro-Asiatic family of the Khasis in Meghalaya, the tribes in Nicobar Islands and the hill tribes of Chotanagpur; (ii) the Dravidian family now confined to the languages in southern

peninsula; namely; Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada; (iii) the Indo-Aryan languages of the people of North India and also down the peninsula comprising mainly Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Rajasthani, Pahari, Lohnda, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi, Bihari, Oriya, Bengali and Assamese and (iv) the Tibeto-Burman branch divided into two languages; viz., (a) the Tibeto-Himalayan in the western Himachal Pradesh and Bhutan and (b) the Assamese-Burmese in the tribes of North East India such as Naga, Bodo, etc.

North East India has the speakers of every Scheduled language of India, although Assamese, Bodo and Manipuri are the only Scheduled languages from the region. Besides, the tribal groups and sub-groups speak approximately 400 languages and dialects which comprise 168 groups in Arunachal Pradesh, 95 in Nagaland, 87 in Manipur, 100 in Tripura and about 200 in Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

#### The Religious Groups

India has eight major religions; namely, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Parsi, Christianity and Animism. The tribes of Central India are the animists who worship spirits in the objects like trees, rocks, etc. The Buddhists are confined to certain communities in the Himalayas and also in neighbouring countries such as Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The Sikhs are found in Punjab, the Jains in Rajasthan and the Parsis in Mumbai. Over 75% of the total population are the Hindus and about 13% are the Muslims mostly settled in Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Moreover, all the religious groups are sub-divided into various sects.

In North East India, the Hindus followed by the Muslims are concentrated in the plains of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. The Christians are 85% in Mizoram, about 60% in Nagaland and around 40% in Meghalaya (Dubey 1977; Rastogi 1986, 1993; Hutnik 1991).

#### The Inter-ethnic Formations in the Diasporic North East India

The inter-ethnic formations in the region may be seen under three historical phases; namely, (i) the pre-British, (ii) the British and (iii) the post-Independence. Notions of seclusion and suspicion based on cultural primordialities and pre-nationality largely determined the formations of people in the pre-British period. No doubt, the Ahom conquered the tribes in the Brahmaputra valley and gradually assimilated into the populations through their localization. But the tribal groups generally suspected and secluded one another and constantly fought the tribal wars for territorial and cultural dominance. The paradigms like primordialism, Marxism and structural-functionalism explain variously the formation of this historical phase. The British superimposed the notion of political dominance in cultural plurality on the existing cultural primordialities. The British administration did maintain the seclusion of primordialities by introducing the scheduled Areas and the Inner Line Permits to contain the inter-tribe friction and to prevent exploitation of the tribals. But their rule established a political order in the society with plurality of ethnic groups loosely organized in the superordinate-subordinate relationship. This set of relations is explicable by the paradigm of cultural plurality. The post-Independence dynamics of democratic politics and development qualitatively changed the character of ethnic formations. On the one hand, the masses got engaged in the economic and political development whereas some segments resisted the nation building process, on the other. Even the people engaged in the politico-economic process of nation building have been clashing here and there, now and then. On the whole, the frictions as well as fusion of ethnic segments reveal the prevalence of relative deprivation feeling, on the one hand, and the increased competitiveness for political and economic dominance among the ethnic groups, on the other. An

ethnic group as a whole seeks the improved economic lot, greater political power and enhanced social status for its members. The relative deprivation paradigm seems more useful to explain the ethnic formations in the context of accelerated pace of political and economic development in the region. In the entire course of time, the region offers various inter-ethnic formations of people; namely, (i) conflicts and integration/assimilation, (ii) the pre- and post-Independence formations, (iii) caste-tribe formations, (iv) the formations of the hills and plains people, (v) linguistic formations, (vi) religious formations and (vii) insiders-outsiders formations. By their cross-classification these formations may be discussed under two broad types; namely, conflicts and integration.

*(i) The Inter-ethnic Conflicts*

In the region the ethnic conflicts surfaced just after India's Independence when the ethnic identity movements were launched, sometimes by tribal communities and sometimes by non-tribals on the issue of religion, language, 'sons of the soil' and foreign nationals, ethnic separatism, migration, etc. Out of the ten ethnic movements in India, the four movements were launched in Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Assam as a result of the feeling of betrayal or the legacy of colonial rule (Singh 1992). The present social tension in the region is the outcome of the interaction of diverse historical, social, political and economic forces strangely combined into, both, integrative and disintegrative, constructive and destructive ways (Kumar 1995:4).

In Assam all ethnic groups seem to be against each other such as tribals against non-tribals, some tribals against other tribals, Nepalese against Assamese, Muslim against Hindu, Assamese against Bengalese and locals against outsiders or disputed foreigners (Ali Engineer 1991: 296; Deka 1996). The ethnic conflicts consisting of overlapping and inseparable phenomena, have principally led to the anti-Muslim riots in Assam in 1950, the language movement between the Assamese and the Bengali in 1961 and 1972, the anti-outsiders movement (1979–84), the terrorist armed revolt since 1979, the Assam-Nagaland border conflict and the demands from non-tribal Assamese and the tribal Assamese like Bodos, Karbis, etc for separate states. Just after Assam was made a chief commissioner's province in 1874, the changes of geographical boundaries led to tensions and language politics between the Assamese and the Bengalese. But since 1930s when the Assamese speakers became a minority (23%) as compared to the Bengali speakers (42%) in the population, the Assamese have been becoming more conscious of their future status in the wake of a large number of emigrants, particularly the Bengali Muslims settled in Assam. The Assamese leadership's aim was to make Assam a Hindu dominated unilingual (Assamese) state, which remained unfulfilled (Samanta 1994; Deka 1996; Ali Engineer 1991; Tarapot 1993). By the close of 19<sup>th</sup> century the Assamese middle class, particularly the students, educated at Calcutta became a major social force in Assam. In the pre-Independence period the students of Assam actively participated in the anti-partition movement, Swadeshi Movements, Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Boycott of Simon Commission and Quit India Movement. They launched revolutionary terrorism under the leadership of Ambigiri Raychoudhury against the British rule. In 1942, several people were killed in different mass upsurges (Deka 1996).

There is a long tradition of the geo-political history closely attached with the growth of ethnic tension and conflict in Assam and the region as a whole. Since its British annexation, Assam has undergone a series of boundary re-arrangements. In the early part of the British rule, Assam was added to the Bengal administrative province. In 1874, alongwith three Bengal districts of Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara it was made a Chief Commissioner's province under the direct

control of the Governor General-in-Council. At that time Manipur, Tripura and Lushai Hills were not its part. By the close of the 19th century Lushai Hills and Manipur were tagged with it under control of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In 1905 Assam was added to the Muslim majority region of East Bengal. Under the reorganization of Bengal into two provinces; viz, West Bengal and East Bengal in 1911, its boundaries changed for the fourth time in 1912 A.D. included the Brahmaputra valley districts, the Bengal districts of Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara and the hill districts such as Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hills and Lushai (Mizo) Hills and continued till Independence. After Independence, Sylhet alongwith eight thana areas in Assam was merged with East Pakistan after holding a referendum in view of the pressing demands for it by the East Bengalese for East Pakistan and by the Assamese for India. Besides, Assam Legislative Assembly and Indian Parliament returned the Bhutani areas of Eastern Dwars added to Assam in 1866 A.D. Finally, Assam state, the NorthEast Frontier Agency (NEFA) and the Group 'C' states of Manipur and Tripura constituted the whole region (Kumar 1995: 86). On racial and linguistic grounds, Nagaland was accorded statehood in 1963 and Meghalaya was formed of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills in 1972. Manipur and Tripura became union territories in 1972 and states in 1987. Mizoram became a union territory in 1972 and a state in 1986. Mikir Hills and Cachar Hills were made autonomous districts in Assam in 1972. Of late, the Bodo inhabited areas of the plains of Assam have got Bodo Territorial Council. At present, Karbis, Dimasas and even Lalungs continue to ask for autonomy (Kumar 1995; Deka 1996).

Thus, the geo-political history created a dynamic environment for emergence of various problems like inter-ethnic tension, conflict, insurgency, separatist agitations, linguistic movements, etc.

For safeguarding their identity and gaining political power, the people of this region have continuously erected a number of political parties, organizations and insurgency groups based on ethnicity (Kumar 1995:52–56). Major ones of these are given here.

A. The political parties and organizations seeking secession from India: (1) Naga National Council (NNC), (2) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), (3) Mizo National Front (MNF), (4) United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), (5) Highlanders Union established in 1946 demanding independence for the hill areas of Assam, (6) Meitei State Committee established in 1960, (7) United Liberation Front (ULF) based in Manipur, (8) United National Liberation Front (UNLF) based in Manipur, (9) People's Liberation Army (PLA) established in 1978, based in Manipur, (10) People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Prepak) based in Manipur, (11) Poilei Liberation Front based in Manipur, (12) Poilei National Army based in Manipur, (13) Chin Liberation Army based in Manipur, (14) Legal Inspection Base of Rensak Army based in Manipur, (15) All Mongloid Youth Organization based in Manipur, (16) Kangleipak Communist Party based in Manipur, (17) Seven Liberation Organizations for seven states, (18) Tripura Peoples Liberation Army, (19) Tripura National Volunteers, (20) Karbi National Volunteers, (21) Bodo Liberation Tigers, (22) HNLC in Meghalaya, (23) ADF in Arunachal Pradesh

B. Regional Parties: (1) Assam Janata Party, (2) Karbi-A-Darbar, (3) All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, (4) Assam Jatiatawadi Dal, (5) Purbanchal Loka Parishad, (6) Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad, (7) United Tribal Nationalist Front working among the plains tribals of Assam, specially the Boros, (8) Assam Tribal League, (9) United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) active in the plains of Assam, (10) Manipur People's Party (MPP), (11) Kuki National Assembly



(KNA) active in Manipur, (12) Manipur Hills Union, (13) National Socialist Democratic Party, (14) Manipur Nationalist Party, (15) Manipur National Organization, (16) All Manipur People's Convention, (17) Manipur National Union, (18) Kanglei League in Manipur, (19) Eviebak Laishem Party in Manipur, (20) Hill People's Conference in Manipur, (21) Khasi National Darbar, (22) Jaintia Darbar, (23) Khasi Jaintia Federated States National Conference, (24) Khasi Jaintia Political Association, (25) Garo National Council, (26) The Hills Union, (27) The Garo National Conference, (28) United Communities Conference (UCC) in Karbi Anglong district, (29) United Peoples Conference (UPC) in Karbi Anglong District of Assam, (30) Mikir Hills Nationalist Organization worked for merger with Nagaland, (31) The Karbi Anglong People's Conference, (32) The United Karbi Liberation Organization, (33) Mikir Hills Progressive Party, (34) People's Democratic Forum (PDF) Karbi Anglong based, (35) Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) Karbi Anglong based, (36) The Karbi Anglong North Cachar Hill Autonomous State Demand Committee (KANCHADCOM), (37) Mikir Hills Minority Party, (38) Arunachal Pradesh People's Party, (39) Naga National Organization, (40) Naga National Democratic Party, (41) Nagaland People's Party, (42) Nagaland People's Council, (43) The United Democratic Front, Nagaland based, (44) Democratic Party of Nagaland, (45) United Front, Nagaland, (46) Meghalaya United Parliamentary Parties, (47) Assam Congress, (48) Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti, (49) Tripura National Volunteers, (50) Tripura Rajya Adivasi Sangh, (51) Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad, (52) Tripura Gana Mukti Parishad, (53) Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad, (54) Tripura Rajya Mondal, (55) Tripura Sangh, (56) Tripura Rajya Praja Mondal, (57) Manipur Congress, (58) Amra Bangali, Tripura based, (59) Bir Bikram Tripura Sangh, DETS, Tripura based, (60) Cheng Crack, (61) Ujani Assam Rajya Parishad, (62) Assam Association

C. Pressure Groups: (1) All Assam Students Union (AASU), (2) All Assam Students Union (AAMSU), (3) The Assam Association, (4) All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), (5) Bodo Students Association, (6) The Ahom Association, (7) The Assam Sahitya Sabha, (8) Khasi Students Union, (9) Garo Students Union, (10) Pan Manipuri Youth League, (11) All Manipur Students Union (AMSU), (12) All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union, (13) Machaleima, (14) Panmyl, (15) The Vaiphei National Organization, (16) Paite National Council, (17) Hmar National Union, (18) Gangtes Tribal Union, (19) Hmar Students Union, (20) Dimasa Students Union, (21) Karbi-Riso-A-Darbar, (22) Hill States Volunteers Ad-hoc Committee, (23) Alliance for Reconstruction of Meghalaya State (ARMS), Meghalaya based students organization, (24) Naga Students Federation (NSF), (25) Tuensang District Students Federation (TDSF), Nagaland based.

Thus, the large number of political parties and pressure groups define the nature and extent of ethnic schism and lack of interest aggregation across ethnic diversity whereas the insurgency exhibits the frustrations of the natives in the political system of cultural pluralities in view of the in-migration and emergent identity crisis. The migrants from the neighbouring nations and the other states of India settled in Assam have changed its entire demographic, social, cultural, economic, political, and linguistic character and, consequently, their relationship with the Assamese (Deka 1996). Some tribal populations like the Burmese Mizo and others from Myanmar and the Chakma and Riang from Bangladesh and their movements in the region have generated conflicts in Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.

The migration determined on the basis of (i) the place of birth of migrants and (ii) the last place of residence of migrants comprises three types; viz., (i) migration within the state,

(ii) migration from other states and (iii) migration from outside India. In 1991 the migrants by their place of birth as well as by their last residence within a state constituted more than four fifths; those from outside a state constituted more than one tenth and those from the outside India constituted 3% to 4% of India's population. In the North East the migrants constituted 7.27% of its total population. A high level of migration in the region is found within all of its states as well as from the other states, and from the outside India in some of the states. Arunachal Pradesh followed by Meghalaya received the highest migrants from other Indian states for business and service activities. By the size of the immigrants mostly hailed from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar respectively, Tripura ranked the first and Sikkim and Mizoram, the second. Manipur and Nagaland have the least of immigrants in view of the resistance of the insurgents. The migrants from other districts of the same state are the highest in Assam and Manipur where the people are mostly moving towards the plains (valleys) and the urban centres in search of employment in agriculture and secondary/tertiary sector respectively (Samanta 1994).

Since the British rule in 1826, the different ethnic groups gradually coming to Assam from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Punjab, Nepal and largely from Bengal occupied land; moved into tea plantations; entered the bureaucracy; started new business and trade and took up the modern professions of teaching, law, medicine and journalism (Deka 1996). At first, the British brought in the tribal labour as the tea planters from the states such as Bihar, Orissa, Chotanagpur, M.P., and Uttar Pradesh from 1830s onwards. They were largely tribal people such as Ho, Santhal, Munda, Saora, Oraon, Parja, Tanti, etc. In the year 1901 their number in Assam was 6,54,000. By the time the indentured labour procurement system was stopped in 1941, many labourers of the tea estates settled down as farmers in the wastelands and on the plots provided by the tea garden authorities (Kumar 1995; Rastogi 1986; Hussain 1993; Deka 1996). After the tea planters, a large number of the Bengali Muslim peasants migrated from East Bengal (Now Bangladesh) particularly from the district of Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Rongpur as cultivators under a plan of Sadulla's Muslim League ministry for their large-scale immigration in pre-partition days. Nonetheless, it was ultimately a plan of the British government itself to create conflict between different ethnic groups to consolidate their colonial economy. After Bengal's division on communal lines under the British policy of 'divide and rule' the tagging of Assam with East Bengal-a Muslim majority province- resulted into a large-scale influx of land hungry peasants from the East Bengal districts (Kumar 1995; Rastogi 1986; Hussain 1993; Deka 1996). The Bengali Hindus and other Hindu minorities were brought by the British from West Bengal districts to work in Assam, or they came to give their services to the East India Company. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they joined as teachers, clerks, railway and post officials, doctors, lawyers, journalists and other officials. Uptil 1943, a great number of Bengali Hindus settled particularly in the districts of Goalpara and Cachar. The Marwaris migrated to Assam especially in pursuit of trade, business and industrial activities (Deka 1996; Hussain 1993).

The post-Independence immigrants are of the three categories; viz., (i) the Hindu refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), (ii) the illegal Muslim infiltration from East Pakistan and Bangladesh and (iii) the immigrants from Nepal. On the Independence, millions of Hindus leaving their homes in the East Pakistan moved towards the states of eastern part of India, particularly West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. This unending influx of the large number of refugees has certainly created demographic imbalance in the states. The Nepali immigrants settled particularly

in the hill slopes of Assam initially immigrated in connection with their services in the British army and, later, continued the process of immigration through their relatives in the post-Independence. To complicate the problem they have come not only from Nepal but also from different parts of the British India (Deka 1996; Kumar 1995). Some other Hindu minority immigrants, largely Biharis, migrated to this region in order to cater to various services and to work as construction labourers. But the Biharis and the Marwaris are semi-permanent or seasonal as classified by Everett S. Lee in his two-fold migration; viz., permanent and semi-permanent or seasonal (Sarma 2002: 9). The impact of illegal Muslim infiltration from East Pakistan/Bangladesh not only confines to demographic imbalance but also extends to political, economic and socio-cultural arenas posing a serious security problem to Assam. The illegal infiltration has occurred in the state particularly in the post-Independence period due to (i) mismanagement of forest reserves and other government lands in Assam and North East India as a whole, (ii) loose international borders and (iii) harbouring and shielding the illegal infiltrations by a section of people (Kumar 1995:13).

In sum, the region's humandscape, especially after Independence, is fraught with the inter-ethnic conflicts of a long historical background. In the pre-Independence period there were mostly inter-tribal conflicts for control of territories and cultural dominance among the ethnic groups of different primordialities. But in the post-Independence times the diverse populations, ever flowing in, made the scene more complex in terms of intensity, scale and intricacy as well as overlapping and interlocking of the inter-ethnic conflicts. These conflicts may broadly be classified as (i) inter-tribal, (ii) inter-nationality, (iii) inter-religious, (iv) inter-lingual, (v) inter-regional and (vi) inter-state. The factors giving rise to the overlapping conflicts may be attributed to (i) developmental dynamics, (ii) communalization of politics and (iii) identity crisis. The post-Independence democratic politics operating on the canvas of diversities utilized the ethnic communities for political mobilization of masses and this led to the politicization/communalization of people in terms of tribe, caste, language, religion and territory. The communal politics found an environment conducive enough to flourish in the wake of developmental activities initiated in the region reeling under backwardness since long time. For access to limited means of development the ethnic politics came to be envisaged as an effective instrument, on the one hand, and relative deprivation and frustration of various ethnic groups in the process of development led to insurgency, on the other. In-migration of people from other parts of India and its neighbouring countries not only further strengthened their sense of deprivation but also created identity crisis among the native people. Therefore, a number of political parties and pressure groups have cropped up. The inter-ethnic conflicts have deep, complex and vexed roots broadly into the geo-political character of the region, competing ethnic groups and in-migration process.

*(ii) The Inter-ethnic Integration*

The ethnic composition no doubt depicts a greater aspect of conflicts and disintegration, but social, cultural, economic and political development in the ecological setting has largely contributed to a long-drawn process of inter-ethnic integration, co-operation and assimilation in the region, especially between Assam and other parts of the country and between the tribals and the non-tribals of Assam (Roy 2002).

In the material culture and economic life there are many similarities and dissimilarities among the tribal and non-tribal ethnic groups in the region as a whole. Majority of the people is directly or indirectly engaged in agricultural sector. They are the plough cultivators in the plains

whereas they practice shifting and terrace cultivation in the hills. In the pre- and early British periods, the integration worked more actively between the tribals and non-tribals, particularly between the Assamese and the Meitei, and between the Naga and Kuki and the Meitei. The process of interaction, contract and integration going on between the Brahmaputra plains and the hills of present Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya brought the people under a common economic zone and a common language, i.e., Assamese as Lingua Franca (Dubey 1978). For their own concern the British developed tea, coal, mineral and oil industries, education, roads and railways, which, fortunately, brought the ethnic groups into contact with each other. After the state formation in the region that directed action was initiated for various development activities like establishment of schools, colleges and universities, construction of new roads, emergence of business centres, development programmes, the government, and Panchayati Raj (Mishra 1991). Whether in economic or cultural terms, the integration has been more spontaneous and strong among the ethnic groups in the plains of Brahmaputra valley since the historical time. A common market brought together the Kacharis, Ahoms, Morans, Mataks, Tewas, Rabhas, Bodos, Chutiyas, Mishing and Koches to form the present Assamese nationality. Agriculture, the main economic source in Assam, engages approximately 74% of Assam's total population and covers 78% of its total land under the cultivation. About 15,000 square kilometres (19% of its total land) is estimated to be the hills area, about 17,932 square kilometres land has the reserved forests and 63,401 kilometres form the plains area. Besides, some other sources like tea and oil industries, coal mining and railways have a large contribution to the national wealth. Despite a low rate of urbanization and industrialization in Assam, Guwahati town is the core of higher education and business, which has economically bound together all the tribal and non-tribal ethnic groups in the region.

The Marwari, the Bengali and the local people of the region largely form the business relations in Assam. During the British period the entrepreneurs, particularly the Marwaris, initiated business in the region as a whole. The industrial development, which has been a by-product of the colonial exploitation of resources by the British, is not influentially effective in the economy of Assam even today. The rate of economic development in the region has been lagging far behind the national rate since the colonial time. Another broad group of tribals (Tea Tribes) comprising Oraon, Santal, Munda, Tanti, etc was brought to Assam by the tea planters as the indentured labour from the neighbouring provinces and is today a part of the Assamese society (Misra 1991; Dubey 1978). An overall picture of the regional economy reflects a strong relationship between the dominant centre and the less developed periphery. Sustained efforts are needed to gear the region forward in the era of technological revolution.

The region's political history has witnessed a number of changes in a long course of time. The Mahabharata, Puranas and other mythological stories reveal contact of the kings and the people of this region with their counterparts in the rest of India. The Mahabharata mentions the King Bhagadutta joining Kurukshetra battle and the ancient texts record the people of the region as the 'Kirata'. In medieval period, the kings of Koch, Kachari, Chutiya, Moran Borahi and Baro Bhuyan ruled separately in Assam. But, in course of time, after the Ahom's arrival all the ethnic groups integrated into one political unit in the Brahmaputra valley. A number of tribal chiefs of the Khasi, Jaintia, Naga and northern hills accepted their supremacy in one form or the other. Besides, a number of dynasties ruled in Manipur and Tripura. During the period, the kings and people of the

central India also accessed the region to capture Assam over a number of times. Aurangzeb captured upto Cooch Bihar and a part of the present Kamrup district but the Mughals had to leave the region shortly, on 9 January 1663, and the Ahoms came back to power.

In the British period, the Raj gradually increasing their administrative boundary annexed Cachar in August 1832, the Jaintia hills on 15 March 1833, the dominions of Purander Singh in 1839, the old Sadia Khowa Gohain in 1835, the Naga Hills in 1866, the Garo Hills from 1831 to 1869 and the Lushais in 1849. Later, every ethnic group in the region whether Muslim or Hindu, tribal or non-tribal, higher caste or lower caste, rich or poor joined the freedom movement and helped make the Indian nation. Religion, caste, tribe, ethnic group, kinship, customs and local considerations are the traditional bases of politics in the region. On the contrary, the modern bases like education, language and politico-economic issues (re-organization of states, separate statehood, location of industries, etc.) have also influenced the course of political action to a large extent (Dubey 1978). The tensions arising, after India's Independence, from the demands of several ethnic groups for separate states and spreading tribal unrest on the ethnic and racial considerations have been dealt with by according them statehood or tribal autonomous councils.

The modern political institutions in the region started only after the Independence, particularly in the hill states. The Congress, Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha had been the important political parties in the British and the post-Independence period. The Congress has a strong base in many states of the region whereas the Communist Party (Marxist) in Tripura is another national political party having an organizational base. Till 1985 the congress has been the dominant political party in Assam. The communist parties are having some base in Assam and Manipur also. The Bhartiya Janta Party has also created some base in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The Assam Gana Parishad having emerged with full mass support in 1985 is presently on decline. Notwithstanding, the rise and fall of a large number of regional political parties and interest groups adduce to the fact that regional political parties and local pressure groups are stronger in this part of the country. . Besides, the voters have a sustained contribution to the political vibrancy in the region. In spite of the terrorism unleashed by the United Liberation Front of Assam, Bodo Liberation Tigers and Karbi National Volunteers and is continuously threatening the Indian sovereignty, the people's participation in the assembly, parliamentary and panchayat elections has not decreased in Assam (Kumar 1995; Dubey 1978).

The social structure has emerged out of the interaction among the different racial, linguistic and cultural groups such as the Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Tibetan, and Indo-Aryans. The region's ancient cultural and political relations with the rest of the country were strengthened in the medieval period through more effective interaction of ethnic groups, particularly the Assamese and the Meiteis, with other parts of India and adoption of Vaishnavism (Barpujari 1990; Dubey 1978; Rastogi 1994). In the British period the western culture got foothold in the region and mainly the Christian religion, English language and western dress left great impact on the hills people, particularly in Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland. The cultural interaction of the local / regional people with different migrated ethnic groups such as Bengali, Muslim, Marwari, Bihari, Oriya, Punjabi, Nepali, etc. is still going on, sometimes creating unrest, here and there. Assam has always been the abode of racially and culturally mixed population. The major cultural assimilation took place in medieval period through Sankardeva's Vaishnavite movement launched in a vigorous way for Aryanisation of the people and to line Assam with the rest of India. He

introduced the tribal people of the region to the pan-Indian culture. Through the Vaishnavism all tribal people such as Koch, Kachari, Ahom, Moran, Matak, Tewa, Rabha, Chutiya, Bodo, Mishing, etc., ultimately, came up to form a broad Assamese society, particularly in the plains of Brahmaputra valley. During the period several tribal groups such as Koch, Ahom, Chutiya, Moran, etc. adopted caste Hinduism (Misra 1991).

Before the Sankara's Vaishnavism initiated in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism and ancient Hinduism were two major religions in ancient Assam. Guru Sankardeva believing in one god (Lord Krishna) abstained from idol worship. Besides, he contributed a lot to the realm of literature, culture, education and art by initiating a unique institution, Namghar, popularly called Khel, where the people recite *kirtans* (devotional songs) in the Lord's and the Guru's praise along with clapping and beating of the drums; viz, Khol, Tal, Negera, etc. (Rastogi 1994). The different ethnic groups such as the Koch, Moran, Chutiya, Ahom, Bodo, Kachari Sonowal, Rabha, Mech, Moran, Mishing, Deori, and even the 'Mazdoor' / 'Adibashi' (Tea Tribes) have drawn within the fold of Vaishnavism and in the villages each of the groups has a Namghar or more. A Namghar consists of three parts; viz., (i) the Batsara or roofed gate, (ii) the kirtan ghar (main body of the Namghar) and (iii) the manikot or sacrosanct. All castes and communities were allowed to freely establish their own Namghars. Though Sankardeva did not give stress on abolition of caste distinctions from the Assamese society, he gave freedom and equality to all low and high class people. Thus, different castes and ethnic groups formed the present Assamese society. Through the Namghar he tried to abolish illiteracy, untouchability, selfishness, greediness, caste divisions, etc. from the Hindu society and introduced basic education in singing, musical instruments, art, craft and vocational training in the medieval Assam. The Namghar functions as a supreme religious centre, a school, a library known as 'Satra' to produce reputed scholars/propagators of Vaishnavism, a little parliament in the villages to discuss all socio-cultural, religious or developmental activities and an agency to make and enforce rules and regulations. Every household in a village cultivates a bigha of land and pays some taxes in cash or kind to maintain 'Khel' (Namghar). The members elect the office bearers; namely, Sutradhar, Gayan Bayan, Dhulia-Khulia, Khanikar, Namgharia, etc, or now-a-days president, secretary, members and Namgharia, to perform religio-cultural activities, to maintain the Namghar and to carry out the village development works. Namghar acts as a court of justice where the village elders settle almost all cases but for major and difficult ones (Rastogi 1994:59-65). This is, perhaps, the great contribution of Assam to the integration of the Indian culture.

On the whole, numerous and conflicting identities have come to terms of integration on account of the interdependencies of economic, political and socio-cultural processes organizing social life in the region.. The factors of integration may be broadly categorized into two categories; viz., the pan-Indian ideological-cultural and the existential (secular) structural.

#### Ethnicity, Diasporism and Society: An Analysis

North East India is historically a diasporic society of mobile populations of multiple and interspersed ethnic groups competing for dominance and development. In the situation of the ethnic heterogeneity a feeling of relative deprivation haunts the groups engaged in various interactions for production and governance. In the democratic politics the political actors like political parties and leaders compete for mobilization of people through articulation of their interests and the people compete for their role in the process of development (production) through their

stakes in governance. In a society where people are organized on the basis of ethnic identities the political actors take advantage of utilizing the existing ethnic groups, instead of individuals, for people's interest aggregation and mobilization. Through political dominance (governance) and development there comes status enhancement of a group. Therefore, the people use their cultural (ethnic) identity as a resource to attain power, wealth and status, i.e., material and non-material gains in the politics of underdevelopment or scarcity. In the given social milieu the interacting ethnic identities lead to their perpetuation, fragmentation and conflicts as well as to integration and assimilation through alignments and contacts for various politico-economic interests. Hence, the society in the region sustains its diasporic character through cultural (ethnic) dominance over polity and economy. The conflicts may be mitigated by galvanization of their identities through the process of development to bring out the polity and economy gradually from the particularistic cultural dominance. That is, their attempts for homogenization of power with a particular culture/ethnic identity will be replaced by homogenization of culture with universalistic politico-economic power. The question is: What factor intervenes their full engagement in the politico-economic development? The answer leads to the factors like underdeveloped infrastructure, unemployment, immigrants and insurgency, which are intertwined in such a way as they hamper the development. The development engaging the people fully will diminish the dichotomy of culture and power and make it easier to tame the ethnic identities.

The integration in the pre-Independence mostly occurred in the plains between the caste and the indigenous people including the plains tribes on economic, political, administrative, social and cultural planes. The hill people mostly either remained or were deliberately retained isolated under the administrative policy of non-interference. After Independence the political, administrative and development processes, urbanization, expanding market and revolutionized communication have played very vital role in the integration of the people of different identities. Local entrepreneurship and labour are gradually increasing in the market dominated by the Marwari and Bengali entrepreneurs and the Bihari labour. In the plains agriculturists employ the cheaper labour from the migrants. In the service sector local people have come up significantly whereas the Bengali and other people dominated earlier. Sub-national and autonomy aspirations of various ethnic identities have been mitigated through the state formation and autonomous tribal councils within the Indian constitution. This method of integration has been proved effective but the region constantly witnesses burgeoning aspirations for identity autonomy. Hinduization in the plains and Christian influence in the hills have been the two major religious processes of integration amidst the presence of the followers of India's almost all religions in the region. Despite the presence of all the Scheduled languages and a large number of other languages and dialects Assamese serves as lingua franca in a greater part of the region. Interestingly, in the wake of increased interactions of the locals with national institutions, markets and service sector along with all pervading access of mass media Hindi is gradually emerging as the link language all over the region.

Surprisingly, the integration has been always going on although the times as the overlapping and cross cutting identities reduce the intensity and longevity of conflicts get reduced and make the inter-ethnic relationship dynamic dialectical. A complete solution of ethnic question seems difficult in any society as even the developed multi-cultural societies are experiencing resurgence of ethnic identities. The development of society itself gives rise to ever new problems, the solutions of which are not found with the technical and material means and the people generally

rediscover their identity for ultimate solution of the problems. Therefore, the ethnic question in the diasporic North East India needs to be handled delicately with a vision for future in the light of the historical experiences of India and other multi-cultural societies.

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## **Power Dynamics and Emerging Patterns of Social Stratification among the Gaddi of Western Utaar Pradesh**

**Parvez A. Abbasi**

The term status group was introduced by Max Weber as an element of social stratification distinct from class, to describe certain collectivities distinct from other social groups in a society, by a socially defined criteria of status (Avercrobie; Hill and Turnur, 1954; 209). According to Weber the term social status may be applied to typically effective group claiming to a position or negative privilege with respect to social prestige, so far as it rests on one or more basis: (a) mode of living; (b) a formal process of education which may consist of empirical or rational training and acquisition of the corresponding modes of life; or (c) on the prestige of birth, or of an occupation (Weber, 1947; 428). Weber further clarifies in this context that status honour is normally expressed in the sense that above all else a specific style of life is expected from all those who wish to belong to a particular circle, which is linked with this expectation and thus, exhibits restriction on social intercourse. These restrictions may confine to normal marriages within the status circle and may lead to complete endogamous closure (Weber, 1958; 199). Thus, in a given society, the concept of 'Status' forms a dimension of broader concept of social stratification. The concept of status as defined by Weber seems to be useful for the vital linkages with the structure of power not only within the community but also beyond it. The present paper is aimed at analyzing the dynamics of status with reference to the community power structure and the emergence of fresh strata among the Gaddis.

The study anchored on the field work among the Gaddi, one of the Muslim groups spread over villages, towns and cities in the Meerut region forty to seventy kilometers north-east of Delhi and was conducted towards close of the ninth decade of the nineteenth century.

Meerut region is situated between the two famous and holy rivers of north India – the Ganga and the Yamuna. The region extends upto Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar on one side and Bulandshwhar other side including Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar and Noida. Meerut is the commissioner head quarters which is feasibly communicable with Delhi (just seventy kilometers) with a national highway which links the national capital to Dehradun, a capital city of Uttaranchal State. It takes about one hundred minutes by bus to approach Delhi.

In the study, information was gathered through observation, conversations, personal contacts and through participation in the deliberation of *Biradari Panchayat* and socio-religious ceremonies.

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During the course of fieldwork, a case study of communal disturbances was also undertaken. For the enrichment of data, conversations with five influential persons including one non-practising and other practising advocates, chief of the *Gaddi Biradari Panchayat* and two representatives of the *Biradari Panchayat* appeared to be very useful. The investigator could get their hospitality and both the advocates became friendly with the investigator, hence, the task of investigator became easier in establishing meaningful rapport with the respondents.

The marriage performance among the Gaddi is not only an important ritual of life cycle, but it also activists a number of kinship and *Biradari* ties effectively. And in the process to commemorating the marriage ceremony, a feast is organized which is a common dining system of the *Biradari*, manifesting the unity of the *Biradari* and renew the group cohesiveness. However, the dowry system has paved its way among the Gaddi community also, which is mainly facilitated with the advancement of agricultural economy, impact of increasing urban culture, and the Hindu social values. The agricultural innovations and their operations contributed to the prosperity of the peasantry in the region. Apparently, their rural life style is reflected even in urbanized setting tremendously. The amalgamation of rural and urban life generated a new fangled social milieu under which, the dowry system gained the social acceptance among the landowning Hindu castes in the region. The Gaddi of Meerut, who are also associated with land and agriculture, also adopted the practice of dowry system. The dowry system has now a place in the social structure of Gaddis. However, both the practices: organizing feast and dowry system, in due course, propelled the *Biradari* in a crisis in the sense, that an increasing cost of feast and dowry has led the number of bachelorhood among the girls of middle and lower strata of the Gaddi. Thus, the practice of dowry in the Gaddi caste, affected *Biradari* solidarity. Dowry and feast has become an extra burden on the girls family.

Both the practices of the feast and dowry got accentuated among the members of Gaddi *Biradari*, especially among leaders of the *Biradari* during the mid 70s. With the initiation of some educated elite, the *Chaudhary* of the Gaddi called a regional *Biradari Panchayat* in 1977 at his residence. The *Panchayat* in its meeting had taken up two issues: the dowry system and organization of feast at the time of marriage, the matters were discussed and suggestions of educated elites to ban the system were accepted. The suggestions were welcomed by the members of the *Biradari*. The *Panchayat* decided that the representatives of the *Biradari* would take care of effective implementation of these suggestions in their respective localities. Nevertheless, even after imposition of ban on dowry and *Biradari* feast, a section of the neo rich families not only continued the organisation of *Biradari* feast but also followed the practice of dowry as well. The continuity of the banned practices by a section of *Biradari* has given rise to a situation of confusion among the *Biradari*, whether to practice the system or do away with it. This sort of a confusion within the *Biradari* posed a challenge to the existing leadership of the *Biradari* by a section of the neo rich families who opined that with out a feast the marriage has no meaning. In order to subside the confusion, a general gathering of the *Biradari* was called during March 1982. The members of the *Biradari* were assembled near the Nandhandi ground in Meerut city at the place of Mazar (tomb) of Bale Miyan, with whom the Gaddi claim their genealogical connections. The members and the representatives of the *Biradari* participated in the deliberation of the *Panchayat*. The educated elites, one of whom a non-practicing advocate had suggested to the *Chaudhary* of the *Biradari* that the problem must be discussed in a general gathering (General

Body Meeting) of the *Biradari*. In this deliberation, no unanimous decisions could be taken. However, the majority supported the ban which was decided in 1977. The *Panchayat* reached a consensus that the dinner be replaced by soft drinks *Sharbat* and the gift of utensils be fixed five in number, the basic material of the utensils be allowed to vary as per the party's desire to offer. This concession was given to provide some scope for variety as per the status of party. The decision was greatly welcomed by the poorer majority and lineage B put its support for it. While lineage M went the opposite side. It is a reflection of an old dispute of property distribution between the two lineages which had occurred two decades earlier. Such conflicts at times turned violent resulting in the exchange of blows. One such conflict has ended up in splitting a close-knit community of the Gaddi into two factions (status groups). In this conflict, firing of gunshots had taken place. The members of lineage M alleged that the lineage B had initiated in opening the fire. There were however, the cross complaints with the police. In return the police arrested the members from both M and B lineage. Both the lineages approached and influenced the police by pulling their own wires. It is interesting to note that this conflict had involved even the non-*Biradari* members, such as an M.P. and a medical advisor to the President of India (both non-*Biradari* members) had taken the sides for each of the conflicting lineages. In the deliberation of general body meeting of 1982, the factions were visible at the time when *Biradari Panchayat* tried to decide to punish the members of the opposing group who not only violated the decision of *Biradari* taken by its executive in 1977, but also tried to disturb the general body meeting by using muscle power in the meeting. Consequently the group was excommunicated by the *Biradari*. The excommunicated group with the support of lineage M, who had muscle power, renewed the old practices of feast and dowery. This particular group was called *Dawati* and the group with the support of lineage B with some educated advocates who followed the decision of *Biradari* to offer *Sharbat*, began to labeled as *Sharbati*. Both the group started to maintain their separate identity. The emergence of *Sharbati* group has paved the way for the *Dawati* group to chose its own *Chaudhary* and the supporters. To put the weight behind this group was lineage M, thus Meena Pahelwan had become the *Chaudhary* of this group. The breakaway group has a new *Chaudhary* which seems to be functional alternative to control the mechanism of the *Dawati* faction of the *Biradari*. The economic and muscles power worked as the under currents for an alternate arrangement of the *Biradari* (*Dawati* group). However, in the present situation, the muscle and economic power work as a stronger under current to influence the *Biradari*. The under currents of modern forces simultaneously go along with the traditional forces of *Biradari Panchayat*. The forces put together have resulted in the emergence of two endogamous groups within the Gaddi as *Sharbati* and the *Dawati*. The emergence of fresh strata had led the serious consequences. A *Sharbati* would not go to a *Dawati* on any ritualistic occasions nor could invite him to his own. Even parents found it difficult to call their daughters whose husbands had become the member of the other group. Such a tension was brought within the community that the *Biradari* decisions were obviously affected by the members who accepted the new norms. The whole kinship structure broke into *Sharbati* and *Dawati*. Thus, the membership of these status groups had become the symbol of ones identity. The interaction even between the close kinsmen began to get influenced by the affiliation of *Sharbati* and *Dawati* groups. All social ties were ceased between those two groups. Efforts were intensified to bring the two factions at a level of agreement.

During the Meerut communal Disturbances (1982), educational elites took the initiative to unite the two factions. Although it was a cumbersome exercise, nevertheless, the members of the *Biradari* were appealed to sink their differences at least taking the communal riots of Meerut into consideration. Lineage M was reluctant to pay any heed hence the new leader (educated elite) offered the proposal that they (*Dawatis*) need not go to the *Sharbatis*, instead lineage B would visit to them. Once the representatives of lineage B arrived at the proposed meeting, the hosts disappeared from the meeting which resulted in not paving any inroads for resolving the differences. The process of initiation was taken over by a young non-practicing advocate, he made efforts to find a solution by proposing the framing of constitution of the Gaddi Welfare Society which would work beyond the factions and tried to initiate the facility of schooling for the children of the community. The effort was initiated by a young educational elite with the help of a voluntary association appeared to be a focal organizing point in itself, a significant social current in a tradition bound society. Unfortunately, the effort failed to narrow the gap, which indicates the present stage of development of the community. However, *Chaudhary* of the *Biradari Panchayat* visualized the importance of the educational elite in the affairs of the *Biradari* and he considers it expedient to consult their opinions before taking the formal decision of the *Panchayat*. He, thus, tried to balance the new ideas with his traditional authority to make it more effective.

The other aspect of Meerut disturbances significantly reflected the *Biradari*'s inter-relations of the *jajamani* arrangement with the lower castes of the Hindus. The women from the Chamar caste families even during the disturbances, came to the Gaddi houses to clean the cow dung from the floor where the animals were tied (the Chamar women convert the cow dung into cow dung cakes and earn by selling it). Besides their earning the Chamar women received Rs.20/-monthly payment for the services rendered to the Gaddi. This sort of *jajamani* continued even during the disturbed period. Nevertheless, on the other hand the Bhangi - Gaddi relations grew tense. In normal time the sweepers got rupees five per month and a Chapati per day from the Gaddi families for cleaning their service latrines. When disturbance broke out, mutual distrust arose and collective behaviour got accentuated to the *Biradari Panchayats* of both the groups at city level, and the sweepers withdrew their services to the Gaddi and other Muslim groups. The houses became stinky and some arrangements were to be made. A few persons from the *Bhisti* caste from the Muslims were prevailed upon to clean the service latrine and use the cycle driven carts for carrying the night soil, as they did not agree to take it as a head load or as a hand load. Amongst them, the majority still continues doing sweeping and cleaning the night soil except one who abandoned his cleaning occupation because he was chided by his wife and members of in laws. In due course of time, some social stigma have been attached to the serving individuals of the *Bhisti* group. These social phenomena of recent origin dates back to the disturbance time. Because pollution attached to the recent occupation people of other Muslim group as well as the other section of *Bhisti* began to looking down upon these servicing individuals. As such a new caste-like group began emerging. And the emergence of this new group seems to be a consequence of the functional arrangement of the *jajamani* system.

The formation of status groups among the Gaddi had shown different kind of reflections in the dynamics of community power structure in the town of Muradnagar particularly during the organization of a local urs (a religious fair). This religious fair was being organized every year by the Gaddi community near the Mazar of Hazrat Ghasi - a peer (Tomb of a local deity Hazarat

Ghazi). The deity is being revered by both the Muslims as well as the Hindus of the town. Amongst the Muslims, the main task of organizing the fair was done by the leading members of the Gaddi and the Kasai caste quite smoothly upto the 1982. But the emergence of *Sharbati* and *Dawati* status groups had affected the organizational work of the urs at the local level. In the town, the *Dawati* group was led by a former Pahelwan (wrestler) who had been very influential among the Gaddi at regional and local levels. Since, the move of *Sharbati* had gained popularity among the youths, and they supported the decision of *Biradari Panchayat* under the local leadership of a Gaddi youth. There was also a property dispute among the members of Gaddi in the town, which was discussed at the local level *Biradari Panchayat*. Fitani Pahelwan who was the head of local *Biradari* tried to favour one party out of the norms of *Biradari* but could not succeed as his move was opposed by a youth leader. This had led in the emergence of a conflicting situation between the two groups at the local level. The conflict had got the organization of urs affected. The *Dawati* status group affirmed to organize another urs at the same place on the same date. The Kasai group had already two factions in the town. One faction was led by a former chairman of the town area of the Muradnagar, and the *Sharbati* status group had alliances with this faction while another faction of Kasai had its alliances with *Dawati* status group of the Gaddi. The organization of two urs simultaneously developed the confusions not only in the minorities but also in the majority communities, who are liberal in donating monetary support to the urs. The two status groups among the Gaddi contributed in disturbing the power equilibrium in the town for quite some time. The newly emerged elite group among the Gaddi (youths) participated enthusiastically in the organizational work of the urs while the other group tried to alternate the masses by organizing a separate urs, but could not get much support by its caste members. Thus, the formation of status groups among the Gaddi at the regional level has affected the members of the caste even at the local level. The split of the *Biradari* reflected in the political process as well and has led in the formation of new factions and alliances in the political structure of the town. The factions among the Gaddi and Kasais played a significant role in the local election of the town area. The alliances were formed of Gaddi youth and an exchairman of Kasais' factions led by the exchairman of Kasais. Amongst these factions, the leadership in the Gaddis' faction was with a youth, popularly known as Netaji by the *Biradari* as well as by the neighbouring groups in the town. The new leadership among the Gaddi, however, sustained new dimension to the local community power structure. In the sense that among the Kasais, the old leadership was being continued, while among the Gaddi, the emergence of a new status group resulted in losing the domination of the old leadership and it had been mainly influenced by the under currents of new ideas. The new leadership among the Gaddi, played an important role in the local activities like the urs organization etc. Because of its effective support within the *Biradari*, the influentials of other castes cutting across the religious boundaries preferred to have alliance with the new emerging youth leadership of the Gaddi. However, the emergence of status groups in the caste seems to have wider implications in the structure and functioning of a political system and adds a new dynamicity to the stratification system both at regional and local levels.

It seems to be note worthy here that in the Meerut region during the last two decades there has been a major shift from traditional old aged elites to the emerging new elites of youth (Chauhan, 1990:100-1). And the Gaddi is no more an exception of this phenomenon. Although, the *Chaudhary* of the *Biradari* remained an old aged man having no education, nevertheless, he

recognized the values of educated elites of the *Biradari* like non-practicing and practicing advocates and considered it useful to consult them to get some inclinations before taking a formal decision. However, the balance between traditional authority with modern ideas are maintained in this pattern.

The point that comes out in the present study is: Ghurye (1969) brought process of fission identified various endogamous groups with in a caste structure. And he cited the example of Kumhar caste. The Kumhar who used small wheel in making earthen pots become different from those who worked at a large wheel. He treated the fission of the caste as sub-castes. Social reforms and power dynamics among the Gaddis have resulted in the emergence of two endogamous groups: the *Sharbati* and the *Dawati*. The process of splitting or the fission of caste into sub-castes has operated along lines different from those of Kumbar's as indicated by Ghurye.

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## **BOOK – REVIEW**

**Encyclopedia of AIDS : A Social, Political, Cultural, and Scientific Record of the HIV Epidemic, Edited by Raymond A. Smith; Penguin Reference, New York, 2001; pp. xxxiii + 782, \$ 25.00 (PB)**

Any discourse on AIDS presupposes many issues which suggest that it is a fastly spreading disease the world over, could be controlled someday in the future, at the present there is no way to escape from it if one acquires it, and its prevention is better than cure. Occasionally one comes across some short-time commercial breaks on television suggesting that the AIDS spreads through the use of contaminated and used needles in the form of injections, through the blood transfusion containing the AIDS virus or through the unsafe sex. Ways and means to safeguard the human-kind against the AIDS are also suggested on the electronic media, they are like : One must ensure that a new needle is used in the injection or one must at least make sure that the same needle is put there in the boiling water for more than forty minutes, that the blood which is to be given to the patient is free from the AIDS virus and that one must have safe sex'. And for having 'Safe Sex' one must have sexual relations with one partner only and make use of condoms. One more dimension has been added to this through the print and electronic media which is suggestive of free and open discussion on the AIDS among the people themselves. It shall help in dispelling the fears about the AIDS.

Now, let us see what is the most essential message which "must" reach the people through the mass-media, It is "let us discuss about AIDS". Unfortunately this is not happening, people at large are either unconcerned about AIDS or don't want to discuss about it. Both of these situations are dangerous from the point of view of society. The print – and electronic-media can dispel the fears about the AIDS among the people, but these efforts would not be sufficient enough until people discuss about it amongst themselves. As the print and electronic media can't go beyond a certain level like developing awareness about the AIDS, some specialized skills in the area of communication are required to dispel the fears and educate the people about it. Admittedly, the concern for the AIDS epidemic has not remained confined up to the medical professionals only, Perhaps the medical professional – a doctor and an equally competent social scientist could be the ideal combination to work as a team to educate people against the AIDS, In this context the book under review has come as a hope which can be used by medical professionals and social scientists alike in different situations – in seminars as well as in the classrooms to dispel the fears about AIDS.

The reference book under review is the paper back edition published by Penguin Reference, its earlier hardcover version was published by Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers (1998). It looks more like an encyclopedic dictionary which includes 249 entries on various topics contributed by 181 authors. Raymond A. Smith begins by "A Caution to Readers" about the use of this encyclopedia and has written some fresh but brief entries for this paper back edition. The editor has tried to evaluate the whole scenario on AIDS as the titles of the new entries suggest e.g. "Sharp Declines in Illness and Death", "New treatment falls short of highest hopes", "Barriers to the use of

Medication”, “Preventive use of Antiviral Medications”, and “Women : The Fastest Growing Impacted Population in the U.S.” Each of these new entries is followed by a list of related topics. The encyclopedia typically includes two prefaces : the first one, “The Era of AIDS is written by James W. Curran and the other “Lessons from the Global HIV / AIDS Epidemic” by Peter Piot. Next to it is “Editor’s note and Guide to usage” followed by the usual acknowledgements. After that a list of contributors and alphabetical list of entries is given. All this consume the introductory but essential part of the encyclopedia covering pages between i – xxxiii. It is followed by entries on various topics related to AIDS, from “abstinence” to “writers” it covers pages between 1 – 762. A couple of last pages between 763-782 are devoted to the index. The first and foremost positive point about this encyclopedia is about its availability in the paperback edition which means its wider circulation and availability throughout the world. The spread of knowledge worldwide particularly on the topic like AIDS is worth appreciating. Since the decade of 1980s many dictionaries and smaller – sized encyclopedias have been published and added to various libraries world over as reference – books. It has in fact saved the scholars from the cumbersome task of searching for concepts, perspectives or even for the points of views which used to consume not only a lot of time but also there limited energies. There is yet another significant difference between those dictionaries of the previous century and the present one. Previously these dictionaries were published mainly around subjects like e.g. on sociology, economics or political science, but now some thematic – issues like AIDS also have become the subjects for such an encyclopedic endeavor. Although some of the entries in the encyclopedia might not look new e.g. Hinduism, Islam, Poverty or Racism but what is new about them is that all such entries have been written about while keeping the perspective of AIDS in mind. A good number of entries deals with medical-issues exclusively, like cytomegalovirus, Hepatitis, T-cells and tuberculosis. There are also entries discussing the geographical location of places like; Asia, South; Europe, Northern; Russia and Former Soviet Union and United States – The South, Additionally there is a mention of a wide range of topics like human rights, literature, pornography, safer-sex education, vaccines, and women. After each such entry two other related issues are mentioned in each case, they are (a) related entries and (b) further reading. Related entries as well as the index given at the end are very useful, especially while searching the cross – references. It is quite encouraging to report that in the “further reading” section there has been a mention of good number of references from the journals of social sciences along with that of medical sciences. A good number of authors, contributing effectively in their respective areas of specializations and the generally lucid style of presentations make this encyclopedia a worth while reading. Even enters on medical sciences do not torture the social-scientists. This encyclopedia finally seems to become a part of the essential reading by academicians, medical professionals administrators, law-makers, politicians, university and college teachers as well as students and all those who are interested to know more about the AIDS. We are sure that reading it would lead to the much required need of society like capacity – building against the menace of AIDS.

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### A Note on Research Committee 14: Culture and Communication

The RC 14 is one of the Research Committees constituted under the Indian Sociological Society by its Executive Committee for its effective, decentralized and systematized functioning in the year 1998. The main theme of the RC, Culture and Communication, represents interests of intellectuals and academics from a wide range of disciplines. Sub-themes and topics of the papers to be presented at the All India Sociological Conference organized by the ISS every year. The RC started its business first in 1998 at the XXV All India Sociological Conference held at Aligarh Muslim University. The Committee emerged a forum of systematic working in 2000 at the XXVI All India Sociological Conference held at University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram. There Dr. V. P. Singh, Reader, Dept. of Sociology, Assam University, Silchar, convened its sessions for three days. In October 2001 Dr. V. P. Singh was made regular convenor of the RC. The systematic working of the committee was further strengthened and its membership got academically differentiated at the XXVII All India Sociological Conference held at GND University, Amritsar (December 26-28, 2001). The participants from the disciplines like English Language and Education joined the committee to make the discussions more interesting. It was XXVIII All India Sociological Conference held at IIT, Kanpur (December 18-20, 2002), that the committee really displayed systematized functioning, academic growth, disciplinary diversity of participants and structural articulation. This trend is still continuing. In Jammu conference, first time 26 abstracts were received and as many as 18 papers were presented by the members covering various dimensions of the RC theme. Theme and sub-themes of the committee, programme of sessions and other agenda were communicated to the members through the RC14 Newsletter and were also in the ISS Newsletter. The sessions were conducted with utmost sincerity, punctuality and interest among all the participants who were further diversified by those from Communication, Mass Media and Journalism, Social Work and Natural Sciences. Here, a need for creating a structure of the committee was felt and therefore the Executives were elected by the members for tenure of two years. This structure provides better working of the committee, networking among the members and planning of activities.

The present office Bearers of the RC are as follows:

**Convenor: Dr. V. P. Singh (Silchar)**  
**Co-convenor: Dr. Parvez A. Abbasi (Surat)**  
**Executive Members:**

**1. Prof. Rajesh Misra (Lucknow) 2. Prof. Arvind Chauhan (Bhopal) 3. Mrs. Manju Goyal (Ghaziabad)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
<b>Number of Abstracts Received</b>	3	12	10	15	9	26	75
<b>Number of Papers Presented</b>	3	9	13	14	6	18	63

The RC has identified some themes related to the main area of culture and communications to provide a guideline to the scholars and researchers to direct their ideas and studies. In the coming years the RC intends to focus on the following themes:

1. *Recent perspectives on Culture and Communication: a. Frankfurt School; b. Post-Modern Culture; c. Culture Reproductions*
2. *Culture and Traditional Modes of Communication.*
3. *Popular Culture and Mass Media.*
4. *Gender Issues in Culture and Communication.*
5. *Ethnicity, Culture and Communication.*
6. *Multimedia, Multilingualism and Cultural Identity in India.*
7. *Information Technology and Development.*
8. *Globalization, Advertising and Consumerism.*
9. *Mass Media and Problems of Fundamentalism, Terrorism, Violence etc.*
10. *Globalization, Mass Media and Socio-cultural Change.*

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