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Consumption Smoothing and Climate Extremes: Evidence from a Farm Household Survey in Coastal Odisha, India

Chandra Sekhar Bahinipati*

Abstract

The farm households in India are subject to climate extremes like cyclones and floods which have negative impact on their welfare measures, such as income, consumption, productive assets, etc. They are taking up various mechanisms during ex-ante and ex-post periods in smoothening their income and consumption. From the policy perspective, it is, therefore, imperative to test the hypothesis of 'fully consumption smoothing'. Using a survey of 285 farm households affected by cyclones and floods in the coastal Odisha, the present study adopted vulnerability as uninsured risk (VER) approach to establish the relationship between households' consumption patterns (i.e., total consumption, food consumption and non-food consumption expenditure) and incidence of cyclones and floods. The aim is to identify the events for which farmers were not able to take adequate measures to hedge against their impacts. In between food and non-food consumption expenditure, both cyclones and floods have a higher negative impact on the former as compared to the latter. In fact, flood has greater negative impact on per capita food consumption than the cyclone. This underlines the fact that the farm households are not able to take sufficient adaptive measures to fully insure the food consumption. On the other hand, the evidences show that the households use existing farm financial management strategies for insuring non-food consumption expenditure. Hence, the focus should be on policy interventions that enhance farm-level adaptation measures in order to reduce potential crop loss due to these extreme events, so that farmers could smoothen their consumption.

I. Introduction

Farm households in developing nations are subject to climatic extremes like cyclones, floods and drought. These shocks have negative impact on welfare measures like

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income, consumption, productive assets, health, child schooling, occupational choice, etc (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000a and b; Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003; Dercon, 2004; Dercon et al., 2005; Hoddinott, 2006; Christiansen et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2010; see Skoufias, 2003a). The vulnerable households are taking up various measures (i.e., farm management and technology, farm financial management, diversification beyond the farm, and government investment in health, infrastructure and education) to smoothen their consumption; these are either taken by them voluntarily or supported by the government. Therefore, assessing effectiveness of different interventions that reduce impact has relevance policy implications (Thomas et al., 2010). Though such issue was widely studied (Christiansen et al., 2007), there is a dearth of study in the context of Odisha which is prone to cyclones and floods; based on the analysis, one could suggest specific coping options for rural households.

In order to address this issue, the present study establishes a relationship between farm households' consumption patterns (i.e., total consumption, food consumption and non-food consumption expenditure) with the incidence of cyclones and floods. In this context, the research question asked as to whether the farmers succeeded in smoothing their consumption to hedge against negative impacts of past cyclones and floods, given the adaptive mechanisms to respond, i.e., cyclone and flood events require any further policy attention. The remainder of this study is structured as follows: section two outlines risk and shocks and farm households; section three explains materials and methods which include sources of household vulnerability, study area and empirical method; section four presents results of the empirical analysis and section five gives concluding remarks.

II. Risk and Shocks and Farm Households

Based on the cross-sectional survey data collected from 285 farm households during 2010/2011 production season in the coastal Odisha, Table 1 reports the details on risk and shocks that farm households came across during 2000-2009¹. A detailed description on the sampling techniques is given in the next section.

This study has classified all the possible risk and shocks into two categories: (i) agricultural risk and shocks, and (ii) non-agricultural risk and shocks. Out of the total sample, 84.56% of farm households have experienced only cyclones (i.e., deep depression and cyclonic storms)². Around 36.84% of farm households reported to be affected by floods. The percentage of farmers reporting sea/ river erosion was 37.19%. Apart from these shocks, pest and diseases affected crops (74.74%), illness of any family member (66.32%), marriage expenses (46.67%), lack of finance (61.05%) and lack of access to agricultural inputs (59.3%) negatively affected a majority of farm

¹ The risk and shocks are reported, which affect at least 10% of the sample households.

² As per Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), there are seven classifications of cyclonic storm based on the wind speed: (i) low pressure (< 17 knots), (ii) depression (17-27 knots), (iii) deep depression (28-33 knots), (iv) cyclonic storm (34-47 knots), (v) severe cyclonic storm (48-63 knots), (vi) very severe cyclonic storm (64-119 knots) and (vii) super cyclonic storm (>120 knots) (IMD, 2008).

households. In total, the most commonly reported major shocks are cyclone (47.72%), flood (25.96%), and sea/river erosion (29.47%) and marriage expenses (28.42%).

III. Materials and Methods

III.1 Sources of Household Vulnerability

The shocks on households due to extreme events like cyclone and flood, affect them in multiple ways: economic effects (wealth, income and consumption as described by Dercon and Krishnan, 2000a and b; Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003; Skoufias, 2003b; Dercon, 2004; Dercon et al., 2005; Hoddinott, 2006; Christiaensen et al., 2007), psychological effects (the traumatic impact of violence: Doherty and Clayton, 2011), destruction of community assets, health effects and education effects (Tesliuc and Lindert, 2002), social capital (e.g., trust and reciprocity) (Fleming et al., 2014). The final outcome of a shock on a household will depend on the shock itself, household's sensitivity, and adaptation measures undertaken by a household to mitigate its negative externalities (McCarthy et al., 2001). In order to reduce the potential vulnerability faced by the households, it is vital to assess present welfare impact of past shocks on households with the present adaptive capacity. In other words, whether shocks can account for the observed fluctuations in consumption or the given adaptation options are enough to a perfectly smooth consumption becomes a pertinent question (Figure 1 describes the process in detail).

It is clear from the Figure 1 that the farm households experiencing shocks are more vulnerable than other farm households who are subject to no shock due to higher exposure level. In addition, vulnerability of households also depends on to what extent their asset endowments are sensitive to shocks, and the adaptation mechanisms they could undertake to reduce potential impacts. If a farm household, for instance, lives in a thatched house and/ or depends on agriculture for basic livelihoods, such household could be at a higher risk.

Households react to these shocks in two ways: ex-ante and ex-post (Morduch, 1995). The ex-ante measures are called 'income smoothing' in the development economics literature and 'pro-active' in the climate change discourse meaning, interventions are taken to protect the households from adverse income shocks before they occur (Morduch, 1995). There are three types of ex-ante strategies: (i) risk prevention or reduction (actions taken to eliminate risk events from occurring, i.e., building sea dyke and flood embankment, and increasing mangrove conservation to reduce risk of cyclone and flood), (ii) reduction of exposure to risk (given the risk, interventions are taken to lower the exposure to risk, i.e., cultivating flood tolerant and/ or traditional varieties of paddy crops and sending children to work in non-farm sources), and (iii) risk mitigation that includes both formal and informal responses to the expected loss (prior arrangement of compensation in case of loss, i.e., purchasing agricultural insurance, building farmer groups and participation in SHGs) (Morduch, 1999; Heitzmann et al., 2002).

Table 1: Details on risk and shocks

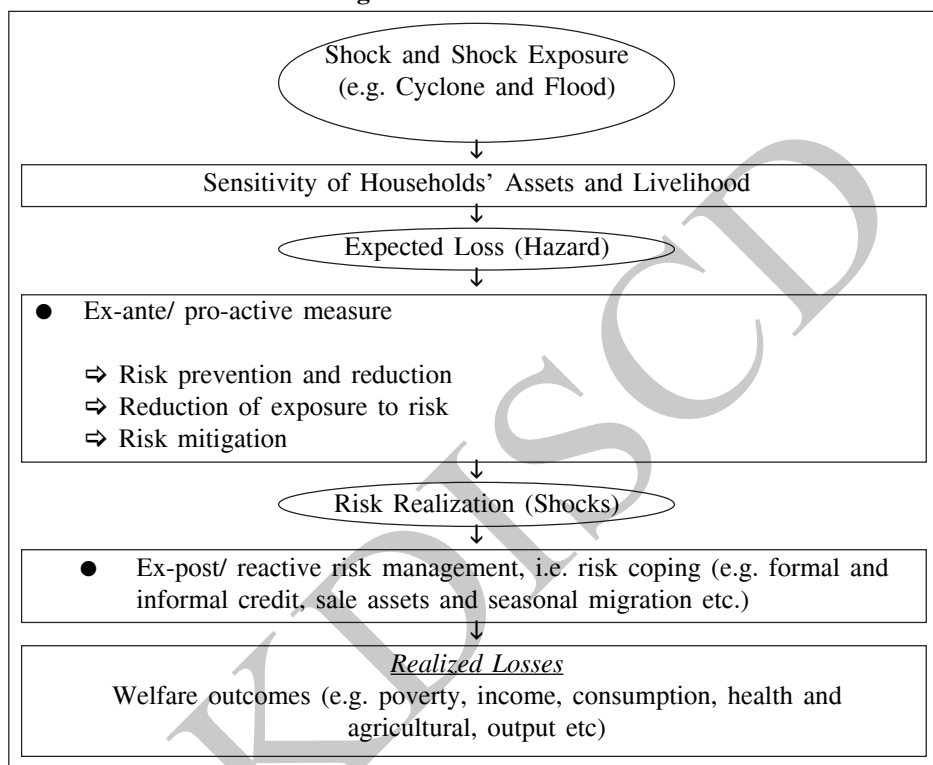
Type of risk/ shock	Widespread of Risk and Shocks			Impact of Risk and Shocks		
	% of households affected by this risk/ shock	% of reporting as idiosyncratic risk/ shock	% of reporting as covariate risk/ shock	% reporting impact on income	% reporting impact on income & consumption	% reporting this shock as major risk/ shock
<i>Agricultural risk/ shock</i>						
Cyclone	84.56	0.00	100.00	28.77	55.79	47.72
Flood	36.84	0.00	100.00	10.18	26.67	25.96
Sea/river erosion	37.19	0.00	100.00	0.00	37.19	29.47
Pests and diseases affect crops	74.74	89.70	10.30	74.74	0.00	0.00
Pests and disease affect livestock	38.60	100.00	0.00	38.60	0.00	1.40
Lack of access to agricultural inputs	59.30	36.70	63.30	59.30	0.00	3.16
Increase in agricultural input price	16.84	0.00	100.00	16.84	0.00	0.00
Decrease agricultural output price	18.25	13.50	86.50	18.25	0.00	0.00
Lack of finance	61.05	96.00	4.00	11.93	49.12	2.81
Confiscation of land	10.53	100	0.00	10.53	0.00	0.00
<i>Non-agricultural risk/ shock</i>						
Death of working adult members	27.37	100.00	0.00	6.67	20.70	15.09
Death of other members	18.60	100.00	0.00	7.02	11.58	7.72
Illness of any members	66.32	100.00	0.00	25.96	40.35	16.14
Marriage expenses	46.67	100.00	0.00	4.91	41.75	28.42
Separation of family members	27.72	100.00	0.00	2.81	24.91	1.40
Loss of employment	15.09	97.70	2.30	6.32	8.77	2.11

Source: Computed from primary data

The ex-post measures are referred to as ‘consumption smoothing’ in the development economics literature (Morduch, 1995) and ‘reactive’ in the climate change discourse. Examples of these measures include selling productive assets, removing children from school, claiming compensation on damage caused, reduced consumption and seasonal migration of household members etc (Morduch, 1995). In addition, the government also provides formal safety nets for the upliftment of poor households (Tesliuc and Lindert, 2002), such as formal extension, PDS (public distribution system), employment opportunity in MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) and disability as well as old-age pension grants in the Indian context, which to some extent also help households to smoothen income and consumption. For example, Tiwari et al. (2011) find that MGNREGA reduced vulnerability level of farmers to

uncertain rainfall in the Chitradurga district of Karnataka state, India. Similarly, Esteves et al. (2013) report that the works generated through MGNREGA reduce vulnerability of agricultural production and livelihoods of the beneficiaries in four states of India, e.g. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Figure 1: The risk chain



Source: Adopted from Heitzmann et al. (2002)

III.2 Study Area and Data

The state of Odisha, geographically located at the eastern coast of India and at the head of the Bay of Bengal, is prone to both cyclonic storms and floods (IMD, 2008; Bahinipati, 2014). For example, IMD (2008) reports that 48.19% (387 out of 803 cyclones) of the total number of cyclones were occurred in Odisha during 1891-2007 (see Bahinipati, 2014). As per BMTPC (Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council) vulnerability atlas, Odisha’s 35.8%, 2.4% and 61.7% of the total area are at risk under a wind velocity of 55 m/s (meter per second) and 50m/s, 47m/s and 44 m/s, and 39m/s, respectively (BMTPC, 2006). On the other hand, 21% (i.e., 3340 thousand ha) of the state’s total area is considered as flood prone (World Bank, 2008). Out of them, 75% is spread across eight districts, including six coastal districts, namely, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam, and two non-coastal districts, such as

Cuttack and Jajpur (World Bank, 2008). Bahinipati (2014) finds that eight districts of Odisha, e.g., Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nuapada and Rayagada, are found as more vulnerable as compared to other districts of Odisha.

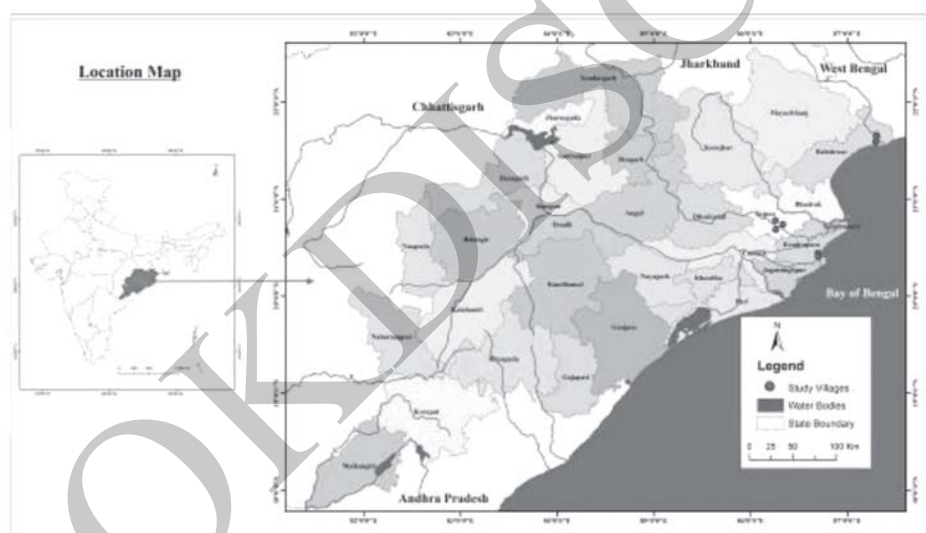
It is observed that the frequency and intensity of cyclones and floods have increased (Mohanty et al., 2008; Pasupalak, 2010; Guhathakurta et al., 2012) and are likely to increase in the years to come (Unnikrishnan et al., 2011). For instance, a positive increasing trend was reported for both reported damage costs and normalised economic losses, which controls the influence of socio-economic factors (Bahinipati and Venkatachalam, 2014; Bahinipati and Patnaik, 2015). Further, an average of 0.33 million ha agricultural land damaged in the state due to flood during 1953-2011 that converts into an economic loss of Rs. 316.2 million per year (GoO, 2013a). The occurrence of unseasonal cyclonic rainfall in 2010 caused major crop loss across 24 districts in Odisha, i.e. the value of crop loss was around Rs 60,000 million (GoO, 2011). Again, flood in September 2011 caused damages around Rs 326.6 million in the state (Samal, 2011). Further, the occurrence of very severe cyclonic storm 'Phailin' in 2013 caused crop loss across 18 districts, which is calculated as Rs 23,000 million, and an estimates loss to house, crops and public properties as Rs 1,43,734.7 million (GoO, 2013b).

Within the state, three cyclone and flood prone districts, namely Balasore, Kendrapada and Jajpur (see Patnaik et al., 2013; Bahinipati, 2014) were selected to conduct farm household-level survey. While Bahinipati (2014) finds these districts are highly vulnerable to cyclones and floods as compared to the other districts of the state, Mohapatra et al. (2012) report these districts as prone to cyclones. For instance, these three districts come across at least 20 cyclonic storms and floods during 1994-2010, and among them, Balasore experienced a higher number of these events, i.e., 30 times (GoO, 2011). While the total area of Balasore and Kendrapada (i.e., 100%) is prone to cyclonic storms, 46.3% and 35.5% of total area in Balasore and Kendrapada are prone to floods, respectively (BMTPC, 2006). During 1994-2008, an average of 0.95 million people were affected and 72.06 thousand ha land got damaged in Balasore, 0.82 million people were affected and 52.5 thousand ha land got damaged in Kendrapada, and 0.63 million were people affected and 54.21 thousand ha land got damaged in Jajpur due to cyclones and floods (GoO, 2011).

The farm household-level survey was conducted in the randomly selected seven disaster prone villages in these three districts (see Figure 2) during November 2010 to March 2011. A stratified random sampling method was used to select farm households with an aim to cover households representing different categories of land ownership. In doing so, a two step sampling procedure was followed. Firstly, all the households at village-level were stratified into five categories on the basis of land ownership: landless (0 ha), marginal (< 1 ha), small (1-2 ha), medium (2-10 ha) and large (> 10 ha). Secondly, with following a simple random sampling method 10% of the farm households have been drawn in proportion to the total households within each 'strata'. In total, 285 farm households were interviewed.

To answer our research question, this study has followed ‘shock module’ developed by Hoddinott and Quisumbing (2003b), which was tested in the villages studied and refined to meet the specificities of these villages. Since the data is ‘cross-sectional’ in nature, the present study developed a retrospective module to obtain a history of risk and shocks and also responses (Hoddinott and Quisumbing, 2003b). This module asks farm households to list out possible negative risk and shocks, e.g., climatic, health, lifecycle, social, economic and environment (Hoogeveen et al., 2004) that occurred in the last decade, and their frequency (high, moderate and low)³, impact (i.e., loss of income, and loss of both income and consumption) and geographical coverage (covariate or idiosyncratic). The data for cyclone and flood frequency was collected either through village-level survey or secondary sources (e.g., ‘Panchayat office’ of the respective village), and the information related to other risks and shocks were self-reported⁴. These questions help us to assess the extent to which these shocks have negative implication on farm households’ living standard.

Figure 2: Map of the Study Region



Source: Author's Figure

³ Low frequency: shocks with a frequency of one in ten years; medium frequency: shocks with a frequency of more than one in ten years; and high frequency: shocks with a frequency of more than one in one year (Heitzmann et al., 2002).

⁴ As the collection of shock data through the recall process involves error such as either under or over reported (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000a), the present study gathers information related to covariate shocks from the published disaster reports and panchayat office. However, it is not possible to collect information on idiosyncratic shocks from the secondary sources. Moreover, Dercon and Krishnan (2000a) outline that error involved in reporting health shocks is minimal.

III. 3 Households' Vulnerability to Cyclones and Floods: An Econometric Assessment

There are three methods available in the literature to assess vulnerability, namely, 'vulnerability as expected to poverty' (VEP) (Chaudhuri et al., 2002; Sarris and Karfakis, 2007; Shewmake, 2008; Deressa et al., 2009; Gunther and Harttgen, 2009; Azam and Imai, 2009; Milcher, 2010), 'vulnerability as low expected utility' (VEU) (Ligon and Schechter, 2003) and 'vulnerability as uninsured to risk' (VER) (Dercon and Krishnan, 2000a and b; Tesliuc and Lindert, 2002; Skoufias, 2003a; Skoufias and Quisumbing, 2003; Christiaensen et al., 2007; Gerry and Li, 2010; Thomas et al., 2010). Mostly these three methods are applied to estimate vulnerability at the household-level (Hoddinott and Quisumbing, 2003a and b). While both VEP and VEU measure ex-ante vulnerability, VER estimates welfare loss due to the observed shocks. In particular, VER is an ex-post assessment that estimates the extent to which a negative observed shock caused welfare loss, given the risk management mechanisms to mitigate impact of such shock.

The VER approach was adopted in the present study to develop an econometric model for estimating the extent to which cyclone and flood have caused welfare loss, given the risk management mechanisms to mitigate impact of such shocks. In this context, the present analysis used cross-sectional variability as a proxy for inter-temporal variability (Hoddinott and Quisumbing, 2003b). This is due to the lack of availability of data for longer period. Farm households' welfare, measured by their per capita consumption expenditure, depends on household characteristics, including characteristics of the household head, access to formal and informal institutions, observed negative shocks and district-level unobserved characteristics. While the observed negative shocks drive the exposure of a farm household, the household characteristics, access to formal and informal institutions and district-level unobserved characteristics represent the sensitivity as well as the adaptive capacity of a farm household. The variables were chosen in the present analysis based on the previous vulnerability studies (e.g., Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003) and field experience. In practice, this study estimates the following model (which is similar to the model described in Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003):

$$\text{Model 1: } \ln C_h = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_h + \beta_2 S_h + \beta_3 I_h + \beta_4 D_h + e_h \dots \dots (1)$$

Where C_h is the per capita consumption expenditure (total, food and non-food consumption expenditure) in household h , X_h is a set of the variables denoting the characteristics of the household and the household head, S_h is a binary variable indicating if the farm household experienced cyclone (i.e. deep depression and cyclonic storm) and flood during 2000-2009, I_h is a vector of access to formal and informal institutions, D_h is a set of binary variables identifying households living in each district separately to capture unobserved heterogeneity effect at district-level and e_h is a random error term. The random error term captures measurement error of consumption expenditure (since dependent variable is consumption measured in logarithm) as well as effect of idiosyncratic shocks. In the present model, it is assumed that there is no correlation between idiosyncratic shocks that are captured by the random error term and farm household characteristics (Hoddinott and Quisumbing, 2003a)⁵.

The vector X_h includes a number of variables associated with the demographic characteristics of the farm household (e.g., size of household and size of household square) as well as asset ownership (e.g., log per capita asset value) and characteristics of the household head (e.g. age of household head, household head age square, years of education by household head, agriculture as major source of income). As observed in the literature (Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003; Christiaensen and Subbarao, 2004; Dercon et al., 2005; Christiaensen et al., 2007), the variables associated with demography, agriculture and economic capacity are the potential determinants of vulnerability, which have either positive or negative association with level of vulnerability. The above variables are also considered to control the taste and preferences of a farm household. The square term of the size of household and household head's age are taken to capture the non-linear effects of the respective variables. The vector S_h includes dummy variables for cyclone and flood, i.e., whether a farm household experiences at least one cyclone or flood during 2000-2009. If farm households are insured against cyclone and flood, the coefficient values of β_2 are either zero or close to zero; it means, shocks to current consumption should have no effect.

In addition, a set of access to formal and informal institutions I_h includes variables like access to formal credit, employment opportunity in MGNREGA, informal credit and if the household receives remittances. These variables capture the role of formal and informal institutions as these indicators are to some extent assist farm households to mitigate potential impacts of cyclone and flood. The vector D_h includes dummy variables for two study districts, i.e. Balasore, and Jajpur. These variables are taken to capture some of the variation in consumption arising from district-level unobserved heterogeneity. While taking dummy variables for cyclone and flood, the functional form adopted in equation 1 assumes that each farm household experienced similar number of cyclone and flood. However, some farm households might have experienced more number of cyclones and floods, and obviously, these households could be more vulnerable as compared to the other households in the study region. This consideration leads to an augmented version of the model (1), i.e. the cyclone and flood frequency variables (SF_h) are considered instead of cyclone and flood dummy variables, which is represented in equation 2.

$$\text{Model 2: } \ln C_h = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_h + \beta_2 SF_h + \beta_3 I_h + \beta_4 D_h + e_h \dots \dots (2)$$

Ordinary least square (OLS) regression analysis was performed to estimate the above models. A robust standard error was calculated to address the possibility of heteroskedasticity in both the models. While Appendix 1 presents the description of variables and their construction procedure, and Table 2 reports basic descriptive statistics of these variables used in the regression model.

⁵ There may be a possibility that measurement error of idiosyncratic shocks could be correlated with farm households' characteristics. In order to overcome this problem, Datt and Hoogeveen (2003) apply the instrumental variable regression model. However, a suitable instrumental variable was not found in the present sample.

IV. Results and Discussion

The estimated models of the welfare impact of cyclone and flood on farm households' consumption level are shown in Table 3. The results from this Table are described below. In these models, the goodness of fit (R^2) varies in between 0.203 to 0.339, i.e. these models explain 20-34 percent of the total variation in log consumption expenditure (total, food and non-food consumption expenditure). Further, the estimated coefficients of variables taken in the models are consistent with those reported in the earlier literature (e.g. Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003; Dercon et al., 2005; Christiaensen et al., 2007).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of variables used in the econometric model

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dependent variables				
Log(per capita consumption expenditure)	3.73	0.14	3.05	4.14
Log(per capita food consumption expenditure)	3.59	0.15	2.30	3.89
Log(per capita non-food consumption expenditure)	3.11	0.26	2.26	4
Independent variables				
<i>Household characteristics</i>				
Size of household	5.89	2.52	1	18
Size of household square/100	0.41	0.42	0.01	3.24
Age of household Head	49.23	13.69	25	82
Age of household Head square/100	26.10	14.03	6.25	67.24
Years of education of household head	1.57	2.70	0	14
Agriculture as major source of income	0.71	0.46	0	1
Log(Per capita asset value)	4.11	0.47	2.95	5.36
<i>Climatic shocks</i>				
Cyclone	0.85	0.36	0	1
Flood	0.37	0.48	0	1
Cyclone frequency	4.17	2.94	0	7
Flood frequency	2.11	3.09	0	8
<i>Access to formal and informal institutions</i>				
Access to formal credit	0.38	0.48	0	1
Employment opportunity in MGNREGA	0.48	0.50	0	1
Access to informal credit	0.84	0.37	0	1
Remittances received	0.67	0.47	0	1
<i>District</i>				
Balasore	0.35	0.48	0	1
Jajpur	0.16	0.39	0	1

Source: computed from primary data

Note: SD- standard deviation, Min- minimum value and Max- maximum value

Among the household characteristics, the variables like size of household, square of size of household, years of education by household head and log per capita asset value are found to be significant in both the models. While size of household has negative relationship with total, food and non-food consumption expenditures, square of size of household has a positive association with these variables. This suggests that size of household has a negative as well as a non-linear impact on farm households' consumption pattern. In other words, the per capita consumption expenditure declines marginally for larger household size due to non-diversification of income sources. This is similar to the results obtained by Datt and Hoogeveen (2003), Christiaensen and Subbarao (2004), Dercon et al. (2005) and Christiaensen et al. (2007). Further, the variable representing years of education of the household head has a positive relationship with the farm households' level of consumption per capita. For example, an additional year of education is likely to enhance per capita consumption expenditure (total, food and non-food) within a range of 0.6% to 0.9%. This could be due to two reasons: i) the likelihood that literate farm household head and his/ her children could have access to non-farm income sources, and ii) high probability that a literate farm household could undertake adaptation measures to mitigate potential impacts. Our findings are similar to the findings of Dercon et al. (2005), Blankespoor et al. (2010), Wamsler et al. (2012) and Sharma et al. (2013) whereby they establish that access to education is one of the major factors in the context of reducing vulnerability. The farm household with higher per capita asset value tends to be richer. Such household is able to smoothen consumption through dissaving and/ or depleting the existing assets as the presence of higher level of assets in a household facilitates faster recovery. On similar lines, Datt and Hoogeveen (2003) also find a positive association between land ownership and household consumption pattern. In the present analysis, it is found that the coefficient of log per capita asset value is positive (i.e., this can increase level of consumption expenditure within the range of 8.3% to 30.1%) with a significance at 1% level.

Previous studies find that the shocks negatively influence households' welfare (e.g., Dercon and Krishnan, 2000a; Datt and Hoogeveen, 2003; Ninno and Marini, 2005; Christiaensen et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2010; Skoufias, 2003b). With reference to the present analysis, it is observed that cyclone and flood have negatively influenced total and food consumption per capita. This ascertains that both cyclone and flood have a negative impact on farm household's welfare, i.e., farm households are not fully recovered from the impacts of past cyclones and floods at the time of survey. In other words, the given adaptation measures are not sufficient to fully mitigate the potential impacts of these events. However, flood has greater impact on total consumption expenditure than that of a cyclone. For example, flood has a 4.9% (significant at 5% level) negative impact on per capita total consumption expenditure of farm households affected by this shock alone. Similarly, cyclone reduces the consumption of those affected by 4.1%, which is significant at 10% level.

Table 3: Impact of cyclone and flood on (log) per capita household consumption expenditure

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Log(per capita consumption expenditure)	Log(per capita food consumption expenditure)	Log(per capita non-food consumption expenditure)	Log(per capita consumption expenditure)	Log(per capita food consumption expenditure)	Log(per capita non-food consumption expenditure)
Household characteristics						
Size of household	-0.051*** (0.012)	-0.042*** (0.014)	-0.059*** (0.020)	-0.052*** (0.012)	-0.043*** (0.014)	-0.061*** (0.019)
Size of household square/100	0.258*** (0.075)	0.216** (0.086)	0.319*** (0.116)	0.256*** (0.074)	0.209** (0.083)	0.331*** (0.114)
Age of household head	-0.0004 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.009)	0.001 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.003 (0.009)
Age of household head square/100	0.001 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.0001 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.009)
Years of education of HH head	0.007*** (0.003)	0.007*** (0.003)	0.009* (0.005)	0.006** (0.003)	0.006** (0.003)	0.009* (0.005)
Agriculture as major source of income	0.003 (0.015)	0.015 (0.017)	-0.011 (0.033)	-0.0001 (0.016)	0.010 (0.017)	-0.013 (0.033)
Log(Per capita asset value)	0.147*** (0.026)	0.092*** (0.026)	0.301*** (0.046)	0.139*** (0.027)	0.081*** (0.026)	0.296*** (0.046)
Climatic shocks						
Cyclone	-0.041* (0.021)	-0.054*** (0.019)	-0.040 (0.048)			
Flood	-0.049** (0.022)	-0.082*** (0.024)	0.057 (0.051)			
Cyclone frequency				0.001 (0.005)	0.001 (0.008)	0.008 (0.009)
Flood frequency				-0.007* (0.004)	-0.013*** (0.005)	0.015 (0.009)
Access to formal and informal institutions						
Access to formal credit	0.022 (0.015)	0.024 (0.016)	0.009 (0.031)	0.026* (0.016)	0.029* (0.018)	0.012 (0.031)
Employment in MGNREGA	0.009 (0.016)	0.012 (0.018)	0.024* (0.031)	0.003 (0.017)	0.006 (0.017)	0.011 (0.031)
Access to informal credit	0.038 (0.025)	0.024 (0.037)	0.081** (0.040)	0.042* (0.025)	0.031 (0.037)	0.082** (0.040)
Remittances received	0.033** (0.017)	0.014 (0.019)	0.064** (0.032)	0.034** (0.016)	0.015 (0.019)	0.069** (0.032)

<i>District</i>						
Balasore	-0.016 (0.024)	0.037 (0.025)	-0.199*** (0.052)	-0.012 (0.027)	0.038 (0.037)	-0.171*** (0.053)
Jajpur	-0.019 (0.034)	0.009 (0.034)	-0.159** (0.076)	0.014 (0.05)	0.054 (0.057)	-0.145 (0.101)
Constant	3.298*** (0.141)	3.440*** (0.139)	1.997*** (0.259)	3.260*** (0.140)	3.389*** (0.139)	1.959*** (0.253)
No. of observations	285	285	285	285	285	285
R ²	0.339	0.216	0.271	0.331	0.203	0.270
F(13, 271)	8.43	6.45	5.61	8.26	5.83	5.58
Prob. > F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Source: computed from primary data;

Note: i) The figures in the parentheses are robust standard error

ii) *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05 and * p<0.1 respectively

In the case of impact on food and non-food consumption expenditure, the cyclone and flood dummy variables have higher negative impact on the former in comparison to the latter, and the coefficient is also significant. It is inferred that both cyclone and flood have a higher negative impact on food consumption than that of non-food consumption. But, the flood has a higher negative impact on food consumption expenditure than cyclone. For instance, flood reduces food consumption by 8.2% (significant at 1% level), whereas cyclone cuts down food consumption by 5.4% (significant at 1% level). This underlines that the farm households, especially the flood affected farmers, are not able to take sufficient adaptive measures to hedge against food consumption loss than the non-food consumption loss. This could be attributed to the continuous damage of agricultural crops due to cyclones and floods, which are the major source of income for the farm households. In spite of this, most of the existing risk management policies (e.g., employment opportunity through MGNREGA, formal credit and agricultural insurance etc.) are dealing with farm financial management, and therefore, these measures could have helped the households to reduce the negative impacts on non-food consumption expenditure.

We now discuss about the results when the 'frequency' of cyclone and flood is included instead of just cyclone and flood, in model 2. The flood frequency is negatively associated with total and food consumption expenditure. This means, on an average farm household experiencing more number of floods have lower level of total consumption and food consumption expenditure. While the flood frequency reduced food consumption expenditure by 1.3% (significant at 1% level), total consumption declined by 0.7% (significant at 10% level). From model 1 and 2, it can be inferred that the flood had a higher negative impact on farm households' consumption pattern as compared to cyclone, particularly on their food consumption expenditure.

Access to formal and informal institutions help farm households to smoothen income and consumption (Morduch, 1999; Skoufias, 2003a; Sumarto et al., 2003), and this

also reflects the adaptive capacity of a farm household. The time required to fully recover from the impact of cyclone and flood is less for those households with access to formal institutions; because, they are able to avail formal credit as well as formal safety net measures to smoothen their consumption (as observed by Skoufias, 2003a; Sumarto et al., 2003). In the present analysis, both the variables of formal institutions, e.g. access to formal credit and employment opportunity in MGNREGA, show a positive relationship with farm households' consumption pattern. For instance, employment opportunity in MGNREGA increases purchasing power of farm households, and reduces the 'recovery' period after a cyclone or flood. In addition, the development based activities undertaken through MGNREGA reduce the level of vulnerability of farmers (Tiwari et al., 2011). Further, farm households are better off if they have access to informal institutions like informal credit (borrowing from money lender, friends and neighbours) and receive remittances (Morduch, 1999); but the informal credit makes a household more susceptible in the long-run due to a higher interest rate on borrowing. In the present analysis, both the variables are found to be positively influencing farm households' consumption expenditure. In both the models, variables representing access to informal credit and remittances are statistically significant in the case of both total and non-food consumption expenditure. It means the farm households in the study region are using informal sources to smoothen non-food consumption expenditure.

V. Concluding Observations

The present study assesses the impact of cyclone and flood on farm households' consumption behaviour. In doing so, this identifies particular climatic extreme events to which the farmers are not able to take adequate measures to hedge against their impacts.

Adopting VER approach, this study ascertains that both cyclone and flood have a negative impact on the farm households' consumption pattern, but flood has higher impact compared to the cyclone. In the case of impact on food and non-food consumption expenditure per capita, both cyclone and flood have higher negative impact on the former as compared to the latter. However, flood has greater negative impact on per capita food consumption than the cyclone. This underlines the fact that the farm households are not able to take sufficient adaptive measures to fully insure the food consumption; however, evidences show that the households use existing farm financial management strategies for insuring non-food consumption expenditure. The farm households might have partially insured food consumption. Hence, the focus should be on policy interventions that enhance farm-level adaptation measures in order to reduce potential crop loss due to these extreme events.

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Appendix 1: Description of the variables and their construction procedure

Variables	Definition of the Variables
Dependent variables	
Log(per capita consumption expenditure)	Log of per capita consumption expenditure
Log(per capita food consumption expenditure)	Log of per capita food consumption expenditure
Log(per capita non-food consumption expenditure)	Log of per capita non-food consumption expenditure
Independent variables	
Household characteristics	
Size of household	Total number of members in a household
Size of household square/100	Square of size of household divided by 100
Age of household head	Number of years household head completed
Age of household head square/100	Square of number of years household head completed divided by 100
Years of education of household head	Number of years formal education completed by the household head
Agriculture as major source of income	Dummy=1, if a farm household earns more than 50 percent of their income from agriculture; 0, otherwise
Log(Per capita asset value)	Log of per capita asset value
Climatic shocks	
Cyclone	Dummy =1, if a farm household experienced at least one cyclone during 2000-2009; 0, otherwise
Flood	Dummy =1, if a farm household experienced at least one flood during 2000-2009; 0, otherwise
Cyclone frequency	Number of cyclonic storms experienced by the farm households during 2000-2009
Flood frequency	Number of floods experienced by the farm households during 2000-2009
Access to formal and informal institutions	
Access to formal credit	Dummy=1, if a farm household has access to formal credit sources; 0, otherwise
Employment opportunity in MGNREGA	Dummy=1, if any members of the farm household is employed under MGNREGA activities; 0, otherwise
Access to informal credit	Dummy=1, if a farm household has access to informal credit sources; 0, otherwise
Remittances received	Dummy=1, if a farm household receives remittances; 0, otherwise
District	
Balasure	Dummy=1, if a farm household belongs to Balasure district; 0, otherwise
Jajpur	Dummy=1, if a farm household belongs to Jajpur district; 0, otherwise

Employment, Rights and Security at Work: Case of Adolescent and Young Women in India

Vibhuti Patel*

Abstract

The paper examines and addresses the challenges faced by youths particularly by the young and adolescent women at work in India. The underlying patriarchal attitudes and practices, and the economy driven by increasing capitalism and globalisation provide further reasons for examining, understanding and addressing adolescent girls and their rights to work, as well as the conditions of work. All these need to be looked under the purview of international standards, national laws, policies, programmes and strategies with regard to adolescent and young women.

I. Introduction: Youth and Rights at Work

The ILO Report (2010), *Global Employment Trends for Youth* states that “young men and women today build the foundations for the economies and societies of today and tomorrow. They bring energy, talent and creativity to economies and make important contributions as productive workers, entrepreneurs, consumers, agents of change and as members of civil society. There is no doubt that what young people strive for is the chance of a decent and productive job from which to build a better future. Take away that hope and you are left with a disillusioned youth trapped in a cycle of working poverty or in danger of detaching from the labour market altogether – thus representing a vast waste of economic potential (p.2).

The statement provides the rationale for examining and addressing the challenges faced by youths at work. The underlying patriarchal attitudes and practices, situated in the context of increasing capitalism and economic globalisation (a largely exploitative phenomenon), provide further reasons for examining, understanding and addressing adolescent girls and their right to work, as well as rights in work (conditions of work). This is partially what this paper seeks to address. Additionally, international standards, national laws, policies, programmes and strategies with regard to adolescent girls’

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work are also discussed. A considerable amount of work contributed by girls is unpaid labour that is not valued in monetary terms, and yet, such work is extremely important for the functioning of any economy.

The ILO Report (2010) based on recent labour market information available, explores and highlights the vulnerabilities of youth (between the ages of 15 and 24) to unemployment and decent work deficits, showing where progress has or has not been made in absorbing the energy, talent and creativity of young people into the productive potential of the economy. The key findings of the report were (pp.3-6)

- a) The youth labour force participation rate decreased globally from 54.7 to 50.8 percent between 1998 and 2008, the main reason being increase in number of young people participating in the education system,
- b) The young people have higher likelihood than adults of being among the working poor,
- c) In developing economies many more young people than adults engage in family businesses or farms (informal enterprises). The chances of them of ever transiting to paid employment in the formal sector are slim,
- d) Most regions demonstrated encouraging gender trends with decreasing gaps in both male-to-female labour force participation rates,
- e) During 2007-9 when there was a global economic crisis, young women had more difficulty than young men in finding work, and
- f) In developing countries, the global economic crisis contributes to 'vulnerable employment,¹ and informal sector employment.

The findings, particularly the last two, provide clear indication that worldwide, adolescent girls and young women get forced into informal sector employment and employment where their rights are not likely to be protected, out of desperation of wanting to find work.

II. International Human Rights Standard Related to Work

We are aware that workers' struggles have been essential to the recognition of a range of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to work. The ILO developed a broad range of labour-related standards, even prior to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. India too has ratified a number of international

¹ ILO defines workers in vulnerable employment as the sum of own-account workers and contributing family workers. They are less likely to have formal work arrangements, and are therefore more likely to lack decent working conditions, adequate social security and 'voice' through effective representation by trade unions and similar organizations. Vulnerable employment is often characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine workers' fundamental rights. For more details, see http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_120470/lang-en/index.htm, accessed 10 October 2012

conventions² that focus directly or have provisions on women's rights at the workplace.

Moreover, some of the *Standards set by Human Rights Treaties* are- Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) guarantees everyone "the right to work, to free employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment." Article 6 of the ICESCR states - the right to work includes "the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work. "Work as a human rights standard involves earning an adequate standard of living. Further, Article 6(2) states that "the full realisation of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes." The *Directives of the European Union* to its member states on the issue of protecting young people at work are an example of standard-setting on this issue³. While such directives are applicable only to member countries of the European Union, these are discussed below to illustrate potential ways in which the Indian government can safeguard the rights of adolescent girls at work.

The directives set the objective to adopt minimum requirements aimed in particular at improving working conditions, guaranteeing workers better health and safety protection; applies to all young people under the age of 18⁴ who have an employment contract or an employment relationship defined by the law in force in a Member State and/or subject to the law in force in a Member State. Member States are to take the necessary measures to prohibit the employment of children and shall ensure that the employment of adolescents is strictly controlled and protected under the conditions provided for in the Directive.

The list the employer's general obligations as stated in the directive on young people are - protection of the health and safety, assessment of the risks associated with their work, assessment and monitoring of the health, information about young people and children's legal representatives on the possible risks to their health and safety. The types of employment that are prohibited for young people are work which is objectively beyond their physical or psychological capacity, work involving harmful exposure to

² For example the ILO Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45) (ratified on 25/03/1938); ILO Night Work (Women) (Revised) Convention, 1948; and Protocol, 1990 (No. 89) (ratified on 27/02/1950); ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) (ratified on 25/09/1958); ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) (ratified on 03/06/1960); ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) (ratified on 17/11/1998); ILO Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141) (ratified on 18/08/1977); UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 (ratified on 09/07/93); UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (ICESCR) (acceded to 10/04/1979); UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR) (acceded to 10/04/1979) UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953 (ratified on 01/11/1961) are some of them.

³ European Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work; summary of the directive is available at <http://www.europa.eu.int>, accessed 15 September 2012

⁴ young people under the age of 15 or who are still in full-time compulsory education in accordance with National legislation; adolescents, young people between the ages of 15 and 18 who are no longer in full-time compulsory education in accordance with national legislation are considered.

agents which are toxic, carcinogenic cause, heritable genetic damage, or harm to the unborn child or which in any other way chronically affect human health, work involving harmful exposure to radiation, work involving the risk of accidents which, it may be assumed cannot be recognised or avoided by young person owing to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training and work.

As per the directives the Member states' responsibilities are to implement the directives in the form of legislations in their respective countries, to define necessary measures applicable in the event of infringement of the provisions of this directive and to ensure that such measures must be effective and proportionate to the offence.

In the Indian context, since adolescent girls at work also include girls who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breast feeding, the European Union directive on this issue are relevant to examine state responsibility in other jurisdictions.

The European Council directive⁵ on protection of pregnant women, women who have recently given birth and women who are breastfeeding - the directive calls upon the European Commission to draw up guidelines on the assessment of the chemical, physical and biological agents and industrial processes considered dangerous for the health and safety of the relevant workers, to include physical movements and postures, mental and physical fatigue and other types of physical and mental stress. For all the activities liable to involve a risk, the employer or the health and safety service must determine the nature, degree and duration of exposure in order to evaluate the risks and decide what measures should be taken. In this context the workers are also to be notified of the results and of measures involving health and safety at work. The directive also states that pregnant workers have the right to take leave from work without loss of pay to enable them to attend ante-natal examinations if such examinations take place during working hours; prohibition of dismissal of women for reasons related to their condition, protective measures for unlawful dismissal and an adequate allowance for health insurance.

III. Constitution and Labour Laws in India

The Constitution of India sets out a number of fundamental rights, generally enforceable in the courts. These include equality before the law and equal protection under the law (Article 14), and prohibition on discrimination by the State on a number of grounds, including sex (Article 15), in spheres including public employment (Article 16). In addition, the State can make affirmative action in favour of women, including through reservation and special laws (Article 15-3). The State is duty-bound to protect the life and personal liberty of all, including women (Article 21). The Constitution also directs the state to provide equal pay for equal work (Article 39-d), and make provisions

⁵ Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 (Tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC.), Summary available at <http://www.europa.eu.int>, accessed 15 September 2012

for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. The Constitution further states, in the fundamental rights chapter, that no child below the age (Article 42) of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory / mine / other hazardous employment (Article 24). The right to primary education has been included as a fundamental right⁶. The Constitution further directs the state to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth is protected against moral and material abandonment (Article 39-f).

Provisions of labour laws have focused on prohibiting/regulating child labour, particularly in hazardous work, and on improving the safety, health and welfare of women and girls in factories and other places of work, minimum wages, equal pay for equal work, maternity benefits, child care facilities, provisions for adequate rest and leisure, prevention of discrimination and sexual harassment at the work place. Many labour laws are an elaboration of principles and directives stated in the Constitution. For example, the equal pay for equal work clause led to the enactment of The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. The emphasis on just and humane conditions of work led to provisions in Factories Act, 1948 and other labour laws, prescribing for separate toilets for women and girls, and provision of crèches, and the prohibition of employment of women in dangerous or arduous jobs and night employment. The direction to the State to provide maternity relief's resulted in the enactment of The Maternity Benefits Act, 1961.

Under the Constitution of India, labour is a subject in the 'Concurrent List'. This means that both the central and state governments are competent to enact legislations pertaining to the same. At present India have several acts⁷ those also protect women at the work place (and are implicitly applicable to adolescent girls).

IV. The Children in the Labour Market

Child Labour may be defined to include children prematurely leading adult lives, working with or without wages, under conditions damaging to their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development, denying them their basic rights to education, health and development. This includes children working in any sector, occupation or

⁶ The Government of India, through the 86th amendment Act of 2002, inserted Article 21A to the Constitution which states that the state 'shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years.'

⁷ The equal remuneration Act, 1976; The Factories Act, 1948; The Mines Act, 1952, The Minimum Wages Act, 1948; Employees Compensation Act, 1923; The Industrial Dispute Act, 1947; The Payments of Gratuity Act, 1972; The Employees Provident Fund Act, 1952; The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act 1986; The Apprentices Act, 1961; The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976; Plantation Labour Act, 1951; The Payments of Bonus Act, 1955; Personal Injuries (Compensation Insurance Act, 1963; Employees State Insurance Act, 1948; Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment) Conditions of Services Act, 1979 and The Contract Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1970. For an elaboration of labour laws in general and those pertaining to women, please see Bhasin (2007) and Sharma (2007).

process, including the formal and non-formal, organised and unorganised, within or outside the family⁸. The organisation *Free the Children* defines child labour as a work done by children below the age of 14 "... which restricts or damages their physical, emotional, intellectual, social or spiritual growth as children"⁹. UNICEF describes child labour as "one of the clearest and worst manifestations of how poverty has a child's face" (UNICEF, 2001).

It is important to remember that protective laws are able to regulate the conditions of work in the unorganised and informal sector. The government ought to address the causes of child labour, instead of its manifestations. The causes of child labour include poverty, lack of education and exposure, poor access to education, suppression of adult workers' rights, and partial prohibition of child labour and inadequate enforcement of child labour laws. Employment of girl children is intricately linked to class and caste hierarchy, social attitude towards education of girls as well as gender discrimination.

Adolescent girls are also considered one of the most vulnerable groups for exploitation at work, due to the process of socialisation. They are conditioned to be more docile, timid, compliant, loyal and responsible. They are seen to have less addictions or vices, and more hardworking and obedient than boys. Significant characteristics of the girl child labourer include invisible work which is not recognised as an economic activity and which is not under the purview of law, no identifiable employer, home-based work, long working hours, poor conditions that prevent them from attending school, no skill formation, low pay and low status, and physical abuse and sexual harassment (Bajpai, 2003). Sexual abuse of girl children and adolescent girls employed in domestic work is rampant in this country.

This places an onus on the law and policy makers and to formulate relevant laws and policies to address possible exploitation, and for their proper implementation.

Policy Framework for the Child Labour

The National Policy on Child Labour, August 1987 spelled out an action plan for tackling the problem of child labour. It envisaged a legislative action plan; focused on and convergence of general development programmes for benefiting children wherever possible; and launching of projects for the welfare of working children in areas of high concentration of child labour¹⁰. In pursuance of National Child Labour Policy, the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme was started in 1988 to rehabilitate child labour. The Scheme sought to adopt a sequential approach with focus on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations and processes in the first instance. Under the Scheme, after a survey of child labour engaged in hazardous occupations and processes was conducted, with the objective to withdraw the children from these

⁸ http://www.wikigender.org/index.php/Girl_Child_Labourers_in_India:_An_Invisible_Issue, accessed 1 September 2012

⁹ http://www.freethechildren.org/youthinaction/child_labour_the_situation.htm, accessed 6 September 2012

¹⁰ <http://labour.nic.in/cwl/ChildLabour.htm>, accessed 1 September 2012

occupations and then put into special schools in order to enable them to be mainstreamed into formal schooling system. The Scheme envisages running of special schools for child labour withdrawn from work. The special schools are provisioned with formal/non-formal education along and vocational training, a nominal stipend, supplementary nutrition and regular health check-ups. Most of these schools are run by the NGOs in a district and the provisioned fund is released by the district administration. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, the coverage of the NCLP Scheme has increased from 12 districts in 1988 to 100 districts in the 9th plan (1997-2002) to 250 districts during the 10th Plan (2003 – 2007)¹¹.

An evaluation of the Scheme was carried out by independent agencies in coordination with V V Giri National Labour Institute in 2001. Based on the recommendations of the evaluation and experience of implementing the scheme since 1988, the strategy for implementing the scheme during the 10th Plan was devised. The 10th Plan aimed at greater convergence with the other developmental schemes and bringing qualitative changes in the Scheme. The salient points of the strategy as envisaged by the 10th Plan include:

- Focused and reinforced action to eliminate child labour in the hazardous occupations by the end of the Plan period;
- Expansion of National Child Labour Projects to additional 150 districts;
- Linking the child labour elimination efforts with the Scheme of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* of Ministry of Human Resource Development and
- Convergence with other Schemes of the Departments of Education, Rural Development, Health and Women and Child Development for the ultimate attainment of the objective in a time bound manner¹².

The strategy outlined for the 11th Five Year plan (2007-12) includes expanding the NCLP scheme to ensure universal enrolment of children in the 6-14 age groups to cover those in the hard-to-reach segment. Another Government initiative under the 11th plan is to amend all laws to recognize everyone under the age of 18 as children and to take appropriate measures to protect their rights accordingly¹³.

Protective Laws

The enactment of the Factories Act, 1948 and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 further complement the constitutional provision on child labour. The Act of 1948 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories and regulates the working conditions in the age group of 15-18 years. The Act of 1986 prohibits children in hazardous occupations and regulates conditions of work in non-hazardous jobs. Employment of children has been prohibited in at least 13 occupations and 51 processes in the country, with more and more hazardous occupations

¹¹ <http://labour.nic.in/cwl/ChildLabour.htm>, accessed 10 September 2012

¹² Ibid

¹³ The 11th Five Year Plan, Volume II, available at <http://planningcommission.nic.in>, accessed 8 September 2012

and processes added to the list from time to time. In 2006, the Central Government amended the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibiting employment of children below 14 years of age even in non-hazardous industry such as restaurants, motels and in domestic work¹⁴.

Through a 2008 notification, the government sought to further amend and add to the list of occupations and processes in which child labour is prohibited. These include the food processing and beverage industries, mechanised fishing, timber handling and loading, and warehousing¹⁵. In June 2012, the chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, has reportedly said that there is a need to club both hazardous and non-hazardous work as child labour, and a serious need to amend the law on child labour to include every kind of child labour as hazardous to children¹⁶. On 28 August 2012, the cabinet approved a new law – Child & Adolescent Labour (Prohibition) Act, proposing a complete ban on employment of children under the age of 14 in all areas of work. It can be noted that without sufficient political backing, effective implementation, adequate budgets and robust enforcement, the amended law could remain on the statute book without any impact for the estimated 12.6 million under-14 years working in the country¹⁷.

Law and Policy in Action

The judiciary has been conscious of the strong link between child labour and education of children. An important judicial intervention in the action against child labour in India was the *M.C. Mehta case* (1996) in which the Supreme Court, directed the Union and state governments to identify all children working in hazardous processes and occupations, to withdraw them from work, and to provide them with quality education¹⁸. The Court also directed that a Child Labour Rehabilitation-cum-Welfare Fund be set up using contributions from employers who contravene the Child Labour Act. In addition, in 1993, the Supreme Court in *Unnikrishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh*¹⁹ stated that each child has the right to free education until he or she completes the age of 14 years. Article 21-A was subsequently inserted into the Constitution to reflect this standard.

In 2005, three non-profit organisations working on child rights - the M V Foundation, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights and Social Jurist- filed a public interest litigation in the Supreme Court of India challenging the validity of the Child Labour Act in the wake of the constitutional guarantee to right to education for children in the 6-14 age-group. They argue that child labour up to the age of compulsory education is unconstitutional and is in negation of rights under Article 21-A which provides compulsory education up to the age of 14. The petition questions as to how children can be at work and at school at the same time, compromising on the quality. The petition contends that the

¹⁴ Notification in the Official Gazette, dated 10 October 2006

¹⁵ Gazette Notification by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Child Labour Section), Government of India, dated 25 September 2008.

¹⁶ 'NCPCR Head Advocates Amendment in Child Labour Act', http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/ncpcr-head-advocates-amendment-in-child-labour-act_781223.html, accessed 8 September 2012

¹⁷ A Move that could Help Reduce Child Labour', *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 August 2012

existing legislations on child labour which were not completely prohibiting it in all occupations and processes, were resulting in negation of all the fundamental and human rights guaranteed to the children under Article 14, 21-A, 23, 24, 39 (e) 39 (f), 41, 45 and 51-A (h), 61-A (j), 51-A (k) of the Constitution read with U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973. This case is pending before the Supreme Court. Notably however, under this case the Court has asked the Government to file a status report on the implementation of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* – the ongoing government programme providing free and compulsory education to all children.

As on many other issues, there exists a gap between the legal standards and reality. In many Indian industries, girls are unrecognised labourers because they are seen as helpers and not workers. Therefore, girls are therefore not protected by the law²⁰. The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme, which provides for Rs. 100 as stipend per month to each child labourer withdrawn from work, has come under criticism from persons, including the chairperson of NCPCR, who observed: “The Rs 100 stipend is on official papers only. I wonder how many kids receive this monthly stipend”²¹. Moreover, despite the fact that India has formulated laws and policies to protect adolescent girls in labour, the issue is still caught between legal and policy commitments to children on the one hand, and the fallout of the process of globalisation on the other²². The statistics below indicate the level of enforcement of the law on child labour, and highlight the fact that out of the number of violations detected, only a small number of prosecutions are launched, out of which an even smaller number convicted.

Table: Enforcement of Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986
(Based on reports received from the State Governments & CLC)

Year	No. of inspections carried out	No. of violations detected	Prosecutions launched	Convictions	Acquittals
1997-98	288150	25909	19496	6073	157
1998-99	222856	11263	6469	4125	725
1999-2000	242269	7598	3972	1333	356
2000-01	189842	10537	2398	1036	343
2001-02	449042	16604	9201	1799	606
2002-03	372504	28850	5660	1717	2229
2003-04	346212	26411	9221	4013	642
2004-05	242223	16632	2609	1385	447
Total	2353098	143804	59026	21481	5505

Source: Ministry of Labour, Government of India, <http://labour.nic.in/cwl/ChildLabour.htm>

¹⁸ *M C Mehta vs State of Tamil Nadu*(1996) 6 SCC 756: AIR 1997 SC. 699

¹⁹ AIR 1993 SC 217: 1993 SCR (1) 594: 1993 SCC (1) 645

²⁰ www.indianchild.com/child_labor_india.thm, accessed on 7th September, 2012

²¹ NCPCR Head Advocates Amendment in Child Labour Act', http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/ncpcr-head-advocates-amendment-in-child-labour-act_781223.html, accessed 1 September 2012

²² <http://infochangeindia.org/children/backgrounder/children-background-a-perspective.html>, accessed 9 April 2012

V. Children as Bonded Labour

The causes of bonded labour include poverty, unemployment/under-employment, inequitable distribution of land and assets, low wages, distress migration and social customs. The system which ties a person for a specified or unspecified period of time either with wages or without wages draws heavily upon traditional feudal social relations, the caste system, social hierarchy and discriminatory practices that are prevalent in society. Such systems thrive in agriculture, brick kilns, stone quarries, crushers and mines, power looms and cotton handlooms, as well as in constructions and other industries.

People considered 'untouchables', *adivasis*, women and children are among the main victims of the bonded labour system, as they have a lower social ascription and fewer perceived rights. In addition to other forms of exploitation and abuse, female bonded labourers are vulnerable to wage discrimination, physical abuse and sexual exploitation by the creditor and his family members / relatives. The malnutrition-related death of Katraju Lakshmi – a Chenchu tribal woman from Andhra Pradesh – who worked as a bonded labourer on construction sites in Meghalaya, is a case in point²³.

Legal and Policy Response

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 was enacted to abolish the system, as it is exploitative, violative of human dignity and is contrary to basic human values²⁴. The law unilaterally frees all bonded labourers from debt bondage, with simultaneous liquidation of their debts. The law lays down monitoring, enforcement and implementation modalities, which mainly rest on state governments. A series of progressive judgments of the Supreme Court has attempted to monitor the implementation of the law. Pursuant to a 1997 directive of the Supreme Court, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has been vested with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the law and making reports to the Court from time to time²⁵.

Law and Policy in Action

In Bandhua Mukti Morcha vs. Union of India, the Supreme Court dealt with the release of bonded labourers from stone quarries in Haryana²⁶. Despite a formal abolition of the system by law and some positive judgments, it continues to exist in practice. An example of the manner in which the bonded labour system works, in particular relevance

²³ For more details, see <http://www.fian.org/cases/letter-campaigns/india-failure-of-state-social-programmes-leads-to-bonded-labour-of-600-chenchu-tribals-and-the-death-of-a-chenchu-woman>. accessed 4 December 2009

²⁴ The words of the Supreme Court in the *Asiad Workers case - People's Union for Democratic Rights vs. Union of India* AIR 1982 SC 1473

²⁵ Order dated 11 November 1997 in *PUCL vs. State of Tamil Nadu and others*

²⁶ AIR 1984 SC 802

to adolescent girls, is the *Sumangali*²⁷ scheme in Tamil Nadu.

In February 2006, the State Textile Workers Federation made a representation through the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), to the Government of Tamil Nadu, alleging that the Textile Mills in Tamil Nadu were indulging in an exploitative practice of engaging adolescent girls under the Marriage Scheme for Adolescent Girls leading to forced labour. In January 2007, a notification was issued by the government of Tamil Nadu, including the employment in textile and spinning mills within Part I of the Schedule to the Minimum Wages Act. Thereafter the Chief Inspector of Factories submitted a report to the state government, confirming that girls above the age of 15 were employed in spinning mills for 3 year apprenticeship, and that after completion, the girls were paid Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 50,000 as a lump sum amount to meet their marriage expenses. The report also indicated that a total of 38,461 girls were employed in 406 mills of Erode, Coimbatore and Dindugul districts. The report further said that there had been some incidents of sexual harassment. The report recommended that since it might be impossible to abolish the system all of a sudden, it would be better to appoint monitoring committees at the district level to examine the working conditions and prevention of exploitation of the young girls²⁸. Now based on directions received from the NHRC, the state government has begun identifying mills where young girls were employed.

The *Sumangali* scheme is clearly exploitative in nature, as it provided the girls an approximate daily wage of Rs. 50 a day, nearly three times lesser than the legal minimum wage in Coimbatore in 2008. Once the contract is signed, young girls are under the control of the factory or the broker. It is often reported that the girls lived in captivity for a long period. Some factories are reported to fire the girls or make them resign shortly before they finish the three- year contract so as to avoid paying the marriage assistance fund, ranging from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 50,000²⁹.

In November 2008, the state government, through a government order, fixed minimum wages of Rs. 110/- per day apart from dearness allowance as detailed in the order, to apprentices engaged in employment in textile mills³⁰. This order was challenged through many writ petitions in the Madras High Court before a single judge, where they were all dismissed, and the government order upheld³¹. In July 2012, civil society renewed

²⁷ The *Sumangali* scheme, which is a form of forced labour in India, is said to have started in 1989. The word “*Sumangali*” in Tamil means an unmarried girl becoming a respectable woman by entering into marriage. Thus, the scheme is also known as “marriage assistance system”. Under this scheme, girls’ parents, usually poor and from the lower castes, are persuaded by brokers to sign up their daughter(s). The scheme promises a bulk of money after completion of a three-year contract working in the factory. The scheme, prevalent largely in the spinning mills of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, supposedly meets the need of poor families and provides stable workforce to factories.

²⁸ G.O.Ms.No.62, Labour and Employment department, dated 30-3-2007

²⁹ Sindhu Menon, *Adolescent Dreams Shattered in the Lure of Marriage: Sumangali System: A New Form of Bondage in Tamil Nadu*, available at <http://labourfile.org/ArticleMore.aspx?Id=826>, accessed 1 June 2012

³⁰ G.O. (2D) No.61, Labour and Employment (J1) Department of State of Tamil Nadu, dated 7.11.2008

³¹ *Tamil Nadu Spinning Mills vs The State of Tamil Nadu*, judgment dated 30 April 2009

its demand for monitoring of companies implementing the *Sumangali scheme*³². Despite the various interventions of the state government, NHRC, the judiciary and civil society organizations, exploitation in the form of bonded and forced labour of adolescent girls reportedly continues in the Tamil Nadu textile and garment industry³³.

The *Sumangali* scheme is a complex issue involving adolescent girls, embedded in and deriving strength from a combination of factors: the Indian context of patriarchy, gender discrimination, low social value for girls, the importance attributed to marriage of girls, the practice of dowry and the perception of girls as a financial burden. The case study from Tamil Nadu discussed above is a mere example of the phenomenon of employing girls in bonded / forced / exploitative labour.

Despite the legal provisions, identification and release of bonded labourers is always challenging, as only a small number are identified, that too with the persistent efforts of non-profit organizations, and that the rehabilitation of such labourers is often neglected (Srivastava, 2005). Moreover, very few employers got prosecuted and even fewer got convicted. According to the Ministry of Labour's figures, between 2000 and 2002 in all of India, there were only around 1800 bonded labourers being identified and released; and another around 17300 bonded labourers rehabilitated. However, there was no data showing how many child labourers are among those being freed, and how many of them were adolescent girls³⁴.

VI. Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Sexual harassment at the workplace is an important issue related to the safety and dignity of the young women in workplaces.

Sexual harassment is an expression of male power over women and girls that sustain patriarchal relations, and is often an extension of violence against women and girls in everyday life, targeting and exploiting their vulnerability at the workplace. The cases of sexual harassment of women and girls at the workplace are increasing alarmingly because of several factors, such as the poor status of women, patriarchy and gender discrimination, increasing number of working women which results in a 'threat' perception among certain men, poor knowledge of human relations, and inadequate provisions of law to deal with the problem effectively. Sexual harassment at the workplace is not only an issue related to empowerment of women and girls and an issue of occupational safety and health, but is also an issue pertaining to human rights, as the right to life ought to include the right to work in an environment that is conducive to human dignity.

³² 'Monitoring of Companies under the Sumangali Scheme Demanded', *The Hindu*, 18 July 2012

³³ B. Aravind Kumar, Exploitation Continues at Garment Hub, *The Hindu*, 8 March 2012

³⁴ Human Rights Watch (2003), p. 50

Sexual harassment³⁵ of women at workplace is also a violation of the right to life and personal liberty as mentioned in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Right to livelihood is an integral facet of the right to life, and consequently sexual harassment at the workplace is the violation of the right to livelihood, as it deprives the woman and girl of a safe working environment.

Landmark Judgment of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of India pronounced a landmark judgment on sexual harassment of working women in 1997 in *Vishaka and Others vs. State of Rajasthan*³⁶. In this judgment, the court stated that sexual harassment of working women (including girls) as a form of discrimination against women and violation of the constitutional right to equality. The backdrop to this judgment was the gang rape of a *sathin*, Bhanwari Devi in 1992, who was employed by the Rajasthan government in its women's development programme to prevent child marriages. A group of women's organisations came forward to file a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court, asking for directions and guidelines to ensure the constitutional rights of women to work in a violence-free work environment. The landmark judgment was significant in recognising sexual harassment at the work place as a violation of the constitutional rights of women and outlining guidelines for the prevention, deterrence and redress of sexual harassment.

The judgment also provided guidelines for employers to redress and prevent sexual harassment at workplace, and to provide a discrimination-free working environment for women employees. The judgment said that it was the duty of the employer or other responsible persons in work places to provide women with a safe working atmosphere as well as provide mechanisms for resolution of complaints through the establishment of complaints committees³⁷.

³⁵ In common parlance, there is only a thin line distinguishing between casual flirting and sexual harassment. The Supreme Court of India laid down the definition of sexual harassment as "any unwelcomed sexually determined behavior such as avoidable physical contact, a demand for request of sexual favors, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcomed physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct of sexual nature. It also includes dirty jokes, sexual remarks about a person's body, sexual advances either verbal or through gestures or through the use of sexually suggestive or pornographic materials, whistling or obscene remarks, touching, patting, pinching, physical assaults and molestation of and towards women workers by their male colleagues.

³⁶ *Vishaka & others vs. State of Rajasthan* AIR 1997 SC 3011; (1997) 6 SCC 341.

³⁷ There is directive from the Supreme Court to constitute a committee for receiving and inquiring into complaints of sexual harassment at every workplace. Every such committee should consist of members of whom at least 50% are women, a chairperson who is a woman and an external member from a social work/non-profit organisation. It also outlined preventive steps that the employer ought to take, including discussing the issue affirmatively in workers' meetings and employer-employee meetings, prominent display of guidelines to create awareness of the right of women employees, and prominent display of members of the complaints committee and their contact details. The employers are also responsible for formulating an anti-sexual harassment policy, and for constituting a complaints committee to investigate, mediate, counsel and resolve cases of sexual harassment. A separate law on the issue is being drafted. In the absence of any written law, the judgment is legally binding and final on the issue.

Law and Policy in Action

Though the Supreme Court judgment has shifted the onus on the employers in public and private sectors to ensure women employees' safety at the workplace, formulating and anti-sexual harassment policy and setting up a complaints committee are not priorities for companies. Hence the law is violated rampantly. Most workplaces do not constitute a committee till an incident of sexual harassment occurs. Unless a criminal case has been filed, the consequences of the enquiry are usually in the form of a reprimand, demotion, suspension, dismissal or being asked to tender an apology.

An important contributory factor to non-implementation of the law is the lack of awareness among women and girls. In a research by Sakshi – a women's organization – it was found that 58% of the women were not aware of the Supreme Court guidelines³⁸. Despite the law, many cases go unreported as women are reluctant to lodge complaints of sexual harassment against their colleagues for fear of accompanying social stigma and protracted litigation in courts of law.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) commissioned a project on "Sexual harassment of women at work place" in various cities. The study reveals that nearly 60% of the working women are not aware of the guidelines given by the Supreme Court of India in *Vishakha* case. It was further found that even many of the employers are not aware of the Supreme Court guidelines and have not constituted a committee in pursuance of the guidelines. Thereafter, the NCW had prepared the code of conduct at work place in pursuance of the Supreme Court guidelines and circulated the same to all the ministries, educational institutions, public and private sector undertakings and various NGOs for information and implementation.

In 2010, The Protection Against Sexual Harassment of Women Bill was drafted. The bill makes it mandatory for all workplaces, including homes, universities, hospitals, government and non-government offices, factories, other formal and informal work places to constitute an internal committee for redress of complaints. On 3 September 2012, the Bill – The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill 2010 - was passed by Lok Sabha. One of the major provisions of the Bill, which is of serious concern to women's rights activists and advocates, is that which penalises the complainant if the internal committee or the local committee concludes that the allegation of sexual harassment was maliciously made, or was false³⁹. This provision will have a chilling effect on women who are subjected to sexual harassment at the workplace, and deter them from complaining⁴⁰.

³⁸ Sucheta Dalal, 'Bias in the Boardroom', *The Sunday Express*, May 18 2003

³⁹ Section 14 of the bill calls for action against the complainant in case the "internal committee or the local committee, as the case may be, arrives at a conclusion that the allegation against the respondent is malicious or the aggrieved woman or any other person making the complaint has made the complaint knowing it to be false."

⁴⁰ For a comprehensive critique of the Bill, see Jaising, Indira. 'Complainant in the Dock', *The Indian Express*, 17 September, 2012.

VII. Conclusion: Importance of Policies for Adolescent Girls at Work

Lack of implementation of laws, lack of awareness of rights enshrined in the laws coupled with lack of access to justice for adolescent girls, brings to the fore the importance of pro- active policies for adolescent girls at work as a complementing strategy.

“Kishori Shakti Yojana” – an adolescent girls’ scheme sponsored by the central and state government of Haryana - is a case in point where adolescent girls are trained and equipped to improve their home-based and vocational skills. The scheme was commenced with the objective of improving the nutritional and health status of adolescent girls between 11-18 years of age, to train and equip them to improve home-based and vocational skills, to promote awareness of health hygiene, nutrition, home management, child care, and take all measures as to facilitate their marriage after attaining the age of 18 years and even later. This scheme is being implemented through anganwadi centres⁴¹. Such schemes need to be taken up at a larger, nationwide scale to make a meaningful and long-term impact on economic empowerment of adolescent girls.

In conclusion, instead of viewing adolescent girls only through the lens of their natal families, they should be seen as individuals in their own right, who require laws and policies for protecting and promoting their rights. Micro-credit facilities and facilities for on-site banking facilities for adolescent girls and young women at their place of work are some such strategies. The policies should be geared towards supporting adolescent girls for building skills such as life skills and vocational skills, and for having savings independent of their families, in order that they can become economically independent. Laws related to eradication of child labour, bonded labour and protecting girls at the workplace ought to be implemented in a rigorous manner.

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Does Increasing Longevity Lead Increasing Disability? Evidence from Indian States

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Abstract

Recent studies uncovered continuous increase in life expectancy (LE) at birth in India and its states. Does increasing longevity lead to increasing disability? How is LE associated with proportions of life in good or bad health?

The paper aims to answer these questions by relating the disability data available in the 2011 census with the corresponding mortality data in the Sample Registration System. In doing so, the paper examines the differential pattern of disability among older adults defined as aged 60 and above and the association between LE and healthy life expectancy (HLE) at birth and at age 60 in India and its states.

Two measures are used to quantify disability in Indian states. First, disability rates were calculated by age, sex, residence and states; secondly, healthy life expectancy (HLE) and disabled life expectancy (DLE) were calculated by the method proposed by Sullivan (1971) and proportion of life spent in poor health.

Findings reveal that almost all types of disability increase with increasing age. There exists greater prevalence of disability in rural areas, among elderly populations and the oldest-old women in India. The disability prevalence rate is systematically more among Indian men than Indian women until age 79. Among the oldest age group (80+), Indian women are more disabled than men. On average, both males and females are expected to live about two years in an unhealthy condition. In general, there exists positive association between LE and HLE.

The findings recommend that policy and intervention on disability should be pro-rural, pro-gender and pro-elderly to reduce the disparity in disability among the Indian population. Further, modification of census disability definition as per the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health model of the World Health Organization is urgently needed for accurate measurement of the disabled population in India.

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I. Introduction

India's consistent achievement in gaining life expectancy (LE) in the past several decades made it the home of more than 103 million people aged 60 years and above in 2011. As a consequence of its rapidly ageing population, the central theme of health research in India is no longer confined to longevity but has expanded to understanding the burden of disability, particularly among the old-aged population. Does survival advantage translate to poorer health among older adults (60+) in India?

Answering these questions is of an enormous importance for future health care needs and policy implications. The existing body of literature addressing ageing and disability issues are not inclusive. While one group of studies focuses exclusively on the measurement and prevalence of disabilities in India (Mitra and Sambamoorthi 2006; Jeffery and Singal 2008; Mishra and Gupta 2006; Mehrotra 2006; Bakshi 2010), other studies focus on the problem of ageing issues in India (Chatterji et al. 2008; Thomas et al. 2014). We, however, found a limited number of studies that link ageing and disability by applying population-level disability data.

Nevertheless, addressing this question is not straightforward even in the context of developed countries, where the literature revolving around this issue is ample. While several researchers argue that people are living longer healthy lives (Fries 1983), some others believe that ill health and disability has increased with increasing longevity (Kramer 1980; Gruenberg 1977). Crimmins et al. (1989) claim that the association between longer lives and longer healthy lives depends on the definition of "health"; for instance, if the definition of "health" includes an ability to participate fully in the normal activities of everyday life, then the population under consideration might not live longer healthy lives. However, the conclusion would be altered if the definition were limited only to ill health, or to days spent in bed.

Unlike China or many other developed countries, India has the advantage of having heterogeneous sub-populations with diverse demographic indicators. It is well documented that most of the southern states in India are in the advanced stages of demographic transition with low mortality and more old-aged populations, whereas the central and eastern states still have relatively high mortality and young populations. This demographic diversity across Indian sub-populations gives an opportunity to test the linkage between different levels of survivorship and disability even after applying cross-sectional data.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, we examine the differential patterns of disability condition among the older population in India. Secondly, using 80 sub-populations of India, we test whether increasing longevity measured by life expectancy (LE) at birth and age 60 leads to increasing disability measured by proportion of life in poor health.

II. Data and Methods

Disability data were used from the C-20 table of the most recent 2011 Census provided by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner India. The question canvassed in Census 2011 is “Is this person mentally or physically disabled?” If the answer to this question is “yes”, a list of eight different types of disability is provided, viz. disability 1) in seeing, 2) in hearing, 3) in speech, 4) in movement, 5) mental retardation, 6) mental illness, 7) any other and 8) multiple disabilities. A detailed definition of each of the disabilities mentioned above can be found on the website of the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India. Data were organized into 5- and 10-year age groups—0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 19, 20 to 29,... and the 90+—by sex and residence (rural-urban) at the state- and district-level. Since disability information is not available in the line of conventional life table age groups, we assumed that percentage disability in each five-year age group is the same as the percent disability for corresponding ten-year age group, i.e., if the disability rate for the 60-69 age group is 4.41, we assume that the percent disability for each five-year age group, viz. 60-64 and 65-69, is 4.41. For the age group 0-4, we assume that the disability rate is uniformly distributed in each age. Although disability information was collected in the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census, we could not use those due to definitional changes in disability from one census to another. To calculate the disability rate, the corresponding population data are obtained from the same census.

Age-specific death rates (ASDR) for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 were obtained from statistical reports of the Sample Registration System (SRS). Instead of using one single-year ASDR, we used an average of ASDRs for 2010, 2011 and 2012 to eliminate possible sampling fluctuation. In short, the SRS, a dual registration system in India that covers six million of the population, has been providing the most reliable estimates of vital rates at national and sub-national (state categorized by rural-urban) since the 1970s. Several previous studies evaluated the quality of mortality information provided by the SRS (Saikia et al. 2011; Bhat 2002).

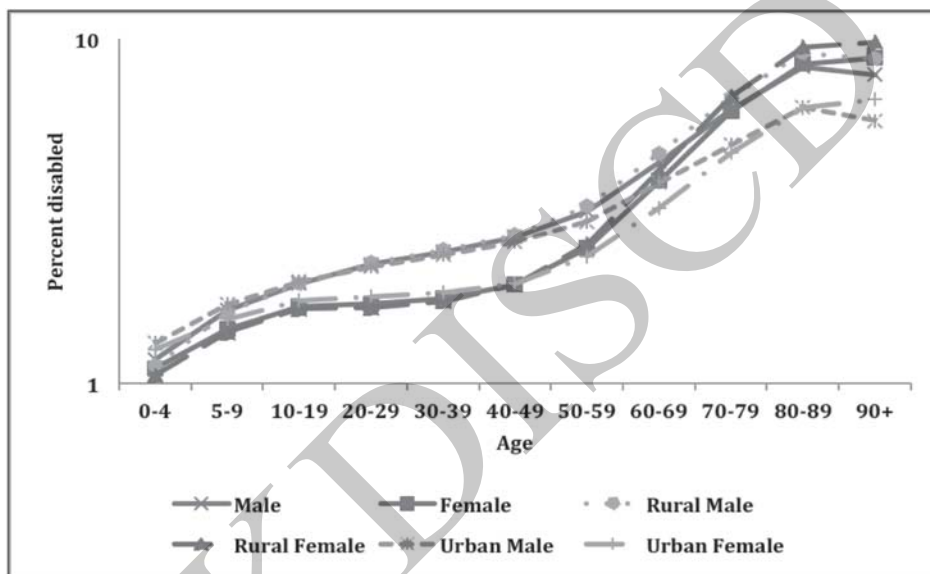
The most recent reports of the SRS provide ASDRs for 20 states of India by sex and rural-urban category. Life tables were produced for eighty population subgroups (20x2x2) using Chiang’s method (Preston et al. 2001).

Further, HLE and disabled life expectancy (DLE) were calculated using the Sullivan Method (Sullivan 1971), which provides estimates of HLE and DLE with few data requirements, such as age-specific prevalence of disability and age-specific mortality rate from a life table. It combines the disability prevalence observed for a given population with life tables depicting that population’s mortality experience. The number of years lived within each age group in the life table is distributed across states of disability according to age-specific disability rates (Cambois et al. 2001).

III. Results

The absolute number of disabled population in India is 26,810,557, comprising about 2.21 percent of the total population. Figure 1 depicts the age-sex pattern of the disability prevalence rate. It can be seen that for both sexes, the prevalence of disability slowly increases with age, but escalates after age 50. Compared to men, women experienced a lower rate of disability in India except for the oldest-old age groups (80 and above).

Figure 1: Disability prevalence rate by age, sex and place of residence, India, 2011



Note: Y-axis is expressed in logarithmic scale

There exists a stark difference in the disability prevalence rate between men and women in the 10-59 age group, indicating that men are subject to a higher prevalence of disability before becoming older adults. The gender gap in disability prevalence vanishes between ages 60 and 89; afterwards, women report marginally higher disability than men. Among all age groups and all residents, the pervasiveness of disability is the highest among rural women belonging to the oldest-old age group. Interestingly, the rural-urban differential in disability prevalence is not visible until age 60. Afterwards, rural Indians experience a higher prevalence of disability than urban Indians, suggesting an irregular divide of the disability burden by rural-urban residence.

Figure 2: Prevalence rate of disability by sex in 20 states of India among 60+ aged populations, 2011

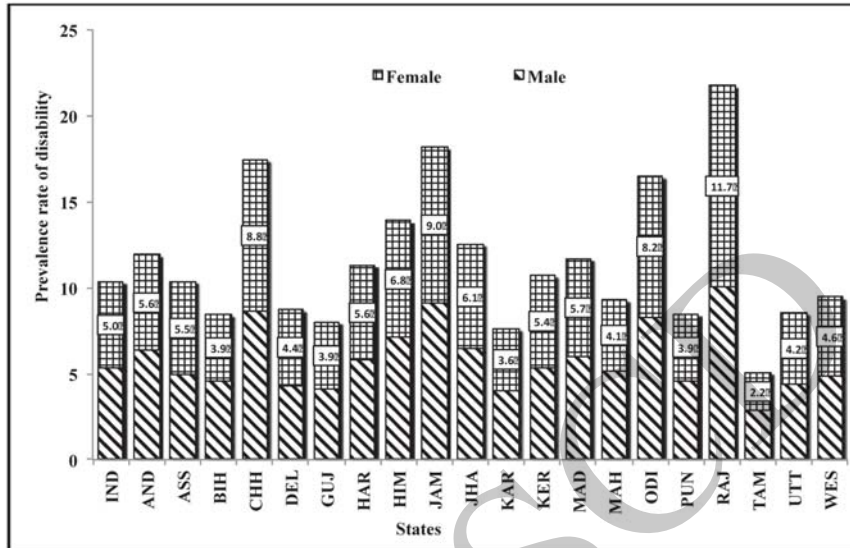


Figure 2 depicts the differential rate of disability prevalence by gender among people aged 60 and above in 20 states of India. It suggests substantial variation in disability prevalence rate across these states. Among males in the age group of 60 years and above, the disability prevalence rate in Rajasthan is more than three times than that of Tamil Nadu (2.8 percent in Tamil Nadu against 10.1 percent in Rajasthan). Likewise, women in Rajasthan experienced more than five times the disability rate experienced by women of Tamil Nadu (11.7percentin Rajasthan against 2.2 percent in Tamil Nadu). In the majority of states (17 out of 20 states), disability prevalence is higher for men than women in 2011.

Figure 3: Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth and at age 60 by sex and residence, India 2011

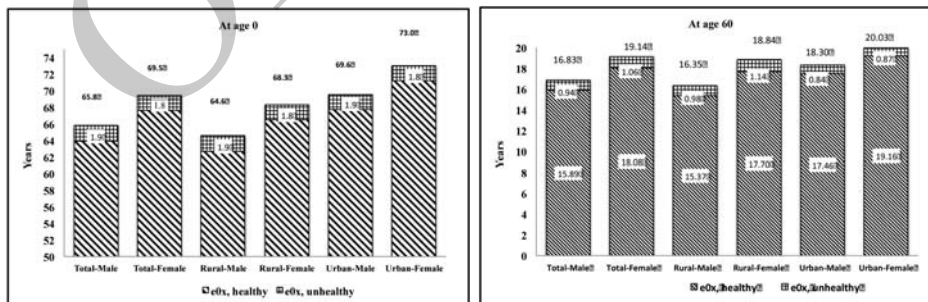


Figure 3 exhibits rural-urban differential in LE, HLE and DLE at birth and age 60 for India in 2011, respectively. In general, Indian women are expected to survive longer than Indian men irrespective of their place of residence. While life expectancy at birth

varies considerably by place of residence for both sexes, DLE at birth remains constant for both sexes, i.e., 1.9 years for males and 1.8 years for females, among all types of residents. Thus, Indian men are expected to live a slightly longer disabled life than Indian women at birth. However, this picture is altered when we examine this difference at age 60. All women experience longer DLE at age 60 than men irrespective of their residence (rural-urban). Likewise, the rural-urban difference is more pronounced in DLE at age 60.

Table 1: Life expectancy and disabled life expectancy at age 0 for Indian States, 2011

States	Rural				Urban				Total			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	LEB	DLE	LEB	DLE	LEB	DLE	LEB	HLE	LEB	DLE	LEB	DLE
Andhra Pradesh	63.5	2.2	68.9	2.1	69.2	2.3	74.1	2.2	65.1	2.2	70.3	2.2
Assam	61.0	1.3	64.0	1.5	68.3	1.3	72.2	1.4	61.9	1.3	65.0	1.5
Bihar	67.3	2.0	68.0	1.6	69.9	2.1	71.4	1.8	67.5	2.0	68.3	1.6
Chhattisgarh	62.4	2.1	65.9	2.4	66.2	2.0	70.2	2.0	63.0	2.2	66.5	2.3
Delhi	69.3	1.6	72.6	1.6	72.1	1.6	74.8	1.6	71.7	1.5	74.4	1.5
Gujarat	64.4	1.4	69.6	1.4	69.4	1.7	73.5	1.8	66.2	1.5	71.0	1.6
Haryana	64.6	1.9	69.8	1.9	68.8	2.0	71.9	2.0	65.9	2.0	70.5	2.0
Himachal Pradesh	68.4	2.2	73.9	2.3	76.1	2.0	79.6	2.2	69.0	2.2	74.3	2.3
Jammu & Kashmir	70.0	3.4	71.3	3.1	73.7	2.7	77.2	2.8	70.7	3.2	72.4	3.0
Jharkhand	64.6	2.2	65.2	1.9	69.5	2.0	72.6	1.9	65.4	2.1	66.4	1.9
Karnataka	64.5	1.7	69.9	1.6	70.1	1.9	73.5	1.7	66.3	1.7	71.1	1.6
Kerala	71.2	2.1	77.8	2.2	72.3	2.0	77.4	1.9	71.5	2.0	77.7	2.1
Madhya Pradesh	61.0	1.7	64.6	1.7	67.0	1.9	70.6	1.7	62.2	1.8	65.7	1.7
Maharashtra	68.0	2.4	72.4	2.0	71.8	2.2	74.7	1.9	69.5	2.3	73.3	2.0
Odisha	63.3	2.5	65.8	2.5	68.2	2.2	70.3	2.1	63.9	2.5	66.3	2.4
Punjab	67.3	2.1	72.4	1.8	70.8	1.9	74.8	1.7	68.6	2.0	73.4	1.8
Rajasthan	64.4	2.6	69.2	3.4	68.0	2.0	71.8	2.1	65.1	2.4	69.7	3.1
Tamil Nadu	66.9	1.3	71.6	1.2	69.8	1.3	73.8	1.1	68.1	1.3	72.5	1.2
Uttar Pradesh	61.6	1.5	65.2	1.5	66.6	1.9	69.0	1.7	62.5	1.7	65.9	1.6
West Bengal	67.8	2.0	70.8	1.9	70.5	1.9	73.6	1.8	68.5	1.9	71.5	1.8
India	64.6	1.9	68.3	1.8	69.6	1.9	73.0	1.8	65.8	1.9	69.5	1.9

Table 1 presents life expectancy and DLE birth for 20 Indian states in 2011. In all Indian states, women live longer than men irrespective of their place of residence. Both LE and DLE at birth vary substantially from one state to another. The maximum regional gap in LE at birth is among rural women and is about 13.8 years (77.8 years in Kerala and 64.0 years in Assam). The highest female DLE at birth, in rural Rajasthan (3.4 years), is more than three times the lowest female DLE at birth, in urban Tamil Nadu (1.1 years). Although urban residents enjoy systematically higher LE at birth than rural residents, there is no distinct pattern in the rural-urban differential in DLE at birth. Also, Indian women do not always have longer DLE than Indian men at birth. Remarkably, the differential in LE and DLE at birth is not identical with the differential in LE and DLE at age 60 in Indian states. Rural people's systematic disadvantage both in LE and DLE is uncovered at age 60 (Table 2). At age 60, all Indian women expect to live longer than men, and a majority of them experience longer DLE than men.

Table 2: Life expectancy and disabled life expectancy at age 60 for Indian States, 2011

States	Rural				Urban				Total			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
	LE	DLE	LE	DLE	LE	DLE	LE	DLE	LE	DLE	LE	DLE
Andhra Pradesh	16.2	1.2	18.9	1.3	17.7	1.0	21.5	1.0	16.6	1.1	19.5	1.2
Assam	14.7	0.7	17.4	1.1	18.4	0.7	19.7	0.8	15.2	0.8	17.8	1.1
Bihar	17.1	0.8	17.7	0.8	18.8	0.9	18.8	0.7	17.3	0.9	17.8	0.8
Chhattisgarh	13.7	1.2	17.6	1.8	16.8	1.2	19.0	1.4	14.1	1.2	17.7	1.7
Delhi	17.4	1.0	18.9	1.2	20.1	1.0	21.1	1.2	19.7	0.9	20.7	1.1
Gujarat	17.3	0.7	20.4	0.9	17.6	0.7	21.0	0.9	17.4	0.8	20.6	0.9
Haryana	17.1	1.1	20.3	1.3	18.6	1.1	20.1	1.2	17.6	1.1	20.3	1.3
Himachal Pradesh	18.2	1.4	21.7	1.7	22.8	1.2	26.0	1.5	18.4	1.4	21.9	1.7
Jammu & Kashmir	19.2	2.1	20.2	2.2	21.1	1.6	23.5	1.8	19.6	1.9	20.8	2.0
Jharkhand	15.8	1.2	16.5	1.2	17.8	0.9	19.8	1.0	16.2	1.1	17.0	1.1
Karnataka	16.1	0.7	18.9	0.8	18.7	0.7	19.8	0.6	16.9	0.7	19.2	0.8
Kerala	17.7	1.1	21.6	1.3	17.9	1.0	20.8	1.2	17.7	1.0	21.4	1.3
Madhya Pradesh	14.6	0.9	17.6	1.1	17.8	0.9	18.8	0.9	15.2	0.9	17.8	1.1
Maharashtra	17.3	1.0	19.2	0.9	18.9	0.9	20.0	0.8	17.9	1.0	19.5	0.9
Odisha	17.0	1.6	17.9	1.6	17.7	1.1	18.1	1.2	17.0	1.5	17.9	1.5
Punjab	18.6	0.9	21.0	0.9	19.7	0.8	20.7	0.8	19.0	1.0	20.9	0.9
Rajasthan	16.6	2.0	21.0	3.2	17.2	1.2	19.8	1.5	16.7	1.8	20.7	2.8
Tamil Nadu	16.7	0.5	18.9	0.5	18.0	0.5	19.4	0.4	17.2	0.5	19.1	0.5
Uttar Pradesh	15.2	0.7	18.4	0.8	18.0	0.9	19.1	0.8	15.6	0.7	18.6	0.9
West Bengal	16.6	0.9	18.2	1.0	18.2	0.8	20.0	0.8	17.1	0.8	18.7	0.9
India	16.4	1.0	18.8	1.1	18.3	0.8	20.0	0.8	16.8	0.9	19.1	1.0

Figure 4: Relationship between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth in Indian states

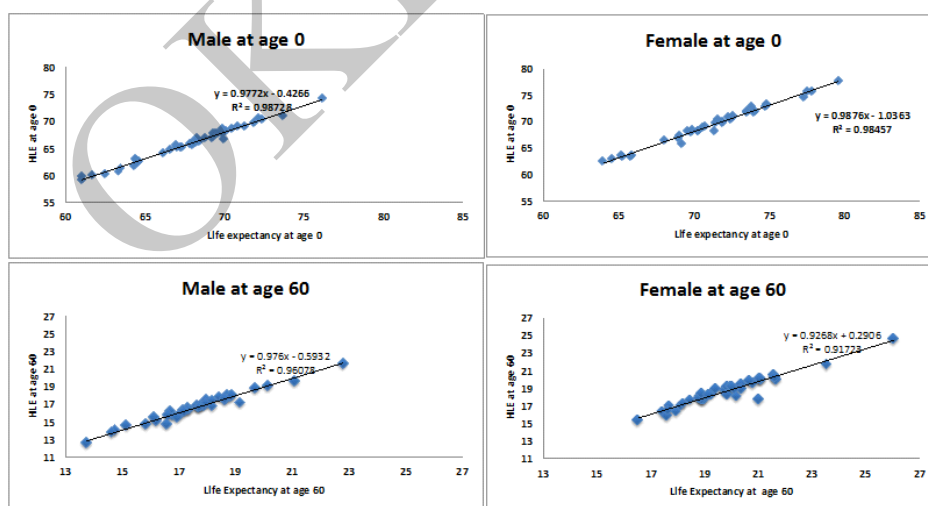


Figure 5: Life expectancy (at age 0 and at age 60) and % of life in poor health in Indian states

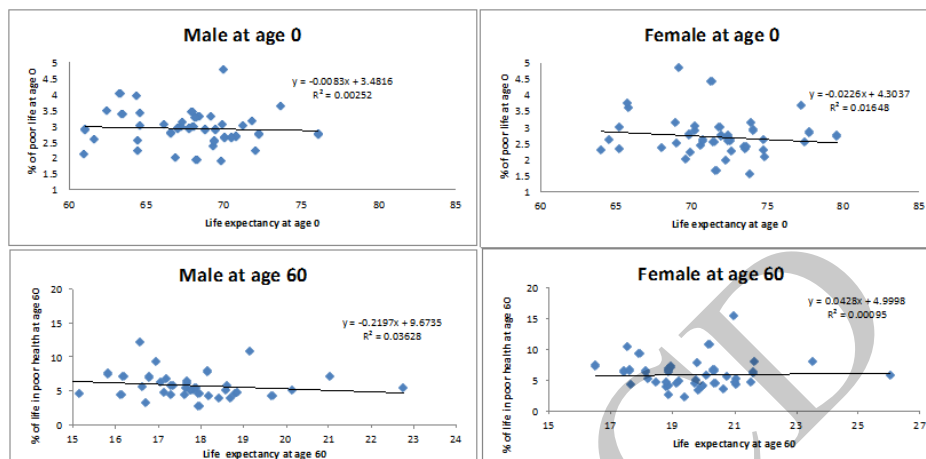


Figure 4 describes the relationship between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at ages 0 and 60 in 80 Indian sub-populations (20 states subdivided by male-female and rural-urban), respectively. A large mortality difference among Indian states in both ages is clearly visible in these figures. We also observe a strong and positive linear relationship between LE and HLE at different ages, which indicates that increase in life expectancy leads to an increase in healthy life expectancy.

Figure 5 presents the relationship between life expectancy and percentage of life in poor health at ages 0 and 60 in same 80 Indian sub-populations respectively. Contrary to the above findings, as life expectancy at birth increases, the percent of total life in poor health has not shrunk but remained constant. Thus, although the increase in LE indicates an increase in HLE, it may not lead to an increase in the percentage of a life spent in better health.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

Understanding the burden of disability among the older populations is extremely important in the context of a rapidly diversifying and ageing population like India. This paper aimed to investigate the differential pattern of disability among people aged 60 and above, as well as its linkage with life expectancy in Indian states. This is an important addition to the current disability literature in India, since there is very little empirical evidence on this issue.

The results of the first objective reveal a great deal of disparity in disability prevalence by age, gender, type and state of residence among the Indian population. The disability prevalence escalates after age 50, and is the highest among oldest-old women (aged 80 and above). The stark gender difference in disability prevalence in the age group 10-

50 suggests that men might be more exposed to accident-related disability than women at young adult ages.

Compared to urban Indians, rural Indians suffer a higher rate of disability beyond age 60. Similarly, regional differences in life expectancy DLE are remarkable for both men and women. The most of these findings are consistent with previous findings (O'Keefe 2005).

The present study confirms that there exists greater prevalence of disability in rural areas, among elderly populations and especially among older women in India. These findings suggest that policy and intervention on disability should be pro-rural, pro-gender and pro-elderly to reduce health inequality among the Indian population.

Secondly, we tested whether increasing longevity measured by LE at birth and age 60 leads to increasing disability measured by proportion of life in poor health. Our results reveal that increasing longevity is not strongly associated with the proportion of life spent in poor health. However, this result depends heavily on the definition of "disability" in the census or surveys.

Accurate measurement of disability is extremely necessary for improving the overall life and well-being of disabled people. This can prove to be an important tool for appropriate policies and interventions at both societal and individual levels. As of now, the definition of "disability" in the Indian census is a narrow measurement of disability, since it does not include information on activity limitations and participation restrictions. This prevents the comparison of Indian disability indicators with those of the rest of countries in the world. We strongly recommend the modification of the definition of disability in the Census as per the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) model of the World Health Organization to capture physical impairments, activity and functional limitations.

The present study has a few important limitations. The very first limitation arises due to the definition of "disability" as conceived in the Census of India, which does not strictly follow any of the conceptual models of disability defined by previous studies (Altman 2001; WHO 2001; WHO 2011). There exist three different approaches of understanding disability, viz., the medical model, the social model and the ICF model (Bickenbach et al. 1999; Altman 2001). While the medical model understands "disability" as intrinsic to the body or mind, and neglects limitations in daily life activities, the social model considers "disability" a result of society's failure to address the needs of persons with impairment (Mitra and Sambamoorthi 2006; Oliver 2013). The ICF model of disability of the WHO provides a coherent conceptualization of "disability" since it combines disability due to impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions (WHO 2001; Mitra and Sambamoorthi 2006; Leonardia et al. 2006). Most of the literature addressing disability in developing countries is based essentially on the ICF model. For instance, the Global Burden of Disease study defines disability as "shorter long-term health loss, other than death, such as chronic respiratory disease, diabetes,

cardiovascular diseases, and mental or behavioural disorders” (Murray et al. 2012). Unlike these studies, the Indian census has completely overlooked disability in daily activities/participation and defined disability as in the medical model. Consequently, no evidence was found of the positive relationship between longevity and disability in India. Therefore, one may expect a different direction in this relationship if the census definition of disability moves beyond the narrow definition of medical disability.

Secondly, while establishing linkages between longevity and disability, we depended primarily on only one cross-sectional census on Indian sub-populations with different levels of LE. Time series analysis of LE, HLE and DLE could not be done due to the lack of a uniform definition of disability from one census to another.

The third important limitation in the current analysis is inherent in the assumption of constant mortality in both healthy and disabled populations in Sullivan’s model. Thus, if disabled persons are subject to mortality selection, DLE based on Indian census data will be severely underestimated.

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Ethnicity and Autonomy: Unending political process in Mizoram

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Abstract

North East has become one of the most diversified regions in terms of ethnic identities. As such, the present state of Mizoram cannot escape such 'diversity' in term of ethnicity. Right from the dawn of independence till today, smaller ethnic communities struggle for their ethnic space. Ethnic tribal minorities like Lai, Mara and Chakma succeeded in establishing institutional autonomy in the southern parts of the state of Mizoram. But, the struggle for greater autonomy has been continued till today. Not only that, the other ethnic communities like the Hmar and the Bru are also pressuring the state government for creation of Autonomous District for their territorial autonomy and protection. This deeply embedded in the social, cultural and political realities, discourse on ethnicity becomes 'problem' for the policy makers, academician, and also media. Therefore, the present study will take a precautionary step to look into three thing: First, origin of the three autonomous districts and the present demands for greater autonomy; second, the demand for district autonomy initiated by the Hmar and the Bru, and the creation of SHDC; third, the paper will try and search the solution for the deep cleavage "deep diversity" within the state.

I. Introduction

The term 'ethnicity' has occupied one of the core issues in the study of North East. Defining the term reflect complexity as the region is divided internally and externally, covering tension and conflict arising out of cultural heterogeneity in the region. (Lacina 2009: 998, Gohain 2008) Moreover, ethnicity hardly exists in pure form because in the present context, it is always closely associated with what one can called 'political, cultural, religious and other social views and forms of interaction, which constitute important ingredient of the ethnic phenomenon' (Baqai 2004: 58). In the context of North East, we can see that the institutional arrangement particularly (State, UTs, Autonomous District, etc.) are designed for the larger ethnic communities (major groups), though never in a "peaceful" manners. While the minority groups (even some major

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groups of the plains) who felt to be left out of such institutional accommodations, resort to conflict and claims their rights based on their cultural, languages, territory, etc. (Manor 1996: 460). As a result, 'armed separatist' movements and 'counter militarism' have become the enduring feature of the region's politics (Hassan 2008: 53, McDuie-Ra 2008 :190, Lacina 2007).

This may be the reason why North East has been viewed as region of continuous 'conflict' and 'struggle' where the line is drawn between 'us' and 'them' for creating an 'ethnic space'. One can also argue that indiscriminate use of the term ethnicity in such situation "can produce more distortion than understanding" (Manor 1996: 459). It is therefore, necessary to go beyond the 'conflict zone' and construct a positive idea which is entailed in the name of democracy and also development (Dasgupta 1997: 346, Chandhoke 2006, Cline 2006: 126, Rao 1979: 592). The question however remains - will the Indian model of democracy success in the present context of North East India (Weiner 1989, Hazarika 2003). Therefore, the term 'ethnicity' and autonomy are become the necessity to employ for unifying the region or each territorial state other than disintegrating them (Sahadevan 2002: 104).

The state of Mizoram in the northeast region of India is no exception in such context. The state is though often regarded as one of the peaceful state in Indian Union after the signing of the Mizo Accord in 1986¹, but still the minority communities who felt 'left out' of the state formation process turn against the state. The reasons may differ among the communities. While the Lai, Mara and Chakma successes in establishing Autonomous Districts, the movement of the Hmar People's Convention (later HPCD) for Autonomous District and the pressure exerted by the Brus for more 'ethnic space' has entangled the state for political solution.

II. The Autonomous Districts

It is noticed in Mizoram that the minority communities took their own course in search for autonomy and protect their distinct identity. The struggle for autonomy exerted by the minority communities in Mizoram has now become the central theme of internal politics. This major challenge needs to be addressed with deep caution so as to integrate them in the larger political and cultural realm.

With the formation of the Mizo District Council in 1952, the minority communities within the Mizo District felt that their rights and autonomy should be protected from the majority community 'Mizo' through the Sixth Schedule. Thus, Tribal Union party was formed by the Pawi and Lakher on October 25, 1949 at Lawngtlai. (Chalngingluaia 2001: 2-3) The party ultimately succeeded in the formation of Pawi-Lakher Autonomous

¹ Memorandum of Settlement was signed between the Government of India, Mizo National Front (MNF) and Government of Mizoram on 30th June 1986. This memorandum is known as 'Mizoram Peace Accord' as it marked an end two decades of armed movement by the MNF for sovereign nation-state.

Council (PLRC) (Hnialum 2010:4, Zohra 1997)².

Soon in April, 1953 election for the first Pawi- Lakher Regional Council was held in which 9 seats were elected and 3 seats were nominated by the Government. The PLRC was inaugurated in Lunglei on April 23, 1953. (Chalngingluaia 2001:9) The Pawi-Lakher Regional Council functioned for two decades, till Mizoram was declared Union Territory in 1971. Here after, PLRC was trifurcated into three Regional Councils; viz., Chakma, Lakher and Pawi Regional Councils under the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous region (Re-organisation) order, 1972.³ Later, the three Regional Councils were also upgraded into Autonomous District from April 29, 1972 immediately after Mizo District attained Union Territory⁴.

The trifurcation of PLRC into three Autonomous Districts viz., Pawi Autonomous District, Lakher Autonomous District and Chakma Autonomous District were formed by amending paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. The three new Autonomous Districts were inserted in Part III of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule and continue to the 'tribal areas' of the present State of Mizoram. Later the Pawi and the Lakher were change into Lai and Mara thus, the present Autonomous Districts are known as, Lai Autonomous District, Mara Autonomous District and Chakma Autonomous District.

If one looks into the political history of the formation of Regional Council under the Sixth Schedule, apart from the then Pawi-Lakher Regional Council, there was no other Regional Council formed by the State Government. In other words, the then Mizo District was the only Autonomous District under Assam where Regional Council was constituted to protect other minority communities under the Sixth Schedule. Therefore, the formation of the present day Autonomous Districts in Mizoram has a long political route whose lineage can be traced to the dawn of Independence.

III. Demand for Greater Autonomy: Political 'Imbrogio'

Sensing the well protected nature of the tribal under the Sixth Schedule, the presence of three Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram seem to have encouraged other ethnic minority communities, viz., the Hmar and the Bru (GoM 1986) to struggle for new institutional arrangement within the state of Mizoram. (Sen 1992: 78, Lalrinawma 2000: 28) The present state of Mizoram has therefore been caught and entangled in the struggle and demands for autonomy by these two ethnic communities.

Among them, it is the Hmar who put strong and constant pressure on the State Government for the creation of separate Autonomous District to protect their 'define distinct identity'. In the case of the Bru community, the demand for autonomy has been

² Government of Assam, Vide Memo No. TAD/R/52/15 dated 20.05.52.

³ Vide Administrator of Mizoram Notification No. CCMP3/72/70-72 Dated 1.4.1972

⁴ The Mizoram District Councils (Miscellaneous Provisions) Order, 1972

a recent phenomenon that was initiated by a group (namely, Bru National Liberation Front, BNLF) from the 'repatriation campaign' in Tripura. Their main agenda was to claim 'homeland' and representation for the Bru in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. (Times of India 2001, Sept. 8) Though in both the cases, the State Government was adamant not to create another autonomous region (Times of India 2001, August. 4) but in the case of Hmar, Memorandum of Settlement had been signed to for the creation of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC) that covers Hmar occupied villages to accommodate their struggle. Therefore, it is necessary to have a brief study of the struggle of other minority communities for autonomy.

The struggle of the Hmar community for autonomy has taken a long process. It was initiated with developmental issue based on territorial orientation but was soon turned into struggle for homeland or in other word 'ethnic space' (Chonzik 2010, Singh 1994: 127). The struggle came to the front soon after the conversion of Mizoram Hmar Association into a political organization called Hmar People's Convention in December 18, 1986. The main agenda of the HPC was the creation Autonomous District comprising of all the Hmar-dominated areas in the north and northwest Mizoram under the Sixth Schedule⁵. To push their demands the HPC resolved to an armed struggle which lasted till 1992 and finally 'halt' when the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) was signed between the Government of Mizoram and HPC. The MoS ultimately concluded with the Five Point Agreement in 1994⁶

According to the political dialogue, SHDC was officially formed on August 27, 1997 but the discontentment advocated by the various Hmar groups was of the nature of implementation of the MoS which is not yet arrived till today. (Bhaumik & Bhattacharya 2005, Hassan 2006) Some of the discontentments exerted were - the demarcation of the SHDC area could not be settled and election to the SHDC could not be held. Moreover, there was the issue of implementation of the Hmar language as a medium of instruction in the SHDC areas (The Assam Tribune 2012: December 6). The members of the SHDC were not elected by people but appointed by the State Government which seems to implicate that it is fully controlled by the Government. Even after two decades of the signing of MoS, election could not be held in SHDC though in September 23, 2013 the State Cabinet approved the creation of SHDC areas into 12 constituencies under SHDC Election Rules 2008 for election (Vanglaini 2013: September 30).

On the other end, it seems that MoS itself suffer major setback right from the beginning as it was resulted in the formation of a faction among the HPC called HPC-D (Hmar People's Convention Democratic). The HPC-D was against the MoS and continued to hold armed struggle against the Government of Mizoram in demand for greater

⁵ The HPC quest for Hmar autonomy started with the demand for the creation 'Hmar Ram' a homeland in the Hmar occupied areas in the states of Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya in 1987. HPC's first *memorandum* dated 21st January, 1987, submitted to the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. This was soon followed by Second *memorandum* dated October 5, 1987, narrowing their demand area only to the state of Mizoram.

⁶ Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) was signed in Aizawl on July 27, 1994. Following the agreement the armed cadres of the HPC surrendered their weapons in October 1994.

autonomy⁷. The demand made by the HPC-D has not been materialised till date because the State Government reaffirmed that it could not afford the creation of another Autonomous District (Vanglaini 2013: July 19 & August 17). The State Government's indifference to the demand of the HPC-D is supported by the non-governmental organisations in Mizoram⁸. The main idea behind the support made by the NGOs is that, the Mizo communities as whole (Nation) could not afford another 'territorial division' which would further intensify 'ethnic' differences. They therefore, urged all the minority communities to define their term under Mizo and Mizoram, culturally and politically.

IV. Against the State

In order to intensify their cause, the HPC-D boycotted the Village Council election in 15 villages that was to be held on February 23, 2012. The Government of Mizoram was left with no choice but extended the term of the existing Village Councils in these villages⁹. Moreover the movement also turns against the largest NGO (Young Mizo Association) whom the HPC-D accused of being against their demands. Thus, the HPC-D made public declaration to the YMA branches in the villages covered under the 'demand areas' for the submission of the YMA 'official seals' to the Central YMA¹⁰. The YMA branches under the 'demand areas' has no option but to comply by the HPC-D notifications.

Therefore, the initiative taken by the HPC-D in their struggle for autonomy has indicated three important things: first, it has put pressure on the government for the full implementation of MoS, particularly the creation of District Council under the Sixth Schedule¹¹. Second, the HPC-D resistance against the CYMA clearly signifies that they will put pressure on any organisations that do not support their demand for autonomy.

⁷ In the beginning of 2007, the Mizoram Government initiated a series of steps for political dialogue with HPC-D. The HPC-D who pursued greater autonomy demanded tripartite talks between the Central Government and the Government of Mizoram. According to the HPC-D, their terms mainly entailed the creation of Hmar Territorial Council (HTC) in the State of Mizoram under the Sixth Schedule. Moreover to win the heart of the Mizo the HPC-D also stated that "it would not compromise the territorial integrity of the State of Mizoram and had no intention of breaking away from it".

⁸ 'Joint Resolution' published by the CYMA, MHIP Gen. Hqrs. & MUP Gen. Hqrs., August 5, 2013, Aizawl.

⁹ State Election Commission Notification, No. B. 12011/48/2012-SEC/VC/Vol-II, the 10th July, 2013.

¹⁰ In the month of February 2012, there was a rumor spread by 'some unknown' that the CYMA president in his public speech proclaimed that the YMA was against the up gradation of SHDC to ADC. This had created a tension between the CYMA and the HPC-D in which the Chairman of HPC-D Zosangbera sent open letter to T. Sangkunga, President CYMA accusing him of making such speech in the public. Soon, the General Secretary of CYMA made a clarification that "the President did not make such speech and urged the YMA branches in the HPCD Demand Area not to submitted their seals to the CYMA and that the CYMA has tries to pacify the existing tension". 'Central YMA Thuchhuak', CYMA office, April 20, 2012, Aizawl. (<http://centrallyma.org.in/news.php?readmore=172>, accessed on October 7, 2013)

Thirdly, and most importantly, they tend to create separate ethnic identity and space within Mizo (Nation), similar to that of the Lai and Maras, and seek recognition of 'their difference' under the Constitution of India¹².

The State Government is caught in the political 'imbroglio' as constant pressure is exerted by demanding greater autonomy within the state. Till now, the State Government has remained adamant on its position on not creating separate autonomous region. For how long it can hold or divert the struggle for autonomous space remains a serious political question. With regard to the Hmar issues, some degree of political dialogue has been initiated between the Government of Mizoram and HPC, i.e., formation of Sinlung Hills Development Council (SHDC), but the continuous demand made by the faction group HPC-D for greater autonomy still remains at large.

The question is – will the granting of Autonomous Council to the Hmar within the state of Mizoram lead to harmony. Or, is it affordable to the State Government to create another Autonomous District where many minority communities compete for territorial recognition within the State boundary.

Experience has shown that simply granting Autonomous Council does not offer the 'best' solution for ethnic minorities within the State¹³. Even in the present context, one can clearly see that the ADCs put constant pressure on the State Government for greater degree of autonomy if possible 'total autonomy' what one can term it. Thus apprehension persist up to what extend the term 'autonomy' can be defined and In the case of the Hmar, one needs to think and rethink seriously what will be the possible 'solution' which can be realised in letter and spirit to cede the struggle.

V. Concluding Remarks

It has been the task of the policy maker, academician, the NGOs, the leaders of the ethnic communities, the media and of course the insurgents to find the best solution to the present context. How far this ever growing movement of autonomy will persist? Will it end? Does the establishment of institutional arrangement (ethnic space) will ever end the quest for greater autonomy? It is difficult to answer such questions as the state often tries to deviate from the issue instead of putting efforts for possible solution. Thus, it is necessary to look into the real situation where the presence of different ethnic communities indicates deep cleavage within the society itself. In this context it

¹¹ In the memorandum submitted to the then Governor of Mizoram, the leaders of HPC states that "Hmar District Council is the dragnet to overcome all the prevailing problems of the Hmars." Memorandum submitted to the Governor of Mizoram by HPC General Hqr. in Aizawl, October 12, 2000.

¹² Mizo Hmar Welfare Community issued a public statement stating that: "Hmar is the largest tribe of the Mizo and ...that they will never detached or disintegrated from the Mizo" see, *MHWC Press Release*, Aizawl, August 7, 2013.

¹³ Most of the States in North Eastern Indian has faced the challenge on how to accommodate the ethnic minorities. There are hardly any Autonomous District which is content to their relation with the State and the Centre Government, particularly the financial relation.

may help to employ Charles Taylor's "deep diversity" to answer the problem arises out of deep cleavage. First, 'deep diversity' itself is necessary to understand that there is a cleavage of difference in each community in a wider context. Second, 'the politic of recognition' is a necessary instrument which is well advocated by the communitarian to accommodate difference through institutional arrangement. To attain recognition, "dialogue" is an essential element that sanctions accommodation of the minority culture. But, the most important is "inter dependent" which is important for the survival "deep diversity".

Inter dependent is the most important to put remarks in the context of the present study. Defining and refining our difference from other though necessary, but it keeps constant distance between 'us' and 'them'. The institutional arrangement under ADC in the present context of Mizoram gives an example that though each Autonomous Districts enjoy certain degree of autonomy the question remains on the nature of 'autonomy' which is unending political process. Moreover, apprehension laying over the issue of 'autonomy' that it can lead to distortion rather than solution if deviated from the real cause. For example, one need to question does 'autonomy' result in a unifying nature of the Mizo as a nation or 'divide'. It needs one to seek a balance tendency in the struggle for autonomy. It is also the duty of each community particularly the Mizo society in a larger context to give space for ethnic minorities. It ought to find commonality with other (individually or community) and that one needs to deepen our dependence on each other for integration and development. Thus, one needs to be careful in pursuing autonomy on ethnic line as it can lead to distortion than understanding. This is the exact stands of NGOs such as YMA which keep iterating for integrating the various ethnic communities under one umbrella, though difficult is not impossible. It is necessary to propagate that each community needs the other for their survival and integration is must for development. It does not imply that minority will have no autonomy or not accommodate in the larger realm. But the demand for 'autonomy' has to come along with the process of integration with faith and mutual understanding. It is necessary to re-define and refine our notion of autonomy by involving various parties and seek solutions, of which the state take the lead.

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Rhetoric and Reality of Public-Private Partnerships in India: A case study of Bangalore Agenda Task Force

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Abstract

Evidences now reveal rising emphasis on the public-private partnership (PPP) approach to raise the efficiency and inclusion level of the development interventions. This paper reviews the characteristics of the PPP approach and examines its utility and viability through a case study of BATF created for the delivery of urban infrastructure. PPP is considered as an alternative service delivery model to achieve efficiency and address shortages of public resources, although unlikely to replace fully traditional service delivery approach of the welfare state. It is visualised that PPP would help to overcome impediments posed by state failure and institutional constraints, and distributing costs and risk among partners. Some observable positive outcomes are seen of such initiatives. But studies also indicate citizen repose little faith on such approaches as saviour of their problems and prefer the government (state) for solutions. Despite tangible accomplishments, the fact is that the approach does not by itself guarantee equity. PPP alone is not a panacea; rather it is one of the tools the State has at its disposal for service delivery, which needs careful application.

I. Public-Private Partnership for Service Delivery: Conceptual Framework

There is lack of consensus over the definition of Public Private Partnership (PPP). PPP is defined as 'working arrangements based on a mutual commitment between a public sector organisation with any organization outside of the public sector' (Gerrad, 2001: 49; Bovaid, 2004: 200). It is a contractual agreement formed between a government agency and a private sector that allows the latter in public service delivery towards financing, designing, implementing (Peirre, 1999:374; Osborne, 2000; Awortwi, 2004: 213; DEA and ADB, 2006: 17; Hodge and Greve, 2007:545; Rajan, 2007: 2).

PPP is innovative, flexible collaborations in which the partners are bound by shared values and mutual trust to share cost, risks, and benefits (Batley, 1996; Ghore, 2001:

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441; Teisman and Klijn, 2003: 197; Prosper Ngowi, 2006: 3; Bloomfield, 2006:400). PPP is also understood in terms of inherent power dynamics shared mutually among the partners (Lister, 2000:228). Power might be political information, or organizational power. PPP is alternative service delivery model to achieve efficiency and address shortages, although unlikely to replace fully traditional service delivery by governments. The partnership concept is linked to the network forms of governance, in which public actors co-opt other actors to solve the governance problems. PPP therefore, represent an innovative or new way of doing business to improve the quality and efficiency of public services.

Typology of Public-Private Partnership

PPP encompasses a range of partnerships based on (i) number of partnership involved (ii) governance level at which partnership is evolved and (iii) the objectives or purpose for which partnership is constituted (Sekar, 2002: 5). Other classification include: type of partnership, size of partner (measurable in terms of funding, revenue, investments etc), extent of collaboration/level of commitment, role and functions, stage of partnership, type of actors involved, area of intervention for output, scope of partnership, organisational form, capacity in partnership, and geographic location. All these forms of partnership imply some degree of complementarity or synergy or collaboration or co-production, dialogue, contracting, co-ownership, market friendly regulation and trust between public and civic actors in pursuit of common set of social objectives (Robinson and White, 2001: 107; Sansom, 2006:210)).

The classification includes public-public, public-private, and public- civil society and International- development partners. Partnership between public- public is most common to cooperate and coordinate in service delivery (Hall, et al, 2005: 7). The coordination between the Bangalore City Corporation (BCC) and Karnataka Slum Clearance Board (KSCB) can be mentioned in this regard. The partnerships between local and central or state governments for power sharing (for setting policy priorities, policy design or planning and policy implementation) are also come under this category.

PPP in partnership with 'private' sector include interalia corporate bodies, consulting firms, contractors, maintenance companies, and private investors and so on. The public-private also include: service contracts, operation and management contracts, Leasing-Buy-Build-Operate (BBO), Lease-Develop-Operate (LDO), Wrap-Around Addition (WAA), Build Operate-Transfer (BOT), Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) etc. Most contracts cover the finance, design, management, and maintenance obligations. These contracts are usually financed by user fees or tariffs or by government subsidies. The argument is that private participation results in better efficiency. The PPP helps to raise resources (funds, techno-managerial skill and expertise), innovation, cost saving and reconstruction and commercial risk sharing, entrepreneurial spirit and improve services simultaneously.

The partnership with third sector such as local NGOs, community organisations, trade unions and so on (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2004) is to achieve transparency,

accountability, social equity (Laquian, 2005: 307). Partnership with NGOs or Community Based Organizations also varies depending whether primarily, a deepening role or stretching role (Krishna, 2003: 365). Such engagements facilitate co-production without undue interference of government (Sansom, 2006: 213).

These civic groups play a predominant role in mobilising services, pressing for micro-policy reforms, engage in mass campaigns, demand for better services, monitor actual provision and ensuring accountability from service providers (Chowdhury Roy, 1999:1097; Jalal, 2000: 43; Robinson and White, 2001: 100; Paul, et al 2004: 933). The horizontal engagement of public civil society is aimed to promote consultative process and prioritise service options and widen the participatory democracy. In fact, the process of decentralisation has resulted in the empowerment of the common people through local-level planning and community resource mobilisation. Norms of such cooperation on networks of civic engagement among ordinary citizens and public agencies are used for developmental ends and serve as socialisation agents of partnership (Chowdhury Roy, 1999:1098; Vigoda, 2002:536; Sangita, 2005: 75) and realise collective pressure to usher policy changes. Instead of remaining passive recipients, the participation of civic groups has in fact inspired the undertaking of a unique state-citizen dialogue in a stupendous way by 'pressurizing' or 'lobbying' the existing state for change. These structures are effective beyond their social role, by linking the public issues at the grassroots into the appropriate platform at the local level. The deliberative structures hope to promote civic values, civility as a precondition for governance and thereby determine their own development paradigms.

The state and international partnership include a public authority from a country (preferably high income country) entering into a partnership with a public authority with a lower income country usually to assist the latter with its development projects (Hall, et al, 2005: 7-8; Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2004: 254). The second type of partnership is between international partners when public authorities (Hall et al 2005: 6) from different countries work together to address common set issues and agendas. These partnerships are important inter-organisational mechanism for delivering international development assistance. For instance, transnational agencies or international donor agencies like World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) or United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has major funding or contribution for infrastructure such as water supply; sanitation; energy or power sector.

There are many potential drivers for promoting partnership in developing countries. First, glaring infrastructure deficit, in the areas such as water supply, sanitation, local transportation, and waste treatment compel the government to opt private sector for financing, design, construction, and operation (Lquian, 2005: 312). Partnership would help to overcome impediments posed by state failure, institutional constraints, and distributing costs and risk among partners. In addition, partnership constitutes the most significant methods to generate performance of essential services that tends to reflect the incorporation of market-based principles and practices into the public provisioning of services (Pinto, 1998: 394). In the field of local governance, the governmental

organisations are increasingly dependent on private or semi-private actors for implementation of their policies and service delivery.

Expected outcomes from the Partnership

What inherent mechanism the PPP mode has to raise the inclusion level of the services? PPP reduces the gap of meeting increasing infrastructure needs and social exclusion. Partnership further can bring creativity, dynamic, resilience, innovation, energy, vibrancy and capacity building to improve service delivery. PPP however is critical in promoting innovation in technological, institutional, and organizational behaviors and practices in service delivery.

The objectives of PPP in service delivery vary with wider political and private interest. The PPP tries to promote clear customer focus through reduced cost, faster services, and improved service quality. Further, PPP promotes greater efficiency in terms of improved coverage, access and enhanced social service (Cook and Minogue, 1990: 398; Kaul, 1997: 21; Brown and Potoski, 2006:657; Bloomfield, 2006:401). PPP ensures recovery of user charges by better risk allocation and procures additional revenue streams, which public institutions alone often fail. Thus, PPP is seen as the best way, to govern the complex relations and interactions in a modern network society (Teisman and Klijn, 2002: 198).

Obstacles for PPP

The major constraints for PPP are: fragmentation, duplication, heterogeneity and uncertain outcomes. Power relationship in partnership is often asymmetrical and less ambivalence. The most vexed issues of a partnership approach are fragmented structures and processes, blurring responsibilities and accountability. Effective coordination in partnership seems to be the area of contention which includes: duplication of services, heterogeneous approaches, competition for resources, and lack of integration, corruption, inter-institutional coordination, bureaucratization, and dependence (Robinson and White, 2001: 103; Krishna, 2003: 368).

Public authority in partnership is often overshadowed owing to its focus on monitoring and evaluation. Lack of infrastructure and other resources available with the Public authorities, which is, one of the drivers of such partnership; leads to somewhat uneven playing field and weak relations. Inadequate control over the PPP, is often observed in the cases of local contracts with private sector involved in services provisioning and result in higher cost to local taxpayers (Bloomfield, 2006:402;Hodge and Greve 2007: 553). The long-term partnership entailing innovative methods of financing public facilities are susceptible to transparency problems (Ghere, 2000: 448; Bloomfield, 2006: 403) and within partnership coordination costs are a major challenge to successful PPPs. Staff reduction or downsizing leads to mistrust and poor management. Tariff increase, layoffs, and poor stakeholder's coordination have contributed for its weakness. Further, private investors are basically profit-oriented. PPPs tend to focus on markets where revenues are easily generated. The poor are often excluded from PPPs because of institutional constraints that prevent the development of an attractive market that

involves the poor (Robinson and White, 2001: 104; Laquian, 2005: 312; Leung and Hui, 2005: 14). Such developments also push forward the argument that public provisioning is the only way out in a welfare state.

Many PPPs have failed due to strong opposition from civil society, local media, and other stakeholders. Even in the absence of this bias, governments often lack the financial resources and the technical capacities to provide services to the poor. Partnership would further marginalise the poor as they focus on markets for profits. Further, the availability of private financing for infrastructure projects has essentially provided governments an opportunity to use a 'mega-credit' card to charge on infrastructure deals (Hodge and Greve, 2007: 552). Lastly, the partnership projects have generally undermined the significance of local cultural ethos. Overcoming these institutional constraints often require innovative solutions and an inclusive partnership that will bring in all relevant stakeholders.

Enabling Conditions for Public-Private Partnership

It will require careful planning and application through a clear framework for partnerships to extract full potential of PPP mode. Governments need to work on accountable and transparent structures to formulate and enforce. First the establishment of proactive mechanisms (such as ombudsman, ethical training, and citizen grievances processes) would ensure partnership legitimacy. Second, PPP needs to do preparatory work defining procedure (specificities), tasks, quality indicators and monitoring process. Improved and more independent regulation of public utilities is achieved by an effective entry point for future well defined PPP contracts (Sansom, 2006:215). Some necessary pre-requisites include strong political commitment, transparency and consistency of policy, effective regulation, careful design of the contract with appropriate risk apportionment and attention to cost recovery, and clearly defined stakeholder roles, project financing, and extent of competition. And creation of a good information base is also an important factor. Feedback and consultations with citizens, labour unions, relevant government agencies, private investors, civil society organizations, and media will ensure support, client focus, and overall improved implementation of PPP and protect public interest.

Thus, successful PPP stems from the nature of goods and services produced and depends on transformation of inputs into outputs and tradeoffs that partnership face (Orts, 1996: 1080; Rudolph, 2000: 1768). Further, the successful partnership depends on the form of rates paid to public officials and the opportunity costs facing citizens for inputs like knowledge, skills and time (Ostrom, 1996: 1081). Finally, effective conflict resolution, contradicting social and political goals, complicated contractual agreements, expertise, consultation, cooperation and attending to their suggestions are all potential areas of concern.

Public-Private Partnership in Urban Context

Cities of the world experience tremendous pressure in terms of management and operation of urban systems as well as service delivery. Important changes are taking place in the governance of cities in developing countries; one of the important being the proliferation of various forms of networks and partnership between public-private

and civil society. Many urban reforms such as partnerships with public-private and civil society organisations are introduced to improve quality of governance and service delivery. The broad stakeholders in this reform process include differing in sectors and levels. Changes in rules, norms and values, practices have been brought to facilitate coordination among various agencies to improve efficiency. Privatisation, decentralisation, restructuring of departments and administrative procedures, laws and regulations, social audit, e-governance, citizen charter, redressal of grievances, transparency and sound personnel policies constituted major strategies of urban governance reform (World Bank, 2003). Many Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) introduce innovations to improve billing and collection, rationalisation of service charges, simplifications of tax assessment system, computerisation of services, and improved accounting and financial management systems.

II. Public-Private Partnership: A case study of BATF in Bangalore City

Partnership among various government agencies has been evolved to address the changing needs of growth and development of Bangalore. City Improvement Trust Board (CITB) in 1945 and later Bangalore Metropolitan Planning Board (BMPB) in 1961 was responsible for preparation of master plan for Bangalore (Heitzman, 2004: 48). In their place, Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) came into existence in 1976. The BDA prepared Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) in 1985 to promote inter-agency coordination. Bangalore Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (BMRDA) was set up in 1985 to plan, coordination and supervise orderly development of the Bangalore Metropolitan Region (8721 Kms). State departments like Urban Development Department (UDD), Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) and the State Town Planning Directorate (STPD) State Town Planning Board (STPB) and Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC) are responsible for policy, supervision and coordination. Major private and public planning bodies such as Nandi (Mysore Highway Corridor)-Bangalore Mysore International Corridor Planning Authority (BMICPA), BIALI for construction of New International Airport-Bangalore International Airport Planning Authority (BIAPPA) and IT corridor are involved in planning and development activities in the city. The problem of vertical networking is compounded with poor intergovernmental coordination and fragmented interventions. To overcome this, Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) was constituted to mobilise resources, improve infrastructure and transform Bangalore a better performing metropolis.

BATF and Partnership -Policy Formulation, Enforcement and Implementation

To develop Bangalore as class one city of the country by 2004 and strengthen its position as an engine for Karnataka's economic growth, BATF was constituted in the year 2000. It consisted of 15 members representing government, corporate sector and civil society. The BATF represented entrepreneurial class influencing public policy space as partners in setting the urban agendas as well as implementation (Heitzman, 2004: 103; Raghunath and Sen, 2003: 206). Over the years, the BATF has been silent catalyst translating its mandate into action projects and creation systems to enable PPP

for realising the city's potential.

BATF worked with 7 civic stakeholders (BMP, BDA, BWSSB, BCP, BMTC, BESCOM, and BSNL). BATF assisted them in implementation of short-term and long-term projects. In addition BATF undertook projects on its own initiative to build credibility with the stakeholders and show case best practices (BATF, 2003). Such experiment has enabled the stakeholders to access skills and resources of the various civic and administrative stakeholders. These efforts aimed efficiency, cost effective implementation projects and schemes that encouraged participation of public and private sectors, professionals and citizen groups for enhancing quality of life in the city. The thrust areas of BATF include: Up-gradation of infrastructure; public health and sanitation; roads and traffic; and introduction of local financial reforms.

Urban Infrastructure and Upgradation: BATF Partnership

With the partnership of BATF, BDA developed infrastructure facilities like ring roads, fly-overs, grade separators, parks and lakes and other infrastructure facilities. These were undertaken at cost of Rs 300- 400 crores without any assistance from the state government and other civic bodies (BDA, 2004: 32). These projects have been completed within 18 to 24 months. These enabled BDA to turn out financially vibrant and developed the quality city infrastructure with no additional burden on the citizens. Further, BDA allotted 40,000 housing sites during 2000 to 2003.

The Bangalore city police introduced many changes primarily on prevention of crime and maintaining of traffic management, with the help of BATF. Police force has created innovative solutions to address the city's traffic problems through one-ways. Under the guidance of BATF, many citizen-friendly initiatives such as 'Pay and Park' facility was installed in 95 locations. This enabled BMTC to earn over 1.25 crore revenue per year. Some of the issues in this context are – one, does the revenue generated help to recover the costs? Two, how the infrastructure developed enhanced convenience and efficiency of the citizens? BATF with BMTC constructed 100-125 bus shelters on BOT basis at no cost. BMTC earned over 1.25 crore revenue per annum carrying 25 lakh passengers every day. The introduction of service centres (information-cum-complaint lodging system) by BMTC enabled passengers to enquire about bus routes, arrivals and departures (BATF, 2003). In addition, 40 Modern High-Tech Bus Shelters were constructed along Outer Ring Road. Other highlights of the period were installation of 647 new power transformers, installation of 1.3 lakh new telephone connections, introduction of one-way traffic on major roads, a modern fingerprint system for crime detection, renovation of five ground-level reservoirs and allocation of 5,000 housing sites. The BATF in collaboration with the BMP, the Bangalore Traffic Police and the BMTC has taken up a Central Area Traffic Management Plan (CATMP). This has helped to some extent in reducing air pollution, travel time and fuel consumption, and make pedestrian crossings safe.

Financial Reforms and BATF

BATF along with BMP has also undertaken a number of citizen friendly initiatives like

the introduction of the *Sarala Katha Scheme* (SKS), *easy plan* (Sulabha Nakshe) for sanction of building plans, setting up a computerised complaints management system, easily accessible round the clock control room and Self-Assessment Scheme (SAS) of property tax. Although the exact numbers are not known, the BMP officials claim that the citizen's response has been very good for SKS. Bangalore thus became the first city in India to adopt a comprehensive unit area method based, property tax assessment scheme. The BATF has contributed in developing communication strategy, delivery mechanism and computerisation of data (Raghunath and Sen, 2003: 207).

In 2002-03, about 2000 *Khata* booklets were sold. Besides, Fund Based Accounting System (FBAS) was introduced in the area of accounting and budgeting reforms and along with various stakeholders viz. BMP, BCP and BMTC formed a mechanism to address the tax problems in Bangalore (BATF, 2003). As a result the BMP property tax collection had gone up to Rs 200 crores from Rs. 100 crores within 3 years. A thorough revised financial module was done with all required technical inputs. These measures have helped to mobilise additional resources. On one hand these are basically improvement of governance issues in the state domain and push for the argument that better governance mechanisms of state enhance provisioning capacity.

III. Urban Government and Civil Society Partnership

The partnership between government and civil society in Bangalore can be classified into two categories. In the first category, the government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have come together to set priorities and formulate, implement and monitor policies and programmes. In the second category, the CSOs are undertaking various programmes on their own without collaborating with government. Some of the organisations have contested the government actions by mobilising and empowering the people to raise their voice. These civic groups exhibited a range of organisational forms which include the loose debating style, the entrepreneurial style, and the confederation of neighbourhood interests. Such 'third force' activism reflects augmentation of social capital that articulated collective visions of urban based problems and offer solutions. (Heitzman, 2004: 110).

The government has collaborated with civic groups for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. The organizations like 'Janaagraha' and 'Swabhimani' collaborated with BMP in setting agenda and identifying the needs of citizen. While NGOs like, AVAS and CIVIC mobilised slum dwellers through 'Slum *Jagruthu*' programme. To promote policy and action planning consultation, UNCHS funded CIVIC on urban management programme (Heitzman 2004: 160). Community Based Organizations, NGOs and residential associations raised their voice and local concerns for the provisioning of services (Paul, 2004). NGOs like 'Centre for Environment Education', 'Bangalore Environment Trust', INTACH, Exnora and Shanthinagar Residential Associations have set the dialogue and provide engineering and technical inputs to BMP for improving Integrated Solid Waste Management. A citizen-local

government initiative for cleaner, greener and safe Bangalore was launched by 'Swabhimana' (Nair, 2005: 114). Citizens groups like CIVIC and others aimed to empower citizens with the Right to Information Act (RTI) and vision campaigns. Initiatives have been taken by corporate sector like Wipro and Intel software companies in education through I-shiksha services (a network of computer tools) to enhance teaching and learning process. Similarly, the Rag-pickers Education and Development Scheme (REDS); and the Tata Council for Community Initiatives worked on community programmes for the city (Heitzman, 2004: 162).

Public and civil society partnership has also brought through public hearings forums for providing services like electricity, water, and so on. Nearly 3591 cases related to water disputes, non-receipt of bills, metering faults, were resolved during 2001-2005 through water adalats conducted by BWSSB. NGOs were also involved in educating citizen about citizen charters to redress grievances through inter-voice recording system, RTI cell (Right to Information) and so on. Some of the citizen groups like Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Samudaya and Kannada Shakti Kendras have redefined urban space by mobilizing social class and promote civic activism. To this effect, BATF, PAC (Public Affairs Centre) and CIVIC shared the concern for the management of city. NGOs like CIVIC, Citizen's Action group and Bangalore Environment Trust, and Nagarlok were involved in legal activism against BMP for the poor state of transportation, private use of public spaces (Nair 2005: 196).

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1993 facilitated state-civil society partnership in provisioning of services (Subha and Bhargava, 1999; Sekhar, 2005). This arrangement has given legitimacy to the civic groups and improved the credibility of BMP¹. This has facilitated efficient delivery of services and empowered the ULBs. Civic groups like 'Jaanagraha', 'Civic' and 'Proof' are involved in participatory budgeting practices at grassroots level.

IV. The Outcomes of the PPP mode

The outcomes of the PPP mode can be discussed on efficiency and equity terms.

Efficiency

Reviews indicate that efficiency levels of service delivery have improved in some of the public utilities in Bangalore. By limiting manpower and outsourcing its activities, the efficiency levels in BWSSB had gone up from 78 per cent to 95 per cent. While in BDA per capita productivity went up from Rs. 21 lakhs to Rs.1 crore, salary as percentage of budget dropped from 7 per cent to 3 per cent. Through contracted out maintenance work of streetlights of BMP resulted to avoid pilferage in material use and energy loss and increase in efficiency level to 95 per cent as compared to 45 per cent earlier (Urban Finance 2004; Sangita 2006: 49-50). Corruption and harassment of the common man has declined in registration deeds after the introduction of Kauvery software, and has ensured the speedy delivery and better access to information.

Here we observe efficiency gains of two types. One, efficiency gain is at the cost of limiting the manpower or using outsourced workforce at cheaper rate. This can be termed as low road efficiency. Two, avoidance of pilfer age of energy and loss is a welcome mode.

Equity and Service Delivery

We are aware that privatisation adversely affects the interests of the vulnerable sections and backward regions in having access to public resources and employment. The basic services like water, sanitation and electricity provided by the private organisations may not be available in the disadvantaged and backward regions. Such a situation may lead to social tensions. In many instances social networks and civil society associations or partnership do not guarantee effectiveness in the social sphere. Chandhoke (2005) in Delhi context found that the citizens repose little faith on civil society institutions as saviour of their problems and prefer the government (state) for solutions. Similar study by Harris (2005) in Delhi concluded that poorer and less educated are more likely to seek political parties and government support to solve their problems rather than civil society.

In Bangalore context the PPP mode indicates limited impact on urban poor. In spite of BWSSB's all-round performance, the availability of water to the poor and low-income group is very low. A study of five slums in Bangalore, it was found that the water consumption was only 25 per cent of the city average which was less than half the water norm fixed by public health engineers. One-third of the population has only partial or no access to potable water (Subramaniam, 1988; Benjamin, 2000).

Access to other services such as toilets in Bangalore is also not satisfactory. An official report for 1994 stated that there were 113,000 houses without any latrines, while 17,500 had dry latrines (Benjamin 2000: 39). Similarly, while addressing the infrastructure needs, the lofty ideals and aims of BATF did not trickle down the benefits of its activities to the poorer sections in the city (Ghosh 2005). Further, ward committees do not constitute effective platform for interface between citizens and representatives, as the latter do not have awareness about their respective ward office and their representatives (Sekhar, 2005). The satisfaction level of service among the poor was not very high. Partnerships tend to be ad hoc, donor-dependent, and loosely coordinated, highly supply-driven rather than end-user and limited in scope to impact on poverty reduction.

The case study and reviews present some of the stark realities of the approach. The question is how a good pro-poor model can be positioned. Or universal public provisioning in the basic services sector is the only way out?

V. Policy Prescriptions

Vibrant partnership is an essential paradigm to ensure the efficient services delivery and raise the inclusion level. Local governance reforms highlight the critical importance

of partnership in the negotiation, delivery and monitoring of services. The new trend of partnership represents culture of new deliberative forums impacting on policy institutions. This is understood in the context of competing social demands that pressurise for public action/ policies. Despite tangible accomplishments, the above findings clearly demonstrate the fact that nexus through PPP do not by itself guarantee equity and holistic participation. PPP alone is not a panacea, rather it is one of the tools, and government has at their disposal for service delivery – a tool that needs careful application. The government is committed to empower citizens with more opportunities to influence public services in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them, and in ways that will make a real difference to services.

An important prerequisite for partnership and reforms to be effective is ensure that citizens are equipped with knowledge, skills and confidence to play an active role in public dialogue, consultation and local decision making. Only then, they can scrutinize public services, hold them to account and help them to improve. To this end, the government must support capacity building; scale up citizen governance. The bottom line interventions through innovative models such as partnerships must adequately ensure the provisioning of services to poor for better urban governance. Greater attention must be paid to broaden decision making process that determine distribution pattern and deepen to include low income communities in service delivery systems and thereby contribute for poverty reduction.

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Mental Health, Gender and Society: The Social-Epidemiological Connect

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Abstract

The term mental health is not merely reflective of the absence of psychopathologies, rather is suggestive of the general state of mind that conduces overall emotional well-being of an individual. The discourse on Mental Health has been addressed by different schools of thought, each having forwarded their premise in contradiction to that of the other. This paper attempts to study the issue from the sociological perspective, while emphasizing on the interplay of different perspectives - whether sociological, biological or psychological - in addressing the issue in a holistic manner. The argument mooted here is that a disturbance of mental health is not caused only by biological and psychological characteristics of human beings but also by structural features which impacts the role, status, behaviour and resources privileging some members of the society to the detriment of others. An insistence on genetic and psychological factors in accounting for mental disorder is rather myopic, due recognition has to be accorded to social dynamics in explaining mental health and illness. An important aspect of this paper is to focus upon how mental health bears differential implications for the female members of the society. This paper is therefore an attempt to contextualize the discussion on mental health with regard to women and their social environment which, as the paper argues, lends itself substantially in influencing their mental health in an unfavourable manner.

I. Introduction

A layman's cogitation on mental health would reflect upon as the absence of psychopathologies, such as depression and anxiety. However, mental health connotes the general state of mind that conduces rational thinking, effective communication, learning, emotional development, resilience and a sense of self-worth. To gain a comprehensive insight into what mental health is one can refer to the World Health Organization's definition of mental health: "A state of complete physical, mental and

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social well-being and not merely the absence of disease which refers to myriad activities directly or indirectly related to the mental well-being of an individual. Mental health may broadly be defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 1948: 100).

Mental Health has been addressed by different schools of thought, each having posited their premise in contradiction to that of the other. This paper attempts to study the issue from the sociological perspective, while emphasizing on the interplay of different perspectives -whether sociological, biological or psychological - in addressing the issue in a holistic manner. Another aspect that merits mention in approaching the issue of mental health is how the same bears differential implications for the male and the female members of the society. This paper is also an attempt to contextualise the issue with regard to women and their social ambient which, as the paper argues, appertains to influencing their mental health in an unfavourable manner. The central idea here is to establish the relationship between socially affected factors and illness, physical and mental - in other words the social epidemiological connect.

II. Data for the Paper

This paper generates data from a household survey, interviews with the key informants (health practitioners, traditional healers, community representatives) and Focus group discussions (FGDs) at community level (SHGs, panchayat office, temples/mosques/churches).

The field survey interacted with 830 women in same number of households in 100 villages of 10 districts of Assam (viz. Sonitpur, Darrang, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Golaghat, Bongaigaon, Tinsukia, Cachar, Sibsagar and Kamrup) during 2014-15. The data captures the causes of mental illness of the women, impact of religious practices in shaping their attitude and thought process, experiences in natal and in-laws house, income level and difficulties in running the households and opinion on poverty and its consequences.

III. Mental Health – an Understanding from Myriad Perspectives

For long the discourse on mental health and illness was dominated by the bio-medical paradigm. The etiological accounts cultivated by this paradigm deduced mental disorders as brain diseases and therefore sought ‘somatic therapies’ intended to address the deep rooted ‘biological dysfunctions’ (Deacon, 2013). The bio-medical model of mental health and illness positioned itself to revolutionise the domain through its propositions on detection, treatment and prevention of mental disorder. The bio-medical model however leaves no room within its framework for the social, psychological, and behavioural dimensions of illness. “The bio-medical model not only requires that disease be dealt with as an entity independent of social behaviour, it also demands that behavioural aberrations be explained on the basis of disordered somatic (biochemical or neurophysiological) processes” (Engel, 1977 as quoted in Deacon, 2013: 847).

The 'enthusiastic anticipation' (Kinderman, 2005) surrounding this model was however, in time challenged by the psychological model which voiced its dissent against the reductionism attempted by the proponents of the former, by unequivocally rejecting the psychological, behavioural and social factors that they argued ought to be factored in any mental health intervention. In contrast to the argument forwarded by the bio-medical model, the psychological model predicates an alternative approach that focuses on "...associative networks, based in the neural substrate, but developed through learning and relying on theories of conditioning, perception, appraisal and belief-formation, propositional and implicational encoding, mental models of the world, internalised schemas of relationships etc." (Kinderman, 2005: 209). The argument mooted here is that the core element of individual personality development is pinned on its ability to adjust to the external environment. To the advocates of this school of thought, dysfunction occurs when along the trajectory of development, an individual fails at appropriating the ability to adjust or develops mal-adaptive practices in response and reaction to the external circumstances.

To the canon of literature on mental health, the sociological paradigm has added a significant dimension towards a more comprehensive understanding of mental health. In the view posited by the sociological model, the bio-medical and the psychological stance lead to the pathologisation of the individual. They forward the opinion that mental disorder is not caused by biological and psychological characteristics of the human subjects alone but also by structural features which impacts the role, status, behaviour and resources privileging some members of the society to the detriment of others. Genetic and psychological factors on their own cannot account for mental disorder; cognizance has to be taken of social dynamics in explaining mental health and illness. As Busfield (2000:544) articulates, "Geneticists' reported claims notwithstanding, social processes are crucial to the understanding of mental health and disorder in a range of ways. First, social processes shape the very concepts of mental health and disorder, thereby setting the boundaries of what constitutes mental disorder and the categories that are used to distinguish one disorder from another. Second, social processes play an important part in the aetiology of mental disorders ± any mental disorder is always a product of genetics and environment. Third, social processes play a vital part in influencing mental health practice".

Further, within the ambit of the sociological approach to mental health, some theories have gained precedence in explaining the connection between external environment and its impact on mental health. The stress theory of Selye (1956) postulated how living organisms responded to negative external stimulus in three stages which include flight or fight, resistance and exhaustion. A protracted exposure to negative stimulus builds exhaustion, the stage which culminates into illness. A social environment which has a prolonged negative impact upon individuals, therefore, has the potential to generate illness, including mental illness. The Structural Strain Theory, which draws its inspiration from Robert Merton's Anomie Theory, expounds how a hierarchically stratified society places some groups at an economic advantage while others are put at disadvantageous positions and that economic disadvantage is a strain that brings about psychological disorders.

Several early thinkers (Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Thomas J Scheff) indicate how an understanding of the concept of mental illness is socially conditioned and anything that resides outside of the pale of socially acceptable behaviour is denigrated as disorder and illness. These references are indicative of the fact that social factors have a substantial role to play in the manner in which mental illness is caused, perceived and addressed and impels one to think beyond biological and psychological factors.

This paper makes an attempt is made to understand mental health and illness particularly that of the women from the social perspective thereby underlining the social epidemiological connect. Gender is a socially constructed identity imposed on the biologically determined male and female sex. The patriarchal structure has proven to be unfavourable to the female sex by relegating them to a position inferior to that of men and imposing upon them socially conceived sanctions, thereby curtailing their rights and freedom. The discriminatory outlook of the society has weighed heavily upon the female psyche and is a causal factor in bringing about mental distress and disorder among the same.

Gender and Mental Health

Demographic factors, for instance, age, gender and ethnicity are important in determining the health risks individuals in a society find themselves exposed to. These diverse factors lend their influences in determining the health status (including mental health) of an individual. Table 1 as adopted from McCulloch and Goldies (2010) indicates how the varied factors impacting mental health of individuals may be gauged.

Table 1: Factors impacting mental health of individuals

Society	Community	Family	Individual
Equality versus Discrimination	Personal Safety	Family Structure	Lifestyle Factor (diet, exercise, alcohol intake)
Unemployment Level	Housing and Access to Open Space	Family Dynamics (e.g. High /low expressed emotions)	Attributional Style (That is, how events are understood?)
Social Coherence	Economic Status of the Community	Genetic Makeup	Debt versus Financial Security
Education	Isolation	Intergenerational Contact	Physical Health
Health Care Provision	Neighbourliness	Parenting	Individual Relationships and Responses to these

Source: McCulloch and Goldie, 2010.

Of all the factors making themselves palpable in the health status of an individual, the focus here is drawn towards gender and its role in shaping health particularly mental health of individuals. According to the WHO, "Gender is a critical determinant of

mental health and mental illness. It determines the differential power and control men and women have over the socio-economic determinants of their mental health and lives, their social position, status and treatment in society and their susceptibility and exposure to specific mental health risks”(http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/genderwomen/en/). Drawing from this definition, it becomes obvious that the society is stratified along gender lines. The inferior status coupled with truncated rights and liberties that fetter a woman’s existence takes its toll on the mental health of the women. Furthermore, socio-cultural norms that endorse women’s subjugation, regulation of their behaviour and violence as an instrument of control weighs upon them. Customary norms denying equitable allocation of resources among men and women (favouring the former at the expense of the latter) coupled with constraints that are imposed on their public life leaves them dependent on their male counterparts. This economic dependence translates itself in curtailment of their decision making power, of their participation in political processes, of their independent agency and in negatively impacting upon the overall sense of self-worth of the women.

Women generally seem to be more susceptible to neuroses like distress, anxiety, depression and other somatoform disorders which questions biological genesis of the same and propels attention to the socio-cultural phenomena and its potential in affecting mental disorder. It has been further observed that depression is not just more commonly found among women but may also linger for a longer duration in their lives. It may be averred, thus, that the social stressors in the lives of women may cause consternation in them which in time may debilitate their mental health.

IV. Social Factors and Mental Health of Women: The Social Etiological Connect

An important aspect that warrants attention is the high prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder among women resulting from the preponderance of sexual violence against women in any society. The sociological paradigm has, in present times, emphasised upon the multifarious ways in which socio-cultural factors leave their imprint on the manner in which neuroses and psychosis is shaped. Some of the ways in which socio-cultural dynamics affect mental health may include - *Pathogenic effects*, when culture is a direct causative factor in forming or generating illness; *Patho-selective effects*, when there is a tendency to select culturally influenced reaction patterns that result in psychopathology; *Patho-plastic effect*, when culture contributes to modelling or shaping of symptoms; *Patho-elaborating effects*, when behavioural reactions become exaggerated through cultural reinforcements; *Patho-facilitative effects*, when cultural factors contribute to frequent occurrence and *Patho-reactive effects*, when culture influences perception and reaction (Tseng, 2001).

The socio-cultural aspects which weigh down heavily upon women resulting in a disturbance of their mental health can be explored in the following sections, citing the evidences from the field survey.

Stress and Mental Health

Common mental disorder (referred to as non-psychotic psychiatric morbidity) is characterised by a range of symptoms including anxiety and depression. These conditions have a debilitating effect on the personal and social lives of individuals and are commonly experienced by both men and women. Kuruvilla and Jacob (2007) explain that these, “common mental disorders (CMDs), are reported to be most prevalent among those with the lowest material standard of living, especially among those with a long-term experience of poverty.

Socio-cultural norms vary for men and women of a society. These factors which impose restrictions on women and accords them inferior status in society may often result in mental stress. This is depictive of how inimical social conditions of individuals generate vulnerability for mental disorders among those that find themselves trapped in the same and simultaneously draws attention to the mire of hostile circumstances that women, more than men, have to negotiate in their everyday lives.

Data generated from the field reveals that mental stress, caused by several factors including those generated by socio-cultural norms. Most informants have responded in favour of the argument that mental stress shares a positive relation with mental disorder (Table 2).

Table 2: Causes of mental illness in women

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Genetic	140	16.9	17.4
Mental stress	236	28.4	29.4
Over work	150	18.1	18.7
Disobeying her husband/elders	35	4.2	4.4
Sexual exploitation	59	7.1	7.3
Physical illness	111	13.4	13.8
Curse	64	7.7	8
Others	8	1	1
Total	803	96.7	100
Non-response	27	3.3	
Total	830	100	

Source: Field work, 2014-15

Religion and Mental Health

The patriarchal society is endowed with several instruments of control which are employed to regulate social hierarchies with the intent to restrain the weaker sections of the society in their confines of powerlessness and enable the dominant forces to retain their monopoly over social power and resources. One of the early thinkers to have drawn attention towards the concept of religion as a tool of social control is German philosopher Karl Marx (1844).

Marx had categorically pronounced how religion lends itself as a tool in the hands of

the socially powerful to keep the disempowered in their present situation. Being favourably disposed towards the empowered class, religion, according to Marx, legitimizes the former's power, authority and control over the hapless groups. As expounded by Marx, religion performs an ideological function related to the idea of reification. Reification wraps in its injunctions ideas that in reality are arbitrary and changeable and posits them as inviolable, immutable and inconvertible. Thus, reification of socio-cultural practices is a more viable form of social control as it generates ideas which reigns each group of society within its ambit of functioning and sustains the traditional structure of power and control.

Religion claims to provide authentic and divinely sanctioned standards of thought, conduct and communal living. It regulates other social institutes of control such as the family and education system. Okon suggests that "religion arrogates to itself the duty of a 'watchdog' and social umpire. As the acknowledged custodian of human ideals and aspirations, religion has always provided a platform for social control" (2012: 141). Thus, religion is an important socio-cultural determinant of the status and power that men and women yield in society. Data generated from the field is in sync with this argument (Table 3).

Table 3: Impact of religion shaping people's attitude and thought process

Reason (as many as)	N-830	Percentage
Regulates social life	666	80.24
Ensures moral conduct and ethical behaviour	571	68.79
Preserves social norms	520	62.65
Blinds people from rational thinking	84	10.12
Accords unequal status	84	10.12
Cause of social disruption	113	13.61
Imposes illogical/ unjustified restrictions	73	8.79

Source: Field work, 2014-15

Religious sanctions favour men above women thereby categorically delineating the differential status enjoyed by men and women of a given society. The argument here is that such relegation impacts upon a woman's sense of dignity and self-esteem which could be distressful and consequently have an impact upon her overall mental well-being. Table 4 is indicative of how religion restricts the participation of women in various activities. The table suggests that the participation of women is far less in certain rituals (e.g. death rituals, purification rituals) which in traditional society are an exclusive domain of the men.

Table 4: Degree of participation of women/men in religious rituals/rites

Gender	Participatory approach	Marriage rituals	Birth rituals	Death rituals	Purification rituals	Puberty rituals	Other Auspicious rituals
Men	Active Participation	87.1	54.6	95	66.3	11.8	69.7
	Nominal Participation	12.5	33.2	3.5	20.7	40.2	25.7
	Ancillary participation	0.4	3.1	0.9	7.5	27	2.9
	Exclusion from participation	0	9.1	0.6	5.4	21	1.8
Women	Active Participation	74.1	68.5	16.5	43.1	88.4	47.8
	Nominal Participation	22.2	23.1	28.7	24	7	45.8
	Ancillary participation	2.5	7.1	24.3	20.3	3.6	6
	Exclusion from participation	1.3	1.1	30.5	12.6	1	0.4

Source: Field work, 2014-15, figures are in percentage

The manner in which religion functions to disempower women, affects the latter's self-esteem. Further, religion educates women to remain submissive to their male counterparts and imposes several other restrictions on them with regard to inheritance of paternal property, choice of partners in marriage, widowhood and other paraphernalia of their social life. All these lead women to internalize the inferior status accorded by religion which does negatively tell upon their self-esteem. Mann (2004) draws attention to the empirical studies conducted in recent past those indicate that self-esteem is an important psychological factor contributing to health and quality of life.

Mental health is significantly affected by self-esteem. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) throws light on how "negative or unstable self-perceptions are a key component in the diagnostic criteria of major depressive disorders, manic and hypomanic episodes, dysthymic disorders, dissociative disorders, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and in personality disorders, such as borderline, narcissistic and avoidant behaviour" (as quoted in Mann *et al*2004:360). Thus, the argument that lack of self-esteem, issuing out of inferior status accorded to women by socio-cultural factors including religion, stand to adversely affect their mental health becomes evident.

Marriage and Mental Health

Marriage and child bearing constitute important aspects of a woman's social life. The role of a woman as a wife is characterized by subservience to the husband and his kin and dedication to the children, the elderly and the ailing in the family. In traditional social set-ups, the life of a woman is regulated by the husband and the in-laws, thereby curtailing whatever little independence the woman may have been privileged within her natal house. Unmarried women as also women unable to bear children to sustain family lineage are socially scorned and held in low esteem. Therefore, unmarried women or those who have been divorced/separated from their husbands suffer from great mental duress.

The freedom, status and other privileges that women may have enjoyed in their natal house is compromised in their husband's house post-marriage. Sharma (2013:245) points out how the patriarchal structure functions to ensure complete dependence on

the male sex leading to enormous stress placing the woman's mental health under constant threat. Field data for this paper revealed that from the 52 married respondent women only 22 enjoy the freedom characterised in the preceding discussions.

Batra and Gautam (2013) explained how disruption of marriage can bring about neurotic disorder among couples, particularly the women whose identity, in traditional societies, develops around their fathers and husbands. Marriage has been associated with prevalence of depression among women than among men. Moreover, in traditional Hindu families there exists a rigid code of conduct for women which prevents communication and expression of emotions, especially negative ones, because of which there is higher prevalence of internalizing disorders such as depression in women compared to men" (p. 245).

An important aspect of marriage that bears a direct relevance to mental health of women is that of domestic violence. Violence within marriage is a pretty common phenomenon that mars the life of many married women and makes them vulnerable to mental distress. Most often violence is related to dowry (a characteristic feature of Indian society), which has heaped untold suffering on women and in several cases has led not just to mental derangement, but also death.

Economic Disadvantage and Mental Health

In bridging the gaps, the World Health Organization states, "The world's most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on earth is extreme poverty" (1995: 1). Murali and Oyeboode (2004:216) explain on WHO statement that "this statement emphasises the importance of poverty as a variable adversely influencing health. Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, encompassing inability to satisfy basic needs, lack of control over resources, lack of education and poor health. Poverty can be intrinsically alienating and distressing, and of particular concern are the direct and indirect effects of poverty on the development and maintenance of emotional, behavioural and psychiatric problems". Economic disadvantage is brought about by low income and inadequate access to resources which characterize the life of women more than that of men.

Table 4 provides an insight into the patient's perspective of poverty and its bearing upon overall mental and physical health of family. Most respondents opined that poverty adversely affected mental health of family members.

Table 5: Opinion of critical patient towards poverty and its consequences

	Frequency	Percentage
Disturbs mental health	26	25.5
Low social status	18	17.6
Disrupts family well-being	26	25.5
Unfulfilled aspirations/ dreams/ desires etc	19	18.6
Exposure to social threats and other risks	6	5.9
Others	7	6.9
Total	102	100.0

Source: Field work, 2014-15

There exists a canon of sociological literature on the connection between economic disadvantage and poor mental health. Murali and Oyeboode (2004: 217) explain that “one reason for this phenomenon may be that relative deprivation is a catalyst for a range of negative emotional and cognitive responses to inequality. Low socio-economic position poses as a deterrent in accessing resources and leaves its imprint on the experience one encounters at personal and professional levels. These socio-economic aspects contribute to negative life experience which in time tells upon one’s physical and mental health.

Murali and Oyeboode (2004) tell it is the poor who are exposed to dangerous environments, who (if employed) often have stressful, unrewarding and depersonalising work. “Overall people in lower socio-economic classes by virtue of their life circumstances are exposed to more stressors, and with fewer resources to manage them and greater vulnerability to stressors, they are doubly victimised”(2004:217). Table 6 upholds how majority of women face stress in managing household expenses within the limited economic resources.

Table 6: Income of the households and women facing difficulties to run

Monthly income of the households	Total sampled households	Difficulties			
		To arrange two square meals	To ensure education for the children	To ensure health related expenses	To ensure all three aspects-meals, education and health
Up to 1000	29	19	1	3	6
Between 1001 to 5000	345	32	35	64	214
Between 5001 to 9000	252	17	33	49	153
Between 9001 to 13000	83	2	5	25	51
Between 13001 to 25000	38	0	2	6	30
Above 25000	10	0	0	3	7
Total	757	70 (9.2)	76 (10.0)	150 (19.8)	461 (60.9)

Source: Field work 2014

V. Conclusion: The Bio-psychosocial Model of Mental Health

This review paper drawing some field insights explored the social epidemiological connection in the context of mental health of women. Dominated by the biological model, mental health for long stood to be addressed interns of bio-genetics alone till the psychological model and thereafter the sociological model presented fresh ideas

with respect to a holistic understanding of mental health. In this paper, the centre stage has been occupied by the sociological model, drawing from which, some aspects of socio-cultural life that have a bearing upon the mental health of women have been explored. The moot point here is to focus on the debilitating effect that negative social factors have on mental health particularly that of women's mental health owing to the historical socio-cultural disadvantages they suffer from. It warrants that the domain of mental health should take within the ambit of consideration social causative factors in addition to those put forward by medical sciences in adequately addressing the issue.

The paper though largely attributes to the social causative factors to address mental health, however, does not stand to deny credence to the other models, viz. the psychological model and the biological model. Rather, it is suggested that the three models should work in tandem to address the domain of mental health. In conclusion we may recall the words of Ghaemi, "no single illness, patient or condition can be reduced to any one aspect (biological, psychological or social). They are all, more or less equally, relevant, in all cases, at all times" (2009: 3).

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Book Review

A Social History of Second World War

Raj Kumar Thakur*

Yasmin Khan (2015) The Raj At War: A People's History of India's Second World War, Random House, Gurgaon, pp 416, Rs 699

Breaking free from the 'global panorama' and the romanticism associated with the Second World War, Yasmin Khan begins with the promises of 'history from below'. The book explores the diverse experiences of people sandwiched between limited choices offered by the war. Khan makes us travel across time; she brings to us the experiences of the peasants being transformed into soldiers. The war began with an endless appetite for recruits. The Indian army expanded and the traditional fighting races like: Jats, Rajputs, Pathans, Gurkhas and Sikhs were complemented by Madrassis, untouchable leather workers and Bengali urbanites. The recruitment parties travelled to the hilly terrains and 'stripped' the hills of the 'young people and able bodied men' (p. 29). Recruitment was not without resistance and the author has beautifully portrayed the picture of mothers resorting to pleading, emotional blackmail and guarding their son from joining the army. Apart from men, war needed money. The Indian public had to forcefully part away with their income. The war fund brought hardship to people. This led to intensification of people's grievance, which was utilised politically by the Indian political leaders in writing off the hegemony of the Raj. The War fund certainly intensified decolonisation.

Deconstructing the masculine celebration of war, the author offers us a history of anxiety, wait and loneliness of women, whose husbands were serving in the battlefields. 'Soldiering' as the author observes 'was a mental and a physical challenge'.

The battles that sepoys fought with ill-health, depression and debilitating diseases particularly malaria and dysentery were often as extreme as any fought with combatants...In Assam and Burma, among sepoys, loss of weight was so great in a large number of cases that they were reduced to a bag of bones(p. 249)

While soldiers lived dangerously fighting in the battlefields, women kept waiting for their husbands to return, and soldiers missed their families. Women were left wanting

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both in money, love and longing and many appealed for divorce. Dependent women starved. Starvation gave way to prostitution. The soldiers on the other hand flocked towards prostitutes. The market for prostitution cropped up and sexually transmitted diseases were on the rise. There was nothing noble about the war, the author rightly argues that people were forced to make 'difficult moral and personal choices' during the war.

Geographies of War

After journeying across time, the author makes us travel through the varied geography of war. She has vividly portrayed the experiences of the 4th Indian Division fighting in Africa. The march of the Indian Division in defeating the Italian occupied East Africa is a gripping account of life lost and battle won. It was one of the 'hardest battle' fought. The sacrifice and the victory of the Indian troops found widespread propaganda. After all propaganda was one of the mechanisms through which the morale of the people could be boosted. Injured and dead were given medals and newspapers and newsreels recounted the experiences of heroism and exploits of the soldiers. From Africa the author takes us to the plantations and paddy fields of India. The tea planters in Assam began supplying men to be used as manual labourers towards the war effort. Labourers were deployed in building roads which connected India and Burma. Manipuri and Naga hills men were deployed as porters. The labourers and porters worked day and night. 'Marathas, Madrasis, Bengalis, Punjabis, Oriyas, Biharis, Nepalis, low castes, dalits and adivasis all worked side by side on the road' (p. 260). The building of road was a story of strain, shortage of food, sickness and malnourishment. Jungles were cleared to protect the health of the air force men from deadly mosquitoes and flies. For building of aerodromes, villages were acquired and paddy fields burnt without compensating the villagers. Workers worked on back to back shifts, and the people were made to bow forcefully before the rising military demands. The sign of unrest among the labourers has been very well portrayed, the workers feared working in the war zone, the undue strain and mental trauma of the villagers and workers surely goes in deconstructing the victory marches of war.

The road towards decolonisation

The British Empire travelled many roads towards decolonisation; the Second World War intensified the process. It served as a grave digger and stole the hegemony of the 'British Raj'. Price rise and food shortages brought starvation to people. While hoarders and merchants gained, people suffered. The draconian Defence of India Act generated thousands of political prisoners. The mood of the colonial population was turning against the Raj. From famines to the loss of life, war certainly 'heightened social tensions and exacerbated the differences of class, caste and religion' (p XIV). The mood of the colonial population can be understood from the following excerpts-

People paid bribes... to get cases through the courts or to shake off criminal charges, to secure driving licenses, to collect good from the post

offices and to acquire ration cards, taxi and *tongawallahs* complained about police harassment for petty fines; passengers complained about ticket inspectors on trains taking their share...young people who lived through the war were also becoming drawn into alternative forms of politics and finding other outlets, dreaming of radical political transformation...Similarly there was a rash of small private armies, routine drilling and armed militias that were attracting enthusiasts around the country, both on the left and the right, from the *Khaksars* and RSS to the Communist Party. They offered a refreshing and liberating vision and the promise of radical social transformation, transcending the bitter disappointments and stifled political life (pp 285-286).

While War brought victory to the State, war certainly brought the rule of the Raj under scanner. The victory celebrations to the people were mere eyewash, war had brought everyday life to a standstill and people began looking for alternatives. War brought politics home, the debates and discussions at home deprived the moral hegemony of the Raj abroad. Now the masses looked for newer alternatives, and a better government. The damages done by war could not be erased. The book traces the loss of the hegemony of the British Raj and opens newer avenues of research. Some of the themes highlighted Loneliness, War weary, Medicine, Women, Youth, Communists, are stories in themselves. As the author rightly puts there is 'still much more to be understood about the demands of war on many different kinds of people' (p. 321). This work is a beginning towards a people's history and opens roads for further critical social history of Second World War.

Book Review**Contextualising Northeast India in Look East Policy****Akshay Jyoti Sarma***

Gorky Chakraborty and Asok Kumar Ray (2014) The Look East Policy and Northeast India, AAKAR Books, New Delhi and OKDISCD, Guwahati; 369 pages

India's Look East Policy was evolved in the early nineties giving paradigm shift to the country's foreign policy and international trade and cooperation. Despite having cultural and historical proximities, India could not ascertain mutual cooperation with the countries of East and Southeast Asia, particularly because of the existing global political scenario and the Cold War polarisations (Naidu 2008; Haokip 2015). Traditionally, India looked towards the West for her economic and trade interests. The dismantling of the Soviet Union and penetration of neo-liberal economy in a globalised set-up, world politics took new directions, one leading to mutual interdependency at the global level in the name of globalization and on the other as the global co-operation seemed to be a protracted process, countries relied on simultaneous bi-lateral and group consolidation.. There was a wave of neo-regionalism creating multilateral blocs in the geographic regions for mutual cooperation and economic integration unlike the traditional military blocs (Hettne and Soderbaum 2000). In south Asia, however, experiment of regional cooperation (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) could not prosper especially due to fragile relationship and trust deficit among its members. The lack of viability in SAARC to fulfil the economic aspirations in the given situation of market economy pushed India to widen the probable arena of cooperation. Conversely, the Southeast Asian Countries went ahead with a relatively successful experiment of regional cooperation, where one can see the vibrancy of intra-regional and inter-regional economic activity in the Asia-pacific region. The authors of the book observe India's Look East Policy is spurred by economic motivations and by the conviction of a large section of Indian elites for strengthening ties with the countries of the Asian Miracle (Chapter II: A Roadmap of the look East Policy, p.67). The ASEAN and other countries in the Asia Pacific are now considered as an expanded 'regional market' and this will induce greater competition and technology spill over, and improved trade logistics leading to greater investment in the region. The World Bank also viewed the benefits of cooperation and integration of South Asia and Southeast Asia as the 'playing field of global finance' (p. 68).

The authors observe that India's Look East Policy over the span of last two and a half

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decades demonstrated different dimensions in the field of foreign policy, trade, defence, security etc. The approach of India, through its Look East strategy is not only to attract investment but also for encouraging Indian entrepreneurs to look for investment opportunities in the ASEAN countries in this regards, the book questions the stake of the Northeast in this LEP approach. The authors are of the view that Northeast India, with its huge geo-strategic significance has an important role here, which has been only highlighted after the launch of the Northeast Region (NER) Vision 2020 in 2008. The Vision attributed the significance of the region in realising the Look East Policy.

The book has rightly debated the notion of space in the Northeast region. As the geographic space of the region has been made and unmade in different times at regular intervals to conveniently accommodate firstly the requirements of the colonial state and secondly, of the post-colonial state, the aspirations of the people has been more than often secondary in this regards. The authors have pointed at three hiatuses while dealing with spatiality in the region: between the colonised space vis-a-vis the lives space of the indigenous communities; between the nationalised space of the modern state vis-a-vis the lived space of the indigenous communities; and thirdly, the globalised space vis-a-vis the lived space of the indigenous communities (Chapter I: Introducing Northeast India, p.16). There has always been an indigenous notion of space among the communities living in the Northeast which have had to confront with the 'exogenous' forces such as colonisation, nationalisation, and globalisation. In the process, the space consciousness of the indigenes of the region has been diluted and re-configured to suit the machinations of the Indian state. While the governments at the centre and the Northeast are keen to provide a good 'business climate' to attract investment from the international corporate, private sector and the financial institutions, the interests and aspirations of the local and indigenous people appear to be sacrificed (p. 57).

Taking note on the re-imagination of the Northeast as a space for the market economy under the Look East Policy, the authors are of the view that such space re-configuration is attempted to give beyond-the-border space, a birth in the global market economy as the issue of space gained wider political economy significance in the contemporary neo-liberal frame (p. 16). The current geo-political imagination of the Northeast has been viewed as the 'extended Northeast', the space of the region extended beyond the region and international borders to the Southeast Asia.

The increasing penetration of capital and its other manifestation also have changed the idea of space in the Northeast. The spatial reconstruction and reconfiguration of the Northeast took place in different modes after its colonisation. According to the authors, right after the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826 and until The Government of India Act, 1935, the 'bio-space' in the region was created and recreated by arbitrarily drawing border-lines and boundaries. Secondly, through different Acts, the existing Chieftainships were brought under regulation led to structured subordination of the tribes in the region. Thirdly, the denial of the natural rights of the indigenous people and converting the common property resources to private property resources through different jurisprudential instruments namely '*res-nullius*' and '*lex loci*' also squeezed the notion

of space in the region. The natural rights of the indigenous people over space became acquired rights, permissible under the British jurisprudence. Likewise, revenue interests of the colonial government and drive for infrastructure building also squeezed space consciousness of the communities in the region. The authors provide an eloquent example, 'for the construction of the National Highway³⁹ only, as many as ten army expeditions were made on the Angami tract of then Naga Hills, which obliterated numerous ethnic spaces along the tract' (p. 35). Authors have critically argued that the colonial creation and recreation of space in the Northeast India had altered the natural and the archaic space of the indigenous people in the region that they used to enjoy in the pre-capitalist era, which was featured by 'mutual interdependencies of the communities, cultural give-and-take and community level exchanges and social bond'. However, the post-colonial developments such as the three partitions (Burma 1937, India 1947, and Pakistan 1971) and its consequential developments, wave of ethnic assertions have once again impacted the notion of the natural space –'bio-space' in the region leading to the ethnic conflicts, community dissention and bargaining for space.

The authors have well elaborated the NER dimension in the Look East Policy as a space for realising the eastward economic aspirations of the country. Looking at the prospects of the region, government took several policy measures to create conducive business environment and to attract foreign direct investment to the region. Among others, government has offered various incentive packages for investment in different sectors such as tax subsidies, land grants and allowing use of local resources (p.73). The driving force of the Look East Policy was to expand the market economy. The geographic proximity of the Northeast with Southeast Asia has amplified its relevance as a prospective economic zone hitherto been in the periphery of the economic activity. Yet, despite the Vision and stress on opening up of trade routes across the border to accelerate growth process of the region, the economy of the region has not moved forward. Northeast India's share in the regional trade is still very negligible as India's major trade engagement with Southeast Asia and the bulk of this trade is till date carried out through the more convenient sea-routes.

The book has critically dealt with various regional groupings in the region towards achieving larger economic cooperation and regional trade agreements. The authors are on the view that the regional groupings in the South and Southeast Asian region (the SAARC and the ASEAN) are instrumental in trade and market promotion either at regional or sub-regional levels. But there are considerable differences among the member states on ideological, political and strategic grounds leading to failure of becoming a regional trade bloc with substantial bargaining power at the global level, remained captive to the WTO hegemony (Chapter III: Regional Cooperation, p. 137). Conversely, the western regional groupings such as EU and NAFTA have better integrated with the global market with high bargaining power, largely because of forging of their strategic interest and putting aside the inconsequential differences.

So far the nature of integration of Northeast India in the regional market, there has been an inequality and polarity between the 'mega market economy' at the global level

and the 'dwindling farmers, artisans and petty manufacturers' at the local level. As the authors viewed, "not being able to scale up, the trade narrative of the Northeast remained confined mainly within a fiction of border trade, thereby trivialising the larger trade prospect of Northeast India at the regional and sub-regional levels." (p. 140). Thus, Northeast India is becoming the domino of the global capital and market rather becoming an equal player in the regional trade and the market.

The book deserves credit for contextualising the issue of governance and security in the larger context of globalisation and market expansion. The neo-liberal political economy has, however, changed the entire notion of governability. There has been change from a hierarchical and sovereignty based modes of governing to a more horizontal, network-based mode. According to the authors, there has been diffusion of political authority from the state to other actors. Trans-national policy networks are overpowering sovereign space of the states where international organizations, WTO, IMF, civil society organizations, activists group and trans-national non-state alliances are dictating the terms of governance and governability through an agenda called institutional reform (Chapter IV: Governance and Security). It was propagated that 'good institutions facilitate growth and weak institutions negatively affect growth' (p. 150). Institutional reforms are, therefore, necessary for safe function of finance capital and for creating an enabling environment for the private sector-led FDI driven development regime.

In Northeast India, the issue of governance and security has become a major constraint in promoting and integrating the region with the global market. Political unrest in the region has become a concern for the market economy and regional growth as it affects the governance scenario. As the authors viewed, international financial institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank also insisted on governance as conditionality for loans (p. 165). So far as the Northeast India is concerned, institutional reforms and creation of new institutions as 'soft measures' on one hand and using power through state military and imposition of draconian law as the 'hard measures' on the other are instrumental to ensure conducive governance in the region.

Northeast India's stake in the Look East Policy has been visualised from two different perspective. As the authors observe, one view looks the region from the euphoria of economic growth in larger economic and trade frame of the global economy where driving forces are market reforms, transnational connectivity and market integration (Chapter V: The Contemporary Macro-Economic Trends, p. 202). The authors viewed this as the 'continental pole' which eventually bypass and supersede the local concerns of the region. Another perspective looks at the bargaining point of how much it (Northeast) can gain from the continental policy creating hope and excitement in different circles. The Look East Policy has also changed the perception of Northeast India from 'an anthropologist paradise' during colonial era and the 'security perception' in the post-colonial era to the 'gateway for trade and cooperation' with Southeast Asia in the contemporary era of globalisation (p. 204).

Although, Northeast India is moving towards a greater stake in the country's Look East Policy, this region has failed to enhance the capability and competency to be a real beneficiary of trans-national trade and cooperation. The authors argued that this region is still way behind in comparison to the national growth rates. The much hyped development agenda under the aegis of Look East Policy in the region has failed to create opportunities for the shift of the workforce from primary to other sectors. Similarly, manufacturing sector has also shown a declining trend which failed to generate income and also employment in the region although it exhibits a higher employment elasticity compared to other sectors in the regional economy. Likewise, unemployment rate in the region is almost three times higher in the rural areas and double in the urban areas compared to the national rates. Moreover, the trade profile of NER remains quite insignificant even under the LEP regime. There is a gap between the official statistics and the reality in region as much larger share of trade constitutes the informal trade across the borders. On the other hand, NER is formally exporting primary products (raw materials e.g. tea, coal and limestone) which indicate infeasibility of value addition in the region. As a result, the authors view that, the process not only dismisses the scope of resource utilisation for productive purposes that could be fed into the trade in goods but also discourages employment generation (Chapter VI: The Trade Scenario, p.276). The overall trade scenario has not improved in the region even after different initiatives under the aegis of the Look East Policy.

The book provides with a lucid critique of India's Look East Policy. For economic and strategic interests of India, the authors see dual prospects of India's cooperation with neighbouring countries. "On one hand, the hydro-power of the Nepal and Bhutan, gas reserves of Burma, transit facility through Bangladesh and inter-regional private sector investments can add to India's growth story. On the other hand, it possesses a security advantage, where strategic cooperation with these nations can give India the upper hand in dealing with the scores of insurgent groups belonging to the NER and also act as a bulwark against China" (Chapter VII: A Critique of the Look East Policy, p. 289). Despite all these developments, the authors however have rightly questioned the nature of engagement of the Northeast region in India-Southeast Asia cooperation and to what extent the region would be able to meaningfully play a part in the trans-national cooperation or the region would simply remain a passage for trade instead of being a meaningful partner to the process. Although, the Look East Policy has redefined Northeast India as the centre of a thriving integrated economic space, the disruption of old trade routes by the colonial rulers and the absence of the emergence of newer trade routes had deprived NER of its natural markets. As the authors view, the Look East Policy has benefitted the global market more than the Northeast region (p. 338).

The Look East Policy, which is eventual fallout of global economic order, ignored the real need of the local economy of the region. Local community and the local voices are also ignored in the policy making process. The authors feel that instead of domestication of the continental policy through institutional reforms, a policy like LEP should have a domestic root and emerge from below.

The book is worthy of appreciation for its critical approach. It is comprehensive and well elaborated on various aspects nuances pertaining to the Northeast India including the rhetoric and reality of Look East Policy. Apart from few typological errors and a more nuanced approach to confirm to brevity in the last chapter, this book is worth reading for those who wish to understand the political economy of LEP in general and its linkages with the Northeast region in particular.

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OKDISCD

Book Review**The Problematic Relationship between
Culture and Ethnicity****Dwijen Sharma***

Culture, Ethnicity and Identity: A Reader, (2014), Jyotirmoy Prodhani and R. S. Thakur, (eds.) DVS Publishers, Guwahati. pp 308. Rs. 850/-

This volume is a welcome addition to the already existing corpus of research on the issues relating to culture, ethnicity and identity. It addresses these issues from theoretical and analytical perspectives. Though the emphasis in this volume is on India's North-East, a section is fully devoted to the precarious issue of identity of other peripheral groups from the mainstream India that include the *Sindhis*, the *Dalits* and the *Adivasis*. The purpose of bringing out this volume as stated in the 'Foreword' is to "facilitate meaningful dialogues" and "for greater inter-cultural and inter-ethnic understanding and provide a foundation for mutual interactions and exchanges among communities". Overall, it is an exercise to devise new idioms and ideas concerning the geo-cultural and politico-historical realities of India's North-East. The informative Introduction to the volume highlights various definitions of ethnicity and how those definitions have emerged in the academic discourse. The editors have taken recourse to Dipesh Chakrabarty to argue that the 'Enlightenment' rationality introduced by the British in colonial India led to the emergence of ethnic consciousness in the people. The question, therefore, this volume tries to examine is whether the ethnic consciousness that was derived from foreign political exigency frames the governing logic of ethnicity and its exclusivist ideology. It also examines whether the idea of ethnicity so disseminated was purportedly aimed at gaining greater control over the differentiated. The volume also deliberates how ethnicity emerges as an ideological proposition and how by resisting absorption into the 'moral' ambit of homogenising meta-discourse, this cultural idiom turns into a political utterance. It raises certain pertinent questions regarding the received practices of locating the ethnic in an attempt to understand the construction of identity, its assertions and the resulting rupture in the society.

The papers of the book unfolded in six sections theorise and analyse the constructed nature of ethno-cultural identities while tracing the legacies and the historico-cultural trajectories of this heteromorphic region. The papers explore the people and their

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habitats, their writings and translations, politics and practices as well as their folklore and ethnic world-views. The first section titled “Ethnicity, Identity, and Destiny” theorises ethnicity and identity from different theoretical positions. One of the papers in this section titled “Culture, Ethnicity and Identities” draws on Gadamer and the concept of ‘cultural embeddedness’ to build a discourse on identity. It also draws on Robert Scruton’s observations of the retreat of the sacred in the wake of ‘Enlightenment’ to argue how the cultural practices were ethnicised. It argues how the idea of identity has been distorted and redefined as ethnicity minus culture in the wake of the identity politics. While the paper titled “Identity and Invisibility” looks at identity as a historical construct and defines ethnic identity in terms of perceived differences between any two groups, the paper titled “Ethnicity and Individual Identity: A textual Overview” defines ethnic identity in terms of collective ideal of the group. Another paper titled “Variation, Ethnic Identity and Historical Discourse” deals with the nature and role of cultural markers in the construction of identities. It also looks at the notion of ethnicity by placing it in a complicated relationship with oral history, folklore and public sphere.

The second section titled “Ethnicity and the North-East: Constructions and Representations” provides critical insights to understand ethnic assertions and anxieties, ambivalences and negotiations as well as its celebrations and trepidations that have abidingly characterized the realities of the region. One of the papers in this section titled “Postcolonial Modernity and Identity Politics in North-East India” explores the complex dynamics of Identity construction and its representation within the ‘aporetic’ discourse of North-East India. Taking recourse to Agamben and Derrida, the paper maintains that the only way out from this ‘aporetic’ situation is recognising the perishable present and to rethink and recreate a sustainable diversity discourse that strengthens multiculturalism and democracy. It also contends that militancy and autonomy movements that challenge the Indian nation-state are a product of (post)colonial modernity. The paper titled “Understanding Ethnic Persistence: A Phenomenology of Otherness” raises a pertinent question that accounts for practices of a community that do not adhere to Anthropological-Philosophical sources. It argues that the state and the market collaborate in developing a new language of representation and description to disrupt the language of imagination that shifts and widens imagined spaces beyond boundaries. The paper titled “Validation of Selves in Ethnic Narratives of the North-East” argues that identity formation in the North-East occurs in the ‘transactive domain’ where ethnic communities not only engage in a struggle for dominion but also involve in a process of negotiation and re-negotiation. It also illustrates how the works in Assamese written by writers of diverse ethnic communities legitimise the inclusive and plural ethos of the North-East.

The third section titled “The North-East Spectrum: Cultures, Identities, and Histories” deals with the diversity in literature, folklore and history of various ethnic communities of the region, and builds a discourse of micro-narratives from the margin. One of the papers in this section titled “Writing as Sacrilege: An Assessment of the Act of Translating Folk Tales of the Hills of Tripura” makes a critical assessment on the potentialities and politics of translating oral literature into mainstream languages. The

paper titled “The Koches in Ancient Literature” problematises the Koch historiography in an attempt to illustrate the possibility of writing alternative history from the margin. The paper titled “Songs of Desire and Deprivation: Women in Rajbanshi Folk Songs” locates the alternative realities of an ethnic community by exploring the folksongs of and by women.

The fourth section titled “Ethnicity, Multiculturalism and the Dalit Discourses” makes perceptive observations on the legacies and the constructions of ethno-cultural identities ranging from the socially marginalized entities like the Dalits to the apparently mainstream, the Sindhis, and to the socio-economically marginalised, the Adivasis. One of the papers in this section titled “Language: Preserver and Nourisher of Ethnic Self” posits the importance of language in preserving and nourishing ethnic identity of a community.

The fifth section titled “The Ethnic Resonance: An Accent on the Garo Hills” is devoted to the cultural historiography of A`chik (Garo). The papers in this section discuss and explore the folk literary traditions, oral narratives, folk-beliefs, myths, rituals, folk-festivals, and world-views of the A`chiks.

The sixth section titled “The Transcendence” locates ethnic discourse in imperial enterprise and colonial hegemony. One of the papers in this section titled “Anthropology, Colonialism, and Postmodern Anthropology: A Saidian Study” questions the establishment of anthropology as a discipline by the colonial rulers. It also problematises the question of ethnicity in relation to postcolonial politics and postmodern ambivalence.

The volume is a significant contribution to the study of Ethnicity and Identity particularly of the India’s North-East. It brings to the comfort of readers the various models of ethnicity— Constructivist, Primordial, Circumstantial, Relational and Processual. The significant contribution of this volume lies in its attempt to understand how the various ethnic groups of the North-East create their boundaries while constantly negotiating the contested territory. This book would immensely help the students, researchers, policy makers and those who want to understand the complex dynamics of Culture, Ethnicity and Identity that are at work in the region. However, a couple of papers are found wanting in establishing its proposed objectives.