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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**H.C.D.G.College, Nitaipukhuri**

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## Editorial

*The emergence of contemporary history as a distinctive academic discipline is very useful and needs to be studied in the light of the recent past. The main objective of contemporary history is to conceptualize, contextualize and historicize – to explain – some aspect of the recent past or to provide a historical understanding of current trends or developments. Though the development of contemporary history had taken place in the early 1930s in Netherland it was more popular in the post world war period. Later on in 1980s in order to analyze the contested claims and counter claims of recent past, using historical and other academic methodologies, the Institute of Contemporary British History (now Centre for Contemporary British History (CCBH)) was established in 1986 and thenceforth it has acted as a focal point for the study of contemporary history. In India the contemporary continued to be of significance in determining the nature of historical research in postcolonial India. Several historians questioned the earlier ways of understanding the past—a questioning of conventional history, which essentially the succession of dynasties one more glorious than the next—with economic history, social history and the history of religion and the arts. Romila Thapar, Partha Chatterjee, Ashis Nandy are all working in this field of history. Thus, there have been noticeable shift in the writing of history in*

*the period after colonial rule, in response to changes in contemporary Indian society and polity.*

*The main aim of this journal is to provide a platform to the research scholars and faculty members working in the different fields of study in of historiography. The papers in this volume are written on different topics. Prof. Biswajit Barua in his paper searches out the causes of the development of India's close relationship with Israel especially in the field of defence deal after a non cordial relationship for more than four decades. Jayshree Phukan's paper is also related to India's foreign policy towards Afghanistan and she tries to show the geo-strategic significance of Afghanistan for India in south Asian politics. Bibhash Choudhury's highly thought-provoking essay on Lakshminath Bezbaroa's hagiography, Sri Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva, "Writing Life, Reading Culture: Bezbaroa on Sankardeva" brings out some cardinal points regarding Sankardeva's application of tradition in a unique and innovative way. Drawing the context of tradition and individual talent, he exquisitely estimates 'Bezbaroa's enterprise' of reading the life of a saint-artist and his surrounding culture which made it possible to emerge two cultural icons in fifteenth century Assam. Dr. Choudhury here makes an estimate of Bezbaroa's eandevour to make Sankardeva real and relevant to modern audience.*

*Nizara Phukan's paper on the Buryat Mongols is a new area of research. She tries to analyze how the process of Russification of the Buryat Mongols under the Russian Empire has been allowed to die a slow death of the Buryat culture due to the overwhelming presence of dominant Russian culture. Pradyumna Sarma writes his paper on traditional games of Assam where he tries to show how these games and sports are essential markers of social developments and change. He wants to investigate the social origin of these games as far as possible and traceable. Sanghamitra Jahari tries to explain in her paper the structural evolution from village to chiefdom to tribe and ultimately to state. She also describes the several stages of historical evolution*

*in the tribal society not as an isolated entity but in a constant state of interaction, both at local and supra-local levels. Shirumoni Baruah makes an attempt to show in her paper that how the prevailing rigid caste system in India had helped in the rise of Buddhism. She interprets that Buddhism challenged the Brahmanical authority and its ritual orthodoxy. To her Buddhism is not strictly a religion in the sense in which it is commonly understood, for it is not a system of faith and worship, owing any allegiance to a supernatural God. She, in her paper, does not call it a philosophy because it is not merely the love of inducing the search after wisdom. Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization. Buddhism is not a Philosophy but Philosophy of philosophies. Devid Payeng paper is a comparative study on African cultural past with that of India's North-east in the light of Chinua Achebe's Things fall Apart. To him the reason for which a few African tribes converted into Christianity by leaving their own Igbo culture the tribes of North-eastern states too have converted to Christianity for the same reason. He says that if a society is not based on principles of equality or in other words, if all members of a particular society are not guaranteed equal respect and treatment then external forces can easily intrude and shatter it. He saw a similar kind of situation in the culture and society of North-East India in the colonial and post-colonial period. On the other hand Rimi Rashmi Borah made an attempt to highlight the contribution of the Digboi Oil Refinery in the industrialization process in Assam from 1901 to 1981. The last paper is on 'Indo-Japan Trade and Commercial Relations in the Post Cold War Period'. In this paper Bishakha Baruah critically examine the India's economic policy after World War II especially bilateral trade with Japan as a trading partner. She comments that it was only after 1991; India adopted an outward-oriented policy to develop her economy by making use of the tide of globalization.*

*I believe these papers will succeed in providing some new information to the readers having interest in these areas of study. We will consider it highly rewarding if the articles of this issue serves this purpose.*

*I take the privilege to offer my heartiest thanks to Mrs. Gitli Saikia, Associate professor and Head, Department of English of this college for her constant help and advice in publishing this journal. I extend my sincere regards and gratitude to the members of the Advisory Board, my fellow colleagues and students of our Department without whose valuable suggestions and active involvement it would not have been possible for me to bring out this volume. I am also highly grateful to those who have enriched this issue by their valuable research articles. Moreover, I convey my sincere gratitude to our honourable Principal Sir for encouraging us in publishing this journal. Finally, I convey my thanks to the owner and staff of Hazarika Offset Printers and all the members of my college fraternity.*

**Tarun Gogoi**  
Editor

Research Journal of Itihas Adhyayan Chakra

## India's Defence Deals With Israel

**Prof. Biswajit Baruah**

The objective of the present paper is to analyze firstly, why India's relation with Israel was not cordial for more than four decades. Secondly, what were the circumstances that moved India closer to Israel especially in the field of defence? Thirdly, why India gave priority to Israeli arms including Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs) missiles and electronic warfare systems?

India's relation with Israel in the beginning was never cordial. For the last four decades, she had maintained close relations with the Arab world. This was due to her dependence on oil supply from the West Asian nations and also because of more than 100 million Muslim citizens in the country who considered Israel as an enemy and could influence the government. In spite of these constraints, India extended de-jure recognition to Israel in 1950s and allowed her to maintain a Consulate in Mumbai. But due to the changing global scenario in the aftermath of the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Gulf War, Pakistan's attempt to internationalize Kashmir issue, her support to the militants in Kashmir gradually compelled India to have closer ties with Israel.

Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, India depended on the former for military hardware like Tanks, Fighter bombers of the MIG series, Rockets etc. But her break up led to the collapse of her military industrial complex and thus could no longer supply aircrafts or its spares to India.

India's defence officials had stated that they need more than 1 lakh spare parts to maintain aircrafts, tanks, guns, missiles, naval vessels purchased from the former Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

After her disintegration, Russia alone cannot meet the demands of India's defence forces. So, there is a need to diversify her purchases. In this regard, India has looked towards Israel for her technology and expertise in both lethal and non-lethal weapons. This includes equipments like radar, electronic warfare equipment and engineering items used in border fencing. The biggest advantage of seeking military cooperation with Israel lies in the fact that its technology is largely indigenous and facilitates technology transfer with no end user problem.

Israel is self-sufficient in light arms, communication devices, force multipliers, remotely piloted vehicles, electronic and anti-electronic warfare systems, night vision devices, naval equipments ranging from command and control systems and naval patrol boats. Israel's defence industry can produce technologically advanced component that give 20 to 30 year old weapon systems new life and a qualitative edge and improves the capabilities of fighter aircraft, helicopters, combat vehicles and intelligence systems.<sup>2</sup>

Israel has to export arms firstly, for the well-being of the defence industry, secondly, to improve her economy and lastly, to support the Research and Development that enables her to have superiority in weapons technology.<sup>3</sup>

It was in the first week of April 1995, General Helz Bodinger from Israel visited India. His visit resulted in a package deal that included Airborne Warning and Control Systems, Remotely Piloted Vehicles, access to an air platform for anti-detection and anti-jamming manoeuvre and specialized weapons.<sup>4</sup>

Defence Secretary of India, K.A. Nambiar paid a visit to Israel initially for the purpose of identifying the avionics and weapons systems for MIG21B15 aircraft which were being upgraded for India under the Indo-Russian joint venture. The upgradation of the Russian T-72 tank was also discussed with Israel.<sup>5</sup>

During President Ezer Weizman's visit to India in January 1997, the two countries decided to exchange military attaches. Senior Defence officials of India then visited Israel to gather information on satellite and missile programmes.<sup>6</sup>

India's on-going defence program is same as Israel. They are the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), (Israel's Lavi), Arjun Tank (Merkava), Prithvi Missile (Jericho-I) and Agni (Jericho II). Others are Remotely Piloted Vehicles, Airborne Early Warning System and Anti Ballistic Missile Systems.<sup>7</sup>

During Weizman's visit, negotiations took place by which India agreed to purchase Barak-I vertically launched Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs) from Israel. This missile has the ability to intercept anti-ship missiles like the Harpoon.<sup>8</sup>

So far the air force is concerned; India had started upgradation of its MIG-21 fleet since the early 1990s.

According to Jane's Defence Weekly, Israel had agreed to improve the MIG-21 cockpit. She had also been given the contract for installing the electronic warfare equipment in the upgraded MIG-21 planes.

India was also very much interested to collaborate with Israel in the indigenous AWACS development, project. According to India's Defence Ministry, Israel offered to sell India 3 AWACS aircraft. This plane is required by India to keep a strict watch on any movement in Indian and Pakistani airspace along the Line of Control (LOC) and the international borders.<sup>10</sup>

Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV) are also called Force Multipliers since they send virtual real time data and pictures from deep inside enemy territory while safely dodging enemy radars. It can give information on enemy forces deployment, kind of weapons deployed and the level of enemy preparedness along borders.

Israel is regarded as one of the world leaders in the field of UAV manufacturing. Their UAVs are smaller, lighter and have more manoeuvrability.<sup>11</sup>

India and Israel have already signed a contract for UAVs to boost the former's air Surveillance arm.<sup>12</sup>

In 1996, India purchased 32 IAI searcher UAVs, Electronic Sensors and an Air Combat Manoeuvring Instrumentation Simulator System from Israel.<sup>13</sup>

Israel has also helped in upgrading the Russian made Indian Air Force MIG-21 aircraft as well as supplied laser-guided bombs.

India and Israel had been negotiating for the joint production of the 'Heron' UAV for the Indian Navy.<sup>14</sup>

Acquisition of higher range of UAV by India has become more important especially after the Kargil experience (1999) for surveillance of the high altitude ranges in Jammu and Kashmir bordering Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

India purchased 50 Israeli drones for \$220 million in 2005 and is also proposing to buy the new Harop Drone. The Harop which was developed in the 1990s by Israel Aerospace Industries can operate against enemy radars and Surface to Air Missiles.

In the last week of August 2015, government of India approved \$ 400 million to buy 10 missile armed Heron TP drones from Israel. These drones will be operated by the Indian Air force which already has a fleet of reconnaissance drones. It also has a fleet of 'Harpy' UAV, from Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Gurmeet Kanwal, a former head of the Government –funded Centre for Land Warfare Studies in New Delhi, said the armed Herons would enter Indian service by late 2016 that would give the Indian Air Force deep strike capability. These drones can safely attack terrorist safe havens in Pakistan.

Defence News reported that the Indian Army would be ordering 321 Spike Launchers, 8356 missiles, 15 training simulators and peripheral equipment from Israel's Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd for a \$ 1 Billion deal.

These missiles would later be assembled by Bharat Dynamics Ltd. The spike missiles would be installed on Russian built combat vehicles. It has a range of 2.5 km in day and night condition and 90% accuracy rate. It has 3 G active passive fire and forgets guidance systems.<sup>17</sup>

On December 30, 2015, India test-fired a new long range surface-to-air missile capable of countering aerial threats at extended ranges. The addition of armed UAVs would help her to aim at large terrorist camps or individual targets in hostile territory with minimal risk. Former Air Chief PV Naik opened- "It is very good if something like this is happening. Instead of sending a pilot in a high risk area, it is best to use an armed drone. The system can also be used for a surprise, sneak attack."<sup>18</sup>

**Main Battle Tank:** India's Main Battle Tank (MBT) 'Arjun' Project began in the 1970s to replace the old 'Vijayanta' Tanks. But it faced technical problems and high costs so far its chassis was concerned. Israeli expertise can be of great help as 'Arjun' is the counterpart of the former's 'Merkava' tank<sup>19</sup>.

**Missiles:** India had started its own ambitious Intergrated Guided Missile Development Programme in 1983. It has the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile "Agni", Surface to Surface Missile "Prithvi", short range Surface to Air Missile "Trishul" and medium range Surface to Air Missile "Akash". Israel similarly has the Ship to Ship Missile "Gabriel", Air to Air "Python", Air to Surface "Popeye", Surface to Surface "Jericho I" and IRBM "Jericho II".<sup>20</sup>

India is negotiating for Israel's missile technology to perfect the launching and guidance system of "Prithvi". She has also sought Israel's help in electronics for its submarine launched missile "Sagarika". India has also sought technical



help from Israel to develop "Akash" which can pose a threat to the M-II missiles acquired by Pakistan.

**Navy:** India is collaborating with Israel for the "Super Dvora" Mark II, Fast Attack Naval Craft. Way back in 1997, India bought two "Super Dvora" Mark II attack boats and also got a license to build another four.

Israel's IAI Ramta Division, Beersheba and Goa Shipyards limited were given the contract to build these crafts.<sup>21</sup>

It was also reported that the two countries can jointly make 80 such boats for India's Navy and Coast Guard.<sup>22</sup>

**Maritime Surveillance:** Israel has also given its advanced multimode maritime surveillance radar to the Indian Navy to counter the threat from the Pakistani fleet which is equipped with the US P3C "Orion" maritime surveillance aircraft. These Israeli radars would also be fitted to the Patrol helicopters.

To conclude, India who shares borders with nuclear China as well as nuclear Pakistan, is likely to spend \$250 billion over the next decade to upgrade its military. It is the world's biggest buyer of defence equipment but Prime Minister Modi is trying to build defence industrial base in the country to cut overseas purchases. It has been thus observed from the above analysis, that Israel is one of India's top three arms supplier but most of these deals are not publicized because of her fear of upsetting the Arab countries and its own very large Muslim population.

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## Writing Life, Reading Culture: Bezbaroa on Sankaradeva

*Dr. Bibhash Choudhury*

### I. Tradition and the Individual Talent

In *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (1934) T. S. Eliot offered a definition of tradition that seems quite similar to what we often designate by the term culture:

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of 'the same people living in the same place'. ... We are always in danger, in clinging to an old tradition, or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the unessential, the real and the sentimental. Our second danger is to associate tradition with the immovable; to think of it as something hostile to all change; to aim to return to some previous condition which we imagine as having been capable of preservation in perpetuity, instead of aiming to stimulate the life which produced that condition in its time. (Eliot 1934: 18-19)

At the same time, Eliot also asks us to consider the ways in which the process of enculturation serves to structure our worldviews. This meant, for Eliot, the cultivation of a critical temper, which would not only serve as mode of analysis but equally enable us to read conditions of being by constantly recognising the dangers of parochialism. This tendency to privilege aspects of

our cultural life over others that we consider less relevant at the time of investigation is not easy to unsettle. Eliot's prescription is symptomatic of a modernist ethic that carries forward the *sense* of a cultural ethos that places the subject in an ambit wider than its immediate context, while at the same time bearing its character in all its uniqueness. In hagiographic literature or in its exact reverse, the counter-religious (sometimes called blasphemous) discourse, the lopsidedness of the worldview could end up undoing the very talent it seeks to magnify. Hagiography achieves its effect through magnification. The chronicler of a saint's, prophet's or a messiah's life not only has to acknowledge the cultural dimensions that inform the subject's circumstances, but must also justify the 'tradition' in at least these two ways: one, define the unique character and contribution of the subject and two, situate this development within the wider matrix that draws from and enhances the idea of the life. The fashioning of life in such traditions is weighed down by the inevitability of conformity; in the hands of more accomplished biographers, however, the available format holds the key. Śaṅkaradeva, Assam's leading figure in the Vaishnava faith, provides an interesting example of this exercise. The first extant version of the Assamese *Ramayana*, penned by Madhava Kandali in the fourteenth century, was not complete as the *Adi Kanda* and the *Uttara Kanda* weren't part of the narrative. Śaṅkaradeva, along with Mādhavadeva, his foremost disciple, took the task of writing these opening and closing sections. The fact that the format and the storyline were already there made it easier for Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva for work in their innovations. Śaṅkaradeva's representation of Sita's wrath and subsequent underground descent readdress questions of identity and self-fashioning in a mode where matters of conformity and deviation are not about designing alternative versions. The wrath of Sita in Śaṅkaradeva's representation is neither defiance nor assertion of rights; it could be perhaps understood in terms of a subject hood that has always otherwise been seen as part of paradigm where Rama has been the governing principle. In fact, it is

difficult to accommodate it within the structures that serve similar *Ramayana* versions. His excellent linguistic skills, enhanced by the fascinating array of metaphoric illustrations, render vibrant an emotion which is fraught with its own history. This Śāṅkaradeva case exemplifies the coming together of the tradition and the individual talent. In taking this task, Śāṅkaradeva was impelled by both historical and immediate reasons. In many ways, his task was similar to the chronicler of cultural history, to revisit an already existing narrative and imbue it with relevance for the contemporary audience.

The task of Lakshminath Bezbaroa was remarkably similar to the one undertaken by Śāṅkaradeva in the above example, in that he sought to arrest the modern in his subject by examining the question of cultural relevance. The project carried its own dangers. Modernisation, could not, for instance, be seen as the sanction for the overthrow of the parameters that determined the life of the subject. The primary biographical texts in the tradition, known as *Guru Çaritas*, chronicled the lives of the Vaishnava saints and already established the terms of the canon. Bezbaroa's aim was not to disengage the religious and the secular as such, nor was he intent upon investing in the figures of Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva qualities that would wrest them from their original contexts. Yet his lives succeeded in situating them as relevant subjects that extended beyond the scriptural confines of hagiographic literature. In Bezbaroa's narratives, Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva emerged as cultural icons of the Assamese people. How was this achieved? More importantly, why was it done?

Maheswar Neog, acknowledging the significance of Bezbaroa's lives of the Vaishnava saints, suggests that the modern here is not akin to a re-telling or a rearrangement of already read resources (Neog1998:1); Bezbaroa's enterprise was determined by an understanding of the cultural circumstances in which his subjects operated, a process which was significantly accentuated by Bezbaroa's cosmopolitan temper so that he was able to review a tradition of which he

himself was an integral part. Bezbaroa's father Dinanath Bezbaroa had already traversed the path by suggesting the possibilities of writing a text based on the structures of faith in his *Bar-Çharit*; the example, however, alerted Bezbaroa to the difficulties of situating a subject within a tradition that demanded so much of the biographer. This was the danger that Eliot refers to as that of 'clinging to an old tradition, or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the unessential, the real and the sentimental.' It is considerably easier to develop a satirical or a cynical version in the name of critical judgement. Bezbaroa's revisit of Assam's cultural past was not such an enterprise. At the same time, he drew out the conditions of life of his subjects in a manner that stayed clear of the sectarian confines that so often enclose hagiographic literature. There was a second, equally important, logic behind the modernity that characterises Bezbaroa's lives of the Vaishnava saints. This was a historical one. Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva were remarkable subjects, that they were cultural pioneers goes without saying, but their transmutation of a Indian tradition within a particularised Assamese situation required appropriate understanding and commentary. The *Guru Çaritas* provide detailed accounts of the lives of the saints and also archive procedures, principles and structures of faith that characterise Assamese Vaishnavism. Bezbaroa had to faithfully reorient the principles of faith, in addition to which he had to contextualise Śāṅkaradeva's uniqueness even as he saw the development in a wider Indian social dimension. One of the commonplaces in circulation was to see Śāṅkaradeva as a corollary to another Vaishnava figure from Bengal, Chaitanya. Bezbaroa's representation of Śāṅkaradeva was designed to point out the inconsistencies in the commonplace. However, he did not indulge in the process of reverse gradation, demonstrating his outstanding sense of critical judgement and fairness.

Writers ignorant of historical facts have often represented Śāṅkaradeva's school of neo-Vaishnavism in Assam as an offshoot of the Chaitnya movement in Bengal. This is misconstruction and misrepresentation of real historical facts.

Śaṅkaradeva was born in 1449 A.D. whereas Chaitanya was born in 1486 A.D. Chaitanya was not born when Śaṅkara set out on his pilgrimage. When Chaitanya turned ascetic in 1510 A.D. Śaṅkara's Vaishnavism was in full swing. Śaṅkara could not have met Chaitanya during his first pilgrimage. But during his second pilgrimage from Barpetā he met Chaitanya at about 1530 A.D. at Puri. There was no conversation between them as Chaitanya was then observing silence, and therefore by pouring water from his kamandalu Chaitanya indicated that devotion to God is continuous and directed to one channel only like the flow of running water, was his creed. Śaṅkara did not long survive after his return from the second pilgrimage. He died in Cooch-Bihar in the year 1568 A.D. after having attained a very long life of 119 years. (Bezbaroa 2005: 3026)

Bezbaroa's narrative may sometimes appear clinical, but it is in no way lifeless. On the contrary, his is an account that imbues the lives of the saints with a life appears *true* and modern. There is no denying that the combination of the historical imperative and the desire to render modern a culture situated in Assam's past determined character of his writing. Yet Bezbaroa's narrative does not display radical 'inventions' or fictionalised overwhelming of canonical versions; his modernity lay in the highlighting of the potential embedded in his subjects that extended beyond the structures of immediate faith. The challenges faced by Bezbaroa were not confined to the removal of misconstrued ideas outside the state, there were equally persistent attempts to place Śaṅkaradeva in either of the two extremes of parochialism or satire. An interesting case can be seen in Bezbaroa's reply to a letter addressed to him by one Jagat Chandra Saikia in *Baanhi*, where the latter sought to justify the 'fact' that Śaṅkaradeva actually practised idolatry. In his letter Saikia wrote: "Perhaps due to our ignorance or maybe because of the inexperience that clouds us, or maybe because of the inability to control the propensities of our thought and perhaps caused by our sophisticated minds, we are compelled to declare Mahapurusha Śaṅkaradeva as an idol-worshipper. He may not have done so himself or may

not have even displayed such an inclination among the people, yet we will say that he has trod the same path, for his religious texts carry such seed, which he could not fully eradicate. He has indeed said, 'Do not offer prayers to other gods and goddesses ... do not look upon any idols...' etc. but we protest this on the ground that in praying-worshipping the Almighty through the establishment of a *thapana* today, is it our error, or Śaṅkaradeva's? If that is how Śaṅkaradeva prescribed the mode of prayer, then we would consider it an instance of idolatry, for which we argue that Śaṅkaradeva has contradicted himself. What we would like to ask is this: did Śaṅkaradeva prohibit prayer where there was a *thapana*, or did he not call such a mode of prayer idolatry?" (Bezbaroa 2005: 2650)

Bezbaroa's response displays astute diplomatic skill. Instead of dismissing the allegations against Śaṅkaradeva by a mere comment to the contrary, he presents the cultural and spiritual traces that inform the Vaishnava saint's process of prayer. Śaṅkaradeva, Bezbaroa argues, did not imagine the Vaishnava faith out of thin air. It is deeply embedded in the rich spiritual tradition of India that includes multiple streams, some seemingly contradicting one another. Secondly, Śaṅkaradeva opened his faith to everybody and Bezbaroa's quote from the *Kirtana* – 'all the rivers and streams, arrive eventually to the sea from diverse paths' – is one of the many illustrations in the reply which is used to argue that Śaṅkaradeva was far from being an iconoclast, he only outlined the easiest *marga*, the *bhakti-marga* through which spiritual realisation was possible. This debate is just an indication of the difficulties that Bezbaroa dealt with as he sought to reorient the Vaishnava saints for a modern audience. He was thus confronting two immediate challenges in his attempt to present the character of Assamese Vaishnavism: the first entailed the presentation of the faith in all its uniqueness even as it echoed the primary strands of India's spiritual tradition; the second involved the process of making Śaṅkaradeva real and relevant for a contemporary, modern audience.

### III. Humanism and the New Life

In his Preface to *Sri Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva* Lakshminath Bezbaroa alludes to the depiction of miracles in the various versions of Christ's life. A reader, sceptical about the reality of such occurrences in the life of the subject, Bezbaroa suggests, could avoid taking them at face value. Similar experiences, not rationally explicable, are also part of the narratives of the Vaishnava saints and it is the reader's discrimination that would determine the way the lives were received and read. In setting up an ambience where the sceptic and faithful alike could approach the subject with their preferred structures of reading, Bezbaroa carefully worked out a plan that presented the figures of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva as both *real* and *relevant*. This, in fact, was his primary goal: to humanise and to re-introduce a familiar subject to new audience. Also, there was an additional educative function that his rendering of the saints' lives was supposed to carry out, about which he writes in the Preface: "I have observed that even among those who are conversant with the lives of the Mahapurushas, there is a tendency to take the corrupt and inaccurate versions forwarded by some petty biographers as gospel truth. If the biographer does not respect the subject, the representation lacks life; for his reasoning and perspective will almost always be insensitive." (Bezbaroa 1968: 216) Bezbaroa contends that the lack of an inwardness regarding the subject and its context often mars an otherwise factual representation. It is important, in his view, to come to terms with the subject's conditions of being so that when it is presented as the *insider's view* it is considered as authentic. As a biographer, Bezbaroa's position is of one who knows his subject from within as he himself subscribes to the philosophy he has chosen to narrate. This position is not uncommon among hagiographers, but Bezbaroa's alertness to the pitfalls of parochialism separates him from other writers of Śaṅkaradeva's life who preceded him. In many ways, Bezbaroa's humanistic ideal was characterised by his penchant for references that drew on the cultural and social life of his readers, and sometimes even from

situations that would have struck many Assamese as distant. His reference to the *Mimamsa* tradition (313), for instance, in order to demonstrate the distinctness of the Vaishnava faith or to the writings of people like Swami Vivekananda not only shows his success as a comparatist; but also exhibits his resourceful marshalling of the relevant elements from India's scriptural literature. The opening incantation of Mādhavadeva's *Naam-Ghosa* salutes the *bhakta*, for whom even *moksha* is not desirable. This passage has been read variously within the Assamese Vaishnava tradition and Bezbaroa's commentary, where he invokes Vivekananda, adds another dimension to the philosophy. The *bhakti* whose end is governed by a longing for the soul's release, in this view, does not free itself from the trammels of desire. The footnote appended to Bezbaroa's commentary on the opening passage from the *Naam-Ghosa* refers to a Vivekananda explication of the experience of the *bhakta*: "He (the *bhakta*), soon, through the mercy of the Lord, reaches a plane where pedantic and powerless reason is left far behind and the mere ineffectual groping through the dark gives place to the daylight of direct perception. He no more reasons and believes, he almost perceives. He no more argues, he senses. And are not this seeing God, and feeling God and enjoying God, higher than everything else? Nay Bhaktas have not wanted who have maintained that it is higher than even Moksha – liberation." (Bezbaroa 1968: 348)

The reference is not presented to buttress the view expressed in the *Naam-Ghosa*; it, however, much like Eliot's position regarding the dynamism of tradition draws our attention to the echoes of common spiritual heritage that informs both Vivekananda's and Mādhavadeva's outlook about the *bhakta*. In another instance, Bezbaroa places Śaṅkaradeva in a wider spiritual matrix that includes other religious figures: this is done in connection with the concept of universal appeal that all *bhakti* traditions possess. He argues that the true spirit of the *Sanatana* ideal involves the accommodation of the lay people in an accessible format. Spiritually realised figures such as Jesus, Kabir, Nanak,

Chaitanya, Ramananda and Śāṅkaradeva sought to share their experiences with people who otherwise would have had no access to it. The movement from the personal to the public is compatible with the ideal of the *bhakta* who foregoes even the very idea of *moksha*. It is also situated within a framework that we now term humanist. The openness characterising the practices of these figures thus had a very significant social and cultural dimension. The fact that they had to confront stiff resistance from within the societies they operated in suggests how forces in name of existing faith challenged the possibilities of a new life.

Throughout his biographies of Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva, exegetical works such a *Tattva-Katha*, and in other references to the Vaishnava saints, Bezbaroa took great care to situate his reading within a broader cultural and historically relevant framework. His wide-ranging documentation of the various spiritual traditions of India serves two immediate purposes: one, it shows the significance of cross-fertilisation which informed all the *bhakti* traditions in India and two, it helped him emphasise the unique character of Assamese Vaishnavism which was both real and relevant for a modern people. Bezbaroa's nationalist spirit, which was manifested not only in his writings, but was evident in his personality and conduct as well, played an important role in the way he re-fashioned the lives of the Vaishnava saints for a new audience. Śāṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva were much more than spiritual figures tied to the *bhakti* movement, they were cultural icons of an Assamese past that required placement for a new generation of readers. Having spent a considerable period of his life outside Assam, Bezbaroa was alive to the merit of critical distance; he was also conscious of the remarkable synthesising and creative dimensions of his subjects in the context of similar practices in other parts of India. Aware of the dangers of excess and parochial blindness, he reasoned the significance of Assamese Vaishnavism through a wide but equally effective humanist perspective. While he claimed that Śāṅkaradeva's practice wasn't an one-off, isolated phenomenon, it enabled him to counter the absolutist framework that so often informs the

reductionist accounts of much hagiographic literature. The acknowledgment of the presence of various strands of India's spiritual tradition in Śāṅkaradeva's version of Vaishnavism actually aided Bezbaroa's argument about the reality and relevance of his subjects. His humanistic reading opened up the lives of the Vaishnava saints to a much wider audience that extended beyond the sectarian confines of the immediate faith; it made new a tradition that became contemporary and accessible.

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## Social Context of Traditional Games of Assam

*Dr. Pradyumna Sarma*

### **Introduction:**

Traditional games of Assam form an integral part of its rich cultural heritage. These games are essential markers of social development and change and hence are of great historical and cultural significance. The present study is based on the hypothesis that most games did not originate as mere pastimes. On the contrary, they are by and large the mimetic representations of certain important social functions related to spiritual, magical or divinatory practices of our ancestors. Games, therefore, cannot be dismissed as insignificant and childish as they replicate the collective attitude of the 'non-intellectual commoners'.

### **Objective:**

The present study tends to utilize traditional games of Assam as essential markers of social developments and change and in doing so it inclines to investigate the social origin of these games as far as possible and traceable.

### **Methodology:**

The study is based on a multi-disciplinary approach. The methodology of this thesis includes observation, interview, and questionnaire etc. for collection of information. Hence narratives and information elicited through the questionnaire provide the main resource material for this research. Such an approach becomes important in a given area of inquiry, generating historical insight and understanding situations which are inaccessible by other forms of investigation.

### **Conceptual Framework:**

The question of how and under what background traditional games originated holds the thread of this discussion. Men are social beings. All their activities, their thinking and their imagination; in a nut-shell, their whole lifestyle is shaped by the society they belong to. Games are also integral parts of human lifestyles and therefore have deep roots in society. By virtue of this, games have the power to adequately reflect different phases of the societies during which they are carried on. In other words, traditional games are like prisms through which the cultural and spiritual norms of a society can be reviewed. The study of people's cultures along with their individual and collective ideas may help us to gauge the mental and psychological characteristics of groups of people at specified times and places.

The notion that some traditional games mirror real life situation had surfaced since the latter half of the nineteenth century riding on research by social scientists. Thinkers from varied discipline such as history, anthropology, folklore, psychology and others have come up with their prolific suggestions on the hidden significance of 'child's play'. In the field of history, the **Annalists** advocated for rearrangement of history through proper emphasis on whole range of human activities including games. **E.B. Tylor**, a renowned anthropologist, envisaged traditional games to be potential data to reconstruct the cultural history of mankind. In his volume *Primitive Culture*, he holds that things which occupied an important place in the life history of grown-ups in a primitive state became the play items of children in a period of civilization. "...thus the sling and the bow and arrow, which formed the weapons of mankind in an early stage of existence, and are still in the reliance of savage tribes, have become toys in the hands of all civilized children at the present day. Many games current in Europe and America are known to be sportive imitations of customs which formerly had a significant and serious aspect."<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the comment of

Tylor, it can be assumed that the games are mostly the diluted versions of social customs of our primitive forefathers and this transformation (from serious customs to games) took hundreds of years.

In this context the opinion of **Stewart Culin**, another contemporary ethnographer seems to be significant. In his article *The Value of Games in Ethnology* (1894), he remarks:

...many games were not only the products of primitive conditions, but represent the means by which man endeavored to bring himself into communion and to penetrate the secrets of natural powers that surrounded him. Thus, we find that many early games were sacred and divinatory, and unless we can trace them to these conditions, we may be [be] sure that we have not obtained the clew [clue] to their origin.<sup>2</sup>

From the ongoing discussion we may conceive that games (at least some of them) are intimately associated with some serious aspects like religious beliefs and practices embedded with magical and divinatory significance.

Noted folklorist **Alice B. Gomme** has described games as objects of very remote origin. In her voluminous and valuable account she has even attempted to construct a ladder by which games “descended from a long past stage of culture”.<sup>3</sup> It is a common notion that children all over the world have the inherent expertise to mimic anything and everything that comes to the purview of their little world. Our individual experiences also show that the games children play have deep reflections of life surrounding them. In their playful moments, the children try to imitate different activities of day-to-day life. After their first acquaintance with the outer world, the children make rapport with the available elements near them.<sup>4</sup> Thus they find the bird, the butterfly, the flower, the frog, the cat or even the moon as their dearest playmates of joyous moments. To be brief, the children personify every object they observe from dawn to dusk. In their make-belief world they make sportive imitations of

situations performed by the elders, which are otherwise inaccessible for them in real life situations. As for example, in his world of fantasy, a young child would imitate the policeman but in real life he would shy away from one.

Absurdity or impossibility itself becomes absurd or impossible in the play world of the children. Based on this understanding of the child psyche of the present world, we find the same explanation for the playful behavior of children in the past. In historic and prehistoric times also, as ethnographers inform us, children used to replicate the acts of their elders; particularly, the occupation of their seniors which they themselves were to follow in a few years. From this point of view, their games, in fact, were role rehearsals for developing essential life skills.<sup>5</sup> If we understand the logic behind a present day child impersonating its parent with a mock computer or driving an imaginary car aloud or cooking for its dolls with a towel wrapped round its (his/her) waist, it would possibly not be too hard for us to imagine, how the children brought the practice of bow and arrow casting into their play world in an ancient phase of history. In the pages of history, there have been references about the use of bow and arrow by the ancient people for the purpose of hunting, offence and defense etc. So their children were closely familiar with this custom and playfully imitated it. The custom of bow and arrow are not the only examples. Hundreds of other serious social customs slowly transformed (from custom or belief to child's play) in the same process as we have just seen in the case of bow and arrow.

Our understanding of the foregoing discussion leads us to the conclusion that it were the children who imitated different customs and beliefs of the elder members of the society and then converted them into amusements. After passage of considerable time, the original social, sacred or mystic essence of these customs dimmed into obscurity and morphed into the games played by the children and adults alike.



The origin of games is, thus, an obscure area in the field of game research; because games are centered around human civilization for thousands of years and it was not considered important to keep records of such things. Ethnographers inform us that games originated before the art of writing.<sup>6</sup> The huge gap of time and space between origin of a game and its documentation makes the origin of game more and more confusing.

Historical sources, whatsoever, provide very marginal information. In such crucial condition, the only thing that can be helpful to review the origin of games, are the games themselves. Games, fortunately lug along their history within themselves. Games are so expressive in nature that minute examinations of a particular game lead us to its original social, cultural or sacred background. A humble attempt has been made through this study to examine a few of Assamese traditional games in order to trace their original socio-cultural backdrop as far back as possible.

*Hau* or *Hai Gudu* is a widely popular game not only among the people of Assam but among other Indian tribes as well. It is undeniable that this game appears to be a prototype of modern *kabadi*, particularly on the basis of its play-pattern and procedure. The extent of popularity of the game indicates that the game had a distant history and it emerged out of a common historical past or social context.

To some extent the game of *hau* reflect the incessant conflict among the warring tribal clans of primitive age. Some historians observe war strategy of early men in this game. This view asserts that the *hau khel* is the manifestation of the ancient mode of combat through raid and ambush.<sup>7</sup> Both raid and ambush being the two integral parts of this game such an assumption seems to unfurl the antiquity of this game in the right direction. However, there are many more other aspects in this game that lead us to the depth of a socio-historical perspective embedded in this popular game. Interestingly, sports historian Ashim Das uses

this game to explain how a serious research can excavate relevant social implications of a particular game. He represents this game as a reminiscent of conflict among ancient clans for encroachment of land. He views the two opposing sides of this game as two warring clans, the two courts as their respective territories, and the dividing line between the courts as the no man's land between the territories of ancient races.<sup>8</sup>

The game continues until all the players of a side become dead (*mara*). Here also we discern a particular primitive belief. Unless all the members of the rival clan die, a clan cannot possess their land. It is also to be noted that in primitive warfare the object was to knock down and kill as many of the enemies as possible rather than the capture of prisoners.<sup>9</sup> Further, in case of rivalry the issue of taking revenge was a must. 'Eye for an eye' was the usual concept of revenge in the primitive societies. Scoring revenge was considered to be an august duty of every clan member and was carried on generation-wise. The idea of law courts, punishments etc. are notions that developed eventually.<sup>10</sup> That is why, in this game too, we find that to win the game, the party has to eliminate the members of the rival group first. In this way it mimics some deciding confrontations of bygone ages.

Das draws our attention towards another very interesting feature of this game. While raiding in *hau*, the raider cannot change his breath. He can only exhale. To prove this he is to sing a game-song for all the time he is in the enemy's territory. Game-song, thus, is an integral part of the game. If the rival players detain him and force him to change his breath in their marked arena, the raider is considered 'dead'. Thus we notice that proper breathing is the pivotal aspect of *hau khel*. E.B. Tylor enlightens us that the prehistoric men had deep faith in the concept of human 'soul'. For them the breathing was the symbol of soul.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, our traditional Yogic practices also teach us that breathing in a proper way comforts *prana*, a synonymous of soul or *atma*. In a game of *hau*, the raider has to sing a game-song continuously signifying life's continuity.

The deep belief of the ancient men in the rebirth or transmigration of soul gets reflected in the game of *hau*. When a player dies or loses his chance during offence or defense, the rule of this game allows a 'life' to an already 'dead' player in the opposition team. Since the dawn of civilization, men perceived that human soul defies the law of mortality and after one's physical death the soul does not perish along with the body. Instead, it reincarnates and transmigrates to another body. This primitive conjecture was tied to the feeling that the soul of a slain enemy would take rebirth as one's own clan member. The spirit of vengeance, thus, increased significantly, as these early men sincerely believed that the fatalities in the enemy camp would certainly strengthen their own rank through new births. In a very simple way, the *hau khel* represents this ancient belief of our predecessors.

Among the Assamese traditional games, the board-games form a major category. Board-games are played on permanent or makeshift boards either with the help of pieces (*guti*) or with dices. Here, we shall first deal with the games played with *gutis* and then move towards the dice games. Games like *daba*, *solla gutir khel*, *pacish gutir khel*, *bagh dhal* etc. are the best examples of Assamese board-games played with pieces of different kinds. In most cases seeds and pebbles are used as *gutis*. Only in case of *daba* (modern chess), special pieces corresponding to a king (*raja*), an elephant (*gaja*), a horse (*aswa*) and a ship (*nauka*) with four footmen (*sainya*) are used. Actually, these four pieces (excluding the king) represent the four corps of the ancient Indian army.<sup>12</sup> That is why this game was known in ancient India as *chaturanga* (four limbs). *Chaturanga* or *daba*, thus is an imaginative reconstruction of a battlefield between two hostile armies. The game requires strategy and foresight and provides excellent training in warfare. Historian Basham has given a very lucid account of the growth and stages of development of this game and its diffusion

from India to Europe via Persia.<sup>13</sup> Military strategy of early people may be seen through some other Assamese board-games too e. g. *solla gutir khel*, *pacish gutir khel*, *bagh dhal* etc. *Solla gutir khel* is also known as *mogal-pathan*, an appellation which reminds about the historic conflict between the *Mogals* (*Mughals*) and the *Pathans* in medieval period.

As mentioned earlier, there is another form of board-game which is played with dice. These games are also termed as **games of chance** as chance or fate play a deciding role in the outcome. Among all kinds of board games, games of chance are probably the oldest and surely most widely popular. Assamese games like *tac* (playing cards), *cowrie*, *pasha* etc. are a few examples of games of chance. It has already mentioned that such games are generally played with single or multiple dice. Dice are the earliest random number generators with ancient but obscure origin. Six sided dice discovered in *Indus* sites gives evidence to its antiquity.<sup>14</sup> In ancient times dices were made of bones, sea shells sea shells (*cowrie*), ivory, seeds, pebbles etc.

There exists a notion that the winners of games of chance have received supernatural or magical aids.<sup>15</sup> In our epic *Mahabharata* too we may find similar assumption of divine interference in the game of *pasha*. Games of chance like *tac*, *cowrie*, *pasha* etc are mostly associated with fortune telling and gambling which finally indicates their relation to the ancient beliefs of divination. To attest this notion, we may quote Tylor: "Arts of divination and games of chance are so similar in principle that the very same instrument passes from one use to the other."<sup>16</sup> For instance, we may cite the example of playing cards which are used for the purpose of both fortune telling and amusement. Playing cards, which usually have fifty-two cards with four suits/varieties, correspond to the fifty-two weeks of a year and four seasons may indicate some mystical origin of this game. We have already discussed about the association of *cowrie* with divination. Thus, it may rightly be assumed that most of the games of chance are the sportive survivals of the ancient practice of consulting the fate.

**Conclusion:**

A study of social context of traditional games highlights various beliefs and customs of early, medieval and even colonial Assam. Glimpses of primitive customs associated with fertility cult, totem belief, taboos, divination, military combat, marriage rituals etc. which have otherwise disappeared centuries ago, thus, may be traced through traditional games. "It is not, therefore, too much to say that we have in these children's games some of the oldest historical documents belonging to our race, worthy of being placed side by side with folktale and other monuments of man's progress from savagery to civilization."<sup>17</sup>

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## **Tradition and Nationality: A Historical Perspective on the Buryat Mongols**

*Nizara Phukon*

### **Introduction:**

The word *tradition* has the literal meaning in Latin of “something handed over,” something that gives one community the status and identity of living; comprising stories, symbols and memories of their own. According to Geertz (1966:8), tradition is “a quality of reflexivity, of continual self-modification or ‘dialectical invention’.” So it can be said that it is a model of shaping the experiences of human being both at individual and at group level. The anthropological and ethnic nationalistic meaning of tradition is nothing but cultural identity only.

If one takes the definition of nationality according to Lord Bryce, “a nationality is a population held together by certain ties, as for example, language and literature, ideas, customs and traditions in such a way as to feel itself a coherent unity distinct from other populations similarly held together by like ties of their own”. So nationality normally emphasizes on the development of common social heritage of their own that is distinct from others. A nationality transforms into a nation when it aspires to political self-determination or actually organizes itself into a state.

The Buryat Mongols are one of major nationalities in Russia. There are more than forty indigenous communities in Siberia, which really make this

region; a region of immense socio cultural significance. Ethnographers divide the Siberian indigenous communities into six groups on the basis of linguistic criteria. The Buryat Mongols fall into the Altaic group (Sansone 1980: 45-46). Among all the indigenous communities the Buryat Mongols is the largest indigenous community numbering approximately 4, 36,000 in Siberia with a rich cultural history. The Buryats who used to live in and around the Lake Baikal and in the Northern border of Mongolia are of Mongol origin. Another group of Mongol people inhabiting Russian Federation is the Kalmyks (Fondhal 1993: 15).

Buryat Mongols can be divided into two regional groups – Eastern Buryats and Western Buryats. The eastern Buryats used to live in the east of the Lake Baikal and the Western Buryats live in the west and north of the Lake Baikal (Forsyth :84; Humphrey: 24). The indigenous communities like Tabunut, Atagan, and Khori represent the Eastern Buryats and the Western Buryats the Mongol Bulagat, Ekherit, and Khongodor groups. The Buryat Mongols mainly live in Buryatia, Dornod, Hentii, Selenge, Tuv, Bulgan, and Huvsgul Aimags.

In Buryat Mongolian mythology people living in and around the Lake Baikal were called ‘Burte Chino’. Burte Chino means Blue Wolf People. The name Buryat comes from ‘Burte’, or ‘Bured’, according to the ancient dialect of the Mongolia which means ‘wolf’. The Huns were one of these ancient Mongol origins. It has been said that the tribes of Huns in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and 4<sup>th</sup> A.D used to live in the territory which came to be known later as modern Buryatia. When the Hun confederation came to an end, the areas constituting Modern Mongolia and the core Mongolian homelands like Lake Baikal region were ruled by the Turkic tribes. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century Temujin was born who was to later become Chinggis Khan. Through his power he developed an empire that is called Chinggis Khan’s empire and he united all the Mongolian speaking people ([http://www.tengarism.org/Buryat\\_History.Html](http://www.tengarism.org/Buryat_History.Html)). At the beginning of

the 13th century, after conquering Central Asia, Iran and north China, apart from the Far North; the whole of Siberia was seized by Genghis Khan's hordes.

But in the 17th century, after the removal of power of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty in China, Chinggis Khan's empire also broke up. During that period, today's Buryatia was under the Chinggis Khan's empire. The disintegration and fall of the Mongolian empire was the result of the civil war among the Mongol princes. After the disintegration of the Mongol Empire, the Manchus attacked and grabbed the region. As a result, some of the Oirats fled into Russia and settled in the Volga River Valley with the permission of the Russian authority. And later this tribe came to be known as the Kalmyks. A Russian protectorate was established to save the Buryats from Manchu's attack. Prior to 1917, the population of Buryats was approximately 30,000 (Forsyth 1992: 86). The population of Buryats in 1990 was 421,700. According to the 1995 estimate of Buryats in Buryat Republic; they were numbering approximately 2, 52,000. At present the Buryats basically represent their republic called Buryatia as a subject of Russian Federation. The capital of the Buryat republic is Ulan-Ude. The Republic of Buryatia became a part of the Moscow state in 1703 in accordance to the agreement signed by Peter I. The Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Oblast became a part of Far East Republic in 1921. During 1921- 23 two Buryat Autonomous Regions existed- one in the Far Eastern Republic and the other in Irkutsk province of the Russian Soviet Republic. The Buryat-Mongolian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was formed on 30 May, 1923, as a part of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic. Its capital was established in Verkhneudinsk. Hence, 30 May is considered as the Buryat republic's foundation day.

The main territory of the new Buryat Republic, including Verkhneudinsk and the monastic centers of Tsongol and Goose Lake, almost completely

surrounded Lake Baikal, except for its south-western end, which was within the Russian province of Irkutsk (Forsyth 1992:74-75). The Buryat Republic stretched from the frontier of Tuva in the west to the river Vitim in the east. In addition two separate smaller areas – the west of the Angara and the east of the Lake Baikal, including the Aga Monastery, belonged to the Buryat Mongol ASSR (Ibid: 275). The 43.8% (some 215,000) population of this republic in 1926 was Buryats and 52.7% (some 258,000) were Russian. In 2007 the population of the republic was 9,599. Among these most numerous indigenous community was the Buryats which represented 27.8% of the total population.

#### **Historical and Cultural Links to Mongolia:**

There are several regions in the world, which share the same Mongol root, including Mongolia, Buryat, Kalmyk and Tuva Autonomous Republic in Russia and Inner Mongolia in China. Geographically as Mongolia is one of the border countries of Russia, it has a deep link to Siberia; even today the Buryat Mongols share many customs with their Mongolian cousin. The Eastern Buryats practiced many ways of Mongols in their day to day lives, such as they used to rear horses and other castles and they also migrated from one pasture to another and used a kind of portable felt-covered tent to live (Ibid: 84).

In accordance to religion there are some linkages between the Buryat Mongols of Siberia and the Mongols of Mongolia. Up to 16th century the Buryat of Siberia followed the Shamanism like their Mongol cousins. They believed in spirits of natural phenomenon and many divinities along with their ancestors and off spring. The Buryat Mongols practiced a central religious practice of blood sacrifice to the sky god Tengri like all their Mongol cousins. In regards to language also the Buryat Mongols in Siberia shared certain similarities to their homeland Mongolia. The language of the Buryats is one of the Mongolian families that are based on Khalkha dialect. Many words are identical

in Buryats and Khalkha, such as *gar* 'hand', *ger* 'house', *ulaan* 'red', and *khoyor* 'two'. Before the time of Chingis Khan the Mongols had a written language that was used by all Mongolian tribes up till the 20th century. After the conquest by the Russians in the 17th century the Buryats merged certain changes. But the eastern Buryats maintained their contacts with Mongolia and used the Mongolian literacy language. They shared with their cousins in Mongolia a common heritage of religious, astrological and medical books written or printed by wood blocks, mainly in Tibetan, but partly in the Mongol language (Ibid: 171).

In regards to adoption of Buddhist Religion the Buryat Mongols in Siberia shared links to its homeland Mongolia. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the constant intercourse between the Buryat Mongols and their cousins in Mongolia had an important social consequence which led to the spread of Buddhism among them. In 1710 the first Lamanist monastery temple (Datsan) was founded among the Transbaikal Buryats. And by 1740, there were 11 Datsans among the Buryats. During the second half of the 18th century in the Eastern Buryatia Buddhism made great strides and became the dominant religion. It is important to note that this was a Mongoloid form of Buddhism as it incorporated elements of the old Shamanist beliefs like blood sacrifice (Ibid: 99-100).

Moreover in regards to defence also the Buryat Mongols in Siberia shared linkages to their Mongol cousin. They shared the Mongol tradition of military organization, effective equestrian tactics and the deadly use of the bow and arrow. There are many similarities among the Buryats and the Mongols of Mongolia in terms of customs and practice. The Buryats are a major northern branch of Mongols sharing traditional Mongolian nomadic culture. Historically they were nomadic or semi – nomadic herders living in felt or wooden yurts. For example like the Mongols, the Buryats also practiced nomadic way of herding and used '*gers*' as shelter.

### **Russification of the Buryat Mongols:**

Russification can be simply said as the process of imposition of Russian culture on the non-Russian or the native communities of Russia and the gradual co-option of the Buryats by Russian culture, by political and non-political measures. Through certain official policies Russia has been trying to assimilate the indigenous people from Imperial time to soviet period and its continuing to federal Russian rule in modern time also.

The Russians sent an expedition from Tomsk to subjugate the tribes east of the Yenisey. Then only the Russians first came to know about the Buryat Mongols in 1609, as rumors told by the Ket and Samoyed of the Kan and Kisir basins told the Russians that, they already paid tribute to the Buryat Mongols. And in 1625 the Russians were taking Yasak from the Tungus and they wanted to explore and conquer the region (Ibid: 89).

The Buryats came under the dominance of the Russian Empire as a result of the Nerchinsk Treaty in 1689. For 350 years or more, the Buryat Mongols were under Russian rule (Ibid: 15). Relationship among these two nationalities began in 1628 when the Russian invaded the Buryat territory under the Cossack Pyotr Beketov. The Russians invaded the Buryat territory for various reasons among which to find silver mines is an important one. During that time there took place a series of Buryat campaigns, raids, counter attacks resulted bloodshed of many people including Buryats, Tungus and Russians. The natives as always put a disadvantage in the face of Russian guns, were defeated. After defeating the Buryats in the first encounter that took place in 1628 was a great tragedy for them as they carried off the Buryat women and children as prisoners. And the prisoners were taken – old, young and infants to a total of 28 were shot and killed in their cabins. By this time this massacre was accomplished some 200 Buryats had been killed (Ibid: 90). Though the resistance by the

Buryat Mongols continued, yet by the middle of 1640s Buryats were driven to desperation by the endless depredations of the Russian conquerors. It is important to mention that the capture of the leaders to be held as hostage against tribute payment by the Russian colonist was less successful in the case of the Buryat Mongols. They fought against the Russians with their clan abandonment, combined in large armies and by guerrilla warfare.

The process of Russification led various dying problems to the Buryat Mongols. Increasing Russian domination in the Lake Baikal region resulted in mass migration to Mongolia. Not only this, Buryat Mongols also faced acute problems when there emerged counter migration from Mongolia. Migration created another tension among the Buryat pastures as they were taken by the Russian settlers' (Ibid: 271). Russification actually curtailed the autonomy of the Buryat Mongols. The Buryats had been granted autonomy by the Russians in 1728 as they were working for the Russian authority as the Cossacks to guard the Chinese border. Russification brought suppression of religious and secular institutions of the Buryat Mongols. Russification almost led to the conversion of the Shamanist and Buddhist Buryat Mongols to Christianity. From 1820 a group of protestant missionaries from the London Missionary School worked in Transbaikalia under the patronage of the Alexander I and M. M. Seperanskiy. Moreover, up to 1825 the native people who believed in Shamanist and Buddhist religion, the Russian authority tried to convert them to Christianity. The Lamas of Buddhist monasteries were exempted from payment of taxes and from Cossack service. So in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, N. N. Muravyov-Amurskiy, the governor general of Siberia made regulations by forbidding the foundation of new monasteries and limiting the number of Lamas to 255 (Ibid :171).

As the Buryat Mongols was Mongol in origin they shared many customs and practices with their Mongol cousins. But this did not please the Russian

authorities, particularly the Russian Communist Party and in May 1929, it issued a declaration that attacked the Buryat Mongol nationalism. The Soviet government was not in favour of the Buryat's striving for independence. Thus it started an aggressive policy to eliminate Buryat's nationalism starting with a harsh action against the religion in Buryatia. Most of the religious traditions, including dastans and many cultural treasures were destroyed and many lamas were either killed or sent to labour camps. The Soviet Russian Government strove to minimize historical links between Buryatia and Mongolia, tending as they did towards Pan- Mongol idea (Ibid: 377). In the 1930s, the religious and secular institutions of the Buryats were suppressed by the Soviet state. The Soviet authority imposed collectivization on the Buryat Mongols. There emerged radical changes into the Buryat literary language due to Russification. For example in 1931 the Soviet authority had replaced the Mongolian alphabet by the Roman as the medium for written Buryat. The Buryats were russified in language and culture to such an extent that they started losing the traditional names of their children and they used the Russian names only. The Russian Communist Party (RCP) had suppressed the monasteries and other secular institutions like the Buryat Mongol Learned Society (BMLS).

Stalin was specifically harsh towards the Buryats as many of them fled into Mongolia escaping the struggle between the White and Red Russian. Thus he urged the Mongolian government to take measures against the Buryats who had settled in Mongolia by blaming them as part of Ataman Semeyonov's people. This attempt to establish a united Mongolia became a main reason for Stalin to blame Buryatia for Pan- Mongolian conspiracy and resentment against the Soviet government, during the dark years of the purge. Thus fearing for Buryat nationalism Stalin had 11000 Buryats killed in the 1930s. During only 1937-1938 6,836 people were arrested and 4,709 of them were charged for their alleged work against the Soviet government. "As of February 15, 1938, 2036

people were arrested for their Pan- Mongolic aspiration and 1,303 of them were lamas.” Stalin’s suspicious attitude to Buryats for their alleged Pan – Mongolism was continued by the subsequent herders of the Soviet government and the name ‘Mongol’ was removed from the name of Buryat Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic during N. Khrushchev’s leadership.

The Russian policy of development in the name of collectivization was one of the painful experiences to the Buryat Mongols. The most important aim of the Russian Communist Party’s social policies in the 1930s was collectivization that was imposed on both the native Siberians and the farmers of Ukraine. The economic aim of the Communist Party’s policy was to collectivize of hunting, fishing and herding activities of the Siberian natives but the real aim was to proletarianise them by binding them in collectives subordinated to superstructure of the Soviet state (Ibid:291). By the end of 1931, the Buryat Mongols had 61% collective farms. Being a highly traditional society the Buryatia represented class differences, but the class struggle was absent. It was only with the process of collectivization the Buryats had to experience class struggle. Collectivization led to the destruction of the traditional Buryat nomadic or semi nomadic life and compelled them to settle in villages. Moreover the main aim of the Russian authority was something different, as through the collectivization, the Buryats would go over from their cattle rearing to modern methods of grain-cultivation that actually hinted the strategic plan of the Russian government to make Buryatia as the main food producer for the Far-East.

The Buryat population also decreased in the process of Russification. According to an official statistics; that in the early twentieth century the Russians reduced their autonomy and the power of the local councils replaced by the Russians officials. Buryat declined from 2, 37,500 to 2, 24,700 between 1926 and 1939. One of the very active organizations in Buryatia the Writer’s Union faced a big turmoil as well. Though short but a promising period, which started

with the establishment of Autonomous Republic, for Buryat nationalist activists, writers and teachers came to an end. Most of the members of the writer’s Union were arrested for their real or alleged work against the Soviet Government. And during the period from mid- late twentieth century Buryats became numerous indigenous communities in Siberia increasingly Russified (Ibid: 375).

There is also a view that suggests that Russians themselves adopted many Buryat ways of culture, in other words the Russians got Buryatised. The Russian settlers were able to establish relations of friendship and cooperation with the local tribes by assimilating themselves to the local natives and adopted many local customs and way (Sansone 1980:37). Research has shown that the Russian settlers in Buryatia have been “Buriatised” to a great extent. This ‘Buryatised’ process was to be seen not only in their physical changes but in their habits and ideas also. The Buryatised process showed the result of forgetting their mother tongue and fluency in speaking Buryat language by the Russian settlers in Buryatia. Moreover the Russians also had strong faith in Shamanism (Stadling 1905:55).

#### **The Soviet Nationalities Policy towards Siberian Natives:**

In the early period of 1917 Revolution a new nationalities policy was introduced by V.I. Lenin called *korenizatsiia*, which means *indigenization*. The main objective of this nationality policy was to make a pro non- Russian or indigenous Soviet State. Through this policy Lenin launched a campaign of de-Russification and recognized the various peoples as separate nationalities and granted significant concessions. But after Lenin, Stalin brought certain changes to the nationalities policy. As the policy of *korenizatsiia* had led a strong sense of national consciousness among the indigenous groups, Stalin was apprehensive. So, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Stalin eventually reversed the process of *korenizatsiia*. During 1936-1938 all national groups including minor ethnic



groups suffered greatly in Soviet Union. Stalin had taken a devastative policy by physically eliminating many local political leaders in the Republics. After Stalin, Khrushchev came to power. Under his rein the non- Russian nationalities were given permissive conditions to express their rights. However, he also established the Russian language as the main language of all the Russians. The non-Russian nationalities got adequate recognition during the reign of Gorbachev also. Many nationalist movements' led by ethnic communities occurred during that time. However, according to some writers; from the 1960 to the 1980 the Soviet Russian Government simply had no nationalities policy for the North (Forsyth 1992: 398). It is important to note that the Sovietization of ethnicity was an important component of the Soviet Nationalities Policy.

#### **Buryats under Soviet Nationalities Policy:**

The Buryat Mongols occupy a unique place in Soviet Nationalities policy as a whole. By both race and language they are the only people of the USSR belonging to the Mongol group (Kolarz 1954:114). Buryats along with all other Siberian natives had suffered a lot in the process of collectivization imposed by the Soviet Russian government through RCP. In this regard, the following facts need to be noted:

- i. By the 1960s nomadism had been eliminated
- ii. Housing facilities for the nomads was badly overcrowded resulting in enforced residence system.
- iii. There was enforced deportation of people from their home town to newly created villages.
- iv. The *Buryat Mongols* were considered as simply 'labor resources' by the planners of the Soviet Russian state economy.

All these have changed from one to another in regards to both occupation and region. Moreover by transferring to the forced collectivization created the artificial Russian style villages; more than half of the Buryat Mongols had become unemployed and aimless. The enforced residence system had systematically alienated the young Buryats from their own communities and traditional occupations. The Constitution of Soviet S atellite Republic gave special legal position to the Buryat Mongols. According to the Article 116, "the entire area inhabited by the Buryat-Mongols shall form a special territory under the name of 'Autonomous Buryat-Mongol Province'. Article 118 guaranteed to the Buryats the right to establish courts of justice as well as economic, cultural and administrative institutions in their territory (Ibid: 115).

According to Hundley and Raeff, in the early 19th century the Buryats gained more autonomy as the then Governor General of Siberia Mikhail Speranskii developed the Statute of Alien Administration (SAA) in 1822 (Hundley 1984; Raef 1969). This granted to the Buryats the legal rights to self governance through Steppe Dumas. The SAA also allowed the freedom of religion, right to native language as instruction in schools, right to land possession and other cultural and administrative autonomy to the Buryats (Sweet; Chakars 2010:1-13).

#### **Russian Nationalities Policy towards the Indigenous Communities:**

There emerged certain changes in Nationalities Policy after the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991. The Russian Federation brought into existence some new policies towards the people of the North. The constitution of Russian Federation guaranteed basic rights to the ethnic people of the North. During the period 1993 to 2000, the Russian Federation guaranteed the rights of indigenous peoples as guaranteed by international law and the treaties of the Russian Federation (art. 69). National law on various aspects of indigenous peoples' life

such as, land use, traditional resource management, public actions, language, culture, education were legally recognized (Rutland :143).

In 2000, Vladimir Putin became the President in the RF. After coming to power he dismantled the co- federal system which curtailed the recognition of the republican sovereignty introduced by Yeltsin .Under his ruling the legislation of federal subjects were controlled by the federal laws. Moreover Putin had introduced a new system under which there would be seven federal districts which would be headed by presidential representatives (Ibid: 143).

Buryatia has faced increasing centralization under the policies of Vladimir Putin since 2000. In May 2000, the creation of seven federal districts overlaid the earlier federal units. It actually reduced the number of federal units and increased the power of the centre over the people. Moreover, in December 2004, he abolished the right to appointment of the leader of the indigenous people. In Buryatia, in 2006, Potapov finished his third term and there should have been another election. But instead of this, Putin appointed Potapov's successor. The two Buryat autonomous regions like Ust-Ordinsk Buryat Autonomous Okrug and Aginsk Buryat Autonomous Okrug had been separated from the Republic of Buryatia in 1937. On April 16, 2006, the Ust-Ordinsk Buryat Autonomous Okrug was merged with Irkutsk Oblast and on March 1, 2008, the Aginsk Buryat Autonomous Okrug was merged with the Chita Oblast. And this led to the creation of a new federal district called the Zabaikal'skii Krai. Thus, these ethnic Buryat territories faced a crisis of existence (Sweet; Chakars 2010:1-13).

#### **Native Rights Movements by the Buryat Mongols:**

The Buryat Mongols have undergone a long process of domination and assimilation into the Russian culture from the rule of Russian Empire to the Soviet Period. It cannot be denied that they still suffer from certain problems

under federal system of Russia. There was total absence of national awareness among the Buryat Mongols under the rule of Russian Empire. The main cause was that dictatorship did not allow them to do anything independently. Nationalism arises sometimes from reassertion and revival of native culture. Buryat Mongols have also shown this kind of resistance. They began and are still continuing their native rights movement.

Though the native rights movement began properly in the late 1980s Buryat intelligentsia had started demanding their autonomy soon after the beginning of Russian Revolution in 1917. The Russian penetration into Buryat homelands began in the later 16th century or as early as the 17th century. At that time there was only a minimal contact between the Buryats and the Russian. Only in 18th century the factors like immigration of Russians into the Buryat homelands led to emergence of ethnic conflict, as it led to gradual dispossession of their ancestral territory. In the early 20th century the Tsarist government proposed a land reform ranting equal territory to each household. The Russian migration and the land reform both dissatisfied the Buryats and they developed a nationalist movement demanding local self government.

Therefore in 1918, the Bolshevik government granted the Buryats their own administrative areas. This was the first step of territorial autonomy in the history of Buryat nationalist movement. In the late 1980s a kind of 'native rights movement' began to emerge in many parts of Siberia (Forsyth 1992:409). The problem of industrial development and ecology inevitably led the Buryat intelligentsia into political field and the question of native rights, particularly with reference to territory. In 1921, the constitution of the Far Eastern Republic created an "Autonomous Buryat-Mongol Oblast" and in 1922 the Soviet government established a Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Republic. These two were merged to form one single Buryat-Mongol ASSR in 1923 (Fondhal 1997: 76). In the process of nationalist movement many Buryat leaders had to suffer a

lot. Most of the members of the Buryat intelligentsia, who had played a critical role in shaping the early policy of the Buryat-Mongol ASSR, were denounced as Japanese spies and purged.

In 1987 the Buryats took the decision to reinstate Buryat as the language of instruction in schools. Forsyth 409 that resulted in 1989 in a majority of schools Buryat had become the language of instruction. During the period of 1990, the Soviet power over Buryats reduced to an extent. So the Buryat government issued a declaration of sovereignty which included the law and control over Buryat land and the restoration of the name of the Republic of Buryatia. In the later Soviet period, the Buryat national movement had a contribution to the revival of Buryat culture. In February 1991, the All-Buryat Congress for the Spiritual Rebirth and Consolidation of the Nation was held, by the government of the Republic of Buryatia and the leaders of the Buryat National Movement. The Buryats also demanded for rights to press and literature. The early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century produced political movements among the Buryat Mongols, because the Russian government reduced their autonomy by abolition of the steppe councils presided over by native leaders. Moreover the Russian government used the Buryat cattle rearers land to the Russian state and redistributed to the Buryats and new Russian settlers (Forsyth 1992:173).

In 2006 the UNESCO Atlas of World's Languages added the Buryat language as one of the endangered languages of the world. For any nationality a crucial factor is the continuing use of the national language, but it tended towards a decline in the use of native Buryat language especially in the educational system and in social intercourse in general.

#### **Conclusion:**

The Buryat Mongols are the most numerous indigenous community among more than forty indigenous communities in Russia. They are Mongol

origin having a rich history of culture and tradition in Russia. The co-option of Buryat culture and the cohesion by some Soviet policies have taken decades and the process has been like cheeping away of indigenous culture by the successive regimes in Russia. This has given a bi-product of an indigenous community which has a sense of loss as well as resentment over it. The Buryat nationalism therefore arises from loss of tradition and an increasing sense of it by being a part of a country that has a huge Russian culture.

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## Significance of Afghanistan in India's Foreign Policy

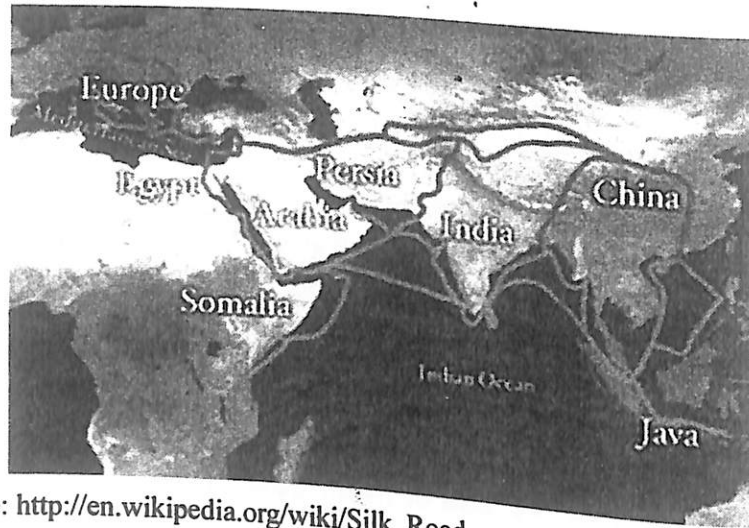
*Jayasree Nath*

India and Afghanistan share a strong historical and cultural relationship. The close cultural and historical relation between India and Afghanistan goes back to the period of great Silk Route. The Silk Route was a series of interconnected trade routes linking Asia and Europe in the ancient period. This Silk Route enhanced not only trade relations among the countries and region but slowly a cultural interaction also started among people. For example Buddhism, during Emperor Ashoka's time was propagated along the Silk Road through Kashmir to Afghanistan and Central Asia, ultimately taking root in China. Chengis Khan used it during the 13<sup>th</sup> century to expand the Mongolian empire. The Great Silk Route existed from the second century BC to 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. It got the name from the first item of transit trade-Chinese silk. Chinese Han Dynasty was the first extensive user of the Silk Route during the second century B C. After that successor empires in the region utilized the route and expanded thereafter such as Roman Empire, Kushan Empire till Mughal Empire.

Afghanistan's location between the two great civilizations; India and China, also was a contributing factor for the promotion of cultural ties. The religious exchange among the nations Afghanistan, India including China and Central Asia was another factor of that interaction. Buddhism spread from India to Central Asia and then to China, Islam came to India in a big way from Central Asia. There are a lot of cultural religious heritage still visible today. A twelve-metre long sleeping statute of Buddha in Tajikistan and massive statues in Afghanistan although destroyed by Taliban shows the linkages. Sufism represented an important cultural interaction among the regions. Takshashila

(now in Pakistan) was strategically located on the river Indus and the city of Puruspura (near Peshawar in Pakistan).

Map I: Ancient Silk Route and its networks



Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk\\_Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk_Road)

During colonial era, strategic significance of Afghanistan came as the region saw the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the 19th century. In later period it is also came to known as Great Game. In this game Afghanistan became the buffer zone between two Great Empire; British India and Russian Empire. Both empires wanted to carve out their sphere of influence and expand their empire in the neighbouring region of Afghanistan, i. e Central Asian region. The modern boundary of Afghanistan is also the creation of colonial time only. Since that time Afghanistan remaining a focal point in the region pertaining superpower hegemony in the whole Central and South Asian region.

Map II: Afghanistan



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu)

### Significance of Afghanistan in India's Foreign Policy:

In terms of relations among nations, historical-cultural backgrounds always help to create a cooperative space in the present context of relationship. Relationship between India and Afghanistan is quite old and comprehensive. While ancient pre-colonial era was marked by a trade link enhancing a cultural historical relations, post-colonial globalised era compel the region to renovate their relations in a new way by looking for a cooperation of strategic equation to fulfil their own national aspiration; be it political, geostrategic, economic or military.

With its geo-strategic location, neighbouring CAR, Pakistan and Iran, Afghanistan has remained a focus of India's regional foreign policy. Besides, India was among the first non-Communist states to recognise the government installed by the Soviet Union after its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. New Delhi supported successive governments in Kabul until the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s. India, also along with Russia and Iran supported the non-Pashtun Rabbani forces opposing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. India provided high altitude warfare equipments, technical support and medical facilities to the Northern Alliance forces in the border of Tajikistan. India also established a hospital in Farkhor on the Afghan-Tajik border to provide medical assistance to the soldiers.

India's security interest on Afghanistan started after the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight IC-184 from Kathmandu in 1999 by Pakistan based terrorists to Kandahar of southern Afghanistan. The hijackers were funded and trained by the Taliban. India supported the anti-Taliban Rabbani forces and joined hands with Northern Alliance groups with other neighbouring countries of Afghanistan such as Iran, Russia and Central Asia. As a result, India also reportedly established its first overseas airbase Ayni near Dushanbe in Tajikistan to defend its commercial flights to Europe. The base is upgraded by India is now fully operational. During the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, India had experienced many security threats in terms of the proliferation of Afghan mujahideen militants in the Kashmir area. M. H. Ansari, India's former Ambassador to Afghanistan, observed, "A relationship with the Taliban was not attempted... as a result of the treatment meted out to the Afghan Hindus and Sikhs. Much more serious in Indian eyes were the Taliban pronouncements on Kashmir, the training of Kashmiris, Pakistanis, and foreign militants in camps in Afghanistan... these touched the core of India's vital interests and compelled New Delhi to strengthen its support and assistance to the predominantly non-Pashtun Rabbani

forces". During the US-led war on terrorism on Afghanistan, India offered support in forms which included intelligence. After the Taliban government was toppled, India actively participated in rebuilding efforts of Afghanistan.

Two aspects in modern sense have developed in India's growing interest in Afghanistan and neighbouring region. First and foremost is the security and stability of Afghanistan which interlinked with India's domestic security, linking with Pakistan factor. This broader security view is interlocked with India's domestic and regional security perspective connected with India's CAR policy too. India has experienced Pakistan sponsored terrorism and Pakistan's earlier search for "Strategic Depth" in Afghanistan extending to CAR by encompassing radical Islamic groups. As a result, India through the development measures wanted to change the political economy of Afghanistan. Since 2001 about 100 Indian companies have invested in Afghanistan ranging from services, construction and industrial sector etc. Both countries also have signed preferential trade agreement for further increase of trade and investment. India is one of the largest trade partners of Afghanistan and its fifth largest source of imports. Though size of trade is very small but it is increasing steadily. Recently, India was awarded the mining rights of the Hajigak iron ore which is biggest iron ore deposit in Afghanistan. It is a consortium of seven Indian companies. This also forms the largest single investment in Afghanistan by any country so far. Additionally, India's construction of road between Iran and Afghanistan from Delaram to Zaranj through a signing of MoU in 2003 between India, Iran and Afghanistan shows India's active and strident strategic role in the region in the near future. It also shows if necessary India is ready to bypass Pakistan and will help the other countries to bypass the Gwadar port of Pakistan and will facilitate movement of goods to and fro through Iranian port to Afghanistan and CAR. On military policy, India is involved in assisting and training the Afghan military personnel only. On furthering defence policy with Afghanistan, India needs to be very

cautious and a regional forum would be more beneficial seeing not only the past experiences of Afghanistan's political situation but due to its location in the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia and neighbouring two great military power of the world; China and Russia.

On the other hand, Pakistan, bordering country of both Afghanistan and India, and also only land route between the two is an important factor for India. Pakistan also sees India's involvement on Afghanistan in sceptical way due to all-time hostility with India. It has also reserved transit right to India connecting through their land to Afghanistan. However, international community always recognised India's humanitarian efforts on Afghanistan in a positive way and appreciate India's efforts. Moreover, Pakistan in recent time is facing their home-grown terrorism problems and accepted the fact that economic integration and development of Afghanistan is necessary for their own economic development. Agreement on development of TAPI (Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India) pipeline projects by all stakeholders is a good example of this initiative.

Secondly, to get access of the energy rich market of Iran, and Central Asia and further Russia. India, except with Pakistan holds a good relationship with its northern neighbouring region. With Russia, Iran and Central Asia, India shares a warm friendly cooperation. While, Iran is the second largest supplier of crude oil to India, supplying more than 425,000 barrels of oil per day, India is one of the largest foreign investors in Iran's oil and gas industry. However, economic sanctions imposed by the Western countries halted relations between the two. The recent nuclear deal between western countries with Iran carried a positive indication of furthering relations between India and Iran.

Additionally, India already has invested in major oil fields of CAR; especially with the energy rich country of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. With Kazakhstan, India has achieved a good understanding to further its relationship.

Kazakhstan is the largest economy in the CAR next to Russia among CIS and is the largest repository of hydrocarbon reserves and producer among the five Republics. Other mineral resources found in Kazakhstan are chromium, lead, and zinc reserves and it is among the top ten sources of coal, manganese, copper, iron, and gold reserves. India entering in the energy market of Kazakhstan has signed an agreement on the purchase of 25 percent stake in the Satpayev Oil Block, one of the important oil fields in Kazakhstan. From Indian side ONGC Videsh Limited and Kazmunaygaz signed the agreement in 2011. In recent visit of Indian Prime Minister to Central Asia, Narendra Modi with the premier of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov launched the first exploratory drilling of the Satpayev oil block. India is to conduct a feasibility study on importing crude oil and gas from Kazakhstan either through a pipeline or as liquid natural gas in ships. The hydrocarbons can be brought first to Iran via the Caspian Sea and transported across the country through a pipeline. India also shares a MoU with Kazatomprom envisaging cooperation on the supply of uranium to India for the civil nuclear purpose. Kazakhstan also has the second-largest deposits of uranium at 1.5 million tons, constituting approximately 17 percent of the world's total. It is most resourceful country in the CAR poised to emerge as the number one supplier of uranium in the world. Astana is also planning to increase uranium output capacity from the current 6,673 Metric Tons Uranium (MTU) to 30,000 MTU by the end of 2018. This needs a good partner and investor while India is keen to be a partner through joint ventures. The nuclear agreement signed with Kazakhstan makes India fifth country besides the US, France, Mongolia and Russia that would supply uranium to India for civilian energy purposes. Under the proposed agreement, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India will begin to import at least 120 tons annually of Kazakhstan's uranium. The undergoing TAPI pipeline project is another important pipeline project hoping to carry the energy from Turkmenistan to India via Pakistan and Afghanistan. Although all stakeholders are agreed to develop the same, security

situation in Afghanistan is the major impediment for this project. Hence, a secure and stable Afghanistan is a prime requirement for the development of the whole region. Lack of access through land or sea also has created a difficult situation for India to import energy from CAR. Pakistan's denials to transit right to India through its land to Afghanistan hampering to link these two regions. However, India with Iran, Central Asia and Russia is searching alternative trade route to connect India with the region. North-South Transport corridor project is one such international project. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is the ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia. The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities of the region such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali etc. India is helping Iran to develop its Chabahar port to connect Afghanistan and Central Asia. It is also a major port of INSTC. India is also supporting to develop the border region of Central Asia and Afghanistan to connect with the Chabahar port of Iran. These developmental measures of India can be retrieved in a positive aspect of India's role in Afghanistan and its neighbouring region.

#### **War on Terrorism and India's role on Afghanistan:**

India has played a significant role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of war torn Afghanistan. India has played an active role in the development of Afghanistan based on the understanding that social and economic development in Afghanistan is crucial to regional stability. India's assistance towards Afghanistan mainly focused on the humanitarian grounds which affects the common Afghan people. The principal objective of India's development partnership is to assist in building indigenous Afghan capacity and institutions and to ensure that development touches all the people and regions of Afghanistan and encompasses all the sectors of development.

India's supports towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan have been reflected in the Strategic Partnership Agreement, signed between Afghanistan and India during Afghan President Hamid Karzai's visit to India in October 2011. It is primarily based on multi-faceted relations between the two countries for cooperation in various areas, be it geostrategic, economic or security. This agreement is a strong signal of India's commitment to peace, stability and prosperity of Afghanistan during such a critical period of security and governance transition. India's humanitarian assistance in the reconstruction project in Afghanistan is spanning a variety of sectors identified by the Afghan government and Afghan National Development Strategy as priority areas, particularly infrastructure, small and community-based development projects and capacity building projects.

In the capacity building projects, India is providing annual scholarships to the students of Afghanistan intended to study in Indian Universities, numbering almost 500 or 600 per year. Agriculture being the key to the development of Afghanistan and India is cooperating to develop the same. To innovate agricultural sector, India is assisting fellowships to Afghan people to enhance knowledge in agricultural sector. To build indigenous Afghan capacity and institutions, India also announced its strong support to the proposed Afghan National Institution Building Project of the UNDP. Also India is providing training and scholarships to the civil servants of Afghanistan. On the community-based projects, India is providing medical assistance and facilitating healthcare service to the common Afghan people by Indian doctors. Linking a telecommunication network for its 11 provincial capitals and a TV network across the country, a power transmission grid from Uzbekistan to bring additional electricity to Kabul, completion of the construction of Afghanistan's parliamentary building, construction of Salma Dam in Herat province, solar electrification of roads, construction of 220km road linking landlocked Afghanistan with the Chabahar port of Iran, supply of



aircrafts, buses and other vehicles etc. are some important projects India has contributed in the development projects of Afghanistan. All these development projects are focused on the socio economic development of border areas. India is also engaged in the construction of schools, colleges, hospitals, drilling tube wells, sending biscuits, wheats etc. Afghanistan on the other hand also considered India as a "great friend". Afghanistan has welcomed India's efforts in reconstruction project throughout the country. Former President of Afghanistan, Karzai repeatedly hails India as a "great friend". India also shares a civilizational privileged, historical relationship with Afghanistan. India supports Afghanistan's efforts to build a peaceful, pluralistic, democratic and prosperous country. Additionally India's growing interest in CAR through the embedded policy of economic, energy and strategic synergy benefiting both has further enhanced the Afghan factor in the relation between the two since both share common interests and concerns in the region.

India also hosted an international investor's meet on Afghanistan in New Delhi in 2012 in which more than 270 private sector firms and consultancies from India and Afghanistan besides regional and global partners participated. This is an attempt to help Afghanistan transition from an unstable economy so far being sustained by foreign aid to one sustained by private investments. This was as a part of responsibility India has initiated as a member of the Istanbul Process for regional dialogue on Afghanistan. Istanbul Process for regional dialogue on Afghanistan is also described as the "Heart of Asia Process" set up in 2011 in Turkey. The member countries are India, China, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. Western countries along with the UN are also supporter of this process. The process deals with counter-terrorism and counter narcotics, education, economic development and regional infrastructure and the response to natural disasters and is working through a

series of confidence-building measures (CBMs), each led by a member or group of countries.

#### **India's current policy on Afghanistan (Post NATO withdrawal):**

India's current policy approach towards this region is reflective of its growing concerns about future developments in Afghanistan after the U.S. military drawdown in 2014. Moreover the present scenario of stability and security of Afghanistan is very fragile. Recent attacks of Taliban on security forces of Afghanistan have shown the unresolved problems of Afghanistan. Though, it is not possible for Taliban to come back again in power as they did in 1996. India along with other concerned countries is looking cautiously the future development of Afghanistan and concerned countries including regional and Western will not allow it to happen again. On regional level, India has already stepped up its engagement with the US, Russia and regional countries to address the Afghan Quagmire. India views the Central Asian countries as reliable partners as they share same concern. Recently India also became full member of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) which has carried a positive connotation for regional grouping with Central Asia. Besides, Afghanistan is also an observer member of SCO. Since SCO was officially established as a bulwark against terrorism in CAR, inclusion of India and a pragmatic approach on Afghanistan can help the whole region in the backdrop of security situation of Afghanistan. In regional cooperation, Afghanistan joined SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) at the 14th SAARC Summit held in Delhi in April 2007, opening possibilities of Afghanistan becoming a trade, transportation and energy hub linking together the countries of the region from Central to South Asia. India was the main advocator for the inclusion of Afghanistan in the SAARC group. India has also encouraged Afghanistan's efforts at capitalising on its unique geographical location at the heart of the

Asian continent by supporting regional initiatives like the Istanbul process and RECCA (Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan) that seek to assist in Afghanistan's development through cooperation in various sectors of the economy.

India along with other regional powers believes in economic integration of Afghanistan with regional groupings to stabilise the region in future. India, during the third Indo-US Strategic Dialogue agreed to form trilateral consultations with the US on Afghanistan. This initiative will enable India and the US to explore opportunities to promote Afghanistan's development in the areas of agriculture, mining, energy, capacity building and infrastructure. Indian humanitarian efforts already crossed \$2 billion dollars positing as the foremost regional aid giving country in Afghanistan. Despite many threats and attacks India still is continuing its development assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Geographical proximity leads significance of Afghanistan in India's north neighbourhood foreign policy. It has a regional perspective to understand the relations between the two nations.

**Conclusion:**

India's policy towards Afghanistan is the embodiment of the soft power approach with a long term goal. India has historically enjoyed amicable relations with every government in Kabul with the exception of the Taliban regime. India also shared a "Friendship Treaty" agreement signed in 1950 with Afghanistan. In the Post 9/11 era, both also have signed strategic agreement in 2011 to enhanced cooperation further. India has successfully attracted the common opinion poll conducted by BBC, American Broadcasting Company (ABC) and prefer more India's role and leadership in their territory compared to the great

power U.S. and regional power China, with 71% expressing approval, the most positive rating of India compared to any other surveyed on Asia-Pacific country.

From Indian perspective, CAR is an extended neighbour while Afghanistan is a member of SAARC and a friend till Taliban came to power. Security and stability of Afghanistan is always India's concern since it is connected with India's domestic security interest. It also has carried India's future energy policy. India has enhanced a "Connect Central Asia Policy" for future energy cooperation with Central Asian region to meet the growing energy demand of India. Besides, Russia and Iran shares a good friendly cooperation with India since earlier time. India already had established its humanitarian aid and services in Afghanistan. Although land route is a problem to communicate, alternative trade route is in progress to promote regional cooperation and to meet security and stability of Afghanistan. India is also supporting and helping the infrastructure and developmental projects in Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia to link South Asia, Central Asia and further beyond. For example India is helping Iran to develop its Chabahar port to connect Afghanistan and Central Asia. India also a member of the on-going North-South corridor link project is intended to take freight from India to Europe through Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia. Pipeline project such as TAPI is also another future area of interest India, Central Asia and Afghanistan are looking forward.

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## Academic Debates on the Identity of Tribe in the Context of Historical Evolution of State

*Dr. Sanghamitra Jahari*

Social scientists have attached much importance to the study of tribal development. Leading anthropologist L. H. Morgan had deliberated that new tribes were formed by natural growth. In the first place, there will occur a gradual outflow of people from some overstocked geographical centre which possessed superior advantages in the means of subsistence. This would continue from year to year and in due course the emigrants would become distinct in interests, strangers in feelings and last of all they will become divergent in speech. Separation and independence would follow although their territories were contiguous. A new tribe was thus created. Indian anthropologists have depicted tribes as small; self-contained, self-sufficient and autonomous homogenous communities practicing subsistence economy with the lack of or limited external trade, in which exploitation and social conflict have no place.

### Debates on Relation of State and Tribe

A path breaking line of enquiry in the study of tribe was its relation vis a vis state in the context of the historical evolution of state and the associated structural changes in society. Central to this enquiry was the debate started by Morton Fried, James G. Scott, Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner on whether the tribe as an intermediary unit made a transition into state and whether tribe can exist without the transition to statehood. In their view the traditional typology of the structural evolution from village to chiefdom to tribe and ultimately to state may not be conducive to explain variation in societies who have opted to remain outside state system. A society may lack statehood or

government, but then inevitably its political needs are served by more generalized institutions such as family, totemic clan, age set and lineage.<sup>1</sup> Morton's contention is that if we imagine a possibility of formation of tribes as a reaction to the pushing of state organization into regions of more simple organized population, then attempts to identify the pristine state with a prior tribal form of organization may well create a very misleading picture.

In contrast to the conventional view Morton Fried suggests that tribes are formed by the prior activity of state-organized societies. James G Scott opined that to say 'states make tribes' would be far more correct than to say 'tribes make state'. Scott counters the old view that the hill people were the aboriginal population that had failed, for whatever reason to make the transition to a more civilized way of life, population that have been "left behind" culturally and materially.<sup>2</sup> People moved into hills or peripheries when pressed by stronger fugitives or threatened by a new expanding state in search of new land and autonomy. Physical flight was the main check on state power. At times of war, crop failure, natural calamities, oppressive taxation, economic contraction or military conquest, however the advantages of social existence outside the reach of valley state were far more alluring.

The core area of E. R. Leach study is the Kachin area (Burma) in which the Gumsa and Gumlao represents community structure in chiefdoms while the organization of the hill-dwelling peoples is very different from that of the people of the valleys.<sup>3</sup> According to Leach tribes and state may exist within the same system and evolve their own socio-political formations.

Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner addressed the question whether tribes made a transition to statehood in the context of the Middle East. They found that the tribes played a significant role in the creation of certain Islamic

empires as Umayyad, Abbasid, Ottoman etc but there were tribes who remained immune from imperial control. When the tribes refuse to come under state control they adopt strategies of resistance such as deliberately under-producing or suppressing potential leaders to frustrate attempts at control, military confrontation, avoiding engagement by refusing to recognize any leader either indigenous or imposed externally, fleeing rather than fighting and maintaining a diffuse form of organization. Tribal formations still persisted as chiefdoms, particularly in desert and mountain peripheries where they remained beyond the reach of the Ottoman and Iranian governments and where they continued to thrive and to maintain the traditional cultural basis for their group identity.<sup>4</sup>

Scholars like Richard Tapper holds the view that tribes transited into statehood through the intermediary phase of chieftaincy. He views the tribe as being organized politically under chiefs. But he added that what dominated such chiefships was the tribal segmentary organization marked by political decentralization, minimal administration, kin-related political behaviour, social solidarity, economic cooperation and territoriality based on tribal grazing zones.

#### **Transformation of Undifferentiated Tribal Societies in Eastern and North East India:**

Tribe and state are treated not as isolated but in interaction with each other; even when tribes have been conceived as remaining outside the state, which has most often been the case, they have been viewed as being in constant interaction with civilization: tribal society has been seen not as static but in process of change.<sup>5</sup> The tribal dominated areas of East-Central and North-East India are areas where the transformation of the undifferentiated tribal societies into a pan-Indian Hindu setting took place. In his study of the tribals of Central India Surajit Sinha found that in Barabhum, Gondwana and Chotanagpur the kingdoms emerged from an indigenous tribal base; a process deeply connected

with the attainment of the technological level of settled agriculture. Though A. L. Basham refuses to accede to the view that tribal settlements in the hills belonged to the cultural phase which spread to the hills but Suranjit K. Saha contends that the states did emerge from within the tribal societies of the mountain and forest regions of East-Central India. He stated that the process of acculturation, Hinduisation and social stratification within the village could not be properly understood unless the data are examined in the broader context of the formation of the principality. He further adds that the formation of the state provided the decisive socio-political framework for the transformation of the tribal system into the regional caste system.

An important instrument frequently used by the classical Hindu states, as well as those secondary states which imitated them as role models, for establishing and consolidating elite control in undifferentiated tribal societies were royal charters granting villages to Brahmanas in perpetuity.<sup>6</sup> The Brahman, imported from centres of Hindu culture by chiefs on the fringes of Aryanism and settled in uninhabited or under-populated waste, was the pioneer of the Aryan way of life in the tribal areas.<sup>7</sup> Many Brahmanas succeeded in gaining influence with tribal chiefs, and devised new sacrificial rites of royal consecration and rejuvenation, which tended more and more to free the chiefs from control by tribal councils.<sup>8</sup>

Sociologists and Anthropologists tend to see as the end result of social change in tribal India the transformation of any given tribe into a caste or just another socially stratified group, or the merger of the tribe in the peasantry.<sup>9</sup> The dominant view is that the tribes are those sections who stand more or less outside the pale of Hindu civilization. For those who were fused into the general society through a method of assimilation uses the concepts like technological adaptation, Sanskritization, Hinduisation and State formation. Virginius Xaxa has raised concern whether such processes as Sanskritization or Hinduisation

lead to the dislocation of tribal society and pave the way for its absorption into the Hindu society. In this regard, M. N. Srinivas said that Sanskritization is generally accompanied by, and often results in upward mobility of a group, whether low caste Hindu or tribal but that is related only to positional changes in the system and does not lead to structural changes.<sup>10</sup> The studies on regional political history of Assam have for a long time been dominated by the historians' ideological leanings towards dynastic events and ruling elites whether of the kingdoms of Ahoms, Koch, Dimasa or that of Tripura. The limitation of conventional historiography of the region has been non-cognizance of polities which fall outside the imperial system as for example that of the tribals. Xaxa preferred to use the word Hinduisation instead of Sanskritization on the ground that climbing up the social ladder is not the overriding concern for the tribes. Tribes have not moved into processes like Hinduisation or Sanskritisation as whole groups. The general pattern is that only a section of a tribe moves to a new cultural patterns. However barring the upper strata of the tribal society who got integrated into the Hindu order, the rank and file continued to live outside traditional Hindu practices though there may have been a process of Hinduisation among them. Even after Hinduisation the tribes remain by and large outside the hierarchical structure of Hindu society.

#### **Conclusion :**

For a comprehensive study of regional history especially in the context of the tribes we need to mark out distinct stages of historical evolution in the tribal society not as an isolated entity but in a constant state of interaction, both at local and supra-local levels. This can come to the fore only when we consider not only the dynastic or elitist history but also the socio-cultural dynamics behind the changes or continuity of the tribal ethos as well as their ethno-cultural implications involving issues of identity, ethnicity and mobilization.

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Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Socio-Cultural Changes of North-East India: A Comparative Study

*Devid Payeng*

To understand my argument it would be better to have a glimpse on the plot of *Things Fall Apart*. The story is centred on Okonkwo who is a wealthy and respected warrior of the Umuofia clan, a lower Nigerian tribe that is part of a consortium of nine connected villages. In his entire life he is haunted by the actions of Unoka, his cowardly and effeminate father who died without any honour. Unlike his father, Okonkwo became a clansman, warrior, farmer and family provider who has three wives. He has a son named Nwoye whom he finds lazy. Okonkwo worries that Nwoye will end up a failure like his father, Unoka.

When a married woman from Okonkwo's village was killed by a person from a neighbouring village then the village had to give a virgin to the husband and also a fifteen year old boy to settle the matter as per the rule of the Igbo society. Okonkwo takes charge of the boy, Ikemefuna and finds an ideal son in him. Nwoye likewise forms a strong attachment to the new comer. Ikemefuna stays with Okonkwo's family for three years. Nwoye looks upto him as an older brother and much to Okonkwo's pleasure he develops a masculine attitude. But unfortunately, Ogbuefi Ezeudu, a respected village elder informs Okonkwo in private that Ikemefuna must be killed as it is told by the village oracle. The village elder also suggests Okonkwo that because Ikemefuna calls him "father", he ( Okonkwo) should not take part in the boy's killing. But Okonkwo, who doesn't wish to look weak in front of his fellow tribesman, cuts the boy down.

The action makes Nwoye hate his father as well as the tradition of the Igbo society. Okonkwo sinks into depression neither able to sleep nor eat.

After some days, Ogbuefi Ezeudu, the village elder, who was a good friend of Okonkwo dies and in his funeral a horrible accident occurs. On the day of the funeral, the men beat drums and fire their guns as he was a powerful person of the village. Okonkwo also fires his gun but unfortunately the bullet kills a sixteen year old boy from the village. Because killing a clansman is a crime against the earth goddess according to the Igbo culture, Okonkwo must take his family into exile for seven years in order to atone. He leaves for his mother's natal village Mbanta. Okonkwo's kinsman, especially his uncle, Uchendu receives him warmly. During the second year of Okonkwo's stay at his mother's village six missionaries arrives at the village. Through an interpreter named Kiaga, the missionaries leader Mr Bron speaks to the villagers. He tells the villagers that their Gods are falls and explain them to embrace Christianity. Those people who are weak, outcast, poor and dissatisfied with the Igbo tradition are the foremost to embrace Christianity. Okonkwo is unhappy with the villagers of Mbanta because they have allowed the missionaries to build a church in the village. Okonkwo sighs that if it would have been in his village then he would not have allowed them to build a church.

When Okonkwo returns his village after seven years of exile he finds a changed environment in the village. Missionaries already established a church, a school and a hospital in his village and he is surprised that the villagers allowed them. Many people of the village have already converted to Christianity and his son Nwoye is also one of them. The white Europeans established their own administration in the village. In an accident Okonkwo and some of his villagers' burn down the missionary built Church of the village and when five court messenger approach and order the clansman to surrender Okonkwo kills one of

the messengers with his machete by thinking that other villagers will also do the same. But to his utter surprise the village crowd allows the other messenger to escape, Okonkwo realizes that his clan is not willing to go to war against the white settlers. When the District Commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound to arrest him he finds that Okonkwo has already hanged himself.

#### **Analysis on Things Fall Apart and North East India:**

In the literary discourse of post-colonialism Chinua Achebe is a very familiar name. Since its publication *Things fall Apart* has attracted immense interest of the post colonial critics as it can be considered a pioneer in retracing Africa's colonial past from a colonized perspective. A post colonial reading of the novel will let us see how Achebe counters Eurocentric view of Africa. One of the important characteristic of post colonial writer is to challenge the colonizers view of colonized people and culture as *other*. He challenges the European representation of Africa as a land of primitive or savage who lack culture and civilization. For he presents before the reader a rich, varied and complex culture of Africa which was not known to the most of the world. For the purpose, he chooses one definite culture, namely Igbo culture and explores it by depicting a fictional village Umuofia. If we go through the chapters of the novel then we will discover this challenging attitude of Achebe as a post-colonial writer. The text is replete with such examples. For instance, the practice of sharing palm wine<sup>1</sup> and kola nuts<sup>2</sup> is repeated throughout the book to emphasize the peacefulness of the Igbo. When Unoka's resentful neighbor visits him to collect a debt, the neighbor does not immediately addresses the debt. Instead, he and Unoka share a Kola nut and pray their ancestral spirits. Afterwards they converse about community affairs at great length. Through his emphasis on the harmony and complexity of the Igbo culture, Achebe contradicts the stereotypical European representation of African as savages. Moreover, contrary to the



Eurocentric perception of Africa as primordial land of silence Achebe shows that people of Umuofia speak a very complex language which is full of proverbs and literary and rhetorical devices. With the introduction of Ikemefuna's character in the plot of the novel, Achebe is able to remind us that the story we are reading is not about Africa but rather about one specific culture within Africa. Each clan has its own culture and Ikemefuna is an existing addition of Umuofia because he brings with him a new and unfamiliar folk tales which he tells to Nwoye and other people. Achebe, thus combats the European tendency to see all African as one and the same.

But the fact is that *Things Fall Apart* is not one sided portrayal of African culture. He does not blindly glorify all of the traditional practices of the Igbo culture but rather they are put to question. He provides reasons that the rapid destruction and Christianization of the Igbo culture was fuelled by various drawbacks in the Igbo society and culture itself. For instance, in the text he presents how among the Igbo people twins are considered evil and are thrown away to the "Evil Forest". Again on another occasion when the village oracle declares that Ikemefuna must be killed then Okonkwo kills him despite of his love for him because the tradition commands it. Both actions created great discontent and disbelief on the Igbo traditional practices in the mind of Nwoye. Consequently, when missionaries came to Umuofia, Nwoye was one of those who first converted to Christianity. May be it seems to answer his long held doubts about his native belief system, specially the abandonment of twin newborn and Ikemefuna's death. Along with Nwoye, the weak, Osu<sup>4</sup> (socially outcast,) Efulufu,<sup>5</sup> (title less) and those who are dissatisfied or discontent with the Igbo society are the first people to have a conversion to Christianity. They are drawn to the new religion because it offers them to live with dignity and equality. Therefore, Okonkwo points out that if a society is not based on principles of equality or on other words, if all members of a particular society

are not guaranteed equal respect and treatment then external forces can easily intrude and shatter it. On this light, if we look at the colonial and post-colonial panorama of the culture and society of North-East India we find similar kind of situation.

Geographically, states of North-East India (now comprises of 8 states) are poorly connected with one another and to the rest of India. Apart from heavenly natural beauty, NE India is a home to hundreds of different tribal community vibrating in traditional culture and way of life. Prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries and beginning of colonial rule, each of these tribal communities was rich in their respective folk lore, folk song, folk dance, various beliefs and myths, and ways of life. As per religious beliefs are concerned they worshipped their respective pagan god and goddesses. For example, in Arunachal Pradesh Tani<sup>6</sup> group worshipped Donyi-Po:lo<sup>7</sup> (sun and moon). In manipur, Kuki tribe worshipped their respective god. But unfortunately Christian missionaries and colonial rule have already shattered most of such tribal culture by strategically imposing western culture, religion and value system. If we compare the census of 2001 and 2011 on Religion of the North-East states then we will have a clear picture of the alarming rise of Christianity. The table below indicates the comparison:

	Christian Population in 2001	Christian Population in 2011
Arunachal Pradesh	18.70%	30.00%
Manipur	34.00%	41.29%
Mizoram	86.90%	87.10%
Nagaland	89.70%	87.93%
Assam	3.70%	3.74%
Meghalaya	70.0%	74.59%
Sikkim	4.35%	9.91%
Tripura	3.20%	6.68%

The above chart shows the stark reality of the alarming rise of Christian population which will surely hamper the social and national integrity. Although percentage of Christian population in Assam is comparatively less than other states of the region yet missionary activities can be seen among the tribal people. In this context it would be better to cite an example of the same. Majuli can be called as the capital of Neo-Vaishnavite<sup>8</sup> culture propagated by great Mahapurush<sup>9</sup> Sankardeva<sup>10</sup>. The Island is still home to more than 30 *Satras*<sup>11</sup>. But the shocking truth is that the missionaries have already made its mark in some *Missiing*<sup>12</sup> tribal villages of the historic Island. By following Sankardeva's footprints the *Missing* people built *Namghar*<sup>13</sup> on the model of one that can be found everywhere in Assam. The tribe still performs some religious ceremony on the fashion of any other Vaishnavite people. But the question is why these people are changing their religion. The answer is not hard to find. For if one visit the Island one would discover orthodox nature in most of the *Satras*. One would hardly find any *Bhakatas* or member from the tribe in any of the *Satras* of Majuli. Likewise, in various programs and functions of the *Satras* the so called lower caste people are excluded. This orthodox nature of the *Satra* has created an unhealthy relationship between the tribal and upper caste Vaishnavite people. For the reason the Christian missionaries have dared to preach their religion on the holy land. However, that cannot be considered only reason for religious conversion of these people. There are other reasons also which is to be discussed in the later part of the article.

#### **Similarities in the process of Christianization in Achebe's Africa and North East India:**

Now I would like to draw the similarities between the process of Christianization in Africa as described in *Things Fall Apart* and North East India. By observing the activities of Christian missionaries in North East India and Achebe's fictional village Umofia it can be said that they are never hurry in

their Christianizing and Westernizing mission nor they do it forcefully. As Obrieka said to Okonkwo about Europeans in *Things Fall Apart*:

“...White man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart”

This illustrates that the white colonists and their religion weakens the kinship bonds so central to Igbo culture. They knew well that Igbo kinship bonds as the central obstacle to the success of its missionaries. That is the reason of overjoyed responds of a missionary when Nowye attends a missionary school at another village-”Blessed is he who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake” Therefore it can be assumed that wherever they propose to start their mission they first study the socio-cultural scenario of the place keenly. Next they would try to dig out the weaknesses of the society they pierce into and would manipulate those weaknesses as weapons to reach their goals. In the case of North East India, they came to know about the vulnerability of Indian society. They discovered the cultural gap between the people of North East India and the mainstream Hindu society.( We can't even ignore the political reasons behind unhealthy relationship between NE India and mainstream society. But I will not elaborate upon that). Before the arrival of Europeans most of the tribal people were counted themselves as Hindu and they kept their tribal religion and culture alive simultaneously. Nevertheless there have been always discontent and sense of alienation on the part of these tribal people. The reason is apparent, for these tribal people one of the problem in so called *Hinduism* is its caste system. People of Hindu society are ranked on the basis of their caste. They are divided into four categories on hierarchical order. According to the system Brahmins are placed at the top, kshatriya at the second, Vaishya at the third and shudra at the bottom. The caste categorization implicitly had a fifth element, being those

people deemed to be entirely outside its scope, such as tribal people and untouchables. This hierarchical order was not rigid during ancient time and but it was further developed during the collapse of Mughal era and the British colonial regime of India. Between 1860 and 1920 British Raj used rigid caste organization a central mechanism of administration. For instance, they granted administrative and senior appointments only to the upper castes. This marked alienation and dissatisfaction among the lower caste people and untouchables. This drawback in the Indian society assisted the missionaries in Christianization of the tribal people of North-East India. It's become easy for them to point out the inequality of the Hindu society and professing the imaginary equality in their religion. On the other hand these tribal people can be equated with the Ofuele and Osu of Igbo society mentioned in *Things Fall Apart*. As discussed already in early of the article that Ofuele and Osu and dissatisfied members of the Igbo society were the first people to join Christianity. Because church's value system will allow twins to live, for example, which offers comfort to the pregnant woman who has had to endure the casting away to die of her four sets of newborn twins? Similarly, men without titles turn to Christianity to find affirmation of their individual worth. The Osu are able to discard others' perception of them as members of an ostracized caste and enter the church as the equals of other converts. Even in the other parts of India this phenomenon can be seen amidst Dalits<sup>14</sup> and the tribals.

Secondly, they always target the illiterate and economically weak section of a society. They try to lure the people by voluntarily offering some services. For instance they would build a hospital, an educational institute and provide monetary help. After earning the trust of the people they start their missionary action. On this juncture it is important to remind the slow growth and development of NE states compared to other parts of India. Despite of having diverse natural resources, rich bio-diversity and enormous hydro-electricity potential and among other, the region lacks fundamental infrastructure and

industrial development. The discrimination and economic exploitation on the part of the central government have given rise to discontent and social unrest in the NE India. The rise separatist movements in Nagaland and Assam are not unrelated example either. Therefore, it became legitimate for the missionaries to approach the region as an economic beneficiary and a savior of illiteracy and darkness of the people. Therefore it would not be unwise to say that the whole of North-East owe a lot to the missionaries because a large percentage of the population is educated through institutions set up by Christian missionaries. In *Things Fall Apart* also we find that they adopt similar strategy to convert those Igbo people. In the text it is evident that Missionaries first establish a School and a hospital in the village of Umofia after that they start preaching their religion.

Thirdly and most importantly another major cause for the collapse of tribal cultures is imbued within their cultural practices itself. Most of the tribal communities have some barbaric practices. For example, among the *missing* tribe 'brutal animal sacrifices' are made in various religious rituals. Among some the Naga tribes the ritualistic tradition of headhunting was there up-to mid twentieth century. According to that barbaric tradition heads of the enemies were cut off and preserved as trophies. Some people like to opine that the practice was a way of asserting their manliness. Again among the *Missing* tribe girl child are not treated at par with that of male child. Now some people amidst the tribe itself don't like such practices but still forced to perform such practices only because tradition commands it. In other tribes also such kind of barbaric traditions are still followed blindly. If they don't reform themselves or diagnose their faults then external forces like Christianity would easily engulf their culture. In *Things Fall Apart* Achebe points out such barbaric tradition of the Igbo people. For example, new born twins are considered evil among Igbo people, human sacrifices are done on the ground of communal ethics. Many

prejudices and blind adherence to the unexamined traditions were brought to light in the novel. I have mentioned already how the village of Mbaino had to offer a virgin and a young boy to Ogbuefi Udo whose wife was killed in an accident. Yet those people who suffer from swelling of stomach and limbs are left in the forest to die so that they do not offend the earth by being buried. Okonkwo's beating of his wives with no valid reason shows peripheral position of women in the Igbo society.

**Conclusion:**

From the above discussion it can be concluded that in both India and Africa the Europeans adopted similar strategy for imposing their culture and value system. From the study it is also proved that both these countries had to lose many of their rich cultures because of the faults in their own society itself. We all know well that what was lost can be recovered but we must not ignore the Christianizing missions that are still continuing in many parts of the nation including plain tribes of Assam. If people in our society don't act little bit matured then all the tribal culture of the area will be banished one day. We have to accept with humility that Europeans have contributed a lot to the progress of our society. No doubt they have enlightened the NE region with education and wiped out many evil practices but they should not have allowed to do the same at the cost of destroying our unique cultures. To prevent such destructive factors both state and central government will have to speed up the pace of development in every corner of the region to maintain the sense of belongingness of people to the mainland India. Moreover, people should start to respect each and every communities and culture of the multicultural nation like India. If people of a particular society live in unity and with equality then no external forces can easily exert its influence to its culture.

**Notes:**

1. Palm Wine: Palm wine is an alcoholic beverage created from sap of various species of Palm tree. It is used as a traditional rituals and festivals of Igbo people.
2. Cola Nuts: Cola nut is the fruit of the Cola tree, which is found mostly in the tropical rainforests of Africa.
3. Evil Forest: Among the Igbo people Evil Forest is sinister or ominous place where people suffering from grave diseases like leprosy, swelling of limbs and stomach are thrown to die.
4. Osu: Among the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria the Osu are outcasts, the equivalent of being an "Untouchable".
5. Eufelegu: Among Igbo people worthless or who hold low esteem in their society.
6. Tani: The Tani tribes is a group of tribes from the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India with certain belief system.
7. Donyi: and Po:lo: They are words of Missing tribe. Donyi means Sun and Po:lo: refers to Moon. Missing tribe worship them as god and goddess.

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## Digboi Oil Refinery And The Process Of Industrialization

*Rimi Rashmi Borah*

The British established a small oil installation in 1889 and the Assam Oil Company in the same year. Thereafter a refinery was set up in 1901. The present work concludes in 1981 when Burmah Oil Company (BOC) was taken over by the Government of India namely, the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (I.O.C.L.) and Assam Oil Division (AOD) in case of Assam. Industrialization started in Assam when Oil, Coal, Tea was discovered by the British. This would gradually help in increasing the revenue of the rulers and also lead to Industrialization.

This paper will be an attempt to highlight the contribution of the Digboi Oil Refinery which helped in the industrialization process from 1901 to 1981.

Assam is well blessed by nature in respect of oil and natural gas which is termed as "liquid gold". During the pre-independence period the quest for oil was carried out by the B.O.C. and after independence, intensive search for oil has been carried out by the ONGC.<sup>1</sup>

During the pre-independence period search for "economic" as well as "energy group" of mineral was carried out in Assam. Geologically, Assam represents a wide stratigraphic spectrum in age ranging from Archaean to Quaternary. The Tertiary formations are the rich store house of quite a few economic mineral deposits like oil and natural gas, coal, limestone etc.<sup>2</sup>

The minerals play a vital role for the development of economic and comprehensive programme for the region. There is ample scope to develop this region with a number of industries based on the by-products received from the processing of Assam's crude oil<sup>3</sup>.

Industrialization is the cornerstone of economic growth. Almost all countries of the world are trying to strengthen their economies through industrialization. Assam is no exception. But to the indigenous people of Assam, the knowhow about the recent development in the field of modern industries is developing very slowly<sup>4</sup>.

In Assam industry is based on Agriculture and Oil. It has the oldest refinery in the country which started commercial production in 1901. Assam was the first state in the country where in 1889 oil was struck at Digboi in Tinsukia district. The refinery now belongs to the Assam Oil Division of the Indian Oil Corporation and has a refining capacity of 3 lakh tonnes of petrol, kerosene, diesel and other petroleum products.

Its original refining capacity had been 0.5 million metric tons per annum since 1901. After modernization the capacity of the refinery has been enhanced to 0.65 million metric tons per annum.<sup>5</sup>

Digboi oil refinery is situated in Margherita subdivision and is becoming an urban area. It is actually the result of rapid industrialization.

The total population of Tinsukia district is 1150146.<sup>6</sup> One of the important sub-divisions in Tinsukia district is Margherita. Digboi is the most important town under Margherita sub-division. In Tinsukia district, total urban population is 2, 24,174 and rural population is 9, 25,972. In Margherita sub-division total population is 3, 19,491 total urban populations is 81192 and rural

population is 2,38,299<sup>7</sup>. Earlier the region was full of forests and there were only narrow paths connecting the surrounding villages.

Industrialization plays a very crucial role in the process of economic development of a region. The effect of industrialization on the process of development of a particular region can mainly be measured the following ways-

1. Structural change in the economy
2. Beneficial effects on agricultural development
3. Creation of employment
4. Formation of capital
5. Creation of an industrial culture
6. Enlargement of local market
7. Absorption of technology<sup>8</sup>

In the sphere of industrialization, Assam is yet to make much headway. Although the base for industrial development in Assam was created more than a century ago with the establishment of tea, coal, oil and plywood industries, it could hardly accelerate the pace of industrial development during the subsequent period. Assam has the distinction of having the first oil refinery, first plywood factory and also the tea industry in the country<sup>9</sup>.

The state occupied an important place in the industrial map of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through participation in the most prosperous, petroleum industry, which is crucial to the growth of an economy and was started by the British rulers in the fag end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first oil refinery of the country was set up in 1901 at Digboi which is now owned and managed by the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.<sup>10</sup>

Since the setting up of these refineries, new oil fields have been discovered in several places in Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Jorhat districts and also

in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. At present Assam produces about 5 million tonnes of oil which accounts for more than 50 per cent of the production of onshore oil in the country. Gujarat produces about 3 million tonnes and Bombay High produces about 13 million tonnes offshore oil. The estimated reserves of crude oil in Assam (as on 1980) were 82.65 million tonnes.

Over the years, along with the discovery of new oil fields, natural gas reserves have also been discovered in the state. The estimated availability of associated gas from the Oil India Limited and ONGC oil fields is 72.8 billion cubic metres. The current production of associated gas in the state is estimated at about 5.5 million standard cubic metres per day. As per the Gas Task Force Report (June, 1984), the estimated free gas reserves in Assam are around 40 million cubic metres. An estimated 3 million cubic metres of gas are being flared up in the state daily. The natural gas has high components of plastic products which may be utilized for the plastic industry. Natural gas is also an excellent feedstock for the production of nitrogenous fertilizer and has an advantage over coal and even naphtha. During the sixties, the first natural-gas-based fertilizer plant in Asia was established in Namrup in Assam. The petroleum industry is a highly mechanized and capital intensive industry: From the point of view of employment generation, the scope of this industry is limited. But by-products of the petro-chemical industry opens up a vast scope for other types of industries in the small scale sector. These industries in the small scale sector have great employment potential. Besides, the growth of these industries will help in the development of transport and communication system in the state.<sup>11</sup>

In 1850 world petroleum production was nil but in 1956 it exceeded 800 million tons. In 1920 oil and natural gas supplied 15% of world's total effectively utilized energy. By 1956 Oil and gas overtook coal as the world's most prolific source of energy.<sup>12</sup>

No. 110G.M., dated Digboi, the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1921.

From- the Acting General Manager, Assam oil Company Limited, Digboi,  
To -The Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur.

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your memorandum No. 2975R., dated the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1921, together with copy of letter No. 538 - 2, dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1920, with enclosures, from the Industries and Munitions, regarding the adoption of a standard form of Royalty Clause for New Oil Concessions.

2. The proposal to adopt a "sliding scale" varying according to the total production of crude is undoubtedly a good one, and for Companies who have been fortunate in securing territory where the oil-sands are prolific, the proposed rates of royalty might be called fair; but for small Companies whose territory does not produce large quantities of crude, and whose annual production falls between 10,000 to 30,000 tons, the rate of royalty suggested is much too high and would be a burden, and place them at a disadvantage.

3. It will be obvious that the expenses in boring a well are the same whether the yield be one barrel or 1,000 barrels per day. Take for instance, the enormous expenses involved in exploiting areas such as this Company has been doing for some years in thickest of jungles, hilly country and absence of any means of communication with as yet no return to the share-holders. This Company has however, ever since 1887, been struggling hard to battle against adverse circumstances for its very existence, having spent large sums of money in developing the mineral resources of this part of the country, but its annual crude production has never exceeded 25,000 tons, and this want of success lies in the fact that we have not as yet exploited territory where large yielding wells have been found.

4. I would therefore suggest that instead of one rate of percentage for production varying between 10,000 tons would be fairer to Companies with a small output if two were adopted, namely, 5 per cent for production varying from 10,000 to 30,000 tons and 7½ per cent for production varying from 30,000 to 50,000 tons.

5. The fixing of the price of crude will be attended with many difficulties, because the quality of crude varies, and in countries where no direct transactions of crude oil take place, crude would only be fuel oil were it not refined. One of the areas this Company is now testing we have got crude which is not worth refining as it contains neither kerosene nor wax, and is therefore only fit for fuel.

6. It would obviously be unfair for a Company with small production of low grade oil to be assessed at the market price of refined products obtained by more fortunate Companies having a copious of crude. As the refining of oil is a thing quite from the winning of crude, I would suggest that the gross value of production up to say 30,000 tons annually should be assessed at the maximum price at which fuel oil as sold to the public, in order that the rate of royalty should not fall too heavy on a struggling Company whose individual wells produce only small quantities of crude and whose expenses are equal to, if not greater than, Companies who are in a more favorable position.

No.17.

No. 669R., dated Shillong, the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1921.

From- The Hon'ble Mr. A. W. Botham, C.I.E., Chief Secretary the Government of Assam,

To-The Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Industries.

*I am directed by the Government of Assam to refer to your letter No. M.-538 – 2, dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1920, on the subject of the adoption of a standard form of royalty clause for new oil concessions in different parts of the Empire.*

*2. The Government of Assam are asked for their provisional views on the clause and they give even there with some hesitation. On the whole they regard the draft clause as not open to serious objection.*

*3. This Government before replying the two companies operating in Assam. The General Manager in India of the Burma Oil Company declined to express any opinion on the ground that any authorization expression of opinion could only be made with the considered approval of the Company's Board. I am to forward a copy of the reply received from the General Manager of the Assam Oil Company. The argument therein put forward for an intermediate rate of royalty on an output of from 10,000 to 30,000 tons is discounted by the fact that the Company already holds two leases covering an aggregate area of eight square miles current for the next 21 years and charged with royalties at the rate of five per cent in addition to one lease covering an area square miles which will expire in 1926 and which is charged with royalty at the rate of 8 annas per hundred gallons. I am to add (the point is interesting in view of the Assam Oil Company's arguments based on its description of itself as a small and struggling company) that, statements having appeared in the press to the effect that the Assam Oil Company is being absorbed by the Burma Oil Company, the Assam Government have been informed by the representatives of the two companies that the Assam Oil Company has not in fact been amalgamated with the Burma Oil Company, but the larger company has acquired the majority of the smaller company. (ASSAM STATE ARCHIVES, GUWAHATI)*

Concerns about rapid growth of urban areas combined with small or moderate increases in industrialization have given rise to analyses which compare levels of urbanization and indexes of industrialization either cross-nationally or for nineteenth century conditions in this context now.

The setting up of this refinery would gradually help in industrialization of Assam. By industrialization we mean the process in which a society or country (or world) transforms itself from a primarily agricultural society into one based on the manufacturing of goods and services.

- The process by which traditionally non-industrial sectors (such as agriculture, education, health) of an economy become increasingly similar to the manufacturing.

- It also means sustained economic development based on factory production, division of labour, concentration of industries and population in certain geographical areas and urbanization.

The Digboi Refinery was rebuilt with higher capacity in 1923 and thus it becomes a cost effective viable unit for the first time. The Burmah Oil Company was marketing the products of Digboi Refinery until 1965.

Again the Assam Oil Company took over the marketing function from Burmah Oil Company in the year 1965 and marketed its product in the brand name of "Assam Oil"<sup>13</sup>.

By an Act of the Parliament in 1981, the refining and marketing interest of the Assam Oil Company was vested with the Indian Oil Corporation Limited and the Assam Oil Company as a Division became a full-fledged part of the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. Since then it was rechristened as the Assam Oil Division of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.<sup>14</sup>



The refinery became a part of the Indian Oil in 1981 which created a separate division for both the refinery and marketing operation. Coal and petroleum are the chief minerals playing an important role in the economy and industrial development of Assam. Digboi Refinery produces major petroleum products like fuels, wax, bitumen and range of specially products. It can very well be said to be a technical marvel of the past and present. Today it occupies a dominant role in the marketing of petroleum products in the North East India.

To conclude, with development in technology and infrastructure, Digboi Oil Refinery has been positively contributing towards industrialization of the state

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## Understanding the Philosophy of Buddhism and its Challenge to Brahmanism

*Shirumoni Baruah*

In this paper an attempt has been made to show how the prevailing rigid caste system in India had helped in the rise of Buddhism. Further, the Philosophy of Gautam Buddha would also be analysed that would offer a challenge to Brahmanism.

India is the homeland of major religions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Religion played an important role in uniting the society. A religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems and world views that relate humanity to an order of existence. Many Religions have narratives, symbols and sacred histories that aim to explain the meaning of life and origin of life or universe. The 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C has a great importance in Indian history both from political and religious point of view. Men's mind everywhere was displaying a new spirit of curiosity and bold enquiry into the problems of life and the way to attain eternal happiness and peace. Two new religions such as Jainism and Buddhism emerged with some new religious Philosophy different From Hinduism. Buddhism emerged as a revolt of the result against Brahmanical authority and its ritual orthodoxy. The growing mass of ritual and sacrifices involving a slaughter of innocent animals and the hegemony of Brahmin priests with a false sense of superiority had embittered the relations between different sections of society. The weaker and poorer section suffering in a cast-ridden society was eagerly waiting for the emergence of some force to remove their despondency and degradation in the society. The time was ripe for religious reformation which

could provide a middle path between rituals and sacrifices on the one hand, and austere life and heresy on the other.<sup>1</sup>

At that time India was not politically united. The 16 Mahajanpadas were ruled by kings known as 'Ganas' or 'Sangha' where power was shared by a number of persons collectively called 'rajās'. It was in such a political and social situation, Siddhartha was born. His father Suddhodona belonged to the Shakya clan. His chief concert was Mahamaya. This Royal couple was eventually destined to become the parents of the greatest man even born.<sup>2</sup> During that period Brahmanas attributed a diverse origin to the cast system. They based their views on the 10<sup>th</sup> Mandal of the Rig veda called the Purush Sukta which asserts that Brahmana was born out of the mouth of Brahma, the kashatriyas from his arm, the Vaishyas from his stomach and the Sudra from his feet. The status of human being was determined by birth not by once karma.<sup>3</sup> The Brahmanas as a class were considered to be the highest in society. They were required to live on the charity of the people or on the fees obtained by the performance of various rites. The Kashtriyas were primarily concerned with the administration of the country particularly defence. The Baishyas were connected with the economic life of the county. The Sudras occupied a very low position in society. Mixing with them was not permitted to the three upper casts as they were regarded as untouchables. The caste system did not give even the ordinary human rights to a large section of Indian society.<sup>4</sup> Due to the existence of caste system qualities of an individual was totally ignored. The law books also refer to mixed caste system which originated from inter-marriages and illicit relations. Next were the non- Aryans, the Mlechas Chandalas, Suapakas etc. considered even lower than the Sudras almost beyond the pale of the society.

Being the son of a royal family, Siddhartha was especially trained in the arts of warfare and administration. But he was profoundly compassionate. His

love for all beings great or small gave him a unique personality. There were many incidents which took place during his youth that indicated that he was indeed destined to the someone great. Although he was constantly surrounded by all kinds of luxury, the young prince was never happy. His enlightenment was the most important and spiritual achievement in the history of mankind.<sup>5</sup> After become the Buddha, he questioned the authority of the Vedas Condemned blood sacrifices, denied the existence of a supreme creative spirit and inculcated reference for saints who from their point of view attained supreme Knowledge.<sup>6</sup> He showed a new light to the world and provided solace and mental comfort to the depressed, downtrodden the aggrieved. It is no doubt different in the approach to life and its problems and the way to alleviate sufferings. It also emphasized individual agency suggesting that men and women could strive to attain liberation from the trials and tribulations or worldly existence. This was in marked contrast to the Brahmanical position. In Brahmanism an individual existence was determined by his or her birth in a specific caste.<sup>7</sup>

Buddha stressed on following the middle path overruling the virtues of self indulgence and self- mortification. Condemning these as extreme, he wanted the people to concentrate on right views, right resolve, right speech, right recollections, right livelihood, right effort and right meditation. The middle path shown by him was not a religious revelation but corresponding to a social revelation assuring equality and opportunity for all.<sup>8</sup> According to him it was not by birth but by deeds, once became a Brahmin or an outcaste. His attempt to set up a social system for all was only a tool to renovate the then existing pattern rather than to replace it. He was in contact with all types of people from kings and nobles to courtesans and the downtrodden.<sup>9</sup> He believed that a deity was not essential for the creation and preservation of the universe. Independence from deities was also evidence in Buddhist ideas about the origin of government and the state. Whereas Vedic Brahmanism believe in the involvement of Gods with

the origin of the government and state. Buddhism described it as a process of gradual social change in which the instituting of the family and the ownership of fields led to civil strife.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the Brahmanical idea, the Buddhist concept of 'karma' was not tied to the regulation of Varna society nor were social ethics measured by the rules of Varna. The improvement of one's karma to ensure a better life was dependent on observing a code of social ethics based on eightfold path and not merely the norms of sacred duties prepared by Brahmanical authors.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of Buddhist monasteries accelerated of education. Education was not restricted to the upper castes only. The directive in the functioning of a monastery was that opinion was to be democratically discussed. Buddhism opposed many Brahmanical theories and practices and provided an alternative through their heterodox ideas. The '*Bhikhu*' and the '*Bhikhunies*' were referred to as Shramanas or Samana. They were mentioned even by Alberuni (a traveler) who observed that they lived as equal members of the order denying caste distinctions. The denouncer discarded the social obligations required through family and caste ties but entered an alternative society that of the Sangha.<sup>12</sup>

Buddhist philosophy the truth of sufferings is to be compared with a disease, the truth of the origin of sufferings with the cause of the disease, the truth of the extinction of sufferings with the cure of the disease, the truth of the way to cessation of sufferings with the medicine. Such doctrines were totally different from Brahmanism.<sup>13</sup> According to Buddha, Karma is all moral and immoral volition and intentional action mental (thought), verbal (word) and physical (deeds). Involuntary and unintentional actions are not karma, because volition is not present. Buddhism started in one corner of India and made its way to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma, Tibet, Central Asia, Java, Sumatra, Japan, Borneo, Champa, China and Siam. The people who were unable to complicated rituals of the Brahmin's welcomed Buddhism. The practice of Hinduism had

been made very expensive by the Brahmins. The teaching of Buddha did not involve expenditure. The younger and weaker section of the then society was attracted towards Buddhism. Buddha's disciples were from different social background. As a result of training they were equally endowed with spiritual achievements. They were the kings and princes, peasants and labourers, Brahmins and outcasts, teachers, traders, ascetics, sinners and even notorious bandits, all of them having been inspired by the teachings of Buddha. They had consequently, abandoned their earlier ways of life and took upon themselves the holy vows, pure and sublime in all respects and attained the ultimate realization of truth.<sup>14</sup> It helped in the end of the cycle of sufferings for those who renounced the world which was totally opposite to Brahmanism. The philosophy of Buddhism always opposed the theory that considers the status of a person by birth. Such a philosophy must have been welcomed by the Sudras and the Vaishyas who were fed up with the supremacy and pride of the Brahmanism. There was no necessity of priests and other intermediary in order to attain 'Nirvana'. As Buddhism was economical and practical it was welcomed by the common masses.<sup>15</sup>

Some modern authorities believed that the Buddha had no intention of founding a new religion and never looked on his doctrine as distinct from the popular cults of the time. He evolved a sort of super doctrine from the popular beliefs which could help his followers further along the road to salvation. Two hundred years after his lifetime Buddhism became a distinct religion.<sup>16</sup> It spread throughout India and other parts of the world under the patronage of great rulers of India such as Bimbisara, Ajatsatru, Kalasoka, Ashoka, Kanishka, Harshabardhan and under the rulers of Pala dynasty. It constitutes the most scientific and practical teachings and that is why more and more knowledgeable people were also attracted towards it. Buddha taught men to be strong to take responsibility of his own action and to be brave to face its consequences.<sup>17</sup> Even the Christian faith in its early days was greatly influenced by its teaching. Albert Einstein the

greatest scientist in the 20th century regarded that Buddhist doctrine is based on science. He said, "religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It would transcend a personal god and avoid dogmas and theology covering both the natural and spiritual; it should be based on religious sense arising from the experience of all things natural and spiritual and a meaningful unity. If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism"<sup>18</sup> Brahmanism has given importance in the existence of God on the other hand Buddhism did not concern itself the problems of God or the soul as these discussions were of no help in one's moral progress. He avoided both the extremes of gross luxury and grim austerity. Ignorance is the root cause and foundation of all evils and sufferings. It clouds all right understanding. It prevents from seeing the true nature of things. Therefore he asked all to avoid ignorance.<sup>19</sup>

The question has often asked is Buddhism a religion or a Philosophy? Buddhism is not strictly a religion in the sense in which that would be commonly understood, for it is not a system of faith and worship, owing any allegiance to a supernatural God. It does not demand blind faith from its adherents. On the other hand it cannot be strictly called a philosophy because it is not merely the love of inducing the search after wisdom. Philosophy deals mainly with the knowledge and is not concerned with practice whereas Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization. In one sense, Buddhism is not a Philosophy but Philosophy of philosophies.<sup>20</sup>

#### Conclusion:

From the above discussion it is evident that Buddhism completely broke away from Brahmanism. With a rational mind, Buddha accepted the doctrine of karma and rebirth as the common goal of liberation from the eternal process of 'Avagaman' - coming and going birth and death. He was of course critical of the

efficacy of sacrifices and rituals for he firmly opposed the pleasure and prosperity that was sought at the cost of other suffering. It gives more importance to actual practice. Buddha fought hard against the caste system, animal and human sacrifices and self-mortification. It became popular among the masses. The Greeks who settled in India were greatly influenced by Buddhism and their number might have been considerable. It is a religion for self-help It also teaches that all men are born equally and are free to choose whatever is best for themselves. The teaching of the Buddha though very old is still valid and practical and can be followed with advantage by all people of the world.

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## India-Japan Trade and Commercial Relations in the Post Cold War Period

*Ms. Bishakha Baruah*

After World War II, India was an important trading partner of Japan. She exported mainly iron-ore to Japan which was needed by the latter's steel industry. It was only after 1991; India adopted an outward-oriented policy to develop her economy by making use of the tide of globalization.

But in 1996-1997, India-Japan bilateral trade accounted to only \$4.19 billion. It decreased to \$3.64 billion in 2000-2001 and \$3.66 billion in 2001-2002. It soon rose to \$5.36 billion in 2004-2005 and \$13.82 billion in 2010-2011.

India imported mainly machinery, iron and steel products, consumer electronics, auto and parts, precision instruments etc. She exported marine products, jewels and ornaments which actually favoured Japan so far the balance of trade was concerned. But with the recent increased petroleum products from India, Japan-India bilateral trade have shown signs of increase since 2007 with an average growth rate of 19% between 2005-2006 and 2010-2011.

The Japan-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement/ Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA/EPA) came into effect in August 2011. Tariffs were eliminated on 90% of Indian and 97% of Japanese goods over ten years. India would import more auto parts and steel products from Japan while Japan would import more agricultural and marine products from India.

India will be able to buy auto components, iron and steel products, electric and electronic parts and general machinery from Japan at concessional rate. At present they are subject to 5% tariff rates which will be eliminated within five years. The current 12.5% tariff rate on automobile components, gearboxes and diesel engines will be reduced to half within 6-8 years. Japan will be allowed to import industrial and mining goods free of tariff rate immediately while asparagus, shrimp and lumber and other marine imports from India will be reduced to zero within 7-10 years.

India's growing trade relations with ASEAN according to Free Trade Area (FTA) arrangements have affected her trade relations with Japan.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, 7 items out of 10 imported machinery products from this area included semi-conductors and thermionic tubes, office equipment parts, auto parts, internal combustion engines and superheating/cooling equipment.<sup>2</sup>

According to a survey of the Japanese Companies activities in Asia-Oceania conducted by JETRO, many of these companies located in Thailand and Singapore selected India as the most important country for their operations and export destinations in the coming three years<sup>3</sup> It is in the field of investment rather than trade where one observes a more dynamic trend in recent India-Japan economic relations. In 1997, Japanese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India amounted to \$434 million but decreased in the wake of India's nuclear experiment in 1998. From April 2000 to November 2011, Japanese FDI into India accounted for 5% enjoying the 5<sup>th</sup> ranking. Her FDI to India increased to \$1562 million in 2010-2011 and from 2011-2012 ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> after Mauritius and Singapore<sup>4</sup>

Japan after realising that India offers a vast domestic market, her companies are increasing from 248 in January, 2006 to 438 in January, 2008 and from October 2011 it rose to 812.<sup>5</sup> Her FDI into India increased from 178.2

billion Yen in 2007 to 542.9 billion Yen in 2008 and 344.3 billion Yen in 2009 showing that India became one of the three most important destinations of Japan's FDI into Asia next only to China and the ASEAN.

From 1991 to 2005 the top sector receiving FDI from Japan was the transport sector (60.4%) followed by electrical equipment (7.2%), service sectors – financial and non-financial (3.7%), ceramics (2.2%) and textiles (2%).<sup>6</sup> In recent years, other Japanese companies are entering India in fields like steel makers, pharmaceutical companies and construction machineries. Regarding the automobile sector, Suzuki, Nissan and Toyota have released low-priced cars as well as sport utility vehicle (SUVs) in the market.

All major Japanese steel producers have tied up Indian counterparts to make sheet iron for automobiles or to set up blast furnaces in India with Nippon Steel allying with Tata Steel, Sumitomo Metal Industries with Bushan Steel, and JFE Steel with JSW Steel and Kobe Steel with SAIL. Logistics Companies including Nippon Express, Hitachi Transport System and Itochu have already started their business in India and Shipping Companies including Mitsui\_O.S.K lines are engaged with Marine transportation of automobiles exported from India to Europe. Komatsu and Hitachi Construction Machinery are increasing their production in India. Regarding Electronic appliances sector, Panasonic and Sony are doing their best to compete with LG and Samsung of South Korea. Panasonic Electrical Works have acquired Anchor Electric in 2007. Sony using its production base in Malaysia has gone ahead of LG and Samsung in the sale of flat panel display TVs in 2010.

Newly expanding areas for Japanese FDI into India include pharmaceuticals. Daiichi Sankyo acquired Ranbaxy Laboratories – the largest pharmaceutical company in India in 2008. Fuji film has tied up with Dr Reddy's to set a joint venture in Japan for making generic medicines. Japanese companies

are entering India in various sectors like food, cosmetics, stationery and sanitary goods. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries set up two joint venture companies with Larsen and Toubro to make supercritical pressure boilers and turbines in 2007. Hitachi has tied up with BCE Energy Systems and Toshiba with Jindal South West. Japan has also invested in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) between Mumbai and Delhi.

Japanese financial institutions have also entered the Indian market. The Bank of Tokyo- Mitsubishi UFJ has announced its decision to invest 700 billion to 1 trillion Yen in India by 2014.

#### **IT Offshore Investment:**

Japan today is facing an acute shortage of IT engineers as most of them retired. She needs more than 5, 01,000 IT engineers including 3, 60,000 professionals.<sup>7</sup> India enjoys a great esteem in high-quality control/management capability and rich global experience. Many Indian IT companies including TCS, Infosys and WIPRO have come to Japan since the early 1990s. Their number is small no doubt but gradually it is exceeding.

The present robust economic growth of India got caught on Japanese investment radar. As a result of good India Japan Trade relations, Japan has now turned up as the third largest FDI facilitator to India. Further, India Japan Trade Relations have helped India to bring in US \$2153 million into the domestic market. Although Japan's contribution to India's FDI inflow is 6% but the quantum is rising steadily, especially in the Indian Financial Market. Japanese Equity investments are on the rise and the quantum of investment is around US \$4.9 billion. During the financial year 2005-2006 the India and Japan trade was to the tune of US \$6 billion. India Japan Trade Relations ranks fifth amongst all trading partners that India has. The positive part of the India Japan Trade

Relations has facilitated growth in the presence of Japanese companies in India. To complement such growth a good number of Indian companies have also opened their shops in Japan and the numbers are rising steadily.

A few notable agreements and convention signed between India and Japan to further the cement the cordial relations between the two countries are-

- Air Service
- Culture and heritage
- Economic ties
- Commerce
- Avoidance of Double Taxation
- Co-operation in the field of Science and Technology
- Students exchange programme

Japan and India is natural ally and as such the year 2007 has been marked as the Indo-Japan friendship year.

#### **Economic-Ties:**

In August 2000, Japanese Prime Minister Mori visited India. At this meeting, Japan and India agreed to establish “Japan-India Global Partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Japan in December 2001, where both Prime Ministers issued “Japan-India Joint Declaration”. In April 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi visited India and signed Joint Statement “Japan-India Partnership in the New Asian Era: Strategic Orientation of Japan-India Global Partnership.”

Japan is currently India’s fourth largest source of FDI.

In October 2008, Japan signed an agreement with India under which it would provide the latter a low-interest loan worth US \$4.5 billion to construct a

railway project between Delhi and Mumbai. This is the single largest overseas project being financed by Japan and reflected growing economic partnership between the two nations. India is also one of the only three countries in the world with whom Japan has security pact. As of March 2006, Japan was the third largest investor in India.

Kenichi Yoshida a Director of Soft bridge Solutions, Japan stated in late 2009 that Indian engineers were becoming the backbone of Japan’s IT industry and that “it is important for Japanese industry to work together with India.” Under the memorandum, any Japanese coming to India for business or work will be straightway granted a three-year visa and similar procedures will be followed by Japan. Other highlights of this visit include abolition of custom duties on 94 percent of trade between the two nations over the next decade. As per the Agreement, tariffs will be removed on almost 90 percent of Japan’s exports to India and 97 percent of India’s exports to Japan Trade between the two nations has also steadily been growing.

#### **Bullet Train Deal**

India and Japan have signed a deal to build a Shinkansen Bullet Train link between Mumbai and Ahmadabad when Japanese Prime Minister visited India in December 2015.

#### **India-Japan Relations: New Times, Renewed Expectations**

The Tokyo Declaration has added qualitative depth to the evolving bilateral bonhomie and demonstrated the new leadership’s commitment to cultivate a robust political, economic, strategic and defence co-operation. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi inherited a strong India-Japan relation from the previous administration, charismatic Modi-Abe rapport has redefined the



relationship by elevating it to a Special Strategic and Global Partnership, underscoring the mutual trust.

While Modi has demonstrated India's resolve to refuel the development story by way of facilitating Japanese businesses and investments, there is renewed confidence among the Japan Inc who are well-versed with Modi as a result-oriented leader. As Chief Minister of Gujarat, Modi had embarked on cultivating a strong bond with Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) while drawing investments to the state. Articulating the convergence of interests by way of 3D's- democracy, demography and demand, Modi's initiative to pass a strong message against India's 'red-tape' image, sharing his brand India vision, marketing India as a manufacturing hub, underscoring his focus on SMEs, promise of instituting a special management team under the PMO to process Japanese investment marks a positive tone. Moreover, it is profitable economic partnership for Japan as well which is experiencing economic stagnation since 2008 and needs alternative markets following its relation with China.

The biggest takeaway for India from this visit is Abe's assurance of \$33.5 billion public and private investment and financing including ODA, doubling Japanese FDI and the number of companies in India over the coming five years. Even as the footprint of Japanese ODA in India is expanding in the infrastructure sector, the economic content of India-Japan bilateral relation so far is not commensurate with the diplomatic energy. Modi's visit reflects an attempt to address the concern over low economic profile of the relationship.

The bilateral trade component lacks steam when compared with Japan-China trade (US \$311.995 billion in 2013) despite the ongoing tensions in the East China Sea. India-Japan bilateral trade further declined to \$16.31 billion in 2012. Concern over the issue of trade deficit in favour of Japan is a priority. While the India-Japan bilateral trade represents approximately one percent of

Japan's overall foreign trade, it amounts to 2.2 – 2.5 percent of India's total trade. Moreover, Japanese companies invested \$15.359 billion in India between April 2000 and December 2013, accounting for seven percent of the total FDI inflow into India.

**Japanese Foreign Direct Investment Flows to India**

		Year		(US \$ million)		
	<b>Total Trade</b>					
1.4	% Growth		32.92	28.08	0.52	-3.35
1.5	% Share	2.22	2.21	2.30	2.34	2.13
1.6	<b>TRADE BALANCE</b>					
1.7	<b>India's Trade Balance</b>	109,621	118,632.94	183,355.57	190,335.97	135,794.49

Source: Department of Commerce Export-Import Data Bank

**ODA loans from Japan**

Year	Commitment		Distribution	
	Yet Billion	Rs. Crores	Year Billion	Rs. Crores
2008-90	236.047	11713.32	122.56	5861.48
2009-10	218.2	10694.93	128.95	6553.43
2010-11	203.566	11197.81	123.84	6581.67
2011-12	134.288	8203.01	139.22	8497.43
2012-13	353.106	23179.77	113.964	7259.95
2013-14	101.703 (upto 31.05.2013)	6812	22.320 (upto 30.06.2013)	1249.85 (upto 30.06.2013)

Source: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Source: Reserve Bank of India

**India-Japan Trade**  
(Values in US \$ Millions)

S. N.		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
1.	<b>Export</b>	3,629.54	5,091.24	6,328.54	6,100.06	6,814.07
2.	% Growth		40.27	24.30	-3.61	11.71
3.	<b>India's Total Export</b>	178,751.43	251,136.19	305,963.92	300,400.68	314,405.30
4.	% Growth		40.49	21.83	-1.82	4.66
5.	% Share	2.03	2.03	2.07	2.03	2.17
6.	<b>Import</b>	67,34.18	8,632.03	11,999.43	12,412.29	9,480.75
7.	% Growth		28.18	39.01	3.44	-23.62
8.	<b>India's Total Import</b>	288,372.88	369,769.13	489,319.49	490,736.65	450,199.79
9.	% Growth		28.23	32.33	0.29	-8.26
10.	% Share	2.34	2.33	2.45	2.53	2.11
11.	<b>Total Trade</b>	10,363.72	13,723.27	18,327.97	18,512.35	16,294.82
12.	% Growth		32.42	33.55	1.01	-11.98
13.	<b>India's Total Trade</b>	467,124.31	620,905.32	795,283	791,137.33	764,605.09

Source: Department of Commerce, Export Import Data bank

With his visit to Japan, Modi has unveiled a season of high-powered diplomacy. India will shortly host Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Chinese President Xi Jinping before Modi's meeting with President Obama later in September. Modi balanced his foreign policy orientation by hinting at the prevailing 18th century expansionist approach without naming any particular nation while, at the same time, arguing the case of focusing on nation's "progress and development instead of paying attention to others" in a direct reference to China.

India is expected to pursue its quest for multi-polarity, great power identity and pragmatically engage with all the important players. Prime Minister

Modi has demonstrated statesmanship by underscoring that the essence of Asian century lies in development.

To conclude, India-Japan Trade and Investments can get a further boost if more efforts are made under the basis of public-private partnership on both sides to enhance the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor which will consolidate India-Japan collaboration and reap huge economic benefits. Secondly, human exchange should be promoted using all channels which will further expand and promote their bilateral relations.

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## Representation of Women in Anita Desai's 'Fasting, Feasting'

*Asfi Begum*

Anita Desai is known as a great artist chiefly in her art of characterization. She has own an important place in Indian English fiction for displaying psychological insight into the inner self of her character and painting a realistic picture of Indian setting and background. Deep interest in her women and their reaction to the various aspects of life add a new dimension to her novels. In her writings, she expresses the innermost feelings of her women characters in a very sensitive and natural way. Mr. Srivastava aptly observed on this aspect of her art :

Being a sensitive women novelist and gifted with good observation, sensitive, a penetrating analysis and a skill to paint with words, Anita Desai creates a rich gallery of characters, both male and female though dominated by the latter. (1994:XXXVIII)

It is seen that Anita Desai's novels donot explain theories of Philosophy or Psychology, but they reveal her involvement for upliftment of women who are seen as worst sufferers or highly suppressed by the perverted social values. Anita Desai's novel 'Fasting, Feasting' is the story of a family consisting of husband, wife two daughters – Uma and Aruna and a son Arun. The story of the novel moves around the plight of an unattractive and isolated girl Uma, whose life is full of unfulfilled desires and frustration. Through the portrayal of Uma's character Desai shows how women have to live a life of suffocation and undeserved sufferings both physically and mentally in the male dominated

patriarchal framework. She explains how a girl child craves for parental affection but at the end, gets nothing but frustration, isolation and unhomely treatment. Through her, she also depicts how the neglected child slowly develops the horrible sense of trauma.

Uma is brought up in a highly conservative and traditional family. She is the most neglected child of the family but she is needed in all time. Her parents lead a luxurious life, which is presented through the image of 'swinging sofa' in the opening of the novel. The opening passage suggests the ensuing events and the discriminating attitude of parents to their daughter. It opens,

"On the veranda overlooking the garden, the drive and the gate, they sit together on the creaking sofa, swing suspended from its iron frame, dangling their legs so that the slippers on their feet hang loose. Before them a low round table is covered with a faded cloth, embroidered in the center with flowers behind them, a pedestal fan blows warm air at the backs of their heads and necks".

(Fasting, Feasting 3)

Through this passage, Anita Desai shows the selfish, luxurious and dominating parents whose hearts seems to mutter and grumble without reason. Sitting on the sofa the luxuriant parents of Uma are doing nothing but giving only orders to Uma . In the family, everything is in the direct control of MamaPapa. Mama Keeps ordering the cook through Uma from her swinging throne.

Mama once recalls her past days when she was a child in her parents's house. She remembers, 'In my days girls in the family were not given sweets, nuts, good things to eat. If something special had been bought from the market, like sweets or nuts, it was given to the boys in the family. (Fasting, Feasting 5)

This is true in Indian society. Here Desai observes the ill-treatment of woman in a male dominated Indian society through the point of view of Mama. This discrimination between the sexes in India begins even when the child is in the mother's womb. None of the conventional blessings showered upon a pregnant woman mention daughters. In Indian society woman is worshiped but in practice, she is an oppressed and discriminated being. Even the educated people practice it. In the novel *Fasting Feasting* Anita Desai creates such a situation. Here the crazy for son is so much that even before the second child is born, it is named Arun. Father is disappointed when a female child is born and she is named Aruna from Arun.

However, the situation became worse when Uma's mother became pregnant for the third time and gives birth to a son. The reserved and sober father burst with enthusiasm at the birth of a son.

“ Arriving home, he sprang out of the car, raced into the house and shouted the news to whoever was there to hear servants, elders, relatives, all gathered at the door, and then saw the most astounding sight of their lives—papa, in his elation, leaping over three chairs in the hall, one after the other, like a boy playing leap frog,.....” a boy!” he screamed, “ a boy—oy! Arun, Arun at last!”

(*Fasting, Feasting*, 18)

When mama came home, she tried to teach Uma the correct way of folding nappies, of preparing watered milk, of rocking the screaming infants to sleep. As she goes out to do her home work, her mama calls her to leave all home work and ask her to do the work related to the infant. Since she has failed, therefore, the mother feels that going to school is waste of time and money. Mama used to say, you know you failed your exams again you're not being moved up. What is the use of going back to school? Stay at home and look after your baby brother (*Fasting, Feasting* 22)

Uma who wants to continue her schooling, hopes to find support from her father, but he also lets her down. But the same parents sent Arun, the brother of Uma to America for higher education and prevented Uma from even the matriculation. She suffers all her life as a girl and then as a woman. She is not even allowed to take music lesson. This shows the truthful portrayal of the women in society who find nothing but a step-motherly treatment in a male dominated family.

She has to face terrible humiliation in the sphere of her marriage too. Being unattractive, she is rejected many a times in marriage proposals. The first suitor in her life prefers her younger sister Aruna. The second one goes through with an engagement, but breaks off and refuses to return the dowry. At the third attempt, Uma is married, only to find out later that he is already married so she returns home on permanent disgrace, with another dowry lost, and hereafter her existence is confined to the veranda, bedroom and kitchen of her parents' home. In the character of Uma, Anita Desai has presented a very dismal picture of Indian marriage.

When there is a chance of escape from this situation in the form of a job, offered at the local hospital, she is not permitted to take it up. Uma's father believes that it is below dignity for a daughter to work. He is a true representative of male dominated society. He does not want woman to be equal. When Dr. Dutt pleads with him for Uma to work, he frowns:

He was locking his face up into a frown of great degree. The frown was filled with everything he thought of working women who dared presume to step into the world he occupied. (*Fasting, Feasting* 146)

Mama spoke on behalf of Papa very clearly and decisively.

‘Our daughter does not need to go out to work, Dr Dutt, she said,’ As long as we are here to provide for her, she will never need to go to work.’ ‘But she works all

the time! Dr Dutt exclaimed on a rather sharp note 'At home now you must give her a chance to work outside there is no need; Papa supported Mama's view. In double strength, it grew formidable where is the need?' (Fasting, Feasting 146)

When Dr Dutt persists and asks Uma's opinion she can't spelt any word before her parents, though she wants to join the job. Her life is totally dependent. Truth cannot come out from the depth of her heart because she is always fearful. Like Maya, Sita, Monisha, Amla, Nanda Kaul—the female protagonists of her earlier novels, she also feels fragmented and full of despair and anguish. In the world of people like Uma's parents the woman's wish does not exist, she is treated as an entity. The joy of living is not for her. In the house, Uma has to do everything but she has no right to do anything without the permission of her parents. Even she is not allowed to make a phone call which is always locked. Once while the parents are out, Uma uses the phone, but unfortunately she forgets to lock the phone and when the parents came home, her unauthorized use of phone is detected, for which she is scolded: Costs money, costs money! He kept shouting long after. Never earned anything in her life, made me spend and spend, on her dowry and her wedding. Oh, yes, spend till I'm ruined, till I am a pauper—— (Fasting, Feasting 149)

She has no privacy. When she shuts the door of her room to do something, her Mama Papa immediately became suspicious. One day when she sits down on her bed, lifts her feet up in a comfortable cross-legged position, and opens a book and start to reads Mama shouts 'Coffee for Papa, Uma. (Fasting, Feasting 139) At first Uma does not give any response. 'But now Mama's hand are slapping at the door. 'Why have you locked the door, Uma? Open it—at once!' Uma gets off the bed and goes quickly to the door and opens it, goes to the kitchen and returns to the veranda with a tiny tray. (Fasting, Feasting 139)

Thus, through the novel *Fasting, Feasting* Anita Desai aptly shows the constant urge of woman's freedom through Uma. She shows the false sense of male ego and perverted social values and practices. She also shows that sometimes the worst enemy of woman is another woman, a rival, a despotic mother-in-law, a sister-in-law or even a selfish cold and unfeeling mother like Mama. The neglect of Uma leaves behind a memory of pain and questions how deprived of parental love can make a life living hell. Through Uma Desai projects the story of thousands of Uma in the Indian society. She thinks that woman should be given proper respect and equal treatment, and then only the chariot of the family may move smoothly.

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## The Subaltern in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

*Gitali Saikia*

### Introduction:

In *The White Tiger* Aravind Adiga locates the oppressed and the marginal, the inferior rank of the society in the corollary of his meta-narrative. It is the story of the others, the story of the suppressed and humiliated, exploited marginal group who is denied equality, and thereby called underprivileged. They are somehow subordinated to some other group because of their social position, racial, religious, or economic status. This 'underclass' as Adiga says, is depicted bringing out the structure of the dichotomy of the dominant and the subordinate class in Indian society where the peasantry, workers, labourers, the small businessmen, drivers, lower class, tribes and aborigines and minorities are suppressed in any way or the other. In *The White Tiger* Adiga presents the suffering, repression and humiliation of the poor in a developed capitalist society. Here a study has been made to 'listen to the small voice of history' through the presentation of one subaltern character who represents his class who are living in "perpetual servitude".

### The Subaltern and Subaltern Studies:

'Subaltern' was used for the first time by the Italian Marxist writer Antonio Gramsci to mean "the inferior rank" of people in the society. "The subaltern has become a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse and internalized by colonial peoples who employ this discourse, subaltern is a British word for someone of inferior military rank, and combines the Latin terms for "under" (sub) and "other" (alter)" (Abrams & Harpham 307). Originally the term was used in military hierarchies for

subordinates (Gopal, Dr. Abhishek). Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist writer, used it in non-military sense to refer to those people who are outside the established structure of political representation. The term "refers to subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language, and culture and was used to signify the centrality of dominant/ dominated relationships in history" (Prakash 1477). The subaltern classes refer fundamentally in Gramsci's words to any "low rank" person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation (Louia, 2012:5). The Subaltern Studies Collective uses the term as Ranajit Guha states in the preface to *Subaltern Studies I* (1982), "as a name for the general attribute of subordination ... whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office, or in any other way" (vii). Later on the term has been used by many subaltern thinkers like Homi K. Bhaba, Sausa Santos to denote the marginalized or subordinate people, oppressed minority groups, lower class, weaker sex, women etc.. The subaltern is always suppressed and exploited by the rich, elite or those who have power. "Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of the ruling groups" (Gramsci 55); they are characterized by "a subordinate status, a "subject disinherited by governing epistemes and unable to access hegemonic power structures" (Kostelac, 2006:65 qtd in Mhlahlo 3).

At present, the archetypal figure of the subaltern has been the Third World peasant (Pandey 273). He shows how from Ranajit Guha's insurgent peasant and Bagdi agricultural labour; to Mahasweta Devi's poor tribal peasant women (translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) to Amin's otiyars or peasant volunteers of Chauri Chaura, Prakash's Kamia's, Skaria's Bhils and Hardiman's Patidars; to Chatterji's 'fragments of the nation' in which one reviewer noted the industrial working class was conspicuously absent; and even in Chakrabarty's study of the Calcutta working class, which underlined the persistence of feudal values, networks and practices in the activities of the jute mill labourers, to take a few examples

from the writings in Subaltern Studies, it is this figure—superstitious, illiterate, ill-equipped, isolated and non-political as s/he had appeared in much of the received social science and historical literature—that emerges again and again as the paradigm of the subaltern (Pandey 273-274).

Subaltern Studies gives emphasis on the study of the marginalized, subordinate and oppressed peoples who are deprived of power, their consciousness and their mentality. They are deprived of any kind of participation but used and exploited for the benefit of the hegemonic dominant class. As they are deprived of power they cannot speak. Though “they cannot speak”, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak answers to her own question raised in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988), the subaltern has a voice borne along with their agony and suffering that is expressed in their attitude, manners and speech, and often bursts out in the form of rebellion. Subaltern Studies gives emphasis on listening to this “small voice” and on articulation of that silence. Leela Gandhi says:

“Subaltern Studies defined itself as an attempt to allow the “people” finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and in so doing to speak for, or sound the muted voice of truly oppressed”( 2).

Ranjit Guha himself defines subaltern studies as “listening to the small voice of history” (1). Nowadays, the focus of Subaltern Studies is on the consciousness of subaltern classes, sp

#### **Portrayal of the Subaltern in *The White Tiger*:**

In the novel Aravind Adiga portrays two world that exist within India—the India of Darkness and the India of Light. Balram Halwai, who belongs to the sweet maker caste comes from the India of Darkness. People belonging to the Dark India are subjugated by the rich landlords or the employers: “Things are different in the Darkness (54).” Adiga through the character of Balram exquisitely

brings out the dichotomy of the situations of the rich and the poor: “A rich man’s body is like a premium cotton pillow, white and soft and blank. Ours are different. My father’s spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in villages to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog’s collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks. The story of the poor man’s life is written on his body, in a sharp pen (27).” Balram describes his uncle’s hardship and subjugation. He describes, “My uncle also did backbreaking work, but they did what everyone else did. Each year, as soon it began raining, they would go out to the fields with blackened sickles, begging one landlord or the other for some work. Then they cast seed, cut weeds, and harvested corn and paddy. (27).” Balram reveals the agony experienced by the whole class.

Pre-independent as well as post-independent Indian society is full of such stories of inequalities. The *White Tiger* exhibits such a story re-presenting their repression, oppression and agony. Critic like Dr. Saloni Prasad says, “*The White Tiger* is a penetrating piece of social commentary, attuned to the inequalities that persist despite India’s prosperity. Every scene: every phrase, is a blunt instrument, wielded to remind Adiga’s readers of his country’s cruelty. The characters also seem superficial. Balram’s landlord boss and his wife are caricatures of the insensitive upper class, cruel to and remote from their employees. The novel describes an India far removed from the colourful costumes and music of the Bollywood films and the mystical enticements of tourism promotions. This India is a seething network of people locked into a social framework that promotes injustice and class segregation (41).”

On the other hand two opposite worlds are distinctly brought out with various outward agents and modes. The size and character of the residence are also regarded as a clear indication of status differences among the Indians (Guha

69). “Objects of wear too were seen as status markers” (Guha 62). Balram’s master, Mr. Ashok and his wife, Pinky, live in a huge building. They have a costly, fashionable car. Against the sophistication and grandeur of the residences of the rich people the filth and dirt as well as unhygiene of the residential area of the poor construction workers is presented vividly: “five feet ahead of me a row of men squatted on the ground in a nearly perfect straight line. They were defecating. / I was at the slum.(TWT 260)”. These are construction workers of huge buildings and malls—“Vitoligo-Lips had told me about this place—all these construction workers who were building the malls and giant apartment buildings lived here (TWT 260).” Balram, the narrator further expresses the irony of their life, “These people were buildings homes for the rich, but they lived in tents covered with blue tarpaulin sheets, and partitioned into lanes by lines of sewage (TWT 260).”

Class division in a developing world is more severe than the earlier one. Balram has become a driver and he feels the division acutely: “the five stars of Delhi are things of mystery to me. I’ve been to them all, but I’ve never stepped past the front door of one. We’re not allowed to do that, there’s usually a fat guard at the glass door up at the front, a man with a waxed mouchtouche and beard, who wears a ridiculous red circus turban and thinks he’s someone important because the American tourists want to have their photo taken with him. If he so much as sees a driver near the hotel, he’ll glare—he’ll shake a finger like a schoolteacher (TWT 200).” He again reproaches, “That’s the driver’s fate (TWT 200). Then Balram makes a comment which is significant: “Every other servant thinks he can boss over us (TWT 200).” It is a general instinct of human being that whenever they have a little power they never hesitate to exert it over others. Domination is prevalent everywhere when somebody inferior to him comes near. Here we have a distinct description of the inferior status of the drivers who have no access into the hotel, who have to stay “up at the front, near the trees... The drivers were waiting near the parking lot of the hotel, in their usual key-chain-

swirling, gossip-mongering, ammonia-releasing circle. Croaching and jabberling like monkeys (TWT 200-201).”

The Defiance:

Balram in his letter to the Chinese Premier speaks of himself and his fellowmen as ‘half-baked’. After he has seen the white tiger in the National zoo of Delhi, while the tiger’s eyes met his eyes Balram fainted and said, “I’m sorry”. Dharam, his brother asked him, “Sorry for what?”, at that time he answered, “I can’t live the rest of my life in a cage, Granny. I’m so sorry.” He rebels and murdering his master Bairam makes himself free.

Gautam Bhadra observes two characters of the subaltern. . “Time and again, the subordinate classes have risen in rebellion because of their faith in some moral order, out of an urge to restore justice” (Bhadra. 2006 [ 1997 ]. 94). The *praja* recognizes his first identity as *praja* (subject) against the *raja* (king) ...he then becomes conscious of the marks of his distinction. This is the first step of self recognition, without which rebellion is impossible. (Bhadra. 94). In *The White Tiger* Balram, the servant has becomes conscious of the distinction between himself and his master. Again and again he speaks that he wants to be a free man. Immediately after he has killed his master he feels that he is a free man : “From now on I could play the music as long as I wanted.” (TWT 287).

“I have woken up, and the rest of you are still sleeping, and that is the only difference between us (TWT 315).” Balram identifies himself with the white tiger who does not want to live in a cage. He breaks the cage—“All I wanted was the chance to be a man –and for that, one murder was enough (TWT 315).” The tiger escapes his cage. And this is the story of a subaltern who ultimately makes himself equal with the dominant class. “Aravind’s white tiger seems to have been portrayed as a liberation tiger for the still half-enslaved and ‘half-baked’ Indians or Asians (Rahman 211).”



In *The White Tiger*, no doubt, Balram voices the unarticulated misery, desire and aspiration of the subaltern who are suppressed and humiliated by the dominant class. He speaks to the tea seller while he has said pointing out the photo of the murderer in the poster, that this is the face of the half of the people of this country, is significant.

The consciousness of Balram brings forth the essential force to his mind to change his life defying subordination. He has changed to a master but not like his former master Ashok. He clears out that difference: “You could stare at the screen of my silver Macintosh laptop and see photos of my SUVs, my drivers, my garages, my mechanics, and all my paid-off policemen.

All of them belong to me —Munna, whose destiny was to be a sweet-maker! (TWT 302).” He again says, “Once I was a driver to a master, but now I am a master of drivers. I don’t treat them like servants—I don’t slap, or bully, or mock anyone. I don’t insult any of them by calling them my ‘family’, either. They’re my employees... I make them sign a contract and I sign too, and both of us must honour that contract.” (TWT 302). Not only this Balram takes all the trouble after his driver has hit a boy who is riding a bicycle on the street. What he has told to the relative of the demised by is significant: “I am the owner of the vehicle. Your fight is with me, not with this driver. He was following my orders, to drive as fast as he could. The blood is on my hands, not his... I offer myself as your ransom (TWT 307).” While his master Ashok’s wife Pinky hit a man to his death they tried to push the blame to Balram, Balram, the master takes the whole trouble on his shoulder relieving his driver from suffering and pain.

**Conclusion:**

“To do a thing” or “to speak for them” means to bring it (the voice) out, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak said in an interview with Leon De Cock. Once Balram said that they (his class) remain slaves because they can’t see what is

beautiful in this world. Though “perpetual servitude” compels them to live in darkness, Balram shows that it can be defied. He could come to that consciousness and evolves. Balram voices the malady of the subaltern, who is speaking for them. He wants to “make them awake”.

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