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Section : **Special Article**

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Article Name : **Interrogating sub-regional Cultural Nationalism in Odisha:
A Shift from economic deprivation to cultural distinctness**

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Abstract:

Odisha, the first province in India to be created in terms of linguistic homogeneity, subsequently encountered another regional mobilisation; this time on the grounds of underdevelopment and state politics that divides the state into two culturally distinct regions 'Sambalpuri-Katki'. After the decline of Ganatantra/Sawantra Parisad, regionalism in Western Odisha has been witnessing the rise of separate Koshal nationalism in the very heartland of the Odia movement. The transformation from regionalism to sub-regional cultural nationalism has two different trends: separatist and autonomist and is an outcome Western Odisha's cultural peculiarity. The major thrust of this paper is to provide a comprehensive account of this transformation and explore the nature of Koshal movement, mobilisation processes and implications on state politics.

Keywords: nationalism, regionalism, Koshal, Odisha and statehood movement

Introduction:

In a state like India, it is a herculean task to manage political unity on the one hand, and on the other to satisfy various nationalities based on wide ranging social, historical and linguistic parameters. India, so far, did well in this respect by keeping 'political nationalism' at the macro level based on the common factors like citizenship and political system and 'cultural nationalism' based on language, race, religion, etc. It is generally understood that while nationalism aims for political self-determination, self-rule in a particular homeland is based on the historical-cultural distinctness. Subrat K. Nanda argued that in a post-colonial multi-national country like India, at the regional level, cultural-linguistic distinct groups are demanding provincial and regional political autonomy within the common sovereign state based on their cultural identity in a particular territory. He identified this variety of nationalism as 'cultural nationalism' and this essay signifies that meaning for the usage of 'cultural nationalism'¹. Even this process of creating states on the basis of major linguistic identities sometimes resulted in subjugation of other cultural, historical identities and linguistic minorities within the state. This subjugation added with material deprivation with the passing of time raises new demands for self-rule and forces to redraw the political map of India, time and again.² But still, there are many statehood movements currently functioning at different regions of the country. In India, regional mobilisation is taking place on the lines of two processes: regionalism and regional cultural nationalism.

"Regionalism is a set of 'attitudes' or 'feeling' or 'action imperatives' which are used by a people inhabiting a contiguous region to promote their socio-economic, political and cultural interests".³

Regionalism is linked with the phenomena of relative deprivation, primarily in material terms, which arises out of the differential rate of socio-economic development and political mobility between regions. Regionalism grows only when a particular region remains economically backward and politically discriminated against mostly to meet some economic and political ends. Three pre-requisites are necessary for the growth of regionalism from regional inequalities a) perception of deprivation by an important section of people, b) rise of an articulate regional leadership and c) presence of a reference group against which the development of the region can be contrasted.⁴ Regional cultural nationalism indicates quest for identity and desire for self-rule by a distinct group of people based on common language, history, culture, tradition etc. in an ancestral home land.

In case of cultural nationalism, the critical factor is protection of cultural identity while in regionalism it is protection of region's developmental interest against socio-economic exploitation and political inequalities experienced by a neglected or dominated region. In some cases, both are linked with the goal of politico-administrative unit. But the major difference, as noted in the former case, is based on cultural identity while the other on regional underdevelopment and backwardness. Sometimes regionalism after some period gives birth to a strong wave of nationalism through crystallizing cultural identity, but only when 'the people begin to standardise their language/dialect and differentiate their culture to such an extent that a sense of unity within them can be established and genuine cultural differentiation from others can be made'.⁵

Odisha remained a distinct case-study for the above mentioned processes in Indian politics. It is the first state created out of a strong Odia linguistic nationalism. But just after creation, it has been witnessing regionalism and sub-regional cultural nationalism within the state. A section of people from Western Odisha have been demanding a separate state namely 'Koshal' based on Western Odisha or Koshali cultural identity. This essay is going to address these two forms of regional articulation in Odisha politics and explain their nature, mobilisation methods and leadership pattern.

Genesis of regionalism in Odisha:

Odisha was the first state created out of cultural nationalism based on Odia linguistic identity in pre-independence period. But, it encountered a strong wave of regionalism and sub-regional cultural nationalism in post-independence era which have remained dominant features of state politics till date. Historically, geographically and demographically, Odisha has been subdivided into two regions, the Coastal plain-land identified by *Utkal-Kalinga/Mughalbandi* and Western hilly Highlands representing the *Koshal/Gadajat* division.⁶ There are significant differences and similarities between both regions in terms of culture, tradition, history, festival and dialectic. Due to early contact with the British, the coastal

region witnessed socio-economic and political development as compared to Western region which was ruled by *Gadjet* princes and witnessed a feudal societal setting, traditional life style and backwardness. There were substantial levels of regional disparities among both regions at the time of India's independence which become more pronounced after independence. Mostly, the Western region experienced relatively low level of development and continues to lag behind the coastal districts in matters of education, employment and occupation, irrigation, agricultural development, transport and communication, and rate of urbanisation.⁷ This relative deprivation and underdevelopment has become the means for developing regionalism by a section of regional elites. Despite this, the coastal people during their land settlement operation⁸ and having ruled as administrators in Western region during pre-independence exploited the local people to such an extent that it created an unmitigated animosity among the people of this region. The coastal people's behaviour like little 'maharaja', 'conquerors' and 'imposters'⁹ earned significant hatred toward them. 'For comparatively simple people of these areas the administrator was identified with the Congress Party and thus for them the Congress assumed the image of an unwanted tyrant . . . they began to think of themselves as a conquered people, ruled by the Congress'.¹⁰ The *Katkis* (coastal Odisha people), the 'exploiters', became their 'conquerors' in the garb of Congress Party.¹¹ This general perception divides the Odia into two sections of people i.e. '*Katkis*' (dwellers of Cuttack) and '*Sambalpuria*' (dwellers of Sambalpur). This mutual antagonism is also based on the dialectical differences of both regions.

There are some other factors that have widened regional cleavages and emergence of regionalism. Historically, both regions have different experiences. Most of the Western Odisha was under the *Gadjet* states when Odisha was formed and it merged only after independence. There are differences in terms of culture, custom-tradition, festivals, food habits and dialect. The speaking patterns of Western Odisha; popularly known as '*Sambalpuri*' is different from mainstream Odia. This has become a point of contestation between both region and now a section of Western Odisha renamed their language as '*Koshali*' and demanding that it is a separate language, different from Odia. In terms of socio-economic and political development too, the Western region lags far behind the Coastal region. Politically also, Coastal Odisha dominated other parts due to its majority in Assembly and ministerial berths. The people of Coastal Odisha, because of their politico-economic domination has become the vanguard of Odia nationality and their culture, dance, language, festival, tradition ---recognised as mainstream which marginalises historic-cultural artefacts of other parts. The regional elites of Western Odisha blame the State Government for their economic backwardness, underdevelopment and cultural marginalisation which they see as being controlled and dominated by '*katkis*' leading to the State Government's step-motherly treatment. This sense of relative deprivation mixed with socio-cultural, historical and dialectal identity of the Western Odisha has produced regionalism in state politics during 1950-70s and gave birth

to a form of regional cultural nationalism thereafter. Now the regional elites of Western part are attempting to define their regional identities in complete nationalistic terms and demanding a separate state.

I

During 1940s and 50s, rulers of erstwhile princely states mainly Patna, Sonapur and Kalahandi were championing the idea of regionalism and regional mobilisation in Western Odisha. They launched counter-mobilisation to resist merger and organisation of *Gadajat* states of Odisha and Chhattisgarh under 'Eastern union' and glorified the idea of '*Mahakosala*'. But when it failed, they started articulating the regional identity of Western Odisha by inventing the history of '*Koshal*' or '*Dakhin Kosal*' empire found in this part in ancient and medieval period. They mobilised people support to form a separate *Koshal* province. These rulers demanded that naturally, culturally and historically Odisha was divided into two distinct Odia regions i.e. the coastal Odisha belongs to the old *Utkal-Kalinga* empires with its cultural practices and the western hilly land corresponding to the ancient Koshal Empire with separate culture, tradition and dialectal uniqueness.¹² R. N. Singhdeo, the then King of Patna, opposed the idea of common administrative setup for both *Gadajat* states and Odisha out of fear that politically and economically developed coastal people would exploit backward people of the other regions politically and economically.¹³ Some conscious citizens and leaders of the region apprehended that the more developed coast would take undue advantage of the situation at the expense of the backward districts.¹⁴ They started campaign for the formation of *Koshal* state, consisting of Western *Gadajat* states and Sambalpur district through Patna state newspaper '*Patna Dipika*' and other printed materials.¹⁵ The rulers maintained that a separate *Koshal* province should be formed for the odia-speaking people of Koshal-Sambalpur tract on the grounds of common culture and history.¹⁶ The anti-*katkia* sentiment, which was simmering due to nationalisation of forest and *kendu* leaves, two important sources of income in the region, price rise, replacement of simple administrative system with a complex bureaucratic rationality, was mobilised by these rulers for their political goal. People's discontent with the government's (*the Katkia Sarkar*) decision for construction of a multi-purpose Dam at Hirakud, near Sambalpur causing large scale displacement was moulded by regional elites into anti-Odisha sentiments and an attempt was made to separate Sambalpur district from Odisha and to merge with *Gadajats* to form a 'Koshal state'. But, due to central government's interference, 24 *Gadajat* states were merged with Odisha province in 1948-49.

The ex-princes along with the support of the *Zamindars*, *Gauntias*, *Mandal* dissidents, agitators of Hirakud dam displacement and anti-merger agitators came forward with a plan to have a party on regional line.¹⁷ Under the leadership of R N Singhdeo, a political party called '*Kosal Utkal Praja Parishad*' was

formed in 1948 and in 1950 renamed as '*Ganatantra Parishad*'. The merger of the princely states with Odisha created a political vacuum in Western part as Congress was only marginally present in the region. The necessity to fill-up the political vacuum gave rise to the Ganatantra Parishad (G.P.).¹⁸ The anti-*Katkis* and anti-Congress sentiment in Western Odisha benefitted the newly formed party, which emerged by projecting Congress as the alien *Katkia* conqueror and exploiter of Western Odisha. The party appeared as the guardian of Western Odisha's regional interests.

The lifespan of G.P. was short (1950-62)¹⁹ but, throughout this period its performance was spectacular. It emerged as a dominant player in Odisha politics, mostly very strong in the western part. It effectively projected underdevelopment, poverty, hunger deaths etc. of Western Odisha which was used against Congress leadership mostly hailing from the coastal region. The regional imbalances, cultural distinction and linguistic differences became the weapons. The political society of Odisha got divided on regional lines for more than three decades until the decline of Swatantra party. Congress remained dominant in the coastal belt and G.P./Swatantra party in the Western region. Throughout the period, G.P. criticised the party in power for neglecting the Western part and satisfying the coastal region only. It demanded the resettlement of Hiraikud dam displacees, criticised the government's decision to setup NALCO plant in Rourkela of Sundargarh district which involved demolition of several tribal and non-tribal villages.

Except the G.P. or *Swatantra Party*, the Congress leadership of Western Odisha, student and young organisation such as '*Paschim Orissa Gana Sammukshya*' (Western Orissa Popular Front) and Rourkela Steel Plant's Displaced Person Welfare Committee among others mobilised the population based on regional grievances. They demanded fifty percent of reservation of seats in local medical and engineering colleges, reservation in Class III and IV jobs for local people, expansion of educational institutes, more development of the region in terms of electrification, sanitation, minor irrigation, communication, opening up branches of high court, Board of Secondary Education, Odisha Public Service Commission, periodical sessions of State Legislative Assembly, compensation and rehabilitation of Rourkela steel plant and Hiraikud Dam displacees etc.²⁰ They were all very critical of the political leadership of coastal belt in the state whose policies were responsible for regional imbalances in the state.²¹ Congress leaders of the region urged the central government to intervene.²²

This phase of Odisha politics was vehemently guided by regionalism and strong regional feelings. Demands made by Western Odisha based political parties, political leadership or civil society organisations were mostly based on economic backwardness of the region, political dominance of the coastal people having a sense of superiority, a feeling of discrimination, poorly developed agriculture, lack of adequate means of transport and communication and low levels of income, unemployment etc.²³

Some cultural organisations also demanded a television broadcast centre, equal patronage to Western Odisha's dance, song, culture, dialectic etc. as to the coastal ones. All those demands were guided by socio-cultural, politico-economical interest and development of Western Odisha. Separate cultural identity based on Western Odisha culture, history, and language which became dominant in Koshali nationalism didn't come into the picture; they were very much under the label of Odia nationalism. Even, the G.P., the major player of regional politics fought for the unification of *Kharswain* and *Saraikela*, two Odia speaking regions of Bihar (now in Jharkhand) with Odisha.²⁴ But, this phase created conditions for the emergence of 'Koshal movement' based on Koshali sub-regional nationalism. 'Accumulated effects of all these historical, cultural and linguistic cleavages carried forward by the regional socio-economic disparities have given birth to a separatist trend and demand for the bifurcation of Orissa'.²⁵

II

Koshali nationalism is based on separate cultural, historical and linguistic identity of western Odisha and not merely on regional identity. This nationalism has given birth to Koshal movement (apparently a statehood movement for Western Odisha). Many argue that Koshal movement was rooted in the political mobilisation that took place during the Ganatantara Parishad and subsequently by different politically motivated groups and entities, noted among them are a Sambalpur based noted advocate; P. R Dubey, founder of the Kosal Party and Balgopal Mishra, the then MLA of Bolangir district in 1990s. Dubey organised various programmes like *Koshal Jana Jagran Yatra* (People's awareness campaign) and *Koshal Sammilani* (Koshal Conference). Balgopal Mishra creates awareness through his *Koshal Ratha*, a chariot that rolled throughout the Western Odisha.²⁶ Generally it is believed that these political groups indoctrinate the 'two nationalities theory'; that the Western and Coastal Odisha constitute two culturally distinct nationality i.e. 'Kalinga-Utkal nationality' and 'Koshal nationality' respectively.²⁷ But the genesis of nationalism on the cultural assertion of western Odisha has in literature. A writer of *Sambalpuri* (Western Odia dialectic); Kaviraj Prayag Dutta Joshi for the first time argued that that 'Koshali' (he used the term in the place of Sambalpuri) is a different language that belongs to the Eastern Hindi language Family (*Awadhi, Bundelkhandi, Chattishgarhi*) and different from Odia.²⁸ There are considerable differences in both languages in terms of vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax.²⁹ He binds the whole region into one unifying linguistic identity 'Koshali', along with its own cultural and historical legacy thereby mitigating all linguistic differences within Western Odisha, which could not be envisaged with the term 'Sambalpuri'. Viewed from this perspective, the existence of a separate nationality logically implies the right to self-determination in cultural and political terms within the framework of Indian union, as argued by Subrat K. Nanda.³⁰

Separate Koshali identity has provided the western regionalists an agency of their own, a missing link between regional mobilisation and its culture. They transform regionalism to nationalism by connecting it with Koshali cultural identity. There are two different trends of this movement i.e. autonomist and separationist; based on its mobilisation of political and cultural domains.³¹ Protagonists of 'autonomy' are urging for greater decentralisation of political and economic resources as well as patronage and recognition to cultural artefacts of Western Odisha including linguistic distinctiveness within the larger Odia nationalism. The Separatists are not in favour of these short term solutions and rather stand for a separate province for Western Odisha namely 'Koshal' based on its linguistic identity and backwardness.

The autonomists, like the regionalists are raising different demands such as reservation in employment for local people in factories and mines, better health care, a separate developmental package for their region, and justice to the Western region in terms of training institutes, central institutions like IIT, IIM etc. Establishment of a separate bench of High court and a separate development Council for Koshal region has been a long standing demand. Bar associations of all districts along with other civil society organisations are organising rallies, strikes, *dharanas* etc. on regular basis for a High Court branch. A separate development council, which was the major demand of 1990s was formed in order reduce regional imbalances, which however till date, has proved fruitless.³² The autonomists are very critical about the demand of separate state. They stand for more decentralisation of resources into the western region.

On cultural domain, their main demand is recognition and inclusion of *Koshali/Sambalpurias* a separate language in the 8th schedule of the Constitution and the second official language of Odisha that can be used as a medium of teaching in school in the Western part of the state. They are critical of state-sponsored *Utkalanisation* (patronising and promoting the culture of Coastal Odisha) process that tried to destroy the historical diversity of Odisha. The government of Odisha's attempts to *Utkalanise* the entire Odisha has created huge dissatisfaction in Western Odisha. Celebration of Odisha day as Utkal day, renaming of the Bolangir, Kalahandi and *Panchabati Gramya bank* into '*Utkal Gramya Bank*',³³ Odisha house situated at Kolkata was renamed as 'Utkal House'³⁴, the only culture university of the state named as 'Utkal Culture University', state Government's mouthpiece as '*Utkala Prasanga*'. Even history was not spared in the process and utkalanisation took place through text books that resulted in the loss of identity for Western Odisha people. This sub-regional chauvinism of the Coastal people is strongly opposed by Koshal protagonists. Their key demand is that Odisha's cultural academies to finance, promote and institutionalise Koshali dance, music, language, drama, culture along with promotion of tourist places of the region. Some other sections have also demanded *Kosli Sahitya Academy* and *Kosli Sangeet Natak Academy*.³⁵

The separationists, under various organisations like *Koshal Kranti Dal*, Western Odisha Liberation front, *Koshal Ekta Manch*, Koshal State Co-ordination Committee, *Koshal Sangram Parishad*, *Koshal Bhumi Mukti Sangathan*, *Koshal Sammilan*, *Koshal Kranti Yuva Morcha*, *Koshal party*, *Koshal Raej Kriyanushtan* Committee, All Koshal Students' Union, etc. however have been demanding a separate Koshal state based on its linguistic identity. These organisations have been actively working in different parts of Western Odisha and mobilising people on distinct cultural identity and step-motherly approach of *Katkiya Sarkar* towards them. They are choosing some selective socio-cultural and historical symbols and most importantly the Kosali-Sambalpuri didactic to create a separate nation- the Koshal.³⁶ In a memorandum submitted to Prime Minister of India they demanded that Odisha is a bi-lingual state based on two separate nationalities i.e. Koshal and Kalinga/Utkal. So far the Kalinga/Utkal nationality dominated in all spheres of the state that caused widespread regional inequality, poverty, starvation, underdevelopment, marginalisation and regional chauvinism. The only solution they are looking is the creation of a separate 'Koshal Pradesh' on linguistic and underdevelopment grounds.³⁷

Political organisations are regularly organising strikes, dharanas, rail *roko*, blockage, meetings and rallies on various issues concerning discriminatory approaches of Odisha state against the Koshal region. They are very active in both print media and social media in order to create awareness among the educated masses regarding the suffering of the Koshal and inducting a sense of pride among them through regeneration of Koshali songs, culture, history, heroes and ethos. To facilitate greater awareness and putting Koshal demands through empirical study, they are also encouraging events like symposiums, seminar, workshops, debates and discussions on various fora ranging from electronic media to public offices, schools and colleges. Submitting memoranda, demanding a separate state to ameliorate the suffering of Koshali people, to various political representatives of both central and state governments, is one of their regular activities. Kosal party and *Koshal Kranti Dal* are fighting elections too.

In the 1990s, P.R. Dubey and Balgopal Mishra mobilised considerable public opinion on struggle for the Koshal State through various programmes like *Koshal Jana Jagran Yatra*, *Koshal Sammilani*, and *Koshal Ratha*.³⁸ *Koshal Ekta Manch* formed in 1998 by uniting 72 socio-political and cultural organisations unitedly fought for regional imbalances and disparity. It took the form of a political party in 2007: *Koshal Kranti Dal*, under the leadership of a Bolangir based lawyer Pramod Mishra along with many political and non-political associations to lead the movement and contest election on that basis, but failed to capture public attention. Mobilisation on political front was mostly confined to the educated mass and social media leaving the majority behind. However, they are working as a pressure group to guard Western Odisha's interests.

Cultural protagonists have their own unique way of mobilisation and struggle and they so far got adequate attention of people and success to some extent. They are mostly mobilizing people broadly on three areas i.e. journalistic, historical, literature.³⁹ Every nation must have a past. But, Koshal region has no representation in the historical purview of Odisha. That makes the important tasks of Koshali sympathiser; to invent Koshali identity from History. The historians of Western Odisha started re-writing the History of Odisha and bring the Koshal region into it by discovering the heritage sites, royal dynasties, archaeological sites, local heroes etc. '*Koshalananda Kavya*' and '*Jai Chandrika*'; two great epics of the region granting the ground for a glorified past. A numbers of journals and blocs are coming out in recent times both in internet and print media like Koshal Discussion Forum, '*Koshal Prabaha*', '*Koshal Katha*,' '*Mor Bhasa Sambalpuri*' etc. that has raised issues concerning regional imbalances, culture, songs, food habit, sports and historical heritages of Western Odisha; that has been either isolated or neglected for years beneath the majoritarian Odia Nationalism.

Many researchers like Pandit Pragya Datta Joshi, Dr. Ashok Kumar Das and others worked extensively on the linguistic domain of Koshali dialect and argued that it is a different language. The linguists of the region have been playing a major role in the movement through their works written in both Odia and Koshali and enriching Koshali literature. Their research works indicate that the vocabulary, grammar and morphology of the Koshali language has its own distinctness. They standardised the language with its own set of stories, poems, epics, grammar and dictionary. A '*Bhasha Bisesagna Committee*' was appointed in 2014 by the state government on the status of Koshali/Sambalpuri language and the committee concludes that it is a different language.⁴⁰ Thereafter, the State government through various letters urging the central government to include Sambalpuri/Koshali in the 8th schedule of the constitution.⁴¹ Within only thirty years (1st article demanding that Koshali is a separate language was published in 1982 by Pragya Dutta Joshi) they have transformed a mere dialectic into a full-fledged language with its own set of grammar and literature. This is unquestionably a remarkable achievement'.⁴²

People of this region have started to differentiate themselves from those from the coastal Odisha in all aspects of life starting from faith and belief to food and sport and to the extent of racial identity. '*Lok Mohotsav*' (People's Festival) organised in all districts annually has been in the forefront of nurturing and reinventing the separate, glorious cultural and linguistic identity of Western Odisha and in creating a separate nationality, Koshali nationality. The souvenirs of these *Lok Mohotsav* have become the prime medium for revival of separate Koshal nation with its distinct language, culture, dance, food habits, sports, historical heritage etc.⁴³ In terms of religion too, there is a recurring argument that Western Odisha, historically a predominant place of '*Sakta*' and '*Saiva*' cult had remained the under the shadow of Coastal Odia, who are trying to spread their '*Vaishnavic*' or '*Jagannath*' culture.⁴⁴ The anthropological argument

too has been brought into the discussion with claims that Coastal people are Mongoloid and Dravidian while the Koshali people are from pre-Dravidian and Munda group.⁴⁵

While looking at leadership pattern of this new movement; the new middle class composed of progressive individuals from different backgrounds like lawyers, academicians, litterateurs, retired public servants, students etc. replaced the old political class of the region. Historically, *ex-Rajas, Zamindars, Gauntias*, landlords etc. were the prominent leaders of this region who were also in the forefront of the struggle particularly during the phase of regionalism. But, on the assertion of cultural identity and demand for separate Koshal Pradesh, these classes remain reluctant to lend support for various reasons. Hence, a new leadership pattern has emerged in the political arena of Western Odisha under the Koshal movement and Koshal poets become its flag bearers.

III

Regionalism and sub-regional cultural nationalism in Odisha is mostly a product of regional economic and political disparities. Western Odisha, which lags behind in terms of development, developed a sense of relative deprivation along with its cultural differences mobilised through regional political elites, gave birth to regionalism. Later on, this process mixed with cultural deprivation and discrimination made way for cultural nationalism, that seeks Western Odisha's cultural-linguistic identity, its own history, past glories, heroes, festivals, food habits so on and so forth in order to make it distinct and different from coastal Odisha. They felt that it was not possible until they transformed 'Sambalpuri' regionalism to 'Koshali' nationalism. This process began first in literature rather in political sphere. This gave regionalists their own agency to fight against regional discrimination, which was missing before. The regional mobilisation that took place on regional disparity, backwardness and underdevelopment has weakened the unifying nature of Odia identity and gave birth to a strong sense of resentment among Koshali people. Now they are asserting their regional differences in nationalistic terms and demanding that they belong to a different nationality-Koshali nationality; distinct and separate from mainstream Odia nationality.⁴⁶

Koshal Movement is not only a statehood movement, rather a movement to get recognition of Koshali identity along with other developmental interests, to preserve and protect historic-cultural artefacts by countering Utkalanisation process. Within the movement there are both autonomists and separationists. Autonomists are arguing for regional developmental interest and autonomy along with cultural recognition and protection, but right now not in support of separate state. Thus it can be said that, their quest for cultural self-determination is invariably linked with quest for political self-determination.⁴⁷

Mobilisation of Koshal Movement in political front has so far proved incompetent, mostly confined to educated masses. But, the cultural front succeeded in making a Koshal nation out of Western Odisha's history, culture, language. They had, just within three decades, succeeded in situating the Sambalpuri dialect into a full-fledged Koshali language and made it a forerunner for inclusion in 8th schedule of Indian constitution with the support of Odisha Government. In Statehood Movement, Koshal movement 'has started with a state on the basis of administrative convenience and backwardness and reached its zenith with the demand of linguistic statehood, which subsequently reflects the strong sentimentality attached with language'.⁴⁸ This movement is being led not by political elites but by a new leadership, mostly from new middle class i.e. lawyers, retired public officials, school teachers, college lecturers and Koshali cultural bearers.

Conclusion:

In Odisha, despite its linguistic unity, sub-regional nationalism crystallised due to tensions and conflict resulting from regional developmental disparities and cultural discrimination. The people of the deprived region attempted to reconstruct their identity in more objective cultural-linguistic terms. Once that happened, a regional consciousness turned into a national consciousness in the cultural sense and is now demanding political self-determination in the form of 'Koshal statehood'. Despite incompetent political mobilisation, they succeeded to transform 'Koshal' history and culture to form a nation based on linguistic unity (apparently the basis of statehood in India). Apart from this transformation, Koshal movement has brought new leadership pattern to western Odisha. The new Middle class, intellectuals, poets, retired public servants become the flag-bearers of this movement who are different from the classical Raja-Jamindar class who were dominant in Regionalism era and in political domain till today. Another interesting observation we can draw out of this movement is that unlike what Pradeep Kumar⁴⁹, M. P. Singh⁵⁰ argued about statehood movements in India progressing from linguistic identity to backwardness and administrative suitability in Jharkhand, Uttrakhand, Chattishgarh and most recently in Telengana, the Koshal movement so far has been 'proving itself as an anti-thesis of this linearity'.⁵¹ The regional mobilisation on administrative convenience and backwardness has been started back in the 1950s, but after the 80s has transformed into cultural nationalism based on Western Odisha's cultural artefacts and local dialect. It would be wrong to calculate its success and failure at this nascent stage, but this movement if successfully mobilised and the outcome of it would have a lasting impact not only at local level but also in the arena of national politics.

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Section : **Special Article**

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Article Name : **Devastating Environment and the State Politics-An Analytical Study of Uttar Pradesh**

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Abstract

There is an intimate relationship among politics, economics and environment. The economic and developmental policies of the government play a crucial role in shaping and sustaining the environment of the country. Along with the various socio-economic factors, the attitude, sensitivity and functioning of the different successive governments headed by different sets of political parties in India are chiefly responsible for the worsening of environment today. The eco-politics should be the prime agenda of every government functioning in the states and at the central level. The present study is an academic investigation and analysis of the distressing condition of environment of Uttar Pradesh and the attitude and role of successive governments in handling this issue.

Keywords: environmental deterioration, water pollution, state politics, environmental governance etc.

The global community today is distressed by severe environmental challenges. The pollution of water, air, noise, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, global warming, depletion in ozone layer, acid rain, waste disposal and many more have been affecting the survival of human beings and other species of earth. The deteriorating eco-system is a matter of great concern worldwide. In post-independent India, the policies of sustainable development have been neglected by successive governments both at the centre and in the states.

The state of Uttar Pradesh, the biggest state of India in population is situated in the northern part of India. The political significance of the state may be seen in the fact that it has the highest parliamentary seats which plays a decisive role in making the government of the country.

Various studies and reports conducted on the environmental scenario of Uttar Pradesh have pointed to the disastrous condition of environment in the state. Many regions of the state have been converted into 'environmental hotspots'. The deteriorating conditions of land, rivers, biodiversity, groundwater, deforestation, poisonous air and unbearable noise, malnutrition, health hazards, lack of sanitation, increasing slums, hazardous and bio-medical waste severely affect the people in the state. Uttar Pradesh is the producer of huge green house gases, hazardous waste and bio-medical waste.¹

A study was conducted jointly by the Uttar Pradesh government and World Bank particularly in areas of surface and ground water pollution, hazardous and municipal solid waste generation, and degraded land area of Uttar Pradesh. The report questioned the poor status of environmental governance in the state.²

The Fifteenth Vidhan Sabha of Uttar Pradesh in August 2008 resolved to adopt an Action Plan for deteriorating underground water and to improve water conservation policy for drinking water and irrigation.³

The Supreme Court and the High Court of Uttar Pradesh have also repeatedly rebuked the state government and its agencies responsible for environmental protection measures but no decisive change is still visible in the attitude and functioning of the state government.

Environmental Challenges of Uttar Pradesh-The key environmental challenges of the state may be described as-

Today the state is facing acute problems of pollution of water, non -availability of potable water, arsenic contamination in ground water, rapid ground water depletion and improper sewerage and sanitation system. It is noticeable that the improper municipal and industrial waste disposal system and excessive use of pesticides for agricultural purposes are the main reasons for ground water pollution. Both urban and rural areas of Uttar Pradesh are witnessing severe water-borne diseases due to the use of polluted water and poor sanitary conditions. The findings of the studies (UNICEF and State Government Report, 2008 and Report of Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Department, 2010) also identified severe arsenic content in the ground water of 49 districts of Uttar Pradesh. Although the then State Government of Mayawati assured in Vidhan Sabha to take obligatory actions in this connection but it was an unsolved exercise which further aggravated the situation.⁴

River pollution in Uttar Pradesh is also an enduring problem. The main causes of river pollution have been sewage and industrial waste, rural waste water mixed with pesticide, fertilizer and other chemicals, directly flowing into rivers and disruption in the flow of the rivers. Questioning on river policies related to the river Ganga, NGT on 23rd October, 2016 commented that wrong policies have been the causes of deteriorating condition of the Ganga. The main reasons for Ganga pollution has been unscientific working of associating authorities and institutions, lack of information and co-ordination and wrong policies. The NGT also said that it was not clear that how many industries were situated on the bank of the Ganga and

to what extent they were discharging polluted water into the river. It further commented that the public money was being wasted by the government of U.P. in the name of cleanliness of Ganga pollution.⁵

Similarly Air & Noise Pollution are matters of grave concern in Uttar Pradesh. The air of the cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Ghaziabad and Varanasi has been most polluted. The Vehicular emissions, traffic congestion and smoke of industries are the main causes of air pollution in the state. Similarly the state is distressed by noise pollution. In January, 2018, following the orders of Allahabad Highcourt, the government of Uttar Pradesh headed by Yogi Adityanath banned the unauthorized use of loudspeakers.⁶ The deteriorating biodiversity and wild life in Uttar Pradesh are also in vulnerable state. The State of Environment Report, 2010 observed in its study that the poor quality of water, climate change and loss of many species in the five biodiversity zones of Uttar Pradesh are under tremendous pressure.⁷

Likewise the loss of the agricultural land in Uttar Pradesh due to the soil erosion, excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides, poor water management and the use of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes became a worrying issue.

The State Environment Report, 2010, observed that almost 3.8 million hectare of land in UP witnessed deterioration. Though to combat this situation, the state government has been running various social forestry programmes but these became insufficient for the betterment of this situation.⁸

Other issues like poor management of solid waste generation, Industrial Pollution due to leather, sugar and power projects etc. became major source of pollution over the years.⁹

State Environment Policy (SEP) 2007

With the objective to provide Environmental safety and security to the people of Uttar Pradesh and to conserve the natural resources of the state, the draft policy was started preparing by the Department of Environment, Government of Uttar Pradesh. The policy was inspired by the National Environment Policy-2006. The Draft policy promised to proceed all developmental policies of the state in tune with sustaining environment and ecology of UP. Unfortunately this policy was confined to draft only.¹⁰

Election Manifesto of Different Political Parties in India

Since the present study is focusing to examine and analyse the political dimension of environmental problems of the state, it is necessary to know the outlook and action plan of different political parties of UP towards environmental issues. In this connection a study of the commitment of political parties in their election manifestoes revealed the fact that environmental issues have not been very much placed in electoral politics be it the national or the state.

A little change was visible when in the election manifesto of Bhartiya Janta Party for Lok Sabha election of 2014, the sustainable development, cleanliness of the Ganga, drinking water, clean and healthy India, agro and social forestry, use of clean energy, solar energy, and conservation of natural resources etc. issues were the part of the manifesto.¹¹ Similarly, in the election manifesto of BJP entitled 'Sankalp Patra' for Lok Sabha election of 2019, the Party again reiterated its commitment for the greener country and a special financial assistance in the form of a 'Green Bonus' for the Himalayan States to facilitate the protection and promotion of forests.¹²

The Election Manifesto of Congress Party in 2014 Lok Sabha election highlighted its commitment towards conservation of natural resources which secures health, livelihood and nutritional well-being of all. Further, in the election manifesto of 2019 Lok Sabha election, Congress emphasized on the battle against global warming and safeguarding the environment.¹³

The Samajwadi Party, in its manifesto of UP state assembly election 2017 declared Clean UP Green UP programme. It is known to all that Bahujan Samaj Party does not issue election manifesto in elections.¹⁴

An Overview of the Environmental Politics in Uttar Pradesh-

In Uttar Pradesh governments started working on environmental issues in late seventies. In this connection, during the regime of Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna, the then Chief Minister of the State, Uttar Pradesh State Water Pollution Control was established on 3rd February, 1975 under water (prevention and control of pollution) act 1974. Afterwards, in February, 1976, Directorate of Environment was established during the regime of Narayan Dutta Tiwari, the then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. It is noticeable that though pollution control board was established in 1975, no concrete work has been done by the board. Also, funds were not allocated to the board. Due to this, board faced difficulties in establishing its office etc. For the first time N.D. Tiwari government of Congress Party sanctioned money for the board.¹⁵

To ensure water supply facilities in the state, Public Health Regulation Department was established in 1927 which became autonomous government regulation Department in 1946. Later on in 1975 it became Water Conservation and Sewage System (Act 743, 1975) which got converted into UP Jal Nigam.¹⁶

1. During the regime of Babu Banarasi Das, V.P. Singh and Shripati Mishra, from 1977 to 1984 (all from Congress Party), no concrete steps were taken towards the environmental protection of the state. It is mentioned in the Annual Report of Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board that during the chief ministership of Shripati Mishra (1983-84) almost 10,000 industrial units were causing pollution to the water resources of the country and there were only 17 industries which were having polluted water treatment machinery. The study of the air pollution of this period also indicated that pollution in air had been spread out by 60 industries in which only 3 units had machine to check air pollution. Again in August 1984, N.D. Tiwari of the Congress Party became the chief minister of the state. In 1981 the Central Government passed Air Pollution Control and Regulation Act. The State Government implemented this Act in the state in 1985 and the name of UP Water Pollution Control Board had been converted into Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board and the appointment of Member Secretary in the Board started in 1984 during N.D. Tiwari period.¹⁷
2. In June 1985, Ganga Action Plan was announced by Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, which was implemented in UP largely. During the period of Veer Bahadur Singh, the annual activity report of Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board highlighted the fact that the Board was lacking in funds and staff to improve its functioning.¹⁸
3. Under the Ganga Action Plan in the cities of UP– Rishikesh, Allahabad and Varanasi, installation of sewage line and STP had begun to stop the sewage water flowing directly into the river. At that time N.D. Tiwari was heading the state. But it was observed in many studies that the policies of the Ganga Action Plan could not achieve the desired results.¹⁹
4. Under the stewardship of Chief Minister Veer Bahadur Singh, in 1987-88, Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board demanded 123.15 lacs but the Central Government approved only 24 lacs. Further, in 1987, to check the pollution of Gomti River, the State Government approved a plan, but the pollution of Gomti, till today, is a big challenge.²⁰
5. During the period of Mulayam Singh Yadav in 1989, the Central Government slashed the budget of Pollution Control Board. The Board demanded 150.02 lacs but the government approved only 19 lacs.²¹

6. During 1989-90, the budget of the Board was 203.62 lacs but the Government approved only 20 lacs. During the period of Kalyan Singh government in 1991 the board received 1 crore for the establishment of its office.²²
7. The period of the 90s in UP was governed by Kalyan Singh, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati. This period was full of political uncertainties, opportunism, appeasement and horse trading for political power. In 1991, in collaboration with World Bank and Government of India, the State Government prepared a five year plan to control industrial pollution.
Now it will be relevant here to study and analyse the standpoint and role of different successive governments of Uttar Pradesh in detail-

The Role of Mulayam Singh Yadav Government towards Environmental Issues (2003-07)-

Mulayam Singh Yadav, the then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, showed his inclination towards environmental protection, repeatedly expressed his government's commitment in environmental matters on many occasions. In 2005, Mulayam Singh Yadav, while addressing a public meeting said that the government will bring environmental policy for state very soon.²³

Again on the occasion of Independence Day, he reiterated that the government of UP will bring legislation in coming session of Vidhan Sabha for clean and green cities. Emphasizing to make plantation drive as the mass movement, the chief minister further said that in every district of the state 10 acre land will be reserved for plantation.²⁴ During this period a State Environment Authority was constituted on 13th April 2007 to approve environmental sanctioning of 'B' class industries. This was on the line of Environmental Act 1986 and the action of Central Government started in 1994. In this connection it was provisioned that 'A' class industries will seek permission from Central Government and 'B' class industries like thermal power plants, river valley projects, mining related industries, paper industries, sugar mills, tanneries, etc. will seek permission from the state environment authority.

The study of the attitude and the role of Mulayam Singh Yadav government in Uttar Pradesh indicated the partial implementation of environmental policies and programmes in the state. Neither the environmental protection bill could be tabled in the UP Assembly nor the situation of the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Gomti and the other big and small rivers of UP could change. Although the State Government had promised to implement new environment policy for the state but it could not be executed. The CAG report of 2005 of the Government of India also underlined that the UP Government was inactive in regard to environmental matters and over looked environmental laws in public corporations.²⁵

The Role of Mayawati Government towards Environmental Issues (2007-12)-

The Uttar Pradesh was ruled by BahujanSamaj Party under the stewardship of Mayawati from 2007 to 2012. The State Government of Mayawati also did not work for the state environment policy. The pollution of air, water, rivers drew attention in Uttar Pradesh VidhanSabha as these issues were raised many times by the opposition parties during this period. In February, 2010 during the winter session of Uttar Pradesh VidhanSabha, the MLA PramodTiwari of Congress party and Dr. Radha Mohan Agrawal of BJP raised the issue of environment pollution due to increasing number of vehicles and untreated water flowing into rivers. The then Urban Development Minister NakulDubey accepted that 35 per cent vehicle have been increased in the state during last 5 years. He also said that the State Government was doing serious exertions.²⁶Radha Mohan Agrawal also raised the cases of pollution in Ami river flows in Sidharth Nagar, Basti, SantKabir Nagar and Gorakhpur. The Government replied that they are working on it and fund has been demanded from the Central Government for this purpose.²⁷The issue of air pollution of cities such as Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Ghaziabad and Varanasi raised in UP Assembly by ShyamDevRaiChoudhary, MLA of Varanasi. The then Environment Minister NakulDubey assured to take action in this regard.²⁸But State Government did not take concrete action to check the situation.

During this period the judiciary continuously reminded and scolded at times the State Government for their insincere approach towards safety and security of the environment of the state. In January, 2010 the Court asked the Mayawati government to inform the actions taken by the Government to transfer leather industries of Kanpur which were causing pollution in Ganga. The Court also instructed the Government to stop untreated water of canals to be discharged into the Yamuna and to take stringent actions against the guilty officers.²⁹

Again in October 2010, the Allahabad High Court expressed its anger for the unaccountable role of the State Government regarding pollution control measures relating the river Ganga.³⁰In another move Uttar Pradesh High Court said that the orders given by the courts were not implemented by the State Government and the court asked Principal Secretary of UP to be present in the Court and inform what action they had taken regarding the transfer of leather industry of Kanpur and what had been done to clean the river Ganga.³¹

In June 2010, a proposal for cleaning the Ganga was finalized by the Mayawati Government in collaboration with the World Bank. The World Bank agreed to provide Rs. 1 billion for cleaning of the river along 2490 Km stretch, covering 5 states including UttarPradesh.³²

During this period the federal dimension of the environmental problems also need to be studied and analyzed carefully in order to develop a comprehensive understanding in this issue. The environmental

matters have always been cause of conflict between the Centre and the State. In 2011, the then Union Minister of Environment Jai Ram Ramesh accused the State Government of their irresponsible approach towards the pollution of the Ganga. He further added that he had written a letter to the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board for stopping tanneries' poisonous water being discharged into the Ganga but nothing had been done.³³ On the other hand, Satish Chandra Mishra, the then President of State Advisory Board told that the Central Government had given Rs. 500 Crore which was insufficient and UP needed Rs. 2000 crore for conservation of the Ganga.

To sum up it may be said that neither the Government of Mulayam Singh Yadav nor the Mayawati adopted the approach of eco-friendly politics. The policies and programmes initiated by both the governments could not sustain the biodiversity and conservation of environment of Uttar Pradesh. The charges of corruption against Mayawati, the then Chief Minister of the State in the cases like Taj Trapezium and Noida Park goaded more impediments during this time.

The Role of Akhilesh Yadav Government towards Environmental Issues (2012-17)-

In the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections of 2012, Samajwadi Party won the elections and Mulayam Singh Yadav, president of the party handed over his political legacy to his son Akhilesh Yadav, the then Lok Sabha MP from Kanouj seat. The analysis of the functioning of Akhilesh Yadav government towards environmental issues stressed the fact that the attitude and role of Akhilesh Yadav government was not distinctively different from the previous governments. With a degree of Environment Engineering Akhilesh Yadav initially showed his concern for the pathetic state of environment of Uttar Pradesh and kept the department of environment with him.

Speaking in Vidhan Sabha on 29th June 2012, the then chief minister said that we would develop Gomti river front as a green belt. He also criticized that BSP government had not done right work and wasted money in making parks.³⁴

In spite of his concern towards environmental matters of the state, the draft of new environment policy which was focused on conservation of agricultural land from unplanned industrial development and was prepared in his supervision but could not translate into action and it was confined to files only.³⁵ This is ironical that the Supreme Court, the High Court and the NGT repeatedly asked, directed and scolded at times the Akhilesh Yadav government for its failure to take steps for safe environment of the state but these orders were overlooked many times. For example, in 2016, the Supreme Court of India, in its order said that environment should be included in the curriculum but the order of the court was not followed by the Akhilesh government.³⁶ The federal dimension of the environmental issues is also a major challenge

especially in the case where centre and states are ruled by different political parties. Akhilesh Yadav government repeatedly said that the protection of environment is the collective responsibility of the centre and the state governments. In many cases including cleaning the river Ganga he accused the Central Government, headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh for its non-cooperative approach and allocation of inappropriate funds to the State Government.³⁷ The politicization of river issues may be seen here as the State Government launched a series of river revival and river front development projects including the Gomti River (cost 665 crore rupees) and beautifying its river front. This was actually a counter strategy of the Akhilesh Government for delaying the execution of Central Government's Namami Gange project in the State. The then Union Minister Uma Bharti accused Samajwadi Party Government of Uttar Pradesh for their slackness and non-cooperative approach towards the project.³⁸ This is perturbing that partisan interests are overshadowing on the life saving issues such as environment and ecology.

The Role of Yogi Adityanath towards Environmental Issues (2017 to Present)-

In the legislative assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh in 2017, Bharatiya Janta Party has come to power and Yogi Adityanath became the Chief Minister of the state. In the politics of Uttar Pradesh it was noticeable that a majority government came into power with the additional advantage of being same party was ruling at the central level. A careful study of the functioning of the BJP headed government in UP since March 2017 indicated that though the government started taking initiatives for sustaining the environment but more is to be done yet.

Heading the government Yogi Adityanath vowed to protect the natural resources of the state. The functioning of the State Government as the study observed that it was being questioned by the Court and the NGT again and again. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) in May 2017 expressed its dissatisfaction regarding the role of Yogi Adityanath Government and UP Pollution Control Board and imposed a penalty of Rupees 50 lacs on pollution spreading industrial units of Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh in May, 2017.³⁹ Following this the State Government started shifting those industries which were robbing the River Ganga through their poisonous discharge.⁴⁰

Again in the problem of bio medical waste the High Court of UP on 3rd August, 2017, scolded to the Principal Secretary of Uttar Pradesh regarding the mismanagement of bio medical waste treatment. The court said that why the Government did not do any arrangement regarding the management of bio medical waste and the court expressed its agonies that the state did not have systematic data on this issue.⁴¹

In October, 2018 while suggesting measures to check dust pollution Yogi government issued orders to municipal corporations to ensure the burning of garbage and sprinkling of water to control dust pollution.⁴² But it was also couldn't effectively implemented.

The analysis of the attitude and role of Uttar Pradesh governments headed by different chief ministers of Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Bhartiya Janta Party throws light on the fact that the successive governments of Uttar Pradesh did not execute policies of environmental protection and sustenance. The factors hampered implementation of environmental plans, programmes and policies may be seen as- lack of visionary approach and political will, bureaucratic hazards, corruption and politicization of environmental issues along with poverty, insufficient development, and explosion of population and lack of environmental citizenship. Today eco-politics and environmental governance with sincere and accountable approach of political and administrative machinery of the state is a vital and an inescapable need.

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Section : Special Article

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Article Name : **ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370 – ITS NATURE,
IMPLICATIONS AND VALIDITY**

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Introduction

On October 26, 1947, when Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian Union, he didn't quite fathom the consequences that would emerge therefrom. The Instrument of Accession, although signed in a haste, given the prevailing circumstances set in motion from across the border, was unlike the Instrument of Accession signed by other Princely states, giving the Dominion of India (as it then was) very little control over matters pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir namely, defence, external affairs and communications. This accession was however, ultimately left to the will of the people, as was expressed by Lord Mountbatten in his letter to Maharaja Hari Singh, rendering the entire arrangement as temporary and controversial¹. The United Nations Security Council got subsequently involved in helping achieve India a sense of security against Pakistan, warding off any invaders/elements from the territory of Kashmir by virtue of Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations². At home, the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was convened in 1951, on the basis of adult suffrage with proportionate representation³, settling the question of accession in its Preamble and Article 3, calling Jammu and Kashmir an "Integral Part" of the Indian Union⁴. Kashmir however, has been a burning issue, ever since one can think of, taking into account the Indo-Pak war that culminated into Karachi Agreement, the Bangladesh Liberation War that ended in a ceasefire by UN auspices leading to Simla Agreement, 1972, and thereafter the Lahore Agreement of 1999 after the nuclear missile tests across the borders during the Vajpayee Government. The two important provisions, namely Article 35-A and the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India, incorporated by way of Constitutional (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954 gave greater level of autonomy to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, allowing it to have a say in certain matters, notwithstanding the laws made by the Parliament that would normally apply to all states. Considering the current move, taken by the government by virtue of Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019, this special status has been removed. A move hailed by many as the win of democracy, and detested by large calling it a demise of democracy, one needs to understand why the two diverging opinions exist. The article herein shall firstly deal with the historical aspect, touching upon the theatre of war that Kashmir was, taking into account the involvement of apparent stakeholders – namely Pakistan and China, and thereafter the political conditions that prevailed in the state, including the interference of Delhi by way of presidential orders and how the position of Article 370 was understood and trampled by way of some landmark judgements. The third part shall deal with the current move taken by the President by order of 2019 and what it essentially aims to provide for, further taking into picture the emerging schools of thought and lastly analysing some important questions raised in the light of the current move.

Historical Perspective

At the time of Independence, Maharaja Hari Singh, was the Hindu ruler of the Princely State of Kashmir, which had over 2/3rd population as Muslim⁵. Finding himself in a conundrum during the time of transfer of power, when asked to accede either to India or Pakistan, he chose neither. This subsequently led to Poonch Revolt⁶, leading to subsequent attack from Pakistan⁷, compelling him to seek the assistance of India, therefore leading to the signing of the Instrument of Accession⁸. The Instrument simply stated accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to the Dominion of India with no promise as to the "*commitment in any way as to acceptance of any future constitution of India or to fetter my discretion to enter into arrangement with the governments of India under any such future constitution.*"⁹, providing the dominion of India to make laws on Defence, External Affairs, Communications and Ancillary matters¹⁰. But this did not settle the elements of troubles immediately thereafter. Relying on the sole basis of two-nation theory, that explains the divide based on communal lines, Pakistan claimed its stake in the matter, considering the religious front existing then. The first Indo-Pak war of 1947, which resulted therefrom from the ongoing attacks in the pursuit of free Kashmir was ended by a ceasefire¹¹ and the conclusion of Karachi Agreement,

1949¹², that defined the line of control, specifying the areas that India held as well as those under the control of Pakistan.

Analysing the shared hostility amongst the two nations, one can gather an understanding of the power dynamics that call for the troops to march and violate the agreements. With the continuous breach of agreements, with India justifying itself as protecting the region and Pakistan trying to avoid any hostility from its neighbourhood and thereby acquiring more territory, it becomes clear that the issue of Jammu and Kashmir has never been settled.

Political Conditions of Kashmir

Given the gravity of the matter, it is further imperative to understand the political influence that played a pivotal role in shaping Kashmir the way we have it today. Firstly, although being one single territory, the population has diverging views, with three major groups emerging therefrom. The first group can be easily described as one conforming to the status quo i.e. believing that Jammu and Kashmir is essentially a part of the Union of India. The proponents of this school of thought are some of the extremist Hindus with the backing of communal right wing parties¹³ and the Praja Parishad movement of 1952-53 that gained momentum amongst the Hindu community of Kashmir along with some Muslim Supporters of Pradesh Congress. The second school of thought believes in adherence to the UN Security Council Resolution of 21 April, 1948, which India accepted¹⁴ and believes in determining the fate of people by their own will. These thoughts flow from Plebiscite Front of Mirza Afzal Beg¹⁵ Lastly comes the Awami Action Party, demanding accession to the state of Pakistan. The existing heterogeneity, which is found even amongst the Muslims, which was largely ignored by Syed Ali Shah Geelani in his works¹⁶, highlight the underlying issue of holding a plebiscite, since the unfavourable result would not just be detrimental to one, but many other stakeholders. While it has been argued that Pakistan maintains its stance on determination of the fate of Jammu and Kashmir by the will of the people, it also does support accession to the state of Pakistan¹⁷. Even the demographics of the existing politics reeks of an amalgamation of communalism, secessionism and regionalism¹⁸, which is essentially why no national party could use Kashmir as a base for their electoral campaign until the elections of 2002¹⁹. The underlying reason for the slow entry of democratic politics can be largely attributed to the primacy of separatist politics of All Party Hurriyat Conference and its fragments, JKLF, Peoples League, Jamait-e-Ahleehadis and the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP)²⁰ and factors influencing the voter turnout owing to the 'gun culture'. Growing militancy in the state, leading to sheer violation of Human Rights in the state have also been cited as one of the reason for the political backwardness²¹. The prominence of political leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who dissed communal arguments vis-à-vis the partition, rebuking Pakistan for invasion of sorts, and took a secular stance prior to the partition, grew with communal undertones. With the swearing in of Sheikh Abdullah as a minister, after the Indira-Abdullah Accord of 1975, Sheikh Abdullah finally conceded to the status of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of the Union, while Indira Gandhi accepted the special status given to Kashmir by virtue of Article 370.

Meanwhile the social conditions in Kashmir became conducive owing to the diverging opinions and a feeling of instability that loomed over, concerning the different political elements who resorted to voicing and endorsing their idea of nationalism. When those in favour of plebiscite understood that it was no longer happening, they took recourse of indigenous means²² and this ushered into an uprising, causing chaos and casualties of all sorts, that was suppressed by the Indian Military,²³ beginning from massacres, tortures, gang rapes, death in torture cells and so forth for the sake of integrity of the union. India casts blame on Pakistan for supplying the youth with means to fulfil their radical aspirations, threatening the national peace and security. And so to suppress such elements, wide powers were given to the Army, Paramilitary and the Police by way of Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990. Such is the level of impunity²⁴ that the same came to be documented in a study titled "Alleged Perpetrators: Stories Impunity in J&K" by International People's Tribunal for Human Rights and Justice

in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons²⁵ documenting the chronic absence of rule of law and civil liberties through 214 documented cases.

Research Objectives

1. To understand whether the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019, that has abrogated Article 35A and 370, is democratic or not.
2. To understand the position of Jammu and Kashmir in the Union of India and the position of Article 370.

Research Questions

1. Whether Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019, for abrogating Article 35A and 370 of the Constitution of India is Constitutional or not.
2. Whether Plebiscite was possible in the State (Now Union Territory) of Jammu & Kashmir.
3. Whether Pakistan has any stakes in the matter that India claims to be purely internal.

Methodology

The authors have employed a doctrinal research methodology where they have used qualitative data to assess and analyse the historical and political growth of Article 370 and the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Deducing from the given set of data, the authors proceed to address the research questions and analyse the same with the help of a set solution based approach, derived from an existing set of facts. This will conclude in drawing an analogy in order to arrive at a suitable opinion.

Stature of Constitution (Application to State of Jammu and Kashmir) Order 1954

Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru conceded to the demand for regional autonomy by way of the Delhi Agreement of 1952.²⁶ Sheikh Abdullah had voiced his demands for regional autonomy, given his initial Kashmiri Nationalist stance, whilst the Jana Sangha opposing the same. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee offered withdrawal of agitation on the grounds that the principle of regional autonomy be applied as a whole to the entire territory, including the province of Ladakh and Kashmir Valley. However, later Sheikh Abdullah clarified, upholding separate regional autonomy to protect the interests of other cultural units.

In 1968, The Jammu and Kashmir State People's Convention was convened that adopted a five tier Internal Constitution, that suggested maximum regional autonomy, subject to the unity of the state²⁷. The same was later accepted by All Party Jammu Committee in the year 1978-79, since the fundamental aspirations of non-interference of Delhi and secondly, upholding the spirit and interests of Kashmir were complied with.

By virtue of Article 370(1)(d), Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954,²⁸ was birthed, that superseded Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir), Order 1950, certain provisions were added namely:

- (i) the Proviso clause to Article 3²⁹ specifying that “no bill for increasing or diminishing the area of State of Jammu and Kashmir or altering the name or boundary of the state shall be introduced in the Parliament without the consent of the State Legislature”;

- (ii) Proviso clause to Article 7³⁰ stating that “*nothing in this Article shall apply to a permanent resident of the State of Jammu and Kashmir*”;
- (iii) under Part III, certain exceptions and provisions were carved out;
- (iv) Clause (c) to Article 35³¹ was added stating that “*no law with respect to Preventive Detention made by the Legislature of the State of Jammu and Kashmir shall be invalid on the grounds on inconsistency with the provisions of Part III, but any such law, shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, cease to have effect on the expiration of five years from the commencement of the said order, except as respects things done or omitted to be done before the expiration thereof*”;
- (v) Article 35A was incorporated in the Indian Constitution too grant autonomy to the State in matters pertaining to permanent residents, and the special rights or restrictions, or employment under the State Government or Acquisition of any Immovable Property in the State or settlement therein.

The autonomy provided for, was, however, merely on paper, as by virtue of Article 370, 45 Presidential Orders were passed to extend application of the provisions of Constitution to the State³². On a careful perusal, one finds that nearly all Union List subjects are applicable, a number of concurrent matters as well as other Schedules. A total of 260 out of 395 Articles have been extended and made applicable to the state.

When Article 306 (Draft Article of 370) was debated upon in the Constituent Assembly³³, it was to be a temporary provision³⁴. Why it assumed a temporary character was due to the fact that until then the Constituent Assembly of the State of Jammu and Kashmir hadn't been convened.

However, after the Constituent Assembly of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was convened, neither did it incline in favour of keeping it, nor did it demand its removal. Hence, the present day scenario. As per Article 370, the following provisions have been incorporated – (1) Although under Article 238 (which now stands repealed), the State of Jammu and Kashmir was a part of the Indian Union, the provisions as applicable to the other states are not applicable to it³⁵. (2) the power of Parliament to make laws for the said state are limited to matters in the Union List and the Concurrent List, which in consultation with the Government of the State, the President declares to be corresponding to those specified in the Instrument of Accession, or such other matters in the said list with the concurrence of Government of the State, the President may specify³⁶. (3) Article 1 as well as Article 370 apply in relation to the said state. (4) Further, such provisions of the constitution shall apply in relation to that State subject with any such exceptions or modifications that the President by order may specify. Herein, the following proviso clauses follow: (i) No such order that corresponds to matters specified in the Instrument of Accession shall be issued except in consultation with the Government of the State; Secondly, no such order, the matter of which is not specified in the two given lists, shall be issued except with the Concurrence of that Government. Furthermore, the Article provides two important points vis-à-vis the decision of the Constituent Assembly of the State. It stipulates that (1) for the purposes that such powers as accorded to the State Government pertaining to Presidential Orders shall cease once the Constituent Assembly of the State is convened.(2) Beginning with a non-obstante clause, it provides that the President, may, by public order, declare that the above Article shall become inoperative or operative with such exceptions and modifications provided that the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly shall be necessary.

In the landmark case of *Prem Nath Kaul v. State of J&K*,³⁷ the court has emphasised on the importance of adding the clause demanding the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the state depicting the importance attached by constitutional framers to allow the Constituent Assembly have a greater say in matters covered under Article 370. 10 years later, in deciding *Sampat Prakash v. State of J&K*,³⁸ the court didn't even consider the judgement previously rendered in *Prem Nath Kaul* case and went on to declare that the provisions of Article 370 do not cease to exist by the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly of the State inasmuch as the purpose of incorporating the Article was to empower the President to exercise his discretion therein insofar as the application of the provisions of the Constitution of India was concerned. That having been noted, Article 370, henceforth, didn't cease to be operative. Thus, President orders passed thereunder could not be challenged in the courts of law.

In one of the initial cases of *Puranlal Lakhanpal v. President of India*³⁹ the court delved into the question of powers of the President to extend the application of certain provisions of the Constitution with such exceptions or modifications as the President may by order specify. Here, the court in defining the word ‘modification’ gave it the widest meaning possible, extending the same to amendment, however cautioning that the same does not imply any ‘radical transformation.

Current Developments vis-à-vis the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir), 2019

Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir), 2019, superseding its predecessor, Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) 1954, abrogated Article 370, taking away the special privileges retained by the State of Jammu and Kashmir by virtue of Article 35A of the Constitution. Consequent to the said order, The Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Bill, 2019 was passed in the Parliament with a view of bifurcating the territory of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir being one, Ladakh being another.

The following clauses were added to Article 367, namely: [1] “For the purposes of this Constitution as it applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, references to the Constitution or its provisions thereof shall be construed as references to the Constitution or its provisions thereof as applied in relation to that state”, [2] Vis-à-vis the “references made to the person for the time being recognised by the President on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly of the State as the Sadar-i-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers of the State shall be construed as references to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir”. [3] “References made to the Government of the State shall be construed as references made to the Governor of the State.” [4] The construction of the Proviso clause under Article 370(3), the expression Constituent Assembly of the State shall be read as Legislative Assembly of the State.

The said order would apply all provisions of the Constitution to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, subject to exceptions and modifications⁴⁰. Autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir has been taken away by virtue of this order.

The long been pending move, was the agenda of the Hindu Nationalists⁴¹ and a part of BJP’s manifesto⁴¹ for the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections⁴². Jammu and Kashmir was receiving 10 percent of the total Central Funds, despite the obvious that it has a population of just 1 per cent; it had been doing well as far as the economic indicators were concerned, resulting in social growth. The underlying reason cited was to allow corporations to invest in the State; eliminate positive discrimination in the matters of public colleges and jobs; and restore women with rights, who were deprived of their property due to marriage with a non-Kashmiris. Subsequently there was an imposition of the President’s Rule in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, by way of a proclamation issued on December 18, 2018, thereby imposing Centre’s rule under Article 356 of the Constitution⁴³.

Two schools of thought since have emerged – whereas one side lauds the move as Constitutional, the critics opine that this marks the demise of the Constitution, pointing to the unconstitutionality. The proponents of the first school of thought believe that since the provision was a temporary one, it does not become part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Secondly, to hold that the interpretation of the words in Article 370 by virtue of Article 367 i.e. Legislative Assembly of the State to mean the Governor of the State, and the Constituent Assembly as the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir is unconstitutional would be wholly wrong, since the constituent assembly of the State was dissolved in the year 1956 and the above is simply a method of interpretation. Whether the same amounts to overriding is something that must be left to the better sense of judgement of the court. Soli Sorabjee, Former Attorney General of India welcomes the move⁴⁴ however, he firmly believes that putting the leaders of the State – Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti – under house arrest is unconstitutional and which amounts to arbitrary use of preventive detention laws.

The dissenters attack the very fundamental interpretation by virtue of which ‘constituent assembly’ has been interpreted as ‘legislative assembly of the state.’ It has been opined that the power to interpret the provisions in such a manner solely rests with the Parliament and the same can only be brought about with the aid of the provisions of Article 368 wherein a bill proposing a constitutional amendment is tabled in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and passed by 2/3rd majority.⁴⁵ Another argument that has been put is that the Governor of the State, who isn’t a representative of the people cannot act as a surrogate for an elected body (Legislative Assembly of the State).⁴⁶ In the view of Gazala Peer and Javedur Rahman, Article 370 cannot be abrogated owing to the fact that the same requires the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State, which stands dissolved as on 1956.⁴⁷ A.G. Noorani, too, in this context has remarked “The whole bill is not only unconstitutional, it’s a fraud.”⁴⁸

Arguments also concern the consent of the real stakeholders – the Kashmiris. Questions as to why plebiscite⁴⁹ was not adopted have been raised. This is because the United Nations Security Council’s Resolutions⁵⁰ had called the Governments of India and Pakistan to bring about a cessation to the then ongoing fight and create proper conditions for a free and impartial plebiscite, allowing people to decide if they wish to accede to India or Pakistan.⁵¹

Fuelled by strategic interests, the objections raised by Pakistan⁵² that the move via Presidential Order is clearly in breach of the UN Security Council Resolutions,⁵³ also point out the threat of nuclear capabilities in the neighbourhood, with China further siding Pakistan on its stance.

Analysis

In the light of the above discussed content it is imperative to analyse 3 fundamental questions:

1. As alleged by the proponents of second school of thought, labelling the move as unconstitutional, owing to the incorrect interpretation, let us consider a hypothetical situation. If the Constituent Assembly were to be convened, would that have helped make the move possible?
2. Considering the factum that plebiscite or referendum was always on the table, as was seen under the UN Security Council Resolutions, would conducting one have actually yielded a favourable outcome?
3. Does Pakistan have any stakes in the matter or is the matter purely an internal one?

One needs to understand that the fact that the whole process was a rather carefully chalked out one – the initial Presidential Order in December, the subsequent house arrest of the leaders who may have opposed the move, the communication blackout in state and the massive deployment of troops all throughout the state in the anticipation of threat. Further, as one sees, there was clearly no representation of the real stakeholders, i.e. Kashmiris, it becomes glaring that the convening of Constituent Assembly would’ve never enabled the same move. One could label the move as another way of the Centre to usurp the basic feature of federalism and bring the autonomous state under its control, much like many other hasty initiatives taken in order to bring everything under the umbrella of its control. Nevertheless, given the factum that Kashmiris are especially in a tumultuous state, causing immense agony to those whose voices have never been heard, having a constituent Assembly by way of proportionate representation would have never helped the Hindu right wing fulfil its long pending objective.

Considering the heterogeneity of the population that currently exists in Kashmir, that has been brilliantly pointed out by Sumantra Bose in one of her works,⁵⁴ the same issue of conducting a plebiscite or referendum has been compared with the case of Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as Quebec.⁵⁵ In Kashmir, primarily three kinds of population exist – pro-independence, pro-India and pro-Pakistan.⁵⁶ While it has been argued that differences in most cases are reconcilable, unless they are of one’s identity with a particular nationality, which essentially leads to the overpowering and imposition’s of one’s ideology over another.⁵⁷ Taking the instance of Bosnia-Herzegovina wherein in 1992 independence referendum, 63 per cent of eligible electorate turnout was Muslim Bosnians and Croats, 98 per cent of which supported independence for Bosnia. But this referendum, since

was largely ignored by the Bosnian Serb community constituting 35 per cent of the population, who disagreed with the rationale of the outcome of the referendum, ultimately culminating into a three cornered civil war. In the case of Quebec however, the referendum of 1996, there was a defeat by a margin, with 50.6 per cent voting *Non* to independence, while 49.4 per cent voting *Oui*. Here the pro-independence majority Francophone was against the anti-independence minority of Francophones themselves. This however, did not lead to a civil war. If one looks at the state of Irish affairs, Northern Ireland comprises of Pro-Unification population (Catholics) that are in growing majority and the pro-British population (Unionist Protestant). As per the Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland shall remain a part of the United Kingdom and were to be made a part of unified Ireland till a simple majority of Northern Ireland ratify a change through a popular referendum. The architects of the Good Friday Agreement that such a situation shall not arise in the next 20 years but the time, when comes, will pose great deal of risks.

To understand why the Good Friday Agreement in particular does not yield a viable solution for Kashmir problem, it is imperative to study the three strands of the Good Friday Agreement. The First Strand proposes for a democratic institution, having members by way of proportional representation so as to cater to the interests of both the groups i.e. Catholics and the Protestants. The biggest reason why the same fails in the case of Kashmir is because of heterogeneity amongst religious groups, besides the obvious factum that a part of it was held by Pakistan. Even if one devises an amiable approach of institutionalising dialogue between the factions, the same is largely impossible due to the steaming differences between Karachi and New Delhi. Even the proposed idea of reconstitution of the state, merging all Muslims in Kashmir and Hindus In the region of Jammu fails on grounds of heterogeneity that persists amongst religious groups as well. Secondly, Strand Two speaks of North South Ministerial Council for the reconciliation of the Northern region i.e. Ulster and Southern Region i.e. Republic of Ireland for a forum of consultation and cooperation between the two conflicting regions. Ensuring a say of both Pakistan and India would be no less than setting the issue to fire since neither sides would agree to a common dialogue. Failed peaceful bilateral talks, for over 72 years stand a testimony to the same. Strand Three of the Good Friday Agreement talks about the Constitution of British-Irish Council and British Irish Intergovernmental Conference, recognising interests of both Ireland and Britain in Northern Ireland, and providing for a system to address security matters so as to increase the efficiency of administration In northern Ireland, Implementing the same in the Kashmir situation by way of India Pakistan Kashmir Council will again prove to be huge failure and would achieve everything contrary to harmony. Even if Pakistan agrees to participate in the peace making process, given its own interests, India would ever agree upon the same as it has reiterated that Kashmir is a part of it, given the developments that took place in the course of 72 years.

Pakistan claims its stake in the territory of Kashmir for the following reasons – (i) The presence of small number of pro-Pakistanis comprising of a small chunk of Muslim Population in Kashmir has blinded Pakistan to an unreasonable extent that it constantly chants the need to conduct a plebiscite. (ii) The Geographical factors, given the flow of major rivers, Chenab, Jhelum and Indus from India, the same provides for the economic foundation in the fertile valley⁵⁸ and Pakistan being in the downstream renders it a dicey proportion for it to rely on India's water supply. The breach of Indus Water Treaty by India has posed a threat to Pakistan and for the sake of safeguarding its interests, Pakistan believes in claiming its stake. Secondly, the fact that Northern Areas provide Pakistan with a crucial direct access with China i.e. the land route that connects Gilgit with Sikiang⁵⁹ as well as Karakoram Highway, helping in transportation of equipment from China to Pakistan.⁶⁰ China in the present case is backing Pakistan since it too has geopolitical stakes in the Ladakh region. And thus, it upholds the rights of the people for self-determination, backing Pakistan currently amidst the growing tensions.

Conclusion

Upon a careful perusal of facts, the understanding has been that the issue of Article 370 which aimed to act as a temporary provision until the decision of Constituent Assembly of Kashmir remained in the texts of Constitution of

India, with State Autonomy and Encroachment by Centre by way of Presidential Orders often conflicting with each other. It may however be too early to comment whether this shall ultimately reduce the autonomy, or give greater freedom to the new Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. As far as the question of constitutionality of the Presidential Order looms, the fact that the interpretation of 'constituent assembly' was made to that of 'legislative assembly of State' due to the compelling factors that recognised the urgency of the matter, and the fact that convening a constituent assembly would have created a hurdle, if nothing more goes to answer that the same was constitutional. However, siding with the views of Former Attorney General of India, Soli Sorabjee, the authors are of the opinion that the Interpretation is by and large fair, but the hasty step, calling for house arrest of the leaders of the state remains contentious and is essentially unconstitutional. Secondly, as far as the stakes of Pakistan goes, the fact that India could not conduct a plebiscite due to volatile state of affairs of Kashmir and subsequently the Indira-Abdullah Accord of 1975 that marked that Kashmir is an integral part of India goes to reflect that Pakistan does not clearly have any stakes other than that of geopolitical and strategic interests, so as to keep its nuclear armed nations on amicable terms. Lastly, to comment on whether there could have been an alternative to the said outcome or not, the authors holds the view that although creating a nebulous picture of what the future beholds, the long pending fate of the people of the State has finally come to be decided.

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Article Name : **The Responsible Personnel of Coal Mines: Training and Recruitment of Mine Engineers in the Collieries of Eastern India, 1900s-1940s**

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ABSTRACT

The lack of facilities for technical training in mine engineering in late colonial India remained a major constraint. Even when engineering colleges were set up employers tended to give a preference to qualified engineers from Britain. The Indian pass outs trained in the Indian institutions found it difficult to land a job even at the collieries controlled by the Indian Mining Federation, which was an Indian coal lobby. But there were problems in sourcing skilled personnel from Britain. I question the qualifications and capabilities of the personnel responsible for ensuring safety in mines and I try to find out whether the colonial government's fetish for recruiting mining engineers from the UK paid off as far as the existing condition of mine safety in India was concerned. Mine managements often had to settle for less qualified engineers than they were looking for due to the lack of deserving candidates. For example, they had often to settle for mechanical engineers while the actual demand was for a candidate specialised in electrical engineering. Thus, I will show how compromises in recruiting personnel responsible for mine safety were made on a number of occasions, often at the expense of mine safety itself.

KEYWORDS: Mine Engineer, Training in Mine Engineering, Coal Mines, Mine Safety, Mine Education

Mine safety is highly contingent on the abilities of the personnel who are supposed to be well-versed in the technicalities of coal mining: the engineers, managers, and other mining personnel who play a crucial role in scrutinising and making decisions about the safety and prevention of accidents in mines. In colonial India, the lack of facilities for the technical training of mining managers was a major constraint on the industry. Even when engineering colleges were set up in India, employers tended to prefer qualified engineers from Britain. But there were also problems with sourcing skilled personnel from Britain: a majority of the applicants for jobs in India did not have the requisite qualifications, leading to compromises in the quality of the skilled personnel they employed. Despite constant complaints about the scarcity of qualified engineers from abroad, training engineers in India or hiring Indian engineers was not encouraged.

Scholars of Indian labour history have remained relatively silent on the theme of the recruitment and training of mine engineers in India. Although D.K. Nite, for example, mentioned the 'practical skills' of mines' safety¹ and managerial staff,² the role of mining engineers is missing in his work. The present

research intends to intervene in this unexplored area. I question the qualifications and capabilities of the personnel who were responsible for ensuring safety in Indian mines during the colonial period, and try to determine whether the colonial government's fetish of recruiting mining engineers from the UK provided adequate safety for the miners.

The Indian mining industry witnessed a regular inflow of mining engineers, managers, and consultants from abroad, particularly from the United Kingdom. Appointed by reputed managing agency houses like Macneill and Co., these managers and engineers played a significant role in many aspects of coal mining, especially mine safety.³ As noted by E.H. Roberton, a Professor of Mining Engineering at Civil Engineering College, Shibpur (later renamed the Bengal Engineering College),

There is probably no profession that requires such a varied and all-round education in the allied sciences, as well as a very special knowledge of the subject itself, as mining; and for a mining engineer to reach the top of the tree, he must not only have a thorough practical and theoretical knowledge of mining, geology, and mineralogy, but should also possess a great deal more than a smattering of such sciences as mathematics, physics, chemistry, mechanical, civil, and electrical engineering, and in many cases, metallurgy.⁴

Given the job's requirement of such a vast knowledge foundation, in the following section I explore the training and recruitment of mining engineers, as well as the importance given to those who were recruited from abroad.

The importation of managers and engineers from abroad was predicted in 1895 by a committee appointed by the Government of India to study the regulation of Indian mines. The Committee claimed that most of the mine managers and engineers holding Indian certificates would be disqualified because of the framing of the general rules, and therefore 'the importance of foreign element into service will become a

necessity'.⁵ The payment of high salaries to personnel from abroad was also highlighted in this report, and the government was urged to make provisions for 'training men in the mining service'.⁶ Inspector of Indian Mines James Grundy, however, had complete trust in the ability of 'Europeans' to handle any crisis situations that arise in mines. While commenting on accidents caused by the ignition of firedamp, for example, he expressed the opinion that '[a]t present only Europeans and possibly a few natives with experience, can safely deal with fire damp and at present they are the only persons who should be allowed to deal with it.'⁷

Indian Aspirants and the Training Available to them:

The preference for hiring engineers from abroad led mine managements to neglect the possibility of providing training in mine engineering in India or for aspiring Indian candidates. In a report on industrial education from 1902, for example, there is a list of technical schools in Bengal but most covered carpentry and blacksmithing. Mining found no place in the curriculum of the technical school in Burdwan.⁸ In his comments on the state of technical education in Bengal, J. S. Slater, the Principal of the Shibpur Engineering College, did not mention the availability of any technical education related to mines or the coal industry.⁹ Furthermore, what technical instruction was available was extremely limited in its scope. The Director of Public Instruction of Bengal claimed that the scheme only managed to reach the fringes of the industrial masses.¹⁰ In 1908, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce observed that the mining industry was a lucrative opportunity for young students.¹¹ H. H. Mcleod, the Superintendent of the Bengal Coal Company, was of the same opinion, but did not mention any details about the recruitment of students. His prediction was that, with the development of the system of mechanical shifting in mines, mechanical engineers would soon be required.¹² The author's suggestion to the government was to approve more expenditure for central institutions like the Shibpur Engineering College, which could provide training for these future jobs.¹³

The Civil Engineering College at Shibpur, Howrah, was the first engineering college in India to create a course for a diploma in mining engineering. A mining department was added to the Engineering College in November 1905.¹⁴ From 1906 onwards, students were admitted in two categories with certain eligibility criteria attached:

(1) Special students.—Persons resident in Bengal, who have been employed upon mines, admitted under the conditions:

(a) that they have completed at least two years' practical work upon a mine; and

(b) that they have passed (i) the B. Final Examination; (ii) the Matriculation or Entrance Examination of any Indian University; or (iii) any test equivalent to the Middle School Examination of the Code for European schools.

(2) Regular students (diploma)—Qualified for admission by passing the Sub-Overseer Examination of the C.E. College, or an equivalent test of some other college. Age limit at the time of admission, should be between 17 and 19.¹⁵

Classes were designed to offer theoretical training in the general principles of mining, to prepare students for positions of responsibility in coal or metal mines and, in the case of students attending instructional lectures in coalmining, to qualify them to appear for the examinations for mine managers, as required by the *Indian Mines Act of 1901*. The full course for diploma students at the College extended over four years, of which the first two focused on passing the 'Sub-Overseer' Examination. Candidates for the BE (diploma) in Mining took the special course during their last two years, as prescribed in the Calcutta University calendar. A diploma in the principles of mining was granted to successful students and recognised by the Government of India; it also remitted a portion of the required time to be spent in practical work by candidates for mine managers' certificates. A degree (Bachelor of Engineering in Mining) course under the University of Calcutta was also on the anvil.¹⁶ Table 1 gives an idea of the number of graduates each year from the program's inception to 1929.

The next major stride in mining education in India was taken in 1926, with the opening of the Indian School of Mines at Dhanbad based on the Royal School of Mines in London. The formation of the Indian School of Mines was long delayed; in the early 1900s, the Indian National Congress had demanded the establishment of a mining engineering college.¹⁷ The McPherson Committee of 1913-14 also recommended the establishment of a mining college in Dhanbad, but the idea was put aside until 1918-19, when the Mining Education Advisory Board, the Industrial Commission, and the Calcutta University Commission declared their support for the McPherson Committee recommendation. Each of these institutions agreed that the need to import foreign technicians was acute and expensive, and hence establishing an institution to train engineers in India made sense. However, no concrete action was taken.¹⁸ In 1921, the Government of India intended to set up the Indian School of Mines, but it was again delayed. In the meantime, Banaras Hindu University started a mining department in 1923.¹⁹ On 28 September 1922, Agriculture and Industries Department of the Government of Bengal in Darjeeling proposed the establishment of the Indian School of Mines.²⁰ A tentative syllabus was also proposed (see Table 2).

The Indian School of Mines was finally inaugurated on 9 December 1926.²¹ In 1938, the courses offered by the Indian School of Mines were as follows: a three-year course in Coal Mining; a three-year course in Metalliferous Mining; a four-year combined course in Mining Engineering; and a four-year course in Geology.²² ‘At the end of each 3 years’ course, a certificate is awarded, and that at the end of each 4 years’ course a Diploma of Associateship is awarded.’²³ ‘The school is well-equipped and staffed for the teaching of Mining Engineering and Geology. Employment in Metal Mining, Coal Mining, Mine Surveying, and Geology can reasonably be expected.’²⁴ Recruiting these students for mining jobs was given priority, but were their degrees able to compete with those of their western compatriots? Did they play any significant role in making technical decisions or ensuring safety in mines?

The Status of The Indian Degree and Job Opportunities for the Indian Students:

Although a mining department was added to Shibpur Engineering College in November 1905, the College's main focus was on other types of engineering. Furthermore, mining graduates could not find employment in the European-dominated collieries.²⁵ Professor E. H. Robertson, the first professor of mining in India, claimed that he started his class at Shibpur in 1906 with 13 students, but the number quickly reduced to 5 or 6.²⁶ In a letter dated 19 September 1921,²⁷ the Director of Industries, Bihar and Orissa informed the Indian Mining Association about the theoretical instruction that was available for mechanical and electrical engineering apprentices at the Kumardubi Engineering Company's works in the Dhanbad region. The Director also proposed the establishment of a similar program in the Jharia coalfield because the instruction at Kumardubi was 'limited to Anglo-Indians'.²⁸ The Indian Mining Association, however, thought that this scheme was premature.²⁹ The Association claimed that the collieries did not employ apprentices, except mining students who had no desire to become engineers and were happy to remain managers.³⁰

On 8 May 1929, the Principal of the Indian School of Mines wrote a letter to the Indian Mining Association informing them that the School's first batch of students would receive certificates that year and urging the mining industry to give jobs to them.³¹ The Association, however, replied that they would take only a limited number of qualified students.³² By 1930, only two students from this first batch had found employment in the coal industry. The Indian Mining Association categorically stated that the coal industry had only a limited capacity to absorb students from the Indian School of Mining.³³ This did not, however, prevent the Association from boasting that this mining education had been fruitful in a letter to the Mining Education Advisory Board dated 8 February 1930.³⁴ In 1931, the Indian Mining Federation placed four graduates of the Indian School of Mining as salaried apprentices among their member collieries, but could not accommodate more.³⁵ In a letter dated 6 November 1931, the Principal of the School urged the Indian Mining Federation to employ the newly trained students.³⁶ However, the Federation replied that they could not take any more students due to the economic depression.³⁷

Examples of the non-recognition or refusal of certificates issued in India were plenty. Managers' certificates granted under the Indian Coal Mines Regulations were not recognised by the British Mining

Examination Boards, even though under Regulation 43(1), 'persons holding managers' certifications granted under the British Coal Mines Act or any other Act for the of mines in any other part of His Majesty's dominions can be granted without exam a certificate of similar class under the regulations.'³⁸ The Chief Inspector of Mines sent a letter on 21 February 1930 explaining one exception. According to Section 10(2),

The Secretary of State may deliver such a certificate without exam to the applicant who is the holder of a certificate granted in any British possession or foreign country, if the Board report that the standard of training and exam required for the grant of such a certificate is equivalent to that required for the grant of a corresponding certificate under this Act.³⁹

The standard of training and examination required for the Indian certificate was lower than that required in Great Britain. Hence, the Board of Examiners in Great Britain did not think it fit to grant British certificates in lieu of Indian certificates. On the other hand, however,

The British standard being higher than the Indian standard it is reasonable that Indian certificates should be granted in lieu of British certificates. Refusal to grant such certificates would cut off a supply of highly trained managers which the more important mine-owners consider to be essential for the proper working of their mines.⁴⁰

His remark was not really heeded. In a letter from S. K. Banerjee, the Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, to the Secretary of the Indian Mining Federation, Banerjee explains that

The Government of India understands that the British Board for Mining Examinations do not regard the standard of training and exam required for the grant of Managers' Certificates under the

Indian Coal Mines Regulations as being equivalent to that required for the grant of the corresponding British certificates.⁴¹

Earlier the Indian Mining Federation had sent a letter to the Department of Industries and Labour, dated January 30, 1930 opposing the lack of acceptance for Indian Managers' Certificates of Competency in Great Britain.⁴² In a letter dated March 29, 1930, the Government of India explained that the standard of managerial training in India was not considered equivalent to the British one.⁴³ The Federation protested in a letter dated 2 May 1930, pointing out that that a similar certificate from the UK was readily accepted in India but not vice versa.⁴⁴ The Federation even drew attention to the issue of unemployment among Indian managers, which they thought was mainly due to the influx of British-trained managers into India.⁴⁵ On 1 August 1930, the government replied that mining operations in India were much simpler than in the UK, hence the Indian certificate could not be accepted in the UK.⁴⁶ In a letter dated 22 August 1930, the Federation demanded that British certificate holders be required to pass a test under the Indian coalmines regulations to work in Indian mines.⁴⁷ The Government turned down this suggestion.⁴⁸ The Indian Mines Association, on the other hand, had a different take on the issue. In a letter to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce dated 22 May 1933, they asked for the protection of the rights of British colliery managers in India.⁴⁹ The Association opposed a clause (no. 43 of the Indian Coal Mines Regulations of 1926) that might cause a British manager's degree from the UK to be refused in India.⁵⁰ Thus, the Federation and Association were arguing opposite points of view: the former for recognition of the Indian degree, and the latter for the protection of the benefits that British degree-holders already had.

In a nutshell, the industry's dependence on foreign personnel continued while attempts to promote Indian candidates were conspicuously missing. Although some students were sent abroad on scholarships to receive advanced training, their recruitment into the Indian mines was not very promising. Most of the appointed engineers and managers hailed from the United Kingdom, a trend that continued while the Supply Department of the Government of India was planning to train Indian colliery staff in the use and maintenance of coal mining machinery and even proposing to send them to the Mines Mechanisation

Centre in Sheffield for training.⁵¹ The Association was fine with this proposal; they were opposed to the idea of opening a training centre in India due to the high costs of establishing an institution and the long distance between the proposed institute site and the collieries.⁵² The inadequate resources of the Indian institutions and lack of recruitment of Indian mining students combined to further the preference for managers and engineers with certificates from abroad. In the next section, I examine the qualifications of these foreign engineers and the manner in which they were recruited.

The Recruitment of Engineers in Indian Coal Mines: the Case of the Engineers from Abroad:

Combining information from advertisements for the recruitment of engineers and written discussions among responsible officials, I have discovered some new information about the background of these engineers. It was believed that engineers with extraordinary qualifications would prefer to work in their own country, so it was difficult to find engineers with remarkable track records who were willing to be posted in India—at least until the nationalisation of the British coal industry. This lack of skilled workers was widely discussed in official correspondence, such as a draft advertisement dated 30 May 1938 sent by Macneill and Co. of India to Duncan Macneill in London. This advertisement called for the appointment of a colliery manager for four years, with a starting salary around Rs. 550 per month, which could go up to Rs. 625.⁵³ The most important feature of this advertisement was that it called for engineers who were adept in both mechanical and electrical mining. One of the primary pre-conditions was that the applicant must have passed the examination of the Association of Mining Electrical Engineers. However, the hiring managers questioned whether any engineers with these qualifications would readily agree to pursue a career in India.

In a letter dated 23 June 1938, Edward Cork wrote to Duncan Macneill to confirm the relentless search for a young engineer ready to go to India.⁵⁴ This anxiety was further vindicated by an advertisement in *Iron and Coal Trades Review*, dated 1 June 1938: ‘Wanted a competent practical Engineer, aged about 30 years, capable of taking charge of the electrical and mechanical departments of a

large colliery in India, both surface and underground.’⁵⁵ The salary package, fixed at Rs. 650 per month with an annual increase of Rs. 50 per month, was lucrative enough to draw skilled hands from overseas. The perks of the job were equally rewarding: the payment of one month’s salary per annum as bonus for satisfactory work, as well as free furnished quarters and free passage to and from India. Nevertheless, even these offers were unable to attract engineers with the required set of skills and qualifications. One can get a fair idea of the applicants from some descriptions in a letter sent from Cork to Duncan Macneill dated 27 September 1938.⁵⁶ One applicant, for example, had spent three years as a coal cutting machine man—implying that he had no experience with electrical mining. More importantly, he was working as a fitter at a textile works when he decided to apply for the post of a manager at an Indian coalmine. A majority of the applicants ended up not having the requisite qualifications.

This lack of deserving candidates persisted and Cork had to confess, ‘There is definitely a shortage of trained colliery engineers’ (in a letter to Duncan Macneill dated 20 October 1938). As a solution, he proposed:

[I]n view of a continuance of such conditions, I am inclined to think it would be advisable to get hold of one or 2 young fellows 20 to 23 years of age, who have had some practical training on a colliery or attended a technical college in England and send them out as ‘Assistant Engineers’ with the idea, that at the end of stay the third year of their agreement and after obtaining the Government ‘Supervisor's Certificate’ they be promoted to a Colliery Engineer's post.⁵⁷

This was a decisive statement, especially since the responsibility of ensuring safe working conditions in the mines would rest upon these new recruits.

This lack of competent candidates was not a temporary problem: well into the mid-1940s, it was still a concern for the management. In September 1945, Cork wrote a letter to Duncan Macneill about the appointment of a British engineer to the post of Chief Engineer at a colliery in Jharia.⁵⁸ At the time, the British coal industry was passing through a transitional phase marked by incessant demands for

nationalisation from different quarters. Cork continued to lament the dearth of engineers with experience in both mechanical and electrical mining. One candidate, ‘Mr. Nurdin is 34 years of age, married, and has been employed on the engineering side of collieries up till 1940. His references in mining are up to 1935, and the last position he held was as a Foreman Fitter [...] He is not a member of the Mining Electrical Engineers Association nor has he any certificate as an expert electrician.’⁵⁹ Cork advocated advertising again to get ‘hold of a good man, who may not be inclined to continue his services in this country under the proposed nationalised coal industry.’⁶⁰ A later correspondence from 15 November 1945 describes Nurdin’s recruitment:⁶¹ he was considered for the post of Colliery Engineer rather than Chief Engineer, which he accepted gladly. The matter, however, did not end there. Much to the frustration of Duncan and Macneill, however, the Ministry of Fuel and Power refused to release Nurdin, who was still in its employ.⁶² On 30 October 1945, a similar case arose: a certain Mr. Robins, supposedly an eligible candidate for the prescribed post, had not been released by the War Office. Apparently, he was a soldier with two more years to serve and hence was not released.⁶³

The failure of these recruitment procedures indicates a number of related issues. First, it remained difficult to find qualified British engineers who were interested in working in an Indian coalmine. Thus, recruiters were forced to make compromises in the quality of the chosen candidate due to a lack of suitable workers. Second, the appointment or proposed appointment of available candidates to less important posts than those advertised became almost the order of the day. For example, after prolonged deliberation over recruitment for a chief engineer post, Duncan and Macneill informed Cork:

[T]he position in respect of the Chief Engineer’s post is that the present incumbent is expected to serve for another ten or twelve years [...] Any young engineer we may engage now will therefore have to serve as Colliery or Group engineer for about 15 years before he could secure the Chief Engineer’s appointment.⁶⁴

Cork gave his consent to this suggestion and asked that the advertisement be redrafted accordingly. Once again, the chasm between requirements and availability, and the consequent compromise in quality, was evident. Third, even the 'eligible' candidates who were found after much searching were often engaged elsewhere and hence unable to take up the job.

Cork's remarks pertaining to the nationalisation of the UK's mining industry and the consequent increased availability of qualified engineers for mine engineering jobs in India raise a number of questions, which need to be addressed briefly. He sounded quite hopeful that the supply of eligible engineers eager to migrate to India would increase due to the hardships caused by the prospect of nationalisation. However, the connection between nationalisation and limitations on mining engineers in Britain must be questioned, since it was the engineers themselves who were demanding nationalisation.⁶⁵ They played a major role in the Reid Committee, which was instrumental in bringing an end to the private ownership of British coal mines. Some of the representatives of the committee also happened to be engineers.⁶⁶ Hence, Cork's argument that a greater supply of eligible engineers would be available following nationalisation in the United Kingdom does not seem to be convincing.

The desperate hunt for efficient engineers constantly beset the Indian mining industry in the early twentieth century. The result was that there were occasional compromises in the expected quality of new recruits. These compromises are crucial for understanding mine safety at the time, which was to a large extent dependent on foreign engineers and other professionals.

The Mine Engineers: as Responsible Personnel for Mine Safety:

In this section, I highlight the role that these professionals played in matters of mine safety, particularly in the upgrading of mining equipment. First, decisions about the purchase of new mining equipment, for either production or safety, were largely influenced by the engineers and managers from abroad. While the colonial government and the entrepreneurial class were at loggerheads regarding the introduction or purchase of mine machinery,⁶⁷ the recommendations of engineers or consultants based on their visits to important collieries in the United Kingdom or other countries were usually taken seriously

by the government and mining companies alike. A few letters can be cited as examples. In a letter dated 31 March 1937 to Duncan Macneill and Co., London, Cork referred to his visits to English collieries, where he had learned about the usage and upkeep of electric safety lamps so that he could make recommendations for their use in the Indian context.⁶⁸ Insufficient light was one of the major hazards in India's mining industry: very few mines used electricity, so the only light source was lamps with open flames. Miners used *kupis*⁶⁹ with kerosene or castor oil while working on coalfaces, which both gave insufficient light and emitted a foul odour. Cork visited some collieries in England, including Littleton, Grassmoor, Poorly Hall, and West Camock, to inspect the electric lamps installed by companies like Ceag, Wolf, Concordia, and Oldhams. He was entrusted with the responsibility of inspecting both lead and acid battery lamps and alkaline battery lamps. He wrote that he preferred the latter because it was cheaper in upkeep and renewals and supposed to last longer. Cork stated that he was 'inclined to think that the alkaline electric safety lamp is a much cheaper proposition for general colliery use than the oil safety lamp.'⁷⁰ Although the initial cost was high, in the long run

the actual maintenance cost and labour for cleaning and attention is certainly less than for oil lamps, when one considers the number of glasses broken per day, gauzes requiring replacement, washers and daily issues of oil at a normal Indian colliery. Under Indian conditions of 3 shifts working it would mean at least double the number of lamps or a set of spare batteries. Batteries are now made integral with the lamp casing... alkaline batteries require 8-9 hour charge after 9 hours of use.⁷¹

These colliery visits also doubled as inspection tours. When Cork became a mine consultant for Duncan and Macneill and mainly operated from England, the managements of Indian collieries invited him to inspect the methods used in their mines. These visits often led to tension between the officials and different sections of the mining industry. In one letter, W. D. Robb, an agent of the Equitable Coal Company in Jharia, Manbhum was informed that

Mr. Cork will visit and inspect collieries under your charge and report to us in due course. There is no question of these inspections being carried out in any spirit of destructive criticism. Their whole object is to secure co-operation of everyone connected with the companies towards getting the very best out of our mineral holdings.⁷²

Second, foreign engineers had specific responsibilities in the case of an accident, especially in terms of dealing with their aftermath. Instances of these engineers-turned-managers playing a crucial role in courts of enquiry about certain (usually major) accidents were plenty. They often furnished reports of accidents that highlighted the principal causes of mishaps. They had the managing agencies to answer to in cases of major accidents.

Third, correspondence among agents, managers, and other officials about accidents and other issues in the coal industry often led to major tiffs and controversies. These debates either became very vocal or were carefully hushed up. In both cases, these differences of opinion among officials pointed to larger issues facing the Indian coal industry. For example, Cork once became entangled in a debate between F. W. Manley, the superintendent of a colliery in Jharia, and the Chief Inspector of Mines in India. The debate concerned a technical aspect of mining, i.e. if every working place and every road or part of a road that was accessible within 600 feet of anywhere coal was being extracted from a mine should be watered down, or if it should be stone-dusted. This was supposed to be a precaution to keep flammable gas levels in the mines in check. In a letter to Cork, Manley accused the Chief Inspector of having a strong bias toward stone dusting. Manley's own suggestion was to water down wet mines and dust dry ones. Cork, on the other hand, argued that the 'continuous watering of roof, floor and sides, with safety zones created by the equivalent of shower baths, continuous over a predetermined length of gallery, would be better than relying on stone dust, which because of humidity and other causes may not rise in a cloud of emergency.'⁷³ In this example, a simple but crucial precaution for mine safety drew upon markedly divergent opinions and demonstrated the importance that each of these officials demanded in

such contexts. The technical competence of the officials was merely one part of their job profile; clashes of opinion between people in different positions and the collision of divergent interests could stand in the way of ensuring safe working conditions in mines.

Mine officials often engaged in bitter fights over the probable cause of accidents, especially those with major impacts like the Ranipur colliery explosion on 15 April 1940. Four miners were killed in this accident and it sparked a fierce debate about the types of explosives that should be used in coalmines. Methods of shot firing were also questioned by sections of the mine personnel.⁷⁴ While discussing the cause of this accident, a representative of Macneill & Co. complained to Cork about the Mines Department's inspection procedure. Cork held that faulty shot firing⁷⁵ was responsible for the explosion. W. Kirby (the Chief Inspector Mines in India), on the other hand, ascribed the explosion to the ignition of brattice cloth, a material generally used for air ventilation. Cork ruled this factor out and stuck with his theory of defective explosives—which the management of the colliery was not ready to accept.⁷⁶

Interestingly, in September the same representative of Macneill & Co. wrote to Cork to explain what he claimed was the real cause of the accident:

a fall on top of a trailing cable, which caught fire. The place in which the fire took place had been undercut, the machine shifted into an adjacent gallery where it was making a cut, but part of the trailing cable was still in the first gallery. Shots were fired there and coal fell on the trailing cable, and it went on fire. The fire should have been put out and there shouldn't have been any explosion.⁷⁷

However, he requested that Cork not pass this information on to Manley and Burch, who were in charge of the concerned colliery. He found no reason, he explained, for 'flogging the matter further'. Somehow, the debate among engineers, agents, and other officials about the cause of accidents actually led to compromises in mine safety and reduced the accident's impact to the level of a professional dispute.⁷⁸ From these discussions, it is also clear that hushing up the matter entirely was a viable option, and

independent inquiries were not encouraged. This example indicates how the real issues behind an accident could take a backseat to the competitiveness and complications that plagued the hierarchy of the coal industry at the time. Obviously, any real concern for safety is compromised when the actual cause of a mine accident is covered up. Thus, the role of the recruited personnel in accidents was also shrouded with doubt: professional rivalries between different mine officials often came to the fore, leading to unnecessary controversy and the sidetracking of any real concern for workplace safety.

Conclusion:

In this paper, I have raised questions about the training facilities and recruitment methods of the mining engineers, who were responsible for safety in the coalmines in late colonial India. While India did have a few institutes imparting education on mine engineering, job market for the Indian pass outs from the same institutes was not promising at all. Engineers from abroad were given preference in the posts of mine engineers. Recruitment of engineers from abroad, especially from the United Kingdom was not always a smooth process, and often involved a range of discrepancies and a host of compromises. Further, the real role of these personnel in dealing with accidents is shrouded in doubt. Professional rivalries between mine officials were often given precedence over the health of the miners by focusing on unnecessary controversies about the cause of accidents. As a result, actual concerns about safety in the workplace took a backseat.

Table 1: The Number of Mining Students Graduated from Shibpur Engineering College, 1909-1929

YEAR	NUMBER OF GRADUATES
1909	9
1910	6
1911	4
1912	5
1913	2
1914	2
1915	3
1916	2
1917	5

1918	7
1919	11
1920	10
1921	12
1922	11
1923	14
1924	7
1925	9
1926	14
1927	13
1928	3
1929	3

Source: Collated from B.E. College, *Centenary Souvenir*.

Table 2: Proposed Syllabus of the Indian School of Mines

First year course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mathematics- Arithmetic and Algebra. Mensuration and Use of Squared Paper Trigonometry 2. Elementary Science- physics and Chemistry
Second Year Course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Elementary Mechanics (ii) Mechanical Drawing (iii) Elementary Mining and Surveying
Third Year Course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mining and Geology 2. Mechanical and Electrical Engineering

Source: IMF, *Annual report* for the year ending 1925, pp.257-258.

¹Endnotes:

D. K. Nite, 'Reproduction Preferences and Wages: The Mineworker in Jharia Coalfields, 1895-1970', *Studies in History*, Vol. 30 (1), 2014, pp. 55-87, p. 108.

²*Ibid.*, p. 111.

³T. Boyns, T. and J. Wale, 'The Development of Management Information Systems in the British Coal Industry, c. 1880-1947', *Business History*, Vol. 38 (2), 1996, pp. 55-77, p. 76. Boyns and Wale fleshed out the link between management structure and decision making in British coal mines. Due to the dearth of such literature on Indian coalmines, this work is crucial for my research. Also see Burns, Newby, and Winterton, 'Restructuring of the British coal industry'. Engineers' role in system engineering or in the planning or designing of coal mining is explored in this work.

⁴E. H. Robertson, 'The Mining Department of Civil Engineering College, Sibpur', *Transactions of the Mining and Geological Institute of India*, Vol. 4, 1910, pp. 45-69, p. 45.

⁵Department of Revenue and Agriculture, *Papers Regarding Legislation for the Regulation and Sanitation of Mines in India*, Calcutta, 1895 and 1896, p. 3: of the note of dissent.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷J. Grundy, *Report of the Inspector of Mines of India* (hereafter *RIMI*), for the year ending 1895, Calcutta, 1896, p. 150.

⁸J. Clibborn, C. A. Radice, R. E. Enthoven, and F. Westcott, *Report of the Industrial Education, Part III: Proceedings of Conferences*, Calcutta, 1902, p. 1.

⁹J. S. Slater, 'Note on the State of Technical Education in Bengal' in Clibborn et al., p. 10.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹J. G. Cumming, *Review of the Industrial Prospects and Position in Bengal in 1908 with Special Reference to the Industrial Survey of 1890: Part II of Special Report*, Calcutta, 1908, *Review of the Industrial Prospects*, p. 35.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁴R. P. Sinha, 'The Indian School of Mines-its role and significance', *Indian Mining Journal*, Vol. 1 (3), 1953, pp. 4-7., 'Indian School of Mines', p. 4.

¹⁵Robertson, 'The Mining Department', p. 41.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰ Indian Mining Federation (hereafter IMF), *Annual Report for the year ending 1925*, Calcutta, 1926, p. 256. The Indian Mining Federation (IMF) was a coal lobby dominated by Indian coal entrepreneurs. But they had less collieries than their rival, the Indian Mining Association (IMA), which was dominated by Europeans.

²¹ Sinha, 'Indian School of Mines', p. 5.

²²Department of Industries, Government of Bengal, *Opportunities for an Industrial Career for Young Men of Bengal*, Sixth ed., Alipore, 1938, p. 26.

²³*Ibid.*, p.26-27.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁵ Sinha, 'Indian School of Mines', p. 4.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁷Indian Mining Association (hereafter *IMA*), *Annual Report of the Indian Mining Association for the year ending 1922*, Calcutta, 1923, p. 253.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 254.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 256.

³⁰ IMA, *Annual Report for the year ending 1921*, p. 257

³¹ IMA, *Annual Report for the year ending 1929*, p. 205.

³²*Ibid.*, p.207.

³³ IMA, *Annual report for the year ending 1930*, p. 27.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 171.

³⁵ IMF, *Annual report for the year ending 1931*, p. 34.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 136.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 137. The letter was dated 4 December 1931.

³⁸*Non-acceptance in the Great Britain of the Certificate of Competency as Mine Manager*, issued under the Indian coal mines regulations, 1926, Department of Industries and Labour, Geology & Minerals Branch, File no. M-1055, collection no. 78, 1930, Serial no. 392 and 396 (National Archives of India, New Delhi. Hereafter NAI).

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹ Department of Industries and Labour: Geology & Minerals Branch, File no. M-1055, collection no. 78, 1930, Letter dated 29 March 1930 (NAI, New Delhi).

⁴² IMF, *Annual report for the year ending 1930*, p. 69.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁹ IMA, *Annual report for the year ending 1933*, p. 253.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁵¹ IMA, *Annual report for the year ending 1944*, p. 40.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵³ *Cork Collection*, File No. MSS 194/12 (British Library, London): Correspondence relating to recruitment of colliery staff (BL). (*Cork Collection: Papers of Frederick Lawrence Cork*, File no. MSS 194/12, BL. Papers of Frederick Lawrence Cork (1885-1980), colliery manager 1908-37, mining consultant 1937-46, employed by Macneill & Company, Calcutta, including colliery quarterly reports 1937-45, Cork's inspection reports 1937-40, and colliery plans. 63 items 1907 – 1953.)

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, File no. MSS 194/21 (BL): Recruitment and training of colliery staff.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 September, 1945.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.* The letter was dated 30 October 1945.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ R. Millward, 'The 1940s Nationalizations in Britain: Means to an End or the means of production?', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 40 (2), 1997, pp. 209-234, p. 221. Millward refers to electrical engineers who were arguing in favour of nationalisation despite continuing to work for private companies.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁶⁷

⁶⁸ *Cork Collection*, File No. MSS 194/9 (1937): General; handover notes on collieries prior to retirement; colliery equipment; recruitment of staff; colliery quarterly reports and Cork's commission thereon, Nov 1936-June 1937 (British Library. London).

⁶⁹ *Kupis* were naked lights frequently used in underground mine areas, which often proved to be unsafe.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 31 March 1937.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Cork Collection*, File No. MSS 194/10: General; Colliery Quarterly Reports n Cork's Comments thereon; Colliery Inspection Reports by Cork (BL).

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⁷⁴ Government of India, *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India*, for the year ending 1940 (hereafter ARCIMI), Manager of Publications, Delhi, 1941, pp. 5-14.

⁷⁵ From <http://arlweb.msha.gov/century/rescue/rstart.asp>: A 'shot' was a 'charge of some kind of explosive, in regular mining placed in a hole drilled in the coal, the purpose being to break down the coal. A shot firer was a 'man whose special duty is to fire shots or blasts, especially in coal mines.' The shot-firing that Cork referred to was apparently misdirected, resulting in the accident.

⁷⁶*Cork Collection*, File no. MSS 194/15. The letter was dated 6 June 1940.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 19 September 1940.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, The letter was dated 19 September 1940.

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Section	:	Special Article
Author	:	JHUMA BANERJEE <i>Guest Faculty & Ph.D Scholar</i> <i>Department of History, Assam University</i> <i>jhuma2090@gmail.com</i>
Article Name	:	Colonial usurpation of Cachar: A phase of unexpected demographic upheavals (1832-1900)

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ABSTRACT

The north-eastern zone of India has always maintained a distinct identity of its own as far as the geographical and socio-economic aspects are concerned. This zone has carried with itself the tag of being called 'the most isolated' belt of India. That primarily creates an unseen barrier between the rest of India and 'North East'. The distinctiveness of the North East zone at certain point of time acted in a negative way and led to the phase of total segregation where this isolated belt has been considered as the most stagnant zone in terms of its socio economic progress. Due to geographical inaccessibility even the colonial intervention had made a very late beginning in the North-East. Genuinely it had started from 1826 after the signing of the treaty of yandaboo. History itself authenticates that the beginning of the colonial phase in North-East had not only inaugurated a new period in imperial domination but at the same time it had totally transformed the socio-economic, political as well as demographic set-up. Those transformations had been reflected in a positive as well as negative way thereby enhancing the historical significance of this overlooked zone of India.

Each and every state of the North-East silently witnessed the phase of colonial transformation. The state of Assam had not been an exceptional one and in the pre-colonial days it had been a conglomeration of tribal as well as monarchial kingdoms. The district of Cachar in Assam in the pre-colonial phase was an independent monarchial kingdom that was under the indigenous rule of the 'Kachari' kings. It was brought under colonial domination in 1832 and from since that time onwards Cachar underwent severe transformation in all aspects right from the socio-economic to political ones. But major changes were witnessed in the realm of demography which was more in an unexpected way. The process of immigration which was associated with the colonial economic policies had been mainly responsible in transforming the demographic set up of the district after its colonial acquisition.

History remains as a sole eye-witness to authenticate that from 1832 onwards when Cachar had entered its colonial phase, the initiation of new economic policies in the form of plantation economy, wasteland settlement and introduction of Assam Bengal railways had entirely changed the pattern of immigration within the district of Cachar subsequently leading to demographic ups and downs. This change took place into two phases- the initial one from (1832-1900) and the second phase from (1900-1947). The initial phase was the beginning of laying a strong foundation for future economic policies and understanding the original demographic structure of Cachar. The second phase had witnessed major demographic transformation that got a concrete shape with a stronger foundation.

Here is a paper which makes a review on the demographic structure of Cachar from (1832-1900) highlighting specifically on the composition of population in plain and North Cachar hills with a deeper insight into the prime factors that led to the settlement of different communities of people just after the colonial acquisition of Cachar in 1832.

An empirical method has been employed for the study mainly based on the collection of colonial administrative reports that threw immense light on the demography of Cachar. Secondary sources in the form of books have been also taken into consideration.

Key words :- North-East, Treaty of Yandaboo, Kachari kings, demographic ups and down, wasteland land, Assam Bengal Railways, Plantation Economy.

INTRODUCTION

Demographic ups and downs and the associated changes linked with it which tends to totally transform the composition of population had been usually regarded as an inevitable and ever-changing phenomenon. The constant flexibilities within the demographic set up makes a hard hit impact on the socio-economic sphere in the long run. Demographic upheavals play a dominant role in providing a strong foundation for the beginning of a new historical process. That is why when a historian takes up the painstaking task of reconstructing the past, he tries to utilize the magnifying lens of demographic ups and downs to visualize and deeply understand the past changes.¹ Demographic studies play a pivotal role in forming an interconnecting bridge between the past and the present. From the historical perspective demographic turnover had always been an inevitable part of changes witnessed since time immemorial. Although the colonial period had been greatly associated with that change, there are many instances to authenticate that new policies initiated by the colonial administrator for the smooth running of their dictatorial rule had resulted in bringing instant changes within the demographic setup. The developments in the small district of Cachar in Assam is a living example of the demographic transformation that was attributed to the colonial economic policies.² And they were specifically highlighted after the colonial acquisition of Cachar in 1832. The state of Assam as an isolated and remote part of India had witnessed colonial intervention in the early part of the eighteenth century. Assam in those days was a conglomeration of tribal and monarchial kingdoms. The tribal kingdoms comprised of the Naga Hills, the Khasi-Jaintia hills and the Lushai hills which were administered by their respective tribal chiefs. The district of Cachar was a monarchial kingdom that was independently ruled by the kings who belonged to the indigenous 'Kachari' dynasty.³ The colonial administrators had adopted different policies for bringing the tribal as well as monarchial kingdoms under their control. This would not be an exaggerated statement to mention that they expanded their wings of imperial designs on entire Assam on the pretext of mismanagement and mal administration on behalf of the indigenous kingdoms. The district of Cachar indeed fell prey to those tactical moves and witnessed demographic transformation under colonial regime.

The most interesting aspect of the demographic transformation within the small district of Cachar in Assam was its direct association with the changed pattern of immigration. This immigration had resulted in massive influx which comprised of the bengalee as well as non-bengalee people. Although this will not be out of place to mention that the process of immigration had a deep rooted existence. Even in the pre-colonial times immigration within the district had been noticed but a twist came into it under the colonial regime.⁴ A number of colonial administrative reports threw sufficient light on the then existing pattern of demographic setup in Cachar and the extent to which it was changed after the colonial acquisition of the district in 1832. [In this regard Captain Thomas Fisher, who was the very first superintendent of the district appointed in 1832 had added an elaborated information on the demographic setup of Cachar in his

administrative and revenue report and had stated “Among the scanty but varied population of Cachar three or four descriptions of people are found. The first are the Kacharis, the second are the Mussalmans, descendents of emigrants from Bengal and the third are the Hindoos, descendents of Bengal and Assamese emigrants.”⁵

Although the process of immigration had got a boost due to several factors but the prime one responsible for that was certainly the geographical proximation of the district of Cachar with East Bengal (Bangladesh).

Since the pre-colonial time onwards this natural factor had immensely facilitated the entry of people from the districts of Sylhet and Mymensingha in East Bengal to Cachar. Gradually the demographic setup which had once shown the domination of the tribal faction of people transformed totally. The rising concentration of people from the side of East Bengal within Cachar had provided favourable circumstances for the assimilation of the bengalee culture and tradition with the indigenous society of Cachar.⁶ While recapitulating the historical background of Cachar district, one vital aspect which gets revealed is the strong cultural, linguistic and traditional affinity that the inhabitants of Cachar share with the people of Sylhet district in Bangladesh.

Most prominently it gets reflected in the use of the local dialect. But such influences could not have been the result of a single day’s interaction. It had taken many years for leaving the imprint of the cultural and linguistic touch of the masses of East Bengal on the local inhabitants of Cachar. As far as the demographic transformation within the district is concerned which was largely impacted by the process of immigration, it needs to be mentioned that this immigration had taken place in different phases.⁷ Although the colonial version of the changed pattern of immigration was particularly associated with the introduction of the new economic schemes like the plantation economy (tea gardens) and the wasteland policies. The initial phase of the demographic transformation covered the period from 1832-1900.⁸ This was the period when the colonial administrators had just begun the task of creation of the strong foundation for bringing new economic changes. Those changes had subsequently made its hard hit impact on the influx process and entirely transformed the demographic setup.

The beginning was a bit slow in terms of economic transformation as the colonial administrators were trying to discover the hidden positive economic prospects of the district so as to materialize their new economic schemes. Meanwhile the later phase covering the period from 1900-1947 had been an witness to abrupt changes in the demographic setup with the introduction of more concrete policies like the Assam Bengal Railways.⁹ With the introduction of Assam Bengal Railways the hilly tract of Cachar which is known by the name of North Cachar hills had undergone a total demographic transformation. It had not only eliminated the geographical barrier and isolation of the hilly tracts, but at the same time opened up the gateways of this zone to the large number of immigrants from the northern belt of the country who had been mainly recruited for the purpose of construction of railways.¹⁰ Their entry gave a new shape to the demographic picture of North Cachar in a district way.

VISUALISING THROUGH THE MAGNIFYING LENS OF HISTORY:PRE COLONIAL CACHAR WITH ITS DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

History is not a mere narration of the past events. It is all about understanding and recapitulating a living past that has left its imprints so as to learn from the committed mistakes which had given a tough lesson to mankind. It had been already stated that demographic structure of Cachar district had been profoundly impacted by the process of immigration during its colonial phase. [But this was just the continuity of the long process of heavy influx since the pre-colonial phase onwards because of which Cachar had acquired the tag of an 'Entrance Gate' to Assam.¹¹ The colonial administrators had taken an intense look at the historical background of the small and overlooked independent kingdom of Cachar. Based on those explorations and findings major economic changes were initiated which had subsequently entirely transformed the demographic structure under the colonial regime. The independent kingdom of Cachar had derived its original name from the 'Kachari' tribe. Primarily Cachar consists of two distinct portion –

The hilly tract which is a section of Assam Range and is more popular by the name of North Cachar Hills and the plain area which forms the eastern extremity of Surma Valley.¹² The North Cachar Hill was initially administrated from Nowgaong sub-division and in 1854 it was brought under the direct colonial administrative structure. The demographic setup of pre-colonial Cachar certainly showed the presence of people from different communities. More specifically besides having a considerable faction of tribal or the 'Kachari' population, the concentration of the people belonging to the bengalee as well as Manipuri community was observed during pre-colonial phase. This variation within the demographic structure of Cachar can be attributed to the different phases of the monarchial rule by different dynasties which had provided a very conducive atmosphere for the enhanced pace of immigration process. History authenticates that Cachar had been a witness to extreme political turmoil right from 13th century onwards and that had continued till the time the entire zone came under the colonial subjugation.¹³ The plain Cachar and the hilly tracts of Cachar had been under different dynastic rule owing to the extreme political turmoil that had been rampant in the pre-colonial phase. But this difference did not hamper the influx of people from the neighbouring kingdoms or from the hilly tracts to the plain areas of Cachar and vice versa. The plain tracts of Cachar had been under the grip of the Tipperahs which was a section of the Bodo tribes in the thirteenth century and the North Cachar Hills had been under the control of the 'Dimasas' which was yet another section of the Bodos, and considered to be the earliest inhabitants of Assam Valley.¹⁴ Plain Cachar again went under the domination of Koch rulers of Koch Bihar in the mid sixteenth century. In the pre-colonial phase the demographic chart of Cachar, more specifically the plain area showed the presence of the Kachari tribes, people belonging to the Manipuri as well as bengalee community. Bengalee community of people comprised of both the hindoos as well as the muslims. And, quite interestingly the settlement of these communities of people was somewhere interconnected with the process of immigration. Circumstances even became more favorable for influx within Cachar owing to its close geographical proximation with the neighboring kingdoms of the north-east. This pre-colonial demographic structure of Cachar even got highlighted in the administrative and revenue report of Captain Thomas Fisher who was

appointed as the very first superintendent of colonial Cachar in 1832. He had made an extensive survey on the then existing demographic structure and settlement in Cachar so as to prepare a strong foundation for future changes in the realm of economy during colonial period.¹⁵ If we try to visualize the phase of immigration during pre-colonial phase in the district under the magnifying lens of historical analysis, then those factors get revealed which had prompted the process of immigration. In a small kingdom like that of Cachar which was actually under the imperial domination of the tribal kings of the 'Kachari' dynasty, the concentration of the non-tribal faction of people could be observed more prominently.

In the pre-colonial phase plain Cachar had not only been used as an entrance gate to Assam but at the same time it had surprisingly enough even served the purpose of providing a safe shelter to some communities of people who had taken asylum within the plain areas to escape certain political turmoil. This was the prime factor which was responsible for the gradual entry of people belonging to the Manipuri community within Cachar. It was the first instance of the concentration of some non-tribal faction of people that gave a diversified form to the demographic structure of Cachar. Primarily the close geographical location of Cachar with another hilly kingdom of Manipur in the north-east had provided positive scopes for the immigration. Keeping aside this natural factor of geographical proximation yet another factor which had resulted in the excessive inflow of the Manipuri community of people within Cachar was the extreme political turmoil within the kingdom of Manipur and the constant fear of the violent attacks of the Burmese that had been the driving force which led to this pattern of immigration within Cachar.¹⁶ The Manipuri population within Cachar formed one of the chief constituents of the entire composition of population besides having the tribal 'Kachari' as well.

The pre-colonial phase had even witnessed the gradual entry of the bengalee speaking people within the plain areas of Cachar. Before that it has to be mentioned that the influence of bengalee culture was found in a dominant way within the district. This was materialized with the gradual settlement of the bengalee speaking people within the area. Both the Hindoos as well as the muslims settled but the most interesting part was the circumstance that led to the entry of the bengalee community of people.¹⁶ Although this will not be out of place to mention that the closeness of the district of Cachar with East Bengal had to a great extent strengthened the possibility of influx from the districts of East Bengal in the pre-colonial phase but behind the screen certain factors were primarily responsible for which the bengalee immigrants were encouraged enough to enter Cachar thereby transforming the demographic structure in a different way.

The rising influence of bengalee culture and tradition had made its starting right from the beginning of the Dimasa or the Kachari kings who had been the supreme lord of Cachar and independently ruled the kingdom for many centuries. Although the influence of Bengali culture was always not a product of the influx from the side of East Bengal. To a great extent that even came from the western side of Bengal as well which had maintained a sort of strong diplomatic relation with the independent tribal kingdom of Cachar. Entry of bengalee inhabitants particularly the Hindoos had created a favorable and positive atmosphere for the assimilation of the bengalee customs and traditions within the tribal kingdom.

This will not be out of place to mention that even the colonial administrators like Thomas Fisher and B.C. Allen had accepted that the phase of influx of bengalee people from the side of East Bengal was already preceded by the period when large fraction of them had entered into the kingdom of the Kachari kings as religious preachers during pre-colonial period.¹⁷

From the historical point of view that was a phase of immigration which brought in the non-cultivating class of bengalee people within plain Cachar who had primarily been assigned the religious tasks by the original 'Dimasa' (Kachari) kings. Quite interestingly the entry of the upper caste Brahmins during that phase definitely gave a new color to the entire composition of population. Their presence had been associated with the matter of enhanced prestige for the indigenous Kachari kings who had been gradually dragging themselves towards the path of adopting the customs and traditions of Hinduism.¹⁸ The already existing diplomatic relation between the ruling kings of Bengal and Cachar had provided positive atmosphere for frequent religious trips which were specifically arranged for the Kachari kings to places like Nabawdip in Bengal. Usually the recruitment procedures for religious preachers were completed during the course of those trips. And finally they were appointed in the Kachari kings courts.

Because of this unique pattern of immigration in the pre-colonial phase, the demographic structure of Cachar had shown the gradual concentration of non-tribal community of people in a small kingdom that was ruled by a dynasty (Dimasa/Kacharis) which was more tribal in character. This was the first phase and pattern of immigration of the pre-colonial phase in Cachar associated with the entry of people belonging to the bengalee community. There was yet another second phase of immigration which had led to the entry of the cultivating class of people belonging to the bengalee community which comprised of both hindoos and muslims.

This will not be an exaggerated statement to mention that the district of Cachar had a positive trait with the availability of extremely fertile land. But the only negative aspect was the depopulation of the area owing to the political turmoil and frequent raids of the Burmese.¹⁹ Although that could never reduce the attraction for the rich and fertile tracts available within the district which was extremely suitable for agriculture. This was primarily responsible for the massive influx of people within plain Cachar from the side of East Bengal during pre-colonial phase onwards for grabbing the fertile agricultural plots available within the area. Owing to this sort of immigration or influx of people, the demographic structure underwent a massive transformation. The pre-colonial phase in Cachar had been an witness to a peculiar custom of land grants in which the 'Kachari kings' used to donate land either to the religious preachers (brahmanas) or to the ordinary class of people. This practice could have given a two way benefit to the ruling kings.²⁰ It provided better prospects for enhancing the chances of bringing fallow land under cultivation and side by side increased the overall revenue collection of the kingdom. Thus the Kachari kings used to encourage the influx process for their private profits but that turned out to be prime factor for shaping up the demographic structure of Cachar in the pre-colonial phase.

The age old practice of 'land grants' of the pre-colonial phase was taken up as a best way for enhancing the revenue collection even by the colonial administrators. The changes introduced by them

under the colonial regime was nothing more than the re-modification of that practice which had originally existed since a long time. Meanwhile analyzing the demographic structure of pre-colonial Cachar, it gets revealed that the entry of the bengalee muslims within the district was actually an outcome of the 'land grant' practice only. Majority of them were the poor tenants who were unable to get fertile tracts of land for cultivation in the districts of the then East Bengal (Bangladesh). The temptation of getting cultivable land within Cachar had made them overcome all sorts of geographical barrier and establish their settlements permanently within Cachar.]²¹ This will not be an exaggerated statement to mention that the different waves of immigration that had made its impact on the demographic structure of pre-colonial Cachar was greatly influenced by the 'land grant' practices. Although it has to be mentioned very specially that the aspect of availability of extremely fertile tracts of land in Cachar which had immensely attracted immigrants within the district had only altered the demographic setup of plain Cachar (SouthCachar).²² The scenario within the hilly tracts of Cachar ie. North Cachar Hills had depicted an entirely distinct picture in the pre-colonial phase. Right from the very early times the overall population of North Cachar had been extremely low and further it did not show any signs of variation. The domination of the tribal faction of people including the hill Kacharis, the Kachcha Nagas and the Kookies was most of the time depicted through the demographic structure of North Cachar Hills. Process of immigration had even showed its influence to some extent on the demographic transformation of North Cachar hills in the pre-colonial phase. Specifically making a mention of the 'Kookie' population within the hilly tract of North Cachar it is stated that a large faction of the Kookies had immigrated from the neighboring Lushai Hills and from the sides of the kingdom of Manipur. In due course of time the 'Kookies' made their permanent settlement in North Cachar.²³ The pattern and pace of immigration in the hilly tracts of North Cachar had not been in a vigorous way as was witnessed within plain Cachar. The main attraction for immigration within Plain Cachar was certainly the fertility of land which had made a suitable place for massive influx. [Besides this prime factor the other factors like the geographical proximation with the neighboring hilly kingdoms and the diplomatic relation with them had prompted the pace of immigration although that was in a secondary way. On the other had North Cachar Hills did witness demographic transformation due to immigration of certain tribal communities of people but that took place in a restricted way.]²⁴ But when an intense look is taken at the pre-colonial demographic structure of both plain and Hill Cachar it can be stated without any doubts that process of immigration had massively impacted the demographic structure since the pre-colonial phase onwards. Under the colonial regime when Cachar underwent further transformation of its demographic structure, the colonial administrators had taken inspiration from the previously existing practices which were modified and given a slight touch of alteration in the later phase which thereby gave a new color to the entire composition of population.

COLONIAL CACHAR AND THE INITIAL PHASE OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION (1832-1854)

The colonial phase in Cachar had inaugurated a new era of transformation which made its impact on the demographic setup in a very unique and special way. This phase of transformation continued till the colonial administrators ruled over the area. The demographic variation which was noticed under the colonial regime was largely associated with the initiation of new economic policies that made an instant hard hit impact on the population composition. Although the initial period (1832-1854) was just the phase when the colonial administrators were trying to create a strong foundation for carrying out alterations in their future schemes. So the changes within demography in this phase was more in a latent form. Moreover this will not be out of place to mention that in a proper way preparation of census reports and maintaining proper statistical data on the population of Assam (including the district of Cachar) had not made its formal beginning before 1871. Although the initial phase of almost twenty two years just after the colonial subjugation of Cachar from 1832-1854 had been the most significant one because of the intense historical research done by the colonial administrators in order to understand the past existing structure of demography and the factors that gradually transformed the entire composition of population. It will not be an exaggerated statement to mention that many of the economic transformation initiated by the colonial administrators in Plain Cachar had been actually a modified and upgraded version of certain pre-colonial practices which made its direct impact on the demographic structure. In case of North Cachar hills major noticeable changes were observed after 1854 when this hilly tract was brought under the direct colonial subjugation. The absence of the statistical data of Plain and hill Cachar in the initial phase could not provide any concrete information on the overall population but that was greatly compensated by the extensive colonial administrative and revenue reports prepared by the colonial officials that threw sufficient light on the population composition along with the general picture of administration of Cachar. The year 1832 marked the formal annexation of plain Cachar after the demise of maharaja Govinda Chandra. Captain Thomas Fisher was appointed as the very first superintendent of colonial Cachar and he had prepared the very first administrative report on Cachar dtd. 1831 that extensively threw light on general demographic structure of plain Cachar which had been existing since the pre-colonial phase onwards. Captain Fisher had specifically mentioned in his report that plain Cachar had been dominated by the indigenous Kacharis, the hindoo as well as the muslim bengalees. The tribal faction of people including the Nagas and the Kookies did exist but they had gradually moved towards the hilly tracts of North Cachar and settled there permanently.²⁵ This was the very first picture of demographic structure which was depicted through the most significant colonial report.

The introduction of the 'wasteland settlement' scheme had tremendously increased the pace of immigration which thereby transformed the demographic structure of plain Cachar in the colonial period. It will not be an exaggerated statement to mention that 'wasteland scheme' was a sort of updated version of the age old practice of 'land grants' that had once been the prime factor shaping up the demographic structure in pre-colonial phase in Cachar. Quite interestingly this 'wasteland' scheme was also associated with the expansion of the plantation economy in plain Cachar in the colonial phase. This unique colonial scheme had gained formal recognition only in 1838. With its introduction a stimulation for land hunt could

be witnessed in entire plain Cachar. And since it was primarily associated with the expansion of tea plantation, plain Cachar had witnessed the massive expansion of plantation sites by 1855. The demographic upheavals which had been taking place in the initial phase of round about twenty two years within plain Cachar from 1832-1854 was the repercussion of the initiation of wasteland schemes and growth of plantation economy.

The process of immigration had been given a boost with the introduction of the plantation economy. This needs to take an intense look at the historical past that how the growth of the tea estates had brought in the vital question of recruiting garden laborers in almost all districts of Assam. Even Cachar had to experience similar condition and due to the extreme shortage of indigenous laborers, the migrated ones were recruited from the Northern provinces like Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. The entry of these migrated laborers had brought in major demographic transformation in entire plain Cachar. Although the real change was noticed only after 1880's and 1890's when laws of emigration were modified to a great extent so as to facilitate the recruitment procedure of the migrated laborers from the northern belt of the country.²⁷ And this noticeable change was highlighted specifically in the census reports that were prepared after 1900 by the colonial administrators. But prior to that only a rudimentary glimpse of the changing demographic scenario that was being gradually effected by the colonial economic policies was highlighted. The pre-colonial demographic structure of plain Cachar was quite distinct from that of the North Cachar Hills. This distinction was mainly based on the difference in the geographical and economic aspects of the plain and North Cachar hills. From the pre-colonial phase onwards N. C. hills had witnessed the domination of tribal communities of people specifically the Kookies (old and new Kookies), the hill Kacharis and the Kachacha Nagas. Variation within the demographic structure was not noticed in a way as it was visible within plain Cachar. The overall population of the hilly tract had always shown a lesser concentration of people. Even the process of immigration which was primarily shaping up the demography of plain Cachar in the pre-colonial phase was not operating so promptly in the North Cachar hills. The natural migratory feature of the tribal population of North Cachar had always attributed in the outflow of people in the neighbouring hilly tracts in the pre-colonial phase.²⁸ But specifically mentioning about influx of people, it had mainly taken place during the colonial regime which had entirely changed the demographic structure in its totality. It will not be out of place to mention that with the beginning of the maintenance of proper census records in Assam after 1871, the colonial administrators took immense pain to come out with the statistical data that showed the composition of population of both plain and hill Cachar in a systematic way. The most restricted pattern of immigration in North Cachar during pre-colonial phase had taken place with the entry of the 'Kookie' tribes from the neighboring Lushai hills and the kingdom of Manipur. This had given the touch of a new color to its demographic structure which had shown lesser signs of variation during that phase. The dramatic change within demographic structure of entire Cachar district had been witnessed with the beginning of colonial regime and history remains as a silent spectator to those changes.

MAJOR TRANSITIONAL PHASE AND DEMOGRAPHIC ALTERATION IN CACHAR (1854-1900): BEGINNING OF SECOND INNINGS

Beginning of a new colonial era had prepared the district of Cachar for major transformations since 1832 onwards.

The intense study on the population composition and its different aspects within Cachar had been the most painstaking task for colonial administrators. Their future economic schemes made an instant impact on the demographic structure. But then again there was a big question in this regard. The demography of Cachar had been always changing because of the most controversial process of immigration which had been continuing since pre-colonial times. Then to what extent the colonial economic schemes were held responsible for bringing further alterations within the population composition of the district? The answer to this question lies within the fact that immigration process of pre-colonial Cachar was not that much guided by economic motives as was witnessed under the colonial regime. The indigenous Kachari kings had hardly thought anything beyond the mere enhancement of revenue collection for which they used to encourage influx of people to a limited extent. But the colonial administrators achieved the task of gaining economic stability through their well-planned schemes of introducing plantation economy and railways within Cachar whose profound impact was felt on the demographic structure. Deeply analyzing the structure of population composition the very first idea which was more in approximated way was given by colonial official B.C. Allen in his Administrative report on the census of Assam 1901 as well as Assam District Gazetteers Vol-I (Cachar) showing the statistical figures on population of 1872 in both plain and North Cachar Hills. The overall population of plain Cachar was estimated to be 205,027 in approximation meanwhile that of North Cachar hills was estimated to be only 30,000 (approx) as per the report of B.C. Allen.²⁹ The sharp difference between the overall population of plain Cachar and North Cachar certainly revealed the difference in the economic structure that played the vital role in determining the demographic structure in totality. Most interestingly in this entire in depth analysis of census of 1872 the prime factor which was held responsible for impacting the variation in overall population was the process of immigration and not the natural factors like birth and death rates. The flexibility within the process of immigration was more noticed by the beginning of 1881. That was because of the changes brought within the laws of emigration which had facilitated the easy recruitment of the migrated labourers from the northern belt of the country for the tea plantation sectors of plain Cachar. This process of recruitment had gained momentum with the rise in the number of the tea gardens in plain Cachar after 1900. Meanwhile the overall population of plain Cachar witnessed a sharp rise which was directly proportionate with the increasing pressure of population within the nearby district of Sylhet from 1881-1891. It has been already stated that geographical proximation of Cachar with Sylhet had always acted as a catalyzing factors that encouraged the pace of immigration since the pre-colonial time onwards. But besides that prime factor even the unprecedented growth of population in Sylhet culminated in the heavy influx of people towards Cachar who primarily looked for an additional source of living for their survival. The census reports in Assam were prepared formally by colonial authorities after 1871 onwards. Although the initial phase of ten years from 1871-1881 could not provide concrete results on the overall population count as the colonial administrators had to face a lot of hurdles in acquiring primary information on population.

The following table which is a census report of the year 1881 and 1891 showed the total population of Plain Cachar, North Cachar Hills as well as Sylhet district in Bangladesh.

The tremendous population growth and growing burden on Sylhet ultimately led to the diffusion of pressure through massive influx in Cachar district.

Table-1: CENSUS 1881

Districts	Population (in lakhs)		Table
	Male	Female	
Cachar Plain	301,338	269,193	570,531
Sylhet	1,407,645	1,316,697	2,724,342
North Cachar Hills	1926	1002	2928

Source: Census Report of Assam by B.C. Allen and Edward Gait, Assam State Archives.

Table-2: CENSUS OF 1891

Districts	Population (in lakhs)		Table
	Male	Female	
Cachar Plain	1,47,120	334,710	481,830
Sylhet	24,00,526	13,60,891	37,61,417
North Cachar Hills	2120	1000	3120

Source: Census Report of Assam by B.C. Allen and Edward Gait, Assam State Archives.

In this regard prominent historian who had intensely worked on Cachar during its colonial period, J.B. Bhattacharjee had carried with himself the opinion that besides the natural factor of geographical proximation between Cachar and Sylhet, the additional factor of the growing population within Sylhet had culminated into massive influx of people within plain Cachar.³⁰ It is quite interesting to note that the hilly tracts of North Cachar Hills totally reminded untouched from this pattern of immigration because of its distinct economic structure and indeed its sole dependence on the shifting cultivation which was perhaps not the right choice for the poor agricultural cultivators who had immigrated from the side of East Bengal into Cachar. Thus it can be stated without any doubts that the demographic alterations highlighted in the initial phase from 1854-1900 had created an extremely strong foundation for the further transformation in the second phase of 1900-1947. An intense look at the historical background undoubtedly reveals the fact that even though Cachar had acquired the status of being an 'Entrance Gate', the immigrations that took place were interconnected with the colonial economic policies.³¹

CONCLUSION

Finally while summing up the overall conclusion of the entire study, it can be stated without any doubts that colonial usurpation of Cachar had inaugurated a new era of total change in the realm of demographic setup within the district. For many this transformation was a sort of sudden change but the initial phase from 1832-1900 definitely showed the way in which the colonial administrators had laid a strong foundation for carrying out their economic transformation which in future led to the total transformation of the demographic setup. The economic schemes like the introduction of the plantation sector within Cachar and the modifications done within the wasteland schemes bore concrete results in the later phase is from 1900-1947.

But the census reports of the initial phase particularly that of 1881 and 1891 certainly revealed that the process of influx from the side of Sylhet towards Cachar was already in full swing. And this factor had been attributed for giving the district of Cachar the tag of being called the 'entrance gate' to Assam.

History bears the testimony that major demographic upheavals that took place in the colonial phase in Cachar had been mainly guided by economic motives of the colonial administrators. And before those changes could manifest in a more concrete way, the initial phase from 1832-1900 had played the crucial role of providing a strong foundation for further transformation. Process of immigration had been the centre point of demographic transformation within plain as well as North Cachar hills that gave new color to the entire composition of population.

And this will not be an exaggerated statement to even mention that the cultural and linguistic affinity of the people of Cachar district with that of the Sylhet district (Bangladesh) had actually been an outcome of the historic process of immigration taking place since the pre-colonial phase.

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Author	:	KIRTI K KALINGA <i>PhD Research Scholar</i> <i>Utkal University, Odisha, India</i> <i>kirtidash2@gmail.com</i>
Article Name	:	Climate Change and Migration: A Case Study of Pentha Village in Odisha

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Abstract

Climate change and migration nexus is very complicated and is a multidimensional concept. However, approaches to deal with this intricate relationship often ignore the complexity and study it in a linear dimension. Climate change propels migration in the following ways: (i) the rising intensity and number of natural disasters (whether sudden or slow-onset) and extreme events force people to migrate; (ii) increased climate variability in terms of temperature and precipitation changes propel multi-dimensional impact ranging from food security, health, livelihoods, agriculture, and water availability; (iii) rising sea levels inundate the areas making it uninhabitable and this jeopardises millions of people who have to migrate permanently; and (iv) competition over the already scarce natural resources results in growing tensions and armed conflict, finally leading to displacement.¹ As per the findings of the study, there is little doubt amongst the inhabitants of the area about the reality of climate change. One of the principal outcomes of climate change is the rise in sea level and increased frequency and intensity of severe weather events, such as cyclones. This increases the threat of coastal erosion in the area, where the coastline is sandy and low-lying. According to the respondents covered in the study, the majority of the households are dependent on farming for sustenance and unviable, and non-remunerative agriculture due to climate change causes rampant migration. The present paper analyses the gendered dimension of migration and the psychological impacts associated with it. The study also enumerates the adaptation measures taken to counter the impacts of climate change.

Key Words: Climate change, Migration, Pentha, Coastal erosion, Adaptation

Introduction

Migration as a social problem has been studied extensively. Various studies have been conducted that explore the different dimensions of migration arising out of social, political, demographic and economic factors. Currently, the rate of migration has broken all previous records and is taking place across spheres ranging from global to local. Reasons for migration include both ‘push and pull’ factor and span from conflict causalities to environmental and climate change, economic downturn and many other reasons. While international migration dominates the field of research, very less emphasis has been placed on local migration. Migration has brought changes in not only international but national and regional landscape.

Environment propelled migration is an established phenomenon and has dominated the agenda of research for long. However, climate change as a serious environmental crisis has intensified the scale and rate of migration. A growing and developing country like India is bound to witness mass internal

migration and displacement along with external migration. Migration can be voluntary or forced. In the case of climate change-induced migration, it has been a forced displacement. Climate change which is defined as any variation in earth's atmosphere due to anthropogenic and natural factors will be one of the principal causative agents of migration.² There have been studies at the global level to estimate the number of climate migrants. Approximately 200 million people around the world who reside in flood-prone coastal areas will migrate to overcome their vulnerability.³ There are several studies and discussion in different forums mostly on international migration, while the issues of internal migration and displacement have been overlooked or have drawn little attention.⁴ It is apprehended that 143 million additional people will migrate internally due to climate change. There is a grim situation for South Asia, as it is expected to have an average of 35.7 million internal climate migrants by 2050 if no climate-friendly measures are adopted.⁵

Climate change will amplify migration in three ways. First, a rise in temperature will lead to drying up of regions that will substantially hamper agricultural pursuits and 'ecosystem services' in the form of irrigation and soil fertility. With dampening livelihood viability, people will move out to new areas. Second, excessive and erratic rainfall will cause floods in some regions and drought in others. This will not only have livelihood implications but will create habitat insecurities and survival crisis too. Third, increasing sea-levels will ruin structures and evade agricultural fields and huge loss of life. The highly resourceful and fertile low lying coastal areas which are home to millions of people will be devastated leading to mass displacements and migration.⁶

Coastal migration is quite evident and has a high probability of occurrence because of the existence of all the parameters of climate change. Extreme events of high intensity and frequency, abrupt changes in precipitation and temperature and the rising sea make the coastal communities highly vulnerable. The direct effects of these drivers and especially sea-level rise include land-submergence, inundation and coastal erosion, saline-water intrusion, wetland loss and change, coastal flooding, frequent storm surges, increased salinity and impeded drainage.⁷ Rise in global mean sea level by 0.5m to 2 m will result in submergence of land and coastal erosion that can displace 72 to 187 million people and without proper protection, there may be huge loss of life.⁸ Coastal settlements are bound to witness not only destruction of vital physical infrastructure but also diminution of livelihood, cultural heritage and wellbeing.

India has a coastline of about 7,516 km of which 5,400 km is along the mainland is considered one of the frontline environmentally vulnerable area. India is vulnerable to climate change on several grounds ranging from glacier melt, sea-level rise, drought and other extreme events to precipitation and

temperature changes.⁹ Around 37 million people from India will be at risk from sea levels rising by 2050 and 1.4 billion Indians will be living in areas experiencing negative climate change impacts.¹⁰ Migration in coastal areas is not solely because of climate change. There is an interplay of both climatic and non-climatic factors but climate change acts as a catalyst that aggravates the vulnerability. Climate change-induced migration is the result of two broad factors. First, the climate drivers make the current livelihood non-remunerative and unviable. This propels the people to search for alternative livelihood leading to migration. Second, the climate process and events make the locality completely unsuitable for habitation. For example, villages and localities in low lying coastal areas, near to sea are on the brink of vanishing. Therefore, the vulnerability of coastal areas to climate change and the lack of necessary mechanism and adaptive capacity tend to propel migration and displacement of different communities.

In India, due to sub-tropical location and a 480 km coastline, the state of Odisha is more prone to climate-mediated cyclones and coastal erosion and storm surges and tsunamis. These areas witness constant floods because of silted and sedimented rivers and fragile embankments. Coastal Odisha is likely to witness around 4 million climate refugees by 2100.¹¹ Odisha lost 153.8 kilometres, or 28 per cent, of its 485-km-long coastline between 1999 and 2016 to seawater ingress and rising sea levels coupled with changing wind patterns are causing high tidal waves and inundating habitable areas.¹²

The present paper focuses on Pentha village of Brahmanasahi Gram Panchayat of Rajnagar block in Kendrapada district in Odisha. After review of literature, Pentha was selected as it is marked by rising sea level, intense and frequent disaster risk, as well as the fact that no comprehensive study has been done to find out the driving factors of recent migration.

Objectives

- . To understand the perception of community members about climate change
- . To enumerate the major impacts of climate change as perceived by the people
- . To study the consequences of migration, due to climate change in the selected area.

Selection and Description of the Study Area

The study follows a descriptive research design and both qualitative and quantitative aspects have been focused on. The researcher used the multi-stage sampling procedure. At first, purposive sampling was adopted to finalise on the study area and in the next stage, random sampling was used to select the respondents. In a total 50 respondents were selected for the study. The researcher used In-depth interviews and Focus group discussions to elicit information from the respondents.

Pentha village is located in Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district in Odisha, India. The distance between Pentha village and Kendrapara which is the district headquarter is 46 km and Rajnagar which is the sub-district headquarter is 23 km away. The village is very close to Gahirmatha Turtle Sanctuary, Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and is surrounded by a 10 km sea beach.

Demographic/ Socio-economic characteristics of the village

The following Table no 1 gives a brief description of the demographic characteristics of Pentha village.

Table No.1

Demographic characteristics of Pentha

Total area in acres	192 hectares
Total number of Households	107
Total Population	412
Total Males	208
Total Females	204
Main Occupation	Agriculture
Subsidiary Occupation	Fishing
Literacy	61.17 per cent
Percentage of households below poverty line	67.3 per cent
Number of Households surveyed	50

The village is mostly dominated by the upper castes, with absolutely no presence of scheduled caste (SC) or scheduled tribe (ST). Other backward classes (OBC) constitute a minority of the population. Majority of the households are below the poverty line and the literacy rate is below the national average. Agriculture is the major livelihood of the villagers. Out of 107 households, 50 households have been taken as the sample under the study using random sampling method.

After analysing the demographic characteristic of the village, the researcher has tried to capture the socio-economic profile of the household. As a part of the endeavour, assets of the sampled household in the study village are enumerated in Table no.2.

Table No.2

Assets in the sampled households

Total Households surveyed	50
Pucca houses	41
Sanitation	27
Electrification	27
Television	08
Radio	15
Mobile	50
Bank accounts	35
Bicycle	42

Motorcycles	16
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The above table reflects that the majority of the sampled households have pucca houses under Biju Pucca Ghara Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Grameen Awas Yojana. Slightly more than half of the sampled households have sanitation facility and electricity. This implies that despite the government's intervention under Swachha Bharat Abhiyan, the benefits have not reached all sections of the village and has not gained the required momentum. The rest of the households depend on Solar panels and traditional lamps for lighting. For communication and getting information, mobile and radio are used. As migration is a common phenomenon in this area, some families are successful in having savings which they accumulated in the banks.

Results and Analysis

Livelihood Characteristics

Like most of the coastal villages in Odisha, agriculture is the mainstay of their economy. For the sampled households, farming, prawn cultivation and fishing are the main occupations. Agriculture is rainfall dependent and usually, mono-cropping is practised. Paddy is the main crop which is harvested between July and December. Majority of the sampled households perform agricultural work through *bhagachasa* i.e. farming based on partnership. Ladies are mostly involved in post-harvest operations. Prawn cultivation and fishing are other sources of earning income. As all three livelihood options are affected by climate change, villagers are migrating in search of employment. As the push factor is quite dominant, villagers are forced to migrate because of climate change. While many people migrate to nearby villages, some go to Gujarat and Kerala for informal labour. MGNREGA has not been able to reap benefits for the villagers. They also do not have adequate skills to go for other jobs.

During the researcher's visit, it was observed that from every household one or two adult male members have migrated mostly to Kerala and Gujarat in search of employment. They send the remuneration back home which helps in the sustenance of their family. It was also observed that the villagers are no more interested in practising their tradition occupation.

Perception of people towards climate change

The researcher at first tried to find out the perception of people towards climate change and the impact of climate change on them. The results are showcased in Table no 3.

Table No. 3
Perception of people towards climate change

Perception	Summer season		Rainy Season		Winter Season	
	Onset	Offset	Onset	Offset	Onset	Offset
Comes Early	45 (90)	04 (08)	07 (14)	25 (50)	00 (00)	46 (92)
Delays	00 (00)	36 (72)	43 (86)	15 (30)	48 (96)	03 (10)
No change	05 (10)	10 (20)	00 (00)	10 (20)	02 (04)	01 (02)

Source: Primary Survey. The figure in parenthesis presents the percentage

According to Table 3, the majority of the respondents felt changes in the onset of different seasons. 90 percent of the sampled respondents felt that summer is coming early and 96 percent and 86 percent of them experienced delays in the onset of the winter season and rainy season respectively and none of them felt that winter is coming early or summer is getting delayed. No difference in opinion was found for the offset of seasons. Most respondents felt that the rainy season has become very uncertain and erratic. Even in a single year, there is a phase when there is no rainfall leading to a drought-like situation and then suddenly it starts pouring so heavily that fields are flooded leading to stagnation of water and crop loss. Respondents were more aware of climatic changes related to the rainy season and summer season. There is a clear indication that respondents are aware of climate change and are associating changes in seasons to climate change. Though they are not aware of the specific term 'climate change' but are articulate about the parameters of climate change. Their knowledge is a function of their experience, routinised work and traditional wisdom.

Perceived impacts of climate change

Next, the researcher was interested in eliciting response about the impacts of climate change as perceived by the respondents. The researcher grouped the impacts into two categories. The first one includes the impacts that the respondents will face individually. Next group enlists those impacts that will affect the community as a whole.

Table No.4

Perceived impacts of climate change

Multiple choices

n= 50

Areas where negative effects have been noticed	Frequency	Percentage of Cases
Impact on Individual		
Poor crop production	50	100
Increased suffering and poverty	24	48

Working has become difficult due to hotness	28	56
Reduction in prawn production	26	52
Low yield of fish	43	96
Increase in pests and diseases	10	20
Increase in household food insecurity	18	36
Poor livestock production	17	34
Impact on Community as a whole		
Soil attrition	36	72
Coastal Erosion and sea-level rise	50	100
Transportation has become difficult	09	18
Increase in extreme events	50	100
Increased salinity	32	64
No negative effects cited	00	00

Source: Primary survey.

As evident from the above table, respondents feel individual impacts (54.97 percent) will be more than community impacts (45.03 percent).

The major impact of climate change as stated by the respondents unanimously for the entire community is coastal erosion and rise in sea level and increase in intensity and frequency of extreme events like cyclone, flood and drought. Though they were not concerned about washing away of houses due to coastal erosion, that fear becomes apparent during times of flood or cyclone. One of the key informants reported that by the year 2008, 800 meters of Pentha beach was eroded. The next cause of concern is soil attrition (72 per cent) and increased salinity (64 per cent). Transportation is not that major concern for them as only 18 per cent reported it as a problem. As part of individual concerns, all the respondents reported that plummeting crop production is a major problem for them along with low fish yield (96 per cent). According to them, crop production has been affected adversely because of increasing salinity and loss of soil fertility. They have been witnessing low production for the last five years. Prawn production has also been affected due to climate change as stated by 52 per cent of the respondents. As discussed in FGD, before 15 years prawn cultivation was very remunerative. But gradually due to changes in key variables of climate, the cultivators incurred huge losses. Alteration in temperature and precipitation patterns affects both the quality and quantity of produce. All this has led to increasing food insecurity (36 per cent) in households and is responsible for migration. According to 48 per cent of the respondents, the nexus between livelihood vulnerability and food insecurity gradually pushes them into poverty trap which deters their all-around development and wellbeing. Further, 56 per cent of the respondents reported that it becomes very difficult to work on fields due to increasing temperature and humidity. It can be discerned that most of the respondents focused on the direct impacts of climate change and were less aware of the indirect impacts.

Pentha beach was once one of the key tourist sites in Kendrapara district and it also provided additional employment for some of the villagers. But gradually its situation deteriorated due to coastal erosion and sea-level rise, thus, reducing the already meagre income of villagers.

The poor and marginalized groups such as smallholders and subsistence farmers were the worst sufferers. They are neither acquainted with the modern state of the art technologies nor are they having the resource to reduce their exposure to extreme events. Financial constraints prevent them from diversifying their income or even migrate for better opportunities.

Community members in the study area are prone to both slow and sudden onset disasters. They considered increasing soil and water salinity, salt-water intrusion, creation of sand dunes, changing rainfall pattern and drought as slow-onset disasters and floods, cyclones, tidal water incursion and riverbank erosion as sudden-onset disasters.

Even though people were aware of climate change, their perception was just limited to one risk i.e. sea level rise and lacked an understanding of the wider impacts and potential consequences. There have been concomitant lacunae in community preparedness as they are lagging in comprehending different types of climate risks and its accompanying impacts.

Migration

Climate change propels migration in the following ways: (i) the rising intensity and number of natural disasters (whether sudden or slow-onset) and extreme events force people to migrate; (ii) increased climate variability in terms of temperature and precipitation changes have multi-dimensional impact ranging from food security, health, livelihoods, agriculture, and water availability; (iii) rising sea levels inundate the areas making it uninhabitable and forcing millions of people to migrate permanently; and (iv) competition over the already scarce natural resources results in growing tensions and armed conflict, finally leading to displacement.^{13,14}

In the case of Pentha, the first three factors lead to the migration of individuals from their lands. The primary causes of climate migration in Pentha are poor crop productivity, un-viability of agriculture, decrease in fish and prawn production, rise in sea level and riverbank erosion in the mainland areas. Further, extreme events exacerbate the already vulnerable situation.

According to the respondents, labour migration was common before because people wanted to secure better employment opportunities. As mentioned earlier, migration is not a new issue; men from rural areas often migrate to urban areas to find work for a few weeks during lean periods. But the current situation is different in three ways.

1. Earlier, out-migration was for a limited period of time, only during the lean season. But now, migration has become rampant and is for a longer time. Some of the respondents stated that male members come only during the festivals and remain outside the state throughout the year.
2. Previously, migration had been made for short distances, but currently, villagers are spread across the country. Mostly they move to Gujarat and Kerala for textile and sandalwood work respectively.
3. There has been a transition in migration characteristics. Earlier villagers of Pentha migrated for securing better employment opportunities, but now it has become a strategy for survival. This is because all the available livelihood options like agriculture, fishing, prawn cultivation have become non-remunerative. They have fallen below the level of 'hand to mouth existence'.

Pentha village has witnessed both the scenarios of displacement and migration. Particularly after 2000, migration has become more rampant. The Super Cyclone of 1999 ravaged Pentha and has brought sea much closer causing agricultural fields saline and soil erosion. This projects that the increasing case of labour migration can be attributed to climate change that has made farming non-remunerative in this area. Another interesting pattern of migration in this village is that only men folk migrate to other areas, leaving aside their family. In a very rare case, they take their family members with them. There was no case of female migration.

Migration and Women

According to the respondents, after the male members have migrated for alternative livelihood women face the perilous situation. Women bear most of the negative aspects of migration. Responsibility of the entire household is put on their shoulders as they are sole family 'caretakers' and are burdened with more work including securing food for the family while the men are absent. As most of the households belong to small and marginal farmer's category, they do not have enough financial resources to sustain themselves for months in the absence of men. Therefore, women have the extra responsibility of generating income in addition to household chores. As discussed in the above sections, women find it derogatory to work as an agricultural labourer. To sustain their families, they either join SHGs or resort to borrowing. Female children are worst affected as they are the first one whose schooling is stopped as it becomes unaffordable, and they are made to work either at home or outside. However, boys may escape because of a patriarchal mindset.

Apart from this, in the absence of men-folk, women feel unsafe and insecure. More than a genuine problem, it is a psychological and cultural construct, where, women are always seen inferior to men.

The biggest problem they face is during disasters. Women are at the peak of vulnerability during disasters which can be attributed to their pre-disaster insecurities, lack of education and financial independence and local culture. Local culture prohibits them from being in the frontline for receiving help. They have to ensure that at first, everyone else is evacuated or received relief, then only they can take put their interests forward. Further, the vulnerability of women is a function of their age group. Aged, middle age, children, adolescent girls have different problems.

It was during the focus group discussion that the researcher got to know about the problems faced by the women.

Psychological Impact of Migration

The psychological impact is felt by two groups. First is the migrant who leaves the land for employment and the second group consists of the family members left behind. In the first case, people do not want to migrate from their locality. They feel a sense of belonging for their land. No one can deny that every human being has the prerogative to stay where they live. According to the respondents, they now feel stressed out and a sense of loneliness exists for them. They stated that they highly miss the village collectivism and social cohesiveness. Families of migrants similarly undergo various psychological hardships.

Adaptation by the Community

Adaptation by the community to natural disasters can be through technology or non-technical strategies.¹⁵ Pentha beach that once used to be the centre of attraction for the tourists lost its charm both due to climate change and lack of apathy by the government. After the erosion of almost 3kms meters of long Pentha beach, and 800 meters in 2008 itself, the government has become conscious and has directed the concerned officials to resolve the problem. After consulting with the scientists of IIT Madras, Orissa State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) and Odisha Space Applications Centre (ORSAC), it has been decided that there will be the construction of long geo-synthetic sea wall. The geosynthetic tubes are made with crammed layers of stones in plastic and jute nets to prevent erosion by stabilizing the sea bed. It was a 32.92 crore worth project where financial assistance was provided by World Bank (75 per cent), Central government (15 per cent) and Odisha state government (10 per cent). The project started in 2012 and got completed in 2016. According to the sampled respondents, after the construction of the sea wall, sea erosion along the Pentha beach has reduced.

Fig No. 1

However, the cost-benefit analysis of the geo-synthetic sea-wall is yet to be done. The environmental impact on the landscape is yet to be studied. Further, there is also a question mark on the longevity of the solution. During the FGD discussion, it was revealed that villagers are not happy with the solution even though it has reduced soil erosion. According to them, their experience suggests that these cost-intensive solutions are short term quick-fix strategies and do not have long term implications and has also resulted in a loss of aesthetic value of the beaches.

Adaptation strategies by the villagers for plummeting agricultural outcome were limited. They were mostly dependent on government subsidies and loan waivers.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is evident that the negative impacts of climate change in form of sea-level rise, coastal erosion, changes in precipitation and temperature patterns have made farming and prawn cultivation unviable,¹⁶ thus leading to migration in the given study area. This has increased the vulnerability of the residents and reduced their adaptive capacity. But climate change is not the sole factor influencing migration, and it is important to understand the interplay between the various local 'drivers of migration' to design and develop appropriate local and national level plans.

In the current situation, the community members find it difficult to prepare for the risks or respond to specific events. The community has already tried to adapt with short-term strategies but all went in vain. The costs of emergency action, prevention and recovery also pose a significant problem for them, burdening local authorities with already limited resources. The geosynthetic sea-wall was a huge relief

but villagers see it as a short-term solution and do not find the materials used very long-lasting. Complete mass migration or displacement as it has happened in other coastal areas is not a solution and should be the last resort for residents of Pentha village. Therefore, it is required that adaptation strategies should be locally driven rather than a top-down approach where the bureaucrats devise solutions without considering the needs of the community members. Training should be given to the community members on agricultural practices that are sustainable.

Proposed Solutions

Migration in Pentha village is exacerbated due to climate change that has made farming unviable and non-remunerative. Therefore, strategies to mitigate climate change and adapt to it will help reduce migration at this rampant scale.

At first, the Government should focus on maintaining the existing embankments and then on building more embankments to protect this region.

Though short-term strategies can help cope with the situation, it will not help in mitigating the effects of climate change. Therefore, the Government should collaborate with different stakeholders like NGOs working in Pentha, International Organizations and community members to devise strategies that have long term impacts and are sustainable.

Though the Government has various programmes and policies, it has to be integrated and must have an inclusive approach. Emphasis should be placed on building resilience among the community members.

There should be participation parity, where community members are involved in all decision-making process. It is important to take into account local experiences and tap on their traditional knowledge rather than simply imbibing high-cost infrastructure solutions. Natural and local-based solutions like mangrove forest regeneration, land management practices and agroforestry should be adopted to arrest migration due to non-remunerative livelihood options in study village.

Adaptation activities need to target disadvantaged like children, women, and old age groups because they are likely to suffer the worst impacts of climate change.

Allocation of funds for investment in infrastructure (cyclone shelters), basic services (education, health etc.) and livelihood diversification would discourage migration.

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Perspective Section

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Section	:	Perspectives
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Article Name	:	Understanding the Flood Question of Assam

KOLKATA CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES (KCCS) is a society registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. Registration No. S/1L/86955 of 2011-2012. Office Address: 126/6 Becharam Chatterjee Road, Kolkata 700 061 WB India. Contact no. +91 98365 99476. Editor: Subrata Bagchi.

Flood, including other natural disasters are frequent throughout the globe. But the developing countries lack the necessary infrastructure to tackle such natural menaces, fundamentally because the settlements in developing nations are generally unplanned, and not equipped enough to tackle such disasters. Thus, the damages are far more devastating than that are found in the developed countries. In India many states have been witnessing disastrous inundation. Assam, one of the northeastern states of India stands out as one of the worst affected states of the country and has been hit by floods in a recurrent manner. People of Assam have been experiencing devastating isochronal floods over the decades and still awaiting proper measures to prevent the disaster. These recurrent floods have been jeopardizing the socio-political and economic structures of Assam, which will be discussed in the subsequent sections. Moreover, this has painfully subdued people with sorrows, already crippled by communal and regional violence.

River bank erosion compounding with floods in Assam have rendered millions homeless. Though flood is a risk that is well-known to all, the poor people cannot afford to build/rebuild their homes on higher grounds¹, to keep themselves safe from the risk of flood. Land in flood plains is cheaper in terms of price; and this is the reason the economically impoverished people can manage to possess small tracts of land in these flood plains. “People who have few alternative livelihoods or low income are forced to put themselves at risk because they have no option but to try and survive in flood-prone locations”.²

Floods can be attributed to a variety of factors like --- natural, hydro-meteorological and anthropogenic origin.³ Though frequent floods prevail in Assam since early times but flash flood is relatively a new phenomenon which is taking place due to human induced factors including blocking of canals, human encroachment of the natural reservoirs, unplanned human settlement, global warming, abuse of nature in the form of deforestation, resulting in soil erosion and unplanned drainage system etc. The National Disaster Management Authority points out that encroachment of natural streams and watercourses are one of the chief causes for urban flooding.⁴

Like many places in India, people of Assam suffer from flood every year. Devastation varies from time to time and some flood cost more human lives than others. For instance, floods in 1988, 1998, 2004, 2012 and 2019 were more dangerous in nature than other occasions. The recent deluge which is the worst in last two decades has affected 30 out of 33 districts of the state; about 91 people have lost their lives⁵ and estimated another 57.5 lakh people have been severely affected and many have become homeless⁶. According to media reports, flood affected area in the state approximately has increased to 49.16 million hectares in between 1950 and 2018⁷. Loss of livestock, standing crops, properties are unfathomable. Kaziranga National Park too has witnessed severe loss owing to the natural calamity. Wild lives including the state’s pride, one horned Rhinoceros are victims of the annual recurrences of flood. These kind of

destructive floods are, by and large, a yearly event for the people of Assam. In addition to this routine flood, flash floods of 2015 and 2004 were unusual and unprecedented in nature. The national media unfortunately never pays the necessary attention to the flood problem of the state, which results significant inattention from the central government. This paper attempts to study the flood problems of Assam, along with a case of flash flood and its impact on the socio-economic and political arenas.

A Case of the Flash Flood

“Flash floods are more sudden and episodic, and the unpredictable climatic changes caused by human-induced interventions are the reasons for such disasters”.⁸ In addition to the periodic flood, Assam has started to experience flash floods as well. The flash flood of Bolbola belt of Goalpara district is a case in point. Disastrous flash flood in this region occurred on 8 October 2004 and 22 September 2015, due to the cloud burst on east-Garo hills of Meghalaya which resulted in water rushing from the catchment areas downwards through Bolbola belt to Brahmaputra. The disaster of 2004 was so dreadful that it took no less than 300 lives. And the flash flood of 2015 in the same area caused 60 people to die while many others were missing. Bolbola, kalpani, Chandamari, and Fofonga village panchayats under Aagiya police station were completely inundated in the flood. The communication system by road and railway had collapsed due to breach at numerous points of railway track and National Highway 37. A few bridges and culverts were washed away as well to make the situation worse and access to the area was cut-off at the initial phase. Charpara, Garomari, Tekelpara, Khasikhagra, Taranti, Kotasi Bari, Geradubi, Kalpani, Bodhapur, Paglijhara, Tiapara, etc. are some of the villages which were washed away to its entirety. Nurul Amin isa poor peasant who lost his son in 2004 flash flood and another one in 2014 said, “This is the second time in a decade when we have lost everything. I lost both the sons in two consecutive floods of 2004 and 2014. I have not received any ex-gratia money from the government when I lost my son in 2004 and I don’t have any expectation from them this time as well. In 2004 the flood washed away everything whatever I earned in my life. Somehow I managed to build a thatched house after the earlier disaster but that too is gone. Now I can’t see anything about my future, I am completely ravaged.”⁹

Though there are a range of causes of the disaster, but the very distinctive cause is the man-made structures which have clogged the natural drainage system flowing from the Garo hills, downwards towards Brahmaputra. The Bolbola region which has suffered the worst kind of flash flood is about 130 kms away from Guwahati and is situated at the slop of foothills of the Garo hills. The belt is comparatively a low land on the bank of Brahmaputra and is located between Jinari and Krishnai rivers which are two southern tributaries of the Brahmaputra. Torrential rain and cloud bursts are not rare in the region. These occurred in earlier times as well but the surplus water did not cause much havoc due to their convenient drainage towards Brahmaputra through various tributary rivers such as Jinjiram, Jinari,

Krishnai, Dudhnoi along with various other streams, canals etc. But about 15 years back Indian Railway constructed a railway track connecting the railway line of Bongaigaon and Guwahati via Goalpara, which passes through the affected floodplain. And this railway, which is built on a high embankment, in addition to the National Highway no. 37—running parallel to the railway track, has encroached upon the natural water drainage system from the Garo hills, down towards the Brahmaputra to a considerable extent. Though spaces for water passage have been left by constructing narrow culverts under the railway line and under the National Highway no. 37, these are in no way capable of carrying the massive amount of surplus water that pass through it, and thus these structures have become a barrier in the natural drainage system which has eventually caused the recurrence of flashflood. These constructions speak nothing other than the inefficient, defective and poor quality of planning and lack of proper vision on the part of the government while building such structures. In the following paragraphs I will examine the severe impact of floods on the people of the state.

Flood and Migration

The impact of flood is very severe on the economic condition of the people and the state. People of the affected region are largely dependent on agriculture and the losses that results due to the flood are huge. In the sociological context, the agrarian class of the affected areas can be divided into poor peasants with small land holdings, tenants, sharecroppers, and agricultural laborers. In the face of recurrent floods most of the times they can harvest only one seasonal crop i.e. rice, namely IRR1¹⁰ or locally known as *BoroDhan*. Post- disaster, large tracts of land remains under water and at times the standing crops get destroyed to its entirety.

A significant section of the peasants preserve the food grains, especially rice for the rest of the year in *Bhoral*¹¹, quantity of which ranges from fifty to a hundred *Maund*¹² per family gets destroyed due to the flood. Many livestock face death due to inundation or because of post-flood epidemic. Fish farming in countryside is also an important factor in the economy of rural Assam. During floods, one has to bear the loss of these fishes as well. These losses along with further non-feasibility to sow the standing crops warrant serious food crisis in the region. Thus, the natural calamity pushes peasants to a saturation point to leave agrarian mode of living and to migrate to new place, especially to urban centers, for eking out a living there. They embrace various unfamiliar substandard occupations and transform themselves into industrial laborers, rickshaw pullers, *thela*-pullers and even to rag pickers. It is also noteworthy that natural disasters in the form of flood, induces Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in large numbers and the miseries of IDPs are interminable.

Flood and the Identity Question

People across the divides, living in the floodplains get affected by the floods equally. But the majority of the people who lives in the *char* areas and in the floodplains are the East-Bengal origin peasants of Assam. People belonging to this social category suffer from an additional problem, i.e. the identity question, and flood touches that too.

The forefathers of this social category migrated into Assam at the end of 19th century, which continued till the first half of 20th century. Over the decades and across the generations they have assimilated themselves completely to the local language and culture. However, they are suffering from a deep sense of identity crisis to this day because of the blatant politicization of the issue of their legitimate claim to being locals. During the time of deluge the most important issue for these peasants/laborers of Assam remains with the issue of retaining their citizenship identity. Even in the time of serious crisis of this kind, this section of marginalized people need to save their voter identity, importance of which in the political landscape of Assam stands parallel to the importance of their life. There have been instances when “little nationalist” groups in Assam raised wild doubts of presence of Bangladeshi immigrants in the flood affected areas¹³. The process of this kind of ‘othering’ started largely with the infamous Assam Movement¹⁴ which Guha (1980) describes as “chauvinist and undemocratic in content and proto-fascist in its methods”¹⁵.

Natural calamities in the form of devastating floods and river bank erosions have been multiplying the number of internally displaced peoples, principally from the lower Brahmaputra valley inhabited by the peasants of East Bengal origin. These hapless peasants taking shelter in urban areas and other areas are now summarily labeled as Bangladeshi infiltrators! This process has started decades ago as Hussain¹⁶ argues, ‘Negative labeling, wild doubts and apprehensions were expressed, sometimes very explicitly and sometimes very implicitly against the Muslims’ and this continues even in the time of disaster. As Osman Ali, a flood affected person, describes the importance of his voter identity thus, “if we die, only then we can leave our voter identity, without which we will not be allowed to live, even if we survive.”¹⁷ For these people loss of voter identity, even in severe flood, may eventually lead to the loss of their citizenship.

Flood and Education

Most of the educational institutions of the flood-affected region either gets washed away or remains submerged for months. By and large, the books and other study materials of the large section of the student community get destroyed. Post disaster, most of the students whose family suffer from extreme poverty, cannot afford to buy books, school uniforms, etc. Poverty and vulnerability of their parents forces them to leave education and they become child labor which results in massive school

dropouts. As Macionis and Plummer observes ‘children in the poorest families often begin full-time work at an early age to help supplement the family income’¹⁸. Thus a large number of children terminate their education by becoming rag pickers, domestic labors, sweepers, hotel boys, etc. and their helpless parents in the face of disaster cannot afford to do anything and remain as mute spectators.

Flood and Gender

Flood brings extreme misery to all but the sorrows are more intense for women in comparison to their gendered counterpart. Most of the affected people happen to be poor, and, flood brings, further penury to them, “...poverty implies being hungry, lacking shelter and clothing, being sick and not cared for, and being illiterate and not schooled.”¹⁹ Poverty often forces the women, to sell even their ornaments, inherited from ancestors or received at their wedding. Makeshift camps, locally known as relief camps— are the places where people do take shelter after the floods, are also place of extreme human sufferings. The living conditions in such camps are always unhygienic, insecure, extremely uncomfortable, and the difficulty increases manifold for the women folk. The safety and security of women folk and children remains grim, for, such camps are highly insecure for them. Human trafficking too, takes place from such makeshift camps. Fear and insecurity in camps loom large. Losses compounding with lives and property makes lives of women extremely painful and unbearable. During the stay in the makeshift camps, women do not get access to any paid work; therefore, their lives are pushed further, to the margin. In such scenarios they only remain reliant on the government aid or humanitarian assistance, which are always inadequate in quantity and poor in quality. The makeshift camps, intrinsically are, overcrowded and the living conditions are significantly miserable. The camps, *per se*, do not provide the women even minimum privacy they require in their daily life. No such camps come with proper toilets, therefore, defecation is a major issue for the womenfolk, in places surrounding by men. Tomina Bewa, an inmate of a camp in Fofonga village says, “During floods we use banana rafts (locally known as *Bhur*), or boats for defecation on the water.”²⁰ Cooking remains another snag for the women folk during flood, as they cook in *Chula* (cooking stove), which requires dry firewood—a material which is extremely difficult to find when the entire region remains inundated.

Situations become worse for pregnant women during the stay in such camps. It is immensely unbearable for them to stay in relief camps, wherein, many a time child births do take place, in the absence of medical facilities, care, unfortunately even in the absence of the minimum required privacy. Even cases of harassment by a section of opportunistic male inmates in the makeshift camps, are also commonplace occurring.

Way forward

Floods in Assam occur because of the lack of proper channelization of the water of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. The bed of the Brahmaputra is on the rise and dredging of the riverbed, though a gigantic task, nevertheless needs to be taken up on a war footing. And this needs to be ventured intermittently as the riverbed rises in a sustained manner bearing fresh silt almost incessantly. Building dams, which is considered as a solution to flood problems, cannot be implemented in Assam for the region is situated in a high seismic zone. The government has taken up multiple projects of constructing more than hundred dams in northeast India, but none of them are initiated to mitigate the flood problems of the region. Their sole purpose behind the big dams has been to generate electricity. Proper safety measures too are not in place in these constructions. As a consequence these projects have faced stiff resistance from the masses, and have been halted since then. In many parts of Assam we witnessed the exacerbation of flood situation after releasing extra water from the reservoir of big dams. Ranganadi dam and kurishu dam bring havoc to the life of people in the plain area.

Government of Assam concentrated on making embankments as a major method for controlling floods. But experts' point out that building embankment only fulfils short term mitigation. HimanshuThakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People said, 'the most recent embankments are 25 years old'²¹. Building embankment is always a good source of corruption for many, and this practice needs to be countered with strong intervention by the anti-corruption agencies. An exhaustive scientific study of the Brahmaputra is of paramount importance to arrest the flood problems of the valley. Early warning systems in the state must be put in place at the earliest.

Assam has been perennially witnessing poor governance on issues ranging from natural disasters to violence: 'post-independence Assam has been constantly witnessing violence in many forms'.²² As Hussain argues, '...perennial flood and massive river bank erosion in the valleys, unprecedented deforestation, landslide in the hills, other natural and human made disasters have affected the people and ecology of the region very severely'.²³ Floods have been a recurring problem which along with inefficient governance has arrested Assam's economic growth, creating unrest, anxiety, and frustration among the masses of Assam. It has thus become urgent to bring reforms in the political, administrative and intellectual arenas to address the flood havocs and related issues of internal displacement of large number of peasants and laborers. An all-out agenda on flood control and disaster management, including prompt and adequate relief and rehabilitation of affected people is desperately needed to get rid of the endemic sorrow. Loss of property, home, food grains, and standing crops along with the issue of citizenships have made the life of peasants extremely miserable. Issues of drinking water, sanitization of the flood affected areas must be solved in shortest possible time in order to avoid post-flood epidemics. Short term remedies must be taken up at the earliest followed by long term remedies which needs serious

commitment, not limited to paper but in practice too. The government must be prompt in widening the bridges in the railway tracks and national highways, bigger culverts should be made and the blocked canals and other streams must be cleared. Provision to disseminate early warning is of optimum importance. Government must rebuild the educational institutions and create conducive environment for education in order to save the children from dropouts and to ensure a future with enriched human capital.

¹Through higher grounds, I refer to those high lands which remain unaffected from flood.

² Ben Wisner, Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon and Ian Davis, *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability and Disasters*, Routledge, London 2005, p.178.

³ A.K. Bora, *Drainage and Flood* in Abani K. Bhagabati, Ashok K. Bora, BimalK.Kar (ed.), *Geography of Assam*, Rajesh Publications, New Delhi, 2001.

⁴ NDMA, *National Disaster Management Guidelines: Management of Urban Flooding*, National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India, New Delhi, 2010.

⁵ Press trust of India, *Assam flood situation improving, toll rises to 91* in India Today, 6 August 2019.

⁶NirmalyaChaudhary and Abdul Hamid, *Flood Management: Looking beyond defence strategies* in The Telegraph, 2september 2019.

⁷Heli Shah, *Embankments are temporary, not permanent solutions to floods: Experts* in Down To Earth, 16 July 2019.

⁸Shishir Kumar Yadav, *Questioning the Idea of Disaster* in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIX. No. 39, 2014, pp. 21-24.

⁹Field work in Goalpara district of Western Assam.

¹⁰ IRRI stands for International Rice Research Institute.

¹¹*Bhoral* is the Assamese term for granary.

¹²*Onemaundis* equivalent to forty kgs.

¹³ I borrow the term 'little nationalist' from Amalendu Guha, *Little Nationalism Turned Chauvinist: Assam's Anti-Foreigner Upsurge, 1979-80*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 15, No. 41/43, Special Number, Oct, 1980.

¹⁴This movement, which many terms as infamous, started in 1979.

¹⁵Amalendu Guha, op.cit., p.1699.

¹⁶Monirul Hussain, *The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Identity*, Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1993, p.196.

¹⁷Field work in Fofonga village, Goalpara, Assam.

¹⁸JohnJ Macionis and Ken Plummer, *Sociology: a Global Introduction*, Pearson, Noida, 2014, p.642.

¹⁹Steven B Holtzman and TaiesNezam, *Living in Limbo: Conflict-Induced Displacement in Europe and Central Asia*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2004,p.13.

²⁰Field work in Fofonga village of Goalpara district of Assam.

²¹Debasree Purkayastha, *Understanding the Brahmaputra and the annual flooding in Assam* in *The Hindu*, 27 November, 2017.

²²Nazimuddin Siddique, *Massacre in Assam: Explaining the latest round in Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIX, No.22, 2014, pp. 16-18

²³Monirul Hussain, Monirul, *Interrogating Development: State, Displacement and Popular Resistance in North East India*, Sage, 2008, New Delhi, 2008, p.18.



Review Section

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Section : **Book Review**

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Article Name : **Deep Halder, BLOOD ISLAND: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE MARICHJHAPI MASSACRE (HarperCollins Publishers, Noida, 2019), 176 Pages, Rs 399**

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Deep Halder's *Blood Island: An Oral History of the Marichjhapi Massacre* follows, as the very title suggests, a long line of Partition volumes predicated on oral history. From the late 1990s, there has been a distinct paradigm shift in Partition historiography, when the high politics of Partition, namely the whys and the wherefores that led to the vivisection, gave way to unearthing the human tragedy that accompanied the creation of two nation-states of India and Pakistan. Till then, the migrants were relegated as 'subalterns' in the Partition discourse, whose tragedy did not occupy much space in the tomes on Partition. However, the increasing urge to unravel the human dimension of Partition, have led scholars to cast their glances away from the official papers, towards, what Louis Gottschalk terms as, 'personal documents' which include a rich corpus of creative texts, oral testimonies and films that bring forth the various shades of the trauma of uprootment. The pioneers in this field are Urvashi Butalia whose *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (1998) and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin whose *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (1998) set the tone for such scholarly works.

Memory gives new shape and form to past so that it can easily blend in a cultural script. In this context one can use the notion of what Pierre Nora terms as 'memory-history,' where memory forms an integral component of interpreting history. Paul Ricoeur suggests that "...the discipline of history...allows both for widely varying descriptions of the same series of events, and sanctions the use of a variety of equally acceptable rules or preferences for interpreting a given slice of the past."¹ It is in this sense that these personal documents make themselves useful, since "they can tell us something about how social actors, from a particular social position and cultural vantage point, make sense of their world."² Contextualising the boom in memory studies in recent years, Francois Hartog concurs that the reason can be sought in a general epistemological shift, "the emergence of a new regime of historicity."³ With the emphasis on what he terms as 'presentism' or present-oriented regime of historicity, the ever-growing importance of memory studies has been felt in the academia. The rise of memory studies can be traced back to the turn of 1970s when various factors encouraged a proliferation of a scholarly dig into what and how people remember something, and in the process forget others. The Holocaust and the idea of the 'duty to remember' undoubtedly played a part as did some of the new social history of the 1960s. Decline of Positivism's standing in historical method and the turn towards cultural studies must also be taken into account. History is essentially looked at as a dialogue between the past and the present, but there has been a reorientation in this perspective, when time is considered not in such linear terms where the past and the present can be singled out separately, but the two enmesh and what was considered as the past in the past leaves its vestiges on what was deemed as present in the past. The complex web of time often opens up an alternative space (often in literature) where all the remembrances meet, interact, and often adapt to the time and space of the Reader. Such alternative remembrances often remained outside the peer approved sources of history for rewriting, rather reconstructing the past. As a result, as Keith Jenkins remarked, history does not always emerge as the real past. Thus recollections of the days gone by, or the 'lived experiences' are now treated as integral components of history-writing since it helps the scholar to unravel the complex phenomenon of 'time.' What Pierre Nora terms as 'memory-history' has been recognised as adding value to the understanding of history.

Within this genre of memory-history of Partition, Deep Halder's attempt to delve into the Marichjhapi incident by trying to weave in a narrative from oral testimonies of various stakeholders and eye-witnesses, deserves praise, because of the scantiness of scholarly attention to the episode, especially in English. As Debjani Sengupta rues, "In West Bengal's postcolonial history, the name Marichjhapi is

almost a forgotten chapter.” While there is some truth in her lamentation, it would be historically inaccurate to label Marichjhapi as “a forgotten chapter.” Although somewhat of a late entrant in the field of Partition studies in the east, Marichjhapi did find its place in the collation of testimonies in Bengali—Sibnath Chaudhuri’s *Marichjhapi Kanna* (2004), Jagadish Chandra Mondal’s *Marichjhapi: Udbastu Kara ebong Keno?* (2005) and *Marichjhapi Naishabder Antahraley* (2002), Tushar Bhattacharya’s *Aprakashito Marichjhapi* (2010), Sandip Bandyopadhyay’s *Dandakbanthekey Sundarban* (2010), Madhumoy Pal’s *Marichjhapi: ChhinnaDesh, ChhinnaItihaash* (2009) and *Nijer Katha-y Marichjhapi* (2011).

However, that Marichjhapi remains marginalised in the grand narrative on Partition is testified by the dearth of literature in English. Ross Mallick’s “Refugee Resettlement in Forest Reserves: West Bengal Policy Reversal and the Marichjhapi Massacre” (*The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 58, No. 1 (Feb., 1999), pp. 104-125) and Annu Jalais’s “Dwelling on Morichjhanpi: When Tigers Became ‘Citizens’, Refugees ‘Tiger-Food’” (*Economic and Political Weekly* April 23, 2005, pp. 1757-1762) are the only two exceptions. Amitav Ghosh’s *Hungry Tide*, under the literary garb, brings out the angst and pathos of the settlers. Barring these, Marichjhapi remains outside the pale of memory of mainstream Partition literature. Deep Haldar’s volume, in this respect, is indeed a commendable effort in the sense that the journalist-author has tried to use his professional wand to reach out to these marginal men and women in a language that would garner wider visibility.

Inundated by the flood of migrants from across the border following the Partition in 1947, the Government of India in 1957 undertook a detailed assessment of the size of the problem of rehabilitation in different states. This assessment revealed that for effectively rehabilitating the displaced persons who were in India it was essential that the size of the problem be cut down. In consonance with this decision it was stipulated in December 1957, to discontinue rehabilitation assistance to those migrating after March 1958. A formal decision to this effect was taken at the Rehabilitation Ministers’ Conference in Calcutta convened on 3 and 4 July 1958, where it was decided that all the camps would be closed by July 1959 and the system of doles be discontinued. At that juncture migrants labeled in government discourse as Old Migrants (I), i.e., those who migrated between October 1946 and March 1958 and living in various government-run camps numbered around 35,000 families on 1 August 1958⁴ (30,000 agriculturists, and 5,000 non-agriculturists).⁵ The total number of persons was roughly 1,58,000.⁶ As per the decision of the Conference, the onus of rehabilitating 10,000 families would rest on the Government of West Bengal, while the rest, i.e. 25,000 would be dispersed outside the state mainly under the newly-conceived Dandakaranya scheme.⁷ Each family would be given a time frame of two months to decide whether to accept or reject the government’s scheme of rehabilitation. Those who would renounce the proposal of the government, will be given a one-time dole of six months, after which they will cease to be the responsibility of the Government.⁸

Thus began the ambitious project of rehabilitation outside the state which was doomed from the very inception. Although the project was meant to rehabilitate essentially agricultural families, the site selection was faulty since the Dandakaranya belt was primarily a less fertile zone with inferior quality soil, not suitable for agriculture. Whatever fertile soil was available had already been put to use by the resident Gond tribes. The peculiar nature of cultivation practised by them (slash and burn) ensured that the soil was deprived of the enrichment it might have received from the decaying forest litter in the course of the year. Economic rehabilitation of the migrants thus, remained a distant dream. With nothing to fall back on, the settlers started to sell off their cattle and the asbestos rooftop for their subsistence. Basic

facilities like health-care and education were severely lacking. There was no proper dispensary let alone hospital.

Frustrated at the lack of infrastructure, around 10,000 migrants deserted Dandakaranya to travel back to West Bengal and founded their own enclave at Marichjhapi in the Sundarbans area in 1977. The newly-installed Left Front government, which catapulted to power riding high on the support of the East Bengali migrants, it is alleged, opened fire on the hapless Dandakaranya returnees in 1979, citing the protection and supposed destruction of the fragile ecology of the area. Collections of memories of that massacre, namely, pivot around the deep sense of betrayal first by the Congress-led central and state governments, which did not heed to their pleas of rehabilitation within West Bengal and cart-loaded them to Dandakaranya and second by the CPI (M) led Left Front government in 1979 which cut off supplies and subsequently opened fire on the unarmed returnees.

Set amidst this context, divided into nine chapters prefixed by a Preface and an Introduction with an Afterword and Bibliography at the end, the book catalogues the interviews taken by the author on what happened during those fateful five months between January-May 1979, when Marichjhapi was allegedly cleansed of the settler-refugees. What transpired at Marichjhapi is somewhat shrouded in mystery and Haldar's book is an honest attempt to reach to the pith of the enigma. The book follows a linear narrative of interviews arranged sequentially. What come out of the oral accounts, barring the one by erstwhile minister Kanti Ganguly of the Left Front, is the intense bitterness, ignominy and pain that have not faded with the decades. Crisscrossing the pages of the book are interviews by the erstwhile Marichjhapi settlers like Mana Goldar, Santosh Sarkar, lawyer Sakya Sen, who fought for the rights of these hapless souls, journalist Sukharanjan Sengupta who risked his life to capture the true picture through his pen, Left politician Kanti Ganguly who, rubbishes the claim of bullets and tear-gassing resulting in 'high' casualties. But at the same time, the latter acknowledges, "...we Leftists engaged in some cheap politics and promised them the moon" (p. 154). Putting the onus on the central government and the preceding Congress ministry that helmed West Bengal, Ganguly absolves the Leftists of any wrong-doing at Marichjhapi. His is the lone dissenting voice in the oeuvre of pain, angst and anger that flow freely from the pages of the book. The rest pour out their bottled-up emotion to the author—the pain of uprootment from their *Sonar Bangla*, the struggle for existence in a new set-up first in West Bengal camps, then at Dandakaranya, journey to Marichjhapi for that still-elusive peace amidst a piece of land in the sylvan surroundings of the Sundarbans, the fateful month of May 1979 and finally their present state of physical and mental scape. The oozing pain is encapsulated when Mana Goldar says, "*Khubkoshto*" (p. 129) or when Manoranjan Byaparithunders, "Do you know how the tigers in Sundarbans turned into man-eaters?...The tigers developed a taste of the human flesh from the dead of Marichjhapi" (p. 163).

Forty years down the line, what exactly transpired remains somewhat ambivalent, with the settlers crying foul and the government remaining tight-lipped and press reportage being scant. Though the book is an honest attempt of mainstreaming Marichjhapi, the context needed to be better chiseled out. A little bit more detailing of the Dandakaranya project, the helplessness of the migrants in that inhospitable terrain, so succinctly expressed by the project director Saibal Kumar Guptain *Dandakaranya: A Survey of Rehabilitation* (Calcutta 1999) and in his autobiography, *Kichhu Smriti, Kichhu Katha* (Calcutta 1994) could have helped the reader to fathom the depth of the subsequent events that unfolded. Moreover, a diversity of voices could have definitely enriched the text. Although the interviewees were culled from "survivors, erstwhile reporters, government officials and activists," the narratives heavily tilt towards the

discourse on ‘massacre and mayhem.’ While one cannot deny the truth buried in these interviews, it is also essential to unearth the ‘real story’ for which a neutral documentation of ‘other voices’ is equally imperative. Haldar notes that his efforts to interview Amiya Samanta, then superintendent of police at Twenty-Four Parganas under which Marichjhapi falls, did not fructify because of his refusal to grant an audience. In an interview given to this reviewer, back in 2013, Samanta dwelled in detail on the Marichjhapi issue, where he narrated not only his experience as a government official but also outlined the build-up to the ‘massacre.’ How did the politicians from the opposition party of the state, namely the Congress, view the ‘massacre?’ Was there any reaction from the central government of Morarji Desai or was there a silence indicating it was hand-in-glove with the state administration? The overarching question that has so long remained unanswered is what propelled the state administration to adopt such a ‘stern hardline’ attitude towards Marichjhapi? Was it merely ecological protection or the caste angle as pointed out by Jalais or some larger ulterior motive? Sadly, the answers to these questions still elude the readers. In this sense, the book fails to meet up to the expectation, though surely it whets the appetite. Apparently, the final word on Marichjhapi is yet to be written.

¹ Paul Ricœur, "History and Rhetoric" *Diogenes* 168 (42/4), Winter 1994, p. 7

² Marita Eastmond. "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research" *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20 (2), 2007, p. 250

³ François Hartog, (translated by Saskia Brown), *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2016)

⁴ Jugantar, 24 April 1960

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid