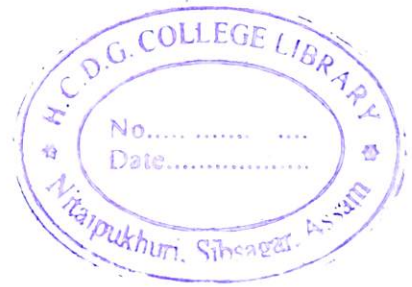


Volume- XII

ISSN 2278- 4314

Peer Reviewed Research Journal of  
**ITI HAS ADHYAYAN CHAKRA**



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
**HCDG College, Nitaipukhuri**  
**Sivasagar, Assam**  
**2019**

***Editor: L.X. Polin Hazarika***

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**JOURNAL OF ITIHAS ADHYAYAN CHAKRA:** An annual peer reviewed research publication of the Department of History, H.C.D.G. College, Nitaipukhuri, Published by the Department of History, H.C.D.G. College, Nitaipukhuri, Sivasagar, Assam. 2019

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**Print:** Ramdhenu Printers, Dibrugarh

**Price:** Rs. 120.00 (Hundred and Twenty only)

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Research in any field allows an individual to pursue the subject one interested in. It opens up new areas of studies and enhances knowledge. This volume of *Journal of Itibas Adhyayan Chakra* is comprised of six research papers from various fields. The first paper is on *Dance: An Ancient Indian Cultural Tradition (Origin, Evolution, Decline, Revival & Its Implication to Educational System)* by, Swaraj Chatterjee. Chatterjee discusses the history of Indian dance forms right from the Vedas to modern age. He particularly focuses on the contribution of Rabindranath Tagore to revive the art forms from the bondage of darkness. Gitali Saikia's paper on "Performance and Society" discusses performance as a social art. Two aspects mainly the relation between performance and society, and how a society can be changed through performance have been discussed in the paper. On the other hand, Anita Barua in her paper entitled "Physical Health of the Aged Population in the Upper Assam Towns of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar" emphasizes to identify the variables correlated with the physical health condition of the aged population of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar towns.

Jharna Dowerah's paper on "Film and Patriarchy" endeavours to identify typical patriarchal representation of women characters in Bollywood movies. The researcher has focused on two representative movies

# DANCE: AN ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURAL TRADITION

(Origin, Evolution, Decline, Revival & Its Implication to Educational System)

Swaraj Chatterjee

## ABSTRACT

Indian cultural history was laid almost 4500 years ago which is believed to be in practice still date. Man began dancing long before he learnt speaking, but that wasn't to entertain the audience but to express their own feelings and sentiments. Indian dance has a strong bonding with the man himself along with its society, culture and civilization. The root of Indian Dance is found in the sacred text that comprises the four Vedas and two important epics The Ramayana and The Mahabharata. The Vedas were strictly restricted to the Brahmins and common people were not even allowed to listen the wordings of the Vedas and people become addicted towards wars and violence, hence with the God's wisdom and the essence of the four Vedas like music, speech, songs, mime and sentiments, Bharata Muni scripted the fifth Veda, The Natya Veda or the Natyashastra. Indian dancing along with the other allied art form had been travelled through various periods with lots of adaptation. The Muslim Period and the British Period had a negative impact on this ancient art form. During the period of Renaissance in 19th century, Indian society modernizes itself, but almost forgetting about their glorious past. Due to the banned over the practice of dance tradition by the colonial missionary in 1892, the art along with the ancient art forms stayed underground. Kabiguru Rabindra Nath Tagore took a step to revive this art form through his literary work. Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore was the one who has transformed dance from extra curriculum activity to co-curricular activity and makes it fit for the current study circle.

**KEYWORDS:** Dance Traditions, Origin, Evolution, Decline, Revival, Rabindra Nath Tagore's contribution.

from the modern era and discusses how the representations of women as weak, submissive characters have not been changed over the years. Angshumalee Dutta's paper on "Role of Women Saints in the Bhakti Movement, With Special Reference to Meera Bai" focuses on the women saints from the medieval period of Indian history mention of whom is rarely found in the mainstream historiography. TPriyanka Gogoi in her paper "Citizenship and Human Rights: The Issue of D Voters in Assam" provides certain solutions of the needs and problems of the D Voters and examines the role and attitude of present Government towards this issue. Patrika Handique in her paper "The Exotic and the Other: A Post-Colonial Re-Reading of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra" is an analysis of the colonial orientalism and the resistance to this colonial imposition which is another important aspect of a post-colonial study. On the other hand, L.X. Polin Hazarika's paper on "Ecological Consciousness in Tamsula Ao's Shaort Stories" discusses the ecological consciousness in Laburnum for My Head" by one of the prominent voices of the region Tamsula Ao and explores how literature can be instrumental in preserving nature.

I believe this issue of the journal comprising research papers from different fields will succeed in providing new information to knowledge enthusiasts. It would be a matter of great honour and encouragement if this issue serves this purpose to some extent.

I take this privilege to offer my heartiest thanks to Mr. Tarun Gogoi, the HoD of the department of History, H.C.D.G. College, for trusting in me and providing me this opportunity to edit the current issue. My sincere regards goes to the HoD of Department of English, Mrs. Gitli Saikia for her constant support and advice in publishing the journal. My heartfelt gratitude goes to the advisory board, my fellow colleagues and the contributors. Moreover, I convey my sincere gratitude to our honourable Principal sir for encouraging us to publish the journal.

**L.X. Polin Hazarika**  
Editor

**INTRODUCTION:**

India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most populated country in the world with 29 states and 7 union territories and it is the largest democratic country. The vast landmass along with huge populations comes along with various types of people, religion, traditions, language, philosophy, customs, foods, clothing, music, dance, architecture, etc. India puts its mark on the world map from the ancient times. India is the countries which have maintain a proper balance of development in various sectors of science, technology, education, life style, etc along with its cultural heritage. The huge population is spread throughout the length and breadth of Indian landmass. They have their own religious background with their different language and cultural identities. Indian cultural history was laid almost 4500 years ago which is belief to be in practice still date. The deep and abiding ideals of philosophy and aesthetics on which the Indian Dance has been built, have also profound influenced by the allied art. The primitive man in his awakened thought could clearly see that life manifests itself in rhythm. Heartbeats, breathing, walking, all these signs of a living body are basically rhythmic. The difference between a living and dead is that while the former has rhythm within him, the later has no rhythm. Man began dancing long before he learnt speaking, but that wasn't to entertain the audience but to express their own feelings and sentiments. Human being expresses their feelings with their words and by their expression which conveys their sentiments. Indian dance has a strong bonding with the man himself along with its society, culture and civilization.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

The root of Indian Dance are found in the sacred text that comprises the four Vedas (*Rig Veda*, *Sam Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*) and two important epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. Usually these exclusive histories are kept by the Bramhins and it delivers to the next generation by the mean of story. Mythological stories tell that the Indian Dance is mainly done by the Hindu God's namely The Shiva and lord Vishnu. It is the consolidation and codified presentation of mime, drama, dance and movements along with an exposition of

acting, direction, stagecraft, costume, makeup, music and theory of aesthetics. Dance and dramatic art is a gift to the mankind by the God. Then comes the *Natyashashtra* (treatise on Dramatic Art) by the sage Bharata is the oldest known literary work on performing art and existing text dates from between 200 B.C and 200 A.D, for the purpose of world peace. As the vedas were strictly restricted to the Bramhins and common people were not even allowed to listen the wordings of the Vedas and people become addicted towards wars and violence, hence with the God's wisdom and the essence of the four Vedas like music, speech, songs, mime and sentiments, Bharata Muni scripted the fifth Veda, The *Natya Veda* or the *Natyashastra*. Another important literary work on this field is the *Abhinaya Darpana*, The mirror of Gesture by Nandikeshwara.

Indian dancing along with the other allied art form had been travelled through various periods with lots of adaptation, but among them specifically dance had been transformed into new patterns and form with the existed periods author and writers. Along with the existed periods the poets also changes and also the style of writing their representation and sentiments changes. As the literature changes its course, same as with it the dance also changes its *bhava*. The periods can be categorized into - Vedic Period, Ramayana Period, Mahabharata Period, Jain Period, Buddhist Period, Hinduism Revival Period, Muslim Period, British period and Modern Period. Dancing was popular in Vedic period, people enjoyed it during the Ramayana and Mahabharata period, Buddhism and Jainism also did not diminish its popularity: rather they used this medium to spread their gospels among the common people. Due to the constant raid by the Turks, The Persians, The Afgans and the Mongolians, Northern part of India suffers a lot, though not of much being affected to the Indian classical Dance pattern except the Kathak. They had brought it from the mandapa to the darbar. In spite of political convulsion and economic retrogression the first century of British rule in India (1757- 1858 A.D) is in certain respect a memorable epoch in her history. This period witnessed a remarkable outburst in intellectual activity in India and a radical transformation

in her society and religious ideas. As a result of all these India passed from the medieval age to modern age.

### CONTRIBUTION OF GURUDEV RABINDRANATH TAGORE:

During the period of Renaissance in 19th century, Indian society modernizes itself, but almost forgetting about their glorious past. Due to the banned over the practice of dance tradition by the colonial missionary in 1892, the art along with the ancient art forms stayed underground. Kabiguru Rabindra Nath Tagore took a step to revive this art form through his literary work. Rabindra Nath Tagore says that –

Man has realised himself through the literature. Self- realisation is the main thing in the fine art. The imaginative power depends upon the expression of the art and literature. Any art become glorious and beautiful through the expression of feelings.”

Gurudev initiated the revivalist movement of dance and presented it to the world in completely new look as “Natir Puja”, where his script was scripted for the purpose of worship through dance. Dance and dancer in India have a social prestige. Our historical evidence suggests that dance and dance theories had been created by the almighty itself. But the colonial rule diminished the social prestige of dance along with dancers. Many were forced to leave the ancient old tradition. The British Emperor had no respect for our culture and they didn’t give any importance for its identities. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was the one who has transformed dance from extra curriculum activity to co-curricular activity and makes it fit for the current study circle. Rabindranath contribution for dance is not only for a limited period of time. The period of his Geetinatya to his Nrityanatya is a vast period. His geetinatya starts with “Balmikir Pratibha” in 1881 and ends with “Srabon Gatha” in 1934 and his Nrityanatya starts from 1935 with “Chitrangada” and continued still 1939 with “Shyama”. His unique writing and noble thoughts not only regain the glory of dance but also provides a highly prestigious position for women. Tagore was much ahead of his time. The spirit of feminism is well expressed in his works

through the sensitive representation of mental atmosphere and the intensive heart desire of his female protagonist. During that time dance were considered as a means of pleasure and the women performing that was considered as Bazaru Aurat or prostitute. Women’s were forced to commit the dance for their livelihood. In the case of Indian women perusing dance as their career is a challenge to proclaim her prestige in the society. But Gurudev depicted dance in a completely newer version with his work “Natir Puja”.

Now a day a students can learn the techniques along with its literary and cultural background and set it as their career. Gurudev always search for better cultural practice worldwide. He always introduced new culture and gave that a new identity to his dream place, Visva Bharati. Gurudev use his aesthetic, coined as “Rabindra Nandon Tatto”, which being associated with four elements – Grohon or Acceptance, Barjan or Rejection, Oieko or Assemble and Uposthapana or Presentation. Implementing those, Gurudev had created and codified all of his works including songs, dance, art and literature. Presently, those art forms have its own identity and termed as Rabindra Sangit (Songs of Tagore), Rabindra Nritya (Dance style of Santiniketan) and Rabindra Sahitya (literary works of Rabindranath Tagore).

### IMPLICATION OF DANCE TO EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:

The importance of dance in the society in the aspect of art, culture and tradition can be trace down from very primitive time and their records can be trace down from the various sources of Cave paintings, Egyptian frescos, Indian statuettes, ancient Greek and Roman art and records of court traditions in China and Japan. In Indian history dance along with dancer have special position in the society. The Classical Indian Dance would be a dead technique, with meaningless flourishes and elaborations, without our rich literature that forms the basis of this dance style. This literary works lends its gravity and dignity of purpose and, when it is presented by a truly inspired dancer, it is imbued with a new profound significance. As the

dancer performs, a distinct religious, literary tradition comes alive. The movements of the dancer's portraits what the writer has sought to express through words and poetry. The epic narrative methods of a Kathakali performance, the lyrical style of Bharatnatyam recitals, the soft rendering of Vidyapati's Padabali, the astapadi's of Jayadev's, Gita Govinda in Manipuri and Odissi and Gitabhavas of a Kathak demonstration are results of contribution of literature to the Classical Indian dancing. There are many classical dancers with polished techniques without the knowledge, fails to express the inner most feelings of the writer. The difference between a good and a bad performance is that the spark of literature shines in one and the lack of it make the other dead.

Due to the constant raid and disturbance from the foreign invasion, Indian dance loses its prestige and hold from the society. After the order to ban the practise of this ancient tradition by the colonial rulers, dance artists and scholar hide themselves from the public appearances. British kingdom has no interest in the art form and treated them as extra curriculum activities. The art form created by the great scholars/ sage have no room to flourish or developed its area. The performers are mainly women, who had treated as *bazaru aurat* or prostitute for mere sort of entertainment. That was the time when Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore took the lead to not only revive the art form from the bondage of darkness but for its growth and expansion. He had fought for the establishment of this art form from extra curriculum activity to co curriculum activity. His creation "Nati Puja" paved the path. As a result of which students are having career in this field. . In this transformation Indian dance plays an important role by providing the women a huge platform for self up gradation and empowerment. Presently, Indian women are so much efficient that they are running a family with all kind of help. Indian women now can cook tasty food for her family and also can fly a fighter jet to the sake of her country. At that time only Gurukul Dance Education is available but with the hands of Gurudev Academy Dance Education born. After the freedom from the colonial rule, Indian government

also take several steps by opening several schools and universities. Now, a student can have higher education in this subject and even conduct research. The education in the subject of dance has shown its importance and benefits to the common people. Visva Bharati is offering dance education from the preliminary stage till the highest educational qualification. Visva Bharati has developed its unique style of dance presentation and to witness that millions of people comes not from India but also from foreign countries in Basnata Utsav, Barsha Mangal, etc.

### CONCLUSION:

Culture is the expression by one or by a group, rather it is consider as a social behaviour or set of rules that being transfused through social learning within a society. Culture is an important factor in shaping identities. The main characteristics of a culture is its "historical reservoir," which includes various factor location, such as gender, race, nationality, language, food, sexuality, religious beliefs, ethnicity, aesthetics, and historical traditions. Our historical background has clear evidence the dance was there from the beginning and it was a part of the daily life. To achieve mastery over this ancient art form one has to go through several hardships, training and must possess passion, devotion and complete sacrifice. Dance is the medium to convey feelings and sentiments from the dancer on stage to the audience off stage and for such expertise deep study over the techniques along with its source is compulsory. The history of Indian Dance is fascinating and challenging at the same time which is the key points for the various researchers to conduct research and vivid study.

India is now achieving growth in almost all the sectors and being considered as a strong nation. India is the country where we still practice our ancient tradition with same value and respect. We always give our first preference to our own cultural identities. Cultural identities prevail among human from its very existence. Every group, society or organisations have their own rules and code of conduct. Recently, several scholars are working hard to specify the cultural



identities of individuals group or community. But the fact is the culture that one group or community is carrying forward has its base in their past which has been transcended to the present and it will reflect its expression in the future. The culture of one derived from their forefather can be termed as its own cultural identities. We are globalising and all are connected through modern communication system. Basically intermingling of cultures is a normal thing as a result of which a transfused culture evolved. Younger generations are lost between the cultures and wonder about their own cultural identities. They have no interest about their own historical background which has paved the path to degrade the culture. The strong cultural identities are the key factor to our youth's mental growth and wellbeing. Knowledge about their cultural traditions and historical background provides them to create a strong cultural identity for themselves.®®

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# PERFORMANCE AND SOCIETY

Gitali Saikia

## ABSTRACT

*Performance is an activity that presents special meaning through various actions. Different types of performances marked a specific human society. It is fervently associated with culture and economy. Primitive people after a successful beast hunt involved in dancing and merry-making in a circular motion beside a great fire. Their actions gave birth to certain type of performance. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century Assam a great saint-poet, Sree Sankardeva brought revolutionary change to performance keeping by uniting common people from different castes and creeds on the name of a new religion. Earlier cultural performance was rooted deeply in agrarian social structure which at present comes under grim influence of globalization and neo-liberalism. It is important to note that nature of a performance profoundly depends on culture of a society. In this paper an attempt is made to study, at first, what is the relation between performance and society, and secondly, how a society can be changed through performance.*

**KEY WORDS:** Act, ceremony, human behavior, performance, theatre, society

## INTRODUCTION:

Performance as a concept usually refers to an activity which includes a studied and rehearsed artistic set of actions. It represents the living reality by delving deep into the human expressive behaviours inherent in the words and rhetoric of a literary piece; the words, imbued with various emotive layers of humanity are translated into depictions, through a set of sign languages (Mahanta 57). In theatrical performance representation of human behaviour is of utmost importance. Bharata in his famous treatise on performing arts, *Natyasastra*, focuses on the

presentation of the meaning of various literary texts through different actions, i.e., performance.

Performance is an essential part of human society. From the ancient time while our primitive fore-fathers went out for hunting or to fight against enemy, after a wild beast hunt or a victory they indulged in some kind of performance. At different times human being performs differently; occasion and place determines its nature and characteristics. Performance is related to life and living; after all, it is determined by the culture of a society and a community. Performance comprises movements of bodies, articulation of speeches and expression with the help of eyes, hands, foot, voice modulation etc. that means, performance has emotional, intellectual, intuitional and experiential context. It has text and grammar. Music, dance, acting, magic, ritual, recitation, theatre, public speaking, sports, opera are some of the performances people generally anticipate. It is noteworthy that the term “theatre” can be used in a very wide sense, namely “to cover drama, many forms of ritual, dance, and other performing arts such as acrobatics, mime and semi dramatized narratives” (Kerr 1).

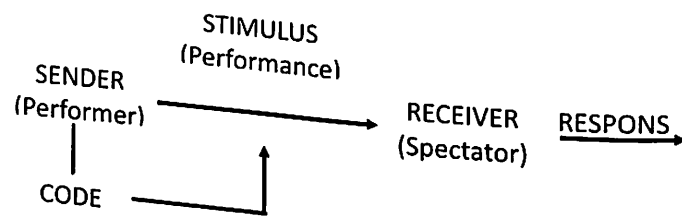
Performance designs indicate the development of a society and its culture. The emotional, intellectual property— mentality, behaviour, attitude, skill and knowledge are also revealed through the performances that the people of a particular society perform. Moreover, performance anticipates co-operation, understanding, unity and solidarity of a society. Observing the role of performance in ancient Greek society, C.L.R. James remarks, “No such social force has existed in any society with such ideas and aspirations since the citizens of Athens and the farmers around trooped into the city to see the plays of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus and decide on the prize-winners by their votes” (James in Nicholas Ridout’s “Performance and Democracy”16).

Alongside the drama, James sees athletic competition as equally important in the Athenian conception of human capability. Like the tragic drama, athletic competition involved the individual in public,

in representative or ideal form (Ridout 16). Olympic Games are so significant to the Greeks that Greek sculpture was inspired by the movement and bodily curves of the athletes. Commenting on drama as a “representative enactment of a democratic culture, and the sport of cricket as “equally obvious and direct”, James says, “The batsman facing the ball does not merely represent his side. For that moment, to all intents and purposes, he is his side. The fundamental relation of the One and the Many, Individual and Social, Individual and Universal, leader and followers, representative and ranks, the part and the whole, is structurally imposed on the players of cricket.” Thus, performance represents both the individual and social panorama of life and its significance.

### PERFORMANCE AS A SOCIAL ACT:

Performance is generally a group activity. Hence, it requires an involvement of a large number of people. As such performance enhances peace and prosperity of that particular society allowing them indulge in various creative activities. Performance requires two important agents—1) Performers, 2) Audience or Spectators. Elam Keir gives a model of the communication process between the performer as ‘sender’ and the spectator as ‘receiver’.



(From Elam Keir's *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, p 21)

The whole process of response through ‘stimulus’ or performance is “grounded in active, intimate, hands on participation.” (Davis 15). As a social act performance gives emphasis on collective thoughts, planning, arrangement and obligations. It gives importance on man as an individual as well as a part of a greater whole. The

societal obligation of an individual is acknowledged in performance of plays, sports, opera or some other performances. Moreover, performances play a great role in “preserving and conveying social memory and identity” (Davis 3). For example, a “stage” set for tourists, it maps identities for individuals and groups: identities that are likely to be authentic as assumed” (Davis 6).

As a social act performance requires a space; it may be a market place, a street, a temple yard, a well organized stage or a hall. In England, the earliest plays, Miracle and Mystery plays were performed in church. Sree Sankardeva in Assam chose Namghar, a community house, to perform Ankiya Bhaona. In modern times, performances have undergone various innovations and developments, theatrical spaces have also been changed from a temple and church yard to a market place and street, from the street to the courtyard, restaurant loft and garage, to forest area. We may mention ‘Budungduppa, under the sal tree’, a theatrical innovation led by renowned theatre personality Sukracharya Rabha in Goalpara district, Assam, as well as ‘Chotal Nat’, an innovative theatre popularized by the eminent playwright-director Saponjyoti Thakur.

Performance can provide the audience with “new modes of knowing” (Davis 15) as well as arousing awareness among people about different things besides providing entertainment to all. It can “champion social change” (Davis 2). As performance represents meaning, “representation of these meanings through performance results in the creation of a new textual field in which the audience reaps and collects the suggestive layers of meanings from seeds sowed by the performers (Mahanta 57). The credibility of performatives depends on factors such as who the utterer is, in whose interest he or she is speaking, where and when the speech acts take place, how it is done, and, not least, what possibilities addressees have to respond to or act on the appeals the speech acts addressed to them contains” (Johansson 35).

Sree Sankardeva in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Assam used performance to reform the society. His innovation that took place in his performance changed the whole culture of the North Eastern region.

On the contrary, the egalitarian and humanistic mission of this great artist, saint-poet and dramatist has been carried on through performance. Performance, indeed, creates some situations “where people’s official status is changed through the performance of certain ceremonies” (Johansson 36).

In recent era African community theatre has popularized Theatre for Development to fight against HIV epidemic. They perform some plays (street plays) to make people aware against HIV and AIDS. In India also street plays are enacted on some issues like dowry, child marriage, child labour, unemployment problem, domestic violence, acid attack on women, and so on. In the 1950s in Assam ‘Sur Bahini’ (band of musicians) was formed under the leadership of some musicians like Bhupen Hazarika and Hemanga Biswas to protest against the domination of the land lords and to protect the rights of the peasants.

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND SOCIETY:

“Performance, in the aestheticized contexts that Kershaw and Foster describe, is a means to both express knowing and acquire knowledge. Its artifact, if any, is neurochemical, for performance registers in the cerebral cortex and is processed in kind” (Davis 3). Some researchers like Philip Auslander is also concerned with the co-presence of performers and audience members in the phenomenology of reception and the mutuality of making meaning. It is a kind of “co-creation of the performer and the partaker” (Mahanta 66) of a text to arrive at meaning. Elam again says, “Theatrical signification is not reducible to a set of one-to-one relationships between single sign-vehicles and their individual meanings. If it were possible to break down the performance text into atomic units of meaning, the task of analysing theatrical semiosis would be scarcely more than a parade of tokens the performance itself would merely to assign fixed values. The items to which the audience has merely to assign fixed values. The production of meaning on stage is too rich and fluid to be accounted

for in terms of discrete objects and their representational roles. An adequate account must be able to identify the range of sign repertoires making up what might be termed the theatrical system of systems; to explain the internal (syntactic) relations of each and the interrelations between systems; and to make explicit the kinds of rules which allow meaning to be communicated and received in the performer-spectator dialectic” (20). The semiotician of theatre, in brief, will be equally concerned with modes of signification and with the resulting acts of communication (Keir 20).

In a society performance is connected with ‘*ranga*’ i.e., entertainment. (The word ‘*ranga*’ (joy) is frequently used in Classical Indian theatrical treatises. Bharata in his *Natyasastra*, uses the terms like ‘*rangapith*’ for stage or performance space. He also used the term ‘*Purbaranga*’). It is also connected with religious and social, economic and political activities. With the help of definite forms performance visualizes oral and written art. Performing art has close relationship with religious beliefs, folk beliefs, ceremonies and festivals, folk medicine and treatment, games and entertainment. Dance, music and acting are all integral parts of rituals. Greek tragedy emerged from the lyrical performance done on the occasion of the worshipping of Greek god Dianosis.

Diana Taylor explains how UNESCO’s concept of intangible cultural heritage acknowledges performance’s role in preserving and conveying social memory and identity (Davis 3). Performance like theatre is considered democratic:

Theatre and democracy were born together; both represent a sociality and a mode of appearing in public which is beneficial to the construction of community; performance itself, as an embodied practice, embeds the abstractions of democratic representation in a participatory constellation of activities (theatergoing, sports); and finally, performance studies reasserts these connections by giving voice to the underrepresented, advocating for an anti-elitist culture, and restoring the body’s

performance to its place alongside the text in academic practice. (Davis 15)

Though performance can be done by an individual it is always a social act. So, relationship between performance and society is just like the government and citizens. Without people government is meaningless, so also without a society performance has no meaning at all. Involvement or participation is one of the integral aspects of performance. There are some basic questions related to a particular type of performance. For example, 1) Who are the audience; 2) Who will perform and 3) what will be performed; 4) Is it didactic or only for entertainment. Through performance some issues or problems of the society can be addressed, and thereby, the audience and common people can be sensitized to some burning issues. It is true that "private issues are transcended by "critique, poesis, intervention, and translation", to come forward as public concerns, without spectacle or historic excess, in a "representational real" of memory. Performance transforms, even in cases of inconceivable trauma, making experience legible to others" (Davis 5). Culture of a society is imbued with performance. Aesthetics of a society, material culture, speech and language- all are revealed through performance.

Commenting on the functions of theatre and community theatre, Tim Prentki and Jan Selman say, "Theatre makes concepts concrete and real for people. It involves its audience both intellectually and emotionally, it sensitises audiences to issues, ideas and people portrayed, and it engenders a personal connection with the events and characters watched on stage. Community based theatre goes a step further; when a play is directly relevant to audience members' lives and concerns, a process begins which can lead to deeper understanding and change"(8). They can use the process to clarify their views, to investigate dilemmas, to analyse their social, political and economic situations, to challenge assumptions, to strategise, to 'rehearse for action', and to share their insights with others within and without their immediate community (Prentki and Selman 9). Nowadays, in

different countries theatre is used as 'social and educative tool'(Prentki and Selman 10). This is also useful for to embody culture and culture specific development.

### PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL CONTEXT:

In ancient or in a medieval society people had to fight among themselves. Especially in ancient society frequent battles and conflict took place among different groups, tribes and communities. So, most of their rituals and performances were about warfare and conflict. Great epics of the world centre round war and conflict. In an agrarian society various performances are related to cultivation and harvesting. Their songs and dances as well as rituals are related to cultivation. For example, Bihu festival in Assam, Gudhi Padwa in Maharashtra, Lohri in Punjab and North India, Deepoli Parba in Karnataka, Kerala, Mid-autumn festival in China, Ikore in Nigeria etc are agricultural festivals and songs and dances performed in these festivals are significant. Performances during colonial period in India speak of colonial domination and subordination.

A society is represented by a performance. Kathakali represents Kerala; Bharatnatyam represents Tamilnadu, Bihu and Sattriya dance represent Assam, Manipuri folk dance represents Monipur, Bhangra represents the Punjab, so on and so forth. "Performance rather than just theatre, appears as the enabling condition or representative practice of the democratic polity.

In every society there are some written and oral forms of performance texts. Performance and culture of elite society and common people always have some kinds of difference. Robert Redfield and other anthropologists had established a basic distinction between the "great tradition" and the "little tradition" to distinguish the interrelated lines of culture carried by the urban elite and ordinary people in the countryside, respectively. Focusing on agrarian societies, Scott believes "more or less in keeping with Redfield's concepts, we may define the little tradition as 'the distinctive patterns of belief and behavior which are valued by the peasantry of an agrarian society';

the great tradition is the corresponding patterns among the society's elite"(8). The great tradition was sometimes and to a certain degree written, whereas the little tradition was almost always cultivated orally. There are differences between elite and popular culture even in modern society, with its highly effective integrative mechanisms in the mass media. Even more than in ancient societies, "in the absence of these integrative factors, the contours of non-elite beliefs are likely to diverge more strikingly from elite beliefs and the variety of beliefs among non-elites is also likely to be greater" (Scott 7).

From time immemorial, religious performances have been observed in different societies. In the ancient and middle ages Bible was read aloud and it was listened by the people gathered in the church. Commenting on the reading of the Bible, Richards A. Horsley in *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition and Hidden Transcript in Q*, says that in the ancient "biblical" world texts operated in a context of communication which was predominantly oral. These reading practices anticipated "oral communication" and "oral performances". The traditional oral performer, on the other hand, depending on standard strategies long familiar to his collective audience, summons conventional connotations of conventional structures evoking a meaning that is *inherent*. Communication through a performance or recitation, therefore, depends much more heavily on extra-textual factors as meaning is evoked *metonymically* from the tradition with which the listeners are familiar. In contrast to the originality of conferred meaning in modern literary texts, traditional oral performance cannot depart from, because it depends upon, traditional references of symbols, phrases, and formulas. Each performance causes what is immanent to come to life in the present; it recreates the networks of inherent meaning (Horsley 48).

In our society, class distinction and caste discrimination are enacted through "hidden transcript" and "public transcript" (Scott 2). In the class and caste-ridden society dominance and subordination are related to power structure. There is binary opposition stating this classification of upper and lower, dominant and subordinate, self and

other. Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1990) "lays out a probing analysis of communication amid the structural conflict characteristic of power relations in which "those subject to elaborate and systematic forms of social subordination" (the worker to the boss, the serf to the lord, the slave to the master, etc.) are forced into a public performance of subordination (e.g., out of fear, prudence, the desire to curry favor, etc.). The "open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate" he labelled the "public transcript" (Scott 2). The latter, however, tells only part of the story of such power relations. For "every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant," usually in sequestered sites(xii). Behind a few anti-elite actions lies "a far more elaborate hidden transcript, an entire discourse, linked to . . . culture, religion, and the experience of colonial rule" (Scott 15). The dominant group also involve incessantly on devising a hidden agenda to perpetuate their rule. "The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed"(xii). Moreover, "the frontier between the public and the hidden transcripts is a zone of constant struggle between the dominant and the subordinate" (Scott 14). It is important to study the unequal power relations. Scott's purpose was to explore how we can "study power relations when the powerless are often obliged to adopt a strategic pose in the presence of the powerful and when the powerful may have an interest in overdramatizing their reputation and mastery" (xii).

All aspects and issues of society can be studied through the study of the performance. The audience's response to the performance is important. "Not only are the audience's signals, in any vital form of theatre, an essential contribution to the formation and reception of the performance text—and indeed various post-war performers and directors such as the Becks and Richard Schechner have extended the bounds of the performance to include the audience explicitly—but the spectator, by virtue of his very patronage of the performance, can

be said to *initiate* the communicative circuit” (Keir 21). In case of performance, audience is the receiver as well as the co-creator, the partaker, patronizer and policy maker.

### SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS AND PERFORMANCE:

Social restrictions reflect age old custom whether good or bad. Social restrictions speak of some kind of discrimination and injustice. There were restrictions on reciting Bible, or other holy books by common people of the particular religion. In India only the Brahmans could read the Vedas and other holy books and perform the rituals. The lower class people like Nishads, Dasis, Sudras and Baishyas, the Dalits, and the untouchables are not allowed to read holy books on their own. Social restrictions remind us of gender discrimination also. During Elizabethan age Shakespeare’s plays were performed on the stage without a female participator to play the role of a female character. There were social restrictions on women to take part in theatre. That restriction went away during Restoration period. In Assam as well as in other parts of India *nats*, *bhaona* and some other religious plays were enacted only with male actors. Women had to struggle a lot to take part in theatre, dance and films. Earlier musical instruments like drum, flute, cymbal, piper etc were performed only by males. Women were not allowed to do that. On the other hand, in pre-independence India and after one or two decades also, musical performers were regarded as meaner kind of people; women performers were regarded as prostitutes, *baijee* etc. So, music and dance was regarded as meaner type of business. In Assam, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Bihu* dance was considered as indecent work. So, men and women from rich and ‘cultured’ family did not take part in *Bihu* dances. Restrictions prevailed in case of playing also. For example, cricket as a game is very popular, but in the global world, only the male cricketers attain fame for playing the game.

### CONCLUSION:

Performance as a social act embodies social and individual behaviour of human being. Performance in a particular society is imbued with tradition and culture. The term ‘theatre’ and ‘performance’ can be used interchangeably as theatre implies action, dance, music, movement, expression, creation and re-creation. Society is the source of both performer (sender) and spectator (receiver). With this ‘stimulus’ (performance), the society is stimulated to make meaning or to decode the signs and symbols represented by performance. Performance text is the creation of a society. It can be a tool for social, educative, emotive and motivational purposes, for development and change. After all, none can deny that performance signifies the mental health and pace of intellectual development of a society. ■■

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# PHYSICAL HEALTH OF THE AGED POPULATION IN THE UPPER ASSAM TOWNS OF NORTH LAKHIMPUR AND SIVASAGAR

Anita Baruwa

## ABSTRACT

*Unlike yesteryears when the wisdom of the old was revered, the elderly segment of the population is being increasingly sidelined and thrown to the corners in the globalisation-fed consumerist world of today. The predicament for the urban aged persons seems to be at a greater risk than their rural counterparts because of family nuclearisation. In such a context, and keeping in mind the gradual increase in the growth rate of the aged persons over the years, it has become necessary to highlight the health situation of this marginalised segment of the population.*

*This paper uses data collected randomly from the aged population of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar towns with the objectives of analysing whether the incidence of selected major ailments varies among the aged persons of the sample towns and identifying the determining variables of the physical health condition of the aged population of the towns under study.*

**KEYWORDS:** Aged Population, Ailments, Elderly, Health Facilities, Health Status.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The population of the world is ageing at a fast pace. The proportion of persons aged 60 years and above in India rose from 5.6



per cent in 1961 to about 8 per cent in 2011. According to the United Nations Population Fund, the share of population over the age of 60 years could increase from 8 per cent in 2015 to 19 per cent in 2050 (Economic Times, 2018). There are wide variations among the different states, with the highest percentage of aged population (12.6 per cent) in Kerala and the lowest (5.4 per cent) in Delhi. In case of Assam it stood at 6.1 per cent (Census, 2011).

Deteriorating health is synonymous with rising age. The Indian National Sample Survey reports showed that the aged persons suffer from chronic and acute multiple diseases with variations in gender and area of residence. In Assam, the percentage of chronically ill aged persons was 62.8 in 1986-87, which rose to 69.5 in 1995-96 in rural areas. The same increased from 59.1 to 76.7 in urban areas (Alam, 2006). Thus, there is an increasing incidence of chronic ailments over the years with the share shifting from the rural to urban areas (Baruwa, 2015). The NSSO report (2004-05) that in urban Assam the expenditure on treatment in private hospitals has risen sharply (Dutta and Bawari, 2007) proves that there are no assured health public provisions for the aged. Whatever is provided by the government is piecemeal in nature.

## 2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The changed situation in the post globalisation period necessitates highlighting the health conditions of the aged population who can be referred to as the marginalised segment of the society. It is pertinent to focus on the spatial health inequalities so that those can be reduced. Hence the present paper aims to compare the physical health conditions of the two towns of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar.

## 3. AREA AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

An attempt has been made in this paper to study a cross section of the aged population residing in two different towns of Upper Assam, viz. North Lakhimpur on the north bank of Brahmaputra and Sivasagar

on the south bank. The present study is confined to the study of selected physical health aspects of the aged sample persons.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

- i. To identify the variables correlated with the physical health condition of the aged population of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar towns.
- ii. To analyse whether the incidence of the selected major ailments varies between the aged population of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar towns.

## 5. NULL HYPOTHESES

- i. There is no significant correlation between the physical health of the aged persons of the sample towns and their socio-economic variables.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the health related variables of the aged persons of the two sample towns.
- iii. There is no significant difference in the incidence of major ailments between the aged persons of the two sample towns.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

This paper uses data collected randomly from 145 aged persons of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar towns to fulfil the objectives. Correlation was used to determine the relationship of various socio-economic variables with the physical health conditions of the sample aged persons. Analysis of variance was performed to test the comparative incidence of major ailments among the aged persons.

The physical health condition of the aged respondents has been determined on the basis of a health score prepared after taking into account the health rating (1 to 5) as submitted by the aged respondents based on their feelings about their own health and 19 other health related factors. Thus the health score is based on a scale of 1 to 20. The social interaction level is a score based on 4 points

likert scale of frequency of interactions. The rest of the variables except age are binary responses.

**7. RESULTS**

This subsection contains the results of the statistical tests performed in order to verify the hypotheses of the study. A total of 145 aged persons, consisting of 92 males (63.45 per cent) and 53 females (36.55 per cent) form the sample of the study (75 from North Lakhimpur and 70 from Sivasagar).

The mean age of the aged respondents is 68.86 years (67.52 years in North Lakhimpur and 70.29 years in Sivasagar). The North Lakhimpur sample consists of 47 males (62.7 per cent) and 28 females (37.3 per cent) in the total of 75 aged persons and the Sivasagar sample consists of 45 males (64.3 per cent) and the 25 females (35.7 per cent) in the total of 70 aged persons.

**7.1. RESULTS OF PEARSON'S CORRELATION TEST**

The first hypothesis of the paper is tested using Pearson's correlation test. The results are summed up in Table 1.

**Table 1 : Correlation between Physical Health and Socio-Economic Variables**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	t	p-values	Adjusted p-values
Age	-0.333	-4.228	<0.000	0.001**
Educational Level	0.170	2.056	0.042	0.733
Work Status	0.137	1.651	0.101	1.000
Fit Habits	0.478	6.502	<0.000	<0.000***
Gender	0.296	3.702	0.000	0.007**
Social Interaction Level	0.325	4.107	<0.000	0.002**

Table 1 shows that except for age (-0.333), all the other socio-economic variables are positively correlated with the physical health condition of the aged persons of the study areas. Among the variables, the strength of the correlation is highest in case of keeping fit habits

(0.478) and almost negligible for educational level (0.170) and work status (0.137).

Since the first null hypothesis was tested with respect to many variables, the problem of multiplicity arose. Hence the rejection criteria have been adjusted for each individual hypothesis with the help of adjusted p-values (Holm method). *The null hypothesis stands rejected that there is no significant correlation between the physical health condition and the socio-economic variables, namely age, fit habits, gender, social interaction level. However, we fail to reject the null hypothesis with respect to work status and educational level.*

**7.2. RESULTS OF ANOVA FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE**

Though typically, a one-way ANOVA is suitable for three or more categorical independent groups, and an independent sample t-test is more appropriate for two groups, the present paper being a part of a broader study, has used the results obtained from the ANOVA test to compare the significant difference between the study areas in order to draw inference regarding the second and third hypotheses of the paper.

**7.2.1. VARIABLES RELATED TO PHYSICAL HEALTH OF THE AGED PERSONS**

The results of the ANOVA for significant difference of the physical health variables are summed up in Table 2.

**Table 2 ANOVA for Significant Difference: Physical Health Variables**

Variables	Towns	Mean	SD	F value	p-value
Fit Habits	North Lakhimpur	0.77	0.42	10.17	0.000 ***
	Sivasagar	0.76	0.43		
Surgeries	North Lakhimpur	0.28	0.45	0.494	0.781
	Sivasagar	0.30	0.46		
Illness in the Past Year	North Lakhimpur	0.12	0.33	2.542	0.027 *
	Sivasagar	0.24	0.43		
Chronic Health Problem	North Lakhimpur	0.44	0.50	4.075	0.001**
	Sivasagar	0.51	0.50		
Major Life Illness	North Lakhimpur	0.43	0.50	8.28	0.000 ***
	Sivasagar	0.53	0.50		

Table 2 shows the results of the ANOVA computed to test for significant difference of selected physical health variables in the two towns. The null hypothesis is rejected with respect to all the variables except major surgeries, i.e. fit habits of the sample population, illnesses in the past year, chronic health problems and major life illnesses varied significantly between the respondents of the two towns.

*Thus, the second null hypothesis that there is no significant difference with respect to the physical health related variables, namely fit habits, illness in the past year, chronic life problems and major life illness, is rejected but that with respect to surgeries could not be rejected.*

The means of the binary responses (“Yes” coded as 1 and “No” coded as 0) of the aged persons regarding the specific health variables, were found out for performing the test. Interpreted percentage-wise, Sivasagar leads in the incidence of illness in the past year (12% points), major life illness (10% points), chronic health problems (7% points), surgeries (2% points). The same is more in North Lakhimpur only for fit habits (1 % point).

### 7.2.2. MAJOR AILMENTS OF THE AGED PERSONS

The results of the ANOVA for significant difference of the major ailments are summed up in Table 3, which shows that except for blood pressure ( $p=0.000$ ) and cardaoc problems ( $p = 0.009$ ), no significant differences were found in the incidence of the rest of the major ailments of the aged persons. The “others” include ailments such as cancer, hernia, various types of body pains etc. but excludes disabilities like memory, vision, hearing and locomotor failures. Thus it indicates that there is no significant difference between the two towns with respect to diabetes, kidney problem, thyroid and others. *Thus, the third null hypothesis that there is no significant difference with respect to incidence of major ailments, namely blood pressure and cardiac problems among the aged persons of the two sample towns, is rejected but there was not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis with respect to diabetes, kidney problem, thyroid and other ailments.*

**Table 3**  
**ANOVA for Significant Difference: Major Ailments**

Ailments	Towns	Mean	SD	F value	P value
Blood Pressure	North Lakhimpur	0.32	0.45	4.774	0.000 ***
	Sivasagar	0.40	0.49		
Cardiac Problem	North Lakhimpur	0.12	0.33	1.692	0.009**
	Sivasagar	0.19	0.39		
Diabetes	North Lakhimpur	0.20	0.40	3.114	0.134
	Sivasagar	0.20	0.40		
Kidney Problem	North Lakhimpur	0.00	0.00	2.176	0.142
	Sivasagar	0.03	0.17		
Thyroid	North Lakhimpur	0.04	0.20	0.14	0.709
	Sivasagar	0.03	0.17		
Others	North Lakhimpur	0.25	0.44	1.698	0.133
	Sivasagar	0.24	0.43		

The means of the binary responses (“Yes” coded as 1 and “No” coded as 0) of the aged persons as to whether they suffered from the specific ailment were found out for performing the test. Interpreted percentage-wise, the incidence of ailments is more in Sivasagar for the following ailments: Blood Pressure (8% points), Cardiac problem (7% points) and Kidney problem (3% points). The same is more in North Lakhimpur for Thyroid and Other ailments (1% point each). For Diabetes it is the same in both the towns.

### 8. DISCUSSION

The overall results of the correlation analysis show that fit habits affect health, positively. So moderate physical activity is necessary in old age. Health problems rise with age. The weak yet positive correlation between gender and health suggests that the male aged persons are slightly healthier than their female counterparts so far as this sample is concerned, which may be explained by the biological and patriarchal background causes. Further, the healthier aged persons are those who have a higher level of social interaction (0.325), i.e. those who have a higher frequency of the opportunity to meet people, either during the course of their paid work, communication with spouses, children, grandchildren, kin, meeting neighbours, friends etc. Work status (0.137) and educational level (0.170) of the aged persons

do not seem to correlate with health as much as found in similar studies. Notwithstanding the poor correlation with respect to work status and educational level, it stands true that being engaged in economic activities and having a higher level of education does help in maintaining good health after a person crosses 60 years.

It is observed that with respect to the incidence of chronic health problems, illness in the past year, fit habits and major life illness among the aged respondents, significant difference exists. However, no significant difference was found with respect to surgeries. Again, so far as the significant difference in the incidence of the selected major ailments is concerned, there are variations in certain aspects. Overall, physical health-wise, the aged persons of North Lakhimpur town seem to have an edge over their counterparts in Sivasagar. The reasons for this may lie in the sedentary lifestyles of the aged persons of Sivasagar. In contrast, most of the sample aged persons in North Lakhimpur are found to be either engaged in performing household tasks or in agricultural activities. The test results have shown significant difference between both the towns with respect to incidence of blood pressure and cardiac problems, but not much difference with respect to diabetes, kidney problem, thyroid and other ailments.

Those who are engaged in some or the other economic activity, have better health condition than those who are not earning. While the straightforward implication of this association between good health and economic activity is that the aged person has sufficient funds of his/her own to spend on health, the other plausible explanation might be the physical activity involved during working hours which also keeps them mentally fit.

Continuing participation in all-round activities which encompasses social, economic and community participation will lead to an aged person remaining "active" in the true sense (Kalache, 2009). Keeping physically fit regularly both by means of moderate physical exercise, yoga, walking, gardening as well as participating in household work will help in proper bodily and mental functioning.

## 9. CONCLUSION: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The deterioration in health as age increases is inevitable. But a socially, economically and physically active lifestyle can abate illnesses to a great extent. Whatever health differentials exist among the aged persons of North Lakhimpur and Sivasagar towns, are a pointer to that the abler aged persons must make an effort to remain active in order to lead a healthy life. At the same time, regular source of financial support is to be ensured. ■■

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## PATRIARCHY AND WOMAN IN FILMS

Jharna Dowerah

### ABSTRACT

*Due to its hierarchal structure, patriarchal system has come to be defined by many as a form of male dominance. Or, more specifically, an ideological structuring of society whereby certain members of the society believe themselves in positions of dominance over others. Patriarchy privileges men over women such that women have little or no claim to material, sexual or intellectual resources of the society. The patriarchal ideology legitimately portray women as being weak, domesticated and subservient. The ideology of patriarchy extends from the household into the film when the filmmakers started representing women according to the demand of the audience. The Indian society regards women as the epitome of respect, pride, honor and beauty. She is told to be always cheerful, kind, loving and efficient in the management of the household affairs. Hence, the Bollywood filmmakers leave no stone unturned to portray women in accordance to the demand of the patriarchal structures of the Indian society. The Indian cinema represents women in subordinate roles. The women are shown as having no sphere of their own. The women exist only in relation to the men. This paper attempts to analyse the complexities and ambiguities in the roles and position of women in a patriarchal set up in a few selected filmic text namely "Chup Chup Ke" and "Om Shanti Om."*

**KEYWORDS:** Patriarchy, Indian cinema, women characters, *Chup Chup Ke*, *Om Shanti Om*.

The term 'patriarchy' is derived from the Latin term 'pater' which means the rule by the father. So, patriarchy means a social system controlled by men, in which lineage is traced through males. Patriarchy describes the structuring of the society on the basis of family units, in which lineage is passed on from the fathers. Within the structure some

considers the father to have primary responsibility for the welfare of the family units. The concept of patriarchy is often used, by extension, to refer to the expectation that men take primary responsibility for structuring of society, acting as representatives via public office. Due to its hierarchal structure, patriarchal system has come to be defined by many as a form of male dominance. Or, more specifically, an ideological structuring of society whereby certain members of the society believe themselves in positions of dominance over others. Patriarchy privileges men over women such that women have little or no claim to material, sexual or intellectual resources of the society. Walby defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. In its wider definition, patriarchy, means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in the society in general. Individuals belonging to a certain cultural system, behave in accordance with social norms by fulfilling the rights and obligations accepted legitimate by the system. And the patriarchal social structure legitimates male domination over women, such that the actions of men are dominant over those of women. Patriarchal thinking shapes the values of one's culture. It socializes individual into its system such that both men and women participate in its value system.

Regarding the origin of patriarchy, traditionalist believe that men are born to dominate and women to be subordinate. The Greek philosopher Aristotle called males active and the females to be passive. For Aristotle, female is 'mutilated male', someone who does not have a soul. In his view the biological inferiority of woman makes her inferior in her capacities, her ability to reason and also in her ability to make decisions. For Sigmund Freud women's anatomy is her destiny. In his view the normal human was male. But the theories of male supremacy has been challenged and it has been proved that there is no historical or scientific evidence for such explanations. And no single explanation for the origin of patriarchy is accepted by all. Walby distinguishes two forms of patriarchy- private patriarchy and public patriarchy. Private

patriarchy is the domination of women which occurs within the household at the hands of an individual patriarch. On the other hand public patriarchy involves the domination in public realms, such as politics, economy, power and status. The circumstance of male dominance is reflected in correlative inequities throughout the society. The patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men have to play the dominant masculine roles and the women the feminine ones. Hence patriarchy is a system characterised by power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition. The system of patriarchy upholds the idea of natural superiority of male over female and women's dependence on and subordination to man in all spheres of life. According to *Advanced Learners Dictionary*, subordination means having less power or authority than somebody in a group or organisation. So, women's subordination means the inferior position of women to men. Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* remarks:

Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless, for atleast twenty years of their lives. (19)

In the above lines Wollstonecraft that every facet of the upbringing of the female makes them a passive agent, who is dependent on men. The socialization process also teaches them to be in a subordinate position and therefore she does not realise her potentialities. Moreover, the feeling of a sense of powerlessness, discrimination and limited self esteem contribute to the subordination of women. Hence, women's subordination is a situation, where a power relationship that exist and men dominate women. As such women are considered as weak and ungifted and hence in the need of man's protection and guidance. The subordination of women takes place in a number of ways- discrimination, disregard, control, exploitation, oppression, violence

and so on. The socialization process contributes to the preservation of the male supremacy in the patriarchal ideology. According to Connell, the process of socialization includes the learning of gender roles as well as the social roles. All the agents of the socialization process such as the family, religion, educational institutions, economy, politics, legal system and arts works to form the strong pillars of the patriarchal structure. It is in this context, noteworthy, to mention Kate Millet's view expressed in her book *Sexual Politics*-

That patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. As the fundamental instrument and the foundation unit of patriarchal society the family and its roles are prototypical. Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which its citizens through its family heads. (33).

Hence, we see how powerful is the structure of family is in upholding the patriarchal ideology. And it is within the structure of the patriarchal system where both men and women behave, think, act and aspire differently accordingly. So, one can see how meaning in the patriarchal structure becomes a function of power for the males. It is in the context of power and domination exercised over women, it is of utmost importance to mention Michel Foucault's idea regarding female sexuality and reproduction. For Foucault, female sexuality and reproduction deal with the cultural definitions of normal and abnormal behaviour regulating people's ideas about their bodies. Foucault argues that sexuality is a socio-cultural creation. It is the product of a particular set of historical circumstances. Supporting this view, Bartky(1977) observes that feminine body itself is a mark of inferiority. The feminine body discipline is deeply insidious with particular norms of diet,

exercise, movements, smiles, make-up, and skin care to render themselves as docile companions of men. As women have internalized the discipline and its conception of femininity. For Foucault, the female body seems to possess no specificity apart from the male norm. Women conform naturally and voluntarily to their long-term exposure, and the socialization process in their social setting. Patriarchy constrains women's thoughts, actions, choices and eventually, living in compliance with the patriarchal norms principle becomes normal for them.

So, the term patriarchy is not only a descriptive term that explains how different societies construct male authority and power, but also become an analytical category. The concept of patriarchy in fact facilitates the analysis of gender relations at the level of social structure and social system. The term 'gender' though often used as a synonym for anatomical sex, the more precise usage refers to the social roles and behaviours deemed appropriate for the sexes. Conventional accounts of gender have insisted on the idea that the differences between men and women are inevitable and that masculinity and femininity are natural. In *Gender and Power* (1987), *The Men and the Boys* (2001), and *Masculinities* (2005), Connell sets forth one of the most important theoretical accounts of gender, as he integrates the concept of patriarchy and masculinity into an overarching theory of gender relations. According to him, gender relations are the product of everyday interactions and practices. And that power in society operates through social relations such as authority, violence, and ideology in institutions, the state, military and domestic life. So, individuals in a group behave in accordance with the social norms by fulfilling the rights and obligations accepted legitimate by the system. And woman who is regarded as naturally inferior to man is accorded a subordinate position and denied autonomy depends on man's protection. According to Brain Martin masculinity is naturally seen to have dominance, confidence, strength, competition and rationality in contrast to femininity which is linked to submission, nurturing, caring, sensitive and over-emotional. And men are expected to exhibit masculine behaviour and women the

feminine ones. The ideas like wifehood and motherhood are glorified in the patriarchal system. The roles are granted social sanctions and one finds their echoes in art and literature and more profoundly in religion, so that women actively engage themselves in playing the social roles. And likewise contribute to their perpetuation of the patriarchal social order. Contemporary feminist theory begins with Simon de Beauvoir's argument that because men view women as fundamentally different from themselves therefore women are reduced to the status of the second sex. In her book *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir points out the fundamental asymmetry of the both the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine'. She beautifully relates in her text how masculinity is considered to be the norm or standard of humanity, and how woman is not regarded as an autonomous being- she is considered to be the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. De Beauvoir points out to an instance where Aristotle also remarked as to how a female is considered to be a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities. She argues in her book how men are able to mystify women to consider woman as the other. And how such mystification and stereotyping is instrumental in creating patriarchy. De Beauvoir's major insight is to throw light on the constructed nature of what a woman is. As she says: 'One is not born a woman but becomes one' (267). De Beauvoir's main thesis is that biological sex and social gender are not accidental but are constructed by the patriarchal ideology to keep the myth of woman as inferior 'Other' going. The feminist argues to the idea of natural inferiority and contends that gender is entirely a political construct, the content of which is radically contingent. Feminist theory argues the representation and misrepresentation of women as weak is rooted in the social conditions where she does not have power and has fewer political, economic and emotional rights and is therefore abused. Feminism explores the cultural dimension of woman's life. The theory argues that the inequalities that exist between men and women are not natural but social. They are not pre-ordained by nature rather created by men therefore they retain power. The ideas like wifehood and motherhood are glorified in the patriarchal system. The roles are

granted social sanctions and one finds their echoes in art and literature and more profoundly in religion, so that women actively engage themselves in playing the social roles. And likewise contribute to their perpetuation of the patriarchal social order. Kate Millet in her remarkable book *Sexual Politics*, posited that patriarchal power is all encompassing and omnipresent. In her book she sets to analyse patriarchy as a political institution. Millet argued that patriarchal society works to inculcate male supremacy through a variety of covert means- politically women have negligible representation; the biological sciences that legitimizes biased devotion and beliefs in female inferiority; and the social system particularly the family which firmly establishes social inequity in the private spheres. Millet believed that women are subjected to an artificially constructed idea of the feminine. And that women's oppression is achieved by a combination of physical violence and cultural pressure. And all the aspects of society and culture functions according to a sexual politics that encourages women to internalize their own inferiority. So patriarchy as an ideology interpellates women to play an active part of their own subordination, as they think they are naturally inferior to men. In the correlation to patriarchy as an ideology, Pam Morris in her book *Literature and Feminism*, has defined ideology in two definitions. The first is that ideology can refer to a consciously held system of beliefs which people knowingly choose or reject. And in the second use of it refers to the way how one perceives reality. So, it is the second use of the term which contributes to the belief of existing biological essentialism. Morris also adds that biological essentialism has been the base of societies across the globe to justify women's subordination. It is in this regard noteworthy to mention what Kate Millet observes in her *Sexual Politics*, that patriarchy is endemic in human social life, explicable or even inevitable on the grounds of human physiology (27). It is men and the patriarchal system that supports biological essentialism to oppress and discriminate women. The conventional gender ideologies insist that the source of gender is the subject herself. The conventional model proposes that the relationship between an individual and his/her gender is the casual

relation of substance to attribute- to be male or female. And the patriarchal ideology posit masculinity and femininity as ideals. Accordingly, the difference between the categories 'male' and 'female' is maintained by repressing differences within categories. Kate Millet in her famous book *Sexual Politics*, argues that sexual politics obtains consent through the socialization of both sexes to basic patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role, and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior status in the female(26). In patriarchy women is identified with nature and men with culture. Women are associated with the natural processes like childbirth, caretaker and caregiver. However, women's domestic sphere work to raise a family is not regarded as real work as compared to man's work which is termed as 'real' work by man. The way patriarchy works in Indian society and specifically in Hindu culture is through capitalist modes as it is deeply rooted in religion, tradition and the family structure. The patriarchal ideology legitimately portray women as being weak, domesticated and subservient. The ideology of patriarchy extends from the household into the film when the filmmakers started representing women according to the demand of the audience. The representation of women is often used as a selling point of the films. Woman are either represented as docile, domestic, honourable, noble and ideal- or as the other extreme as wayward, reckless and irresponsible. For instance, in the movie *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* we see the character of Tina ( Rani Mukherjee) who sings a bhajan despite her Western outlook in the ragging scene when she joins her father's college. The crowd is amazed to which Tina replies that she has respect for her roots and is proud of it. Hence, the patriarchal ideology concealing its relations is reproduced and maintained by means of religious doctrines and practices, social and domestic relations, textbooks and media. The ancient Indian text *Manusmriti* (also known as Manav Dharma Shastra ), a text of classical ethical codes of the Hindu religious faith which is central to the traditional beliefs brings together all the aspects of patriarchy. The Hindu apologist consider the Manusmriti as the divine code of conduct



for both men and women and accordingly the status of women as depicted in the text has been interpreted as Hindu divine law. According to one of the phrase in Manusmriti, 'Na Streeswathantryam Arhati' which means that women do not deserve independence. So, the text prescribes that women should not be given their individual autonomy. The text brings into light as to how women are equated with material goods with men in command of them. It describes how wise men should marry women with beautiful names, grace, soft limbs and small teeth and should not go for women with reddish hair, reluctant parts on her body, one without hair or excessive hair, or names which inspires terror. The text describes how girls are supposed to be in the custody of her husband as a child, and then under the custody of her husband when married, and under the custody of her son as widow. In no circumstance she is allowed to assert herself independently. The Indian society regards women as the epitome of respect, pride, honor and beauty. She is told to be always cheerful, kind, loving and efficient in the management of the household affairs. Hence, the Bollywood filmmakers leave no stone unturned to portray women in accordance to the demand of the patriarchal structures of the Indian society. The Indian cinema represents women in subordinate roles. The women are shown as having no sphere of their own. The women exist only in relation to the men. They go down in the collective memory as organic imperfections, and therefore should be handled with care by the male counterpart. The women are shown as repositories of community values. Women characters are perceived and presented as socially inferior beings. Because they are socially inferior, the female bonding is depicted as clearly distinct from female bonding. The stories played on the screen mostly deals with the male – their dreams, aspirations, conflicts and heroism. The women exist only in relation to men. The women characters as shown as divided amongst themselves. The harsh realities of life, perpetuated by the masculine world makes the women believe obedience is security and therefore right. She learns to be a good daughter, a good wife, a good mother, a good love interest, but never a free individual with her own world of interest. For instance in

the movie *Biwi No.1* (1999), by David Dhawan shows how the character of Prem's (Salman Khan) wife, Pooja (Karishma Kapoor) sacrifices her career to experience the domesticated bliss with her husband. And when the husband strays, it is the other women, Rupali (Susmita Sen) who is blamed for the same and is demonized all through the film. The husband is absolved of adultery and finally returns to his legitimate partner. The title of the movie is significant because the wife is successful in bringing the husband back to the domestic arena which is seen as the victory of the wife over the mistress. Hence, one sees how the Bollywood movies revolves around the themes concerning the family, marriage, ideal wife, mother and daughter associated with the women characters, which has a strong appeal in the patriarchal social structure. It is in this light one can mention the movie *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1995), which has been a box office hit and the story has been a box office hit. The plot of the movie revolves around family values that are centred around the Hindu joint family structure, its teaching and sacrifice. The plot of the movie centres around two families namely Kailashnath's family and Chaudhury's family. Both the families are shown to be family friends who meet after several years and arrange a marriage between Kailashnath's son Rajesh (Monish Bahl) and Professor Chaudhury's daughter Pooja (Renuka Shahane). Interestingly Rajesh has a younger brother Prem (Salman Khan) and Pooja has a younger sister Nisha (Madhuri Dixit). From the first meeting onwards Nisha and Prem has fallen in love with one another. Pooja learns that Prem and Nisha are in love and gives a necklace as a token promising to get them married. Shortly afterwards, Pooja accidentally falls down from the staircases and dies from a head injury. After the tragic incident Nisha is seen to take good care of her dead sister's son, which makes both the family feel that she would be a good mother to her sister's baby. They decide to have Nisha marry Rajesh. Prem and Nisha vows to sacrifice their love for the baby. But when Rajesh realises that Prem and Nisha love each other, he halts the wedding and paves way for Prem and Nisha's wedding with the consent of their families. Thus, we see the idea of the archetypal motherhood has been a

cherished theme for Bollywood. The female characters in Bollywood are portrayed as controlled, chaste, surrendering individual who leave no stone unturned to make sacrifices for the family. In a research work on 'Cinema and Society: Reflection of Patriarchal Values in selected Hindi Blockbusters' the researcher, Mukta Chakravorty tried to study the relationship between patriarchal values and popular cinema and how such values get reinforced through the medium of cinema. Though each phase of Hindi cinema has its own representation of women, but they confined to the patriarchal framework. So, women are seen on screen as upholders of tradition, family values, depriving them from any sense of power and agency.

This paper makes an attempt to analyse the complexities and ambiguities in the roles and position of women in a patriarchal set up in a few selected filmic text namely *Chup Chup Ke* and *Om Shanti Om*. It would look into the language employed to the female agents to unravel the patriarchal hegemony. Language according to the Feminist critics like Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray is the most important form of covert politics used by the power structure that governs the society. Language, as a system of the meaning-making process is responsible for the perpetuation of the patriarchal ideology. It is seen that the patriarchal order takes different forms and is represented with varying degree of emphasis throughout the Bollywood movies. The movie *Chup Chup Ke* (2006), on the surface level is a romantic comedy, but on a deeper analysis one finds the undercurrents of the patriarchal ideology. The movie opens with the protagonist Jeetu (Sahid Kapoor), who is seen running away from all the people to whom he owes money. Jeetu feels himself to be a burden to his father and the entire family and secretly plans to kill himself. He thinks that by killing himself, he can free himself and the entire family who can use the money from his life insurance to pay off his debts. The first instance of the patriarchal element is found when his family thought Jeetu to be no more and his father recollects some past incident of how he scolded his son. Jeetu's father described how Jeetu is causing a lot of problem to his family, his family which has four members – Jeetu's father, mother, elder sister

and Jeetu. His father expresses how he is already worried about his unmarried daughter. This shows the general attitude of the parents living under the patriarchal structure, is seen to constantly live under pressure as soon as the girl child attains a particular age. The reason of their tension basically stems from their attempt to find a suitable bridegroom for their girl. In the next scene we find the character of Pooja (Sushma Reddy), as Jeetu's fiancé, lamenting at the news of Jeetu's death. Pooja's narrative agency is important to analyse the semiotic codes within the symbolic order of the patriarchal ideology. Pooja recollects how she and Jeetu used to meet one another to exchange their ideas and how Jeetu shared all his problems with her. She recalls how Jeetu told her once that he is not prepared for their marriage as he owes a huge sum of money to many money lenders, and how she, as a fiancé with Indian roots is ready to wait for him no matter how much time he needs. This shows the loyalty of the women to their male counterpart. The plot of the movie becomes more interesting as Jeetu's plan does not work and he is found tangled in the nets of the fisherman Gundya (Paresh Rawal) and Bandya (Rajpal Yadav) who saves his life by taking him to the hospital. Gundya, who owes money to a Gujrati businessman, Prabhat Singh Chauhan (Om Puri), seems to be worried thinking out ways of how he would be able to return the money he owes to Prabhat. And is relieved when Bandya, misinterprets the piece of paper which he finds in Jeetu's pocket and thinks Jeetu to be a rich man. Bandya also tells Gundya that Jeetu is deaf and dumb. When Jeetu realises, he pretends to be the same, for he does not want to reveal much. There comes an interesting twist in the plot when Prabhat asks Gundya to keep something in order to take away Gundya's boat. It is at that moment Gundya decides to leave both Jeetu and Bandya at Prabhat's place. Soon, it is revealed that Prabhat's niece Shruti (Kareena Kapoor) is also dumb. Shruti develops a warm feeling for Jeetu when Meenakshi (Neha Dhupia) tells Shruti that Jeetu is deaf as well as dumb. The audience is then introduced to the character of Mangal (Sunil Shetty), as Shruti's brother in the words of Prabhat who says that the family would always

follow Mangal's decision. Mangal who wants his sister to get married. However, one finds how the bridegroom's family rejected to accept Shruti as their daughter-in-law on the ground that she is dumb. But the irony is that Mangal is ready to give his sister's hand in Jeetu's hand even after knowing very well that Jeetu is mute and deaf (as Jeetu pretends to be). This shows the sexist attitude that is prevalent in the patriarchal system. It shows how the patriarchal system has different sets of rules and regulations to judge the 'male' and 'female'. It is conducted in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all the domains. Another instance where one finds the undercurrents of the patriarchal ideology is in the conversation between Jeetu's father and Pooja. The conversation between them follows as-

Jeetu's father- *Ab yaha reh kar kya karoge?...Tumhari toh saare zindagi pari hain.*

The English translation as- What will you do by staying over here...your whole life is in front of you.

Pooja- *Sawal sirf ek mangal sutra ki hi toh hein...jo usne mere gaalein mein nehi bandha...warna meh toh uski kit hi...baachpaan se.*

The line translated as- The question is only about the necklodge...which he has not put around my neck...or else I was only his... right from childhood days.

Jeetu's father- *Jo huwa so bhul jao sab kuch.*

The lines translated as- Whatever has happened has happened...do forget everything.

Pooja- *Aisa nehi hein ki maine koshis nehi ki...par ho nehi pa raha hein...Eish sareer se mera jaan ja sakti hein...lekin Jeet ki yaadein nehi.*

The above lines translated as – It's not like that, that I have not tried...but its not possible...my soul can be liberated from my body...but not the thoughts of Jeetu.

Jeetu's father- *Lekin tumhe apni zindagi jine ki adhikar hein.*

The line translated as- But!...you also have the right to live your life in your own terms.

Pooja- *Kam se kam...mujhe itna adhikar toh dijiye ki mein Jeet ki bidwah baan ke ji saku...yehi mera such hein...ki mein Jeet ki bidwah hu.*

The lines translated in English as- Please father! Do give me the right to live as Jeet's widow...This is the way I find happiness..that I am Jeetu's widow.

And by uttering these words Pooja is seen to go inside the house. The conversation between both of them shows how Pooja perceives her life. The way she dresses herself in complete white colour is another symbol of the prevailing of the patriarchal structure. The patriarchal structure which have its own tenets of belief and ideas. It shows how the idea of tradition and convention is associated with the idea of the women. And the way women are associated with all sorts of cultural baggage, that they become the stems of culture. So much so that even the institution of marriage is introduced to maintain the integrity of a community. And the system of patriarchy interpellates women in such a way that living in compliance with the patriarchal norms and principles becomes normal for them. Pooja's, voluntarily action of accepting her position as Jeetu's widow willingly shows the way patriarchy assigns 'gender' a particular socio-cultural meaning. Another instance of the patriarchal ideology is the seen the moment when Mangal beats Jeetu as he reveals his true identity and Shruti immediately runs to the prayer hall and kneels down in front of the altar and prays to God, by lighting a candle in the palm of her hand to save Jeetu. This shows how the women are devoted and loyal to their men, that they would not care to sacrifice their own life in order to save the life of their men. The climax of the movie is when Jeetu even after knowing very well about Pooja's presence in his life agrees to marry Shruti, but his family intrude on the marriage. His mother and father along with Pooja's father asks him to return back to Pooja, who has lived all her life as Jeetu's widow. But when Pooja learns that Shruti is dumb, she asks Jeetu to marry Shruti. Pooja says to Jeetu-

Pooja- Agar tum ush bejubaa ko ek zindagi dogein...toh mere dil mein tumhare liye aur izzat, aru maan bardh jayeega... yeih mein saachi dil se keh rahi hoo.

The above lines translated as- If you can give life to the dumb girl...then I will have more respect and prestige for you in my heart...I am saying this from the depth of my heart. Thus, we see how the women thinks that it is after all men who can give them life. She thinks herself to be the 'other' and thereby derogate her own sex and co-operate in her own subordination. Such portrayals of women characters on the celluloid hinders them to bring them out as independent human beings with their own substance. Thus, this is how patriarchy hinders women from realising their possibilities. The movie *Om Shanti Om*, is divided into two parts – Part one takes place 30years ago( the 1970's) and 30years later (2007). The title of the movie refers to the main characters. The story focuses on Om's (Sharukh Khan) love, his reincarnation and his revenge on Mukesh ( Arjun Rampal). The movie begins with Om's dream to win his lady love Shantipriya ( Deepika Padukone) and to be a star. But as soon as he learns that Shantipriya is secretly married to the film producer Mukesh Mehra, who subsequently kills her, because he does not want the news of their marriage to become public, fearing it might adversely affect his career. Om, unable to rescue her, also dies as he is suddenly hit by a speeding car of the star Rajesh Kapoor, who is seen in a hurry taking his pregnant wife Lovely to the hospital. What is important is the element of patriarchy embedded in Mukesh's language and action. The very act of Mukesh locking up Shantipriya in the set can be read as an act of physical power enjoyed by man over woman, as woman in society is believed to be physically inferior to man. The next instance of patriarchal structure is visible when Mukesh vocabulary. When Shanti learns from a magazine that Mukesh is going to marry Harsh Mittal's daughter she becomes upset and in a rage questions Mukesh as to how he would marry Mittal's daughter as he has already married her. At such utterances Mukesh asks Shanti to be quite-

*Koi sun lega toh!*

The above line translated as-

Be quite! If anybody gets to hear it.

At such inability of Mukesh to understand her, Shantipriya recalls how she has been secretly married to Mukesh. She relates-

*Do saal ho gaya. hamarein shadi ko. aru char logo ki beech tumhare baath nehi pakar sakti... mang mein ek chutki sindoor nehi bhar sakti...mere liye ek shutki sindoor ki kimat toh us Mittal ke caalish lakh se toh kayee zada hein.*

The lines translated in English as-

We have been married for two years now...But I can't be acknowledged as your wife in public. All I want is to be accepted as your wife.

In the above lines Shantipriya is seen to crave for the recognition by the society as Mukesh's wife. She says that she does not care for Harsh Mittal and his forty lakhs of rupees which he has invested on the project of the movie *Om Shanti Om*, all she wants in her life is to have the bliss of a wife. It is at this instance, Mukesh is seen to care little for Santipriya's feelings and thinks only about his business which could be understood from his words, as he says-

*Tumhari is ek chutki sindoor ki kimat mein tumhe batata hu... Jis din tum yeh ek chutki sindoor dalkar bahaar niklogi...Om Shanti Om, bandh ho jayega... kyon ki ek shadi shuda heroine ke film ke liye koi mujhe ek juti kori nehi dega...tumhari ek chutki sindoor sab khatam kar degi Shanti...tumhara career...mera future.*

The above lines translated as-

Let me tell you something Shanti. The day you will step out of the house as my wife...*Om Shanti Om* will be finished!... Because no one will invest a single penny in a married heroine's film! Everything will be doomed! Not only your career, but my future as well.

So, we see how the patriarchal society which has its own standards of making judgement on the women characters even in the celluloid.

The patriarchal notions are visible even in Shantipriya's vocabulary. During the premiere of *Dreamy Girl*, the stars at the hall, including Om and Pappu, who manages to get the passes are seen to watch the actor of the movie declaim with fervour-

*Ek chutki sindor ki keemat tum kya jaano Ramesh babu? Ishwar ka aashirbaad hota hai ek chutki sindoor! Subhaagan ke sar ka taj hota hai ek chutki sindoor! Har aurat ka khwaab hota hai, ek chutki sindoor!*

Shantipriya's lines translated as-

What would you know about the value of a pinch of vermillion, Ramesh babu? A pinch of vermillion is the blessing of God! A pinch of vermillion is the glory of a married woman! A pinch of vermillion is the dream of every woman.

Hence, the term 'ek chutki sindoor' literally means a pinch of red powder that a married Indian (Hindu) woman wears on her hairline to announce her social status as wife. Pushpa, the character played by Shantipriya in the movie *Dreamy Girl*, tells Ramesh babu that he cannot appreciate the importance of 'sindoor' in a woman's life. Her passionate speech shows the social significance of marriage in the Indian context. How marriage is regarded as a religious rite and the image of woman as 'Sati-Sawitri' has been constantly evoked in films. The institution of marriage has become the be-all and end-all for women in movies. The films like *Dabej*(1950), *Gauri*(1968), *Devi*(1970), *Biwi ho toh Aisi*(1988), *Pati Parmeshwar*(1988), amongst others represented women as passive, submissive wives as perfect figures and martyrs for their own families. In these films, we find how the patriarchal ideology works on to showcase women as sacrificial lambs of depression. What is noteworthy to mention is to draw the parallel between Shantipriya and the character Puspa, played by Shantipriya in the movie *Dreamy Girl*, on account of her feelings and belief on the symbol of 'sindoor'. Shantipriya who is secretly married to Mukesh Mehra, a terribly ambitious film producer asks him to announce their marriage publicly as she is pregnant. But the irony is that Shantipriya's insistence on being publicly acknowledged as the wife of Mukesh Mehra by wearing

'ek chutki sindoor', proclaiming her married status to the world ultimately leads to her murder by her unscrupulous husband. The second half of the movie starts after a span of thirty years, when Om has been reincarnated as OK. OK is a star and happens to meet Mukesh at a party and decides to make a film with him according to his plan to avenge Shantipriya. To his surprise OK meets Sandy (one with the same looks as Shantipriya) on the day of audition and make up his mind to fit in Sandy to avenge Santipriya. The plan of OK works and he finds Mukesh in a disturbed state of mind, but at the climax Mukesh reveals to know everything and OK realising the gravity of the situation tries to warn Sandy not to make her presence in front of Mukesh, as Mukesh might cause harm to Sandy. But in the final instance the actual ghost of Shantipriya appears and kills Mukesh by dropping a chandelier on him. The ghost of Shantipriya disappears with a thankful look on OK. However the irony lies in the fact that Shantipriya's revenge could be made possible only with OK's help. So, the undercurrents of the patriarchal layers is present from the very opening scene to the end as it shows how a woman is not complete in herself as an individual all through her life nor after her death. And that she would always need a man by her side who would be her saviour.

Thus, from the analysis of the two movies selected for the study it can be drawn how the patriarchal structure continuously reinforces the point of view of the males at the cost of the female viewpoint. The way women have been subservient to their male counterparts and the manner in which the images of woman as devoted wife, sacrificing mother and dutiful daughters has been drilled into the psyche of the Indian women that the women themselves have started believing in this 'self-portrait'. ■■

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## ROLE OF WOMEN SAINTS IN THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEERA BAI

Angshumalee Dutta

### ABSTRACT

*The women saints do not find mention in the traditional historiography or court biographies. Information about them has largely been reconstructed from the writings of the emergent middle class. There were certain legendary women figures in the Indian culture that were perceived as ideals by the women. Lalded of Kashmir, Mahadevi Yakka, Babinabai, Muktabai, Meera Bai are some of such women saints from medieval period of the Indian history. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the role played by the women bhakats (saints) of medieval India in the bhakti movement. A special reference to Meera Bai has also been made. The methodology of the paper is both descriptive and analytical. The article is based only on secondary sources.*

**KEYWORDS:** Bhakti Movement, women saints, medieval India, Meera Bai

Women, in early medieval India, had a deep ideological and intellectual impact upon society and culture. There have been some eighty women saints in medieval India, namely, Lalded of Kashmir, Mahadevi Yakka, Bahinabai, Muktabai, Meera Bai and so on and so forth. These women expressed their right to life as they understood it. Meera, Mahadevi Yakka, etc. renounced the traditional role of mothers, daughters, wives and sisters and openly spoke about controversial, caste-debatable issues, including those of love, desire and sexuality. Caste-hierarchy, tradition, patriarchal social structure, multifarious social

practices, customs, etc. were mainly responsible for the emergence of women Saints in Medieval India. They played an active role for the spread of Bhakti cult in India.

In this article, an attempt has been made to highlight the role played by the women bhakats (saints) of medieval India in the bhakti movement. A special reference to Meera Bai has also been made. The methodology of the paper is both descriptive and analytical. The article is based only on secondary sources.

The idea that honour of men lies in their women and can be violated by their conduct is widespread in human societies. In the Indian society, this mindset evolved over a period of centuries and resulted in a different paradigm of honour for women.

Bhainabai was a woman saint whose deviance is manifested not so much in her autobiography (*Atmanividana*), and her bhajans as in her spiritual calling. Bahina, a Brahman woman, defied all caste and gender norms by attending the spiritual congregations of the Shudra saint Tukaram, whom she accepted as her guru.

Vinabai, who headed the mutt at Mirajal, was the chief disciple of Ramdas. Vinabai was expected to conform to the harsh life imposed upon the Brahmin windows, instead of which she chose to be a disciple of Ramdas. Her parents punished her by giving her a poisoned drink. She was saved due to the miraculous intervention of Ramdas.

Women like Mahadevi Yakka and Lalded of Kashmir chose to walkout of marriage as they had initially accepted the yolk of marriage. Therefore, it would be logical to talk of women with fatally divided loyalties, split between social conformism and deviant rebelliousness. Mahadevi Yakka scorned King Kaushika's sexual advanced towards her by walking out of the King's place in nudity with her long hair as her only covering. She declared her mystic union with Shiva in full presence of the Lingayat Spiritual Council. Mahadevi Yakka, Bahinabai and Meera had to face much humiliation and humility.

The Rajput period in Indian history represents the interlude which evolved beliefs and practices that endowed a distinctive

character to female honour which linked the purity and honour of the clan – itself with women's sexuality. Meera was condemned by the feudal society for such acts of deviation. Yet, Meera still remains honoured and revered and till date survives in the cultural consciousness of the people. In the Rajput culture, especially in Mewar, restrictions on women's movement were particularly stringent. Their contact and communication with the outside world was strictly monitored and restricted.

Meera is perhaps the best known women poet within the Bhakti tradition. Singing her bhajans or devotion to her never implied an attempt to subvert or challenge the Rajput dominance. It was the natural attraction towards Meera's intense Krishna bhakti that drew people to her. Biographies have been reconstructed primarily from the bhajans attributed to her, which were transmitted orally for centuries. According to some tradition, Meera was a Rajput princess from Merta in Mewar, Rajasthan. She was married against her wishes to a prince of Sisodia clan of Mewar, who was married against her wishes to a prince of Sisodia clan of Mewar, Rajasthan. She did not submit to the traditional role of wife and mother, and instead choose Lord Krishna as her lover. Her in-laws tried to poison her but she escaped from the palace to live as nomadic, wondering singer who came to be best known for the emotional intensity of her musical compositions. Meera broke clan and caste boundries when she became a disciple of Raidas, a chamar (leather worker) saint. As she intermingled freely with the saint community, she transcended the class and caste boundries.

Vijaya Ramswami suggested that Meera Bai was a rebel, since she was vocal about her Krishna – bhakti and largely associated herself with the low caste people. On the other hand, some historians are of the view that she was not a rebellious woman in any sense of the term as she did not challenge the social order. However, Meera was extremely a self-styled and unconventional woman. It is noteworthy that even now the singing of her songs (bhajans) is not encouraged. Although Meera Bai did not attract a sect or a group of followers, she has been recognised as a source of inspiration for centuries. Her songs are still sung by the poor and the low caste people, especially in Gujarat and

Rajasthan. Meera describes herself in one of her verses as a fish out of water, deprived of the sight of the beloved, a lonely and a lost soul.

The lyrical musical quality of Meera's composition is well articulated in folk as well as in classical music. Prominent male as well as female singers from both the genre have sung Meera's bhajans and have received popular acclaim – some of the well known names are Subhalakshmi, Lata Mangeshkar and Anoop Jalota. Meera's verses still survive as delightful bhajans recorded and available in cassettes and discs. Meera's spiritual experiences were a process of empowerment which endowed her with reservoirs of indomitable inner strength, self confidence and determination to transcend worldly impositions. Her acquaintance with music and dance gave her songs a divine fervour. Unlike other male saints (who refer to a conscious process of self control in their poems), Meera's bhakti has been defined as "*natural, spontaneous and so strong that it enables her to break all bonds and confront all oppositions. Meera owes her survival in the cultural consciousness of the people, to the verses composed by her. Her name is on almost every Indian lips.*"

Patriarchy has always made a great virtue of domestic drudgery for women. Thus, the achievements of a woman outside the household have always been trivialised. Most women saints cast themselves as the brides of the Lord. The result was an inability to reconcile an intense love for God with the sense of duty for a spouse. Crushed and confident to different domestic situation, these women found an alternative possibility in their devotion. Renouncing marriage and life in the world generally, they redirected their passion to a heavenly consort. The Bhakti movement tried to restore the women status and questioned certain forms of oppression. The women saints of the Bhakti movement advocated openly social justice and equality between men and women.

The women saints do not find mention in the traditional historiography or court biographies. Information about them has largely been reconstructed from the writings of the emergent middle class.

Vijaya Ramaswamy is of the view that, "*In modern India, the rebel women saints are by and large as much accepted as revered or as conformists. This may be the result of subtle efforts made by the religious orthodoxy to institutionalise them so that their radicalism got neutralised and they did not appear as a potential alternative to the existing model for the women.*"

There were certain legendary women figures in the Indian culture that were perceived as ideals by the women. Meera became the most pervasive ideal in the ascetic and devotional tradition. Her symbolic significance in the Indian culture, especially for women, has been unparalleled. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, has defined Meera as a 'paramount satyagrahi'. He raised Meera to the status of a venerable national symbol worth emulating by women.

To conclude, in the context of gender construction, certain unusual and positive aspects of the cultural heritage of the state are completely overlooked. Beyond historical construction, distinctive paradigm has been formulated around Meera's personality and her archetypal characters have become proverbial in the Indian society. In fact, many legendary stories associated with gender construction in the Indian culture can be traced to saint Meera. ■■

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# CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE ISSUE OF D VOTERS IN ASSAM

Priyanka Gogoi

## ABSTRACT

The Bengali speaking Muslim minorities of contemporary Assam have been suffering in identity crisis and the feeling of insecurity, which seem to be the enduring source of genocidal impulses in some particular places of Assam. Identity and population politics based on the notions of ethnic, religious and linguistic markers have mobilised specific equations of belonging on the matrix of the border fence, citizenship and the new category of D-Voters, which was introduced to identify citizens perceived to as Dubious or doubtful citizens, all of which have come to embody a specific form of genocidal violence in contemporary period of Assam. D-Voter is disfranchisement of persons after their citizenship were found doubtful, and they have to appear before Foreigner's Tribunal with relevant documents to prove that they are actually Indian citizens. This study seeks to examine the trends, pattern, processes and scale of migration and demographic changes in Assam and will try to explore various needs and challenges faced by the D-voters. It will examine the electoral implications and challenges of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam where illegal immigration has become a major challenge in Assam. This paper will explore how the tripartite matrix of citizenship, illegal immigrants, D-Voters categories have become indispensable in inscribing fear, insecurity and anxiety in Assam's body politic. Using the insight from citizenship issue, this study will show that in the present era the burden of 'proof' on D-Voters in Assam has become a major challenge and the state suffers from a persistent neurosis, characterised by an 'incompleteness - anxiety'. Further this study will elaborate upon the integration of D-Voters with reference to identity politics, illegal immigrants, Bengali speaking Muslims, Hindu Bangladeshi issue, Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016 and the final updation of NRC in Assam. It will point out the solutions for exploring the D-

Voter's names as an Indian citizen in the NRC of Assam and will analyse the identity, population politics and integration of these people in the final updation of NRC in which the present Government's role can act as a bridge between the D-Voters and their issues of integration which will have an impact upon the socio-political status of Assam. Therefore this study will try to find out some solutions of their needs and problems and will examine about the role and attitude of present Government towards this issue. The so-called D-Voter issue is still in discussion for its controversial phenomenon which has hampered the latest updation of NRC in Assam.

**KEYWORDS:** Human Right, D-Voter, NRC, Hindu Bangladeshi

## INTRODUCTION:

Citizenship is one of theseveral enlightenment concepts that together produces the moral and political rationale for the modern nation state. Claims about citizenship, democracy, human rights and governance are today at the centre of debate about political hegemony, regime change, public opinion, voting rights and behavior of people. This paper seeks to look into the aspects and issues of citizenship of Assam and the problems and issues of D-Voters and their identities. It provides an analysis of the concept of citizenship and its different theories and dimensions, based on the concept of Human Rights, liberty and nationhood. The basic issue of this study is based on deportation movement of Assam and the creation of D-Voters and the problems of NRC Updation in Assam. Fear, insecurity and anxiety seem to be the enduring sources of genocidal impulses against the Bengali speaking muslim minorities of contemporary Assam. This paper will show how big is the burden of proof on D-voters in Assam and how the state suffers from an "incompleteness-anxiety" and how attempts have been made to resolve this sense of crisis by mobilizing the D-voters to align their identity in the direction of an imagined purified "National whole".

The concept of citizenship is composed of three major elements or dimensions (Cohen 1999; Kymlicka and Norman 2000; Carens 2000).

The first is citizenship as legal status, defined by civil, political and social rights. Here, the citizen is the legal person free to act according to the law and having the right to claim the laws protection. The second considers citizens specifically as a political agent, actively participating in a society's political institution. The third refers to citizenship as membership to a political community that furnishes a distinct sources of identity.

D-Voters which are referred to as Dubious voter or Doubtful voter is a category of voters in Assam who are disenfranchised by the Govt on the account of their alleged lack of proper citizenship credentials. The D-Voters are determined by special tribunals under the Foreigner's Act, and the person declared as D- Voter is not given the elector's photo identity card. In 2011, Gauhati High Court ordered the D-Voters to be transferred Foreigners Tribunal set up under Foreigner Tribunal order 1964 and be kept in detention camps. The Bengali Hindus who migrated from East Pakistan and Bangladesh before and after 1971 are mostly affected by the categorization. According to Sudip Sarma, the Publicity Secretary of the Assam unit of the Nikhil Bharat Bengali UdbastuSamanway Samiti, there are 6 lakh Bengali Hindu D-Voters in the state. D-Voter is a category of voters who are suspected to be foreigners i.e Bangladeshis illegally residing in Assam. All their citizenship rights, entitlements and privileges as an Indian are withheld until they prove their claim of being an Indian.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

During British period the province of Assam was organized for the first time including a part of East Bengal. The Ahom Kingdom existed only in the extreme eastern part of Assam. The remaining parts were Koch-Kochari and Chutia kingdoms and part of East Bengal. The people who inhabited in those parts can never be called immigrant by virtue of their inclusion with in the province of Assam. Subsequently the Colonial Government encouraged immigration of Bengali Hindus to serve the

administration , Hindi speaking Tea Labours from Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh etc. and Bengali speaking muslims from East Bengal for cultivation of land. Such migration was almost completed up to 1942 and thereafter the same stopped due to resentment of local people followed by steps taken by the government itself for preventing the same and undertaking eviction operation.

After thepartition there was the influx of Bengali Hindus refugees from East Pakistan. The Union Government enforced the policy of driving out the Muslims and settling the Hindu refugees in the land left by the Muslims which was ofcourse strongly opposed by former chief Minister of Assam Sri Gopinath Bordoloi and BishnuramMedhi. Later on the union government introduced the notorious PIP (Pakistani Infiltration Project) scheme and drove out more than 6 lakhs of Muslims from Assam arbitrarily raising the question of their integrity and citing the question of "national security" ,particularly after the Chinese aggression. During the Language movement of 1960 and medium movement of 1972, the Muslim population of Assam whole heartedly supported the local Assamese people and opted for Assamese as their mother tongue and medium of instruction.

The historical Assam movement were initially started against outsiders ,particularly against the big capitalists coming from outside Assam,Tea garden owners and traders. Immediately, thereafter communalist forces and administrative tactical under RSS influence gave political colour to the movement and diverted the same against the Muslim immigrants. Thethen ruling party in the centre under the leadership of Indira Gandhi either failed to diagnose the causes or under influence of RSS with her second coming to power deliberately allowed this to happen. However the Muslim intelligentsia of Assam, concerned by caucus of political touts failed to take the right course and only continued to raise hue and cry without any determined destination. The situation has been raised to the stage as it is today.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

To reach at the above goals, emphasis will be given on the following objectives:-

1. To study about the problems and challenges faced by the D-Voters in the context of National Register of Citizens (NRC).
2. To analyze about the insecurity and anxiety of the D-Voters.
3. To examine trends, pattern, processes and scale of migration and demographic change in Assam.
4. To determine the political, social, economic and environmental impact of the migration on Assam.
5. To investigate the reasons for their inclusion into the list of D-Voters.
6. To study about the Human Right issues.

This paper has addressed various issues relating to “D” voters and citizenship and thereby try to explain a little experience about the intricacies, complications of the proceedings and human problems. It is also often become puzzled with the situation when so many persons came up with hue and cry that they have been declared foreigners disbelieving their evidence holding a view that the documents, voter lists produced by them contains discrepancies in name, title and age and also ignoring the fact that they are residing in this part of land since time immemorial through their forefathers. Admittedly, the voter - lists are prepared by the State agencies and the process of preparing the voter list is a hectic work done in casual manner without door to door visit rather sitting in one side of the village and often without hearing the person (voter) concern and there was no such developed system to make a error free voter list immediately after independence. The illiterate, poor, backward who are living in extreme humiliating condition and below poverty line cannot be vigilant over the errors in the voter-lists. These aspects of matter is simply ignored taking a technical stand that u/s 9 of the

foreigners act, 1946, the burden of proof is on the victim (proceedee) and as the proceedees come up with haphazard evidence and having unexplained discrepancies in their documents no wrong can be attributed to the Tribunal for declaring them as foreigners. Consequently, huge number of people are likely to be made stateless citizen without any right as a citizen. It indicates wrong message to the humanity and human civilization. This issue may be dealt with human approach and there is urgent need to communicate this message to the people as a whole.

In 1997, the Election Commission (EC) identified several hundred thousand people as D-Voters, most of them were Muslims, but it also included Bengali Hindus, Koch Rajbangshis, Nepalis and others. There are 10 Tribunals and thousands of such voters placed under the scanner of the Foreigner’s Tribunal (FT). The process of identifying D-Voters came into being after a huge political mobilization led All Assam Students Union (AASU) and other nationalist organization. Weak claims by the lawyers of the defendant can have people fall under the category. In 1997, the Election Commission of India identified a section of Muslims living in the Char Chapori areas of Assam, linguistic Hindu minorities and even the Rajbangshi people of the state as D-Voters. According to data provided in the 126 members of Assam Assembly in February this year, the state now has 1,25,333 D-Voters and there are only 100 FT, across Assam to cater to them. An independent lawyer of Guwahati High court ‘Aman Wadud’ said, ‘The Election Commission marked people as D-Voters without any prior investigation. The trend begun in 1997 when about 3.5 lakhs people were marked as D-Voters- about 2 lakhs Bengali Hindus and rest Muslims. Several people have still not received the notice. For some it took 5 years, and for the others, the notice took 2 decades to arrive.’ The future road map is not clear. Their names will be kept on hold for now and it is a long process. D-Voters are debarred from voting till the court clear their names in the Foreigner’s Tribunal. In the Foreigner Tribunal of the Goalpara District, against 22000 D-voters cases only 600 have been settled till date.

All these points made above may lead this study to think that the D-Voter is a big issue of Citizenship Amendment Bill ,2016 of Assam, which creates fear, insecurity and anxiety among the D-Voters and sometimes these people have committed suicide for their mental harassment, anxiety and insecurity about future. This study will try to explore the political, social, economic and environmental problems of this issue and will investigate the reasons for the inclusion of their names as a D-Voter. It will basically focus on Human Rights issue and the future possibilities of these victimized people. It is a big burden on these people to prove themselves as Indians. This paper is an attempt to find out some solutions of their needs and problems and will examine about the role and attitude of present Government towards this issue. The so called D-Voter issue is still in discussion for its controversial phenomenon which has hampered the latest updation of NRC in Assam.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

This study combines a methodology with a collection of specific practices, techniques and strategies (method of inquiry) to analyze various aspects of D-Voters in Assam.

A major challenge of this study is to gather reliable data. D-Voter issue of Assam has become a highly charged political, social and divisive issues not only at the state and federal level but also at the international level. This study is based on a mixed methodology which combine both qualitative and quantitative methods. Sources of data have been collected from field surveys among D-Voters in particular locations in Assam using a specially developed and structured questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected from public domain, such as Government census records, statistical records, journals, publications, activities, newspapers etc and interpreted. Both quantitative and qualitative data has been analysed, compared and incorporated to obtain valid conclusion.

#### **RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY:**

D-Voter is disfranchisement of persons after their citizenship were found doubtful, and they have to appear before Foreigner's

Tribunal with relevant documents to prove that they are actually Indian citizens. Till that is done, their names are deleted from electoral rolls and cannot exercise their franchise. An estimated 2,44,144 D-Voter cases were referred to the Tribunals. But over the years, the number has come down to 1,25,333 D-voters with over 60,000 of them were found to be Indian citizens. Now it has become a big burden of proof on the D-Voters. Many a times people are found to have suffered mentally and economically which creates fear, insecurity and anxiety among them. People belonging to Islam religion don't know why they are tagged as D-Voter despite of having NRC legacy data. Muslim minority people become a victim of bureaucratic red tape when they go to the Foreigners' Tribunal to check the status of their complain. The Election Commission has marked some people as D-Voters without any prior investigation. Recently a marginal farmer Gopal Das (62) of Nichlamari in Assam's Udalguri District, committed suicide after being unable to bear the financial burden to get free from the D-Voter tag. This study will try to explore various needs and challenges faced by the D-voters. It will examine the electoral implications and challenges of NRC in Assam where illegal immigration has become a major challenge in contemporary period of Assam. Again this paper seek to personify various roles and attitude of present Government in a betterhood study. In the present day context, it is a major electoral issue of Assam which creates several socio-political and socio-economic problems in Assam.

Now, the basic question which have cropped up during the last 70 years can be formulated in two categories and can be addressed even now. Firstly, whether the leaders of the society have been able to show the correct picture about the multidimensional picture of the problem to the nation and particularly to the indigenous Assamese people. Secondly, whether the immigrant Muslims of Assam who are the worst victims of the problem have been able to make them believable and tolerable to the indigenous Assamese people or make them indispensable for them. Surely, we could not do so. ■■

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# THE EXOTIC AND THE OTHER: A POST-COLONIAL RE-READING OF SHAKESPEARE'S ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Patrika Handique

## ABSTRACT

The proclamation of Edward Said asserts that the Europeans flag off their superior identity by drawing parallelism with the Non-Europeans. Shakespeare's play *Antony and Cleopatra* also exoticizes the presence of an orient whose seductive attribute is presented as destructive and adversely fatal for the productive and constructive imperial forces. The colonizing rulers of Rome in this play exhibit and establish its superiority by belittling the non-whites. Shakespeare's Cleopatra is depicted as a dark beauty that contaminates and weakens the Romanian Antony. The dichotomies that are brought into reflect the various means of otherization. It is Rome which stands as the epitome of strength, rationality and sound ideologies by the imperialist disapproval of Egyptian principles. This research paper, hence, is not only an attempt to study and analyze the colonial orientalism but also to observe the resistance to this colonial imposition which is another important aspect of a post-colonial study.

**KEYWORDS:** Exoticization, Otherization, Orientalism, Imperialism, Dichotomy.

## INTRODUCTION:

The emergence of the Postcolonial criticism was witnessed during 1990's and its seeds in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Besides revisiting the nation's past, glorifying it, the postcolonial lens will also focus on the erosion or removal of colonialist ideologies which is, in other term known as decolonization. This paper which deals with concepts like orientalism, exoticisation, otherization etc. have its proper explanations in Edward Said's *Orientalism* which is a seminal text in establishing the proper Postcolonial criticism. The idea of colonization and conquest poked the minds of Europeans during the period of Renaissance when the quest for learning and discovering haunted the interests of the Whites. With the colonization came the prejudices and the desire to form a self on the basis of creating an "other". Shakespeare's works like *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and so on have been experimented from the angle of postcolonialism. This paper is another trial to view the text of *Antony and Cleopatra* and a step forward to search for the foundation of the producing the self and other.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The methodology of Content Analysis has been used to analyze the text of Shakespeare Antony and Cleopatra from the angle of Postcolonialism. Both Primary and Secondary sources have been referred to during the study.

## DISCUSSION:

The Postcolonial theory tries to address the colonially made "Other" and also emphasize on the exploited, dominated and the subaltern. Besides, this theory endeavors to study the conditions that produce the colonial Other. This other is created through binaries and stressed in order to establish the superior self. It primarily analyzes the notions of resistance, of subversion and opposition. Said argues that the process of Orientalizing happens not only because it is oriental but was made oriental.

Researchers have studied many works of Shakespeare and have found modes of producing other being depicted in these classics. In the remarkable work, *Antony and Cleopatra*, there the plot, no doubt, revolves around the love affair of both Antony and Cleopatra, but

this is to be noted that the difference between them is very much emphasized. In fact, the geographical spaces to which both of them belong to, also stands on the binaries and difference highlighted. Thus, the process of otherization is set up on these kinds of differences produced. Apart from the racial difference, dissimilarities also lay in respects of respective spatial values.

In this play, the playwright shows how Rome places Egypt and its natives in the position of other through opposition between Rome and Egypt. It is Rome that represents Egypt as an oriental other and dominates it with superiority. Egypt is made oriental and prejudiced. It is witnessed in the work how Egypt is always constructed in a negative way that the non-Europeans is the pole that destroys the colonizers and take them astray. The play opens with the Roman Philo's comment on Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra, which is, in his opinion, a weakness. Philo addresses Cleopatra as a "tawny", lustful gypsy and a strumpet. The accusation of Antony's degradation is shouldered upon Egypt by Octavius:

From Alexandria

This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes

The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike

Than Cleopatra; nor is the queen of Ptolomy

More womanly than he; (I. iv. 3-7)

In this extracted passage, it is shown how the touch of Egyptian Queen and the intermingling is dragging Romanian Antony down the ladder. It is clear that Romans consider his new Egyptian way of life as a flaw. Idleness is unforgivable for them while there was no time for leisure. Antony's interest in drinking, entertainment and other kinds of physical and sensual pleasures was all the poor result of interaction with the oriental culture. He no longer was the holder of the triple pillar but had become a feeble character. Again, the Romanian dominants construct feminine and masculine values as clarified in the above lines. The social interactions between the whites and the non-whites are altogether condemned. Presenting Egyptians as inferior is

a way of validating Roman's own domination over the other. The values that are celebrated in Egypt are mocked and attacked in Rome. Throughout the play, Egypt becomes the epitome of sensuous pleasures, playfulness, beauty, and fertility, which fall under 'feminine' characteristics. On the other hand, Rome is considered to be much masculine which glorifies power, war, contest etc. Moreover, in the quoted passage, it is also clear that Cleopatra has been challenging the Roman dichotomy of feminity-masculinity.

From the study of the play, it is clear that Shakespeare relates the ideas of rationality, self esteem, control, honour etc. with Romans which is in contrast with Egypt, the latter believing these ideas as restricting and artificial forces. Egypt desires for abandonment and freedom while Rome longs for sustainability and discipline as shown by Shakespeare. It is attempted to have Cleopatra assimilate the Roman values or to destroy her otherwise. Octavius tries to conquer Cleopatra and thus, establish the Romanian potency. But the dark queen passionately and determinedly provides resistance. It was she who proved to be a supreme political resistance to the glorious Rome. She even protests against a Roman impersonating her:

I shall see

Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness

I the posture of a whore. (V. ii. 219-221)

Cleopatra's love affair with Antony is not an indication of her submission in front of Rome. She wanted an honourable death and hence did not accept a devalued life, thus committing suicide. She never wanted to be a pompous show of the Romans, thereby choosing her life or death on her own terms.

The readers can observe the imperialist prejudices of race in the Romanian portrayal of Cleopatra's characteristics. We get numerous references to her insatiable and wanton sexual appetite but never once, her power or political strength been mentioned. Again, few characters from Rome take up Egyptian values and vice-versa,

which makes it evident that the boundary set up between the colonizers and the colonized is very thin and arbitrary. The readers are compelled to think whether the difference is authentic or the racial identities really fluid and socially constructed. On the one hand, while Cleopatra was formed as an enigmatic, bewitching dark beauty, she celebrated her own identity and colour.

European monarchs during the Elizabethan age were very good at displaying goods, captured slaves and even defeated sovereigns as trophies of their victory. Cleopatra, who was powerfully opposed to this idea and then puts forward her adamant resistance of exoticization in a parade on the streets of Rome.

Edward Said pinpointed a very important idea that the representation of the Orientals does not match the reality, but it is only representation of them as objects studied by the Occidents, including the latter's prejudices and ideologies. Even, the Oriental women express wanton and unlimited sexual intensity as well as willingness. Hence, the presentation of Cleopatra's sensuality points to such representation and the desire of the Romans to breakdown the power, honour and determination of such a powerful woman. But, it must be noted that Cleopatra stands at the opposite pole with her boldness and indomitable spirit.

Again, another important question remains as to whether the voice of Cleopatra has ever been recognized in the play or it is otherwise that it has been blunted. Cleopatra always proved to be of supreme power and took boldly her last step of ending her life in honour rather being humiliated in the Roman streets. But such an honorable ending pointed to assimilation of Roman values as she takes "after the high Roman fashion". Therefore, although Cleopatra provided resistance, her values were being defeated in a sense and Roman values re-established on the other sense.

Exoticisation also occurs in terms of the geographical description of Egypt and remarking both Rome and Egypt in two contrasting worlds. Egypt, as recorded in the play, is a territory with

wilderness which has been exaggerated and therefore, the idea of the need of its conquest emerging. The abundance has been stressed on by Enobarbus:

Enobarbus: [...] we did sleep the day out of countenance / And made the night light with drinking.

Maecenas: Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, / and but twelve persons there. Is this true?

Enobarbus: This was as but as a fly by an eagle. We had / Much more monstrous matter of feast, which worthily / Deserved noting. (II. ii.)

Food and beverages, perfumed and love-sick air and the overwhelming beauty of Cleopatra, her mermaids not only revitalize all our senses but also bring equal presence of the magical aspects in Egypt. Egypt's alienation and exoticisation of it makes it an outsider for Rome. The descriptions throughout the work make it apparent that Rome is portrayed as a contrasting sphere with no such sensualities and confined to the political matters, strict dominance, control and stability. These delineations frame Egypt as feminine and associate Rome with masculine nature:

Antony: Sextus Pompeius / Hath given the dare to Caesar and commands / The empire of thesea. Our slippery people, / Whose love is never linked to the deserver / Till his deserts are past, begin to throw / Pompey the Great and all his dignities / Upon his son, who, high in name and power, / Higher than both in blood and life, stands up / For the mainsoldier; whose quality going on, / The sides o'th' world may danger. (I. ii. 174-183)

## CONCLUSION:

Thus, this play *Antony and Cleopatra* is another example of the racial othering that is a part and parcel of colonization. Here, the



readers get to find the modes through which the “other” is being generated. Exoticization becomes a process of validating one’s desire for conquest and establishing binaries: native-foreign, dominating-dominated, subject-object, exploiters-exploited and so on. Shakespeare who realistically painted the contemporary picture has also shown the conflicting position of such a “difference” because his characters in this play have proved the slipperiness of this difference. Nevertheless, Rome and Egypt becomes in a sense personified and alive to contest the presence of self and the other respectively. ■■

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## ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN TEMSULA AO’S SHORT STORIES

L.X. Polin Hazarika

#### ABSTRACT

*The Northeast India is an ecologically sensitive region. There is a close connection between nature and the inhabitants of the region. Nature is an integral part of their day to day life. However, rapid urbanization and industrialization are causing destruction to this natural harmony existed in the region in the past. Many prominent writers from the region have taken this issue seriously and have celebrated the ecological glory as well as the necessity to preserve it. It has also been observed that there is a close connection between women and nature. This present paper aims to read a short story “Laburnum for My Head” by one of the prominent voices of the region Temsula Ao from ecocritical perspective and explore how literature can be instrumental in preserving nature.*

**KEYWORDS:** Northeast, ecocriticism, nature.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years the growing concern of the people on environment and eco-system, in general, has marked the importance of studying literary texts critically in relation to environment. Thus, ecocriticism has been gaining an importance among the critics and scholars of literature while studying literature from environment point of view. Ecocriticism is described as “an eclectic, pluriform, and cross-disciplinary initiative that aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature and other creative media in a spirit of environmental concern not limited to any one method or commitment” (Buell et al. 2011, 418). It redefines human relationship with nature and challenges the western dualistic construction. Ecocriticism identifies the responsible cultural, economic and political ideologies for crisis in

ecology. However, the term appeared for the first time in 1978 in an essay by William Rueckert's essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism". Here he says that Ecocriticism is the "...application of ecology and ecological concepts to the Study of literature," (Rueckert, 107). William Howarth, on the other hand, defines 'ecocritic' as a person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action.

Literature is nourished by nature. Writers and poets often turn to nature seeking inspiration. The rapid urbanization and industrialization, however, are effecting the sources of environment. Northeast region of India is no exception from this. Literature of northeast has developed and nourished itself in the lap of nature. In most of the literature from the northeast, concern about environment has been noticed. However, the term Northeast entered the Indian lexicon only in 1971. During the colonial period the region was referred to as 'northeast' for administrative convenience. The English language was introduced to the people of this region as a medium of intellect like in the rest of India. The Christian missionaries initiated establishing schools in the region and played a vital role in the spread of English language. At present, Indian writing in English from northeast is a new evolving literature. Literature from this region is diverse in form and content. Politics, marginality, identity, home, nationhood, and memory are frequently treated subjects by the writers of Indian writing in English from the northeast. In their writings life, culture and ways of thinking of the indigenous people of this land have found a global voice for the first time. It has also been noticed that most of the writers from the region retrieve the ecological consciousness of their respective communities through their writings. Among these writers Temsula Ao is prominent one and an authority on Ao Naga culture. Ao is a retired professor of English and the dean of school of Humanities and Education in North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. She is also a renowned poet and ethnographer. Ao belongs to a tribal community

enriched with deeply rooted tradition. Her work carries profound impressions of the myths, legends, fables, rituals and beliefs of Ao Naga culture. This paper is an attempt to explore the ecocritical perspective in her celebrated short story 'Laburnum for my Head' as a conscious effort to aware her readers about conservation and preservation of nature.

## 2. DISCUSSION

The story "Laburnum for My Head" appears in Temsula Ao's short story collection *Laburnum for My Head* published in 2009. The story narrates the egalitarian thought of Lentila when she desired to have a create cemetery for herself instead of a conventional tombstone with epitaph written on it. Lentila had a great liking of laburnum trees. To her the yellow flowers of laburnum are symbols of femininity unlike the brazen gulmohars with orange and dark pink blossoms. However, the brazen gulmohars with orange and dark pink blossoms. However, Lentila's all efforts at bringing a laburnum tree into her garden went in vain. On the first year the new gardener pulled out the small saplings along with the weeds. On the second occasion some stray cows entered the garden and munched on the saplings. On the third year the saplings survived the first few months. But disaster happened when a worker from the health department sprayed DDT concoction on the edges of the garden. Unfortunately, 'it rained heavily that night flooding the entire garden. Except the full-grown trees, all her flowers including the laburnums, withered and died.' (3)

However, Lentila was very firm on her decision of having a laburnum tree in her grave. According to her a boasting tombstone could hardly commemorate the death of a person. It can only speak of 'man's puny attempts to defy death'. Lentila had to encounter socio-economic forces in fulfilling her wish. She did not seek help from her sons and daughters in law. Her sons call their mother's plan 'crazy'. They couldn't envision lentila's dream. In contrast to that Lentila sought help from her humble driver Babu. Babu's son in law also helped Lentila to buy a plot of land to fulfil her venture. In the story Lentila appears as strong willed person who evolved from a simple woman to a woman with willpower and insight. Lentila was very much aware

that the Town Committee would raise question on ownership of the plot she had bought adjacent to the cemetery. Therefore, she decided to donate the plot to the Town Committee itself under certain conditions:

1. The new plot of land could be dedicated as the new cemetery and would be available to all fulfilling the condition that only flowering trees and not headstones would be erected on the gravesides.
2. Lentila, as the donor, should be first to select a place for herself.
3. Plots would be designed by numbers only, and records of names against plot numbers would be maintained in the Committee Register.
4. The terms were to be widely publicized and the Town Committee would ensure that they were adhered to strictly. (12)

Finally, her sturdy willpower and the approval from the Town Committee paved the way to have an eco-cemetery for herself. She defies the social constructs in many levels. Generally, in traditional headstones the name of the deceased persons are mentioned, but Lentila wanted only numbers. Names are social construction which are put on human beings only after birth on the basis of their gender. Lentila hence did not want any names after death and freed herself from this social construct. She has also defied to have her gravesite beside the gravesite of husband. On the contrary, she picked up her gravesite before her death and resisted against the patriarchal set-up. She also presented herself as respectable and dignified woman. By the conditions she offered to the Town Committee Lentila proved her insight. She not only fulfilled her dream, but also ensured a sustainable environment in the town. Lentila's liberation from the patriarchal construction is followed by liberation of nature from the human devastation. Thus, the laburnum tree symbolically represents "projection and creation of the matriarch, the environment of sustainability." (Parui 28) The story towards the end portrays Lentila

falling ill and Babu taking care of the laburnum tree. Though the laburnum flowers started blooming, Babu did not report to Lentila. He found some connection with the news of flower blooming with Lentila. However, when Lentila got to be a witness of the blooming tree she sprang up from her illness and went to "self-imposed" isolation. On the fifth day Lentila went to bed early. Next day she took last breath in her sleep.

Lentila found "femininity" in the earthward blooming laburnum flowers. The obstacles Lentila had to encounter while planting saplings of laburnum tree created psychological conflicts in her. But a resolute woman she was and she died after witnessing the blooming laburnum tree. This how women and nature assimilate into permanence. ■■

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