

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
JOURNAL OF
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
(A National Refereed Bi-Annual Journal)



Vol II Issue1 June 2016

ISSN 2395-7352

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MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
NAAC Accredited Grade 'A' (2014)
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)
TANHRIL, AIZAWL – 796004
MIZORAM, INDIA

Vol II Issue1 June 2016

ISSN 2395-7352

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From the Desk of the Chief Editor

It is once again my happy privilege to write a brief editorial for *Mizoram University Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences (MZUJHSS)*, a National Refereed Bi-annual Journal running into its 2nd year. The response to the 1st and 2nd issues have been most encouraging, drawing good response from both established and upcoming research scholars alike, from across the country. This journal strives to maintain stringent research standard of high quality, at the same time it also plays a facilitative role to encourage new areas of research from upcoming research scholars.

This Vol 2 Issue 1 of June 2016 carries 16 papers from across the disciplines of Humanities and the Social Sciences. The invited lead article from Dr. Sunil Behari Mohanty on “Early Childhood Care and Education” also known as ECCE, stresses on the importance of, and challenges faced by the now essential trend of school education on this aspect whose first framework had been declared by UNESCO 2000, and later by UNESCO 2010 which clearly states that “ECCE is part of the right to education and the main foundation for holistic human development. ECCE is instrumental in poverty eradication and a critical stage to lay the foundations for sustainable development.” In keeping with the note struck by the lead article, the next to follow is a relevant study on the “Effectiveness of Training for Elementary School Teachers in Mizoram in the Context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan contributed by H. Lalrinliana and B.B. Mishra. This study of the SSA in providing education for children of 6 to 14 age group, focuses on aspects of the effectiveness of, and extent of fulfillment of objectives, of the capacity building of teachers through its training programs.

The relevancy of activity based teaching of mathematics for pre-service teachers is highlighted by Lokanath Mishra in his paper “Teaching of Mathematics in Internship Period of B.Ed Students : A Case Study”, and wherein the contributor has developed a model for the implementation of such an activity for teaching of the specific subject. In order to help bring about improved quality in the current technical education offered by 7 technical institutions in Mizoram, the article on “Problems Faced by Students pursuing Technical Courses in Mizoram: An Analytical Study”

submitted by Lalmangaihi Ralte and Lalhmasai Chuaungo examines the all important issue of key challenges that are adversely affecting the quality input of technical education in Mizoram.

At a time when the Indian nation commemorates the 125th Birth Anniversary of the great social reformer and champion of the marginalized in India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, also known as Father of the Indian Constitution, it is only appropriate that an article contributed by K. Vidyasagar Reddy entitled “Dr.B.R. Ambedkar: A Socio-Political Missionary” celebrates and pays tribute to the great man. This submission notes a telling point – while the constitutional contribution of the man is recognized by all, there is little noted in academic discourses about his social revolutionary activities. An article from Srinibas Pathi titled “Biju Patnaik and Women Empowerment” amongst other things, makes a study of a great man who during his time initiated lasting contributions for the empowerment of women and the spreading of awareness about gender parity and equality which bears witness to his progressive ideas and inclusive policies, at a time when such ideas were still considered sensitive and often radical.

The post-colonial era has seen several so called third world countries taking economic and planning policy initiatives and bringing their nations within the global spectrum. Bangladesh is one such country, and Biswajit Choudhury provides a telling study through his article “Political Economy of Rural Non-farm Sector Development in Bangladesh” Although India has adopted parliamentary democracy for its system of governance, decades under this very system is now being scrutinized realistically due to its apparent failure to solve the several problems faced by the nation. This aspect is examined in the article “Elections and Electoral Reforms: An Imperative for Bringing Good Governance in India” submitted by A.P.K. Singh. Biswajit Mohapatra makes a laudable attempt to study what many would consider a complex issue best left untouched, in his article “Understanding Extremism and Extremists in North East India”. The study on “An Analysis of the Movement of the Mizo Union for Mizo Autonomy” from L.H. Chhuanawma gives an interesting and relevant interpretation to the very usage of the inclusive term “Mizo” by the first indigenous political party from the erstwhile Lushai Hill - the Mizo Union in the mid 1940s. His analysis also reveals that the ideology for “Greater Mizoram” was actually initiated by this political party – a historical fact that many are unaware of today.

Drug abuse and its related issues as one of the more worrisome social problems in Mizoram is a subject taken up by a good number of research scholars

in current times. This particular article on “Siblings of Substance Abusers: The Moderating Role of Parental Warmth in Academic Problems” submitted by Lalremruati Pachuau and Laldinpuii H.K. Fente however, studies an aspect often overlooked – the neglect or parental rejection of non-drug abusers who are the siblings of drug abusers. V. Ratnamala and R. Lalrinkima have compiled an interesting study of a highly relevant topic of the region - “Print Media Representation of Conflict between Mizo and Bru with Special Reference to 16th Lok Sabha Election”. This article gives an objective study based on primary research method of content analysis of newspaper dailies of Mizoram covering the span of one month samples, while scholarly attempts that utilize the theoretical perspectives of Gramsci’s hegemony and Van Dijk’s take on racism and minorities, contributes to the added value of interpretation for its readers.

While it is a well-known fact that environmental protection is linked to sustainable development of natural resources, new concepts and practices related to this very relevant issue is the focus of the submission made by Baishali Dey and Nikhil Bhusan Dey in their article “Environmental Accounting and Reporting Practices of Major Industrial Units in Assam”. They have based their study on primary data collected from selected companies under major industrial units of the region. Issues of ethics and trust have also become essential ingredients of commerce and business as borne out by the study on “Customer Trust in Advertising Media: A Study of University Students in Mizoram” contributed by Lalhruiatluangpuii and Bhartendu Singh. This work has used a pre-developed instrument called ADTRUST Scale and takes on students of this University as its subject of study.

The journal is rounded off by two submissions on cultural and literary studies. “Old Mizo Deathways: The Cultural Construction of Death and Dying” from Kristina K. Zama attempts an interesting interpretation of old Mizo cultural concepts, beliefs and practices related to death in a community. The article takes on the views of select cultural theorists on the one hand, and posits it with old Mizo belief systems and values along with Christian tradition on the other, on treatment of the dead and burial rituals / practices which brings in new perspectives and problematization of these concerns. Thongam Dhanajit Singh makes a study of “Alienation in Larkin’s “Mr. Bleaney” : A Critique” vis-à-vis the prevalent theme of alienation in postwar British poetry, while at the same time, attempting to relate the intellectual and political movements of the postwar years with the poetry of Philip Larkin.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of MZUJHSS, I express my grateful thanks to all paper contributors, and subject experts who helped assess the submissions, thereby facilitating the successful completion of this journal. The continued success and growth of this journal is due to the excellent team work of Editors of the individual volumes as well as members of the Editorial Board which has provided a conducive working space and forum for all concerned. A special thank you goes out to Dr. Sunil Behari Mohanty for agreeing to contribute the lead article of this issue. We are especially grateful as always, for the continued support and encouragement received from our Patron Prof. R. Lalthantluanga, Vice Chancellor, and our two Advisors Mr. C. Zothankhuma, IDAS, Registrar, and Prof. Lianzela, now in his newly assigned role as Head of the Department of Economics.

Margaret Ch. Zama
Chief Editor

Early Childhood Care and Education

Sunil Behari Mohanty*

Introduction

Early Childhood Care and Education, traditionally not considered as an essential component of school education, has now been getting increased attention in recent times. ECCE was considered as the first frame work of UNESCO's Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO 2000). The framework stated that

“All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert and secure and be able to learn. The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality early childhood care and education, both in families and in more structured programmes, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development. They should be provided in the child's mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities and families can help ensure the provision of good care and education for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, through activities centred on the child, focused on the family, based within the community and supported by national, multi-sectoral policies and adequate resources.

Governments, through relevant ministries, have the primary responsibility of formulating early childhood care and education policies within the context of national EFA plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education of parents and other caregivers in better child care, building on traditional practices, and the systematic use of early childhood indicators, are important elements in achieving this goal.”

ECCE was highlighted in Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation: Harnessing the Wealth of Nations (UNESCO 2010) in the following words:

“ECCE is part of the right to education and the main foundation for holistic human development. In addition,

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ECCE is instrumental in poverty eradication and a critical stage to lay the foundations for sustainable development. ECCE is an investment in the wealth of nations. There is a strong knowledge base consisting of models, including at national level, of high-quality scalable provision; evidence that families and communities respond to high-quality initiatives and knowledge of how to build capacity. But we still face challenges.”

In spite of various reports highlighting importance of ECCE, nations have failed to devote adequate resource for the purpose. UNICEF (2015, p. 65) mentioned following data on pre-primary school participation.

Table 1
Pre-Primary School Participation in 2009-12: Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)

As per Table 1, gross enrolment ratio was 55% in case of both male and female children of the world. In case of regions, gross enrolment ratio varied amongst female children between 15 and 75 and amongst male children between 15 and 74. Variation between the lowest and the highest was nearly 5 times.

UNICEF (2015, pp. 60-64) mentioned country-wise data on pre-primary school participation. Best performance was reported in case of Ecuador: 148 for male children and 152 for female children. Data in case of high achievers are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Gross Enrolment Ratio (%) 2009-2012

Country	Male	Female	Country	Male	Female
Ecuador	148	152	France	110	109
Mauritius	121	119	San Marino	106	108

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Belgium	119	119	Austria	104	103
Republic of Korea	118	117	Israel	104	103
Malta	118	113	Belarus	104	101
Chile	115	112	Czech Republic	104	101
Ghana	112	115	Denmark	103	100
Germany	113	112	Ukraine	103	100
Seychelles	112	107	Mexico	101	103
Thailand	111	113	Papua New Guinea	101	99
Cuba	110	109	Angola	70	103

The worst situation (1% for female and 2% for male children) was reported in cases of Chad and Yemen. Data in respect of poor achievers are given in Table 3:

Table 3
Gross Enrolment Ratio (%) 2009-2012

Country	Male	Female	Country	Male	Female
Chad	2	1	Syrian Arab Republic	11	10
Yemen	2	2	Togo	11	11
Burkina Faso	4	4	Nigeria	13	13
Mali	4	4	Uganda	13	14
Central African Rep.	6	6	Senegal	13	15
Niger	6	6	Congo	14	14
Burundi	8	8	Bosnia & Herzegovina	17	16
Madagascar	8	9	Botswana	18	18
Myanmar	9	9	Benin	18	18
Sierra Leone	9	10	Kyrgyzstan	24	23
Bhutan	10	9	Lao PDR	24	25
Tajikistan	10	8	TYR Macedonia	28	29

The above mentioned document mentioned GER in case of India –male 57 and female 60.

Early Childhood Care and Education in India

Owing to the 86th amendment of the constitution, the Article 45 of Directive Principles of the Constitution states that “The State shall endeavour to provide

early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.” Hence, the nation has started giving more attention to early childhood care and education. According to the National Policy for Children 2013

(MWCD 2013a, Art 4.6 (i), p. 6), “The State shall take all necessary measures to: (i) Provide universal and equitable access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for optimal development and active learning capacity of all children below six years of age.” Data on child population in the age group 0-6 in 2011, as reported in Ministry of Home Affairs (2012, Table 2(1) are as follows:

Table 4
Child Population in the Age Group 0-6 in India in 2011

India / State / Union Territory#	Child population in the age group 0-6		
	Persons	Male	Female
INDIA	15,87,89,287	8,29,52,135	7,58,37,152
A & N Islands #	39,497	20,094	19,403
Andhra Pradesh	86,42,686	44,48,330	41,94,356
Arunachal Pradesh	2,02,759	1,03,430	99,329
Assam	45,11,307	23,05,088	22,06,219
Bihar	1,85,82,229	96,15,280	89,66,949
Chandigarh #	1,17,953	63,187	54,766
Chhattisgarh #	35,84,028	18,24,987	17,59,041
Dadra & NH #	49,196	25,575	23,621
Daman & Diu #	25,880	13,556	12,324
Delhi NCT #	19,70,510	10,55,735	9,14,775
Goa	1,39,495	72,669	66,826
Gujarat	74,94,176	39,74,286	35,19,890
Haryana	32,97,724	18,02,047	14,95,677
Himachal Pradesh	7,63,864	4,00,681	3,63,183
Jammu & Kashmir	20,08,642	10,80,662	9,27,980
Jharkhand	52,37,582	26,95,921	25,41,661
Karnataka	68,55,801	35,27,844	33,27,957
Kerala	33,22,247	16,95,935	16,26,312
Lakshadweep #	7,088	3,715	3,373
Madhya Pradesh	1,05,48,295	55,16,957	50,31,338
Maharashtra	1,28,48,375	68,22,262	60,26,113
Manipur	1,70,553	1,82,684	1,70,553
Meghalaya	5,55,822	2,82,189	2,73,633
Mizoram	1,65,536	83,965	81,571
Nagaland	2,85,981	1,47,111	1,38,870
Odisha	50,35,650	26,03,208	24,32,442

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Puducherry #	1,27,610	64,932	62,678
Punjab	29,41,570	15,93,262	13,48,308
Rajasthan	1,05,04,916	55,80,212	49,24,704
Sikkim	61,077	31,418	29,659
Tamil Nadu	68,94,821	35,42,351	33,52,470
Tripura	4,44,055	2,27,354	2,16,701
Uttar Pradesh	2,97,28,235	1,56,53,175	1,40,75,060
Uttarakhand	13,28,844	7,04,769	6,24,075
West Bengal	1,01,12,599	51,87,264	49,25,335

Percentages of child population in the age group 0-6 in 2011 among the states were : Uttar Pradesh(18.7%), Bihar (11.7%), Maharashtra(8.1%), Madhya Pradesh(6.6%), Rajasthan(6.6%), West Bengal(6.4%), Andhra Pradesh(5.4%), Gujarat(4.7%), Tamil Nadu(4.3%), Karnataka(4.3%), Jharkhand(3.3%), Odisha(3.2%), Assam(2.8%), Chhattisgarh (2.3%), Kerala(2.1%), Haryana(2.1%), Punjab(1.9%), Jammu & Kashmir(1.3%), Delhi NCT(1.2%) and Uttarakhand(0.8%)..... These states may need more funds for providing appropriate quality of pre-school education and cover all the schools. They may take the model of Puducherry Union Territory which has the pre-school classes attached to primary schools.

Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers

Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers and other deserving women provides day care facilities to children in the age group 0 to 6 years from families with monthly income of less than Rs.12,000/-In

addition to being a safe space for the children, the crèches provide services such as supplementary nutrition, pre- school education and emergency health care, etc. As per MWCD (2014, p. 269) during 2013-14, there were 23,785 crèches. Said document also stated that 5000 AWC Cum Crèches were to be created by end of March, 2014.

ECCE Curriculum

According to MWCD (2012a, pp.7-8), curriculum content for ECCE should include:

Physical and Motor Development: Gross motor skills; coordination of fine muscles with dexterity; eye hand coordination; sense of balance, physical co-ordination, and awareness of space and direction; nutrition, health status and practices.

Language Development: Listening and comprehension; oral skills/speaking and communicating; vocabulary development; pre- literacy/emergent literacy skills like phonological awareness; print awareness and concepts; letter- sound correspondence; recognition of letters;

building words and sentences and early writing; and Introduction to language of school transaction.

Cognitive Development: Development of various concepts including pre number and number concepts and operations (knowledge and skills related to comparing, classification, conservation of space and quantity, one to one correspondence; counting); spatial sense; patterns and estimations in measurement; data handling; skills related to sequential thinking, critical thinking, observing, reasoning and problem solving; and knowledge about concepts and physical, social and biological environment.

Socio-Personal and Emotional Development: Development of self-concept; self-control; life skills/ self-help skills; habit formation; initiative and curiosity; engagement and persistence; cooperation; compassion; social relationships; group interaction; pro-social behaviour; expressing feelings, accepting others feelings.

Sensorial Development: Development of the five senses through visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experiences.

Development of Creative and Aesthetic Appreciation: Exploring different art forms, develop dispositions, expression and appreciation for artistic, dance/ drama and musical activities.

MWCD (2012b) mentioned following non-negotiable criteria for ECCE:

- Duration of the ECCE programme should be 3-4 hours;
- 1 classroom measuring 35 square meters for a group of 30 children and availability of 30 square meters of outdoor space for a group of 30 children;
- The building should be structurally safe and within easy approach. It should be clean and should have surrounding green area;
- Clean potable water should be available;
- Separate toilets for girls and boys should be available;
- Immediate health service in terms of First Aid/ Medical Kit should be available at the centre;
- Adequate trained staff should be appointed;
- There should be provision of adequate developmentally appropriate toys and learning materials;
- Space should be allocated for cooking meals and nap time for children;
- The adult child ratio should be 1:20 for 3-6 year old children and 1:10 for under 3 year old children.

Recommendations

- MWCD (2015, pp. 29-34) gave the following recommendations:

Strengthen Capacity

- Develop District/State/National Action Plans for ECCE progressively in all districts. Teams from districts should meet from time to time for sharing of issues, strategies and orientation on need-based planning before the State prepares for APIP.
- Ensure appropriate financial allocation and timely flow of funds; provide flexibility to States/UTs on utilisation of funds as per their needs with target indicators on outcomes for ECCE.
- Strengthening Institutional capacity of NIPCCD and its Regional Centers, MLTCs, AWTCs, and partnering with SCERTs, DIETs and BRCs of MHRD to constitute ECCE Unit for training, mentoring and supportive supervision of AWWs.
- Develop a training strategy to include (a) specific skill-based in-service training in ECE with periodic refreshers (b) capacity building of AWTCs and supervisors to serve as mentors, (c) constitution of state/district resource groups in ECE.
- Qualified and trained facilitators working with children under all managements (public and private); dedicated facilitators (second worker) under ICDS to focus on ECCE implementation.
- Certification of training and career pathways for functionaries.

Ensuring Quality

- Implementation of a state level curriculum framework for ECE with contextual adaptations to address the diverse needs of areas.
- Play and learning materials to be attractive, age specific and adequate for all children.

Public Private Partnerships

- Initiate a new mass campaign for ECCE, to create local toy and active banks in all AWCs across the country through community contribution - collecting and using local stories, rhymes, songs, games, play activity materials and creative cultural expression with the involvement of parents, communities and Panchayats.
- Develop a consortium for ECCE involving NGOs, public and private sector, development partners, resource institutions as oversight body to support the State at different levels of implementation of ECCE programme. For example, State Ministry of Women and Child Development Resource Groups for Curriculum already created may be encouraged for the same; identification of resource persons and institutions and constitution of state, district/block resource groups should be explored.

Advocacy and Awareness

- Advocacy and Awareness promotion through Inter State Visits,

Annual Meet / e-platform for inter-state showcasing of good work, sharing of best practices that are relevant, sustainable and replicable with adaptations.

electronic media. - Encouraging community members as resource persons etc.

- Involvement of NGOs and CBOs.

Partnership Model with Community

- Making AWCs more child-friendly through a mass campaign, like Swachh Bharat. There could be mass mobilisation and shramdaan by the community for cleaning/repairing, colourful painting of the walls of AWCs outside and with stories inside, making activity corners, fencing, kitchen gardens and safe outdoor play space, depending upon the AWC setting.
- Encourage piloting of different community-based approaches for infant care crèches-cum-AWCs, others linked to MGNREGA especially to support women working in the unorganised sector, flexibly responding to their patterns of work and time, further enabling girl child to be relieved from sibling care and attend school.
- Enhancing community awareness and involvement through:-
 - Community mobilization activities like annual AW days, shows, monthly ECCE days, etc.
 - Constituting parents' committees for local management, activating monitoring committee at all levels.
 - Regular meetings. - Use of folk and

Linkage with Primary Schools

- Possible areas of convergence could be: Joint Surveys, MDM/NSP, Joint Orientations, Annual day/festival celebrations, enrolment drives, etc.

Quality of Interventions

- Introduce a new parent education programme focusing on early stimulation of children under 3 years through a trained care counsellor, to empower parents and families for improved family care behaviours. This would also enable shared parenting responsibilities, changing gender stereotypes in child care roles and in early socialisation.
- Early stimulation, identification of children with special needs as a part of health programme for convergence and greater outreach to the community.
- Model ECCE Centres (AWCs) as demonstration centres for AWCs based on the concept of building as a learning aid for creating a vibrant ECD centre and enabling participation of children in ECCE activities. Monitoring and Supervision
- Create a demand for quality ECCE programme by launching a

Early Childhood Care and Education

community awareness campaign to generate the need for a quality ECCE programme and involve parents, community and panchayats to ensure participation of children in the ECCE programme of AWCs.

- Development of outcome-focused system of M&E for each administrative level including registers, diary maintenance, and data records etc.”

Early Childhood Care and Education through Anganwadis

Anganwadis (courtyards) are part of Integrated Child Development Services scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India. Started in 1975, this programme

is the largest early childhood development programme in the world. This programme covers expectant and nursing mothers and children up to the age of six and provides a package of services that includes medical checks, immunizations, referral services, supplementary feeding, preschool education, and health and nutrition education. According to MWCD (2014, p. 5), on 31st December 2013, there were 7,067 projects and 13,41,745 AWCs “across 35 States / UTs, covering 1026.03 lakh beneficiaries under supplementary nutrition and 356.10 lakh children in the age group 3-6 years children under pre-school component.” The number of Anganwadi centres and number of children covered as on 31st March 2014, given by MWCD (2014, p. 247) are given in the following table.

Table 5
No. of Pre-school Children in 3-6 Age Group in Anganwadis

States/UTs (Data as on (Month/year))	Anganwadi Centres -Operational	No. of Pre-school children 3-6 years	States/UTs	Anganwadi Centres -Operational	No. of Pre-school children 3-6 years
Andhra Pradesh (03/13)	90757	1737383	Nagaland	3455	139689
Arunachal Pradesh	6028	114811	Odisha	71306	1404383
Assam	62153	1214400	Punjab	26656	434586
Bihar	91677	2245450	Rajasthan	61100	1100255
Chhattisgarh	49651	880233	Sikkim	1233	12072
Goa	1262	20462	Tamil Nadu	54439	1104148
Gujarat	50226	1420958	Tripura	9911	151715
Haryana	25905	374820	Uttar Pradesh	187659	8748683
Himachal Pradesh	18907	153417	Uttarakhand	19174	255258
Jammu & Kashmir	28594	299257	West Bengal	116390	3473177
Jharkhand	38432	115809	A& N Islands	710	4413
Karnataka	64518	1682974	Chandigarh	500	18184
Kerala	33115	440739	Dadra & NH	267	9636

Madhya Pradesh	91318	3199102	Daman &Diu	107	1819
Maharashtra	107913	2991230	Delhi	10897	383741
Manipur	9883	179522	Lakshadweep	107	2290
Meghalaya	5156	180042	Puducherry	788	1398
Mizoram	2070	821049	INDIA	1342265	36359305

Out of total number of 36359305 children in the age group 3-6 in Anganwadis, among the States, Uttar Pradesh had the highest number of children 8748683, followed by West Bengal 3473177, Madhya Pradesh 3199102, Maharashtra 2991230, Bihar 2245450, Andhra Pradesh including Telengana 1737383, Karnataka 1682974, Odisha 1404383, Assam 1214400, Tamil Nadu 1104148, Rajasthan 1100255, etc.

As per MWCD (2013b, p. 3), average number of children per Anganwadi at the national level was 62.87. In case of the States and UTs the number varied from 100 (Uttar Pradesh) to Sikkim (17.57). The number in case of other States & UTs were: Meghalaya (90.99), Madhya Pradesh (90.35), Delhi NCT (83.76, Chandigarh UT(82.56), West Bengal (77.13), Assam (70.50), Jharkhand (69.91), Mizoram (65.33), Nagaland (65.04), Gujarat (61.79), Karnataka (59.92), Chhattisgarh (58.19), Maharashtra (57.50), Dadra & NH UT(56.67), Odisha (56.65), Daman & Diu (51.90), Andhra Pradesh (51.62), Rajasthan (49.89), Goa (46.67), Tamil Nadu (45.21), Lakshadweep (44.45), Bihar (43.73), Haryana (43.03), Punjab (39.31), Arunachal Pradesh (38.56), Manipur (36.26), Puducherry (35.16), Tripura (30.37), Kerala (25.84), Jammu & Kashmir (23.76), Himachal Pradesh

(23.07), A & N Islands (20.48), and Uttarakhand (18.51). There is a wide gap between the lowest and the highest average number of children per Anganwadi. Yoshikawa and Kabay (2015, p. 19), in their paper written for UNESCO, stated that “Like most large scale and expansive interventions, the ICDS program has not been universally successful.” They also reported neglect of pre-school component and inadequate coverage of nutrition and health components.

Pre-primary Education

Pre-school education is a significant component of early childhood care and education. Pre-school education is provided in either special institutions known as “Nursery schools”, Montessori schools” “Kindergarten schools” or as part of formal school system. There are also pre-primary classes attached to most of the English medium and private schools. Poor children also get pre-primary education in government run elementary schools of the Union Territory of Puducherry. Planning Commission (2012, pp. 57-58) gave following directions:

- Every primary school to provide pre-primary education for at least one year (5th year old child) so that by the end of the Twelfth Plan, about 50 per cent of the schools would

have pre-primary classes and priority to be given to educationally lagging States/Districts/Blocks.

- Pre-school education to be included under SSA/RTE as a separate component with a specific budget line.
- Gradual shifting of the pre-primary year from the purview of ICDS to the primary schools and mid-day meal scheme to cover nutrition component of ICDS for these 5 year olds.

Planning Commission (2012, p.56) stated that “ *Research on the impact of PTR on student learning suggests that a low PTR*

matters most at younger ages, when children are being socialised into the process of learning, and less so in older classes. Thus, it may make sense to supplement the requirements under the RTE, for communities to hire multiple community-based teachers on contract to focus on improving school preparedness and basic literacy and numeracy for pre-school children.”

MHRD (2014) Table B-1 gave following data on enrolment in school education-pre-primary and Table A-1 gave following data in respect of pre-primary schools as on 30th September 2011.

**Table 6
Enrolment in Pre-Primary and Number of Pre-Primary Schools (2011
September 30)**

Sl. No.	States/Union Territories	Enrolment in School Education-Pre-Primary Source: MHRD2014 Table B1			No. of Pre-Primary Schools: Source: MHRD 2014 Table A1
		Boys	Girls	Total	
1	Andhra Pradesh	229595	180491	410086	
2	Arunachal Pradesh	17361	14952	32313	11
3	Assam	223779	223736	497515	
4	Bihar	127	98	225	1
5	Chhattisgarh	52465	40330	92795	957
6	Goa				
7	Gujarat				
8	Haryana	70410	61345	131755	
9	Himachal Pr.	40324	35147	75471	
11	Jharkhand	92111	80799	127910	95
12	Karnataka	64311	49517	113828	1
13	Kerala				711

14	Madhya Pradesh				
15	Maharashtra	1259699	1107107	2366806	
16	Manipur	59658	50723	110381	
17	Meghalaya	127896	124656	232552	
18	Mizoram	20884	19462	40346	
19	Nagaland	62459	54609	117068	
20	Odisha				
21	Punjab				
22	Rajasthan	368715	262021	630736	7
23	Sikkim				395
24	Tamil Nadu	401159	382958	784117	2457
25	Tripura	4973	4215	9188	
26	Uttar Pradesh				
27	Uttarakhand				
28	West Bengal				
29	A& N Islands	4249	4072	8321	34
30	Chandigarh	9828	8471	18299	1
31	D&N Haveli				
32	Daman & Diu	1888	1545	3433	32
33	Delhi	86308	79622	165930	51
34	Lakshadweep	481	589	1070	19
35	Puducherry	20303	18054	38357	550
	ALL STATES	3268983	2804519	6073502	61498

Above tables, for certain reasons do not give complete data. The tables given above give the picture that the number of pre-primary schools is much smaller in comparison to the number of Anganwadis. Most of the pre-primary schools are fee charging private schools, whereas, the Anganwadis are either run by the government machinery or by the government aided machinery and do not charge the children's parents. In Puducherry UT, the pre-primary classes are attached to primary schools and function for the same duration as provided for other

classes. Such facilities should be made available in every school, unless parents are ready to take back their children during afternoon hours. It may be helpful for the nation, especially for the disadvantaged population, if the State can divert adequate funds for pre-school education and immediately, convert all Anganwadis to pre-school classes of nearby primary schools. MWCD (2014, p. 7) stated that "Restructured ICDS envisages AWC as a "vibrant Early Childhood Development Centre" to become the first village outpost for health, nutrition and early learning."

Pre-Primary Schooling Facilities for Disadvantaged Population

During late seventies, Central government had introduced pre-school education, by starting pre-school classes in certain primary schools in tribal blocks of the country. The teacher's wife was given preference to act as pre-school teacher. The scheme indirectly controlled the teacher absence. As the nation has many tribal dialects, and a number of tribal children using these dialects face difficulty when taught in the State language at class I level, pre-school education for such children can help. Pre-school education can also take care of the problem of student absence in the primary school for those remaining at home to take care of children of 3-6 years of the family.

Integrated Child Protection Scheme

According to MWCD (2014a, p. 8), since 2009-10, Government of India is operating Integrated Child Protection Scheme through the State Government/UT Administrations on predefined cost sharing financial pattern. The objectives of the Scheme are to contribute to the improvement in the well-being of children in difficult circumstances, as well as reduction of vulnerability to situation and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children from parent. Services provided under this scheme include (a) Homes of various types for children; (b) Emergency outreach services through Child line; (c) Open

shelters for children in need of care and protection in Urban and Semi Urban Areas; (d) Family Based on-Institutional Care through Sponsorship, Foster Care and Adoptions. During the financial year, 2013-14, Ministry assisted 1289 homes, 263 Specialised Adoption Agencies (SAAs) and 205 Open Shelters through State governments/UT Administrations. Norms for this scheme has been revised from 1st April 2014.

Improving Quality of ECCE in India

In the Regional Report for Asia and the Pacific, Rao and Sun (2010, p. 73) recommended that:

“Governments should ensure that only trained staff provides services to children and that early childhood educators are provided opportunities for refresher training and continued professional development. They must regulate the establishment and implementation of community based and centre based programmes and give adequate attention to health and safety standards, teacher qualifications and teacher child ratios. Governments should also ensure that curriculum guidelines are followed and that programmes are holistic, integrated and consistent with current professional knowledge and not merely a downward extension on primary school. The for profit sector should be regulated. To effectively monitor programmes, appropriate action must be taken when programmes fail to meet contextually relevant standards.”

MWCD (2014b) stated following eight quality standards for Early Childhood Care and Education: 1. Interaction; 2. Health, Nutrition, Personal Care and Routine; 3. Protective Care and Safety; 4. Infrastructure/ Physical Environment; 5. Organisation and Management; 6. Children Experiences and Learning Opportunities; 7. Assessment and Outcome Measures; and 8. Managing Support Quality System. MWCD document mentioned following Non- Negotiable Indicators:

- An ECCE programme of 4 hours duration with snack/break time of half an hour;
- 1 classroom measuring at least 35 square meters (carpet area) for a group of 30 children and availability of adequate (at least 30 square meters) outdoor space for a group of 30 children;
- Adequately trained staff;
- Age and developmentally appropriate, child centric curriculum transacted in the mother tongue/local vernacular;
- Adequate developmentally appropriate toys and learning materials;
- The building should be structurally safe and within easy approach. It should be clean and should have surrounding green area;
- Adequate and safe drinking water;

- Adequate and separate child-friendly toilets and hand wash facilities for girls and boys;
- Separate space allocated for cooking nutritionally balanced meals and nap time for children;
- Immediate health service in terms of First Aid/ Medical Kit available at the centre.
- The adult/ caregiver: child ratio of 1:20 for 3-6 year old children and 1:10 for under 3s should be available at the ECCE Centre. Children should not be unattended at any given point of time.

UNICEF India Country Office (2014, pp.95-99) listed following 8 National Quality Standards for ECCE:

Standard I: Interaction

Teacher/ adult - child interaction

- All children are treated equally and with respect, affection and care.
- Caregivers do not use physical punishment or verbal abuse to discipline children.
- Caregivers appreciate the cultural/ social and religious diversity of the children and promote tolerance and unity.
- Children with special needs are encouraged and enabled to participate in the learning environment. 2.1.5 Children approach the teachers/ caregivers freely at any time.

Child - child interaction

- Meaningful interaction between peers during meal/snack time.

Child environment/ material interaction

- Locally made learning materials available and used by children.
- Children take care of the material and put the material back at the designated spot.

Staff- family interaction

- Teachers/ caregivers visit children's homes to maintain good relationship with parents/ family members.
- Teachers/ caregivers have regular meetings with parents, conduct parenting education sessions and take feedback from the parents.

Standard II: Health Nutrition, Personal Care and Routine

Health (checkup, first aid, immunization, handling illness)

- Children's height and weight is measured regularly to identify malnourished children.
- Children are immunized at regular intervals and records maintained.
- Routine health check-ups are conducted for children and referrals provided, when required.

Nutrition

- Caregivers have adequate knowledge about balanced and healthy diet for children and encourage the same at the center.

Hygiene

- Classrooms as well as toilets are clean and hygienic.

Habit formation

- Teacher/ caregivers inculcate habits in children such as washing hands before and after meals, putting materials back in their place after using them etc.

Standard III: Protective Care and Safety

Adult supervision

- At least 1 adult for every 20 children in 3- 6 years age group and for every 10 children under 3 years.
- Socio/ Emotional protection Teachers/ caregivers are sensitive to the children's needs and are able to provide emotional support to children, when needed, particularly those who are facing deprivation.
- Physical safety / availability of first aid kit for children, in case of an emergency.
- Center has preventive measures, in case of fires and other natural disasters (fire extinguishers, sand buckets etc.)

Standard IV: Infrastructure/ physical environment

Space, building, outdoors (size, ventilation, light, disabled friendly)

- Provision of adequate light and ventilation in the rooms.

- ECCE center is disabled- friendly and allows easy access for children with special needs.
- Our ECCE center has shelves or a place for children to keep their belongings.
- Adequate space available for children. (1 classroom measuring 35 square meters (carpet area) for a group of 30 children and availability of 30 square meters of outdoor space for a group of 30 children) Availability of equipments for outdoor play/ activities for all children.
- Allocated space for cooking meals, storage of food items, hygienic kitchen and nap time for children.
- Availability of shelves or a place for children to keep their belongings.

Aesthetics, cleanliness, green area

- Clean surroundings in and around center.
- Designated area for garbage disposal, dustbins, brooms etc.

Safety and approach

- No hazards, such as uncovered drains/ wells, around the ECCE center.
- ECCE Centre is located in a safe place.
- Safety level of building is adequately maintained.
- ECCE center building is maintained in a good condition.

Water facility

- Availability of adequate, clean and potable water for all children.
- Toilet facility, availability of water and soap in the toilet.
- Separate toilets for girls and boys, which are safe and hygienic.

Standard V: Organization and Management

Programme philosophy and methods

- Children are NOT left unattended at any point of time.
- ECCE programme is conducted for 4 hours daily with children (with ½ hr snack/break time).
- Centre does not conduct rote-learning activities or formal teaching of 3Rs (reading, writing & arithmetic).
- Activities for development of reading, writing & number readiness are planned and implemented according to children's needs.

Documentation and records

- Documentation/Portfolio of each child's performance and progress is done and available to families and staff. 2.2.3
- Records of children's attendance, leave, and absence are kept and regularly updated.

Programme planning

- Balance of age-appropriate structured, guided activities and free play for children provided.

- Display of materials, children's artwork and handicrafts on the walls at the eye level of children or on a table.
- Flexible seating arrangements and layout of the class according to activities available.

Parent involvement

- Parents and children are provided information on nutritionally balanced diet and health education. 4.5 Parents encourage children at home to practice good habits that are modelled and practiced at ECCE center.
- Parents and community members also share their abilities and skills at the ECCE center.
- Teachers/ caregivers hold regular consultation with the community on ways to support and improve the ECCE center.

Staffing (adequacy, professional qualifications, professional development opportunities, reflective practitioners)

- Staff have the appropriate education and qualification/ experience.
- Professional development program with ongoing support of coaching and mentoring is provided.

Standard VI: Children Experiences and Learning Opportunities

- Provide opportunities for exploration, experimentation Adequate developmentally appropriate toys and

learning materials available for children to play and gain mastery and success.

- Opportunities are provided for play/ exploration with other children and adults.
- Encourage child to make choices and participate in play learning centers/ corners are used for children to play according to their interests and choose their activity.
- Foster child's language and literacy abilities teacher uses the language understood by children for interaction within the classroom.
- Promote each child's physical abilities Outdoor equipments are used for large muscle development where necessary.
- Nurture development and maintenance of relationships Provides opportunities to work and play in groups
- Cultivate enjoyment of and participation in expressive arts teacher encourages self-expression in arts & craft activities & appreciation with guidance.

Standard VII: Assessment and Outcome Measures

Assessment methods

- Caregivers are sensitive to and are able to understand factors that may be affecting children's progress/ performance.

- Teachers/ caregivers observe children's learning and development and keep a record of how progress is made towards the goals.

Assessment reporting

- Maintain portfolios of all children, containing anecdotal records, developmental checklists, samples of drawing, writing and other activities, observation notes and parent teacher meeting notes.

Facilitating development through assessment

- Use information to identify children's strength and weaknesses and plan accordingly.

Staff assessment and development

- Staff is regularly updated about recent information and practices around ECCE.

Programme assessment (staff meeting, parent feedback)

- Teachers/ caregivers share strengths of the children with parents and identify areas of improvement on a regular basis. They also partner with parents to work on these areas.

Standard VIII: Managing to Support Quality System

Teacher education and on-site professional development, opportunity for capacity building at all administrative levels, career path for the staff

- Teachers/ caregivers in our ECCE center attend relevant training to build their knowledge and skills in child development.
- Parent- teacher committee supports staff development and upgrading of professional qualification of teachers/ caregivers.
- Caregivers are prepared to deal with emergencies and disasters.
- Teachers/ caregivers get regular mentoring support from Supervisors/ Head teachers. Supervisors visit the ECCE centre regularly and demonstrate good practices.

ECCE in Private Sector

Private sector plays a vital role in providing ECCE. ECCE not being a state controlled system, in addition to high quality ECCE being delivered by reputed schools, there are abundant low quality ECCE being delivered by many profit making private schools. Manji et al. (2015, p. 35) stated that

“In terms of social factors related to parental choice, the recent IECEI study, which analyzed social indicators related to participation trends in ECE programs in three states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Rajasthan) on a sub-sample of 2323 four year olds, demonstrates a significant preference of the higher socio-economic status families in the rural sector for private schooling.”

Conclusions

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, is yet to develop appropriate mechanism to monitor process of delivery of ECCE programmes. In order to do this, it has to establish adequate numbers of Model ECCE centres by adequately upgrading selected Anganwadis. Like District Institutes of

Education and Training of MHRD, MWCD may go for District Institutes of ECCE and restructure its National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development to function as National Resource Centre for ECCE. This strategy is essential to give justice to the stipulations for ECCE provided in the constitution.

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Effectiveness of Training for Elementary School Teachers in Mizoram in the Context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

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Abstract

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aims to provide quality education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group across the nation. The programme places great emphasis on building the capacity of teachers for teaching, through regular training programmes. The Scheme provides for regular annual in-service training for up to 20 days per teacher. The SSA framework was amended to give more emphasis to practical classroom related teacher training by providing for a maximum of 10 days institutional training at BRC level, and another 10 days, specifically at cluster/school level, in order to ensure follow-up, peer learning and experience practical classroom transactions. In the present study, an attempt has been made to evaluate the 10 days institutional training at BRC level and 10 days at cluster/school level for improving the teaching learning practices of teachers through subject specific training in two language subjects – English and Mizo. The study reveals that the subject specific trainings are largely effective in the attainment of the goals.

Key words: Effectiveness, Training, Elementary school teachers, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Introduction

For improvement of elementary education, which has now become a fundamental right of all the children of the country, various programmes and schemes have been implemented from time to time. These schemes have rightly recognized the need to provide recurrent training to teachers who are already on the job to provide quality elementary education. Thus, teacher development through in-service teacher training

programmes has continued to be one of the thrust areas to ensure quality of elementary education.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aims to provide quality education to all children in the 6 to 14 age group across the nation. The programme places great emphasis on building the capacity of teachers for teaching, through regular training programmes. The Scheme provides for regular annual in-service training for up to 20 days per teacher. The

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SSA framework was amended to give more emphasis to practical classroom related teacher training by providing for a maximum of 10 days institutional training at BRC level, and another 10 days, specifically at cluster/school level, in order to ensure follow-up, peer learning and experience practical classroom transactions. SSA also provides for 30 days induction training for newly recruited trained teachers to orient them to their roles and responsibilities, the expectations of the SSA programme and specific state/district priorities in quality education. Further, 60 days training is also provided for teachers who have not received pre-service training. All training programmes are funded from SSA and cover several pedagogical issues, including content and methodology, improving teaching learning transactions at class room level. States have started exploring several innovative means of imparting these trainings, including use of distance, self-learning mode and use of educational technology.

States prepare their own teacher training schedules and programmes based on fresh guidelines for in-service teacher training under SSA prepared by NCERT in January 2007 that was shared with all the states. Based on this, the state of Mizoram also prepared training calendars for different years and conducted the trainings according to the schedules. Apart from training in general topics, subject specific trainings are also conducted for teachers teaching the specific subjects. Each subject-specific-

training has its own objectives. A very important concern in this regard is whether the trainings are effective for the teachers or not, or whether the objectives of the trainings are fulfilled or not.

To address the concern raised above, it is pertinent to take up investigation on these. However, when the investigators made a serious exploration of various sources to locate empirical studies of present nature, they hardly found any empirical study conducted anywhere in the country. Since SSA is a new scheme introduced in the year 2001 only, no study on SSA can be expected prior to 2001 and two/three years after. Being a government scheme, its implementation is monitored by external agencies like universities and others as monitoring institutions. In the case of Mizoram, Department of Education, Mizoram University takes up the monitoring work but it is beyond their scope to address the issues raised above. Moreover, no study of this kind has been found to have been conducted in Mizoram. It is against this background that the investigators decided to take up an evaluative study on effectiveness of training of elementary school teachers in Mizoram in the context of SSA.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms Used

The terms used in the article are quite familiar. However, the following terms which have specific meaning in the context of the study are explained below.

Training: Training in the present study implies the twenty days in-service training

of teachers broken up into ten days institutional training at BRC level, and another ten days specifically at cluster/school level organized every year under SSA of Mizoram in conformity to the broad/core objectives stipulated by MHRD, Government of India.

Elementary School Teachers: Elementary school teachers refer to the teachers teaching classes I to VIII in composite elementary schools or primary schools comprising of classes I-IV and middle schools comprising of classes V-VIII.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) literally means Education for All. It is a campaign on a mission mode for universalization of elementary education in the whole of our country.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been conducted with the following objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of English for both primary and middle school teachers in Mizoram under SSA.
- 2) To compare the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of English with reference to stages of education and gender of teachers.
- 3) To evaluate the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of Mizo for both primary and middle school teachers in Mizoram under SSA.
- 4) To compare the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of

Mizo with reference to stages of education and gender of teachers.

Delimitation of the Study

In the present study, training has been delimited to the training on teaching learning of two language subjects i.e. English and Mizo only that are imparted to elementary school teachers in Mizoram by SSA.

Methodology of the Study

For the present study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches of research were employed. Stratified random sampling method was applied as sampling technique. First of all, the whole of Mizoram was stratified based on districts. At first, out of the eight districts, four were randomly selected. Elementary schools in the four districts were again stratified into primary and middle schools. Forty schools in each district consisting of 20 primary and 20 middle schools were again randomly selected as sample schools. Two separate questionnaires were developed by the investigators to assess the effectiveness of the training programmes for the two subjects- English and Mizo focusing on the objectives of the training programmes. Data were collected through the questionnaires from all teachers of the sample schools who had attended subject-specific trainings in English and Mizo conducted at BRC level. Responses from 124 and 98 teachers of English and Mizo respectively were obtained. The data were organized and analyzed both qualitatively and

quantitatively with respect to the two subjects. For quantitative analysis frequency and percentage were used.

Analysis of Data

Effectiveness of ‘Training on Teaching-Learning of English’ for Primary and Middle School Teachers

The first objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of English for both primary and middle school teachers in Mizoram under SSA. The questionnaire for assessing the effectiveness of the

subject specific training in English has seven statements with two alternative choices ‘ Yes’ and ‘No’. Further, in order to reveal the extent to which the trainees have been benefitted, two more alternatives- ‘To a great extent’ and ‘To some extent’ were given for those who would respond ‘Yes’. All the seven statements were prepared based on objectives of subject specific trainings in English conducted at BRC level. The data were analyzed according to the objective of the study and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Responses of Teachers on Effectiveness of Training on Teaching-Learning of English

State- ment No.	Statement	Response (N = 124)		
		Yes		No
		To a great extent	To some extent	
1	It helped me become more aware of my students’ pronunciation difficulties	82 (66.1)	42 (33.9)	0 (0.0)
2	It enabled me to use a range of simple techniques for helping my students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds	54 (43.5)	36 (29)	34 (27.5)
3	It improved my ability to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary at each level	44 (35.4)	40 (32.3)	40 (32.3)
4	It improved my ability to use various techniques for showing new vocabulary	56 (45.1)	25 (20.2)	43 (34.7)
5	It increased my knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and parts of the sentence	54 (43.5)	32 (25.8)	38 (30.7)

Effectiveness of Training for Elementary School Teachers in Mizoram in the Context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

6	It improved my ability to conduct different activities for teaching grammar	62	28	34
		(50)	(22.6)	(27.4)
7	It helped me improve my techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing	75	22	27
		(60.5)	(17.7)	(21.8)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

Table 1 reveals that all the respondents who had attended subject specific trainings in English reported that they became more aware of their students' pronunciation difficulties as a result of the training. Further, 66.1% and 33.9% of them said that they were benefitted to a great extent and to some extent respectively by the training in this regard. Relating to the second statement 72.5% responded positively and the rest 27.5% responded negatively. It implies that the training enabled majority of the teachers to use a range of simple techniques for helping their students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds. Relating to the third statement 67.7% responded positively (35.4% to a great extent and 32.3% to some extent) and the rest 32.3% responded negatively. It implies that majority of the trainees perceived the training programme helpful to them in improving their abilities to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary. Relating to the 4th statement 65.3% responded positively (45.1% to a great extent and 20.2% to some extent) and the rest 34.7% responded negatively. It implies that majority of the trainees perceived the training programme helpful to them in improving their abilities to use various techniques for showing new

vocabulary. The 5th statement was responded positively by 69.3% (43.5% to a great extent and 25.8% to some extent) and negatively by 30.7%. It implies that majority of the trainees perceived the training programme helpful to them in enhancing their knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and parts of the sentence. Relating to the 6th statement 72.6% responded positively (50% to a great extent and 22.6% to some extent) and the rest 27.4% responded negatively. It implies that majority of the trainees perceived the training programme helpful to them in improving their abilities to conduct different activities for teaching grammar. Similarly, relating to the last (7th) statement 78.2% responded positively (60.5% to a great extent and 17.7% to some extent) and the rest 21.8% responded negatively. It implies that majority of the trainees perceived the training programme helpful to them in improving their techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The percentages of teachers who considered the trainings in English subject ineffective on attainment of the seven objectives ranged from 21.8 to 34.7. Thus, the results indicate that the objectives of

subject specific trainings in English conducted at BRC level were largely fulfilled in case of majority of the trainees.

The second objective of the study was to compare the effectiveness of

training on teaching learning of English with reference to stages of education and gender of teachers. The results are presented in Table 2 and Table 3 for stage-wise and gender-wise comparison respectively.

Table 2
Stage-wise (PS & MS) Responses of Teachers on Effectiveness of Training on Teaching-Learning of English

Statement No	Statement	Primary School (N = 42)			Middle School Teachers (N = 82)		
		Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No	Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No
1	It helped me become more aware of my students' pronunciation difficulties	30 (71.4)	12 (28.6)	0 (0.0)	52 (63.4)	30 (36.6)	0 (0.0)
2	It enabled me to use a range of simple techniques for helping my students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds	22 (52.4)	14 (33.3)	6 (14.3)	32 (39)	22 (26.8)	28 (34.2)
3	It improved my ability to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary at each level	18 (42.9)	16 (38.1)	8 (19)	26 (31.7)	24 (29.3)	32 (39)
4	It improved my ability to use various techniques for showing new vocabulary	24 (57.1)	10 (23.8)	8 (19.1)	32 (39)	15 (18.3)	35 (42.7)
5	It increased my knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and parts of the sentence	20 (47.6)	14 (33.3)	8 (19.1)	34 (41.4)	18 (22)	30 (36.6)
6	It improved my ability to conduct different activities for teaching grammar	26 (61.9)	10 (23.8)	6 (14.3)	36 (43.9)	18 (22)	28 (34.1)
7	It helped me improve my techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing	25 (59.5)	8 (19.1)	9 (21.4)	50 (61)	14 (17)	18 (22)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

Effectiveness of Training for Elementary School Teachers in Mizoram in the Context of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Table 2 reveals that training on teaching learning of English is perceived to be beneficial to majority of both primary and middle school teachers. However, it has been perceived to be more effective by primary school teachers than middle school teachers. It is revealed from Table 2 that: (i) Out of the seven areas or objectives of training in English subject, the percentages of primary school teachers who perceived the training effective to a great extent are more than that of middle school teachers in five areas/objectives; (ii) The percentages of middle school teachers who considered the training as not effective are more than that of primary school teachers in all the areas; and (iii) The percentage of middle school teachers who found the training effective to a great extent is more than that of primary school teachers only in the seventh objective i.e.

improvement in techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. All teachers of the two groups are found to have been benefitted by the training in becoming more aware of their students’ pronunciation difficulties. In comparison to middle school teachers, the primary school teachers perceived the training programmes to be more beneficial to them to use a range of simple techniques for helping their students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds; in improving their abilities to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary and to use various techniques for showing new vocabulary; in enhancing their knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and parts of the sentence; and in improving their abilities to conduct different activities for teaching grammar.

Table 3
Gender-wise Responses of Teachers on Effectiveness of Training on Teaching-Learning of English

State ment No	Statement	Male Teachers (N = 52)			Female Teachers (N= 72)		
		Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No	Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No
1	It helped me become more aware of my students’ pronunciation difficulties	36 (69.2)	16 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	46 (63.9)	26 (36.1)	0 (0.0)
2	It enabled me to use a range of simple techniques for helping my students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds	26 (50)	14 (26.9)	12 (23.1)	28 (38.9)	22 (30.6)	22 (30.5)

3	It improved my ability to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary at each level	20	16	16	24	24	24
		(38.5)	(30.8)	(30.7)	(33.3)	(33.4)	(33.3)
4	It improved my ability to use various techniques for showing new vocabulary	22	10	20	34	15	23
		(42.3)	(19.2)	(38.5)	(47.2)	(20.9)	(31.9)
5	It increased my knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and parts of the sentence	20	12	20	34	20	18
		(38.5)	(23)	(38.5)	(47.2)	(27.8)	(25)
6	It improved my ability to conduct different activities for teaching grammar	24	10	18	38	18	16
		(46.2)	(19.2)	(34.6)	(52.8)	(25)	(22.2)
7	It helped me improve my techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing	30	8	14	45	14	13
		(57.7)	(15.4)	(26.9)	(62.5)	(19.4)	(18.1)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

From Table 3 it is revealed that all teachers of the two groups are found to have been benefitted by the training in becoming more aware of their students' pronunciation difficulties. Male teachers found the training on teaching learning of English more effective than female teachers to use a range of simple techniques for helping their students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds and in improving their abilities to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary. Similarly, female teachers found the training on teaching learning of English more effective than male teachers to use various techniques for showing new vocabulary; in enhancing their knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and

parts of the sentence; in improving their abilities to conduct different activities for teaching grammar, and to improve the techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Effectiveness of 'Training on Teaching-Learning of Mizo' for Primary and Middle School Teachers

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of Mizo for both primary and middle school teachers in Mizoram under SSA. The questionnaire for assessing the effectiveness of the subject specific training in Mizo has four statements with two alternative choices 'Yes' and 'No'. Further, in order to reveal

the extent to which the trainees have been benefitted, two more alternatives- 'To a great extent' and 'To some extent' were given for those who would respond "Yes'. All the four statements were prepared

based on objectives of subject specific trainings in Mizo conducted at BRC level. The data were analyzed according to the objective of the study and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Responses of Teachers on Effectiveness of Training on Teaching-Learning of Mizo

State ment No	Statement	Response (N = 98)		
		Yes		No
		To a great extent	To some extent	
1	It increased my knowledge about the importance of development of skills in language learning	74 (75.5)	24 (24.5)	0 (0.0)
2	It enabled me to collect and develop learning materials	52 (53.1)	44 (44.9)	2 (2)
3	It built self confidence in organizing skill development programme	66 (67.3)	32 (32.7)	0 (0.0)
4	It enabled me to conduct assessment of children's learning in reading and writing	58 (59.2)	38 (38.8)	2 (2)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

From Table 5 it is found that subject specific training on teaching learning of Mizo has four main objectives. The table reveals that training in Mizo subject is effective enough as the percentages of teachers who found the training effective to a great extent are much higher for all the objectives than that of teachers who found the training effective to some extent. Moreover, the percentages of teachers who viewed the training as not effective are very few and negligible.

With regard to effectiveness in fulfilling the objectives of training, the

above table shows that: (i) As many as 75.5% of the teachers perceived the training in Mizo subject as effective to a great extent in increasing their knowledge about the importance of development of skills in language learning while the rest 24.5% of the teachers found the training effective to some extent; (ii) The next highest percentage of teachers i.e. 67.3% perceived the training as effective to a great extent in building self confidence in organizing skill development programme and rest 32.7% of the teachers considered the training effective to some extent; (iii) Again, 59.2% and 38.8 per

cent of the teachers found the training effective to a great extent and to some extent respectively in enabling them to conduct assessment of children’s learning in reading and writing; and (iv) Lastly, 53.1% and 44.9% of teachers felt the training beneficial to them in collecting and developing learning materials to a great extent and to some extent respectively.

The fourth objective of the study was to compare the effectiveness of training on teaching learning of Mizo with reference to stages of education and gender of teachers. The results are presented in Table 5 and Table 6 for stage-wise and gender-wise comparison respectively.

Table 5
Stage-wise (PS & MS) Responses of Teachers on Effectiveness of Training on Teaching-Learning of Mizo

State ment No.	Statement	Primary School			Middle School		
		(N= 34)			(N = 64)		
		Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No	Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No
1	It increased my knowledge about the importance of development of skills in language learning	30	4	0	44	20	0
		-88.2	-11.8	(0.0)	-68.8	-31.3	(0.0)
2	It enabled me to collect and develop learning materials	15	17	2	37	27	0
		(44.1)	(50)	(5.9)	(57.8)	(42.2)	(0.0)
3	It built self confidence in organizing skill development programme	22	12	0	44	20	0
		(64.7)	(35.3)	(0.0)	(68.8)	(31.3)	(0.0)
4	It enabled me to conduct assessment of children’s learning in reading and writing	20	12	2	38	26	0
		(58.8)	(35.3)	(5.9)	(59.4)	(40.6)	(0.0)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

Table 5 shows that training on teaching learning of Mizo is more effective for middle school teachers than primary school teachers as a whole. The percentages of middle school teachers who found the training effective to a great extent to them are more in three out of four areas such as collection and development of learning

materials, building self confidence in organizing skill development programme and conducting assessment of children’s learning in reading and writing. Primary teachers are found more benefitted only in the area of increasing knowledge about the importance of development of skills in language learning.

Table 6
Gender-wise Responses of Teachers on Effectiveness of Training on Teaching-Learning of Mizo

State ment No.	Statement	Male Teachers (N = 50)			Female Teachers (N = 48)		
		Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No	Yes, to a great extent	Yes, to some extent	No
1	It increased my knowledge about the importance of development of skills in language learning	38	12	0	36	12	0
		(76)	(24)	(0.0)	(75)	(25)	(0.0)
2	It enabled me to collect and develop learning materials	30	18	2	22	26	0
		(60)	(36)	(4)	(45.8)	(54.2)	(0.0)
3	It built self confidence in organizing skill development programme	34	16	0	32	16	0
		(68)	(32)	(0.0)	(66.7)	(33.3)	(0.0)
4	It enabled me to conduct assessment of children's learning in reading and writing	32	16	2	26	22	0
		(64)	(32)	(4)	(54.2)	(45.8)	(0.0)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

Table 6 reveals that training on teaching learning of Mizo is more effective in case of male teachers than female teachers. The percentages of teachers who took the training as effective to a great extent range from 60 to 76 in the case of male teachers whereas the range for the same in the case of female teachers is 45.8 to 75 for all the four focused areas. Moreover, the percentages of male teachers for whom the training was effective to a great extent are more for all the areas in comparison to female teachers.

Findings of the Study

The study reveals the following findings:

- Training on teaching learning of English was most effective in helping teachers become more aware of students' pronunciation difficulties. It was also quite effective in improving their techniques of teaching the four language skills – skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The training was effective somehow but not that effective in: (i) enabling teachers to use a range of simple techniques for helping students to improve their pronunciation of individual sounds; (ii) improving their ability to use various techniques for showing new vocabulary; (iii)

increasing their knowledge about what grammar means, units of language and parts of the sentence; and (iv) improving their ability to conduct different activities for teaching grammar. The training was least effective in improving their ability to differentiate between passive and active vocabulary at each level.

- Training on teaching-learning English was considered to be much more effective by primary school teachers than middle school teachers.
- There was not much difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers on the effectiveness of subject specific training in English. As a whole, female teachers found the training more effective than male teachers.
- Training on teaching-learning Mizo was most effective in increasing their knowledge about the importance of development of skills in language learning and in building self confidence in organizing skill development programme. It was also effective in enabling teachers to conduct assessment of children's

learning in reading and writing and again in enabling them to collect and develop learning materials.

- Middle school teachers found subject specific training in Mizo more effective than primary school teachers.
- Subject specific training in Mizo was considered to be more effective by male teachers than female teachers.

Conclusions

With regard to trainings on teaching learning in the two language subjects-English and Mizo, conducted by SSA for elementary school teachers at BRC level, it may be concluded that the training programmes were largely effective in helping the teachers realize the various objectives of the trainings. It can be inferred that the training programmes were well designed and well executed. The objectives of the training programmes do not end with the trainings. The ultimate aim is that the teachers need to translate into practice and to improve the quality of education. The teachers must reflect their acquired knowledge and skills in classroom teaching as well as in dealing with the students in and out of the school so as to bring about desirable changes and improvements in students.

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“I never met a man so stupid I could not learn something from him.”

~ *Galileo Galilei*

“Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards.”

~ *Vernor Sanders Law*

Teaching of Mathematics in Internship Period of B Ed Students: A Case Study

Lokanath Mishra*

Abstract

Teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. Internship is the main focal period for B.Ed students. It is the time to innovate new practices of educating teachers for internship. The intent of this study was to investigate the influence of an Activity Based Mathematics Teaching in promoting innovation. In this study the researcher observed activity based method of teaching mathematics which was practiced on the B.Ed students of MJPR University, Bareilly in India. In this research paper, the author has developed a model of implementing activity methods of teaching mathematics considering the qualitative and quantitative results.

Key words: Activity based method, Mathematics, Pre-service teacher

Introduction

Teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. The revitalization and strengthening of teacher education system is therefore a powerful means for the upliftment of education standards in the country. It can make the teachers professionally competent and inculcate necessary pedagogical skills to meet the demands of the society. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) presented the following vision of teacher and teacher education:

- Teachers need to be prepared to care for children, enjoy to be with them, seek knowledge, own responsibility

towards society and work to build a better world, develop sensitivity to the problems of the learners, commitment to justice and zeal for social reconstruction.

- Teachers need to view learners as active participants in their own learning and not as mere recipients of knowledge; need to encourage their capacity to construct knowledge; ensure that learning shifts away from rote methods. Learning is to be viewed as a search for meaning out of personal experiences and knowledge generation as a continuously evolving process of reflective learning.

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- Teacher education must engage with theory along with field experiences to help trainees to view knowledge not as external to the learner but as something that is actively constructed during learning. Teacher education should integrate academic knowledge and professional learning into a meaningful whole.
- Teachers need to be trained in organizing learner-centred, activity based, participatory learning experiences – play, projects, discussion, dialogue, observation, visits, integrating academic learning with productive work.
- Teacher education should engage teachers with the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks to critically examine them rather than taking them as ‘given’ and accepted without question.
- Teacher education should provide opportunity to student-teachers for reflection and independent study without packing the training schedule with teacher-directed activities alone.
- The programme should engage teachers with children in real context rather than teach them about children through theories alone. It should help them understand the psycho-social attributes and needs of learners, their special abilities and characteristics, their preferred mode of cognition, motivation and learning resulting from home and community socialization.
- The programme should help teachers or potential teachers to develop social sensitivity and consciousness and finer human sensibilities.
- Teacher education programmes need to broaden the curriculum (both school and teacher education) to include different traditions of knowledge; educate teachers to connect school knowledge with community knowledge and life outside the school.
- Teacher education programmes need to help teachers appreciate the potential of hands-on experience as a pedagogic medium both inside and outside the classroom; and work as integral to the process of education.
- Teachers need to re-conceptualize citizenship education in terms of human rights and approaches of critical pedagogy; emphasize environment and its protection, living in harmony within oneself and with natural and social environment; promote peace, democratic way of life, constitutional values of equality, justice, liberty, fraternity and secularism, and caring values.
- In view of the many-sided objectives of teacher education the evaluation protocol needs to be comprehensive and provide due place for the evaluation of attitudes, values,

dispositions, habits and hobbies ,in addition to the conceptual and pedagogical aspects through appropriate quantitative as well as qualitative parameters.

Activity Based Mathematics Teaching in Teacher Education

Activity -Based Learning is an umbrella term that refers to several models at instruction that focuses the responsibility of learning on the learners (Wikipedia, 2008). Activity-based teaching is an approach to education focusing on the idea that students should be engaged through actions. This is in contrast to some traditional forms of teaching in which an educator lectures or otherwise relays information to students who are expected to absorb what they are told. In activity-based teaching, an educator serves the function of facilitator, assisting students through the learning process and providing them with guidance. Various actions and tasks can be used in this type of program, allowing students to become directly involved in the learning process, rather than remaining passive. The purpose of activity-based teaching is for an educator to engage students directly, drawing them into a lesson so that they become a participant in their own learning. Some traditional forms of education often relied upon the educator as a knowledgeable expert who simply provided information to students. In this type of environment, the learners were expected to act as sponges that absorbed information, regardless of any

particular type of effort made on their behalf. The students were taught, but there was not necessarily a focus upon them being a participant and actively learning while in a classroom

The Study

The intent of this study was to investigate the influence of an Activity based Mathematics teaching in promoting innovation.

Research questions

The questions the study seeks to answer are:

- 1) What influence did an activity based teaching have on pre-service secondary Mathematics teachers' disposition towards, and utilization of an innovation?
- 2) What factors influenced student teachers' instructional decisions during their practicum?

Delimitation

The present study was delimited to Vivek College of Education, Bijnor District affiliated to M.J.P.R University, Bareilly in India.

Activity Based Mathematics Teaching (ABMT)

Despite its theoretical appeal, ABMT has not been widely utilized in Mathematics Teaching. As a result, it is unlikely that student teachers would be familiar with the approach prior to

entering into the B.Ed course. This means that ABMT would truly be an innovation for the student teachers participating in the study.

Sample

Data for the study was collected from 18 Pre-service teacher having mathematics method in B.Ed course of the year 2012-13.

Tools and Procedure of Data Collection

Data were collected at three periods of time - the beginning of the course i.e. in the month of July, before the winter vacation i.e. in December and the conclusion of the two week practicum in the month of April during 2012-13. This enabled the researcher to assess the influence of the ABMT and the two week practicum on students' perceptions and utilization of ABMT. Quantitative data was collected in the form of the at each of the data collection periods. The Pedagogical opinion Scale (POS) consisted of sixteen statements relating to eight topics such as fraction trigonometry, co ordinate geometry algebraic expression , second degree equation, graphical representation of data, function and relation and set theory . Each topic was represented in the scale with a positive and negative statement and students were asked to express their level of agreement towards each statement using a three point scale. The incorporation of positive and negative statements facilitated the use of the split-half method to assess the inner reliability

of each statement pair. The overall rating of the pairs on the scale was 0.82.

Major Findings

Influence of the activity based mathematics teaching

At the beginning of the B.Ed course students generally viewed mathematics teaching as a very difficult task. The role of the teacher was to carefully select and sequence the mathematical concepts introduced and provide opportunities for students to solidify their knowledge about the mathematics teaching through numerous activities. "The activity based method makes classroom management very easy. most students were sceptical about the pedagogical value of ABMT, comets are taken by the researcher and analysed .The comments demonstrate pre-service teachers' perception of mathematics teaching knowledge from concepts introduced by the teacher. The results of the personal inquiry promoted in the class were positive. One student noted that the course had "a particularly catalytic effect." In addition to promoting general professional development, the activity based teaching also prompted a general shift in students' disposition towards the innovation.

Influence of the Practicum

Two case studies were presented which highlight adopting of activity based method of teaching mathematics by the student teachers from utilizing innovative practices.

Case study -1

Experimentation with Shalini

When Shalini started the practicum she was excited about the prospect of experimenting with concepts introduced by the teacher educator. As per her opinion everybody fears to teach mathematics. After being exposed to a variety of new alternatives in her methods of mathematics teaching, Shalini was anxious to adopt this method in her practice teaching.

In the course of practice teaching, Shalini was placed with two mentor teacher Educators – a Physical science teacher educator and a mathematics teacher educator. Her experiences with each of the mentor teacher educators would be very different. Shalini taught 6th class mathematics to verification of right angle triangle

Activity – I- A: Verification of Right angle triangle.

Pre requisite knowledge: Area of circle, circumference of circle

Material required: Pencil, simple paper or notebook paper

Procedure:

Draw a circle and fold it directly in half and crease it well. Open it and hold the circle at the end of the crease and fold the circle in half again but at this time match up the end points of the crease. Again open the circle and fold in one of the outer, curved edges of the circle until it just touches the dot in the middle. Crease it well. Again open

it and fold the opposite side of circle and fold it so that the curved part just touches the center and the bottom forms a perfect point and that makes the cone. Fold the top of the cone down until the curved part touches the centre of the circle. The top corners should make perfect points. Crease well and equilateral or acute triangle is formed. Fold new triangle in half by matching up two of the points, crease well. The new crease splits the triangle in half.

Shalini expressed her views that students are interested in this method. But since it is time consuming she could not finish the topic in due course of period, her experiences in the physical science teacher educator, Shalini was given a significant amount of freedom. She opined that: I was alone in the classroom for two weeks with my seventh class the student considered me as the regular teacher.” She decided to experiment with an inductive and deductive method with activity approach for teaching mathematics. She provided students the problems and asked them to solve in small groups to identify examples of each case. She felt as though the activity had been well organized; however, the results were not positive. Although she acknowledged that they didn't have the requisite skills to complete the activity, she attributed the failure of the lesson to her inability to control the teaching process.

Case study –II

Chhabi Gerg

Chhabi Gerg was assigned to a mentor teacher. The mentor teacher had

been teaching mathematics for over fifteen years and had established a very deliberate method of instruction. Chhabi Gerg explained: "Everything is the same and she teaches all of her classes, algebra or geometry, the same way. They do the exact same things and so it's very structured." The method she used was analytic, synthetic and activity-based which would then be reinforced and used through the completion of several exercises and worksheets.

Although Chabi enjoyed a very amicable relationship with her mentor teacher, she felt somewhat restricted to the method already established in the class she was teaching.

Activity – II: To find formula for Area and Volume of Cylinder

Pre requisite knowledge: Area of Rectangle, circumference

Material required: simple paper and pencil, scale

Procedure:

Draw a rectangle, Measure the length and breadth of rectangle, Fold it and make the cylinder and then measure the length and breadth of rectangle, i.e. height and circumference.

Area of a Cylinder

You can see that the surface is made up of two circles and a rectangle. The length of the rectangle is the same as the circumference of the circle! Imagine that

you can open up a cylinder like so: Area of Cylinder = Area of Rectangle

$$\begin{aligned} &= \text{length} \times \text{breadth} \\ &= \text{circumference} \times \text{height} \\ &= 2 r \times h \\ &= 2 rh \end{aligned}$$

Find the radius and height of the cylinder.
Volume of Cylinder

$$\begin{aligned} &= \text{Area of the base} \times \text{height} \\ &= \text{Area of circle} \times \text{height} \\ &= r, 2 \times h, = r, 2 h \end{aligned}$$

She said "I didn't really feel I had much room to move just because she was so organized and she had everything set out and they had a pattern and all of her students were used to it." The comments of the mentor-teacher were perceived by Chhabi to be a significant impediment to creating her own lessons. The experiences of the two students are indicative of the difficulties experienced by most of the student teachers in the study. Although most of them believed in the value of task-based mathematics teaching and expressed an interest in experimenting with the approach in a practical setting, very little experimentation took place. The structure of the teacher education program made it difficult to translate theory into practice. In university courses students were introduced to a number of theoretical concepts, including activity based mathematics teaching, which they were expected to then utilize in a practical setting. However, a number of the mentor teachers were not familiar with the concepts and, therefore, were not able to

provide support. Furthermore, the instructors who introduced the concepts and could provide assistance were not available for consultation.

Conclusions

Based on the whole study, a model for innovative activity-based instructions for teacher preparation is proposed. It is believed that the adoption of this model by teacher trainers generally and primary mathematics methodology course lecturers in particular in any institution will produce teachers who will be able to deliver not only activity-based mathematics but any other pupil-centred instruction Activity-based Instructional Model (ABIM) is a model with 4 major cyclical phases. These are:

- i. Planning stage
- ii. Delivery stage
- iii. Guided response
- iv. Skills formation

The results of this study demonstrate a significant effect on student teachers' disposition towards innovation. Nonetheless, the effect of the method was negligible on student teachers' utilization of the innovation during the practice teaching due to shortage of time. Data reveals the fact that there is a weak or non-existent link between student teachers and teacher educator, as an exercise in professional development rather than skill development. These point to the fact that the teacher education program is unlikely to play a prominent role in the promotion of innovation in teaching of mathematics.

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“If you don’t build your dream, someone else will hire you to help them build theirs.”

~ *Dhirubhai Ambani*

“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”

~ *Eleanor Roosevelt*

Problems Faced by Students Pursuing Technical Courses in Mizoram: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Technical Education is the academic and vocational preparation of students for jobs involving applied science and modern technology. It emphasizes the understanding and practical application of basic principles of science and mathematics, rather than the attainment of proficiency in manual skills. In the present study an attempt has been made to find out the problems faced by students pursuing technical courses in all the seven institutions offering technical courses in Mizoram. Out of the population of 1247 students pursuing technical courses in the state, 280 i.e. around 20% of the students were selected as sample. A questionnaire developed by the investigators was used to find out the problems and suggestions of the students. The study found that students faced a number of problems, the prominent ones being insufficient number of permanent/regular teachers, inaccessibility and inadequate facilities for practical works and lack of co-curricular activities.

Key Words: Problems, Students, Technical education, Technical courses

Introduction

Technical education plays a very important role in the social and economic development of India. For the development of the country and to place the nation on the same path with a developed country, it is needed to produce technically skilled manpower in adequate number according to the needs. Development of skillful human resources takes place by technical education as well as non-technical education. However, it

is through technical education that more skillful human resources can be produced. Apart from this, liberalization of the Indian economy demands well-trained personnel able to acquire new skills and knowledge independently. As such, it can be said that technical education is the base and the vital need for the development of socio-economic condition of the nation.

Technical education refers to learning of skills or some related skills by studying technologies, applied sciences

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and other practical activities. It emphasizes the understanding and practical application of basic principles of science and mathematics, rather than the attainment of proficiency in manual skills that is the concern of vocational education. It is the academic and vocational preparation of students for jobs involving applied science and modern technology. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) defines technical education as, *“Programmes of education, research and training in engineering, technology, architecture, town planning, management, pharmacy and applied arts and crafts and such other programmes or areas as the Central Government may, in consultation with the Council, by notification in the official Gazette, declare”*.

The history of technical education in Mizoram could not be traced back very far as no proper record was maintained in the past. Technical education is still in its preliminary stage of development. Prior to 1989, there was no separate department for technical education. School Education Department, before its trifurcation, was responsible for all matters related to technical education. It selected candidates with the help of the concerned department, for admission in different technical courses.

In the year 1981, the Mizoram Government established the first Technical Institution named Mizoram Polytechnic at Lunglei, offering only one course, Diploma in Civil Engineering with an intake capacity of 60 students

(Chhuanvela, 2007). The institution by this time was under the management of School Education Department. After 5 years in 1986, Diploma in Electrical Engineering was introduced in Mizoram Polytechnic, with an intake of 30 students and this became the second technical course introduced in Mizoram.

Based on the classification of technical courses mentioned in AICTE Process Approval Handbook 2013-2014, 16 courses were available in Mizoram in seven institutions at the time of data collection during 2014. Out of the 16 courses, 10 of them were started after the year 2000. The courses which were started before 2000 were only diploma level courses offered in Polytechnics. The first engineering course at bachelor degree level i.e. B.Tech. (IT) was started only in 2007 by Mizoram University, a central university which started functioning in 2001. The state was blessed by the setting up of National Institute of Technology (NIT) in 2010. Master of Business Administration (MBA) course was offered by Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI) University, Mizoram and Mizoram University (MZU). Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm) was another technical course available at Regional Institute of Para Medical and Nursing Sciences (RIPANS). Out of the 7 institutions offering technical courses, 2 are polytechnics run and managed by Government of Mizoram, 4 are under the management of Central Government and 1 is managed by a private body.

Rationale of the Study

Mizoram, one of the states of India, has been growing progressively in general education. Although, many researches have been conducted in the field of education by various researchers, research as well as detailed case study on technical education in the state has not been conducted. At present, only a few institutions offer courses for technical education and the courses offered are limited. As a result, the products of these institutions cannot meet the growing demand. Moreover, the institutions are not yet well established and are suffering from shortage of adequate infrastructure and facilities, equipment and materials, efficient man power and others. As a result, students are bound to face a number of problems. It is, therefore, important to explore the difficulties faced by students and to find solutions for the problems. Mizoram State Council for Technical Education (MSCTE) was established to improve the efficient functioning of technical education in Mizoram. There is a separate administrative unit of technical education under the Directorate of Higher and Technical Education to look after technical education solely. But till today, technical education is not popularly known and

recognized among the general masses in Mizoram. There are important questions the answers of which are not yet known. In view of this, a study aimed at finding out problems of students and their suggestions was undertaken. It is expected that the study will have implications for educational planners and the authorities in their efforts to improve technical education in Mizoram.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To analyze the problems faced by students pursuing technical courses in Mizoram
2. To suggest measures for addressing the problems of students pursuing technical courses and for improvement of technical education in Mizoram.

Methodology of the Study

The present study is a descriptive study and involves fact-finding enquiries on problems faced by students of technical courses in Mizoram. Population of the study consists of all the students pursuing technical courses available in 2014 in all the seven institutions as detailed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Institution	Courses Offered	Management
1	Mizoram Polytechnic Lunglei (MPL)	1 Diploma in Civil Engineering	Mizoram State Government
		2 Diploma in Electrical Engineering	
		3 Diploma in Mechanical Engineering	
		4 Diploma in Computer Science & Engineering	

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2	Women's Polytechnic Aizawl (WPA)	1	Diploma in Modern Office Practice	Mizoram State Government
		2	Diploma in Electronic & Telecommunication Engineering	
		3	Diploma in Garment technology	
		4	Diploma in Beauty Culture & Cosmetics	
3	National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)	1	Diploma in Electronic & Telecommunication Engineering	Central Government
		2	Diploma in Computer Science Engineering	
		3	Master of Computer Application (MCA)	
4	Mizoram University (MZU)	1	B.Tech (IT)	Central Government
		2	B.Tech (ECE)	
		3	B.Tech (CE)	
		4	B.Tech (EE)	
		5	Master of Business Administration (MBA)	
5	National Institute of Technology (NIT)	1	B.Tech (ECE)	Central Government
		2	B.Tech (EEE)	
		3	B.Tech (CSE)	
6	Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University, Mizoram (ICFAI)	1	Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Private
7	Regional Institute of Para Medical and Nursing Sciences (RIPANS)	1	Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm)	Central Government

A total number of 1247 students were in roll in the seven institutions offering technical courses at the time of data collection during 2014. Thus, all the 1247 students constituted the population of the study. A sample of 280 i.e. around 20% of the students were selected randomly to obtain data about their problems. Data were collected through questionnaire constructed by the investigators. In the questionnaire 11 broad areas were included in which students were likely to face problems. Under each area, there were certain

statements relating to the problems which had to be responded by putting a tick mark. The data were organized according to the 11 problem areas in terms of frequencies and percentages for analysis and interpretation. The results are presented in the succeeding section in tables 1 to 11 for the 11 problem areas followed by interpretation of the results.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data Regarding Problems of Students

Problems Related to Accessibility

Table1: Problems of Students Related to Accessibility

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Institution is too far from the city	92	66
2	Inadequate number of buses	78	56
3	Absence of bus service at frequent intervals	45	31

Table 1 shows that for 66 per cent of the respondents, far location of the institution from the city was a problem. For 56 per cent and 31 per cent of the students, inadequate number of bus services and absence of bus service at frequent intervals respectively were prominent problems.

Problems Related to Infrastructural Facilities

Table 2: Problems of Students Related to Infrastructural Facilities

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Inadequate number of laboratory	96	34
2	Absence of play ground in the campus	132	47
3	No recreation centre for students	90	32
4	Absence of space for indoor games	66	24
5	Unsatisfactory cafeteria	30	11
6	Unavailability of stationary store and reprography	90	32
7	Absence of cafeteria	30	11
8	Absence of auditorium	74	26
8	Inadequate provision of hostel	68	24
10	Absence of medical facilities in the campus	56	20

It is observed from the above table that, out of 10 problems faced by students with regard to infrastructural facilities, nine were from the amenity area. The main problem was absence of play ground in the campus (47%). 32 per cent of the students considered absence of recreation centre for students and stationary/reprography store as problems for them.

The table further shows that absence of auditorium was pointed out by 26 per cent, and absence of space for indoor games and inadequate provision of hostel was pointed out by 24 per cent as problems for them. Absence of medical facilities in the campus (20%) and unsatisfactory services of the cafeteria and absence of it (11%) generated problems for the students. Apart

from the amenities area, 34% of the respondents considered inadequate number of laboratory in the institution as a constraint for them.

Problems Related to Library Facilities

Table 3: Problems of Students Related to Library Facilities

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problem (N=280)	Percentage
1	Inadequate number of books related to technical courses	106	38
2	Short duration of retaining books	52	19
3	Insufficient number of books a student can borrow at a time	34	12
4	Limited time for library due to heavy class schedule	18	6
5	Inadequate reading space and facilities	22	8
6	Absence of reprographic unit	90	32

Table 3 reveals that 38 per cent of the students considered the number of books related to technical courses to be inadequate, and 32 per cent faced a problem due to absence of reprographic unit in the library. For 19 per cent and 12 per cent of the respondents, the duration of retaining book was short and the number of books students could borrow at a time was insufficient respectively. A few numbers of students also felt that reading space and facilities in library was inadequate (8%) and time for library was limited due to heavy class schedule (6%).

Computer Related Problems

Table 4: Problems of Students Related to Computer

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Inadequate number of computers for students	68	24
2	Absence of printer for students	110	39
3	Slow network in the campus	24	9
4	Absence of internet facility in the campus	50	18
6	Non functional computer in the computer laboratory	30	11
7	No proper maintenance of the computer	14	5

With respect to computer related problems, the above table shows that absence of printer for students and inadequate numbers of computers were problems for 39 per cent and 24 per cent of the students respectively. The table further reveals that presence of non-functional computer in the computer laboratory (11%), slow internet network in the campus (9%) and no proper maintenance of the computer (5%) generated difficulties for the students. 18 per cent of the respondents also faced problems due to absence of internet facilities in the institution.

Problems Related to Equipments

Table 5: Problems of Students Related to Equipments

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Limited equipments for practical class	44	16
2	Non-functional laboratory equipments	66	24
3	No proper maintenance of equipments	60	21
5	Outdated equipments	42	15

Table 5 reveals that for 24 per cent and 21 per cent of the respondents, non functional equipments and improper maintenance of equipments in the laboratory respectively were their problems. It further reveals that for 16 per cent, the number of equipments was limited and 15 per cent considered that the equipments available were outdated.

Problems Related to Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Table 6: Problems of Students Related to Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Insufficient number of permanent or regular teachers	230	82
2	Absence of regular Principal due to dearth of qualified candidates	70	25
3	Inadequate number of technical staff for practical class	46	16
4	Inadequate number of attendants to maintain the equipments	46	16

Related to teaching and non teaching staff, Table 6 reveals that insufficient number of permanent/regular teachers was a major problem as reported by 82 per cent of the students. Further, absence of qualified candidates for Principal and inadequate number of technical staff and attendants were perceived to be the problems by 25 per cent and 16 per cent of the respondents respectively.

Problems Related to Syllabus

Table 7: Problems of Students Related to Syllabus

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Some portion of the syllabus are irrelevant for skill development	28	10
2	Some portion of the syllabus are irrelevant for the present situation	16	6
3	Too theoretical	34	12
4	Less interaction with industry for students to have firsthand experience	28	10

Majority of the students did not find any problem relating to their syllabus. Among the few students who pointed out the syllabus related problems, 12 per cent mentioned that the syllabus is too theoretical, ten percent considered some portion of the syllabus as irrelevant for skill development, and 6 per cent perceived some portion of the syllabus as irrelevant for the present situation.

Problems Related to Teaching - Learning Process

Table 8: Problems of Students Related to Teaching - Learning Process

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Uninteresting teaching	140	50
2	Lack of preparation of teachers prior to teaching	60	21
3	Too theoretical teaching due to limited use of aids	106	38
4	Language and communication problems	50	18
5	Too short duration of practical period and too long duration of theory period	50	18

6	Too long duration of practical period and too short duration of theory period	2	
7	Excess number of students in one class	4	1
8	Excess number of students in a group for practical and project	100	36
9	Irregularity of some of the teachers	26	9
10	Unapproachable teachers to share the problems related to studies	36	13

With respect to teaching–learning process, problems most frequently cited by the students were uninteresting teaching, too theoretical teaching due to limited use of aids, and excess number of students in a group for practical and project by 50 per cent, 38 per cent, 36 per cent respectively. The problems here lie mainly with the teachers. The other problems were found to be perceived by a negligible number of students.

Problems Related to Apprenticeship/Internship

Table 9: Problems of Students Related to Apprenticeship/Internship

Sl. No.	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Duration is too short to have experience	64	23
2	No proper guidance from the competent authority	20	7
3	Less remuneration	74	26

Relating to apprenticeship/ internship, 26 per cent, 23 per cent, and 7 per cent of the students perceived less remuneration, short duration, and lack of proper guidance from the competent authority respectively as their problems.

Problems Related to Co curricular Activities

Table 10: Problems of Students Related to Co curricular Activities

Sl. No.	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	No proper arrangement for co-curricular activities	106	38
2	Limited facilities	100	36
3	Inadequate space	64	23

Regarding co-curricular activities, 38 per cent felt that the institutions did not make proper arrangement for co-curricular activities. Further, 36 per cent and 23 per cent of students stated that the facilities and space available for this purpose respectively were limited.

Problems in Connection with Placement

Table 11: Problems of Students Related to Placement

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Students facing the problems (N=280)	Percentage
1	Worry about placement/job due to unsatisfactory quality of technical education received	34	12
2	Worry about placement/job due to absence of proper campus interview	146	52

Table 11 reveals that in connection with placement, 52 per cent and 12 per cent of the respondents were worried about their placement/job due to absence of proper campus interview and unsatisfactory quality of technical education received.

Major Findings

From the analysis of the problems faced by students pursuing technical courses in Mizoram, the following were major findings:

1. Insufficient number of permanent or regular teachers was the biggest problem as the percentages of the students highlighting this problem was highest, i.e. 82 per cent.
2. The next prominent problems in terms of percentages of students mentioning them were far location of the institution from city mentioned by 66 per

cent and inadequate number of bus services highlighted by 56 per cent of the students.

3. Other problems faced by more than 50 per cent of the students pursuing technical courses were worry about placement/job due to absence of proper campus interview (52%) and uninteresting teaching of teachers (50%).

4. Absence of play ground in the campus (for 47%), absence of printer for students (for 39%), inadequate number of books related to technical course (for 38%), excess number of students in a group for practical and project (for 36%), inadequate number of laboratory (for 34%), absence of recreation centre for students and stationary/reprography store (for 32%), absence of reprographic unit in the library (for 32%) and absence of bus service at frequent intervals (for 31%) were other prominent problems faced by the students of technical courses.

5. Problems mentioned by less than 30 per cent of the students were as follow:
- a) Regarding Infrastructural Facilities: absence of auditorium, space for indoor games & inadequate provisions of hostel and medical facilities in the campus (for 26%, 24% and 20% respectively) and unsatisfactory services and absence of cafeteria in the campus (for 11%).
 - b) Regarding Library and its Facilities: Short duration of retaining book (for 19%), limited number of books students could borrow at a time (for 12 %), inadequate reading space with facilities and limited time for library due to heavy period
 - c) Regarding Computer and its Accessories: Inadequate number of computer for students (for 24%), non functional computer in the computer laboratory, slow network internet in the campus, inappropriate maintenance of the computer and absence of internet facilities in the institution (for 18%).
 - d) Regarding Equipment: Non functional equipment in the laboratory (24%), no proper maintenance of equipments (21%), limited equipment available (16%) and outdated equipment available (15%).
 - e) Regarding Teaching and Non Teaching Staff: Absence of permanent principal (for 25%) and inadequate number of technical staff and attendant for smooth functioning of the laboratory (for 16%)
 - f) Regarding Syllabus: Irrelevance of some portions of the syllabus for skill development (for 10%), some portions of the syllabus not suited with the present situation (for 6%) and syllabus too theoretical (for 12%) and interaction of the institution with industry was less (for 10%).
 - g) Regarding Apprenticeship or Internship: Less remuneration (26%), short duration (23%) and lack of guidance from the competent authority (7%).
 - h) Regarding Co-Curricular Activities: Facilities and space available for this purpose were too limited.
 - i) Regarding Placement: Unsatisfactory quality of technical education received (for 12%).

Conclusions

It is accepted worldwide that attaining faster economic growth requires a faster development of technical education and training. Developing countries need to emphasize on technical education and training as it is an essential part in capacity and competence building for the socio-economic growth and development. With regard to technical education, Mizoram is still in its infancy stage and is far behind other states of India. A big challenge faced by the state

is that being a developing state it has a long way to go to reach the same level of technical education as other states. The change in social and economic environment demands for more skilled-man power in various fields of work, Mizoram is lagging in this arena, and therefore, promotion of technical education to meet the demands is the need of the hour. The following measures are suggested for solution of the problems faced by students pursuing technical courses in Mizoram and for further improvement of technical education in the state:

- Necessary steps should be taken for the recruitment of teachers and to fill the vacant teaching posts to reduce the problems faced due to inadequate number of teachers.
- Transportation system should be improved by increasing the number of buses and setting of bus timing at more frequent intervals to solve the problems related to accessibility.
- Emphasis should be given on campus interview for outgoing and passed-out students. Proper functioning of Placement Cell and Counseling Centre in the institutions should be ensured.
- The already available infrastructure and equipments need proper maintenance in some institutions, as most of the equipments were obsolete.
- Authority must pay attention to all round development of the students. Institutions should be equipped with play ground, auditorium, space for indoor games, sports facilities etc.
- Duration of days a student can borrow books from the library and number of books a student can borrow at a time need to be increased by the institutions.
- Use of ICT in teaching-learning process should be promoted. To make their teaching interesting, teachers should make use of ICT facilities.
- Computers should be made available for students in the institutions. Efforts should be made to make the institutions or campuses Wi-Fi enabled to help students in accessing latest information and data from internet.
- Appointing more number of technical and supporting staff, increasing the number of laboratories, increasing the number of books related to technical courses, thorough preparation of teachers prior to teaching and increasing duration of practical period need to be taken care of by the institutions.
- Duration of apprenticeship where relevant, should be extended to enable students to have better and thorough experience in work.

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Dr.B.R. Ambedkar: A Socio-Political Missionary

K. Vidyasagar Reddy*

Abstract

This paper is aimed at highlighting the ideas and ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the champion of downtrodden masses and the marginalized communities in India. Given his multi-dimensional contribution towards ameliorating the living conditions of millions of such communities, Dr. Ambedkar deserves the greatest appreciation and admiration. While his constitutional contribution is living memory to generations of Indians, past and present, his socio-political vision is hardly exposed, leave alone realized, in any serious manner. His social revolutionary role in particular is least covered in the academic discourses in the country. Thus, this paper makes a humble attempt in this direction to remember his multiple activities at a glance and thereby to give him the place he deserves in the political history of Independent India. Obviously, leading contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in making of the Indian Constitution has been elucidated in this paper. As part of it an attempt is made to highlight the main focus of Dr. Ambedkar's vision on socio-economic issues whose significance is felt even at present times. Having measured Dr. Ambedkar's idea of democracy one can feel that he had unshakeable faith in democracy and its practice. In his conception of egalitarian society, democracy has had an amazing role which he defined as 'one person, one vote'; and 'one vote, one value'. Further, democracy means empowerment of any person for participating in the process of decision-making relating to him or her. Thus, his memorable contribution in letter and spirit will always guide the nation on its path of justice, liberty and equality. This paper is a humble attempt to pay a tribute to a great humanist of this century on his 125th Birth Anniversary this year.

Key words: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Socio-political missionary, Constitutional contribution, Reservation process.

Prior to Independent India, the country was manifested with the crisis-ridden social order of numerous castes and communities. There was hardly any social cohesion in its people for centuries on end.

Obviously, that was both the cause and consequence of alien rule in the country. Thus, none of the regimes, native or alien, had ever affected the social fabric of its people in any significant way¹. The

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mainstream Indian society and its upper castes had alienated the marginalised from possessing or acquiring normal citizenship. In the façade of traditional social structure, the unequal Hindu religious institutions were imposed on all communities. Apparently, there were four major castes that caused disunity, both vertically and horizontally in the Indian society². Indian 'lowest castes' like Dalits (16%) and Adivasis (8%) were socially discriminated and became marginalised from the mainstream. Due to the hierarchical caste system³, these communities had been denied equal opportunities in dimensions of social life. And, these were deprived of any basic rights, let alone human rights, for centuries on end.

According to Marc Galanter⁴, 'unlike the whites of the US who fought both the civil war and led civil liberties movement to help African Americans gain equality or established associations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People', their Indian counterparts (manuwadis)⁵ remained indifferent towards the lowest castes. Additionally, the fifth caste (untouchable) was introduced to create havoc in the Indian society once for all. Despite many a social reform movement, casteist discrimination was preached, practiced and propagated in the country. Of all social evils that had undermined Indian social life most was the 'manuwadi practice of untouchability' towards its fellow-Indians, the 'Dalits', formally known as the Scheduled Castes (SCs). Besides women under patriarchy, there

were also some aboriginal communities, the 'Adivasis', or else known as the Scheduled Tribes (STs) who inhabited the Northeast and other remote regions of India, who had faced the similar wrath of 'mainstream Indians' for over centuries on end.

Additionally, the country was also divided along religious lines, as there were several Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs who constituted the religious minorities of plural India. Despite these diverse communities, there remained a common feeling of cultural oneness among all the Indians during the course of freedom struggle. However, these latent differences appeared on the political horizon once freedom was conceded to India. In other words, there were several challenges that the Indian Nation and its people were confronted with on the eve of its Independence. Understandably, the new government had to address such socio-political problems so as to ensure proper governance in the largest democracy like India.

While the Indian state recognised all its citizens as one and the same, its various governmental agencies did not implement the Constitutional provisions for several decades. It was only after a couple of decades after independence (1947) that these marginalised communities were encouraged to practise certain Constitutional rights in the realm of political and economic development. Yet, their legal enforcement was marked by political setbacks and bureaucratic

sabotages. Defective application of reservation policy in public sector is a case in point. For, state bureaucracy smacked of upper caste mind-set (manuwadi) that got stimulus from the overall societal attitude towards the lowest castes. Although the casteist regimes were averse to enforce the reservation policies in the initial decades of independence, emerging economic crisis had diluted such policies thereafter. Incidentally, such a belligerent attitude evoked silent protests in 1960s and 70s in the country. Several social movements were launched under the leadership of middle caste sections of the marginalised. In consequence, the state and its status quoist parties having realised the political necessity to respond to electoral calculus have tried to negotiate the execution of certain schemes like reservations.

Besides the problems of social and cultural discrimination, the marginalised communities have had several other concerns and complications in the field of education, employment and economy that were expected to be addressed through the scheme of reservations. Although these policy initiatives were supportive to very few families economically, their socio-cultural dimension could not be reformed in any way. For, the policy implementation had been sabotaged at ground levels. While the casteist-societal attitudes are attributed for the failure of implementing the policy, lack of awareness among the marginalised cannot be overlooked in this context. Thus, responses of the state and

governments at these levels have been conspicuously apathetic.

While there was one common political leader, M.K. Gandhi, regarded as the Father of Indian nation, who emerged as the guiding force of the mainstream Indian society, his political devotee, Jawaharlal Nehru became the national leader of the Independent India. Both the political leaders since predisposed by similar overseas education and British liberal views and Western ideas like democracy and secularism, the country was expected to follow the alien model of governance. Gandhi was more conservative and traditionalist, whereas Nehru was willing to adopt a different and progressive approach in his work style. Thus, the new government had to follow both these leaders and their conflicting approaches if the country was to move ahead.

Rise of a Socio-Political Visionary

Meanwhile, at an alternative level, there was another-foreign educated scholarly Indian, described as the messiah of the downtrodden, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, emerged as the top leader of the so-called untouchable communities, the Dalits in India. Unlike the Congress political leaders and their primacy, Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar was disturbed more about the social cleavage that plagued India, due to prevalent caste system in the society⁶. Thus, he made it a foremost issue in his consistent struggle against social discrimination and inequality. He

launched many a struggle against the social evils and casteist atrocities of his times. Having honored Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, as his philosophical mentor, Dr. Ambedkar worked against the casteist practices in the country. He was a social reformer of unparalleled quality. He founded several institutions of educational and social nature in Maharashtra and outside so as to educate the masses.

Despite being faced with several uncharacteristic affairs at home and abroad, Dr. Ambedkar always stood firmly for his principles. He took up the problems of one-fourth of Indians, the depressed castes, to the International level (Round Table Conferences at London) on couple of occasions. Ultimately, he proved effective in achieving some concessions to his fellow communities, notwithstanding the stiff opposition from the Gandhian leadership. More than anything else, Dr. Ambedkar was successful in making the social issue on the top of political agenda of the emerging leadership of Indian government. At a time when the whole country was sycophantic of the efforts of Gandhians and Nehruites of the Indian National Congress for the attainment of freedom and forming a fresh government, Dr. Ambedkar was taking on them, on the issues of casteism and social inequality. Thus, he had to face the odd times, like swimming across the currents all the way throughout the country!

Dr. Ambedkar was born April 14, 1891 in a so-called untouchable

community (Mahar) and thus experienced the cruel form of casteism throughout his youth. Yet, he emerged on the heights of academic achievements in the world. Despite facing social discrimination at different levels, he studied law, philosophy and economics in the most reputed institutions at home and abroad. Having acquired a doctorate degree for his work in economics from an American University, he authored several theses and books thereafter. For instance, his writing on the 'annihilation of caste' became the most powerful writing of his times⁷. He practiced law in Mumbai courts, not as a professional lawyer but as a humanist, representing the concerns of the marginalized communities.

As part of his academic-administrative engagements, besides being the Principal, he was also working as a faculty in the law college. Dr. Ambedkar contributed several articles on the socio-economic plight of his fellow countrymen. He presented research papers in several national and international conferences. He delivered lectures in meetings in India and abroad. He was a multi-dimensional personality, having humanism foremost in his works ala Karl Marx of Germany. Having possessed rich intellectual qualities, Dr. Ambedkar wrote extensively on subjects ranging from society, religion, politics, philosophy, law and economics. Thus, framing of the Constitution for the largest democracy was assigned to Dr. Ambedkar.

Constitution-making

On the eve of India's independence, the Nehru-led government invited Dr. Ambedkar to serve as the nation's first law minister, which he accepted for four years. In November 1946, he was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal and in August 1947, was appointed by the Assembly to the drafting committee. Subsequently, Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee that was constituted by the Constituent Assembly to draft the Constitution for Independent India. Although there were several eminent freedom fighters, political leaders, intellectuals and educationists belonging to different parts of India, Dr. Ambedkar alone was selected and requested to lead the team of Constitutional makers. Appointed as the head of that committee on August 29, he worked for more than two and half years within the drafting committee and outside quite effectively. Thanks to his extraordinary knowledge and skills, Dr. Ambedkar ensured passage of the Constitution⁸ in the Constituent Assembly.

Besides Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a galaxy of great leaders and legal scholars in the Constituent Assembly such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar, B.N.Rau among others were associated with the drafting of the Constitution. Although it was the result of the collective efforts of those

many that were charged by the Constituent Assembly to write Indian Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar alone worked on it consistently. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Ambedkar won great praise from his colleagues and contemporary observers for his laborious work. Thanks to Dr. Ambedkar as Chairman of the Drafting Committee and the chief architect of our Constitution, the Indian government has always charted the path of democracy.

As part of his Constitutional mission, Dr. Ambedkar had to study several Constitutions both of his times and of the past, of other nations. He had to spend several sleepless nights during the course of the drafting assignment. He used to stay up whole nights while 'his community was in deep slumber' during the period. Apparently, he was influenced by the British, American, Canadian and Irish Constitutions in certain areas. In this Herculean task of Constitutional work, Dr. Ambedkar's thorough knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures was to come to his timely help. For instance, the Sangha practice from the Buddhist literature was incorporated in terms of voting by ballot, rules of debate and precedence and the use of agendas, committees and proposals to conduct administrative business. Moreover, he tried to incorporate appropriate provisions that were suitable to the Indian context in his draft. Although Dr. Ambedkar used the Western models to give the Constitution a form, its spirit was totally Indian!

Further, the draft prepared by Dr. Ambedkar provided several Constitutional guarantees and protections for individuals, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of social discrimination. Most importantly, Dr. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of positive discrimination that later on became the basis for reservations in education and employment for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes under various provisions of the Constitution.

Besides, the manner in which he singlehandedly responded to several questions being raised in the Constituent Assembly was worth noting. His resounding arguments on many controversial issues won him big applause during the course of debates in the Assembly. Further, there were elaborate explanations that were given to enhance the social relationships and this is why many famous scholars have regarded the features of Indian Constitution as the motivating factors behind the ever "changing and rebuilding society" of India and thus Dr. Ambedkar is rightly acknowledged for such a great achievement⁹.

Constitutional Safeguards: In the Constitutional grounding, he provided an inspiring Preamble to the Constitution, ensuring justice, social, economic and political, liberty, equality and fraternity to

one and all. Dr. Ambedkar was always a champion of fundamental rights, and as Part III of the Indian Constitution states, the fundamental rights are guaranteed to all citizens. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the most significant feature of the fundamental rights is that these rights were made justifiable. In view of coexistence of numerous religions in the country, and considering the case of religious freedom, he included it as a right, as part of fundamental rights itself. In a way, that has enabled India to remain a secular state. Lastly, the Constitutional right to move to the Supreme Court for enforcement of fundamental rights under Article 32 per se became the chief custodian of all other fundamental rights.

Aware of the plural character of Indian society, Dr. Ambedkar strongly advocated for the federal structure of the Union and States based on the principles of a strong Centre and independent States. Dr. Ambedkar also did great service to the nation by proposing the institution of an integrated judicial system and common All India Services with a view to strengthen the national unity and integrity. The significant contribution of Dr. Ambedkar is reflected in the protective discrimination scheme envisaged under some provisions of Part III (Fundamental Rights) and Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) dealing with the Constitutional mandate to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the other backward classes. Provisions like Article 17

prohibiting untouchability, Article 30 dealing with the protection of religious and linguistic minorities are some of the notable examples.

Moreover, Dr. Ambedkar was a strong advocate of the parliamentary form of government right from the inception of the Government of India Act of 1935. He firmly believed that the parliamentary system of government alone can usher in an egalitarian society through the application of principles of social democracy. Dr. Ambedkar's social democracy comprised of politicians and political parties with high standards of political morality, honesty and integrity, committed to the cause of the downtrodden and depressed castes. Even the Preamble of Indian Constitution echoes the principles of parliamentary democracy and other ideals. Further, he created the 'Schedules' so that those included in the Schedules are protected without any changes. The Constitution is indeed very lengthy and bulky, as its provisions are explained in a detailed manner.

Social Empowerment

Incidentally, Dr. Ambedkar, who fought for civil rights and struggled for abolishing caste and untouchability, made the new India a possible dream. Besides, Dr. Ambedkar was not only the father of Indian Constitution but also the liberator of all oppressed sections and communities. No other icon but Dr. Ambedkar can truly represent that socio-

cultural heritage in the modern period. Dr. Ambedkar always stood for equality, justice, liberty and fraternity and fought hard to integrate all Indians across the nation. As a social reformer, Dr. Ambedkar developed a progressive outlook that elevated his religious temperament to its peak. The humanist in him was always alive not only in words but also in deeds.

In fact, the most imperative contribution of Dr. Ambedkar was his battle for equal rights for women, socially and otherwise, at a time when patriarchy was discernible in its ugliest form in the country. Like the other marginalized communities, women were also suffering under chauvinistic discrimination silently for centuries. Unlike the American women and those in some western countries like England, France and others, who had to fight for their voting rights for decades before they were allowed to vote, Dr. Ambedkar facilitated Indian women to enfranchise since the adoption of the Constitution itself!

Yet, his solemn efforts towards women empowerment were unsuccessful when he tried to get the Hindu Code Bill¹⁰ in the Constituent Assembly passed. Thus, he had to resign from Nehru's Cabinet in October 1951. To quote from his statement made in the Parliament, 'for long time I have been thinking of resigning my seat from the Cabinet. The only thing that held me back from giving effect to my intention was the hope that it would be possible to give effect to the

Hindu Code Bill before the life of the present parliament comes to an end. I have agreed to break up the bill and restricted it to marriage and divorce in the fond hope that at least this much of our labor may bear fruit. But even that part of the bill has been killed. I see no purpose in my continuing to be a member of your Cabinet'. Further, he wrote at length on the 'rise and fall of Hindu women', in an article.

Dr. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for not only women, but also for backward classes and religious minorities. Meanwhile, Dr. Ambedkar kept some of the clauses of the Constitutional provisions (Article 340) very flexible and convenient so that certain amendments (OBC Reservations) could be made as and when the situation demanded. Thus there were numerous amendments made to the Constitution so as to offer reservation benefits to these OBC communities in the country. This perhaps was not due to any inadequacies inherent in the Constitution, but only to incorporate the changing times and situations in it, as and when there would be need.

Dr. Ambedkar also staunchly stood for empowerment of Dalits, Adivasis, Backward communities, religious minorities and women in India. He made it his life's mission to uplift the untouchables and other downtrodden masses from their unequal position of inferiority to that of equal position of parity in socio-economic status with so-

called upper-caste Hindus. For achieving this goal the reservation policy or the scheme of protective discrimination was advocated and implemented for ten years at least to ameliorate the conditions of various depressed and down-trodden sections of Hindu society. However, the scheme was not implemented sincerely by those who were at the helm of affairs at the center or in states. Hence, the scheme was extended time and again so as to make it a political issue¹¹.

As usual, the governments were interested more in politicizing the issue rather than implementing the scheme effectively. Or else, why do we have those members (s-elected) in the legislative and executive bodies of the government at all levels who are either unaware of what Dr. Ambedkar wrote in the Constitution or unwilling to implement the same in letter and spirit. Today's tragedy is that our own rulers hardly show any sincere interest for effective implementation of the basic Constitutional provisions. The Constitution of India provided to all its subjects right to live with honor and dignity. Yet the caste system is still playing disastrous role in the life of marginalized sections of the society.

Owing to his significant role in framing of the Indian Constitution, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was popularly known and revered all over India as the father of the Indian Constitution. His efforts to eradicate social evils were remarkable and his birthday is celebrated every year on April 14, not just as an official affair, but

also as a national festival. Having failed to realize his Constitutional dream of social equality in India, he died on December 6, 1956. The fact that he was posthumously awarded the prestigious Bharat Ratna as late as in 1990 exposes the hollow claims of our manuwadi political regimes, over the years. Thus, the less said the better about fulfilling his constitutional safeguards that still remains a dream.

Reservation Process

Due to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, political regimes at the Centre (Union) and in States (provincial units) had to implement some inclusive policies and thereby made certain efforts at assimilation of diverse groups into the mainstream society, but in vain. For, the political regimes were disinclined to challenge the entrenched social hierarchies. Instead, these status quoist regimes continued to travel by water in the mainstream society. As a consequence, the marginalized communities like the dalits, adivasis, backward classes and religious minorities that faced the wrath of social discrimination and developmental neglect for long, are still at the receiving end.

Thanks to Dr.B R Ambedkar¹², the reservation facilities in public sector had offered certain economic means of livelihood to more than 1.5 million Dalits, for instance. Besides, over 50,000 Dalits entered the field of government authority within a couple of decades. Obviously, these physical and economic benefits have

instilled some confidence in Dalit communities. The private sector that attracted around 90% of the job market was left free from state control. As part of Constitutional obligation, the reservation strategy was restricted only to the public sector that offers around 10% jobs¹³. Besides, it is only in the case of lowest category of jobs that the bahujansamaj was given its due share, particularly in the manual jobs. In fact, both sectors, public and private are essential in securing the proportional opportunities for dalits and adivasis. Despite many hurdles, reservation facilities has benefitted a section of dalits and adivasis economically.

At a time when the number of educated among these underprivileged classes/castes was increasing in geometrical progression, their share of jobs in the public sector was dwindling. This was more so in the last two decades, all in the name of globalisation. According to a Report of Working Group¹⁴ on Empowering of SCs, 1,13,450 dalits lost jobs due to the LPG policies in 1992-97, in the Central Government (national domain) alone. The process of their employment retrenchment was on the rise thereafter. Then, one can imagine the fate of those dalit employees working in the State governments' Public sector units during the period. The less said the better about their recruitment in private sectors!

Incidentally, vast majority of private institutions were hardly providing jobs to the candidates of the marginalised

communities. Obviously, the private sector that employs around 90% of work force in the country was under no obligation to fulfil the Constitutional requirements. Meanwhile, several studies¹⁵ on Labour Market reveal that insignificant percentage of these communities was employed, while excluding large majority of them by way of discrimination. Thus, there is a serious need of implementing private reservations in the country, and the sooner the better!

Conclusions

To conclude it, Dr. Ambedkar played a seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution. He used all his experience and knowledge in drafting the Constitution. In his capacity as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, he hammered out a comprehensive workable Constitution into which he incorporated his valuable views. He gave free India its legal framework, and the people, the basis of their freedom. To this end, his contribution was significant, substantial, and spectacular. Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to the evolution of free India lies in his striving for ensuring justice—social, economic and political—for one and all.

Notes

¹Naval, TR (2000). *Law of Prevention of Atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes*.

² Reddy KV.(2015). *Bahujan Politics in India: Beyond Reservations*. New Delhi: Trans-knowledge Book Co.

³ As part of Hindu religious practice of four-fold social hierarchy, caste played a divisive role in the Indian society for over thousands of years. Based on the birth of an individual, a Hindu can be excluded socially and otherwise.

Yet, the political regimes that effected the Constitutional provisions were status quoist and thus just rights are inaccessible to the marginalized communities so far. So the need of the hour is to implement the Constitution in its true spirit, which is humanitarian beyond doubt. It will enable the Indian society to overcome all social and economic evils that the Nation is faced with. The Indian Constitution was designed in such a way that all its citizens are equal before it as “one man one vote and one vote one value”, was advocated by Dr. Ambedkar. However, this sort of equality has been achieved in the political sense to an extent, but not beyond.

Socially and economically, all Indians are hardly alike. Besides the casteist social hierarchy that created havoc in the Indian society, the process of globalisation had undermined the Indian state and its policy initiatives and responses to reservations in recent decades. Unless the constitutional vision of Dr. Ambedkar is realized, there cannot be social harmony that he had always struggled and lived for.

- ⁴Galanter, Marc. (1998). 'The Abolition of Disabilities: Untouchability and the Law', in J. Michael Mahar (ed), *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- ⁵Manuwadi mindset refers to that casteist mental makeup which seeks to justify and promote the 'varnashramadhrama', whereby the prevalent unequal social hierarchy is continued unabated in various forms of Indian social life. As a result of such social cleavage, the upper castes that practice casteist discrimination (manuwadisamaj) dominate over the vast mass of lower castes (bahujansamaj), which ultimately become the victims of manuwadi rule in the country.
- ⁶Reddy, K.V., op.cit. p.109.
- ⁷Ambedkar, B.R. (1989). *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Vol.I*. Bombay: Government of Maharashtra.
- ⁸ While it was adopted on November 26, 1949, the same was implemented with effect from January 26, 1950.
- ⁹ Constituent Assembly Debates, (1989). Vol.I, Government of India, New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat.
- ¹⁰ The aim of the bill was to codify the rules of Hindu law scattered in numerous decisions of the High Court and of the Privy council, which form a bewildering mostly to the common man and give right to constant litigation.
- ¹¹Sastry, V.R. and G. Ram Reddy (ed) (2014). *Empowerment: State, Governance and Beyond*. New Delhi: Research India Press.
- ¹² The father of Indian Constitution, as part of drafting chairperson of the Constitutional scheme of reservations in education and employment, he had played an incredible role for Dalits and Adivasis in the initial decades of independence.
- ¹³ Even these reservations were never implemented beyond 10% in the middle category of posts.
- ¹⁴ 10th Five year Plan, Planning Commission of India, New Delhi
- ¹⁵ Sukhdev Thorat and others (ed), (2005). *Reservation and Private Sector*. New Delhi: Rawat Publication.

Biju Patnaik and Women Empowerment

Srinibas Pathi*

Abstract

Biju Patnaik (1916-2016) was a towering personality of Indian political life who was a link between the freedom struggle days and nation building process during the post-Independence era. He was all in one - freedom fighter, pilot, politician, industrialist, entrepreneur, airlines promoter, diplomat, Chief Minister, Central Cabinet Minister, newspaper owner, visionary leader and one of the makers of modern India. He contributed a lot towards women empowerment and gender parity and equality. Biju Patnaik, a dynamic leader with unprecedented mass following is remembered in his birth centenary year.

Key words: Politic, Diplomacy, Development, Decentralization, Equality, Women empowerment.

Biju Patnaik was a versatile genius. He was a living legend of his time. He belonged to that dare-devil genre of patriots who shirked no challenge to respond to any call of adventure for the cause of our country. And he also went far beyond the geographical boundary of India and directly participated in the freedom struggle of Indonesia against the Dutch which later on crowned him with that country's highest civilian honour i.e, the *Bhumiputra* or son of the soil.¹ Biju Patnaik, who has been very active in numerous fields of our socio-economic and political life, possessed a unique personality which might be described as larger than life. He was all in one – Freedom Fighter, Pilot, Politician,

Industrialist, Entrepreneur, Diplomat, Chief Minister, opposition leader, Union Cabinet Minister, Newspaper Owner, Visionary Leader and one of the makers of modern India.

Biju Babu, as he was popularly known, was generous to the neck and was quite open minded and pragmatic towards everything and everybody. He was brutally frank and outspoken which often landed him into trouble and complications. Perhaps this was the single-most important reason for his not becoming the Prime Minister of India in spite of having all the requisite qualifications. Few of his contemporary politicians could match the political acumen of Biju Babu.

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Bijayananda, the second child of Laxminarayan Patnaik and Ashalata Devi, was born on 5th March, 1916. He spent his childhood at Anand Bhawan in Cuttack, the commercial capital of Odisha. His ancestral place was Rasolkonda (Bhanjanagar), a part of the then Madras Presidency. He had two brothers and one sister. Laxminarayan was a judicial officer under Bihar-Orissa province. Biju was brave, fearless and adventurous from his childhood days. There are numerous stories regarding his daring activities in school and college. While he was a student of first year science in Ravenshaw College (now a Unitary University) Cuttack, he went to Peshawar (now in Pakistan) in 1932 on a bicycle covering a distance of thousands of kilometers. Biju and two of his friends braved inclement weather, forests, rough terrain and many odds to reach Peshawar and even Biju had to fight with a Royal Bengal Tiger on the way! He introduced pole vault game in Odisha and was its reigning champion for a long time.

Biju Babu joined the Indian National Air Ways, a constituent of British Royal Air Force in the Indian sub-continent. He was not meant to serve the imperialist power.² As per the suggestions of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Loknayak Jaya Prakash Narain, Biju used the British plane to carry Indian freedom fighters during the Quit-India Movement to different parts of the country under the most difficult flying conditions and used to land in unorthodox grounds. During this period, he came in close personal contact

with leaders like Achyut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Ashoka Mehta, Aruna Asaf Ali, etc. Soon, he was sacked from the Air Force Service and was imprisoned on 13th January, 1943. He was put in different jails in Punjab and Odisha. After his release, he set up B. Patnaik & Company, one of the pioneering business concerns in pre-Independence period.

Biju Babu became the Chief Minister of Orissa in 1961. He was the main organizer of the AICC Session in Bhubaneswar in 1964 where in the famous resolution on 'democratic socialism' was adopted. During the next two decades, Biju Babu remained one of the most prominent leaders of the non-Congress parties and political formations that resulted in the rise of the Janata Party which assumed power at the Centre in 1977 following the black days of national emergency (1975-77) and in turn putting an end to thirty years of uninterrupted Congress rule. Biju Babu became the Union Minister for Steel and Mines. During 1980-90, he was designated as the unofficial national crisis manager in Indian politics by the media. Be it the issue of Rama Krushna Hegde as the Chief Minister of Karnataka or Vishwanath Pratap Singh to become Prime Minister that depended upon the peculiar support of the BJP on the right and the Left Front on the left, Biju Babu was always ready to mediate. And, in fact, Biju has visited New Delhi twelve times to sustain the V.P Singh Ministry for eleven months. In fact, when Mr. Singh resigned, Biju Babu was

approached by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi at his Aurangzeb Road (now renamed as Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Road) residence in New Delhi to be the Prime Minister with outside support of the Congress-I which he declined. This offer was grabbed by Mr. Chandrasekhar who was in office only for a period of forty four days.

In 1990, the people of Orissa gave a massive mandate to Biju Babu in the Assembly elections. Under his leadership, the Janata Dal got 123 seats in a house of 147 and the outgoing ruling party Congress-I got only ten seats. Biju Babu became the Chief Minister of Orissa for the second time. In 1996 , after the fall of the 13-day old BJP Government led by Atal Vihari Vajpayee, the United Front, supported by the Congress-I from outside, assumed power at the Centre under Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Indra Kumar Gujral in succession. Biju Babu was a sure entrant into the Union Cabinet; may be as the Prime Minister. But due to the treacherous designs and unpardonable backbiting by a few of his own party men, Biju Babu was not included in the Ministry. He was admitted to Escorts Hospital, New Delhi on 30th March, 1997 and he breathed his last on April 17, 1997. But like all great personalities, the man who succumbed to heart failure, continues to live in the hearts of millions of people.

Biju Patnaik was instrumental in the establishment of a large number of institutions and organizations that include, among others, the Orissa Textile Mills, Kalinga Tubes, Kalinga Industries,

Kalinga Airlines, Kalinga Publications, Kalinga Refrigeration, Paradeep Port³ and Express Highway, Orissa Industrial Development Corporation, Ferrochrome Plant in Jajpur Road, Cement Factory at Bargarh, Sponge Iron Factory at Barbil, Regional Engineering College (now NIT) at Rourkela, Sainik School in Bhubanewar, Panchayat Industries throughout Orissa, Balimela Dam, MIG Factory at Sunabeda, Thermal Power Plant at Talcher, Charbatia Air Base, Orissa Flying Club, CRP Centre, Radio Training Centre in Ravenshaw College, Medical College in Berhampur, Engineering College (now University) in Burla, Regional College of Education in Bhubaneswar (now renamed as Regional Institute of Education under the NCERT, New Delhi), Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology in Bhubaneswar, Tikarpara Multipurpose Dam, Mahanadi Barrage, Samal Barrage, Indravati Dam, National Aluminum Company-NALCO (now one of the most profit making Maharatna Companies) and hundreds of educational institutions for girls and weaker sections of the society. Biju Patnaik set up the Kaling Foundation Trust in 1951 which in collaboration with the UNESCO has instituted the annual Kalinga Prize for the popularization of science in the world through study, research and scientific writings.

Biju Babu was a pioneer in many fields. He was nostalgic about the ancient Kingdom of Kalinga under Emperor Kharavela, the legendary Odia king and warrior. He wanted to develop Odisha

through the promotion of agriculture, education and industrialization. Biju Babu was a class apart. He was always at the centre-stage of both national and state politics, a position he hardly exploited to achieve petty personal gains.

Before going into the issue of Biju Patnaik's contribution to the cause of women empowerment, it is pertinent to discuss the notion of women empowerment per se. To empower means to give somebody the power or authority to act. So, this term is often used in the context of improvement of status, position and authority to some individual, group or community at large. Women empowerment has gained momentum throughout the world as a corollary of the feminist movement or feminism. Because women have not received their due or genuine place in most of the societies and have been the victims of male chauvinism and social stigma, so feminism grew as a reaction or backlash. The situation often gets more complicated as in most of the cases the role of women is either eulogized or underestimated; but seldom appreciated in its proper perspective. It may be kept in mind that notions like feminism, gender and women empowerment should not be studied and analyzed in isolation. Rather these ideas need to be located within the overall structural context and social dynamics both in macro and micro levels. The need of the hour is not to portray women either as victims or as martyrs; but to contextualize the discourse on empowerment. This has to be related to

the theories of social movement, state and development.

Today, many writers have proved that the biological determinism or conventional wisdom of portraying women as the weaker sex is not based on facts or scientific truth. Women's biological, genetic and physical make-up makes them not only men's equal but their superior in many cases. The only issue is that adequate opportunity should be provided to women to prove their worth. Women constitute the bulk of the work force and they also contribute more than half of the wealth of nations. But, at the same time, race, ethnicity and social class shape the working conditions and wages of women which are very often hostile, improper and inappropriate.

The Human Development Reports published by the UNDP during the past few years almost as an annual ritual have presented many negative features regarding the status of women inside the member states of the U.N. In most cases, women are engaged in economic activities; but in return, they are either unpaid or under-rated. More importantly, women put in more labour and are engaged in various types of productive endeavours.

Coming to the situation in India, women with varied cultural, social, economic, political and linguistic backgrounds constitute nearly half of the population. But they all share one common cause-as they, irrespective of these variations, work as productive

members of the society, with or without recognition and reward. Women sustain the family; shape the people's and society's fate; and share the bulk of life's burden. Social attitude, deprivation, unemployment, poverty and lack of opportunity only add to the precarious condition of women in India.

A number of social, economic, political, cultural and psychological indicators may be taken into account while analyzing the status of women in India which include, among others, centuries - old tradition, belief systems and norms relating to girls and women and their role; education and literacy among women (again it may further be subdivided into urban and rural settings); employment, unemployment and under-employment of women; low and unequal wage and compensation and gender discrimination at the work-place; female infanticide and maternal morality rate; skewed sex ratio; property and inheritance rights and privileges of women; plight of widows, destitute women, differently able women; women's age at marriage; social evils like dowry, sati and oppressions like physical and mental torture and all kinds of violence and atrocities on women; and, last but not least, political participation of women and their role in the decision-making process.

Many religious, cultural, social and political reform movements have tried to ameliorate the condition of women in India and to bring them at par with men. Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra

Vidyasagar, Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, Gopabandhu Das, Madhusudan Das and many other reformers and thinkers have tried to do their bit in this respect in modern times. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, was of the view that we should not compromise in the matter of women's rights. To call women the weaker sex is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. It is needless to mention here that women participated in large numbers in the freedom struggle including the Gandhian programmes like Satyagraha, picketing, bare-foot march and many other direct action programmes at par with men in different parts of India.

After Independence, the Constitution of India was adopted which guarantees equality, fraternity, justice and liberty to all men and women. Article 14 of the Constitution says that the state shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of the laws. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth; wherein clause-3 states that nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children. Article 16(c1.2) provides that no citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against, in respect of any employment or office under the State. Article 19 states that all citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and

expression and other rights. Besides these Fundamental Rights, the Directive Principles of State Policy as given in Part-IV of the Constitution, also provides a number of provisions for ensuring equality of men and women. Article 39 says that the state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood; equal pay for equal work for both men and women; and the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused. Article 42 provides that the state shall make provision for securing just and human conditions of work and for maternal relief.⁴

During the British regime, a number of social laws were promulgated in India that affected the status, position and role of women in pre-Independence era which include, among others, the Sati System Regularization Act of 1829; the Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act of 1856; the Indian Penal Code of 1860 (relevant provisions relating to award of punishment or various crimes against women); Special Marriage Act of 1872; the Married Women's Property Act of 1874; the Civil Procedure Code of 1908; the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929; and the Hindu Widow's Right on Property Act of 1937. These laws and a few such other Acts were the result of a number of socio-religious and cultural movements that were organized by social reformers and enlightened individuals and groups in different parts of India.

In the post-Independence era, a number of Acts have been adopted in India that affect women and their position vis-a-vis men. Such Acts include, among others, the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 (as amended in 1967); the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 (as amended in 1986); the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956; the Dowry Prohibition act of 1962 (as amended in 1984 and 1986); the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961(as amended from time to time); the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971; the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976; the Family Courts Act of 1984; the Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987; the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act of 1993; and the 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1993. These laws have been enacted by the Parliament of India in tune with the provisions of the Constitution of India, popular demands, agitation by women groups, and legal necessities. But there is a perceptible gap between the cup and the lip. A vast majority of women in India who are illiterate and who live in the rural areas still remain completely unaware of most of these laws and their relevant provisions which are only pious words and philosophical pronouncements as presented in the bulky law books.

However, the declaration of the decade 1976-85 as the Women's Decade by the United Nations brought about a change in the perception of the position and status of women and the issue of gender equality throughout the world including India. Successive U.N Conferences on Women and

Development, including the one held in Beijing, have emphasized on gender equality, gender equity, women participation in development and women empowerment.

It may be pointed out that women empowerment would be possible through a number of ways and means including those of a change in the mind-set of both men and women in all walks of our socio-economic and cultural life; better primary health care including reproductive health and reduction of maternal mortality rate; expansion of women's literacy, education (including technical and professional education); access of women to ownership of land and property; access of women (mainly rural and urban slum dwellers) to micro credit and marketing facilities; organization of women's self help groups and cooperatives for self-employment and gainful productive endeavours; and adequate and proper participation of women in the decision-making process including the local, state and national level governance. Besides the government, the civil society including grass-roots level women organizations should play a more positive and pro-active role for awareness generation among women throughout India.

As education including literacy is the main key to social development and women empowerment, Biju Babu was instrumental in setting up a large number of girls' high schools, women's colleges, women polytechnics and women B.Ed colleges throughout Odisha including a good number of such institutions in the

tribal dominated areas. During his tenure as the Chief Minister, a large number of SC and ST girl students were provided with scholarships. Several concessions were declared by Biju Babu for the privately managed but government-aided girls high schools and women's colleges. He gave particular emphasis to science education, skill development and vocational training of girls. During the International Women's Week (01 March to 08 March, 1994), mass awareness camps were organized by the State Social Welfare Board to spread the message of equality, empowerment and entrepreneurship of women. Biju Babu himself participated in a State level Workshop of Women and Science and Technology, a pioneering step in the post-Independence era in the State.

Employment opportunities come next. Biju Babu took a decision to raise the upper age limit by five years for women candidates for various state government jobs and for appearing at various written examinations and interviews in connection with recruitment. And he did not stop at that. He went on to announce 30 percent reservation for women in all categories of government recruitment. Biju Babu's government decided to take over the management of all the government-aided primary, middle and high schools which benefited thousands of lady teachers. Moreover, he took a revolutionary step by making a policy decision that all the posts of primary school teachers in Odisha

henceforth shall be reserved for qualified women candidates.

Biju Babu took a policy decision in 1994 to set up a Sabai Grass Development Corporation. Sabai⁵ grass is used by women belonging to SCs and STs to produce household items including ropes and rope-products. Often these poor women are exploited by the middle men and unscrupulous traders. It was decided that the Corporation would provide improved varieties of Sabai seeds and necessary implement to women engaged in this cultivation and trade. The Corporation would organize technical training of women for skill development and better production. Marketing of the products would also be taken care of by the Corporation. It was decided that the state government and *Youth-Ending-Hunger*, an international voluntary agency, would jointly operationalize the Corporation.

With a view to implementing the National Plan for Women's Development, the Government of Odisha under the Chief Minister ship of Biju Babu established the Odisha Women Development Cooperative Corporation (Odisha Mahila Vikash Samavaya Nigam) in 1991 which is currently working as the apex state level women's cooperative body. It is a joint endeavour by the Government of India, the Government of Odisha and a number of women organizations. Its main aims and objectives are as follows : to integrate all the development plans for women at state, district, block, gram panchayat and

village levels; to build women as a healthy social and economic force for nation building and to facilitate their individual and collective efforts; to train women entrepreneurs for individual, cooperative and joint enterprises; to provide margin money to women for availing loans from banks and other financial institutions; to set up a state level marketing network for the products manufactured by women; and, finally, to create a congenial environment and awareness for the implementation of women development programmes. This Corporation is working as the nodal agency to coordinate and monitor various women development plans. Some of the major activities that are being undertaken by the corporation include income generation schemes for women groups, social training programmes, marketing assistance to women, organization of women self-help groups, facilitating gender equality within the development plans, and organizing meetings of women entrepreneurs. Another area of operation of the Corporation is its financial assistance and easy loan facilities to various women groups, educational institutions and NGOs to open 'Women Study Circles' to impart examination-oriented coaching to women candidates appearing in different competitive examinations.

Biju Babu was the first leader in India to take very bold steps with regard to grass-roots level democracy. It was during his first tenure as the Chief Minister in early 1960s that he restructured the rural

and urban local bodies and brought in suitable amendments to the existing Acts of 1948, 1959 and 1960. But during his second term as the Chief Minister on 5th March, 1990 which eventually came to be celebrated as the Panchayati Raj Day every year, he announced that for the first time in the history of Independent India, women will be given 33 p.c. reservation

including SC and ST women in rural as well as urban local self government institutions. Incidentally, Odisha is also one of the pioneering states in India to grant 50 p.c. reservation of seats to women in local self government institutions that became a reality under the leadership of Mr. Naveen Patnaik, the present Chief Minister who is also the younger son of legendary Biju Babu.

Notes

- ¹ He rescued Sukarno in a Dakota plane and flew him to India from Jakarta. Sukarno later on became Indonesia's President.
- ² He resigned from the British air force for the cause of Independence.
- ³ It was during the inauguration of the Port that the then Prime Minister Nehru reportedly scolded Biju Babu publicly for being emotional regarding development projects disregarding standard norms which Biju Babu accepted with a smile.
- ⁴ See the relevant provisions of the Constitution of India as given in Part-III and Part-IV.
- ⁵ It is a part of the livelihood opportunities of the tribal and other poor people in different states of India.

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“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

~ **Thomas A. Edison**

“If you don’t value your time, neither will others. Stop giving away your time and talents. Value what you know & start charging for it.”

~ **Kim Garst**

Political Economy of Rural Non-farm Sector Development in Bangladesh

Biswajit Choudhury*

Abstract

Bangladesh is one of the first 35 countries, which adopted Breton Woods institution sponsored Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). In pursuit of SAP, Bangladesh initiated major reforms in different sectors. In agricultural sector, it reduced subsidies on agriculture; in trade and industrial sector, it rationalized and simplified the tariff structure and eliminated quantitative restrictions on imports. Bangladesh also took initiatives in privatisation of public enterprises and improved operational performance of public utilities. In the financial sector, the country implemented reforms aiming at promotion of free market economy, privatised a number of national commercial banks and strengthened commercial bank loan recovery programmes.

Key Words: Rural non-farm-sector, Labour force survey, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Government of Bangladesh.

Introduction

The South Asian States have given varying degrees of attention and priority to rural development since the beginning of de-colonial period. The motivations and objectives of public policies have varied over time and among countries owing to a complex combination of political, economic and social factors as well as opportunities for development provided by foreign assistance and global economic trends¹. According to the World Bank (1975), rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific

group of people, the rural poor. It is concerned with extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas, namely small scale farmers, tenants and the landless.

In recent decades, there has been a great deal of discussion in policy making and planning circles about the need to encourage non-farm pursuits, specially small and medium scale industries in rural areas for the creation of off-farm job opportunities in addition to the modernisation of rural agriculture. It is difficult to give a single, global strategy

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for the development of rural industries because the social, cultural, political and economic conditions in the rural areas are very different. The United Nations suggests that the pattern of industrial development in any country must become more relevant to the aspirations, needs and capabilities of the majority of its population. In fact, two strategies have been evolved for the achievement of this objective such as a top down or bottom up approach or a combination of the two.

Evolution of Rural Non-farm Sector in Bangladesh

The People's Republic of Bangladesh² is located in South Asia and bordering India and Myanmar. The territory constituting Bangladesh was under Hindu rule prior to 1200 AD. From 1201 to 1751 over five and half centuries Bangladesh was under Muslim (Mohammedan) rule. The British ruled the Indian sub-continent including this territory from 1757 to 1947 near about 190 years. In August 1947 with termination of British rule the sub-continent was partitioned as India and Pakistan based on religion. Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan and was known as East Pakistan. In December 16, 1971 after a bloody liberation war this state appeared on the world map as an independent 'Bangladesh' and sovereign state (Malek and Usami 2010).

The history of industrial relations system of Bangladesh can be traced back to the Trade Union Act of 1926 introduced

by British rulers. The main purpose of the Act was to provide for the registration of trade unions and in certain respects, define the law relating to registered trade unions. But the Act did not contain any provision regarding strikes. In 1929 the Trade Disputes Act put restrictions on strikes in public utility services. The Act provided for the establishment of tribunals to adjudicate upon the labour disputes. In 1947 the Industrial Disputes Act placed the conciliation and adjudication machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes on a permanent footing.

In the decade following Partition of India, the then Pakistan government mostly adopted the colonial legacy with regard to labour laws. However, a major development took place in the legal framework of industrial relations in 1965 when the East-Pakistan Trade Unions Act, 1965 was enacted repealing the Trade Unions Act 1926. But the Act could not facilitate healthy growth of trade unions as it was more restrictive on the freedom of association and right to organize.

The period between 1947 and 1969 was thus marked by a host of repressive laws that witnessed labour agitation and widespread industrial unrest. Subsequently, the Labour Disputes Act 1965 and Trade Unions Act 1965 were integrated into one law, namely Industrial Relations Ordinance (IRO) 1969, which made provisions for recognition of collective bargaining agents for establishment or group of establishments. Thus, the Ordinance was a landmark

development in the evolution of collective bargaining in Bangladesh. After the emergence of Bangladesh, development of industrial relations was strained by imposition of martial laws, proclamation of state of emergency at different times, and promulgation of host of other laws and policy which inhibited the growth of sound industrial relations in Bangladesh.

In 1973, the right to strike and lockout, as granted by IRO 1969, was withdrawn. Meanwhile the 'Emergency Power Ordinance 1974' was promulgated and the rules formulated under the Ordinance completely suspended the democratic rights of workers by prohibiting trade union activities such as strikes, lock-outs, collective bargaining. The military regime of 1975 imposed restrictions on the rights of collective bargaining and striking through Industrial Relations (Regulation) Ordinance 1975. The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Ordinance 1977 liberalized the Rights of Freedom of Association to some extent. Another improvement took place through adoption of the Labour Policy of 1980, which restored the right to freedom of association to a considerable extent. The situation worsened again with the imposition of martial law in 1982 when the military regime proclaimed the Industrial Relations (Regulation) Ordinance 1982 by which the government suspended trade union activities, strikes, and right of freedom of association. The scenario improved in 1990 with the fall of the military regime and full trade union

activities were restored by the democratic government in 1991.

The period between 2001 and 2006 saw great achievements, with a huge consultation process on labour law reform to enact an updated, consolidated and unified version of labour laws. These began to be implemented in October 2006. After proclamation of Emergency on 11 January 2007, political and trade union activities, including rallies and demonstrations were again banned. During the Emergency that lasted 23 months, trade unions and collective bargaining were prohibited and the determination of collective bargaining agent could not be made. Thus, frequent interference by government and military regimes on different occasions has curtailed the development of a healthy and congenial atmosphere of industrial relations system in Bangladesh.

The growth of rural population has caused a growing stream of new entrants into labour market each year resulting in a large number of unemployed labour forces. The growing unemployment adversely increase incidence of poverty, affect young generation, create unrest in the society and even frustrate the career of the employed people. Like other developing countries of Asia, employment opportunities in rural Bangladesh are also becoming scarce for the young people. Backwardness of the rural industries and non existence of diversification of rural economic structure has led to a vast reservoir of unemployed and

underemployed labour force. The bulk of labour force, therefore have to look to agricultural sector for their livelihood. But this sector is already overcrowded and beset with problems of unemployment, underemployment and low earnings.

Factors in the evolution of the contemporary rural non-farm sector are to be found in the sectoral pattern of absorption of a rapidly expanding labour force. The expansion of the rural non-farm sector has resulted from a sustained squeezing out of labour from the agricultural sector. Conceptualising in terms of supply push and demand pull factors, it is clear that the past evolution of a section of the rural non-farm sector has resulted generally from a push out of agriculture into the rural non-farm sector.

The issues in the growth and development of the rural non farm sector have already received considerable attention from the World Bank and major stock-holders in Bangladesh. The World Bank (1997) report titled "*Bangladesh: The Non-Farm Sector in A Diversifying Rural Economy*", dealt with many issues in the development of rural non-farm sector in Bangladesh. The main focus of the report was on producing a consensus in defining the coverage of the sector, discussing the main features such as composition and labour productivity in the sector, the role of micro-finance in promoting rural non-farm activities and designing a strategy for promoting a virtuous circle of non-farm growth, and poverty alleviation as well as employment

generation. The study proposed a two-part strategy: a primary strategy of improving infrastructure, finance and agricultural performance, and a secondary strategy of creating (in partnership with NGOs and private sector³) an enabling environment for private sector-led rural industrialization and for stronger linkages to agriculture.

This report uses the broader definition of rural areas. In literature two different definitions of the rural areas can be identified. In the narrower definition the rural areas consist of villages. For instance in the official statistics of Bangladesh, the semi-urban areas like *thana* headquarters, areas adjacent to municipalities, and other areas based on electricity consumption and population densities are often classified as urban. In practice, these areas may be predominantly rural in nature. Moreover, rural people often have access to employment opportunities in nearby towns and peri-urban areas. According to the broader definition, the term rural includes villages, rural towns and peri-urban areas. In this report, the broader definition of rural areas is used and whenever feasible detailed breakdown by different locations are presented.

According to Mahmud (1996), the rural non-farm sector in Bangladesh has received considerable attention from policy makers and development practitioners during the eighties. The interest in the rural non-farm sector has arisen partly out of the need to look for

all sources of growth in a densely populated, predominantly rural economy such as Bangladesh afflicted with a high incidence of rural poverty.

About three-quarters of the people of Bangladesh live in rural areas. Incidence of poverty in the country generally, is quite high, about 40 per cent of people live below the (upper) poverty level, and incidence of extreme poverty is higher in rural areas. Some 44 per cent of people live below the poverty line in rural Bangladesh (BBS 2005), and incidence of extreme (hardcore) poverty in rural areas is 29.3 per cent. Hence, poverty reduction and improving the livelihoods of the rural poor is an important part of the agenda in the development policy of Bangladesh. From this point of view, pro-poor growth is something that Bangladesh has been striving for since its independence with the ongoing poverty reduction strategy also keeping it central.

The change in rural Bangladesh from farm to non-farm economy has been occurring in two ways: (i) diversification within agricultural employment, and (ii) diversification between agricultural and rural non-farm activities. It is important to define the scope of non-farm activities at this point. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (1992) includes the following categories into the domain of rural non-farm sector in Bangladesh: (i) small scale manufacturing (in permanent establishments), (ii) wholesale and

retail trade, (iii) hotels and restaurants, (iv) services, and (v) the household sector.

Sen (1996) shows that the growth of rural non-farm sector in Bangladesh has been pro-poor and, that it has had a considerable poverty reducing impact in the rural economy. However, this view has not gone unchallenged. Mahmud (1996), argues that the expansion of low productivity self-employment has been the major contributing factor in the growth of rural non-farm sector. Raising doubts about the sustainability of this pattern of growth of the sector, he further argues that while the provision of such employment opportunities has been crucial for absorbing the growing numbers of rural workers coming from landless households, the labour shift may have created some degree of overcrowding in the low-productivity non-farm activities, thus undermining the growth of overall productivity and income levels in the rural non-farm sector.

Bangladesh has made significant economic progress since her independence in 1971. Consistent with the trends of free market economy, Uruguay Round Accord and Agreement with the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Bangladesh has been pursuing a liberal economic and trade policy since 1990s. Extensive reform programmes have been implemented in trade during the last two decades. Major economic reforms in Bangladesh came in the form of implementation of a package of structural

adjustment policies under the auspices of the World Bank and the IMF in 1980s and early 1990s.

Bangladesh is one of the first 35 countries which adopted Breton Woods institution sponsored Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). In pursuit of SAP, Bangladesh initiated major reforms in different sectors. In agricultural sector, it reduced subsidies on agriculture; in trade and industrial sector, it rationalized and simplified the tariff structure and eliminated quantitative restrictions on imports. Bangladesh also took initiatives in privatisation of public enterprises and improved operational performance of public utilities. In the financial sector, the country implemented reforms aiming at promotion of free market economy, privatised a number of national commercial banks and strengthened commercial bank loan recovery programmes.

At present, very few countries in Asia regularly collect data on informal employment and the informal sector, which ironically is perceived to be prevalent in many developing countries in Asia. In Bangladesh, the informal sector is roughly estimated to contribute about 64 per cent of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This rough approximation was arrived at by applying many assumptions on the composition of various national accounts sectors on existing survey data. The surveys that were used, however, were not really conducted for purposes of studying the

informal sector, hence the difficulty of making the standard definitions of informal sector and informal employment operational.

The Labour Force Survey and Population Census have been used to estimate the size of rural non-farm sector and its growth over time. While there are some discrepancies between the estimation provided by the two sources, both confirm a rising trend in the share of employment in rural non-farm activity. In a companion paper Bakht (1996) has traced the growth of rural non-farm sector using the Labour Force Survey. He found that the share of non-farm sector in the rural economy increased from 33.5 per cent to 38.6 per cent between 1983-1984 and 1990-1991, and 4.1 per cent growth over the reference period. During this period, the manufacturing sub-sector registered the highest growth of 12 per cent, while other activities, such as community and personal services, registered a decline.

In another companion piece, Mahmud (1996), in an analysis of the Population Census, finds that between 1981 and 1991, the relative size of rural non-farm sector increased from 24 per cent to 26 per cent of the total labour force, 43 per cent to 57 per cent of the non-agriculture labour force, and from 29 per cent to 34 per cent of the rural labour force. If semi urban areas are included, these proportions are found to be much higher in 1991, 33 per cent, 71 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. The inclusion of semi urban areas significantly increases

the share of non-farm sector in the economy. In fact, more than one fourth of the increase in rural non-farm labour force appears to have been in the semi urban areas.

Surveys on Rural Non-farm Sector in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is the apex official organisation responsible for collection and dissemination of statistics in Bangladesh. However, in the past, the BBS was less involved in the collection of data on rural industry. For national income accounting, the BBS estimates value added in small and cottage industries on the basis of a number of dated surveys.

The official data pertaining to manufacturing industry in Bangladesh is available from several sources such as: (i) Labour Force Survey (LFS), (ii) Economic Census (EC), (iii) Annual Establishment and Institution Survey (AEIS), and (iv) Census of Manufacturing Industries (CMI). These censuses and surveys are all carried out by the BBS. However, the reference period of the manufacturing data is not the same in all cases. There are also differences with regard to coverage, definitions and methodology used both between data sources and also within each source at different points in time.

The BBS carried out a sample survey of the sector in 1976 in Bangladesh. Earlier in 1969 it had undertaken a survey of small and household industries in the

rural areas of Bangladesh. At around the same time the Central Statistical Organisation of the then Pakistan conducted surveys of small and cottage industries in some selected urban centres. The employment growth rate between 1969-1970 and 1976-1977 as obtained from these surveys is applied to extrapolate employment in later years. Value added is then estimated by multiplying the employment figure by benchmark (1976) estimate of value added per worker. Only recently, the BBS has updated the values of these parameters on the basis of some recent surveys.

In December 1986, the BBS conducted a complete census of all non-farm economic activities in Bangladesh, which came to be known as Economic Census of 1986. Based on the listing generated through the Economic Census, the BBS carried out in 1989 a sample survey of units having less than 10 workers which covered both household based units as well as enterprises having separate permanent establishments. The sample survey which was titled as the 'Integrated Annual Survey' provided detailed financial and operating information on the surveyed enterprises.

With a view to providing detailed employment data pertaining to the overall economy and its various sub-sectors, the BBS had carried out a pilot manpower survey in 1979, and this was followed by the initiation of the annual Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 1983-1984. The

successive LFS provide information on the changing employment level in various segments of the economy.

The Labour Force Survey is considered as the primary source of employment statistics in Bangladesh. It conducts surveys at 2 or 3 year intervals since 1983-84. The LFS reports provide comparable time series estimates of rural employment for the 1980s broken down by sub-sectors. Since its initiation till 1985-1986, the LFS used a particular definition of labour force participation. According to the definition, a person of 16 years age or above has to put in 15 or more hours of work during the reference week to qualify as economically active. From the LFS 1989-1990 onward, this minimum labour input requirement has been dropped from the definition of economically active person which caused the size of the civilian labour force to go up significantly from 30.9 million in 1985-1986 to 50.7 million in 1989-1990.

After 1986, the Economic Census (EC) was repeated in 2001 but was limited to the urban areas. Enumeration of the rural undertakings was done in 2003. The main limitation of the EC data is that information for less than 10 workers category is not available broken down by smaller size groups (e.g. 1-5 workers and 6-9 workers category). Similarly, beyond 100 workers, the information is not broken down by disaggregate size groups such 100-299 workers, 300-499 workers etc.

The EC data also does not provide value added information.

The other source of official macro data pertaining to small cottage industries is the BSCIC. In 1962, East-Pakistan Small Cottage Industries Corporation (EPSIC), which was the predecessor of the BSCIC carried out for the first time surveys of small and cottage industries in the then Pakistan. The surveys were carried out in two phases. In the first phase a comprehensive listing of all small cottage industrial units was carried out with the help of chairmen, members of union councils and municipal committees. In the second phase, a sample of the listed units was intensively surveyed. The results of the surveys were published separately for small and cottage industries in the form of statistical tables.

During the late seventies, another set of surveys of small cottage industries was conducted by the BSCIC. The BSCIC surveys of small and cottage industries were repeated during the late eighties. These surveys were initiated in Deccan 1987 but could not be completed due to administrative problems in June 1991.

The centre piece of analytical studies on the aggregate rural industries sector of Bangladesh is the Rural Industries Study Project (RISP), carried out by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) during 1978-1980. The RISP provided a set of benchmark on the size, structure, composition, supply side characteristics level and determinants of

demand etc. pertaining to the rural industries sector of Bangladesh.

Several other studies on various aspects and components of rural industries of Bangladesh followed the RISP. These studies however, differed from the RISP in some important ways. Unlike the RISP many of these studies were based on secondary data while others based on micro level surveys. One major post of the RISP study on rural industry was the Study on Rural Industry Development (SRID) conducted by the BIDS during the mid eighties. The SRID was *Upazila*⁴ specific study of potential rural industries and was conducted in 40 *Upazilas* scattered throughout the country.

A second major analytical work reveals potentials, problems and policy issues concerning employment expansion through rural industrialisation in Bangladesh that was carried out by the ILO-ARTEP in 1985. This study was based on available secondary data and was supplemented by limited field survey.

Importance of Rural Non-farm Sector for Bangladesh

The economic viability of Bangladesh has long been in question because of its over-population, poor natural resource base, vulnerability to natural disasters and undiversified economy dependent on the production of two crops: rice and jute. At independence in 1971, the population density was over 500 persons per sq/km. growing at 3 per cent annually; the cultivated land frontier

was exhausted with two-thirds of the total land area already brought under cultivation; only 6 per cent of the GDP originated from manufacturing, mostly jute and cotton textile; and 85 per cent of the export earnings came from jute and jute goods which had weak international markets. Productive capacity and infrastructure was underdeveloped, domestic savings rate which was nearly 12 per cent of the GDP in 1960s, had fallen to almost zero because of a sharp fall in national income in early 1970s; and an entrepreneurial class of Bangladeshi origin was yet to be developed. Despite these adverse initial conditions, over the last quarter century Bangladesh has managed to increase in national income at 4.0 per cent per year, feed its growing population with the same amount of cultivated land, reduce its dependence on jute for export earnings, substantially curtailed the population growth rate, and build up economic infrastructure, particularly roads, electrification and irrigation facilities.

The rural non-farm sources of income are important for the rural poor people of Bangladesh for two reasons. First, the direct agricultural income obtained by the poor is not enough to sustain their livelihoods, either because of landlessness or because the land they own or lease is insufficient. Second, wage-employment in agriculture is highly seasonal. The rural non-farm activities are especially suitable for the poor households of Bangladesh because they require little capital and generate more employment per

unit of capital than do farm sector activities.

The rural non-farm sector promote equitable distribution of income by providing employment for women, unemployed or underemployed youths, small farmers, landless workers and poor people living in rural towns. Women engaged in non-farm activities not only provide the household with additional income but also gain respect and status by contributing to their families' welfare in Bangladesh. Moreover, they also gain the confidence needed to play a role in decision-making at the community level. This prevents out migration and the consequent loss of human capital, retaining potential entrepreneurs in rural areas of Bangladesh. Finally, given the declining land-person ratio in Bangladesh and the number of households that remain landless, engagement in rural non-farm activities seems to constitute one of the few employment generating sources.

The rural non-farm sector has considerable scope to complement farming because of the strong linkages with the farm sector and also the non-farm sector forges linkages between rural and urban areas. The rural non-farm sector is particularly important to the rural poor. Low investment manufacturing and services (including weaving, pottery, gathering, food preparation and processing, domestic and personal services, and unskilled non-farm wage-

labour) typically account for a greater share of the rural poor's income than that of the better-off. Non-farm income is also important to the poor as a means to help stabilize household income in years of natural disasters, such as drought years.

Hence, the employment in rural non-farm activities has become an important aspect of the lives of a large number of people in the rural areas of Bangladesh as in several other developing countries. While this is basically an economic phenomenon, it has an important social aspect because those affected are mostly the rural poor. For the growing number of these people who are not being absorbed enough in agriculture or in urban based industry and are actually obliged to leave the land partially or fully, non-farm activities are perforce a part of their personal survival strategies.

Despite the debate regarding the nature and sustainability of the growth and evolution of rural non-farm sector, it has been clearly evidenced that it has achieved positive growth in terms of generating rural employment and income since the early 1980s. Several papers have undertaken analysis regarding the factors contributing to the growth of the rural non-farm sector. However, institutional analysis to investigate which institutions or institutional mechanisms have been responsible for the growth of the rural non-farm sector and how the institutions contributed in the process etc. hardly exists.

Notes

- ¹ For an extensive survey of the changing themes of rural development and their interaction with the parallel debates on development strategies (albeit mainly from the donors' perspective) see the special issue of ODI's *Development Policy Review*, December 2001, 19 (4), especially the articles by Caroline Ashley and Simon Maxwell (*Rethinking Rural Development*) and by Frank Ellis and Stephen Biggs (*Evolving Themes in Rural Development 1950s-2000*).
- ² Bangladesh was known as East-Bengal before Partition and East-Pakistan after partition of India-Pakistan in August, 1947 respectively.
- ³ At present it is popularized as PPP (Public Private Partnership).
- ⁴ The term *Upazila* means Sub-District in *Bangla*

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Elections and Electoral Reforms: An Imperative for Bringing Good Governance in India

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Abstract

India adopts parliamentary democracy as our system of governance. Its aim and foundation is to provide public welfare to her citizens. However, over the past several years, the whole idea of good governance or doing 'good' to the people or solving their problems could not be achieved properly. Instead, it has widened the gap between the elected and the electors. So, drastic electoral reform is required in order to streamline the system to achieve good governance because the state of affairs depends very much on the type of representatives the voters elect in the elections.

Key words: Election, Unresponsive government, Accountability of political parties, Electoral reform, Good governance.

Introduction

For election of the representatives of the people, the Indian Constitution provides for two methods of elections viz. *direct election and indirect election*. Members of the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies are directly elected by the people. After considerable debate in the Constituent Assembly and its Committees, the founding fathers decided in favour of direct elections to these *houses*. In the Indian democratic system, these legislative bodies known as the *lower or popular house(s)* are the centres of peoples' power. The directly elected representatives are directly responsible to the people for all their acts. There is *indirect election* in respect of the

Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Councils, known as the upper house(s), President and Vice-President of India.

India, being a parliamentary representative democracy, the electorates elect their representatives who will rule them during the next five years period. In this parliamentary system of government, her people live under a system where elected representatives make the *laws* and take the *administrative decisions* for the general welfare of the peoples.

However, during the 60 years of the working of our parliamentary democracy, serious questions are being raised about the survival of our democracy. Over the years the country has been facing acute

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problems on all fronts. Kashyap (1996) wrote "But, politics gradually degenerated into a struggle for power for its own sake. Power for personal ends became the supreme value. Politics became a lucrative profession and came to be regarded very much as the art and science of somehow getting to positions of power and by all possible means staying there. In this scheme of things, Government was little more than the technique and the machinery of governing or ruling over the people, of keeping them under control, of the ruling classes of politicians dominating over the rest of the populace, of the masters enjoying the exercise of power over the masses. Politics became the means to power and Government the manifestation of the quest for domination." He again stated that "In the so-called representative parliamentary democracies like ours, things have come to such a pass that those in Governance are so preoccupied with the struggle for survival in power that they have no time for addressing their attention to the problems of the people. Governance has become a casualty of Government. Howsoever sad, it is not surprising, therefore, that there has been such a sharp erosion in the respect of the people for the politicians. In large parts of the country, Government does not exist. Mafia gangs terrorise and rule, even the thin dividing line between the politicians and criminals has disappeared. Politics has been criminalized and crime politicized. Earlier, the criminal sought the protection of the politician, now it is the politician

who needs the protection of the dasas or the two have become one and the same person. Governments have lost their credibility, legitimacy and even their representative credentials". In the process, there has been increasing distance between the people and the governments. The governments become unresponsive to the peoples' needs and aspirations. This gap of distance between the electors and the elected gradually grows bigger.

Sometime back, Prof. S.R.Hashim, Advisor in the Planning Commission for Perspective Planning, had observed that "one of the most important sources of tension and social strains in the working of our institutions of parliamentary democracy is the widespread feeling that the "distance" has been increasing rapidly, between the centres of decision making and those who are affected by such decisions. There is also a feeling that the distance between the 'elected' and the 'electorates' is becoming too large. Due to this palpable feeling of 'distance' our elected representatives cannot really be 'accountable' to the individual that they represent. There is no way such accountability can be enforced or practiced at every layer" (Dharmadhikari, 1997).

Many thinkers, politicians, academicians and social activists seem to attribute the decline and deterioration in the above institutions, to the moral downfall of Indians, the absence of values and Gandhian selflessness and commitment etc. Hence, the need for an

inquiry into India's current system of governance, which acts through the elected representatives, has been present for a long time.

Electoral Reforms

The election of peoples' representatives through free and fair elections is the sine qua non of democratic system. Since independent India adopted a representative democratic form of government, the framers of the Indian Constitution were conscious of this essential condition and hence they provided for autonomous election machinery for handling the vitally important function of conducting elections in India. The Constitution of India provides for a well-structured, well organized, efficient and an independent election system which has been designed to meet the objective of holding regular, free and fair elections in the country. Part XV of the Constitution of India, concerning Article 324, lays down that "The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the legislature of every State and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President held under this Constitution shall be vested in a Commission" called as the Election Commission (Bakshi, 2003). Hence, the conduct of elections in India and to ensure free and fair elections is the sole responsibility of the Election Commission. This autonomous institution superintends, directs and

controls all aspects of electoral process in India.

Since the inauguration of the Constitution, the election system has been in operation. It has worked quite satisfactorily over the past six decades. The efficacy of electoral process in India can be assessed from the successive elections the country has had in the last more than sixty years.

However, there is every need to reform this system in the light of our past experience. The need to check electoral malpractices, to reduce the gap between the electors and the elected, to secure and increase participation of the voters in elections, etc. has given rise to a strong demand for reform in it.

No doubt, some incremental reforms have so far been made but several scholars, leaders and political parties are still in favour of several other important and needed reforms, though a consensus is yet to emerge in respect of the desired reforms in the election.

The perennial concern of political science has been to find out the best system that would throw up the right kind of rulers. Right from the first general election, the need for electoral reforms has been the subject matter of every wide ranging debate among academicians, politicians, administrators and others. Various Commissions, Committees, Seminars and Workshops have from time to time made comprehensive recommendations for electoral reforms.

Practically every report of the Election Commission has contained reform proposals. Every successive Chief Election Commissioner has applied his mind to this matter and on the basis of his own experience made suggestions. Seshan went a step further and actually assumed powers himself to implement several of them (Kashyap, 1996). For some time now, there has been a debate in India on reforms to the political structure including electoral reforms (Chopra, 1998). Most of the suggestions made by the Election Commission from time to time for reforming the election law and practices are aimed at ensuring free and fair elections through better conduct, superintendence, direction and control of the electoral processes (Kashyap, 1996).

So far, among the recommendations we have had earlier, the recommendations made by the all party Dinesh Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms had the widest support and its report was adopted unanimously. The Lok Sabha also passed a resolution on electoral reforms unanimously. Successive governments have more than once promised on the floor of the house appropriate legislation to bring about comprehensive electoral reforms. But neither the Lok Sabha resolution nor the Goswami Committee recommendations or the government assurances have so far been implemented. The hard fact seems to be that despite their presenting a different public face, in reality none of the political parties may be interested in bringing about electoral reforms. The status quo suits them all

(Kashyap, 1996). Unfortunately, the representatives of the people who need to take up this issue seriously have no inclination to do so because most reforms are aimed at institutionalizing the political process that goes against the interests of individual actors by reducing their ability and clout to manipulate things. But as the issue heats up, what is likely to happen is that some piecemeal reforms will be brought in – some on the electoral front, some elsewhere (Chopra, 1998, p42). Little attention has been paid to this matter till date. The malady is deeper and calls for systematic reforms today.

In fact, the purpose of the electoral exercise is to enable the people to choose their representatives with free and fair poll because free and fair polls constitute the roots of representative democratic polity. But do the people really elect their representatives/rulers in this manner, has been a big question since a long time back. In brief, all electoral practices, including malpractices and corrupt practices emanate from the existing electoral system that the country has adopted and from which the practices flow.

At present, we experience no free and fair elections. Though elections form the backbone of our parliamentary representative democracy, there is not much scope for giving a platform for peoples' participation in the affairs of the State. The true character of free and fair elections is increasingly being marred by muscle power, money power, attempts at booth capturing, appeals to caste,

community, ethnicity, impersonation voting, criminalization of politics, misuse of governmental machineries, violation of election code of conduct, rules, instructions etc. in trying to capture power by hook or by crook. The existing electoral system in the process has developed a great many distortions and negativities during the past many years. As a result, it has become ineffective to deal with these unhealthy forces thereby degenerating the true spirit of representative governance. It is in this background that the urgency of electoral reforms assumes importance (Singh, 2009, pp 574-575).

Despite several electoral reforms that had already been made and more proposals for reforms which have been suggested by different personalities, the following few reforms, are also required in order to bring good governance in the country at large.

To Restrict Mushrooming of Political Parties

A political system is considered democratic only when its people are given the right to organize their political parties. It is also considered as having a real democratic system only when at least two parties are involved in the struggle for power. A political system with one party system cannot be accepted as having a democratic system. Without political parties, elections cannot be held. In fact, we cannot conceive of a modern political system without political parties. As such,

Indian political system, as a liberal democratic system and with a parliamentary form of government, has been living with several political parties which are actively engaged in the struggle for power.

However, in the process, the Indian political system has been over-flooded with hundreds of political parties. There seems to be flourishing cottage-industry in political parties. This industry gets galvanized especially on the eve of elections. Verma (1998) categorically stated that "...Why should there be so many parties? What is so different about their ideologies? Why can't the 'lot of the common-man' and the 'all-round development of the nation' be the only ideology for our political parties...Who cares for the leftist or the rightist or the centrist ideology in a chaos and confusion that is rampant in our society today?."

The mushrooming of political parties creates problem and burdens to the entire election process as well as instability in government. The result is that during election time it begets several problems in the allotment of election symbols, the printing of ballot papers, cost of conducting election etc. So, growing of election-oriented political parties should be checked and restricted by laying down several criteria. Kashyap (1996) wrote that "Mushrooming of political parties must be prevented and their number drastically reduced by law providing for a reasonably higher percentage of nation-wide or state-wide

vote being compulsory for recognition and registration as a national or state party...Not only should the political parties be clearly defined by law but apart from the present registration with the Election Commission for purposes of election law, allocation of symbols etc., their registration should be made obligatory either under the Registration of Societies Act or under a separate law which should be enacted by Parliament for the purpose.” Besides, a party must be at least a few years old before it can contest any election. Only national parties may be allowed to contest Lok Sabha election while State parties can seek representation in Rajya Sabha and contest elections for the House(s) of State Legislature. In brief, there should be a categorical provision for registration and recognition of parties along with provisions for deregistration of parties that fail to comply with the requirements of law. And no such party should be allowed to set up any candidate for election to any Legislature. This will minimise the growth of unrestrained number of political parties in the country.

Accountability of Political Parties

This is another area which needs urgent electoral reform. This emanates from the fact that there is no accountability on the part of political parties. They just contest elections but do not give thought to what they ought to do as a political party in the post-poll scenario. As a result, “During the past half-a-century, there has been a slow but steady erosion of

democratic values in Indian polity. Political parties play a vital role in the running of democracy. People in India are tired of political parties...Politicians in India consider political-parties to be their political-damsels which could cater to their personal interest; there is no element of ideology, policy or programme involved in the making or unmaking of political parties. Such political parties are irrelevant for our democracy, yet they create confusion in the popular mind and lead to a distortion in the outcome of ballot. Even the established political parties are so indifferent to their own sense of responsibility and accountability that they have only earned the wrath and ridicule of the electorate. People are fast losing their faith in the political parties, political-process and the political-system...Indian political parties only are to be blamed for political instability in the country. India must not only debate stability through constitutional means, she must also debate stability through political means” (Verma, 1998). And “... we need to establish strict norms of public accountability. Democracy without accountability is a free for all environment which promotes exploitation, corruption and autocratic overlords who constitute present and future danger to the nation...Our democracy must attempt to build accountability in the system. And this is impossible without structural political reform” (Chopra, 1998, p 42). Openness of the party to the citizens must be maintained at all cost.

Qualification of Candidates

One needs to possess certain qualifications for holding a particular job, public office etc. Then, why not for the candidates who are supposed to hold a dignified post if elected. A layman or criminal playing politics cannot be the right and deserving proposition to hold such a prestigious post. Kashyap wrote “Basic educational and other qualifications should be laid down for contesting election to various offices. Persons with criminal antecedents should not be allowed to contest any election. First conviction should be enough to indicate criminal antecedents”. No person with criminal antecedents or defector should be allowed to occupy any public or party office or to remain a legislator. Hence, there must be some specific qualification for the aspiring candidate to fight the elections. The law should place certain criteria or prescribe a minimum educational qualification for candidates, perhaps a university degree, along with other past records of criminal antecedents, service to the people etc. This may limit and reduce the mushrooming of candidates thereby reducing the electoral expenses to be borne by the State (Singh, 2009).

Ban Criminals from Contesting Election

It is a common knowledge for all that our houses of legislatures is represented by a large number of history-sheeters, mafia dons and persons with criminal background including those charged with

serious crimes like murder, rape, smuggling, kidnapping and dacoity. Such persons with criminal backgrounds became candidates for Lok Sabha and State legislatures. Many of them got elected. Hundreds of sitting members in the Lok Sabha and in the State Legislatures all over the country were believed to belong to the category. So, proper law must be initiated not to allow them to contest any election. Those with a criminal record or with serious criminal charges pending against them, must not be eligible for contesting elections until they are cleared (Kashyap, 1998, pp 44-45).

Enforce NOTA Option

The term “NOTA”, means “none of the above”. It is a button for negative vote for those who have no any option of any of the candidates in the list. It is also a vote for rejection under Rule 49-0. The voters were given this right to “reject the contesting candidates” if they do not like to elect them, by pressing the button NOTA. The voters can express disapproval of candidates without being identified. However, this won’t affect poll outcome and the candidate with maximum votes will be declared elected.

India is the 14th country in the world to allow secret negative voting NOTA. The idea of rejecting the candidates is in practice in thirteen other countries of the world in the form of “neutral voting”, “protest voting” and “negative voting”.

The NOTA option was for the first time introduced in India during the

assembly elections conducted in 2013 as per Supreme Court ruling on 27th September 2013. The Apex Court had given this path-breaking verdict holding that the voters have a right to reject all candidates contesting polls in a constituency. The apex court had said that there was a “dire need” of negative voting which will bring “systematic change” in the election process. “Political parties will be forced to accept the will of the people”. This would compel political parties to field clean and sound candidates who are known for their integrity.

It is said that “by providing NOTA button in the EVMs, it will accelerate the effective political participation in the present state of democratic system and the voters in fact will be empowered” (Singh, 2009). However, eminent persons like Kashyap wrote that the “Provision of negative votes may be considered but again in an atmosphere of illiteracy and ignorance, it would hardly work”. Though the larger electorates in the country are illiterates, they are empowered with the right to vote by the supreme law of the land considering that those who have attained the age of 18 years have the sense to choose their true representatives for their future. So, implementing NOTA option in elections throughout the country as early as possible would streamline the electoral system in the country. This NOTA option will also really minimize the number of dummy candidates during election.

Re-call

It is said that people are “sovereign and powerful”. Sirsikar (1973) rightly pointed out that “the general elections endow a temporary personality to the common citizens. They are crowned as “the sovereign voters”. According to Dharmadhikari (1997), “The Constitution of independent India places a-priori confidence in every citizen being sovereign, regardless of poverty or illiteracy or strength...”. The electorates are considered as the ‘sovereigns’ having the power either to elect or not to elect their rulers. In a sense this sovereignty is very real as the voters collectively decide upon the set of elites who would rule the next term of five years. But at the same time the sovereignty is very transient. This sovereign power is limited to a few moments. It lapses the moment the voters stamp the ballot papers to elect their representatives. For the rest of the period till the next election comes, they are powerless. They do not have further control over their representatives when the latter indulge in undemocratic practices such as defection/re-defection/floorcrossing, corruption, scams, scandals etc.

No elite, neither the elected nor the defeated feels concerned about the sovereigns for five years. The voters return to their daily drab routine without their crowns. So, today seeing the unresponsiveness of the elected representatives towards the myriad problems of the people whom the

Constitution has crowned as the “sovereign voters”, there has arisen the necessity to adopt and introduce into practice the devices of Direct Democracy as prevalent in Switzerland as the only devices to check the unethical and irresponsible behavior of the legislators. Dharmadhikari (1997) wrote that “In order to reinforce the bond of responsiveness between the elected and the electors, there will be a “damocle’s sword” of re-call, over all the elected representatives with a 10 percent of electorates signatures to demand and schedule a re-call referendum on any elected representative and he will stand down from his elected office if there is a minimum 50 percent vote for his removal”. Only then they can be checked by due process when the situation arises.

Empower the Election Commission

The Election Commission should be given “Statutory powers”. The law must empower the Commission to disqualify any candidate and de-recognize or de-register any political party on valid grounds such as violation of the election codes, rules, instructions and laws, without enabling the candidate or the political party to appeal to the judicial courts. This will strengthen the holding of free and fair polls at large.

Strengthen Electoral Laws

The election Model Code of Conduct formulated by the Election Commission of India to be adhered to by the political parties, their contesting candidates, the party in power etc. during elections has

been in many cases violated by the stakeholders in the election. As suggested by several eminent personalities like Kashyap, those found guilty of violating the code of conduct or of any electoral offences or of defection from their party should be barred by law from membership of legislature and holding of any public office for a period of 10 years.

Good Governance

Before we come directly to the term “Good Governance”, it is better to have an understating of the term “Government” and “Governance” first. According to Ashok Mukhopadhyay (as cited in Prasad, 2002), “Government refers to the machinery and institutional arrangements of exercising the sovereign power for serving the internal and external interests of the political community,” while “The Governance means the process as well as the result of making authoritative decisions for the benefit of the society.” The UNDP work on Governance defines ‘Governance’ as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. Governance encompasses every institutions and organisations in the society, from the family to the state, and embraces all methods –good and bad –that societies use to distribute power and manage public resources and problems. “Governance also refers to the forms of political system and the manner in which power is exercised in utilizing the country’s economic and social resources for development. It deals with the capacity

of the government to design, formulate and implement policies, and in general, to discharge government's functions. Governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework" (Minocha, 1998). In general, Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs.

However, in recent years "Government" or "Governance" has not been the prime issue of concern for all. According to Kashyap (1996), "...Even self-government or good government is not enough...In recent years, considerable attention in the academia has been devoted to problems of realizing 'good governance'. Both in developed and developing parts of the world, there has been a welcome shift of focus from traditional concepts of government and politics to the concept of good governance and its attributes."

While talking about 'good governance' "It is equivalent to purposive and development oriented administration which is committed to improvement of quality of life of the mass people. It implies the high level of organizational effectiveness. It also relates to the capacity of the centre of power of political and administrative system to cope up with the emerging challenges of the society. It refers to the adoption of new values of governance with a view to establish greater efficiency, legitimacy and credibility of the system. In simple terms, governance can be considered the citizen-

friendly, citizen-caring and responsive administration" (Minocha, 1998).

Good governance also, among other things, ensures that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources. It is also equitable and promotes the rule of law fairly. Effective democratic forms of governance rely on participation, transparency and accountability. Good governance is, therefore, a subset of Governance, wherein public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of the society.

Hence, "What has become a categorical imperative is clean and quality governance as it affects the lives of the people. The whole idea of good governance is that of giving, of serving and of doing good to the people, or solving their problems and making their lives more livable, satisfying and enjoyable. It comes close to Gandhiji's concept of politics for service of the people and not for becoming masters of the people...The essential pre-requisites for quality governance are that the system should be good and suited to the needs, aspirations, background and ethos of the people concerned and that those selected for operating the system should be endowed with character and competence and motivated by the spirit of public service...The end of all economy and polity was social good and improvement in the quality of human life. Human beings were not to be considered as amere

resource for administration or development but they were the ultimate end and all administration, development etc. were the resource for their good...in Western thought, e.g. in Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics, the supreme concerns and objectives of all political activity happened to be those of providing good governance to the people and for the purpose devising the best political system and finding the best kind of rulers" (Kashyap, 1996).

Conclusion

To conclude it may be said that today our social fabric has been so badly tattered, and the people so sadly segmented and fragmented on caste, community and other narrower lines. Problems of varied nature are coming up one after another. The very foundation of governance to provide public welfare to a vast majority of the deprived segments of the population or solving their problems has considerably failed. It seems that the state of affairs has gone beyond its ability to control and remedy it. The blame, for which, largely belongs to the system of elections.

To correct today's unresponsive system of governance, the change over from the present system to the proposed one is required. Since the governance of the state of affairs depends very much on the type of representatives the voters elects in the elections, radical electoral reform to remedy it is to be advocated. It is the

need of the hour. Patchwork electoral reforms will not help. Since response has to match the challenge, piecemeal electoral reforms undertaken will not succeed in stemming all the rot.

However, the most difficult question is that of the mechanism for bringing about the needed reforms. In view of the nature and the magnitude of the problem, there can be no soft solutions. Because; political parties are the main players in the drama of elections. They are the ones who have the greatest vested interest in the status quo but those who can bring about the changes. So, no electoral reform proposal can be considered without reference to their character and role.

Even then, it can be implemented; only when there are sincere efforts on the part of those who can do this. So, the need of the hour is for an '*integrated approach*' to review our entire socio-political system and constitutional edifice with electoral reforms high on the agenda. Strong and honest political will is required to take on wide ranging actions. Our motives must be transparent and not suspect to bring about the dawn of good governance in our country.

The above suggestions for action in the direction of ensuring good governance are offered for consideration. By bringing out the proposed electoral reforms, the idea of "*Good Governance*" could be achieved in India.

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“Success is about creating benefit for all and enjoying the process. If you focus on this & adopt this definition, success is yours.”

~ **Kelly Kim**

Understanding Extremism and Extremists in North East India

Biswajit Mohapatra*

Abstract

There appears to be a clear danger both in terms of our understanding and conceptually when one comes across the fact that extremism is often used pejoratively. This gives rise to a lot of goals. This paper goes on to conceptualize the terms for utter clarity to enable proper understanding of misconceptions about the ideology, actions that extremists often espouse in pursuit of their ideology, actions and their pursuits besides the groups which are active in the region.

Key Words: Extremism, Extremist groups, Ideology, Politics, Political realism

Introduction

An ideological extremist is usually referred to as right wing or left wing, on the basis of his political leaning that he professes or practices. The left wing extremists are as commonly found as that of right wing extremists. While the left wing extremists aspire for state control and inclusiveness, the right wing extremists aspire for freedom and responsibility with a few strict rules.

Extremism is a term used to describe the actions or ideologies of individuals or groups outside the perceived political centre of a society; or otherwise claimed to violate common moral standards. The term is invariably used in a pejorative sense. Extremism is usually seen as a contrast with moderation and the extremists with the moderates. The terms

extremism or extremist are almost always exonymic i.e. people apply the term to a group rather than any group labelling itself as such. Rather than the groups labelling themselves extremist, those labelled as such often describe themselves as militants for believing in militant action. There is no political party as such that calls itself right-wing extremist or left-wing extremist and there is also no sect of any religion that calls itself extremist or which calls its doctrine as extremism.

The term extremist is then used to describe groups and individuals who have become radicalized, in some way or other because of the prevailing conditions in the society even though the term radical is originally understood to go to the root of a social problem. The term “extremist” is often used with reference to those who use

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or advocate violence against the will of society at large. It has also been used by others to describe those who advocate or use violence to enforce the will of the social body, such as a government or majority constituency.

Extremist Groups

These groups when described as extremist however in general do not accept nor admit that what they practice or advocate constitutes violence and instead describe their acts in terms of acts of resistance or militant action or the use of force. The word violence is not value-neutral as ideology and methodology often become inextricably linked with each other when we use the word extremism. The notion that is being advocated by some that there is a philosophy which can be described as extremism is not acceptable in the mainstream political discourse. Within sociological discipline several academics who are critical of extreme right-wing groups have strongly protested against the use of the term extremist, which was popularized by centrist sociologists in the 1960s and 1970s. Jerome Himmelstein wrote: “At best this characterization tells us nothing substantive about the people it labels; at worst it paints a false-picture.”¹

This act of labelling a person, group or action as extremist is sometimes claimed to be a technique or an instrument to further a political goal — especially by governments seeking to defend the status quo, or political centrists. Hence by any

means the term extremist like the word violence is also not value-neutral. On the other hand, George and Wilcox claimed that the extremist label has been historically applied in case of both the extreme right and extreme left.²

However, some academics on the left have sought to change the frame of reference so as to mean, that only the far right, but not the far left can be outside the pale of societal acceptability.

To quote Robert F. Kennedy: “What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents.”³ Laird Wilcox, the American researcher who has studied various political fringe movements has identified twenty-one alleged traits of a political extremist: A tendency to assassination, name calling and labelling, the making of irresponsible, sweeping generalizations, the failure to give adequate proof of assertions made, advocacy of standards, a tendency to view opponents and critics as essentially evil, a Manichean (bipolar) world view, advocating some degree of censorship and/or repression of their opponents and critics, identifying themselves by reference to who their enemies are, a tendency to substitute intimidation for argument, widely use slogans, buzzwords and “thought-terminating clichés, claim some kind of moral or other superiority over others, doomsday thinking, a tendency to believe that it is justified to

do bad things in the service of a supposedly “good” cause, an emphasis on emotional response, as opposed to reasoning and logical analysis, hypersensitivity and “vigilance, claims of some kind of supernatural, mystical or divinely-inspired rationale for their beliefs and actions, an inability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty, groupthink, the personalization of hostility, a tendency to assume that the system is defective if one is defeated .⁴

Political Extremism and Extremist Movements

During the middle of 20th century, two other political writers viz., Eric Hoffer and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. have written about political extremism in some of their noted publications. Hoffer wrote books such as in *The True Believer* and *The Passionate State of Mind* wherein he analyzed the psychology and sociology of those who join fanatical mass movements.⁵ Arthur Schlesinger in his book, *The Vital Centre*, has identified as to what needs to be the supposed centre of politics within which mainstream political discourse takes place in any extreme situation and has acknowledged the power of societies to draw definite lines regarding what actions would fall outside of this acceptable limits.⁶ Following these assumptions, both Communism and Fascism have been categorized in established western democracies in the post war period as extremist movements, as the fascist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. This

term has also often been used to describe the groups which held views outside of the mainstream but which did not necessarily advocate the use of physical force to achieve their objectives. Examples of such groups are Nation of Islam, and the movement for nuclear disarmament etc.

When we examine the European context more critically we see that the extremist politics is understood as, the new rise of the extreme political right in Europe. This concept of extreme political right, in brief, is comprised of the actions of right-wing extremist parties and the counter-strategies as to how to curb their influence in Europe. In this instant context, it is questioned by some concerned social scientists, if there exists some sort of relationship between neo-liberalism and Right-wing extremism. Extremist politics is the politics of despair.⁷

When we look into our history, the movement of political extremism can be consisted of three different kinds of meshed conditions: conditions of ideology, conditions of history, and conditions of popular attitude. Such extremist movements anywhere owe their origins to causes of disaffection present in the societies. Hence historically extremist movements have always been movements of disaffection. These movements begin when certain groups of people feel that they are about to be deprived of something important or groups whose rising aspirations lead them

to feel that they have always been deprived of something important which they have always had or owned in their society. In majority of cases such deprivation has often been accompanied by a process of political dislocation.

Further, their feelings of alienation is complicated when they assume that the traditional political party structure with which these groups have been associated no longer seems to be serving their needs. It is also seen that extremist movements are not primarily the product of extremists. The critical mass in extremist movements are not necessarily composed of evil-minded types called “extremists,” but rather of ordinary people who have been caught in certain selective kinds of stressful and rather disturbing situations.

The North East Scenario

North East scenario is singularly different. In order to understand analytically as to why extremism or as many call it terrorism is prevalent in this region one has but to take into account the changes that may have occurred in the form of Population Displacement, Political Disorganization, Population Dynamics, Status Preservatism, Low Democratic Restraint and Cultural Baggage etc.

The basic ideology of extremism as can be seen here is encapsulated in a so called model of monism. Hence the extremist actions as manifested in our neighbourhood involves the violation of others’ constitutional rights as a citizen,

through sustained acts of violence aimed at innocent people and advocacy, for the destruction of the very political process, which allows them to co-exist.

We all know that the democratic political process refers primarily to democratic political pluralism: an “open democratic place” for coexistence of ideas, speech, and consonant political action. This kind of monism followed by various extremist groups has become tantamount to the closing down of the democratic space, whether by a massive majority brought under submission through the power of the gun or by a pre-emptive minority composed of their own extremists.

Within a short span of time after independence this region has been a witness to a succession of social changes affecting or threatening displacement. There has been the shift of power from community to elites. There have also been massive waves of immigration. There has been large-scale migration within the country. There has been the many-staged shift from slow development to fast paced developments. The predominant positions of various regional, religious, economic, ethnic, and racial groups have continually been shaken and sharply diminished. Such extremist groups have successfully picked up on social problem situations and crisis processes and have exploited them to the utmost and promised future oriented solutions – which of course have not come true as yet. They have been able to strengthen themselves as well knit groups

through the processes of renewal, the changes in social acceptance, the crystallization of specific social and cultural environments, the changes in the forms, methods and argumentation lines of their self-presentation, their political beliefs according to their respective ethnic communities. In quite a number of cases even after utter failure to live up to their expectation and aspirations to bring about the intended changes in the society, these extremist groups have managed to survive through a process of regrouping and of differentiation. Their relevance has been proved by their capability to participate in anti government operations such as fighting the paramilitary forces or by influencing government formation in the vicinity.

The existence of various right-wing extremist groups can be understood as the result of their programmatic and organizational renewal processes and in their innovative ways of adapting themselves to newly formed specific social environments upon which they can rely and then carry on their acts. They have cleverly positioned themselves within existing society and its political camps as the society is grappling with the phenomena of paradigmatic change from economic and social state to the competitive state.

The proliferation of the locational nationalism (Christopher Butterwege) and the economization of all areas of life have also provided for a social climate to which these right-wing extremist

groups hook on very well. They claim that the only way to solve the problems of the society is by way of nationalism as opposed to the demand for a strong state and inclusion. In that endeavour, they address themselves both to those who are intent on asserting themselves in the national competition and to secure their own perquisites that way, as well as to those who are unsettled by unemployment and precarisation of work and daily life. Neither competition nor social and economic profit maximization emerges as the central principles of actions of the extremists nor any benevolent claims which are made by them on their behalf.

It is revealed from a study of data relating to civilian fatalities as a result of social and political violence in the country over the period September 1, 1999 – August 31, 2001, that over 33 per cent were accounted for a range of insurgencies and terrorist movements in India's Northeast – and these were overwhelmingly concentrated in a small number of districts in four of the seven States in this region.⁸

It is well known that separatism constitutes a primary demand of many of the groups that are active in India's Northeast. However, many Northeast groups have not clearly defined their separatist goals so far. There has also been a major proliferation of militant groups over the years, with 108 groups active in the region, though some appear to be either insignificant gangs and some now

dormant. Amongst all the groups, the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) which pleads for the secession of Assam and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) [NSCN-IM] leader of the longest insurgency in the region, seeking Naga independence, stand out prominently. Their influence in the region is still overwhelming despite a decline in the number of violent acts. They are known to be carrying out widespread networks of extortion and smuggling besides other criminal activities and also being in control over substantial ground business operations. While the NSCN-IM is now continuously engaged in peace negotiations with the Union Government

under a cease-fire agreement that has been effective since August 1997, the ULFA has consistently rejected possibilities of a negotiated settlement. It is reported widely in the media that ULFA and the NSCN-IM have also continued to extend their spheres of influence in the region through intermittent low-grade violence and by training and arming a large number of other terrorist and proxy groups at the behest of ISI. The activities of such groups in the region goes beyond the term normally understood as extremism since the actions have proved to be disruptive, secessionist and for self motivated personal gains rather than the social gains they claim to be at their back of mind.

Notes

- ¹ Himmelstein, Jerome L. *All But Sleeping with the Enemy: Studying the Radical Right Up Close*. ASA, San Francisco: 1988.
- ² George, John and Laird Wilcox. *Nazis, Communists, Klansmen, and Others on the Fringe: Political Extremism in America*. Prometheus Books, 1992.
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An Analysis of the Movement of the Mizo Union for Mizo Autonomy

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Abstract

Autonomy is usually meant to refer to self-government or self-rule. Mizo Union, the first political party in Mizoram (then Lushai district in Assam state) stood for integration of Mizoram in the Indian Union. And within India, the party fought for autonomy of the Mizos. It secured a District Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution for the Mizos. The District Council ushered an era of democratization in the land. It also abolished chieftainship and stripped the Mizo chiefs of all their undue privileges. This brought about equality and social justice among the Mizos. More significantly, it ended years of tyranny of the chiefs. The party also popularized and championed the term 'Mizo', an inclusive ethnic term that eventually replaced the exclusive term 'Lushai'. Since 1940s the party also stood for 'Greater Mizoram' thereby setting the issue as a public agenda among the Mizos till today.

Key words: Autonomy, Mizo Union, District Council, Greater Mizoram.

Introduction

In Political Science, the term 'autonomy' is mostly used to mean self-government or self-rule. The degree of self-government or autonomy, however, is a matter of degree. Autonomy may mean a small degree of self-governance even a full-fledged independence. A definition of autonomy given by the Cambridge Dictionaries Online (CDO) is used here as a working definition of the term. The CDO defines autonomy as "the right of an organization, country, or region to be independent and govern itself" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2016). A

movement may be defined as united actions and efforts of a group of people for a common objective or objectives.

Mizo Union (MU) was the first political party to have started a movement for autonomy in Mizoram (formerly Lushai Hills district). The MU was the first political party in Mizoram that was founded at Aizawl on April 9, 1946. Though the MU ceased to exist since its merger with the Congress party in 1974, the MU's efforts towards securing autonomy for the Mizos was quite noteworthy and therefore this paper attempts to present a brief analysis of the

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Mizo Union's movement for Mizo autonomy. The MU's movement for autonomy is analyzed under the following heads: Movement for District Council, Movement for abolition of chieftainship, Movement for popularization of 'Mizo', Movement for Mizoram.

1. Movement for District Council

From 1890 to Indian Independence in 1947, Mizoram (then Lushai Hills district) was a part of British India. The Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936, declared the Lushai Hills District an 'Excluded Area'. Under this Order, the administration of the Lushai Hills was carried out by the Governor of Assam from 1937 to 1947, acting independently of the Government of Assam. The Governor had a separate secretariat and he was assisted by a Secretary designated as Secretary to the Governor. This meant that the Governor of Assam, as an administrative head of the District, exercised his authority over the land 'at his discretion' (Rao, et al, 1987). Interestingly, the British administration ruled the land through the Mizo chiefs. The chiefs were allowed to enjoy a large degree of autonomy under the British. But the common people suffered, on the whole, under the rule of the chiefs. (Rao, et al, 1987)

At the time of the birth of the first political party in Mizoram, the Mizo Union, in April 1946, it became certain that India would gain independence from

the British. But there was uncertainty in the minds of the Mizo people about the future political status of the Lushai Hills district. Some of the Mizo leaders wanted complete independence from India while others wanted to join Burma (Myanmar). The chiefs were mainly interested to retain chieftainship, whether in India or in Burma (Vanlawma, 1989; Vanthuama, 2001). The role played by the MU at this critical juncture was therefore absolutely crucial.

An Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India formed a sub-committee called the North-Eastern Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee. The Committee was also known as Bordoloi Committee after the name of its Chairman Gopinath Bordoloi who was the Premier of Assam Province as well as a member of the Constituent Assembly of India. The Sub-Committee was to work out ways and means of integrating the Hill tribes of the then Assam Province into the Union of India. (Chhuanawma, 1993).

The Bordoloi Committee visited Aizawl on April 17, 1947. The Committee co-opted two representatives from the Lushai Hills, Ch.Saprawnga and Khawtinkhuma, both of whom were leaders of the MU. By the time the Committee visited Aizawl, the MU was ready with a memorandum containing demands and other points of concern to be submitted to the Committee. The memorandum contains fourteen main clauses and several other sub-clauses. In the memorandum, the MU said that

Mizoram would be a part of independent India (the memorandum at clause no. 2 actually said that “Mizoram would be a part of Assam”). The last clause at no. 14 said that all the clauses of the memorandum, including the clause on merger with India, would be reviewed after ten years (Vanthuama, 2001). On April 18, 1947, the MU submitted its memorandum to the Committee. After interaction with members of the Committee, the MU agreed specifically for creation of a ‘popularly elected District Council’ for the Lushai Hills district. The party also demanded representation in Assam Legislative Assembly. Further, it demanded that the proposed District Council should be given a fairly large degree of autonomy in order to safeguard the interests of the people of Mizoram on matters of land rights, tribal customs and traditions, regulation of influx of ‘outsiders’ etc. (Vanthuama, 2001).

It had been quite a difficult struggle for the MU leadership and the rank and file to make a firm decision to join India and to specifically ask for establishment of a District Council. There was another body, contending to be the sole representative of the people, the District Conference, headed by the District Superintendent Macdonald. The District Conference was dominated by the chiefs. The District Conference and its Chairman Macdonald stood at times for complete Mizo independence and at other times for joining Burma (Vanlawma, 1989; Vanthuama, 2001). But because the MU

managed to have an overwhelming popular support, the District Conference had to ultimately come round to the idea of joining India. In other words, the MU’s unwavering pro-India stand forced the District Conference to change its anti-India objective. The District Conference thus told the Sub-Committee at Aizawl that the Lushai Hills District should be given a District Council. The District Conference further pursued their desire for establishment of a District Council in a letter to the Governor of Assam, sent in May, 1947 (Vanthuama, 2001).

It is interesting to note that a small section of the MU called the Right Wing stood for Mizo independence. But the demand for independence was opposed by a larger section of the MU called the Left Wing. Opposition to the idea of Mizo independence was based on the fear of perpetuation of chieftainship (Chaube, 1973). People found that the simple slogan of ‘abolition of chieftainship’ (promised to be achieved under independent India) advanced by the Left Wing was more appealing and was concerned more directly with their immediate interest than the Right Wing’s slogan of ‘Independence’ that sounded rather vague and looked distant (Goswami, 1979).¹

Besides the Mizo leaders, the Bordoloi Committee also interacted with various leaders of the hill tribes of Assam. Based on their interactions with the hills tribes of Assam including those of the Lushai Hills, the Committee prepared a

report. The Bordoloi Committee submitted its report to the Chairman, Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Shri Ballabhbhai Patel. The most significant aspect of the Bordoloi Committee Report was its recommendation for creation of District Councils and Regional Councils, under the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution, for the hill tribes of Assam including those in the Lushai district. After a series of debates and discussions, the Constituent Assembly accepted the broad recommendations of the Bordoloi Committee Report, including those relating to recommendation for creation of District Councils and Regional Councils. Provisions for establishment of a District Council and a Regional Council were then incorporated into the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. (Rao, et al,1987). Though the MU was by no means the only body that demanded creation of a District Council for the hill tribes of Assam (including the people of the Lushai district), there is no denying that the MU played quite a significant role in the eventual incorporation of constitutional provisions for the establishment of District Councils and Regional Councils in the Lushai Hills and elsewhere in the undivided Assam.

Advisory Council (1948-1951)

Since an immediate constitution of a District Council was not possible, an interim Council known as Lushai Hills District Advisory Council was set up in the Lushai Hills in 1948. Though the

Advisory Council had no statutory basis, it served as a Provisional District Council. The Advisory Council had 37 members. Out of this, 10 were reserved for the chief, 25 were allotted to the common people; and two other members— the Chairman and the Secretary were nominated by the government. The 25 seats were to be filled by an election. The first election to the Advisory Council was held on 15 April 1948, and the MU formed the Council (Rao, et al 1987).

Though the Council only advised the District Superintendent on various administrative problems and development schemes, the Superintendent having the final power and authority, lots of positive changes were affected during its short span. The Council drastically curtailed the powers and privileges of the chiefs. Privileges like selecting plots of field (*jhum*) before commoners, forced and free labour to build the chiefs' houses, *Sachhiah* (a shoulder of a killed animal given to a chief) and compulsory acquisition of properties left by those who left their villages- previously enjoyed by the chiefs- were all abolished (Vanlawma, 1989).

All these greatly reduced the burden of the people. These further brought about equality by demolishing the hierarchical social order and a process of democratization slowly began in the Mizo society. More importantly, the Advisory Council served as a good training ground for the Mizos in the art and practice of self-governing institution.

The Advisory Council was abolished on 12 November 1951.

Mizo District Council (1952-1971)

On 25 April 1952, Lushai Hills District Council under the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution was eventually constituted. The Council composed of 24 members, 18 elected and 6 nominated. The Council was headed by a Chief Executive Member. The Governor of Assam was just a nominal head of the Council and the Chief Executive Member and his Executive Members exercised real powers. A District Council was like a mini-state within a state. The Sixth Schedule contains various provisions that grant a large measure of autonomy to the people of Mizoram. The District Council eventually and effectively clipped the wings of autocratic chiefs (Rao, 1976).

The MU dominated the electoral scene right from the beginning, forming District Council executives from 1952 to 1967 without any break. The party lost only the fourth and the last District Council election in 1970 to the Congress by just one seat. The party merged with the Congress in 1974, after being in power for 20 years from 1948 to 1974 (Chhuanawma, et al, 2015).

2. Abolition of Chieftainship

Another very important step taken by the MU towards self-rule was abolition of chieftainship.

The Mizos had been under the rule of the chiefs for a very long time. Though

some of the chiefs were popular among their subjects, the rule of the chiefs was, on the whole, becoming unbearable for the public. The chiefs enjoyed lots of privileges and the common people were expected to serve the former. There was no such thing as the right to resistance. The chiefs had absolute and final authority to inflict capital punishment on the subjects, to confiscate properties of the subjects, expel their subjects from villages, and to employ their subjects to unpaid and forced labour. This was worsened by the British administration which sided with and supported the chiefs. The British used the latter “to influence and mould the political thinking of the people”, and as “their tool to remain in power by administering through them” (Goswami, 1979:). The British policy of ‘least interference’ adopted in the Hills was, in fact, designed primarily to keep the chiefs on the former’s side wherein a large degree of autonomy was granted to the chiefs, leaving the helpless commoners at the mercy of the chiefs, whose self-indulgence and arrogance grew by the day now that their position was secure with the British patronage. All these acted as hurdles on the path of socio-economic progress of the people at large. Secondly, individual freedom and liberty was much curtailed to the extent that proper development of an individual personality was not possible under the existing system.

“The common Mizo people could not tolerate”, wrote Goswami, “the idle chiefs sitting at the top of the village

hierarchy and using power and authority because of British safeguard” (Goswami, 1979). The all-powerful Church fully backed the commoners in the latter’s undeclared war against the chiefs. “The struggle between the chiefs and the Mizos, who have embraced Christianity and were backed by the Church”, held Bhat, “was unequal. The strength of the church grew with each conversion and it had education and modernity on its side” (Bhat, 1975). Christianity and education created an ‘oligarchy’ of powerful middle class “imbued with the thrill of seeking independence from the chiefs and freedom from customary communal discipline who were dead set against chieftainship” (McCall, 1949). The leadership of the MU came from this ‘oligarchy’ of the educated middle class. The founder of the party, R. Vanlawma, for instance, was the first matriculate from the Lushai Hills district.

Over a period of time, a line was drawn between the chiefs and the commoners. This rift was, in fact, the immediate cause for the formation of the MU. On 16 January 1946, Macdonald (Superintendent of the Lushai Hills) convened a District Conference in which 22 people were elected as representatives of the then existing 11 Circles (*bial*): each circle had one representative from the commoners and another one from among the chiefs. The commoners protested to the Superintendent that this was unfair; the latter however ignored the plea that due weightage be given to the numerically larger group – the commoners. Nevertheless, the Superintendent allowed

the commoners to have a meeting with the permission to form a political party. On a resolution of the meeting held on 9 April 1946, at Aizawl, the Mizo Union was formed (Chhuanawma, 1993).

Notwithstanding a strong anti-chief feeling within the party, the MU wanted to work together with the chiefs. In order to accommodate the chiefs in the party, the word ‘commoners’ (incorporated in the original name) was dropped from the name of the party: Mizo Commoners’ Union became simply Mizo Union. This led Venkata Rao to remark that the MU was not an anti-chief organization at the outset. However, even after affecting a change in the name, the chiefs did not join the MU (Rao, 1976).

On the eve of India’s independence, difference arose between those who wanted complete independence (called Right Wing) and those who wanted to join India (called Left Wing). Interestingly, the left wing was more popular among the people due to its promise of abolition of chieftainship which was more appealing than the promise of independence (the latter looked distant and sounded vague to the people) by the Right Wing (Goswami, 1979). Further, independence, if at all, could only mean perpetuation of the rule of the chiefs which the emerging middle class desperately wanted to do away with (Chaube, 1973). As a result, the pro-independent Right Wing section gradually lost its ground and ultimately ceased to exist.

Even after being under independent India for a year, people discovered that

the chiefs were still at large. So, in order to fulfill its pledge to the people, the MU decided to press for the abolition of chieftainship in a big way. On 28 December 1948, the party launched a Civil Disobedience Movement against the chiefs and the administration. People were urged to defy the authority of the Government as well as of the chiefs. Violence broke out in many parts of the District leading to a state of political unrest. Upholding authority of the chiefs, L.L. Peter (District Superintendent) arrested many of the MU leaders. It was only when an assurance was given to the MU leaders by an advisor to the Governor of Assam of an early implementation of the Sixth Schedule (which was expected to take care of the concerns of the agitators) that pacified the party leadership. This ceased tension and the arrested leaders were later released (Chhuanawma, 1993).

With the full backing of the powerful church, the MU continued its relentless struggle against the chiefs. Finally, the MU was able to fulfill its long cherished dream when it abolished chieftainship in 1954 (i.e. within the Mizo District), eight years after launching the anti-chief movement in 1946². The same was done away with in 1956 within the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council. The rule of the chief as a unit of village administration was replaced by the Village Council, on the pattern of Village Pachayat, a democratically elected body of the people.

From the perspective of autonomy, abolition of chieftainship had three very important results:

- A big hurdle on the path to socio-economic progress of the people was removed.
- Freed from the bondage of a kind of slavery, an individual could now enjoy a much larger amount of freedom and liberty which could enable proper development of his personality. In other words, autonomy of an individual in its true sense could be obtained under the new democratic set up.
- A real experiment with democratic political institutions began only after the abolition of chieftainship and its replacement by an elected Village Council. It was here that the seeds of grassroots democracy were sown.

In other words, abolition of chieftainship paved the way for the establishment of democracy in Mizoram: the rule of the people, by the people, and for the people.

3. Popularization of the term “Mizo”

Another very significant step taken by the MU was popularization of the term “Mizo” which later became a symbol of unity and solidarity. The move was to become a very successful attempt to unite various tribes (having their own names/nomenclatures, dialects, cultures, etc.), such as Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Paihte, Lai (Pawi) and Mara (Lakher).

The new nomenclature ‘Mizo’ (literally it means ‘highlanders’) was to eventually replace ‘Lushai’, a term hitherto in vogue and used by the British to designate the people living in the Lushai Hills. “The word Mizo”, to Goswami, “is a blanket term, having a political undertone” (Goswami, 1979.). To him, the word Mizo has many useful connotations over the use of the word Lushai. For instance, he says, “the ethnic group Lushei used to assume that the blanket word Lushai referred only to them and hence used to take pride for the popularity of the word over other ethnic groups...The word Mizo, however, is a neutral word and is, therefore, acceptable to the people of the territory in its general application” (Goswami, 1979). Chaube aptly remarked thus: “.... The Mizo Union reflected the typical integrationist aspiration of the middle class when they choose the name ‘Mizo’ in preference to ‘Lushai’ (Chaube, 1973).

Championing a new ‘Mizo identity’ that was both an integrationist and a solidarity tribal movement must surely be one major reason for the overwhelming popularity of the MU within a short time. From the late 1940s through the early 1970s, the party became the most dominant political party in Mizoram. It completely dominated the electoral and political scene of the state since its foundation in 1946 till late 1960s. The party continued to play a significant role in the Mizo politics right upto its merger with the Congress in 1974 (Chhuanawma, et al, 2015).

It is true that the concept of ‘Mizo’ was there as early as 1901 or even earlier, when we come across the first magazine “Mizo leh Vai Chanchin” (‘Mizo and *Vai* Story’) published in Mizo language (Goswami, 1979). But the credit for popularizing and legitimizing ‘Mizo’ as an encompassing ethnic term goes to the MU. The party was instrumental in changing the names of the Lushai Hills District into the Mizo Hills District in 1954 and that of the Mizo Hills District into the Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972 (and not ‘Lushailand’). ‘Mizoram’ means ‘land of the Mizos’.

The popularization of the term Mizo had four very important results:

- Mizo as the ‘lingua franca’ was firmly established.
- Mizo language eventually becomes the one and only local vernacular medium of instruction used in schools, colleges and universities throughout Mizoram.³
- A common culture called ‘Mizo Culture’ eventually emerged.
- Popularization and legitimization of the term ‘Mizo’ by the MU paved the way for establishment of political institutions such as ‘Mizo’ District Council, and the Union Territory and the state of ‘Mizoram’.

The net result was that the hitherto heterogeneous Mizo society attained a very high degree of homogeneity after having a common language (the original

Lusei dialect was accepted as Mizo language) and a common culture (common customs, common religion, i.e. Christianity, etc.). The Mizo Identity was thus born⁴. This was no mean achievement in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic North-East. In fact, no other North-East state compares with Mizoram in this regard. It should be noted, however, that the efforts of the MU in the popularization and legitimization of the term Mizo were helped, in a big way, by other organizations such as the Young Mizo Association, the Mizo National Front Movement, the powerful Church and such other factors as remoteness of the area.

The newly established Mizo Identity had two aspects: Firstly, it is inward-looking in nature. It brought about a sense of belonging to the group that was much bigger than those tribal groups existing separately or individually, of togetherness, and of unity within the (Mizo) community. Paradoxically, a sense of being one, that is, of being Mizo, gave rise to a sense of being separate or different from ‘others’ (i.e. non-Mizos). The logical outcome of such an integrationist identity at the regional level was dis-integrationism and separatism at the national level and demands for autonomy as was demonstrated by the Mizo National Front’s demand for Mizo independence in 1960s. The second is outward-looking in nature. This Mizo identity further gave to birth to a pan-Mizo identity that transcends international boundaries. The seed of what has come to be known as “Greater Mizoram” was thus sown.

4. Movement for “Greater Mizoram”

The MU also started a movement for “Greater Mizoram”. “Greater Mizoram” is a term that denotes areas inhabited by kindred Mizo tribes (otherwise popularly known as Lushai-Kuki-Chin tribes) that are geographically contiguous to the state of Mizoram, such as parts of Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Neither the exact origin of the idea nor the person who has coined the term ‘Greater Mizoram’ is known. What is known is that the idea was as old as the formation of the oldest political party- the MU. The concept is rather a complex one, for ‘Greater Mizoram’ can either be within or without India, with independence or complete autonomy as the ultimate objective, or within India with or without a special status. It is largely a political move on the part of the Mizos (MU) of Mizoram who had realized the importance and significance of the size of population and political units and hence had taken upon themselves the mantle of the ‘Godfather’ of the ‘Mizos’ (i.e. all those belonging to the Lushai-Kuki-Chin tribes).

Right from its foundation, the MU made a commitment for establishment of a single administrative unit for all the Mizos living in geographically contiguous areas in India, Burma and Bangladesh. Clause no. 3 of the MU’s memorandum submitted to the Bordoloi Committee in April 1947 clearly stated the party’s position on the issue. The said clause reads: When the then Lushai Hills district

would eventually join India, 'Mizoram' would comprise of:

- The present Lushai Hills,
- Cachar area in Assam, an area of 300 sq. miles with a "Mizo population of 9,000",
- Chittagong Hills Tract, an area of 3,000 sq. miles with a "Mizo population of 5,000",
- Parts of Manipur, an area of 3,500 sq. miles with a "Mizo population of 7,000",
- Parts of Tripura, an area of 250 sq. miles with a "Mizo population of 7,000" (Vanthuama, 2001).

Though the party could not realize its goal of creating a 'Greater Mizoram', it never gave up on it, at least in principle. Thanks to the MU, the idea of 'Greater Mizoram' has till today become a public and political agenda both in Mizoram and its surrounding areas, both inside and outside India. Perhaps the party could not properly pursue this objective since the Mizo National Front launched a movement for Mizo independence since 1966. It may be noted that the MNF fought for independence of 'Greater Mizoram' as well. It did not allow any other organization such as the MU that sought to pursue the same objective of forming 'Greater Mizoram'.

Conclusions

To conclude, the creation of a District Council empowered the people of Mizoram and thus positively gave to the people a great deal of autonomy by way of establishing a constitutional body to look after their interests and general wellbeing. The very powers of the District Council also abolished chieftainship altogether along with the latter's special privileges. This also gave autonomy to the people by way of removing an institution of injustice and inequality in the Mizo society. Movements for popularization of 'Mizo' and for creation of 'Greater Mizoram' are more of ideals that the MU had successfully employed to capture popular support and imagination than they are of political institutions that could directly ensure, in themselves, autonomy in the immediate future. However, attempts to realize 'Greater Mizoram' and the supporting ethnic term 'Mizo' championed by the MU, has become an autonomy issue in that the very idea has got the potential to grant autonomy to the Mizos, at any time in the future. As already pointed out, the dream of all the Mizos (Lushai-Kuki-Chin people) to live under one roof, whether within India or independent of India, has indeed been a lively dream for many Mizos till this day.

Notes

1. The pro-independent Right Wing group within the M.U gradually and ultimately ceased to exist in the long run. Most of them either left the party or were eventually reconciled to the Left Wing ideology of abolition of chieftainship, of joining India, etc.
2. The Assam (Lushai Hills Acquisition of Chief Rights) Bill 1954 was passed on 28 June 1954. Chieftainship was abolished in the Mizo District on 16 August 1954. Accordingly monetary compensations were given to the chiefs.
3. Mizo language is not used in most of Chakma area and some parts of Mara area. In the Chakma District Council area, Chakma and English are generally used as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. Likewise, some Primary and Middle Schools in Mara District Council area do not use Mizo as a medium of instruction. Mara is used instead. The Mizo language is used by most of the people and is understood by one and all within Mizoram. The Chakmas are not regarded as Mizos nor do they regard themselves as one. The Maras and the Lais living in the southern parts of Mizoram are regarded as Mizos with some reservation.
4. Loosely defined, the Mizo identity means the sense of belonging to a social group called "Mizo". Though there are several different tribes, a common language, originally a Lusei dialect and a common culture i.e. an amalgam of cultures of different tribes- largely prevail in the state. A person's loyalty has, henceforth, shifted from his tribe or clan to the new entity the Mizo community. Of course, for the people of state, the new identity is nothing less than 'Mizo Nationality'.

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“A successful man is one who can lay a firm
foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him.”
~ **David Brinkley**

“Let him who would enjoy a good future waste none of
his present.”
~ **Roger Babson**

Siblings of Substance Abusers: The Moderating Role of Parental Warmth in Academic Problems

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Abstract

The study aims to elucidate perceived parental rejection in siblings of substance abusers and its role in their academic problems. The Mizo adolescents with their age ranging between 14 to 19 years, comprising of 290 (145 boys and 145 girls) having a drug-abusing sibling, 290 (145 boys and 145 girls) having an alcohol-abusing sibling and 290 (145 boys and 145 girls) having non-abusing sibling participated in the study. Results revealed significant 'sex', 'status', or their interaction effects on parental acceptance-rejection and academic problems. It was also found that paternal acceptance-rejection moderated the effect of having a drug-abusing sibling on academic problems for boys. Discussions highlighted the consequences of substance abuse problems on the family and the needs of other family members, especially adolescent siblings from parents in the wake of such problems within the family.

Keywords: Parenting, Rejection, Warmth, Acceptance, Psychoactive, Substance, Moderating

Introduction

Research on the impact of a substance abuser on the family has indicated that severe and enduring stress are experienced by the family members, which can result in high levels of physical and psychological morbidity (Orford, Natera, Davies, Nava, Mora, Rigby, Bradbury, Copello, and Velleman, 1998; Velleman, Bennett, Miller, Orford, and Tod, 1993). The family's struggle to cope with and solve the problem has been associated with immense stress and

conflict, not only between parent and child, but also between siblings. Relationships within the family seem to disintegrate, adding to the seemingly relentless negative impact of the problem (Barnard, 2005).

Although the impact of these substance abusers on the whole family has attracted research, the impact on the brothers and sisters (the siblings) has not attracted as much research attention. Recent studies have only started to identify parents and siblings as separate

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constructs within the family (Bank, Burraston, & Snyder, 2004). Siblings often report feeling guilty, shock, anger and dismay for a brother or sister's substance abuse. They also reported fear of being blamed or judged for a sibling's substance abuse (Dorn, Ribbens & South, 1994; Orford, Natera, Copello, Atkinson, Moro & Velleman, 2005; Sayer-Jones, 2006).

Siblings of substance abusers are found to be present with a whole lot of psychological problems, such as low self esteem, self blame, helplessness, hopelessness, expectations of rejection and loss, overestimation of the amount of danger in the world, and/or expectation of maltreatment or abandonment from others. Psychological symptoms such as anorexia, depression, panic attacks, 'nervous breakdown', somatoform disorders, sleep disorders, increased oppositional behaviour, difficulty regulating emotion, poor impulse control, aggression, self destructive behaviour, dissociation, compulsive sexual behaviour, bingeing, purging and, sometimes, thoughts of wanting to die are reported (Barnard, 2005; Coffey, Saladin, Drobos, Brady, Dansky, and Kilpatrick, 2002; Dorn *et al.*, 1994; Davies, Hopkins & Clark, 2005; Greenblatt, 2000; Orford *et al.*, 2005; Sayer-Jones, 2006; Snyder, Bank, and Burraston, 2005; Velleman *et al.*, 1993). Of course academic problems are also a major concern when one of the siblings in the family is a substance abuser. Barnard (2005) noted that academic performance of siblings of drug

users often suffered and they resented this. Siblings also have to deal with the stigma of having an addicted sibling. They often have to lead dual lives and take on dual roles which can become very confusing (Lukens, Thorning & Lohrer, 2004).

Siblings of substance abusers are often overlooked or neglected by their parents. This adds on to the already accumulated stress of having to deal with a sibling's substance abuse (Barnard, 2005; Velleman *et al.*, 1993). The needs of siblings of substance abusers are frequently marginalized by a family's fixation on addressing the problems created by the abusing sibling. Interventions and research focus mainly on the abusing individual and not on the needs of other family members. The health and mental well-being of other siblings are often not recognised. Their needs are usually acknowledged only when the sibling is considered a possible resource in assisting the problem drug-using client. Non-abusing siblings tended to side themselves with their mothers, taking on defensive roles as a means to protect their mothers from the undeserved and burdensome problems arising from their sibling's substance use. A frequent side effect of such an alliance was the over-involvement of non-using siblings in family conflict, with the unfortunate outcome of intensifying relational problems within the family (Barnard, 2005).

Rohner (2004), among others, stressed the role of parenting in children's psychological adjustment in his

conceptualization the warmth dimension of parenting. This is a dimension or continuum on which all humans can be placed because everyone has experienced in childhood more or less love at the hands of major caregivers. One end of the continuum is marked by parental acceptance, which refers to the “warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply love” that children can experience from their parents and other caregivers. The other end of the continuum is marked by parental rejection, which refers to the “absence or significant withdrawal of these feelings and behaviours and by the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviours and affects”. Parental rejection can be experienced by any combination of four principal expressions: (1) cold and unaffectionate, the opposite of being warm and affectionate, (2) hostile and aggressive, (3) indifferent and neglecting, and (4) undifferentiated rejecting.

Rohner’s (2004) concept of parental acceptance-rejection syndrome strongly support the conclusion that children and adults who perceive themselves to be rejected tend to display several psychological maladjustments: hostility, aggression, emotional unresponsiveness; immature dependence, impaired self-esteem, impaired self-adequacy, emotional instability, ever-increasing anger, resentment and negative worldview. Paternal acceptance had been found to be related to children’s academic competence (Forehand & Nousiainen,

1993; Musitu & García, 2004). Paternal warmth also significantly predicted school adjustment and academic achievement (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000). Bader (2001, 2008) found a strong correlation between parental acceptance and scholastic achievement. Putnick, Bornstein, Lansford, Malone, Pastorelli, Skinner, Oburu, (2014) found that higher perceived parental rejection predicted decreases in school performance. Adolescents’ perception of a warm and accepting quality in the relationship with their parents is remarkably important to maintaining their healthy psychological adjustment because their security and other emotional and psychosocial states are dependent on it (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005).

Objectives

Given the literature on the impact of substance abuse in the family, especially with regard to the siblings, and the concomitant effects on parenting, the objectives of the present study aims - (i) to highlight perceived parental acceptance-rejection in siblings of substance abusers and (ii) the moderating role of such perceived parental rejection or warmth in the academic problems of those having substance-abusing siblings.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical foundation the objectives set-forth, the following hypotheses were framed for the present study:

- (i) There will be significant difference between siblings of substance abuser

and non abuser on selected variables among the samples.

- (ii) There will be gender effect on selected variables under study.
- (iii) Independent and interaction effects were expected on the selected variables.

The present study is the first endeavour in the target population on the selected variables, and it is exploratory in nature.

Methodology

Sample: The Mizo adolescents with their age ranging between 14 to 19 years, comprising of 290 (145 boys and 145 girls) having drug-abusing sibling, 290 (145 boys and 145 girls) having alcohol-abusing sibling, and 290 (145 boys and 145 girls) having non-abusing sibling participated in the study, drawn from a randomly selected secondary and higher secondary schools in and around Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The participants themselves identified the substance abuse status of their siblings by responding to ASSIST (WHO, 2000) that detects psychoactive substance use like alcohol and drugs, incorporated in the questionnaire booklet. All the participants have siblings (Mean number of siblings = 4.02). Though all participants were presently residing in different localities of Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram, 42.7 % originally hailed from rural areas and the rest of 57.3 % hailed from urban Aizawl area. All participants had both their parents

living, and most of the fathers were employed (99 %) and literate (97.89 %), while 45.22 % of mothers were employed and literate (97.33 %). Most participants came from nuclear families (72.2 %), and the rest were from joint families (27.8 %). The three groups were found not to differ significantly in these demographic variables except in the status of having substance-abusing sibling - alcohol, drugs or normal.

Psychological Measures:

- (i) *Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire short forms for mothers and fathers (PARQ; Rohner, R.P &Khaleque, A, 2005):* The Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ-Short Form) is a 24 item, self report instrument (4 – point Likert - type scale) designed to measure individuals' perception of acceptance-rejection with separate forms for father and mother. Parental acceptance-rejection is a bipolar dimension, with acceptance/warmth defining one end of the continuum and parental rejection defining the other. The PARQ consists of four subscales: (1) warmth/affection (WA) (2) hostility/aggression (HA) (3) indifference/neglect (IN) (4) undifferentiated rejection (UR); and totally, an *overall paternal or maternal acceptance-rejection score (TTR)*. High score indicates rejection and low score indicates acceptance/warmth.

(ii) *Academic Problems subscale of Adolescent Psychopathology Scale – Short Form (APS-SF; Reynolds, W.M, 2004)*: The Academic Problems subscale of the APS-SF is a 9-item self report measure that evaluates problems associated with academic difficulties in school, including getting into trouble and breaking the rules in school, distractibility and inattention in the classroom etc. It has three response choices of “Yes/No, Sometimes and Always” which were further scale scored. The higher the score, the more the academic problems.

Results and Discussions

Checks of psychometric adequacy to address the theoretical and methodological concerns of cross-cultural reliability and validity of measures of theoretical constructs (Witkin & Berry, 1975; Poortinga, 1997 etc.) revealed substantial item-total coefficients of correlation for both the father and mother versions of PARQ, and an order of adequate reliability ranging from .80 to .82 across the levels of analyses: adolescents having alcohol-abusing sibling, drug-abusing sibling and normal sibling. Academic Problems Scale also yielded more or less acceptable Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .64 to .73. Diagnostic tests of assumptions that underlie the application of parametric tests were also first checked and satisfied.

The results of Factorial ANOVA [2 Sex (male/female) X 3 Status of sibling’s substance abuse (alcohol, drug, normal)] given in Table-1 revealed significant main effect of ‘Sex’ indicating that compared to females, males generally perceived significantly more hostility/aggression ($M = 9.55$ for males; $M = 8.56$ for females), undifferentiated rejection ($M = 6.33$ for males; $M = 6.01$ for females) and total rejection ($M = 40.36$ for males; $M = 38.61$ for females) from fathers, a finding expected of a traditional patrilineal society like the Mizo where men are less involved in the care-giving of their children (Fente, 2012; Rohner and Veneziano, 2001). This finds support from a host of literature where boys tended to perceive higher rejection during childhood from their father than did girls (Hussain *et al.*, 2013; Ibrahim, 1988; Sentse *et al.*, 2009; Hussain & Munaf, 2012). Significant ‘Sex’ effect on HAMIg ($M = 8.60$ for males; $M = 8.12$ for females), indicated that males also perceived significantly more hostility/aggression from mothers compared to females. Apparently with boys typically engaging in more energetic activities, as in other cultures, it does not come as a surprise that Mizo boys should also perceive their primary caregivers (most likely their mother) as more impatient and reprimanding than in the case of girls of the same age (Demetriou & Christodoulides, 2006; Helewa, 1997).

Significant main effect of ‘Status’ (Alcohol, Drugs and Normal) were found

on HAFI, INF, URFI and TTRFI. Post hoc mean comparisons (Tukeyhsd) indicated that adolescents having drug-abusing sibling ($M = 9.36$) scored significantly higher than adolescents having normal sibling ($M = 8.67$) on paternal hostility/aggression (HAFI); adolescents having drug-abusing sibling ($M = 10.51$) scored significantly higher than adolescents having normal sibling ($M = 9.76$) on paternal indifference/neglect INF; adolescents having drug abusing sibling ($M = 6.39$) scored significantly higher than adolescents having normal sibling ($M = 5.89$) on paternal undifferentiated/rejection (URF), and adolescents having drug abusing sibling ($M = 40.51$) also scored significantly higher than adolescents having normal siblings ($M = 38.24$) on TTRFI, suggesting that adolescents having drug abusing sibling perceived significantly more rejection from fathers compared to adolescents having normal siblings.

A qualitative study of siblings of drug abusers by Barnard (2005) also revealed that siblings of drug abusers reported that they were 'estranged, sidelined, and that they were missing out on their parents' attention. Barnard (2005) also reported that fathers tend to withdraw from the family situation (son's addiction), and this in turn could be perceived as rejection by the non-abusing sibling. According to Cicirelli (1995), parents may become preoccupied with the ill child, giving little attention to the other children. The healthy children may be required to take on additional household

responsibilities that allowed them less time for engaging in their own preferred activities. Parents can easily become overwhelmed when one of their children has high needs whether resulting from chronic disability, disease, or addiction (Lamorey, 1999). However, significant main effect of "Status" was not found on any of the PARQ-Mother subscales or total scale. The fact that the status of having drug-abusing and not alcohol-abusing sibling showed significant difference in paternal rejection as compared to having normal siblings may indicate the severity with which drug abuse especially disrupts family life among the Mizo.

Significant interaction effect of "Sex X Status" were also found on URFI and TTRFI which revealed that among boys, siblings of drug-abusers ($M = 6.65$) scored significantly higher on paternal undifferentiated rejection (URF) than boys having normal siblings ($M = 6.19$) and siblings of alcohol-abusers ($M = 6.16$); whereas among girls, siblings of alcohol-abusers ($M = 6.29$) perceived significantly more paternal undifferentiated rejection than those having drug-abusing siblings ($M = 6.13$) and those having normal siblings ($M = 5.60$). The same pattern of interaction effects is also seen on total rejection from father wherein among boys, siblings of drug-abusers ($M = 41.67$) scored significantly higher on paternal total rejection than those having normal sibling ($M = 39.92$) and siblings of alcohol-abusers ($M = 39.48$); whereas among girls, siblings of alcohol-abusers ($M = 39.91$) scored

significantly higher than siblings of drug-abusers ($M = 39.36$) and those having normal sibling ($M=36.56$).

It may be noted that the drugs of abuse among the drug-abusing siblings in this study are almost all opioid derivatives, sedatives and inhalants (85.1 %) that typically shows up behaviourally in apathy, sedation, disinhibition, psychomotor retardation, impaired attention, impaired judgment, lethargy, argumentativeness, lability of mood, and interference with personal function. Although alcohol abusers also show many of these behaviours, they are more characteristic of aggressive behaviour instead of apathy, sedation and psychomotor retardation in opioid drug abusers. The apathetic nature of the drug-abusing sibling may not affect female siblings as much as the aggressive nature of alcohol-abusing siblings. Thus, it is perhaps more difficult to deal with an alcohol-abusing sibling for a girl than a more silent drug-abusing sibling.

Some research also indicated that parents are generally more concerned about illicit drug use than they are about alcohol use (Hayes *et al.*, 2004). Further, alcohol is likely to be perceived as more of a recreational substance by Mizo males, whereas illicit drugs are viewed with more seriousness. In the Mizo context, it has also been reported (UNODC & MSJE, 2004) that the supposed scarcity of alcohol due to MLTP (Mizoram Total Prohibition) Act, (1997) still in force during the research data collection period led to

higher instances of drug abuse. Hence, this could perhaps explain the tolerance of alcohol-abusing siblings by males and the intolerance of drug-abusing siblings by the adolescent boys.

To determine the moderating role of parental acceptance - rejection in the relationship between the status of having a substance-abusing sibling (Alcohol, Drugs and Normal control) and Academic Problems (ADP) among Mizo adolescents, hierarchical regression analyses were computed using SPSS 20, Interaction Software (Soper, 2013) and Hayes' PROCESS for SPSS (Fields, 2014) for Mizo adolescent boys and girls separately. The criterion variable, Academic Problems (ADP), was measured by the Adolescent Psychopathology sub-scale (APS; Reynolds, 2000). The predictor 'status' (Alcohol, Drugs and Normal) was first Dummy Coded into 'Alcodum' and 'Drugdum', with 'Normal' as the reference group. Necessary centering was done for the moderating variables of parental acceptance-rejection (TTRF and TTRM). The interaction terms between the predictors (Alcodum and Drugdum) and the potential moderator (TTRF) were also created.

The results summarized in (Table 2) revealed that among boys, 'status' alone explained only 1.2 % of the variance in Academic Problems. Paternal rejection significantly contributed 4.7 % of the variance explained. The addition of the interaction terms further added 1.6 % to the variance accounted for, bringing the

total proportion of explained variance in ADPIg to 7.5 %. Significant main effect of status (Alcodum, $\eta^2 = .108$; $p = .052$) was found, indicating that in Academic Problems, adolescent boys having alcohol-abusing sibling ($M = 7.40$) scored significantly higher than those having normal sibling ($M = 6.50$). Significant main effect of Paternal Rejection ($\eta^2 = .219$; $p = .000$) was found (Table 2), indicating

that academic problems (ADPIg) increases with increase in paternal rejection. Chen, Liu & Li (2000) also found that paternal warmth significantly predicted academic achievement. Obayan & Jimoh-Cook (1992) found that children who perceive their fathers as rejecting had low academic achievement. Paternal acceptance has also been found to be related to children's academic competence

(Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Musitu & García, 2004). Jones (2004) also found positive association between perceived relationship quality with father and academic achievement.

Interaction effect of ‘status’ (Drugdum) with the moderator variable ‘Paternal rejection’ (TTRF) on the criterion variable ‘Academic Problems’ (ADP) was found to be significant ($\text{Drugdum} \times \text{ZTTRF} | g, r^2 = .156; p = .018$), indicating that adolescent boys having normal sibling and adolescent boys having drug-abusing sibling scored significantly different in academic problems depending on different levels of paternal rejection (Table 2). Analysis of the significance of the simple slopes (Figure-1) at three levels (*M-1SD*, *Average* and *M+1SD*) indicated

that the simple slope (regression of the dependent variable on the independent variable at the level of the moderator for the current interaction line) was found to be significant only at *M-1SD* level, that is, low level ($t = -3.129; p = .002$) of the moderator (TTRF). This indicates that only at low level of paternal rejection (akin to paternal warmth), status of having drug-abusing sibling (Drugdum) was negatively correlated with Academic Problems. That is, if an adolescent has a drug-abusing sibling (high score on Drugdum), he will have less academic problems if his father does not reject him (low score on TTRF). In other words, therefore, it could be predicted that even if boys had drug-abusing siblings, they were likely to have less academic problems if their fathers were perceived to be warm or not rejecting.

Table 2: Coefficients of regression model for Academic Problems on Status and paternal rejection for boys ($N = 435$)

Predictors	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1			
Constant	0.839		
Alcodum	0.108	0.012	0.012
Drugdum	0.001		
Step 2			
Constant	0.837		
ZTTRF g	.219**	0.059	.047**
Step 3			
Constant	0.837		
Alcodum*ZTTRF g Drugdum*ZTTRF g	-0.002 .156*	0.075	.016*

Note. ZTTRF = total paternal rejection. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

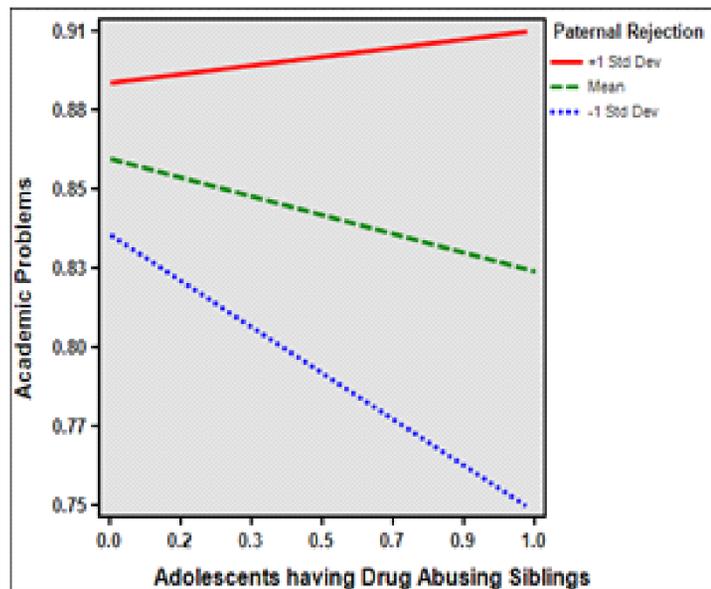


Figure: 1 – Moderating role of paternal rejection between status of having drug-abusing siblings and academic problems in adolescent boys.

Subsequent hierarchical regression analyses neither showed any significant moderating role of maternal rejection in boys', nor paternal or maternal rejection in girls' academic problems due to having substance-abusing siblings. However, significant main effect of status (Alcodum, $\beta = .108$; $p = .052$) indicated that in Academic Problems, adolescent boys having alcohol-abusing siblings ($M = 7.40$) scored significantly higher than those having normal siblings ($M = 6.50$). Significant main effect of Maternal rejection ($\beta = .204$; $p = .000$) also indicated that academic problems (ADPIg) in boys increases with increase in maternal rejection. For girls, significant main effect of paternal rejection ($\beta = .189$; $p = .000$) and maternal rejection ($\beta = .160$; $p = .001$) also

indicated that academic problems (ADPIg) increases with increase in paternal and maternal rejection. Research generally supports the effects of maternal involvement in academic achievement.

Mize and Pettit (1997) also found that maternal warmth predicted better adjustment, especially in academic performance. A study by Zellman and Waterman (1998) also confirmed that parent-school involvement in children's education is associated with positive educational outcomes. Parental involvement in children's education appeared to be associated with a range of positive outcomes, including fewer behaviour problems, lower drop-out rates, and higher student achievement (Comer, 1984; Muller, 1993; Stevenson and Baker,

1987). Lakshmi and Arora (2006) in Varanasi also found that parents who were perceived as being more accepting and using less control tended to have adolescents with higher academic success and competence. Coleman (1997) advocated that strong supportive families are significant in the academic success of children.

Summary and Conclusions

The psychometric checks of the behavioural measures (PARQ-Short Form for fathers and mothers and Academic Problem Scale) revealed their robustness for use in this population. Results indicated that boys perceived significantly more paternal and maternal hostility/aggression, paternal undifferentiated rejection and overall rejection than girls. It was also found that boys and girls having drug-abusing sibling significantly perceived more paternal rejection than boys and girls who had normal sibling. Further, among boys, siblings of drug abusers perceived significantly more paternal hostility/aggression, undifferentiated/rejection and total rejection whereas among girls, siblings of alcohol abusers perceive significantly more paternal hostility/aggression, undifferentiated/rejection and total rejection. A small but significant proportion of the variance in Academic Problems was explained by the status of having substance-abusing sibling in boys, but not in girls. Both paternal and maternal rejection also explained a considerable proportion of the variance in Academic Problems.

The moderating role of paternal rejection in the relationship between status of having drug-abusing sibling and academic problems in boys was found to be significant. It is a fact that every sibling in every family is not equally detrimentally affected by a member's drug abuse in the family. The finding in this study revealed that adolescent boys having drug-abusing sibling scored significantly lower on academic problems when paternal rejection was low (paternal acceptance/warmth). That is, paternal warmth appears to alleviate the academic problems likely to happen due to a sibling's drug-abuse. This is the foremost significance of this study considering the relevance of such information for society, specially the Mizo society whose many families are struggling to deal with the burdens of substance abuse and addiction, it being geographically located on the border of North East India, having to deal with narcotics trafficking intertwined with insurgencies in the neighbouring *Golden Triangle* (Goswami, 2014).

Gender differences on the effects of having alcohol-abusing sibling as compared to having drug-abusing sibling was found contrary to the expectations that boys and girls would be equally negatively impacted by a sibling's substance abuse, another significant point of this study. This may be due to the fact that intoxication of alcohol and the drugs of abuse in common in Mizoram (sedatives and opioids) give differential effects on the behaviour of the abusers. The apathetic nature of the drug-abusing sibling may not

affect female siblings as much as the aggressive nature of alcohol-abusing siblings. Thus, it is perhaps more difficult to deal with an alcohol-abusing brother or sister for a girl than a more silent drug-abusing sibling for a girl, highlighting the vulnerability of the adolescent girls.

Different types of substances create different stresses and demands on family members. Key areas of impact on relatives are physical and psychological health, finance and employment, social life and family relationships (Barnard, 2005). Literature review suggests that there is little research specifically focussing on the siblings of substance abusers. The results of this study have highlighted the importance of considering not only the needs of the brothers and sisters of the substance abusers but specifically that the parenting styles may alleviate or aggravate the impact of such sibling's substance abuse, as not everybody is equally affected and develop psychological problems. The findings of this study also support Rohner's (2004) concept of parental acceptance-rejection syndrome, which concludes that children and adults who perceive themselves to be rejected tend to display psychological maladjustments. It is hoped that such information will educate the Mizo population about the consequences and needs of other family members,

especially adolescent siblings, in the wake of substance abuse problems within the family.

A pressing limitation of the study was the restricted number of parenting variables that could be looked into as potential moderators of the relationship between having a substance-abusing sibling and other psychopathological variables taken in this study. Consideration of socio-cultural and religious factors could also throw light upon the support needs of such siblings to ease the pain of having to deal with substance-abuse problems in the family. It is suggested for future research that more parenting variables like permissiveness, restrictiveness, authoritarian, authoritative, and democratic parenting, overprotection and parental control be taken into consideration as well as the societal factors and spiritual well-being and co-dependency in the family that may play moderating roles in various internalizing and externalizing disorders of adolescent siblings of substance abusers. It is hoped that the results of this study will educate the Mizo population about the consequences and needs of family members other than the substance abuser, especially adolescent siblings, in the wake of substance abuse problems within the family.

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“The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”

~ *Vince Lombardi*

Print Media Representation of Conflict between Mizo and Bru with Special Reference to 16th Lok Sabha Election

V. Ratnamala*
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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the media representation of conflict between Mizo and Bru tribes in Mizoram dailies. The sixteenth Lok Sabha election was postponed in Mizoram due to Mizoram-based civil society's 72-hour state bandh in protest against the EC's move to make Bru refugees vote in Tripura (The Times of India, 2014). The organizations demanded the Commission to allow the refugees to cast their vote in Mizoram, but their demand was turned down. The Bru voters exercised their franchise through postal ballot from April 1 to April 3. For years, Bru families have taken shelter in Tripura after they were displaced to Tripura from Mizoram following ethnic violence with the Mizo community. Apart from revising the poll date, the EC added that provisions will be made in subsequent Lok Sabha and Mizoram assembly elections to allow the displaced Reang voters to vote in their home state. It also utilizes relevant theoretical perspectives including Van Dijk's new(s) racism, minorities' representation in mainstream media, media and conflict theories, besides, Gramsci's hegemony. Content analysis is the primary research method used for this study. To evaluate the media representation, the Aizawl editions of the dailies were selected. One month samples from April 2014 of Vanglaini, Newslink, The Mizoram Post and Zozam times were chosen for the content analysis. These are the leading dailies of Mizoram. All the articles, editorials, photographs, letters to the editor regarding the conflict between Mizo and Bru are the units of analysis. The variables of the study are the sources in the article, the news language, the frequency of news occurrence and the themes.

Key words: Mizos, Brus, Dailies, Content analysis, Media representation, Ethnic violence

Introduction

Mizoram is a hilly North East Indian state dotted with different ethnic groups.

Perched on the southernmost tip of the north eastern region, Mizoram occupies an area of great strategic importance. It is bound by Bangladesh on the west and

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Myanmar on the east and south sharing a total of 722 km international boundary with two countries. It also shares borders with three states – Assam, Tripura and Manipur. The inhabitants of Mizoram are Mizos to outsiders; the word Mizo does not denote one single tribe. It is a generic term given to a conglomeration of tribes, e.g. the Lushai, Pawis (Pai), Lakher, Paite, Ralte, Hmars and Chakmas (Nag,2002).

The Brus are also known as Reangs who reside in the western part of Mamit district of Mizoram. The Reangs are the second largest Scheduled Tribe of the state of Tripura. They belong to the Mongoloid race and their dialect has been classified to the Austro-Asiatic group of Tibeto Burman family. Their dialect is known as *Polong-O*. It is also known as *Riang*. The Reangs have a large presence in the tribal belts of Tripura, as well as Mizoram. The displacement of Reangs (also known as Brus) in Mizoram relates to the demand by the Bru National Union for an autonomous district for Reangs in Mizoram. The estimates of Reangs displaced from Mizoram and living in the refugee camps of Tripura vary between 35000 to 41000.

Mizo politicians and organizations like the Young Mizo Association (YMA) vehemently opposed the demand and see the Reangs not as indigenous to Mizoram, as the bulk of them are recent migrants. They see the demand for a Bru homeland as a scheme to split up Mizoram. But from the Reang activist view point, the demand

for a Reang homeland is justified (Baruah, 2003).

The sixteenth Lok Sabha election was postponed in Mizoram due to Mizoram-based civil society bodies' 72-hour state bandh in protest against the Election Commission's move to make Bru refugees to vote in Tripura (Halliday, 2014). The organizations demanded that the commission allow the refugees to cast their vote in Mizoram, but their demand was turned down. The Bru voters exercised their franchise through postal ballot from April 1 to April 3. For years, Bru families have taken shelter in Tripura after they fled Mizoram following ethnic violence with Mizos. Apart from revising the poll date, the Election Commission added that provisions will be made in subsequent Lok Sabha and Mizoram assembly elections to allow the displaced Bru voters to vote in their home state. The present study attempts to study how media represented the whole episode of conflict between Mizo and Bru with special reference to sixteenth Lok Sabha election held in April 2014.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilizes relevant theoretical perspectives including Appadurai's thoughts and Gramsci's hegemony. But to the researcher's knowledge there are very few comprehensive explanations of the coverage of the conflict between Mizo and Bru in Mizo dailies.

Ethnicity occupies an important position in the history, politics and governance of northeast India. Sanjib Baruah in his article “Citizens and Denizens: Ethnicity, Homelands, and the Crisis of Displacement in Northeast India” analyzed that demarcation of exclusive homelands for ethnically defined groups, protective discrimination regime and separate statehood and autonomous district council has shaped the political imagination of tribal as well as non-tribal activists of the region. The ethnic conflicts between citizens and denizens lead to internal displacement of denizens within Northeast India.

Appadurai proposes five factors that contribute to the global exchange of ideas and information in his 1990 essay ‘Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy’. He labels these five dimensions as “-scapes,” which are fluid and constantly shifting, just as cultures are. Within each of these –scapes, however, exist multiple realities, as an idea or image that changes its context depending on the spectator. With the meaning of ideas changing depending on the person ingesting them, one must then grapple with the existence of an “imagined world,” in which our reality is no more real than somebody else’s. The five scapes are ethnoscape, technoscape, finanscape, mediascapes and ideoscapes.

Ethnoscape refers to the migration of people across cultures and borders, presenting the world and its many communities as fluid and mobile instead

of static. He defined this as “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree.”

The other two –scapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes, deal with the national and international creation and dissemination of information and images. Mediascapes can be understood as the many media outlets (television, radio, newspaper, etc) that shape the “imagined world” we inhabit, where narratives and images are often the only way one forms an opinion about a place or culture. This study will deal with how the media is imagining the ethnic issue of Mizoram i.e the ethnoscape and the mediascape.

Gramsci used the term hegemony to denote the predominance of one social class over others (e.g. bourgeois hegemony). This represents not only political and economic control, but also the ability of the dominant class to project its own way of seeing the world so that those who are subordinated by it accept it as ‘common sense’ and ‘natural’. Hegemony is the power of a dominant group accepted as both natural and legitimate by those who are dominated. This study will also look whether the media supports the dominant views of one social class over the other.

Review of Literature

As per Harold Mendelsohn, the society cannot exist without communication and communication cannot exist outside a social system (Saeed, 2013). The society cannot exist without media and media cannot exist outside a social system. The media just reflects the social system where it exists.

The studies pertaining to “media and minorities” occupy a significant position in academic research all over the world. According to Oxford dictionary, the word minority means ‘the smaller number or part’ and ‘a relatively small group of people differing from the majority in race, religion etc’.

The portrayal of minorities in the mainstream media plays a significant role in any society. The media provides an important source of information through which citizens gain knowledge about their nation, and our attitudes and beliefs are shaped by what the media discerns as public knowledge. According to Van Dijk, media discourse is the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens. Further he focused more specifically on the role of media and in particularly the news which play a role in the reproduction of racial and ethnic equality in the multicultural societies of Western Europe and North America.

Media representation of minorities is always a matter of concern. The minorities are mostly portrayed negatively by the mainstream media. Van Dijk

speaks about new racism in the form of news in which racism is not shown directly but indirectly by showing the minorities as problem people and different from majority. He argues that there is subtle racism in the news media. In Europe, the immigrants are seen as a problem for the majority. ‘The immigration of the Tamil refugees to the Netherlands is represented as a threat to the nation and the social status quo by the Dutch dailies’ (Van Dijk, 1988). The immigration of Tamil refugees is described as invasion.

The Tamils are represented as terrorists who are themselves to blame for the situation in Sri Lanka, as kids of rich parents, as people who illegally enter the country, or as refugees who merely come here to live out of our pockets. In fact, they are portrayed as economic refugees instead of political refugees. He recommends the critical discourse analysis methodology to study the representation of minorities and the news racism in media (Van Dijk, 1988).

Gill Palmer investigated the representation of the Albanian immigrants in the Italian press using social semiotics method. The study posited that the Albanian immigrants are seen as a threat to the status quo of Italian society and to its symbolic geography and identity. They are represented as politically and culturally primitive people. The study combined a critical discourse analysis approach with semiotic analysis of visuals

to explain how language and visuals interact to create meaning and thus, to represent. The Albanian minorities are excluded and other European countries are included in the news representation (Palmer, 2002).

Ilse Devroe's study on media and multiculturalism in Flanders found that the immigrant ethnic minorities are often associated with problems and conflicts and newspaper articles show general bias concerning immigrants. However, findings of both everyday and crisis reporting show that immigrants who are allowed to speak directly are still rare. Even in relation to crime and justice, the topic immigrants are mostly connected to, they almost never get the chance to speak directly. The findings of the study on crisis reporting confirm this trend. Whenever immigrants are allowed to speak, it is mostly on topics such as 'human interest' and 'entertainment, art and culture'. By focussing on one side of the story, several articles stimulate a feeling of insecurity 'caused' by immigrants. (Devroe, 2002)

Gabriela Jacomella's media and migrations: Press narrative and country politics in three European countries is a study on Italian media and the portrayal of fear. It concluded that every newspaper seems to fall prey, at various degrees, to the temptation of inflating news and portraying the sensationalistic, simplified version of the story. The readers are therefore presented with a coverage that kicks off with strong negative messages, and an identification of the "migrant

issue" with disturbing concepts such as emergency, segregation, and cultural differences. A second relevant finding is the almost overwhelming absence of migrants' voices from the media coverage. The stereotype involves the (il)legal status of migrants, which is sometimes taken for granted, as if it were a feature of their very existence (Jacomella, 2010).

The book on *Media and Migration: Constructions of mobility and difference* edited by Russell King and Nancy Wood has documented how the media influence, shape or determine the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of British and European citizenry with respect to contemporary migration processes. This book highlights the relationship between media and migration primarily in terms of the media's representation of the figure of the migrant and of immigration issues, or of the language and rhetoric through which these are articulated and understood.

For Giovanna Campani (Chapter 3), the interests of media and political power in Italy are so inextricably intertwined that the type of coverage immigration received by the media will necessarily be dictated by the prevailing political agenda. Indeed, while one can find major politico-economic interests behind most national media ventures, Campani maintains that Italy constitutes a special, 'abnormal' case where 'all the information is ideologically controlled through implicit choices and depends on economic and political paymasters'. Precisely for this reason, the

media treats migration only in its most superficial and negative manifestations without considering how these are structurally related to the Italian system more generally. Thus the media is so fond of emphasizing the links between migration and criminality (Campani, 2001).

An article titled “Media and Stereotypes on Ethnicity: A Study of Framing Chakma Migration in Tripura” has attempted to analyze the media coverage on migration of Chakma refugees from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh to Tripura with reference to two leading newspapers of Tripura. The study concludes that the media coverage of Tripura Times and Dainik Sambad on Chakma migration from Bangladesh largely resulted in forming ethnic stereotypes that hold high potential in determining the public-Chakma refugee relationship. The study also suggests that absolute dependence of the newspaper on state sponsored advertisements may have resulted in its dependence and reliance on the state for information and advocacy over the Chakma migration from Bangladesh as suggested by the government and its affiliates (Deb & Charvak, 2016).

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the extent of the coverage of the conflict during sixteenth Lok

Sabha election in the sample newspapers.

2. To locate the various types of the news being covered on the conflict.
3. To trace the various themes of news on the conflict during sixteenth Lok Sabha election which was reported.
4. To examine the kind of placement accorded to the news pertaining to the conflict, and
5. To investigate the vocabulary and lexical choice used in the text.

Methodology

The method of content analysis is employed for the present study. The print medium was chosen for the study. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2003), most content analysis in mass media involves multistage sampling. This process consists of three stages: sampling of content sources, selection of dates and selection of content. According to Mass Media in India 2009, the principal dailies of Mizoram are *Vanglaini*, *Aizawl Post*, *Zozam Times*, *Mizo Aw*, *Tawrh Bawm*, *Highlander*, *Newslink*, *Dingdi*, *Hnehtu*, *Mizo Arsi*, *Romei* and *Mizoram Post*. It was compiled and edited by Research, Reference and Training Division, National Documentation Centre on Mass Communication and published by Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

Both the English and Mizo dailies published from Aizawl were chosen for the study. They were chosen based on their circulation figures. The English dailies namely *The Mizoram Post* and *Newslink* were chosen for the study based on circulation. According to Registrar of Newspaper in India, there are 188 publications including daily newspapers, magazines and periodicals published from Mizoram. Among them only *The Mizoram Post* and *Newslink* are English dailies published from Aizawl.

The Mizoram Post is printed in Silchar and it is published from Dawrpui, Aizawl. The registration number of *Newslink* is 69023/98 and it is also sold for Rs.3. The *Vanglaini* and the *Zozam Times* were the two Mizo dailies from Aizawl selected as samples for the study.

Issues of one month sample dailies from April, 1 to April, 30, 2014 were selected for the study. All the articles, editorials, photographs, letters to the editor regarding the conflict between Mizo and Bru were the units of analysis. The variables of the study were the sources in the article, the news language, the placement, the size of the news item, the frequency of news occurrence and the themes. The coding schedule was prepared and finalised after review of literature.

Data collection for the content analysis was achieved by coding each item within a sample newspaper directly into a Microsoft excel sheet across each of the categories of the content analysis.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data collected from the newspapers employing content analysis. Frequency distributions and percentage distributions, was used.

Categories of the Study

Five content categories were developed drawn from previous studies such as the sources in the article, the lexical choice, the frequency of news occurrence and the themes.

Operational Definitions

- “News” is the timely report of events, facts, and opinions that interest a significant number of people. Here “News” also means a direct, matter-of-fact rendering of events related to the conflict.
- Frequency of news - within the sampling period, the appearance of the news story.
- Lexical choice - Use of a word with positive or negative connotations.
- Themes – News and photographs on Bru participation in polling, news and photographs on bandh called for by the NGOs, Bru repatriation, Bru politics and Lok Sabha polls.
- Sources – Views of official sources, views of politicians and views of victims.
- Space – The news stories with 4 columns, three columns, two columns and one column.
- Placement - Front Page, other pages.

Print Media Representation of Conflict between Mizo and Bru with Special Reference to
16th Lok Sabha Election

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of the News Occurrence

Sl. No	Name of the newspaper	Total No of news Frequency N=30	Percentage Distribution
1	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	11	36.66
2	<i>Newslink</i>	19	63
3	<i>Vanglaini</i>	17	56.66
4	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	15	50

As show in Table 1, there was more coverage in terms of frequency of news occurrence in the newspapers. The *Newslink* published more frequently on

this issue. Both the Mizo dailies *Vanglaini* and *The Zozam Times* gave fair coverage of this issue in terms of frequency.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of the Placement

Sl. No	Name of the newspaper	Placement in Front Page	Placement in other pages	Percentage Distribution of Front Page placement
1	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	9	2	81
2	<i>Newslink</i>	19	0	100
3	<i>Vanglaini</i>	9	8	53
4	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	9	6	60

Table 2 shows that *Newslink* published all the articles on this issue in the front pages. *Newslink* is a four page daily and the front page is devoted for the state i.e.

Mizoram news. Hence all the 19 news items on the issue was published in the front page. *The Mizoram Post* also published them mostly on the front page.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of the Size of the Stories

Sl. No	Name of the newspaper	5 column stories	4 column stories	3 column stories	2 column stories	1 column stories
1	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	0	2	5	0	4
2	<i>Newslink</i>	0	8	9	0	2
3	<i>Vanglaini</i>	3	7	4	2	1
4	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	4	3	4	3	1

All the sample dailies gave importance to this issue in terms of space.

Vanglaini and *The Zozam Times* published 5 column stories on this issue. (Table 3)

Table 4: Frequency of the Themes of the News Items

Sl. No	Name of the newspaper	Bru Participation in polls	Bandh	General news on Lok Sabha polls which mentioned about Brus	Brus repatriation and Politics	Negative news
1	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	4	4	0	2	1
2	<i>Newslink</i>	5	5	2	3	4
3	<i>Vanglaini</i>	2	7	4	3	3
4	<i>Zozam Times</i>	3	7	2	4	1

Most of the news on Bru participation in polls and bandh by Mizoram based civil society associations were published in the sampled dailies during the sampling period. News on Brus repatriation and politics were given less importance. All the sampled dailies have also published negative news on Brus (Table 4).

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Photographs Published in Select Newspapers

Sl. No	Name of the newspaper	Frequency N=30	Percentage distribution
1	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	5	16.66
2	<i>Newslink</i>	8	26.66
3	<i>Vanglaini</i>	5	16.66
4	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	5	16.66

As shown in Tables 5 and 6, very few photographs on the issue were published in all the dailies. Only *Newslink* published eight photographs and other dailies published only five photographs.

Table 6: Frequency of the Themes of the Photographs Published in Select Newspapers

Sl. No	Name of the newspaper	Bru participation in polling	Bandh	NGOs	Bureaucrats	Brus
1	<i>The Mizoram Post</i>	1	1	2	1	0
2	<i>Newslink</i>	3	3	0	0	2
3	<i>Vanglaini</i>	1	3	1	0	0
4	<i>The Zozam Times</i>	1	2	0	0	2

Words used

The terminologies the reporters used in the news reports showed the nature of the report whether it is balanced or biased. The reports from *The Mizoram Post* revealed that they have used various terminologies to refer to Brus. They have used the terms like Bru refugees, displaced Bru, tribal refugees and the Reang Tribals. However, they have predominantly used the term Bru refugees. Only one news item from IANS reporting from Agartala referred to Brus as tribal refugees and the Reang tribals. In one news item regarding the kidnapping incident, they used the word miscreants indirectly to refer the Brus.

In *Newslink*, the terms used are Bru refugees, Bru militants, Bru tribals, Bru community, uprooted Bru, and tribal refugees. It has predominantly used the term Bru refugees. One news story on eviction drive indirectly referred them as illegal.

In the *Zozam Times*, the word Bru was never used to denote them, rather the Mizo terminology of determining the 'other' *Tuikuk* was used throughout the content of the news. In *Vanglaini*, the term Bru raltlan (Bru refugee), Bru were used.

In the Mizo dailies, most of the news sources were from the civil society leaders and there is only one instance wherein the Mizoram Bru People Displaced Forum (MBPDF) was quoted both in *Vanglaini* and the *Zozam Times* in which the content is based on the voting pattern of the Bru people only.

With regards to the conducting of total bandh, *Vanglaini* quoted fervently from the civil society leaders that the bandh was conducted for the sake of Mizo community and for the betterment of the welfare of the people residing in Mizoram. With regard to the news content and reporting, the word that the papers used to refer to the Brus as denizens residing in Mizoram, instead of citizens.

In the leading Mizo daily *Vanglaini*'s headline on April 1, 2014, it was reported that the Brus residing in Tripura refugee camp shall cast their vote on April 3. In this regard, the Joint NGO would not allow the counting of votes polled by the Brus. In the content of the news while the demand of the Joint NGO was given priority and quoted them many a time, the Bru leader was quoted only on the voting pattern of the people. On April 7, *Vanglaini* again reported in its headline that the total bandh organised by the Joint NGO (YMA, MUP, MHIP, MZP and MSU) was to demand the cancellation of votes polled by the Bru in Tripura transit camp. Here the news reported that the bandh is for the preservation of the nation and land. Quoting the NGO Coordination Committee Chairman and Central YMA President Lalbiakzuala, 'it is for the sake of preserving the nation and the land'.

Sources

The qualitative content analysis revealed that all the reports filed by the select newspapers quoted only the official

sources and local NGO leaders. The news reports disclosed that the reporters depended mostly on the official views. They have not followed the two source rule like British Broadcasting Corporation (Bhaumik, 2008). The reporter should have got the views from the sources from the both sides that are in conflict. They have not taken the views and opinions of the people who were the minorities in the incident. The newspapers published only the statements of the local NGO leaders. In the news content the demand of the Joint NGO was given priority and quoted them frequently. The Bru leader was quoted only once on the voting pattern of the people. Only once was the byte of the Bru i.e one leader from Mizoram Bru People Displaced Forum (MBPDF) taken.

There was not much professionalism in reporting. All the news reports were filed from Aizawl only. Only one news story from Agartala was published that too from a news agency. The reporters did not move outside of Aizawl to report this issue.

Findings

The quantitative data of content analysis revealed that more space and more news reports were filed on this issue. With regards to the news, newspapers echoed the views and opinions of the dominant sources i.e official sources and local NGOs. The news language and the news selection showed that the news reports were not written sensibly. The newspapers have stereotyped the Brus in the negative and as outsiders like other

previous conflicts coverage. With regard to the news content and reporting, the newspaper gave more importance to the civil bodies of Mizoram. They have not followed the two source rule. They have taken only the official views. They have not taken any views from the witness or the victims.

Conclusions

The data reveals that the conflict between Mizo and Bru tribes during the sixteenth Lok Sabha poll received fair coverage in the select newspapers. The select newspapers gave more space to this issue in terms of news coverage. The conflict was given importance in terms of placement also. Locale wise many of the news stories were published on the front pages. It reveals the interest shown by the media on this issue. The findings shows that select newspapers also gave more space to this issue also.

The terms used by the select newspapers are varied and biased. *Zozam Times* used the word 'Tuikuk' to refer to Brus. It was considered very derogatory by the Brus. This is a fine example of language apartheid. Brus' opinions rarely find space. Brus were under represented in the media reports and depicted in a negative tone. This is very similar to the representation of minorities in the mainstream media. They are always portrayed negatively by the media. The Brus are stereotyped as illegal and negative. The local media links criminality with the Bru tribes in the

coverage. The media also depicts Brus as problematic, outsiders and different from the Mizo community. This shows the presence of subtle racism in the media.

The data reveals that the news coverage reflected us vs. them attitude of the media, that supported the views of local NGOs. The findings confirmed that Mizoram civil society dominated the media coverage. The Mizo vernacular media gave more importance to the views of the Mizoram civil society. The media

has published the press releases of the Mizoram civil society without editing. The quotes from the Mizoram civil society dominated the news coverage. The media and the Mizoram civil society are intertwined and the media coverage on Mizo and Bru conflict is regulated and legitimized by the Mizoram civil society. Hence Gramsci's contention is reflected in the media legitimization and hegemony over the Brus through news reports of Mizoram.

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“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do.”

~ *Mark Twain*

Environmental Accounting and Reporting Practices of Major Industrial Units in Assam

Baishali Dey*
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Abstract

The issue of environmental protection and sustainable development of natural resources to preserve the fragile ecological balance for future generations is of vital importance. Now industries are also increasingly realising their role in environmental protection and sustainable development. In continuation with other parts of India the growth of industries in Assam has also been guided by the necessity of increasing production. For protection of environment and sustainable development, different industries of Assam are committed to abide by environmental norms and various conditions stipulated by the Government of India. This paper is an attempt to analyze the environmental accounting and reporting practices followed by the major industrial units of Assam. The study is mainly based on primary data collected from the selected companies under the major industry groups with the help of a schedule. The industries identified for the study are paper & pulp, cement, oil refinery, petroleum and natural gas, petrochemicals, fertilizers, coal, plywood and tea industries. It was observed that the high polluting industries were better in voluntary environmental disclosure than the low polluting industries. The reasons behind the poor environmental disclosure practices may be its voluntary nature, poor environmental performance, and due to lack of awareness on the part of company's management towards environmental protection.

Key words: Environmental protection, Sustainable development, Environmental disclosure practices.

Introduction

In recent years, environment issues such as environmental degradation, deforestation, overexploitation of natural resources, soil erosion, problem of solid waste management, industrial pollution, global warming, greenhouse gas

emissions etc. have become a matter of great public concern all over the globe. Now, business houses are also increasingly realising their role in environmental protection and sustainable development. In this regard, a new emerging concept of accounting has

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developed worldwide known as 'Environmental Accounting.' It has become an important branch of accounting which involves a process of identification, measurement and allocation of environmental costs and benefits, environmental assets and liabilities and finally converts them in monetary terms.

The issue of environmental protection and sustainable development of natural resources to preserve the fragile ecological balance for future generations is of vital importance. Assam, the largest economy in the North East region of India, is the most industrially advanced state in the region by virtue of its comparatively favourable geographical location and the availability of reasonable infrastructure facilities. The state has moved towards inclusive growth by a balanced pattern of industrial investment. The Industrial Investment Policy was initiated in 2008 to create conditions for income and employment generation in the state. The Policy identified some specific sectors which offer tremendous potential for income and employment generation in Assam. It is worthwhile to mention here that there are refineries, paper mills, coal and cement industry in the public sector which is functioning profitably in the State. However, the state faces severe environmental degradation and resource depletion, which threaten opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

Related Research Studies

Bebbington et al. (1994) conducted a survey on 1000 top UK companies

(listed on the *Times 1000*). The survey was based on a questionnaire sent to finance directors of those companies. The study found that accountants were aware that environmental issues would affect their practice in the future and perceived that this impact falls within the role of the accountant and they felt themselves as the appropriate individuals to innovate in this area. Pradhan and Bal (2002) conducted a study based on the primary data collected from a sample of eighty (80) corporate managers. They found that responses from the corporate managers were positive and are fully aware of the environmental issues and strongly agreed on the disclosure of Corporate Environmental Policy, Environmental Audit Report, quantifiable future goals and targeted environmental issues, disposal of toxic or hazardous substance and on environmental spending. Patra (2003) conducted a case study of TISCO for the financial years 1995-96 to 1999-00 to examine environmental accounting and reporting practices and found that the company launched environmental management programmes and spent on an average, an expenditure of ₹ 25 crore per annum towards prevention of pollution and welfare purposes. Financial data have not been separately disclosed in the financial statement under the head "Environmental cost and expenditure". Sahay (2004) conducted a study on questionnaire survey of top 250 Indian companies ranked by sales as reported by *The Economic Times* in 2003 to investigate their environmental disclosure

practices. The author observed that environmental reporting is not properly maintained and non-comparable and these reports were mainly used as marketing tool. Mitra et al. (2009) conducted an empirical study to establish a relationship between environmental management and business strategy and focused upon six primary indicators (viz., environmental policy, regulatory compliance of standards pertaining to air pollution, release of liquid effluents, generation of solid and hazardous wastes and noise pollution, EMS certification under ISO 14001: environmental audits and environmental cost management) that influence a business unit's environmental pro-activeness.

Objective and Methodology

The study was conducted mainly on selected industries of Assam identified as pollution prone. The industries identified are paper & pulp, cement, oil refinery, petroleum and natural gas, petrochemicals, fertilizers, power, coal, plywood and tea industries. The objective of the study is to analyze the environmental accounting and reporting practices of major industrial units of Assam.

The study is based on primary data collected from the selected companies under the industry groups. Thirty questions were framed in the schedule with the help of the schedule used in related literature. Questions were mostly open-ended and structured to enable the

respondents to answer their view independently and other questions were closed-ended with yes/no. These questions are divided into two categories, namely, Environmental awareness information disclosures, and Environmental accounting and reporting information disclosure. Each of these questions is treated as variables/parameters for fulfilling the objectives of Environmental awareness information disclosures, and Environmental accounting and reporting information disclosures.

The study was conducted mainly on thirteen major industrial units of Assam. The industries identified are: paper & pulp (1 unit), cement (2), oil refinery (2), petroleum and natural gas (3), petrochemicals (1), fertilizers (1), coal (1), plywood (1) and tea (1) industries. The units of study undertaken are: Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd. (Cachar Paper Mill), Cement Corporation of India Ltd. (Bokajan Cement Factory), Barak Valley Cements Ltd., Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (Bongaigaon Refinery Ltd.), Numaligarh Refinery Ltd., Oil India Ltd., Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC), Gas Authority of India Ltd., Assam Petrochemicals Ltd., Bhrmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Ltd., Coal India Ltd (North Eastern Coal Fields), Kitply and Goodricke Group Ltd.

Results and Discussion

The classification of sample units of different industry groups is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Industry-wise Classification of Sample Units in Assam

Industry	No. of sample units	% of Total
Cement	2	15.38
Fertilizer	1	7.692
Oil Refinery	2	15.38
Pulp and Paper	1	7.692
Petrochemicals	1	7.692
Coal	1	7.692
Petroleum And Natural Gas	3	23.08
Plywood	1	7.692
Tea	1	7.692
Total	13	100

Source: Field Survey

The table shows the industry-wise classification of 13 sample units in Assam. Out of 25 sample units, 13 units have responded the questions in the schedule favourably and the remaining 12 sample units did not respond, despite visits to their units respectively. Finally, the analysis of corporate environmental performance in Assam is based on 13 industrial units

which were under nine industry groups of Assam. Of the above sample companies, 10 (77%) belonged to public sector and the remaining 3 (23%) companies belonged to private sector. From the schedule obtained from the sample units, an analysis of the responses received from the respondents against specific questions is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Environmental Performance by Selected Industrial Units in Assam

Items	Units (N=13)	Units (%)
Treatment of wastes by the sample companies, i.e., disposal and recycling	10	76.93
Developing CDM by the sample companies	5	38.46
Implementing WMP by the sample companies	11	84.62
Environmental statement	13	100
Compliance with environmental laws	13	100
Complaints received from local authority	2	15.38
Adopting EMS in terms of 14001	9	69.23
Obtaining ISO 14001 certificates	7	53.85
Having environmental manager	9	69.23

Environmental Accounting and Reporting Practices of Major Industrial Units in Assam

Adopting green technology	6	46.15
Making capital expenditure for green technology	3	23.08
Measurement and reporting of environment related costs, benefits etc.	9	69.23
Separate provisions or contingent liabilities for managing environmental risks	6	46.15
Making Environmental risk reserves	6	36.63
Adopting environmental audit	9	69.23

Source: Field Survey

Treatment of wastes: It was observed that 61.54% of industrial units dispose off the wastes. These wastes were disposed either by dumping in the ground or by discharging in the river. Also, it was found that 15.38% of industrial units recycle wastes, i.e. recycling is done by only one industry. Other units were not recycling their wastes, they only disposed it off.

Developing Clean Development Mechanism (CDM): It was found from that 38.46% of units developed CDM while 61.54% of units have not developed till now. This is not encouraging.

Waste Management Plan (WMP): It was observed that implementing WMP by the units was very encouraging. Over 84% of the units replied that they have adopted WMP; only two units did not have any WMP.

Environment Statement: In response to Question of submission of Environmental Statement to the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) regularly, all the companies mentioned that they submit fees & E. S. regularly. In replying to this question, all the companies answered that they have not been penalised or fined by

SPCB for violation of code of conduct during all the five years, i.e., from 2007-08 to 2011-12.

Compliance with environmental laws/regulations: On both the questions of compliance with Environmental laws/Regulations and Section 217(1) (e) of the Companies Act, 1956, it was found that compliance was 100%. This shows that if companies are required by law to publish any vital information relating to the level of environmental management, compliance of the same becomes automatic.

Complaints received from local community: In response to the question against complaints received from local community regarding damages caused to the environment due to operations of their business and what preventive measures they have taken. Out of 13 selected industrial units under the industry groups, only 15.38% of the companies responded that they have received complaints. One unit even have taken preventive measures by removing the damages, paid compensation and inducted corrective measures whereas 84.62% of companies responded that they had not received any complaints.

EMS in terms of ISO 14001: It was found that 69.23% of units have adopted EMS in terms of ISO 14001.

Obtaining ISO 14001 certificates: It was observed that 53.85 % of units have obtained ISO 14001 certification and 46.15% of units have not obtained till now any ISO 14001 certification for their units.

Having environmental manager: It was found that 69.23% of units have an environmental manager and 30.77% of units do not have any environmental manager. In response to question against measures aimed at motivating employees towards EMS, all the sample units replied ‘yes’.

Adopting green technology: It was observed that adoption of green technology by the industrial units was not very encouraging. It was found that only 46.15% have adopted green technology whereas 53.85% have not adopted.

Making capital expenditure for green technology: It was found that only 23.08% of units make capital expenditure for green technology while 76.92% did not incur any expenditure for adoption of green technology.

Measurement and reporting of environment related costs, benefits etc: The study found that 69.23% industrial units mentioned about accounting policies for measurement and reporting of environment related costs, benefits etc., whereas 30.77% units have not shown any response to this question.

Separate provisions or contingent liabilities for managing environmental risks: It has been observed that only 46.15% of units mentioned about separate provisions or contingent liabilities for managing environmental risks in industrial units of Assam. It indicates that most of the industries have no provisions for managing environmental risks.

Making Environmental Risk Reserves: It was found that only 46.15% of units make Environmental Risk Reserve while 53.85% of the units did not have any Environmental Risk Reserve.

Adoption of environmental audit: In response to adoption of environmental audit by the sample units, it was found that 69.23% of units have adopted environmental audit, and 23.08% of the units did not have environmental audit.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Mean and S.D. for the sample industrial units in Assam

No. of companies	13
Mean	7.73
Standard Deviation	3.39
Range	11
Minimum	2
Maximum	13

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for the sample units under the study. The study reveals that 13 industrial units have a mean value and standard deviation of 7.73 and 3.39 respectively, and ranged from 2 to 13 points indicating a medium variation in the disclosure level of corporate environmental information in Assam.

Conclusions

On the basis of the above analysis of the environmental disclosure practices of the selected companies of Assam, the status of environmental disclosures such as Waste Management Plan, compliance with the environmental laws, adoption of Environmental Management System in terms of ISO 14001 and measurement aimed at motivating employees towards EMS were found to be the most frequently reported disclosure variables. Whereas the least response was found in case of Clean

Development Mechanism, adoption of green technology, making environmental capital expenditure, separate provisions for environmental contingent liabilities and environmental risks reserves.

However, it was observed that the high polluting industries were better in voluntary environmental disclosure than the low polluting industries. The status of voluntary environmental disclosure was found better in the paper and pulp, oil refinery, petroleum and natural gas.

On the whole, the status of voluntary environmental disclosure of the selected industrial units in Assam was not satisfactory. The reasons behind the poor environmental disclosure practices may be its voluntary nature, poor environmental performance, and due to lack of awareness on the part of company's management towards environmental protection.

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“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

~ *Mahatma Gandhi*

Customer Trust in Advertising Media: A Study of University Students in Mizoram

Lalhruaitluangpuii*
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Abstract

Businesses are more and more focused on the development of long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with customers. An essential ingredient in successfully achieving long-term relationships is the establishment and maintenance of trust. Customer trust in various forms of advertising has changed over the years. Companies invest a huge amount of money in advertising and promotion every year. The present study is an attempt to see which media of advertisement is preferred by the customers. The study has used a pre-developed instrument, viz. Adtrust scale, to compare the customers trust in four media advertisements, viz. the Newspapers, the Magazines, the Television, and the Internet among the university students in Mizoram, a small tribal state in Northeast India. The Newspapers as a medium for advertising emerged as the most trusted media.

Key Words: Adtrust scale, Reliability index, Usefulness index, Affect index, Willingness to Rely-On Index, Advertising media

Introduction

Customer trust is an important concept which is based on building customer relationships through trustworthy dialogue and unbiased information. Trust is like the glue that holds the business relationship together which can be shown through actions which includes what people do and do not do. If trust is not present, customers will not buy. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) defined trust as customer confidence in the

quality and reliability of the services offered by the organisation.

It is important to remember that word-of-mouth marketing is the best way to generate new sales. When trust is high, customers go out of their way to tell others about the business, about the product, about the service, and so on.

Investments in enhancing customers' service knowledge would strengthen customer trust in an

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organization and its products and services, and thus can act as an important service differentiator. Customer education initiatives also affect the impact of perceived service quality on customer trust. Successful marketers should be aware of the dynamic relationships between customer education, expertise, and service quality in managing customers' attitudes toward firms. Customer education affects the relative importance of technical and functional service quality for building customer trust in a firm (Eisingerich and Bell, 2007).

Review of Literature

A number of studies have been conducted by researchers to analyse the role of advertisement media in building image of the product. A few selected studies are as under:

Larkin (1977) stated that it appears that while on the surface students have very anti-advertising attitudes, it can be seen that they do so for very different reasons - some of which include a basic favourable attitude toward advertising in general, but a negative attitude toward some of the specific activities of advertisers and their advertisements.

Moore and Moschis (1978) mentioned in their study that young people retain advertising information when they are likely to make consumption decisions (because they have money to spend or work to satisfy consumption needs). Thus, opportunities for consumption may condition the child's perception of the importance of various

types of information in television advertisements, making such information important for the child. The study found that mere exposure to advertising did not set the scene for interpersonal communication about consumption.

Sandage and Leckenby (1980) observed that advertising students have a significantly more favorable attitude towards the institutions than towards the instruments of advertising. The same was true for state government, labor union, and education. Interestingly, advertising fared better at the institutional level than others, except education. At the instrumental level, advertising did not show so well, although it scored more favourably than either state government or labor union.

Hoffman, Novak and Peralta (1999) mentioned that lack of trust on the web arises from the fact that cyber consumers feel they lack control over the access that Web merchants have to their personal information during the online navigation process. These concerns over privacy span the dimensions of environmental control and secondary use of information control.

Kraeuter (2002) stated that starting from a functional perspective trust was seen as distinct but potentially coexisting mechanism for reducing the uncertainty and complexity of transactions and relationships in electronic markets. Because in the near future trust will remain the decisive factor for success or failure of e-businesses, it is very important for Internet companies to act in a way that

engenders consumers' trust. Efforts to increase the security of e commerce systems and trustworthy behavior of online-retailers will prove to be of advantage for both consumers and companies engaging in e commerce.

Tellis (2004) stated that there are numerous measures of advertising and its effects. All these measures can be broadly classified as belonging either to inputs, processes or outputs of a system in which advertising can play a role. The inputs themselves can be classified into three groups: intensity, media and content, in order of increasing refinement. Outcomes can be classified as brand choices, purchase intensity and accounting, depending on the level of analysis. The processes can be classified as cognitive, affective and conative, corresponding to the three different dimensions of mental activity. The effects of advertising relate to each other through a hierarchy of effects, which is specific for each brand, product category and consumer segment. Identifying this hierarchy and advertising's role in it is essential to evaluating how, when and why advertising works.

Dertouzos and Garber (2006) in their study stated that depending on the budget, advertising through television, radio, magazines, and (tentatively) newspapers can help to increase sales. Second, if only a rather small budget is available, it seems best to advertise only in print media; as budgets expand, it becomes optimal to add radio advertising to the mix; and as

budgets expand further, television should also be used.

Soh, Reid and King (2006) in their study found that the ADTRUST scale proved itself to be a valid measure of trust in advertising in the context of two different media: broadcast media and print media. Consumer trust in advertising, measured with the ADTRUST scale, varies across specific advertising media types. Five ad media were examined: television, newspapers, radio, magazines, and the Internet. The results of ANOVA indicate that trust in advertising is significantly lower for Internet advertising than for the other media types. Across all five media investigated, media credibility was consistently associated with media-specific ad-trust, indicating that trust in a medium and trust in advertising in that medium are directly related.

Eisingerich and Bell (2007) showed that investments in enhancing customers' service knowledge strengthen customer trust in an organization and thus can act as an important service differentiator. Customer education initiatives, however, also affect the impact of perceived service quality on customer trust. Successful marketers should be aware of the dynamic relationships between customer education, expertise, and service quality in managing customers' attitudes toward firms. Using data collected from customers of a global financial services firm, this study modelled the multifaceted impact of customer education initiatives on the

relationship between service quality and trust. The findings suggest that customer education affects the relative importance of technical and functional service quality for building customer trust in a firm. Research implications point to new business opportunities for service differentiation and relationship marketing.

Soh, Reid and King (2007) showed in their study that trust has been investigated by behavioral and social scientists from different disciplines. Despite the interdisciplinary research, studies of advertising trust are not abundant in the literature, though both academic and trade investigations have incorporated and measured the construct. This study was conducted to examine consumer trust in different advertising media and the relationship of that trust to media credibility. Results indicate that (1) advertising media are neither especially trusted nor distrusted by consumers; (2) there is variation in consumer trust across different advertising media; (3) trust in specific ad media is differentially associated with education and income; and (4) trust in advertising media and media credibility are correlates, though trust in advertising is distinct and separate from the credibility construct.

Halliburton and Poenaru (2010) mentioned that overall trust was most influenced by the customers' trust in their interaction with front line employees, self-service technologies and marketing communications, followed by the service providers' management policies & practices

and thirdly customers' previous experience. The most important influence factor of emotional trust is rational trust (average 56%) followed by front line employees, management policies, and marketing communications. Rational trust is most influenced by the front line employees, followed by management policies and satisfaction with previous experience.

Banerjee and Banerjee (2012) in their study stated that the marketer's integrity is considered to be the most important factor influencing consumers' online trust. The marketers in the virtual world can gain the consumers' confidence and faith by delivering the products on time, undamaged and according to the specifications mentioned by the customers, and sending error free bill. Online merchants can enhance their integrity by providing the consumers' the option of tracking their shipments, easy and quick ways of placing orders, and multiple ways of payment. Two important factors that act as antecedents to Indian consumers' online trust are security and privacy, and useful information content in the web site. The other antecedents to consumers' online trust are convenience in using the web site, the web design, and word of mouth promotion.

Saemundsson (2012) also used the ADTRUST scale in his study about the customer trust in different advertising media in Iceland. The research was aimed at replicating Soh, Reid and King's (2007) study, and see if results in Iceland differed from their findings as no such study has

been done in Iceland before. The study focused on advertising within the Icelandic market. The study found that participants neither particularly trusted nor distrusted advertising since all mean scores were between 3.35 and 3.65, i.e. just below the neutral point that ranges from 1 to 7, a score of 4 being a neutral trust point. As for differences in trust towards the different media, they found out that advertising in newspapers yielded the strongest mean score of the media in question, differing significantly from the lowest scoring media, TV and Internet.

Aydin (2013) stated in their study that the levels of trust in the advertising among the participants in general can be judged as at an average level. The study shows that participants have the highest trust in newspaper ads. They can make purchase-related decisions, depending on the information they have obtained from this medium. The newspaper medium is followed by the magazine and outdoors. It can be concluded from these evaluations that the participants have the highest trust in the printed media. The ad media with the lowest level of trust for the participants is the Internet.

Chang and Fang (2013) stated in their study that website characteristics affect consumer trust and distrust. Website that provide useful and accurate information and maintain a reliable order fulfilment track record will be perceived as having high online trust. In the online purchasing context, attention should focus on enhancing brand strength, a key

distrust-avoiding factor. The empirical results of this study show that a reputable brand may not enhance sense of trust, but can significantly reduce sense of distrust.

Draganska, Hartmann and Stanglein (2014) found that accounting for differences in pre-existing brand knowledge is paramount in obtaining valid comparisons across advertising formats because people who are exposed to Internet display ads have significantly lower levels of pre-existing brand knowledge than television viewers. Without considering the differences in these “initial conditions,” television advertising seems to be more effective than advertising on the Internet, but when the pre-existing differences among media formats are taken into account, the brand recall lift measures for Internet ads are statistically indistinguishable from comparable television lift measures.

The above studies state about the influence of advertising on consumers and their reactions toward advertising. Some of the studies mention about the reaction of youth in particular, towards advertising, some of them studied about the different forms of advertising and their effectiveness. The studies also mention about consumers’ trust towards advertising and their various possible causes.

There have been a number of valuable studies regarding consumer trust towards advertising. However, it remains a matter of serious concern that only a few studies have been carried out in India and

no significant research has been carried out within the state of Mizoram. This study will fill in the research gap.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the customer trust among the university students in select advertising media in Mizoram.
2. To study the gender impact, if any, on the level of trust in advertising media.
3. To study the impact of the course of study, if any, on the level of trust in advertising media.
4. To study the impact of area of residence, if any, on the level of trust in advertising media.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data as well as primary data. Secondary data has been collected from various published sources, such as journals, magazines, books, internet, newspapers etc. Primary data has been collected from the randomly selected respondents through a well-structured and standardized questionnaire developed by Soh, Reid and King (2007) as discussed below:

The Adtrust Scale

The Adtrust scale is a 20 item 7-point Likert scale developed by Soh, Reid and King (2006). The 20 items are classified into four indexes of ad-trust viz. Reliability (9 items), Usefulness (4 items), Affect (3 items), and Willingness to rely on (4 items). Reliability and

Usefulness indexes reflect the cognitive evaluation of advertising; Affect index reflects the emotional response of advertising; and Willingness to rely on index reflects the behavioural intent to use the information conveyed in advertising. The four indexes are established to support the proposed conceptualization that trusts in advertising is a multi-dimensional construct having cognitive affect, and conative dimensions.

The Reliability component includes items reflecting the quality of information conveyed in advertising: factual, accurate, clear, and complete. Inclusion of these items suggests that the Reliability component reflects consumer evaluation of the informational value of advertising. The second component, Usefulness, refers to consumer feeling of how useful advertising is for purchase-related decision making. The Usefulness component is the consumer's judgment of the practical value of the credible and reliable information that optimizes consumer decision making. The Affect component reflects the likeability of advertising. Likeability can include attractiveness, feeling of liking, enjoyability, and positive affection. The Affect component includes items such as positive, likeable, and enjoyable, which are consistent with the prior conceptualization of likeability. Willingness to Rely On reflects behavioural intent to act on the basis of the information conveyed in advertising (Soh, Reid and King, 2006).

The Adtrust scale represents the four trust factors which show high reliability and concurrent, convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity; and reflects a combination of (1) consumer perception of reliability and usefulness of advertising, (2) consumer affect toward advertising, and (3) consumer willingness to rely on advertising for decision making. The introduction of the Adtrust scale as a valid measure of the construct of trust in advertising should help advertising researchers develop a more in-depth understanding of how consumers respond to advertising. The Adtrust scale brings inter-disciplinary research on the trust construct into advertising research (Soh, Reid and King, 2009).

Sampling

The respondents of the study are the students of Mizoram University pursuing postgraduate courses. At present, there are six schools of studies in the university offering a variety of postgraduate programs (Table 1). The selection of respondents has been done based on multi-

stage stratified random sampling technique, which is drawn as hereunder:

Population: The students pursuing any PG study in Mizoram University.

Sampling frame: The Annual Report of Mizoram University: 2013-14.

Sampling technique: Multi-stage stratified random sampling.

Sample: All IV semester students of one of the departments (selected at random) under each of the schools.

In order to select the respondents, first of all one department of each school has been selected randomly, and then at the second stage all the students of IV semester of the selected department have been assumed as target sample. As such, six departments across the schools have been selected. Mizoram University is a central university under the University Grants Commission, Government of India, and was established on April 25, 2000 by the Mizoram University Act (2000) of the Parliament of India.

Table 1: The Details of the Schools and Departments of Mizoram University

School	Department
School of Economics, Management and Information Sciences	Commerce (Randomly selected)
	Economics
	Management
	Library & Information Science
	Mass Communication
School of Social Sciences	Psychology
	Social Work
	Political Science
	Public Administration (Randomly selected)
	History & Ethnography

School of Life Science	Botany
	Zoology (Randomly selected)
	Biotechnology
School of Earth Sciences and Natural Resources Management	Environmental Science
	Forestry
	Geology
	Geography (Randomly selected)
	Horticulture
	Ext. Education & Rural Development
School of Physical Science	Physics
	Chemistry
	Mathematics & Computer Science (Randomly selected)
School of Education & Humanities	Mizo
	English
	Education (Randomly selected)
	Hindi
School of Engineering & Technology	Computer Engineering
	Electronics and Communication Engineering
	Electrical Engineering
	Information Technology
	Civil Engineering
School of Fine Arts, Architecture & Fashion	Architecture

Source: MZU Annual Reports 2014-15

Results and Discussion

a) Profile of the respondents:

As stated earlier, one department from each school has been randomly selected to represent the school, and then all the IV semester students of the selected department during Feb-July 2015 were chosen as the sample. Out of the 110 respondents, the number of male and female students is exactly the same. The age of the respondents range from 20 to 28 years, the average age being 24 years. Over 28% of the respondents are of 24 years of age which consists of 31

respondents, having the highest number of respondents. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents are of 23 years of age. Almost one-fifth of the respondents are of 25 years of age, 11.8% are of 22 years, and 7.3% are of 21 years. From the School of Economics, Management & Information Sciences, the Department of Commerce is randomly selected in which there are 27 respondents which consists of 24.5% of the total sample, from the School of Social Sciences, the Department of Public Administration is randomly selected in which there are 17 respondents consisting of 15.5% of the total sample, there are only

eight respondents from the School of Life Sciences which comprises of 7.3% of the total sample drawn from the randomly selected Department of Zoology, 22 respondents are from the School of Earth Sciences & Natural Resources Management which is 20% of the total sample from the randomly selected Department of Geography, 19 respondents are from the School of Physical Sciences consisting of 17.3% of the total sample from the randomly selected Department of Mathematics & Computer Science and there are 17 respondents from the School of Education and Humanities which comprises of 15.5% of the total sample from the randomly selected Department of Education.

Further, out of total 110 respondents, 57.3% belong to urban areas while 21.8% of them belong to semi-urban areas, and remaining 20.9% of them reside in the rural areas of Mizoram.

c) Adtrust scale:

Newspapers as advertising media is the most trusted by the respondents as newspaper advertising scored 4.40 on Adtrust scale, which is based on 7 points Likert scale. Magazines scored the least point (i.e., 4.18), television scored 4.39 and internet scored 4.21 on a 7 point scale (see Table 2).

Table 2: Media-wise Adtrust Scale

Media	Adtrust Scale
Newspapers	4.4
Magazines	4.18
Television	4.39
Internet	4.21

Source: Primary Data

b) Four indexes under Adtrust scale

All the 20 questions in the questionnaire are grouped into four indexes namely Reliability (honest, truthful, credible, reliable, dependable, accurate, factual, complete, clear), Usefulness (valuable, good useful, helps people make the best decisions), Affect (likeable, enjoyable, positive), and Willingness to rely-on (I am willing to rely on ad-conveyed information when making purchase related decisions, I am willing

to make important purchase related decisions based on ad-conveyed information, I am willing to consider the ad-conveyed information when making purchase related decisions, I am willing to recommend the product or service that I have seen in ads to my friends or family). These indexes are then summed up on the basis of media, gender, school and location of the respondents.

d) Index-wise scoring of the four media

There are not significant differences between the media as the mean ranges from 4.00 to 4.90 except for the Internet under Reliability Index which gives a total score of 3.85. Under Usefulness Index, Affect Index and Willingness to rely Index, the Magazines has the lowest mean

of 4.39, 4.64, and 4.02 respectively. Under Reliability Index and Usefulness Index, the Newspapers has the highest mean while the Internet has the highest mean under Affect Index. Under Willingness to rely-on Index, the Television has the highest mean. This can be seen from Table 3.

Table 3: Index-wise Scoring of the Four Media

Media	Reliability Index	Usefulness Index	Affect Index	Rely On Index
Newspapers	4.25	4.79	4.70	4.14
Magazines	4.00	4.39	4.64	4.02
Television	4.10	4.50	4.85	4.25
Internet	3.85	4.58	4.96	4.08

Source: Primary Data

e) Gender-wise scoring of the four media

The scores of all the indexes are higher in female-respondents than in male-respondents even though the score range falls within a close range of 4.01

and 4.93. Affect Index has the highest score in both male- and female-respondents while Reliability Index has the lowest mean in both the categories of respondents. This can be observed from Table 4.

Table 4: Gender-wise Scoring of the Four Media

Gender	Reliability Index	Usefulness Index	Affect Index	Willingness to Rely On Index	Adtrust Scale
Male	4.01	4.49	4.64	4.08	4.21
Female	4.09	4.64	4.93	4.16	4.38
Total	4.05	4.56	4.79	4.12	4.29

Source: Primary Data

f) School-wise scoring of the four media

The score ranges between 3.45 and 5.17 where the score is highest under Affect Index of the School of Social Sciences whereas the score is lowest under Willingness to rely-on Index of the School

of Life Sciences. Under Reliability Index, the School of Life Sciences has the lowest mean while the School of Education and Humanities has the highest mean. Under Usefulness Index and Affect Index, the School of Physical Sciences has the lowest mean while the School of Social Sciences

has the highest mean. Under Willingness to rely-on Index, the School of Life Sciences has the lowest mean while the School of Education and Humanities has the highest mean. This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: School-wise Scoring of the Four Media

School	Reliability Index	Usefulness Index	Affect Index	Willingness to Rely On Index	Adtrust Scale
School of Economic, Management & Information Sciences	4.13	4.47	4.9	4	4.36
School of Social Sciences	3.99	4.87	5.17	4.21	4.39
School of Life Sciences	3.79	4.45	4.74	3.45	4
School of Earth Sciences & Natural Resources Management	4.04	4.59	4.69	4.28	4.3
School of Physical Sciences	3.88	4.28	4.44	4.06	4.08
School of Education & Humanities	4.31	4.74	4.77	4.42	4.49
Total	4.02	4.57	4.79	4.07	4.27

Source: Primary Data

g) Location-wise scores of indexes:

Table 6 highlights that the scores are lowest under ‘Reliability Index’ and ‘Willingness to rely-on Index’ of the respondents from semi-urban areas having the same score of 3.93. The score is

highest under ‘Affect Index’ of the respondents from rural areas having a score of 5.02. The respondents from rural areas registered the highest total score of 4.44 while the students from semi-urban area secured the lowest total score of 4.14.

Table 6: Location-wise Scores of Indexes

Location	Reliability Index	Usefulness Index	Affect Index	Willingness to Rely-On Index	Adtrust Scale
Urban	4.04	4.51	4.78	4.19	4.3
Semi-urban	3.93	4.46	4.58	3.93	4.14
Rural	4.21	4.8	5.02	4.14	4.44
Total	4.06	4.59	4.8	4.09	4.29

Source: Primary Data

h) School-wise scores of different media

The respondents belonging to the School of Economics, Management & Information Sciences have reposed the highest trust on TV medium with a score of 4.50, and they have shown the least trust on the Internet with a score of 4.20. Among the respondents from the School of Social Sciences, the Newspapers got the highest score of 4.58 while the Internet registered the least score of 4.16. Similarly, the Television scored the highest index of 4.68 among the respondents from the School of Life Sciences while the Magazines got the

least score of 3.43. Further, among the students of the School of Earth Sciences & Natural Resources Management, the Internet registered the highest score of 4.37 while the Television got the lowest score of 4.26. The Television got the highest score among the students of the School of Physical Sciences and the School of Education and Humanities while the Magazines got the least score among the students of the School of Physical Sciences and the Internet got the least score among the respondents from the School of Education and Humanities.

Table 7: School-wise Scores of Different Media

School	SEMIS	SSS	Life Sc	SES & NRM	Physical Sc	SEH
Newspapers	4.2	4.58	4.68	4.28	4.16	4.46
Magazines	4.28	4.26	3.34	4.27	3.91	4.52
Television	4.5	4.44	4.26	4.26	4.18	4.64
Internet	4.2	4.16	3.71	4.37	4.07	4.32

Source: Primary Data

i) Gender-wise scores of different media

All the select media of advertisement, except the Internet, registered higher scores among the female respondents as compared to the male respondents. Among the select media, the

Television registered the highest score while the Internet got the lowest score among the female respondents. Further, among male respondents, the Newspapers scored the highest while the Magazines scored the least.

Table 8: Gender-wise Scores of Different Media

Gender	Male	Female
Newspapers	4.34	4.35
Magazines	4.08	4.28
Television	4.2	4.58
Internet	4.2	4.18

Source: Primary Data

j) Location-wise scores of different media

The Television got the highest score of 4.39 among the respondents from urban areas while the Internet has the least score of 4.10. Among the respondents from

semi-urban areas, the Television scored the highest while the Magazines scored the least. The Newspapers, as advertising media, has the highest score of 4.55 among the respondents from rural areas while the Magazines has the least score of 4.25.

Table 9: Location-wise Scores of Different Media

Location	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural
Newspapers	4.33	4.18	4.55
Magazines	4.19	4.08	4.25
Television	4.39	4.3	4.48
Internet	4.1	4.14	4.46

Source: Primary Data

Conclusions

The Ad-Trust scale developed by Soh, Reid and King (2006) consists of four separate scales, viz. Reliability (with 9 Likert scale items), Usefulness (with 4 Likert scale items), Affect (with 3 Likert scale items) and Willingness (with 4 Likert scale items). The same standardised scale has been used for the present study. A sample of 110 respondents has been selected from six schools offering PG programs of Mizoram University. One department from each of such schools has been selected, randomly, to represent the school and all the fourth semester students constituted the sample for the study.

The Newspapers as a medium for advertising has emerged as the most trusted media, while the respondents found the Television as the second most trustable medium for advertising. The

respondents consider the Magazines as the least trustworthy media of advertising out of selected four media. The reason for the Magazines to perform the least may be attributed to the fact that it is the least popular medium among the respondents out of the selected media under the study.

As far as the individual four indexes are concerned, the most trusted media of advertising, viz. the Newspapers could outperform the other media of advertising on two indexes, viz. Reliability Index and Usefulness Index, and could manage second and third place on Willingness Index and Affect Index respectively. The second most trusted media of advertising, the Television could outperform the other advertising media on Willingness Index while could manage second place on Reliability Index and Affect Index, and was placed in third position by Usefulness

Index. The least preferred media of advertising by the respondents, viz. the Magazines could manage the third place on the Reliability Index while was least preferred on remaining three indexes. The Internet as advertising media could find 4th, 2nd, 1st and 3rd place on Reliability, Usefulness, Affect and Willingness to rely-on indexes.

Under the Reliability Index, the School of Education and Humanities has the highest mean while the School of Life Sciences has the lowest mean. Under the Usefulness Index and Affect Index, the School of Physical Sciences has the lowest mean while the School of Social Sciences

has the highest mean. Under the Willingness to Rely-on Index, the School of Education and Humanities has the highest mean while the School of Life Sciences has the lowest mean. The Reliability Index, Usefulness Index and Affect Index are highest in case of the respondents belonging to the rural areas while they are the lowest for semi-urban areas. The Willingness to Rely-On Index is highest for the respondents belonging to the urban areas while it is the lowest for their counterparts in semi-urban areas. In terms of gender, all the indexes are higher in case of female respondents compared to male respondents.

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Old Mizo Deathways: The Cultural Construction of Death and Dying

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“In all societies, regardless of whether their customs call for festive or restrained behaviour, the issue of death throws into relief the most important cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences.”(Huntington & Metcalf, 1979:2)

Abstract

All cultures of the world, from time immemorial have devised a response to death and dying so as to come to terms with the physical end of life. Such is the case in Mizo culture that has constructed an elaborate categorization of death and ways of dying so as to find meaning in this cessation. The article makes an effort to construct how the culture in the pre- Christian past explained death, ritualized dying and burial while making a crucial comment on the origins of Mizo belief system, identity and self definition. The signification of the dead body is analysed through these different deathways while positing it against the Christian tradition and its treatment of the dead. The construction of death reveals the values and cultural ethos that have remained a constant after having been caught up in modernity and its fundamental alterities and threat of drastic change due to forces like globalization, change in religion and the eventual evolution of time. Yet, the ultimate objective is the questioning and problematization of these concerns that are concluded to be complicitous in the crumbling of Mizo cultural values while emphasising on the continued importance of community and society.

Key words: Mizo, Culture, Death, Ritual.

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Death is a culturally constructed idea. Because death is a reflection of sociability, rituals and beliefs surrounding the issue of death and burial must therefore be viewed as a cultural construct. Such

activities and rituals highlight the most explicit moorings and values, revealing how a people conceive of itself and the world around them, its social organizations and institutions it holds dear. Many cultures of the world deal with the finality of death through a belief in a

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cycle of rebirth while some others practice rituals to redefine allegiances and relationships among the living. In the Mizo context, the cultural construction of death has always been an elaborate textualization and expression of a complex belief system preoccupied in equal proportions with both the world of the living and the dead. Recent shifts in history and belief have resulted in ritual practices and customs undergoing a huge change although the sharing of grief through social support and participation remain a constant.

The twentieth century has brought immense social and cultural changes since the coming of white missionaries and the successful establishment of Christianity. For example: the planting of an indigenous belief system by a people into Christianity or *saphun* has resulted in the eventual disappearance of a once thriving ritualistic system. This shift is reflected in notions surrounding the afterlife, eschatological beliefs, mortuary rites and certain traditions and customs. Although both the Mizo pre-Christian and the Christian tradition treat death as a 'process', a stage conceptualized and elaborated by Van Gennep in his work *Rites of Passage*, as a 'liminal' phase of rites of passage, this 'process' is without a doubt socially and culturally defined. The modern Mizo bury their dead with the belief in the Christian notion of the soul judged as either good or bad, depending on his/her actions in society thus eventually determining his/her entry into

heaven or condemnation into the fiery pit of hell. Since the life lived determines the condition of the soul in the afterlife, it can also be said that the afterlife controls actions of the living. Likewise, in the pre-Christian belief system, the afterlife has great bearings upon the living. Men who have lived a righteous life and completed required social rituals for taking of titles are the *thangchhuahpa* - the only ones worthy of paradise, in this case called *pialral*. The rest of society judged as unworthy of *pialral* find themselves in the afterlife 'living' in *mitthikhua* or land of the dead.

The narrative surrounding death in the Christian world is a universal story to a large extent, sharing mortuary ritual, observation of a wake, up to the point of burial. More particularly, in the Mizo experience, Christianity has created a new landscape. By 1935, through government regulation, graveyards slowly developed into a standardised system of burial with clearly demarcated locations while simultaneously ending the traditional burial of the dead which was random and unplanned. The new regulated system succeeded in enabling the acceleration of the new Christian religion. It further resulted in rearranging and changing the attitude surrounding complex issues of mortality and corporeality. The effect of a new landscape in the mind of the modern Christian Mizo is found in the creation of a once nonexistent spatiality of the graveyard, the gravesite and cemetery while also creating a new kind of

eneration of a new Christian God rather than veneration of an ancestor. The commandment “Thou shalt not worship other Gods” has found fulfillment through the ritual of a Christian burial which effectively demoted importance of ancestors and their presence in the psyche. This further meant that the common class could now have their own loci for remembrance and expression of grief as opposed to a time when such rituals of an elaborate burial and raising of a monolith of commemoration were reserved only for Chieftains or *thangchhuahpa* - men with titles.

Many scholars have explored and studied a comprehensive comparison of transition period between pre-Christian and post-Christian Mizo society and in the North East Indian region as a whole. The common analysis is in the idea that Christianity made inroads into the entire region of the North East as a ‘movement’ that resulted in impacting deep-rooted change on “thinking, social life, arts and architecture, education, medical care and innumerable other services.” (Subba, Puthenpurakal and Puykunnel, 2009: xv). Since many scholars have studied this transition, the examination here will henceforth focus more on death as a social and cultural phenomenon in the pre-Christian Mizo society, the treatment of the ‘body’ of the dead, so as to bring an analytical paradigm that illustrates Mizo culture and its many facets.

The belief system of Mizo forefathers can be said to have been a cosmological one; a rich and complex

relationship that illustrates man’s consciousness of the world of the living and the unseen spirit world; a world coloured with sacrifices, propitiations and interjected through interlocutors. Mizos have an elaborate categorization of death and ways of dying. Every death and way of dying determines how a body is to be buried. In the case of *hlamzuih*, an infant (usually) not more than three months old who has died is not considered as a considerable loss to his clan or village, except only to his own mother. The villagers do not hold a wake nor expect young men of the village to dig his grave. Cotton soaked in the mother’s breast milk is stuffed into his mouth while an egg is placed in his hand in the hope that it will lead him into the afterlife by rolling on the pathway for him to follow. (B. Lalthangliana, 2013:109) A shallow grave is randomly dug underneath the house where the infant is placed into a large pot and buried like any other item. The lack of concern is because the child is considered a non person, its body not yet attached or given a cultural and social significance, not yet important enough for adults to lose a day’s work at the *jhun*. No superstition is attached to *hlamzuih* nor does it require any propitiation or sacrifice. On the other hand, can this reaction interpreted as a detached demeanour towards *hlamzuih* be relooked at rather as a detached acceptance of this kind of death stemming from the belief that such a death means the infant’s journey into *pialral* is assured and that they will not be catapulted at or denied entry to paradise by Pawla,

thought to be reserved for only men with distinguished titles? Or can this then also imply that the infant gets to eventually reach adulthood in *mitthikhua* since the one who does not enter *pialral* will eventually enter and live in the land of the dead?

In the case of *raicheh* which is death during child birth, the entire village observes a day of rest and work of any kind is considered taboo. The taboo surrounding this kind of dying is reflected in the fear of the wondering spirit, the danger of a chance visitation into a household from someone who has just died of *raicheh*. The stigma surrounding *raicheh* is so intricately tied to social conditioning that a woman is made to get up off her back within the next two to three days after giving birth. She is made to fetch water from the stream albeit a very light load, to prove that she has recovered from the trauma of childbirth and is healthy enough to work again. If a woman dies after this act of carrying water, no one can charge the death as *raicheh*, thus freeing the family from any other social stigma and fear that is attached to it. When *raicheh* befalls a woman, her loom, clothes and even the place she would sit, the inner sanctuary of her home where she once worked, is instantaneously treated as unclean, and touching of these belongings is considered to bring ill luck. Her body and all that has come into contact with her acquire a status of irreverence and defilement. At the knowledge of a neighbour dying from such a death, a fern is gently tucked on the outer wall near the

entrance of each household in the neighbourhood to symbolise a prohibited space so as to discourage her wondering spirit from entering. Unless a cleansing ritual is observed, the shadow cast by *raicheh* is considered to permeate. It is also believed that since a *raicheh* death results in a very difficult journey towards finding *mitthikhua* for the woman so the *Cheraw* or bamboo dance is performed to help ease the pain of the perilous journey and aid in finding a pathway into the land of the dead. (Lianthanga, 1999: 22).

Likewise, in the case of *sarhi* or dying an unnatural death in a most terrible manner, be it through drowning, burning in a fire, being mauled by an animal or in the hands of another, Mizos believe such an unfortunate death is followed by another such *sarhi* unless the misfortune is broken in its path by an immediate burial. The Mizo forefathers consider *sarhi* dying as befalling only the most unfortunate and therefore the burying of the body of a person dying from any such kind of death is treated with great care so as to avoid another unnatural death from following in its wake. When a *sarhi* body is taken into the house for the wake, it is taken in foot first. The body is never placed on the bed but on the floor with the head placed towards the exit. When the body is again carried out for burial, it is carried out foot first. (Dokhuma, 2008:131)

On the other hand, a sudden and unexplained death, a death from no particular illness or reasonable cause is

called *zachhamlak* or ‘deaths occurring to fulfill a hundred deaths’. This category of dying stems from the old belief that at the very least, a hundred deaths will occur within the span of a year. If this number is not fulfilled, unexplainable deaths will keep occurring in the form of what was believed to be *zachhamlak*. In the case of *sarhi* and *raicheh*, since both categories of dying are fraught with fear, the *thlaichhiah* ritual is not performed. *Thlaichhiah* involves the slaughter of various kinds of animals after a death has occurred so as to provide a feast of meat to all who come to mourn. The philosophy behind such a practice is reflective of the communal and cultural preoccupation with the desire to be useful and beneficial to relatives and clansmen from one’s own dying, through the eating of meat which in itself was a rare occasion. Any individual before dying, it is said, has a last wish which is to be able to perform the *thlaichhiah* in death. But when an inauspicious death has occurred, relatives forgo the ritual altogether. Like *sarhi* and *raicheh*, burying of an individual afflicted with epilepsy or *phungzawl* casts a dark and arcane shadow over the body of the dead. The body of an epileptic / *phungzawl* when put into the grave evinces a reaction of extreme revulsion. As soon as the body is placed into the ground, witnesses of the burial immediately scatter hoping to avoid and protect themselves from the exiting spirit that is believed to have previously occupied the dead body.

These deathways do not represent all categories of death. What they do reveal is the treatment of the ‘body’ of the dead; its social and cultural signification and the role death plays in forging of relationships and reinforcing social institutions and social hierarchies. Not merely a body neutral or a corpse to be gotten rid of, the body is symbolic and representative of the Mizo human condition. The culture attributes meaning to the body and to rituals surrounding death to symbolise the relationship between the deceased and the bereaved; that death does not mean an end to the ties that bind the living with the dead and furthermore, practical life having a direct bearing on death and burial rituals. As compared to the Cartesian philosophy of the dualism of mind and body which has for hundreds of years informed Western epistemology, modern science and medicine, the treatment of the dead body and the corporeal body by the Mizo is different in that the body is a synthesis of both mind and body and not necessarily separate from each other. Does this synthesis stem from the belief system of Mizo forefathers being cosmogonic? Both mind and body is given equal importance as the existence of both is necessary to experience life and death. A death ritual is made complete when the body and soul of the deceased coexist. The body is not treated merely as an attachment to be shed or lacking agency. When an individual has died, the family still experiences the presence of the dead by acknowledging his presence by preparing meals, including him during meal time by placing a plate

where the dead used to sit, calling on him to join the living relatives, etc. The significance of the body therefore, both living and dead, is treated as sacred. The dead body is venerated and said to belong to both the owner of the body and the community as a whole. Since all categories of death require the presence of the community, the society as an institution is given paramount status. No family within a village can exclude community participation as mourning and death rituals cannot be conducted without the community given an agency. Likewise mourning and the pain of loss finds meaning through the acknowledgement and participation of the community.

In the rare practice known as *kuangur*, the emphasis is on the importance of the ancestor and his corporeal body, even if existing as bones only. The expensive and complex ritual, once performed only by the affluent, meant the dead was usually a Chieftain or a man who had taken titles and therefore greatly respected by his clan. The clan recognizes his status and this reciprocal relationship, powerful and influential, finds deeper meaning in rituals surrounding his death and burial. *Kuangur*, a slow drawn out process is putrefaction and decomposition of a body within the house so as to extract the bones of the beloved ancestor. His body is placed inside a hollowed out tree serving as a coffin with a constant fire lit under it to allow the body to putrefy and decay until only his bones are left behind after

the bodily liquids have been removed through a hole in the bottom of the coffin. The process would take close to three months. All the while, the family was in mourning and the ritual permeated throughout the entire village. During the ritual, with the help of young men and women of the community, the relatives of the dead were to constantly provide rice beer and slaughter animals to feed the community who came to mourn the dead. (Lalchhawna, 2002:140). After the *kuangur* process, the family kept some of the bones. These bones represent the continuation of the ties that bind the past with the present, the descendants to their ancestors. The death of a man of status and the keeping of his bones enabled his living relatives and all the dead ancestors gone by to stake claim over a certain status quo. The relatives would take out the bones, once every year during the *Mim Kut* festival for the dead - wash the bones, treat it with great love and care, speak to the ancestor, tenderly oil it with pig fat oil and grieve anew while performing and reaffirming a bond with the dead. This reclaiming and restaging of status and influence within the cultural and social boundaries is an important annual performance. The integrity of the man and his body in the form of his bones becomes central to the identity of his entire clan and village. These very bones were also used for the *mitthirawp lam* ritual. Both in equal vicinity of a somber celebration of the ancestors and also an all out festive occasion, the bones which included the head and larger bones like the femur, were

covered with a cloth woven specifically for the occasion. The life size effigies made of cotton and bones of the ancestor represented the physical presence of the dead as they were placed high up on a platform, served *zu* or traditional rice wine and then carried and danced with by a large group which consisted of their close relatives and members of their village.

The intended meaning of death rituals and burial rituals seem to reflect a culture and society highly aware and conscious of social image. Both *kuangur* and *mitthirawplam* and other deathways reflect a communal and cultural expression of grief and mourning. When death occurred, mourning was self conscious and paramount. A mourner was not only cognizant of keen and observant gaze of his clan but also that of the gaze from the dead. This process of overt mourning lasted for a duration of three months, the time a dead spirit was believed to still dwell amongst their living relatives. Throughout these months, mourners were said to be in a state of *samhrampu* or bearing the demeanor of one whose relevance as a person going through the motions of grief was expressed through unkempt, unwashed hair without concern for grooming of the self. The propitiation of the dead only came to an end when the three months ended and *thlanpaih* ceremony of releasing or bidding adieu to the dead soul took place, sending the dead on his way to *mitthikhua*. Relatives and neighbors would gift cloth and fresh vegetables to the departing soul. The final

day of the end of the three months was marked with great solemnity. An elder would solemnly sweep the floor of the house outward through towards the exit, all the while speaking directly to the dead, asking it to carry on his journey into *mitthikhua* and bidding a tearful farewell.

These highly ritualized and culturally constructed responses to death and dying can be said to reinvigorate social bonds and cohesion. Symbolic gesture of offering cloth to the dead for use in the afterlife, holding a wake, digging of the grave by young able bodied men or *thlanlaih*, young men sleeping in the house of the dead or *khawhar in riak* display and demonstrate this reinvigoration. Death rituals and treatment of the dead body also expresses the transfer of property and status from one generation to the next while further reestablishing lineage and kinship. *MimKut*, although lost to the modern Christian Mizo, was a festival once marked to commemorate the dead. Observed annually around the end of the autumn months when maize has been harvested and the yield from the jhums are aplenty, *MimKut* once featured prominently as a part of the cultural signification of the dead. The origin of this folk commemoration can be found in the tale of *Chawngvungi leh Sawngkhara*. Just like how Sawngkhara fed his dead wife Chawngvungi by sending her food offerings after the harvest of maize, the living relatives' observance of this *kut* in a way magnified the value and emphasis

placed upon family ties, clan affiliation and most importantly, continuity of relation between ancestors and future descendents.

II

In the present Mizo worldview, death and dying is informed from a modern Christian tradition. The cultural attachment to and the treatment of the dead body has changed from an old preoccupation with the dead body and its significance to the world of the living to that of the present where once the soul is detached from the corporeal body, the soul transcends the world of the living thus making the dead body irrelevant dust. It can be argued that the evolution of the dead body and its degradation into dust has contributed to creation of a disconnect from traditional rituals surrounding death and dying. This severance seems to have led to an ever decreasing need for social and communal participation when posited against that of the new Christian community. *Kuangur* and *mitthirawplam* have both lost their cultural signification and are no longer in practice. The shift in the concept of god has stripped off rituals of their cultural agency which once were deeply venerated. Other social practices like *khawhar in riak* which is the sleeping of young men in the house of the dead before the ritual of *thlanpaih* has

practically come to an end in many places. Likewise many localities have witnessed the inability of young men to give their time to participate in *thlanlaih* or digging of the grave in times of a death in the neighbourhood resulting in the creation of a new class of undertakers paid to dig a grave.

It has become an inevitability that with exposure to modernism and globalization, the cultural and traditional deathways experience a certain disintegration under these powerful forces. With a rise in population and the inability to give time towards fulfilling social duties, the need of the hour is here where death and dying have become lucrative business from the selling of tomb stones, writing of plaques, printing of epitaphs, decoration of coffins and digging of graves.

The twenty-first century has immensely redefined traditional and cultural Mizo deathways. In the new modern and Christian Mizo community, constructing of deathways, for now, is a blend of the old and new. The concern though, has much to do with the crumbling and eventual perishing of Mizo identification with its cultural ethos, values of helpfulness and participation it holds dear, rather than the execution of rituals for its own sake.

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Alienation in Larkin's "Mr. Bleaney": A Critique

Thongam Dhanajit Singh*

Abstract

Alienation is admittedly the most prominent theme of the postwar British poetry and as such Philip Larkin's poems are also dense with the theme of alienation. As one of the chief architects of the Movement Poetry, he exposes the condition of the common man suffering from alienation against the backdrop of the spiritual barrenness of the postwar Britain. His poems are characterized by simplicity of diction, lucidity of thought and clarity in the portrayal of real life conditions. He examines the common men's lives from a common man's point of view and presents it to his readers to enlighten them on how they misunderstand their own condition. Frequently seen as the 'uncommon poet of the common man' by his readers and critics, Larkin stands out as the tallest figure among the Movement poets. The present essay is an attempt to situate/contextualize alienation in his poetry through a close study of his poem "Mr. Bleaney". It also tries to relate the intellectual and political movements of the postwar years with the poetry of Philip Larkin.

Key words: Alienation, Postwar, Movement, Spiritual barrenness.

Postwar¹ British literature is imbued with the theme of alienation for various reasons. The memory of the detonation of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the emergence of new nations in the world political map, widespread acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution, the growing threat of cold war, etc. have all converged together to redefine the postwar life in Europe. Added to these circumstances is the challenge to the authority of the state and the church. Left with the physical and emotional destructions caused by the Second World

War, individuals frequently find themselves displaced in their own country:

The church was in decline with congregation numbers falling fast: You could no longer imagine a community cemented by faith. However, [postwar] twentieth century intellectuals who rejected religion had to confront a newly empty universe. They sense the potential futility of life: reason offered no substitute for religion. (Marsh 2)

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This experience has been the central theme of most English poems written in the postwar years and Philip Larkin is one of those poets. His poems are dense with characters who are victims of alienation and they always have a sense of the world conspiring against them. This paper is an attempt to contextualize this sense of alienation through a close study of one of his celebrated poems, "Mr. Bleaney".²

Alienation has become a characterizing feature of life across the world today. Though the idea of alienation came to the academic space in the nineteenth century with people like Karl Marx discussing it extensively in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844*, its literary use became conspicuous only in the twentieth century with people like Louis Althusser critically discussing it in his essay "Marxism and Humanism" (1964). Stanley Moore in his work *The Critique of Capitalist Democracy* defines it as 'the characteristics of individual consciousness and social structure typical in societies whose members are controlled by, instead of controlling, the consequences of their collective activity' (125). It gives way to the individuals to accept the social/political status quo via ideological common sense already existing before the individuals. The result is that those individuals thus trapped under such ideological common sense experience a life characterized by powerlessness, friendlessness associated with an idea that the world has an evil design against them.

Of the many autobiographical poems Larkin wrote, "Mr. Bleaney" is one which represents not only the poet himself but also the English people against the backdrop of the postwar English society. The poem narrates the whole drama of a common man and his nature described in terms of how one lives within a society where he is conditioned. It also delineates the link between one's psychological world and the physical world outside it.

The poem begins in the form of a dramatic monologue with the speaker describing Mr. Bleaney's life in terms of the condition of the room he (Bleaney) once lived in. He lived in the room and was later forced to leave: 'They move him.' It means that there is certain disagreement between Bleaney and the owner of the house. The description of the room shows that it is not a spacious and comfortable room. 'Flowered curtains' which are short decorate the window above 'five inches of the sill.' There is a 'bed' and an 'upright chair.' There is 'no hook/behind the door' and 'no room for books and bags.' Yet, he has accepted to stay there—'I'll take it.' It shows that Mr. Bleaney is threatened by both poverty and alienation:

In the eyes of the speaker, everything in Bleaney's life points to failure. He had no wife, no house, no money. He seems to have been degradingly dependent upon the hospitality of others. Throughout most of the poem, the speaker's contemptuous

tone of voice is his method of drawing a distinction between himself and the dead man. (Kuby 98)

Larkin makes one assumption here that he is different from Bleaney. He thinks he is better than Bleaney.

Though the poet is contemptuous of Bleaney's habit, his final point— '...I don't know'— is suggestive of the similarities between them. Here is an interesting point. Like Bleaney, Larkin spent his life after 1943 in a place far from his original home. The condition of the room where Bleaney was lodged has something to do with what Larkin complained of Holtby Hall where he was lodged on his arrival at Hull. On 24 March 1955, two months before writing "Mr. Bleaney," Larkin, complaining over the state of affairs at Holtby Hall, wrote to Judy Egerton:

As you see, I have arrived, and have been at it four days. Verdict? Well, the above address is *not* [emphasis Larkin's] suitable: small, barefloored and noisy: I feel as if I were lying in some penurious doss house at night, with hobos snoring and quarrelling all round me. There is a negro in the next room who wd [sic] benefit enormously from a pair of bedroom slippers. (Larkin 237)

Later in the same year on 26 April 1955 after he had moved from Holtby House, Cottingham to 11 Outlands Road in the same village, Larkin again complained of the house owned by Mr

Dowling in his letter to D.J. Enright: '... I can't ignore the blasted RADIO which seems a feature of everyone's life these days, and it prevents me from sitting thinking and scribbling in the evening, yet if I grumbled my complaint would be regarded as eccentric as a complaint against the traffic or the birds or the children outside'. (Larkin 240-41).

In the letter to Judy Egerton, Larkin has already hinted at the dreary life in a rented room which will be an inevitable part of his life in the coming years, and this life is what is portrayed in "Mr. Bleaney." The 'blasted RADIO' mentioned in his letter to Enright is 'The jabbering set' in "Mr. Bleaney." This radio represents the postwar Britain in which radio has become a symbol of both cultural and technological change marked by liberal thinking, individual freedom and a persistent questioning of the status quo in all social and political institutions such as family, marriage, government, law courts, etc. The speaker's examination of Bleaney's life and his room points at his (speaker's) intention to give a descriptive picture of the self and its dependence and independence. Unlike "Wants," "Mr. Bleaney" is a poem that exposes Larkin's skepticism at the independence of the self. This is unique because in most cases Larkin has highlighted the importance of the self and the need to defend it from the domination by others. The two letters mentioned above complains of not only loneliness but more about the unhealthy environment created by the others in the house where he is lodged. The dilemma

is between the self and the unhealthy environment where the self is placed. This is a postwar phenomenon ascertained by the diction itself: 'upright chair,' 'sixty-watt bulb,' 'jabbering set,' etc.

If one's life is to be determined in terms of how he lives—'That how we live measures our own nature'—the speaker tries to know how Bleaney lives to determine the standard of his life. However he could not come out with a definite answer. The speaker says, 'I know his habits' in the fourth stanza and contradicted himself by saying 'I don't know' at the end of the poem. This is a state of confusion. But with no option in hand, after a minute examination of Bleaney's life, the speaker has to take Bleaney's room: 'So it happens that I lie/ Where Mr. Bleaney lay.' It means that the speaker is like Bleaney who has no home, no wife and no family. However this Bleaney has some positive aspects of life including some success. He is a failure only 'materialistically' as Lolette Kuby writes:

Materialistically, Mr. Bleaney was a failure, but there had been overtones of love in his life that the speaker is blind to. Much of what he knows about Bleaney is, after all, apart from a few material objects, learned from the landlady's compulsive chatter about him. From her point of view quite a different Bleaney might be envisioned. This Bleaney would be one who maintained lasting friendships; one with an urge to salvage and beautify a littered, tussocky strip of land; one who could

evoke the concern and warmth of a landlady to the extent that she prepared special sauces for him, accommodated herself to his schedule, even bought a television set to please him. (99)

This nature of Bleaney shows that he can still enjoy the company of his landlady, friends and relatives even though he is deprived of the material comforts of a posh life.

Thus, Bleaney bears the characteristics of a normal man in his own nature that can create beautiful human relationships though the speaker cannot see that side of his personality. When the speaker chooses to stay in the room where Bleaney stayed and starts fixing Bleaney's life within the material description, he always hints at what Bleaney has rather than what Bleaney is. Here, Bleaney is higher than the speaker: 'The speaker is isolated and lonely, while Bleaney does not appear to have been so' (Kuby 99). However four months³ after the completion of "Mr. Bleaney," the loneliness and isolation are welcomed by Larkin in the poem "Counting":

Thinking in terms of one
Is easily done—
One room, one bed, one chair
One person there
Makes perfect sense; One set
Of wishes can be met
One coffin filled. (CP 108)

The description of the room here is same as that of Mr Bleaney's. Here, the speaker approves the room because:

. . .counting up to two
Is harder to do;
For one must be denied
Before it's tried. (CP 108)

It is not certain whether the poet desires to be alone or his choice of the room is a compulsion. Yet living in such a room is a natural choice for a common man in view of his economic condition in the postwar years. This is to say that economic condition is instrumental for alienation of an individual thereby rendering him friendless.

The habits of the speaker make him different from Mr Bleaney who can win people like the landlady. Though the sense of alienation forms part of their psychological burden, the degree of loneliness is higher in the speaker's case than that of Bleaney's because when the speaker cannot develop a relationship with anyone, Bleaney can do it at least with his landlady. While Bleaney could enjoy 'summer holidays, / And Christmas at his sister's house in Stoke,' the speaker cannot enjoy such social gathering. The last two stanzas are significant in exposing the dull humdrum life in postwar England and the associated theme of alienation. The dull unromantic life is described as:

But if he stood and watched the frigid
wind
Tousling the clouds, lay on the fusty bed
Telling himself that this was home, and
grinned,
And shivered, without shaking off the
dread . . . (CP 102)

Again the eventual end of this
unromantic life as:

That how we live measures our own
nature,
And at his age having no more to
show
Than one hired box should make him
pretty sure
He warranted no better, I don't
know. (CP 103)

Having examined the lifestyle of Bleaney, the speaker is suddenly stopped by the coffin image alluded by the metaphorical 'hired box': 'it is death as the only certain solution to the riddle of the goal of life; and it is the awareness of the coming of death and man's "costly aversion of the eyes from death" which *dissolves* [emphasis King's] any possibility of our dreams becoming the reality' (King 37). This fact about the end of life is true not only for Bleaney who 'warranted no better' but also for the speaker who will follow a similar life by staying in the room Bleaney once lived in. Both of them live in the same fashion but Bleaney 'warranted no better' while the speaker says 'I don't know.' Thus when the coffin image comes in the penultimate line, both Bleaney and the speaker fail to realize their dreams.

The language of the poem is simple and colloquial and this simplicity helps in the portrayal of the simple and uneventful lives of the speaker and Bleaney. The shabby room and the environment surrounding it create a

disgusting atmosphere from which both of them cannot escape. There are 'Flowered curtains, thin and frayed,' 'Bed,' 'upright chair,' 'sixty-watt bulb,' 'no hook,' 'no room for books or bags,' 'saucer-souvenir' and 'the jabbering set' in the room. It shows that it is a low rent room having no amenities of a posh life. Outside this room are 'a strip of building land,' 'Tussocky, littered,' 'frigid wind' and the 'clouds.' It shows the unpleasant life they experience within the limited scope of their lives.

The materials available in the room belong to the postwar England. The poem could not have been written in any other time except in the postwar period which is characterised by various austerity measures of the government which cut the English posh life down to size. The speaker and Bleaney are, therefore, unquestionably postwar English bearing the brunt of the economic weakness of Britain.

The speaker in the poem tries to compare 'I' and 'he' only to realize that 'we' which unifies both 'I' and 'he' will at last end in 'one hired box.' He will also move out of the room in the manner how Bleaney is moved out in the first stanza of the poem: 'They moved him.' The verb 'move' is transitive here. They 'moved' Bleaney because he did not or could not move 'at his age.' It raises a question: Is he dead? The fact that he has 'no more to show' means his game of life is over. However the speaker's examination of Bleaney's life ends in 'I don't know' which is very important for Christopher

Ricks: 'The pronoun ('I') which so often marks the crucial turn or takes the crucial stress in his poetry; the colloquial negative 'don't'; and the admission as to doubtful knowledge'. (Ricks 282). This makes the room 'What something hidden from us chose' (CP 183) and not the original choice of the speaker or Bleaney.

Interestingly, the speaker and Bleaney can be examined as one character split into two like the 'you' and 'I' of T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Bleaney's failure in life is also symptomatic of the speaker's case in the sense that both of them are unified in the 'we' of the first line of the last stanza: 'That how we live measures our own nature.' It means that the way they live are similar. The speaker's mood, anxiety, failure, anger and alienation are registered in his exposition of Bleaney's character one by one along with the description of the room. Then the coffin image 'one hired box' and the self-skeptical 'I don't know' put the whole drama to an end. Thus the speaker and Bleaney are belittled within the limits of the four-wall room with nothing special to give or take. They become very small within the small dreary room.

Larkin's portrayal of Bleaney shows his clarity and dexterity in the observation of reality and its impact on the common man. The language, style, theme and technique show the depth he looks into the everyday life of postwar England and how alienation forms the nucleus of human psyche in his time. It is how he becomes 'an uncommon poet for the common man'.

Notes :

- ¹ Throughout the essay the term 'postwar' is used to mean the time (particularly the first two decades) following the Second World War.
- ² All references to Larkin's poems including "Mr. Bleaney" are from Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*, edited by Anthony Thwaite; hereafter referred to as CP followed by the page number within parenthesis.
- ³ "Mr. Bleaney" was written in May 1955 and "Counting" is believed, according to Anthony Thwaite, to be written in September the same year. Though he puts '?' after September in his dating of the poem in his edition of *Collected Poems*, it is accurate because of the close similarity of the themes of the poems.

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Declaration

Name of Journal : Mizoram University Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences.

Nature of Journal : A National Refereed Bi-Annual journal

Priodicity : June & December

ISSN : 2395-7352

Publisher : Registrar, Mizoram University, Aizawl - 796004, Mizoram

Chief Editor : Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama

Address for Communication : Mizoram University, Aizawl - 796004, Mizoram

Email : hssmzu@gmail.com



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