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Arunachal Pradesh: Political Economy of Becoming a Circumstantial State

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Locating Arunachal Pradesh in its own historical, geographical and political context, attempt is made to analyze the circumstantial state in its present form, and to understand the political economy of a transition from one historical type of power structure to a unit of the nation state. The paper examines the logic of developmental nationalism as the mechanism adopted for political integration of the Himalayan region with the Indian nation.

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The geographical space covering more than eighty-three thousand square kilometers of the eastern Himalayas, bounded by Bhutan to the west, Tibet and China to the north and east and Myanmar to the south-east,which touches the upper Brahmaputra valley, remained nameless until it became the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the mid-1950s. The complex human landscape of the sparsely populated region is constituted by a large number of Indo-Mongoloid groups coping with harsh climatic conditions, difficult terrains, high altitude and niche covered with deep sub-tropical forests intercepted by powerful rivers crashing down the Himalayas. Such geographical–environmental determinants of their social life and material culture rendered them seclusion averting historical social fluidity from the plains.

This geographical space constitutes a sizeable part of the region characterized as Zomia by Willem van Schendel. Relegated to the margins of the valley-dominated states, Zomia, for its historical reasons resisted the projects of nation building and state making of the states to which it belonged (Van Schendel 2002). For James C. Scott, Zomia happens to be one of the largest remaining nonstate spaces[2] in the world, the great mountain realm on the marches of mainland Southeast Asia, China, India and Bangladesh, sprawling across eight nation-states (Scott 2009 : 13-14). Further, the hill populations of Zomia have actively resisted incorporation into the framework of the classical state, the colonial state, and the independent nation-state (ibid: 19). Such categorizations are undoubtedly crucial for understanding the hill societies of

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[2] For Scott, nonstate space points to locations where, owing largely to geographical obstacles, the state has particular difficulty in establishing and maintaining its authority (Scott2009:13).

the northeastern periphery of the Indian nation. Nevertheless, an elucidation of the processes of engagement and negotiation of the hill social formations with the state in its pre-colonial, colonial as well as present incarnation warrants more nuanced understanding. An attempt has been made in this paper to comprehend the political economy of India's integrationist triumph in making the region an integral part of the nation state system with China as 'India's shadow state in the Himalayas' (Guyot-Réchard 2016: 24).

Engagement, Confrontation and Negotiation with the Pre-colonial Valley State

The everyday life of each of the scattered hill communities is still governed by traditions and customs normalized by self-governing village-based institutions. Neither the social structures nor such institutions are, however, insulated from the ubiquity of power relations, let alone patriarchy. The heads of many such self-governing institutions traditionally enjoyed certain amount of privileges legitimized by customs. For instance, the Monpa chiefs had the privilege of having free services of the villagers (Elwin 2014: 61), and the chiefs of Wanchos and Noctes received tribute from the villages under their control (Elwin 2012: 25).

With few exceptions, such as the Monpas who practiced terrace cultivation, and the Apa Tanis, the Wanchos, the Noctes, the Tangsas, the Khamtis and the Singphos closer to the valley engaged in wet rice cultivation, the predominant form of cultivation for most of the hill communities has been shifting cultivation or jhum, This low-input system of farming, a common practice in the humid and sub-humid tropics, often castigate as "primitive subsistence agriculture" constituted the core of the pre-feudal social formations. Largely determined by geography, dependency on jhum demanded close association with the forests for other necessities of life. Although individual ownership over arable land has been a long tradition, jhum land is considered to be collective property to be periodically distributed among the households. A part of the land adjacent to the village has also to be preserved for other purposes such as collection of forest products and hunting. Thus, regulating the socio-cultural life of the community and the system of production, the self-governing institutions became the nucleus of the isolated jhum-centric social formations and also instrumental in construction of an exclusivist subjectivity of the communities.

However, the exclusivist and autonomous social formations have a prolonged history of trade with Tibet, China, Burma as well as the Brahmaputra valley (Bhattacharjee 1981; Mackenzie 1884; Sikdar 1981; 1982a; 1982b). To remain more focused on the hill-valley dialectics, we may expand on only few important points. The people from the hills used to tumble down through the duars (passes) located in the north-western and north-eastern side of the Brahmaputra valley mainly to barter various forest and agricultural products for glass beads, cloth, salt, utensils and agricultural implements to supplement their subsistence economy (Sikdar 1982b). Besides the periodical markets at the duars, Sadiya was an important marketing point and annual

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fairs were also held in Udalguri and Doimara. The Udalguri fair was crucial for the valley traders to trade with Tibet supplying silk, cloth, rice, iron, buffalo horn pearls etc. for rock-salt, gold-dust, woolens, Chinese silk etc. (Bhattacharjee 1981). In addition,thepeople of the hills also acted as intermediaries in the trade between the Brahmaputra valley and Tibet, China and Burma (Sikdar 1982b).

The interactions between the people from hills and the valley, however, must not be romanticized on the basis of the limited economic relations in the periodic markets and fairs. The valley people,through their Hinduized lens, perceived the hill communities as ontologically given spatial categories. The distance between hills and the valley appeared to be more social and cultural than geographical. A sizeable section of the hill people with a common culture was categorized as Abor, to mean 'unruly' or 'disobedient'. For the valley people, the Abors were 'extremely savage', even accused of being cannibals (Elwin 2012: 17).Another large group of hill people was categorized as Miri, perhaps meaning middle man. Plausibly, this characterization was based on the role they played in facilitating trade relations between the Brahmaputra valley and China, and also in settling conflicts between the Ahom kings and the so called Abors.

The hill communities first came into contact of the organized Ahom state in the early part of the sixteenth century in course of its territorial expansion in the north bank of the Brahmaputra. After its consolidation as a well-organized state during the three preceding centuries, territorial expansion of the Ahom state inevitably led to confrontation with the Mughals on the west and the Kacharis and the Jaintias on the west and south east. To avoid blood-spattered confrontation with the communities on the north and the north-east, the Ahom state devised relatively less expensive instrument of negotiation – the system of posa. The Ahom state negotiated with the autonomous hill communities allowing them to have the free services of a reasonable number of paiks[3] in the duars. The paiks were liable to pay the community, to which they were attached, certain necessaries of life on demand. For the services they rendered, each got, a unit of four paiks, was given some amount of concession in the land revenue payable to the state (Devi 1968: 199-219).Negotiation with the numerically strong Adis, however, proved to be more difficult. Not only they claimed absolute sovereignty over the Mishings settled in the valley, below the land of the Adis, also demanded rights over fish and gold found in the rivers flowing through their territory. Accepting the demands of the Adis, the Ahom state acknowledged subjection of the Mishing to the Adis. In turn, they had to pay annual tribute to the Ahom state (ibid: 199-200). This arrangement was undeniably different from the so called posa given to the other communities, as the Adis obligated the Ahom state to share sovereignty with them. Politically, the system of posa was instrumental not only for avoiding conflicts, but also to bring the chiefs under the fold of the Ahom

[3] A paik is an adult male liable to render three months of his manual service in a year to the Ahom state. A paik engaged in agriculture was allotted a plot of land for the service he had to render to the state.

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state. Therefore, in essence, the system of posa cannot be equated with 'blackmail' or 'tribute' as some of the colonial officers described it (Bhattacharjee 1981).

Colonial (Non) Interference

Although the geographical space referred to in colonial parlance as the "North East Frontier" had been interest to the East India Company since the annexation of the Chittogong Hill Tract from the Nawab of Bengal in 1760, and the subsequent assault on Tripura in 1761, (Chaudhuri 1999; Ganguly 2006) six decades passed without colonial interventions in the frontier. This changed with Burmese invasions of the Ahom state of the Brahmaputra valley, Manipur and Cachar plains (1817-1824). Though the Ahom state was brought under colonial control in 1826, direct colonial administration was uniformly introduced and stabilized over the entire erstwhile Ahom kingdom after exploration of various economic potentials, especially of tea, during the first decade of colonial occupation (Guha 1991). Subsequently, Jaintia, Cachar, and Khasi hills were annexed. Further annexation of the remaining hills was carried out step-by-step in the face of stiff resistance (Guha 2006).For the convenience of colonial administration, the contiguous hills and plains that were gradually annexed were also brought under the British province of Assam, which took shape in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Territorially, it included almost the entire present Northeast India, excluding the two princely states of Manipur and Tripura. The administrative arrangement in the British province was also in a flux and kept changing almost till the end of colonialism in India. The narrative of colonial annexation and fluidity of administration has been underlined by the colonial construction of the dichotomy between hills and valleys. The creation of the cultural, political and administrative binary started with the Inner Line Regulations of 1873 and continued till the Government of India Act of 1935, reinforced by many other measures in between.

The colonial construction of the hill-valley dichotomy began with characterization of the hill inhabitants as tribes, the people with an assemblage of negative elements such as primitiveness, savagery, barbarous etc., in sharp contrast to the modern, civilized, and also the Hinduized valley people. Reinforcement and social legitimization of this dichotomy was crucial for protection of colonial capital that started infiltrating into the valley economy surrounded by the hills on three sides. While the colonial state was massively restructuring the political economy of the valley, it required a redefinition of relations with the neighboring hills, instilled by the pre-colonial power structure. Setting the valley up for colonial exploitation, the first instrument that was devised to keep the "disturbing tribes" at a safe distance was the Inner Line Regulations of 1873. The area framed by the Inner Line was the territory under the political-economic jurisdiction of the colonial state. It was mainly for protection of tea estates bordering the hill people that units of armed forces were initially raised (Patil 1984). This created a divide in the existing sociocultural relations between the people of either side of the Inner Line. At the same time, the entire geographical

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space beyond the Inner Line was left undefined by any "Outer Line". In fact, the international boundary of colonial Assam and Tibet was never clearly defined until a tentative agreement was reached in Simla in 1914, and McMahon Line was drawn up on the map. The tract lying between the Inner Line and the MacMahon was considered primarily as a buffer zone between Assam and China.

The area, now framed by the "Outer Line", was brought under colonial administration in 1914 by extending the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880 also to the hills inhabited by the "barbarous or semi-civilized" tribes. The vast natural buffer zone was divided into three administrative units. The Central and Eastern Section, and the Western Section, both placed under the control of their respective Political Officer; and the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract to be controlled by the Deputy Commissioner of the colonial district of Lakhimpur. In 1919, the Central and Eastern Section was renamed as Sadiya Frontier Tract and the Western Section as the Balipara Frontier Tract. The Lakhimpur Frontier Tract remained the same. These three Frontier Tracts were brought under the "Excluded Areas" of Assam in 1935 for direct control of the Governor of Assam and to be administered through the respective Political Officers and the Deputy Commissioner. The administrative mechanism devised by the colonial state for the Frontier Tracts was significantly different from the mechanisms of colonial control over other hills demarcated as districts of the province of Assam (Sarmah 2017).

The importance of the region for colonialism was more for its strategic location than economic interests. The ethos that shaped the colonial administration as well as strategic importance of the region is well reflected in the words of Thomas H. Holdich:

> *Politically, it is here that the diving line exists between the Chinese Empire and our own. Here is the hedge over which we may look, but which we may not pass; and here we may discern what the expansion of another great empire may effect in the matter of approach to our domains, and of control over a horde of Mongoloid peoples who have direct relations with ourselves and whose goodwill as frontier neighbours we cannot ignore (Holdich 1912: 379-380).*

Although the initial efforts for trans Himalayan trade through the region proved to be ineffectual (Sikdar 1982b), the foothills rich in timber, rubber, and ivory and the adjoining fertile plains with the promise of generating enormous revenue lured colonial interests. The immediate concern, therefore, was to dislodge the "tribes" from the areas under their possession for expansion of the tea sector and settlement of ryots, and at the same time, to make them obliged to the colonial rule. Hence, the area was to be subjugated gradually, adopting myriad forms of control, and the process started with an agreement with the chiefs of the Sherdukpens in 1826 and continued till the subjugation of the Mishmis in 1920 (Chakravarty & Chakravarty 1973; Jyotirindra Nath Chowdhury 1982; Mackenzie 1884).

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One of the most effective ways of controlling the "tribal chiefs" was monetization of posa. The chiefs, who were given the privilege of posa in kind, were persuaded or compelled to accept it in cash. Annual payment of posa was increased for the chiefs showing allegiance to the colonial rule (Bose 1979; Kar 2016; Luthra 1971). Monetization of posa was also instrumental for establishing a linkage between the subsistence hill economy and colonial capitalist interests in the valley. With infiltration of cash into the hill economy, Marwari traders operating in the valley as agents of British trading houses were encouraged to open shops to facilitate trade with the hill people. The essence of the frontier trade was to push European finished products to the hill societies and collection of raw products of the hills gradually replacing barter with monetary transactions. Being attracted by the European finished products and opium, the people from the hills frequented the markets dominated by the Marawari traders in the growing urban centres in the valley. Supply from the hills not restricted by the Inner Line resulted in booming of timber and rubber trade in the Brahmaputra valley (Sikdar 1982b). Therefore, rapid transformation of the subsistence hill economy to a monetized one can be seen as a corollary of the integration of colonial Assam with global capital. The consequent social implications *inter alia* provided the basis for growth of a scrounging political class in the decades to come. However, being largely untouched by the "civilizing mission" of the Christian Missionaries, unlike many other parts of the North Eastern Frontier, the loosely governed region, the 'largest *terra incognita'* in South Asia (Guyot-Réchard 2016) for British colonialism remained completely deprived of education.

Becoming a Circumstantial State

The semi-permeable Inner Line had its own political economy. Designed essentially to proscribe movement of the colonial subjects of the valley to the hills, it allowed climbing of cash economy up to the hill societies. However, reinforced by protracted illiteracy of the hill inhabitants; it successfully guarded the 'tribes' against the nationalist ideologies which started influencing the adjoining Brahmaputra valley. Except for a very insignificant inception of a 'war council' in the early 1930s in Sadiya, the hill societies remained beyond the reach of anti-colonial discourse till the dawn of India's independence (Pandey 1997: 90-92). After a break of nearly two decades, a handful of community leaders from Siang came into contact with the Congress leadership, and an attempt was made to organize people under the banner of the Congress on the threshold of India's independence. It was, however, frustrated by the colonial Political Officer (ibid: 92-98).

While India was approaching independence, the political logic of the emerging nation-state warranted a well-designed policy for integrating the Excluded and Partially Excluded areas, which remained almost uninfluenced by the pan-Indian nationalist discourse. The hills, which were brought under the colonial control as districts of Assam elevated serious questions for working out an integrationist model. The question was how to reconcile their aspiration for political autonomy, clearly

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perceptible in some of the hill districts. The instrument for integration designed by the Bordoloi Committee in the form of the "Autonomous District Council" with legislative, judicial, and executive powers was accepted by the constituent assembly. The primary concern was national security, although the instrument was purportedly designed to protect the cultural identity of the hill societies. Essentially, the attempt was to accommodate political aspiration for autonomy within the national political system, characterized by centralized bias, while also facilitating a process of assimilation of the tribal societies with the valley based Assamese culture as well as politics. Accordingly, Autonomous District Councils were constituted in some of the hill districts without altering the colonial map of Assam, retaining the hills under the hegemonic political control of the Assamese.

The strategy for political inclusion of the hill areas covered by the Sadiya Frontier Tract, the Balipara Frontier Tract and the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract, however, had to be worked out differently. As the Bordoloi Committee observed, not only had there been little education except in the fringe or plain portions, but administration had yet to be fully established. In addition to the delicate situations caused by the trade blocks set up by the Tibetans on the Indian side of the MacMahon Line, the large area in many ways was unripe for regular administration until adequate improvements were made through a five-year programme. The village councils in the tracts appeared to be ill organized, and the Committee found little material for local self-government institutions. Since regular provincial administration was not possible, except in the plains, the Committee recommended for accelerating the pace of administration by appointing separate officers. Not to jeopardize the aims of establishing administration and also to bring the tribes, who were well disposed, into the fold of civilization, the Committee recommended continuation of posa, the vestigial payments of sums which the tribes claim by way of *quid pro quo* for making peace. Therefore, the three Frontier Tracts were placed in the Schedule B of the Sixth Schedule to the constitution after separating the plain areas. Consequently, franchise was denied to the people of the hill tracts by debarring their right of representation to the provincial as well as central legislatures, purportedly for their low level of political consciousness.

The 'adoption and enactment of the constitution of India by its people' was preceded by the birth of the Peoples Republic of China, and its immediate interventions in Tibet became a matter serious concern for the Indian nationalists. With a perceived threat of "Chinese irredentism and communist imperialism" Sardar Patel wrote to Nehru on 11 November, 1950, "All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east, we have on our side of the frontier, a population ethnologically and culturally not different from Tibetans or Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and existence on our side of a population with its affinities to Tibetans or Chinese have all elements of political trouble between China and ourselves. There is almost an unlimited scope for infiltration". The infiltration, as Patel was worried about, was the infiltration of Communist ideology. Therefore, he wrote, "the Communist Party

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of India has found some difficulty in contacting Communists abroad, or in getting supplies of arms, literature, etc. from them. They shall now have a comparatively easy means of access to Chinese Communists and through them to other foreign Communists. Infiltration of spies, fifth columnists and Communists would now be easier" (Chopra 1991:275-279).

The apprehension of Chinese irredentism and communist imperialism led India to occupy Tawang in February 1951 to establish its claim that Tawang belonged to India since 1914. This was followed by rapid militarization on the south of the MacMahon Line by establishing a series of Assam Rifles outposts, administrative centres and intelligence checkpoints, the process that continued unabated through the 1950s (Guyot-Réchard 2016:103-104). Militarization had necessarily been accompanied by developmetalist state agenda for the area which was in many ways unripe for regular administration until adequate improvements were made, as the Bordoloi Committee pointed out. Tokenism had its own political role to play. In 1952, Chowkhamoon Gohain, who could afford higher education in Guwahati being the son of a Khamti chief, was nominated to the Indian Parliament (Pandey 1997: 98-100).The Community Development Programme (CDP) was introduced on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti in 1952. The National Extension Service (NES) was inaugurated on the same occasion next year. Starting with 19 National Extension Service Blocks during the First Five Year Plan period, the number bloated to 45 by the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan period. With militarization deep into the "potentially troublesome frontier" and developnetalism for its people aimed essentially at establishing "loyalty or devotion to India"(Chopra 1991)the nation stateprepared the ground for regular administration of the Frontier Tracts in 1954. The Governor of Assam promulgated a North East Frontier Area (Administration) Regulation by re-baptizing the Frontier Tracts as NEFA. For deeper administrative penetration, NEFA was divided into Six Frontier Divisions[4] placing each of them under the control of a Political Officer. Initially, a batch of officer was appointed for administration of the Frontier Divisions, and that was followed by creation of a distinct cadre, the Indian Frontier Administrative Service (IFAS) in 1959.

Constitution of NEFA as a discrete political space with deep militarization and developmentalism along with the subsequent changes of its political structure should be seen with the backdrop of political developments in the adjoining hill districts, especially the Naga Hill District, besides the fear of Chinese infiltration. The imagination of autonomy by the Indian nationalist leadership was preceded by the growth and consolidation of Naga nationalism. The Naga Hills District Tribal Council formed in April 1945 turned into a political platform to assert the Naga

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[4] Balipara Frontier Division was bifurcated and renamed as Kameng Frontier Division with Bomdila as the Head Quarter and Subansiri Frontier Division with Ziro as the Head Quarter; Tirap Frontier was renamed as Tirap Frontier Division with Khonsa as the Head Quarter; Abor hill district was renamed as Siang Frontier Division with Along as Head Quarter; Mishmi hill district was renamed as Lohit Frontier Division with Tezu as Head Quarter; Naga Tribal Area was renamed as Tuensang Frontier Division with Tuensang as Head Quarter. The last one was, however, transferred to Nagaland in 1957.

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identity with renaming of the tribal council as the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946. The NNC prepared to declare independence for the Nagas, and contemplated a 10-year treaty with an independent Assam (Yonuo 1974). In May 1947, the radical section of the Naga leadership unequivocally declared a sovereign Nagaland as their political goal, which led to the plebiscite in 1951and consolidation of armed militancy in response to the military interventions of the Indian nation state.

In other hill districts of Assam, the autonomy provided by the Indian Constitution was an acceptable proposition immediately after independence. The political leadership of the hill districts, however, strived for more power by remaining within the Indian federal structure, and started mobilization for separate hill states comprising the district councils. Following the Naga leadership, political mobilization in the Lushai Hills also took a violent form with the appearance of the Mizo National Front (MNF) in the early 1960s, making its secessionist intentions clear. (Sarmah2017). As a consequence of the political developments in different hill districts of Assam, the process of redrawing the political map of Assam started from the early 1960s and it continued till the mid-1980s. The process was inaugurated by the Constitution (13th Amendment) Act, 1962 to provide statehood to Nagaland and also to insert the Article 371A with certain special provision for the newly created state to meet the political aspirations of the Naga leadership. That was followed by the creation of an Autonomous Sate called Meghalaya in 1969. Further reorganization of the political units of the North East was done in 1971. Statehood was provided to Manipur and Tripura, while the Mizo district of Assam and NEFA were reconstituted as Union Territories as Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh respectively. Finally, when the Mizo nationalist movement came to an end after two decades, Mizoram became a state in 1987. Along with that, statehood was also conferred to Arunachal Pradesh, allegedly, to satisfy political desires and aspirations of the people.

The constitutional provision made for Arunachal Pradesh, however, greatly differed from that of Mizoram. The differences are, perhaps, due to the political exigencies that led to restructuring of the two units of the Indian federal structure. In case of Arunachal Pradesh, the Governor has been provided with special responsibilities for maintaining of law and order backed by enormous powers under Article 371H of the Constitution. However, the constitutional provisions made for Mizoram under the Article 371G are almost similar to that of Nagaland. Nevertheless, the nameless geographical space that was, became a part of the federal structure of the Indian nation state as Arunachal Pradesh without any strong political aspiration of the people manifested through peaceful or violent movements. The foreseeable nosiness certainly provides scope for further research.

Politics of Developmentalism

With their sociogeographical specificities, the nameless nonstate space remained impervious to noteworthy influences and authority of the precolonial valley state,

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as it has already been indicated. The "colonial state space" for Manu Goswami, denoting "the complex ensemble of practices, ideologies, and state projects that underpinned the restructuring of the institutional and spatiotemporal matrices of colonial power and everyday life" (2004: 8) was also not a wholesome reality in the hill societies. Nor did the *colonial nonstatespace* could be made an integral part of the pan Indian nationalist discourse. Nevertheless, geopolitics of the Nation state project demanded its integration to the "idea of India" constructed by the pan Indian nationalist discourse. Militarization was essential, but alone it might lead to estrangement as well as backfire. Therefore, success depended on aptitude to elicit allegiance of the autochthons. At this crucial juncture, the Achingmori episode came as a dreadful lesson at the cost of many lives. A column of the Assam Rifles was dispatched in October 1953 to Achingmori, deep in the un-administered area inhabited by the Tagins, without advance intelligence required for venturing into a virtually unknown territory. The strange men in khaki were massacred. Apart from other apprehensions and suspicions, the Tagins were aware of the objectives of military expansion – "how tribal villages nearer the plains were being gradually brought under closer administrative control" (Rustomji 1983: 131).

In the specific historical and regional context, developmentalist epistemology of the Nation state project required understanding of the social categories not only to redefine the purpose of development but also to make the autochthons conceptualizers of and visible agents in the process. It therefore, necessitated a space for what Escobar has termed as "hyperethnography", allowing the ethnographer to comprehend the development network, investigating the main sites with their respective actors, cultural backgrounds, and practical appropriation of the interventions by local groups (Escobar: 1995). And at this juncture, Nehru appointed Verrier Elwin, a trained anthropologist with deep insights of the tribal areas of India, as the Adviser for Tribal Affairs, and he arrived at Shillong in 1953, as "a missionary of Mr. Nehru's gospel"[5].

The existing Research Branch, which was primarily engaged for documenting the administrative history of the frontier, was reorganized to generate a spate of understanding of the history, culture and language of the people under the guidance of Verrier Elwin. Within a short span, it produced a number of ethnographic accounts of the hill communities of NEFA to help Verrier Elwin reconstructing an integrationist approach. This appeared in the form of "*A Philosophy for NEFA,* first published in the early part of 1957 with a foreword by Nehru. As it was expected by Nehru, the officers and others working with the tribals of NEFA would read carefully and absorb the *Philosophy* to act in accordance with it. The *Philosophy* essentially proposed a mechanism for intervention of the Nation state. The people of NEFA were not to be left in their age-old isolation, nor could the political vacuum along the frontier be left unattended. The interventions must result in a "spirit of love and loyalty for India, without a trace of suspicion that Government has come into the tribal areas to

[5] See, Preface to the Second Edition, the Philosophy for NEFA,(Verrier Elwin 2012).

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colonize or exploit, a full integration of mind and heart with the greater society of which the tribal people form a part …" yet, at the same time "avoiding the dangers of assimilation and detribalization which degraded tribal communities in other parts of the world" (Elwin 2012: 53-54). The proposed middle path for state interventions was in between age-old isolation and too obtrusive interference for assimilation and detribalization. In Nehru's words, "to help the tribal people to grow according to their own genius and tradition; it is not the intention to impose anything on them" (ibid: 56). The core of the integrationist *Philosophy* was the five fundamental principles laid down by Nehru in the foreword to the second edition of *A Philosophy for NEFA*, published in 1958. Praise for *A Philosophy for NEFA* came from all over, the tall nationalists including J.R.D Tata (Guha 2014: 275).

The integrationist mechanism envisaged in the *Philosophy* was, however, soon overpowered by developmentalism of the Nation state. With shifting of responsibility from the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) to the Border Roads Organization (BRO), expansion of roads and communication network during the First Five Year Plan got a momentum since the Second Five Year Plan, backed by military engineering. Not only all the divisional headquarters were linked by roads, NEFA was equipped with thirteen airstrips of different sizes by the end of the Second Five Year Plan. To supplement the feeble indigenous workforce, the process required massive inflow of outside laborers. In addition to expansion of medical services and school education, CDPs were intensified through the increasing number of NES Blocks. Interventions were also initiated, especially since the Second Five Year Plan period, to 'modernize' the 'primitive and wasteful' method of Jhum. Demonstration farms started burgeoning in the hills to promote terrace cultivation of many hitherto unknown cash crops (Chowdhury 1983: 266-271). Proving their resilience to change, the hill communities auspiciously responded to such interventions being oblivious of the vicious socioeconomic insinuations.

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Contesting the fundamentals of the *Philosophy*, developmentalism started exposing the exclusivist hill communities to many new forms of social interactions and economic engagements. Establishment of schools and hospitals for ensuring a 'good life' for the tribals and expansion of administrative networks in a situation of almost total absence of an educated section amongst the autochthons had to be carried out depending on the people from outside. While expansion of transport and communication networks brought a massive outside labor force,militarization exposed the close societies to a host of strange people in khaki. The processes of development dependent on outside expertise, technical skills and labor resulted in mushrooming of urban centres across NEFA. That attracted more and more valley businessmen to settle for ever increasing profit, manipulating the restrictions of Inner Line. The normalization of frontier settlements into towns accelerated the influx of outsiders visibly influencing the ethnic composition.

The story of Vijoynagar is well known. Discovered by an expedition of the Assam

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Rifles in 1961, the area was colonized through a settlement scheme and hundreds of families of soldiers were settled there for security and stability. Yet, another demographic assault invoked by the Nation state was to provide asylum to the Chakmas in the mid 1960s in three different parts of NEFA. Being displaced by the Kapti hydraulic dam over Karnafuli river in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of the then East Pakistan, nearly three thousand Chakma families (approximately 40,000 people) entered NEFA and they were settled with five to ten acres of land allotted to each family. Subsequently, the Chakmas not only remained stateless but also became a serious political question (Singh 2010: 15-17). In view of the considerably low population density, the absolute number of outsiders settled in NEFA is not so significant. However, this has to be seen against the total population of the region and its ethnic composition. The Chakmas alone constituted nearly nine percent of the total population of NEFA in 1971. Further, during the period from 1971 to 1981, the decadal growth of Scheduled Tribe population in NEFA was 20 per cent against that of 94 per cent for the non Scheduled Tribe population. Certainly, this abnormal growth of non Scheduled Tribe population indicates the intensity of influx from outside. More importantly, according to Census data, the growth of urban population during 1971 and 1981 was 141 percent against that of 31 percent for the rural areas of NEFA. This indicates a process of urbanization overwhelmed by the people migrating from the other side of the Inner Line.

The Political Class in the Democratic Theater

The historical conjuncture of the circumstantial state restricted political engagement of the communities essentially to the village-based Institutions. The developmentalist mission of the Nehruvian state, however, disregarded such institutions and also denied political representation based on universal franchise. The influential chiefs were brought closer to administration where necessary. Development engineering avowedly underpinned by security anxiety had, however, to soon fraught with a widening gap between the state and the society at large. The emerging scenario was overcastted by increasing militarization, especially after providing asylum to the Dalai Lama in 1959. It was further aggravated by the Sino-Indian war of 1962, "a performance, a demonstration meant for Indian leaders and public opinion" done by the Chinese force in NEFA. "Through their magisterial handling of the war, benevolence, and promises to return as liberators should the inhabitants demand it" (Guyot-Réchard 2016: 240-241), the Chinese force left a strong message for the people of NEFA as well as the Indian state. The aftermath of the war demanded a radical restructuring of state-society relations for reducing estrangement of the people from the statist development institutions.

The process began with evolving an apparently decentralized power structure. The Governor of Assam in May, 1964 constituted a committee headed by Daying Earing, the only Member of Parliament from NEFA. The Committee recommended an inimitable structure of local self-government. With recognition and delegations of

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responsibilities to develop agriculture, education and public health by the existing administrative structure, the Committee essentially visualized the traditional village councils as the Gram Panchayats. The next higher unit would be at the Circle level to be called Anchal Samiti constituted by members nominated by the village councils. Finally, there would be a Zila Parishad at the district level, as an advisory body, constituted by the members elected by the Anchal Samitis. The Committee also recommended an Electoral College to be constituted by the non-official members of the Zila Parishad to elect the Member of Parliament from NEFA. In contrast to the recommendations of the Committee, the mechanism of decentralized administration worked out for NEFA was, however, based on recognition of the colonial construction of the "Village Authority"[6]. Placing the Anchal Samitis and Zila Parishads in their own hierarchy, the Act promulgated by the Indian parliament provided an "Agency Council" at the top as advisory body to be constituted by the Governor.

The façade of "democratic decentralization" an architecture of the Nation state, and the tiny dose of exotic electoral politics played a decisive role in making of the circumstantial state in the post Nehruvian era. The so-called panchayats structured on the colonial construct of village authorities and functioning as an adjunct wing of the centralized administration soon became the elementary schools of an emerging political class. The village authorities configured by the colonial administration were predominated by the recognized traditional chiefs in their 'red coats' given to them as insignia of authority. The most important source of their political influence was the judicial power they traditionally enjoyed. Reincarnation of the single tribe/clan based village authorities as Gram Panchayats and structuring of the Anchal Samitis with similar ethnic composition provided space for the traditional leadership for their upward political mobility backed by consolidation of powers to negotiate more with the developmentalist administration. Therefore, political articulation of clan/tribe identity in the hill societies became a mere facsimile of cast politics embedded in the main stream of Indian democracy.

The provisional Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh which was functional from 1975 to 1978, was an up gradation of the Agency Council, the apex body of Panchayat Raj. Consequently, all important portfolios of provisional Legislative Assembly, including the Chief Minister, were occupied by the members of the Agency Council. The Union Territory got a Legislative Assembly in 1978 with 33 members - 30 elected and 3 nominated. Subsequently, all the three Legislative Assemblies of the Union Territory, before it became a full-fledged state in February 1987, were also overwhelmingly dominated by members having different

[6] The Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulations, 1945 provides that the Political Officer shall appoint such persons as he considers desirable to be the members of a village authority for such villages or villages as he may specify, and may modify or cancel any such order of appointment, and may dismiss any person so appointed.

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positions in Panchayats.[7] The political leadership of Arunachal Pradesh, therefore, emanated essentially from the rural power structure dominated by the traditional chiefs who could consolidate their political position with powers and material resources accumulated in a geometric progression by becoming an integral part of statist developmentalism.

The traditional chiefs with their consolidated powers and ever-increasing command over resources emerging as a distinct political class was fostered and adopted by the Congress with its predominant hegemony at the national level till the mid-1970s. The simple mechanism was nomination, ranging from the lowest level of administration to the Parliament, to make the emerging political class an integral part of statist developmentalism. Therefore, both forms and contents of the Nation state's interventions deep into the hill societies had never been politically contested. Nor did the political class make any attempt to politically unite the diverse communities, a remarkable difference from the other hill districts of Assam. A small number of school students who formed the Adi-Mising Student Union in 1947 protested against derogatory characterization of the communities such as Abors and Miris, but it remained insignificant and confined only to Sadiya and Pasighat in absence of schools or any such educational institutes in other parts of the region. With expansion of educational facilities, the contesting voice was made creditable by the rebirth of All NEFA Student Union in 1967. The students' movement was reorganized mainly on the questions relating to territoriality of NEFA and continuation of the Inner Line, deportation of the Chakmas, shifting of capital of NEFA from Shillong, more representatives in the Parliament, expansion of road communications, and more importantly, abolition of Assamese Language as medium of instruction from all schools of NEFA (Yonggam 2015: 12-18). However, with the birth of Arunachal Pradesh as a separate state, the issue of deportation of the Chakmas became the primary concern for the students' movement under the leadership of the All Arunachal Students' Union (Prasad 2007).

Political choreography of the Congress with its unit established in 1972 had, however, to confront with contestation at the time of the general elections to the Lok Sabha in 1977. People now had the right to exercise their franchise to elect their two representatives, from the East and the West Parliamentary constituencies. Political maneuvering of the Chief Minister resulted in an uncontested return from the West Constituency (Pandey 1997: 189-190), nevertheless, the people of the East constituency elected an independent candidate. Immediately after the elections, Bakim Pertin, elected from the East parliamentary constituency convened an All Leaders Conference, which culminated in formation of a regional political party, the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA). Appearance of the regional party and

[7] The first Legislative Assembly with elected members formed in 1978, which lasted for only 20 months, had 25 members who held positions in Panchayat Raj. Subsequently, the second Legislative Assembly elected in January 1980, and the third Legislative Assembly formed in January 1986 had 21 and 24 members respectively who held positions in Panchayats (Dubey 2001:81-88).

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its contestation to the Congress hegemony is, however, not be accentuated as an ideological substitute. Though it immediately provided a large space for the ex-student leaders and panchayat representatives to become more visible in the electoral politics, the regional platform has always been a theater for repositioning the dominant leadership. The Janata regime headed by Prem Khandu Thungoon could remain in power for only 17 months and came to an end in September 1979 for defection of 17 members. The PPA after accommodating the defectors changed its name, now to be known as the United Peoples Party of Arunachal; and it reappeared in the earlier name at the time of the general elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1984. By and large, defection as a constitutionally legitimized political paradox to popular mandate continued to be an integral part of the democratic drama of Arunachal, irrespective of the political players. The same leadership keeps changing party affiliation to form the state government matching the party in power at the centre. The process continued till formation of the present Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state after defection engineered by the party in power at the centre.

The long tradition of defection is, however, not to be over generalized as a 'dependency syndrome', reflective of a deep-seated insecurity arising from the extent of neglect and indifference of the region in the mainstream consciousness (Singh 2010: 88) or just as a subjective attribute of the political leaders dictated by pragmatism rather than ideology (Bath 2009: 50). The tradition of defection is reflective of the basic characteristics of the political class that emerged in the historical context of the circumstantial state, besides being adoption of a constitutionally legitimized strategy to remain in power. Access to and possession of land in Arunachal is still guided by the old traditions and customs for the common people. However, conversion land to a productive asset requires investment. Development interventions for substituting traditional jhum with cash crops, essentially a technological intervention without the required institutional reforms, became a bonanza for the political class. Being a part of the developmentalist bureaucracy, politically influential section can easily acquire land allotment certificates required for bank finance and other institutional support to convert the jhum land to modern horticultural farms. The fertile soil, therefore, not only started producing horticultural crops, but also a landed aristocracy in absence of land ceiling or other such legal measures prohibiting accumulation. When the political class started a process of primitive accumulation in the pretext of expansion of permanent cultivation, it also inspired many for production of horticultural cash crops. Almost one third of the total cropped area of Arunachal is now under horticulture.[8] However, the political class remained indifferent to protect the interests of the tiny emerging capitalist farmers and to save them for market vulnerabilities.

[8] With a remarkable low density of population, 17 persons per square kilometer, and significantly high forest coverage of more than 80 per cent of the total geographical area, the total cropped area in Arunachal Pradesh is little more than three per cent, and 30 per cent of the totala cropped area was under horticultural crops in 2013-14. See, Agricultural Statistics at a Glance 2016 and Horticultural Statistics at a Glance 2017, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

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Another means of primitive accumulation appeared in the guise of what is commonly understood as scams. In one of such instances, the Public Distribution System of Arunachal Pradesh was the victim. The so-called scam allegedly spearheaded by the Chief Minister almost for a decade involving Rs. 1000 crore was unearthed by a public interest litigation filed by an organization in 2004.[9]Subsequently, one of the most powerful political leaders who controlled the state politics for decades instrumentalizing defection, Gegong Apang, was arrested in August, 2010. Not only land or the Public Distribution System, the political class also beleaguered the rivers as a means of primitive accumulation, the potential of hydro power that lured the corporate houses. Projecting Arunachal as a 'power house of the country' in the early part of the last decade with capacity for harvesting more than one third of the total hydroelectricity potential of India, the government initiated the process to harvest hydroelectricity rationalizing it as a prerequisite for development. Lured by the projected potential, 159 companies including the central Public Sector Units and private companies signed MoAs and MoUs respectively with the government, and Arunachal received Rs. 1,495.62 crore as upfront money and processing fees within a period of ten years since beginning of the process in 2005 as reported by the *Economic Times on* July 16, 2015. The providence of the 'power house' is a matter of further research; nevertheless, the BJP projected it as a massive scam before it came to power in the state, however, it remained unaddressed after the same party came to power in the state.

Conclusion

Keeping in view India's integrationist paranoia and triumph in the northeastern frontiers, an attempt has been made in this paper to locate Arunachal Pradesh in its own historical, geographical and political context. Arunachal, in its present form, sets an agenda to understand the political economy of a transition from one historical type of power structure to a unit of the federal structure of a nation state uncritically accepting the logic of developmental nationalism. Developmentalism, as an ideology of political integration was instrumentalized by nurturing a scrounging political class by the nation state, the class that was implanted by the colonial power structure to serve its immediate interest. Beginning with making it acquiescent to the centralized bureaucratic system legitimized by the nation state ideology, growth of the incipient political class to its present form of political domination has always been the primary concern of Indian nationalism.

Nevertheless, with the increasing space of political domination in absence of deep rooted democratic political culture, the scrounging political class gathered its vigor to bargain more with the nation state articulating India's strategic concerns especially after the Sino-Indian war of 1962. For instance, the Indian Prime Minister's visit to China in 2008 was immediately followed by his frantic visit to Arunachal Pradesh

[9] September 2010 issue of The Eastern Panorama provides the details of the so called scam.

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to make an announcement of the biggest ever developmental package of Rs. 10,000 crore to the state. Amazingly, that was followed by the anguish expressed by the BJP Member of Parliament from Arunachal for complete absence of railway network in the state. He was willing to get one from China, if India cannot provide (Singh 2010: 5). Continuation of uncontested domination of the scrounging political class requires cultural and political insulation, preventing any questioning of the colonial logic of the Inner Line. Political integration, therefore, remains with the colonial logic of segregation. The present form political domination of the scrounging political class in the state is not a triumph of the Indian cultural nationalism, but merely an opportunistic political adjustment with the Hindutva ideology.

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Colonial Rule and Agrarian Transformation in Naga Hills: A Socio-Economic view of Angami Society

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Abstract

The evolution and socio economic dynamics of the agrarian Angami tribe of Nagaland are best comprehended through land relations that dictate social structures and identity, despite their inherent heterogeneity in land holding patterns. Like any other tribal societies, clan and community ownership of land has been the distinctive hallmark of land relations among the Angami. However, the traditional Angami society was transformed with the British annexation of the Naga Hills in the nineteenth century. It transformed the traditional land relations by their cash economy, new political structures, agricultural land taxation and new labour relations of production. Thus, the paper deals with the colonisation of Naga Hills and the consequent changes in land relations. It examines how native land tenure system was undergoing changes with the introduction of new administrative systems and land revenue policies introduced by the British; besides urbanisation, development of trade and commerce and the advent of Christianity, and the process of agrarian transformation of the Angami society during the colonial period have been analyzed.

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Introduction

The traditional land relations of the Angami underwent significant changes during the colonial rule in the Naga Hills. Before the British intervention, the Nagas were living within their specific village territory and were culturally integrated into the ecological and material world they inhabited (Thomas, 2016). Although there were few interactions outside the village, their society was predominantly traditional. However, British rule disrupted the traditional structure and new customs were

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introduced. Like colonial Africa, European concepts[3] were also deployed in the hills in order to implement their imperial model of rule (Ranger, 2013). Like any other region in the Indian sub-continent, the tribal communities, as well as the valley states of the British Northeast Frontier, underwent substantial transformation under the colonial rule. In Brahmaputra valley, the *Paik* system of the Ahom state was transformed into a system of tax and proprietary rights of the British known as the Ryotwari system (Guha, 1990). Likewise, in the hills, the British imposed their supremacy as undisputed masters over the tribes, and meticulously imposed new land revenue policies. Introduction of various taxes, commercialisation of crops, creation of unprecedented demand for labour, and the spread of Christianity, imposed colonial organizations of governance on the extant traditional political institutions. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand the changes in the Angami land relations during the colonial rule. This paper also examines the British policy of annexation, colonial land revenue system, and its implications on Angami traditional land relations. The paper discusses in detail, the processes of how traditional political institutions, were restructured into the colonial model of rule. It also describes the implications of Christianity on traditional land relations.

British Annexation of Naga Hills

The East India Company came into direct contact with the medieval kingdoms of Manipur, Jaintia, Cachar, and Assam, as well as the tribal communities of the adjoining hills, after the acquisition of Diwani of Bengal in 1765. However, they had been left undisturbed by the British until Burmese invasion (1817-24) of Manipur, Assam and the Cachar Plains. The British defeated the Burmese and forced them to surrender their claim over Assam under the Treaty of Yandabo[4] in 1826. Within a decade and a half of this treaty, the British annexed the kingdoms of Assam, Cachar and Jaintia and all the petty independent tribal states of the Khasi Hills. Almost all other hill territories of the present Northeast (except Manipur and Tripura) were under the political control of the British by 1873 (Guha, 2006). The annexation of the entire region by the British government was, therefore, a gradual process that continued throughout the 19th and into the 20th century (Downs, 1983).

The first Naga encounter with the British took place in January 1832 when Captain Jenkins (later Commissioner of Assam) and Pemberton were ordered to trace a land route from Manipur to the British Headquarters in Assam. The interaction with the Manipur and Assam states brought British into contact with the Angami tribe who fiercely resisted the British intrusion into their country. Captain John Butler noted:

[3] Since there was a limited connection between the British and African political, social and legal system, British administrators invented and codified African traditions, with white models of command and offered many models for African modern behavior. For instance, they created a model of village where there was direct relationship between local food production and local food supplies (Ranger 2013).

[4] The Treaty of Yandabo was signed in the year 1826 between the Burmese and the British at Yandabo village in central Burma. The treaty forced the Burmese to accept the British terms and cease all their interference from the territory of British India.

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> *"In January 1832 Captains Jenkins and Pemberton led 700 Manipuri troops with 800 coolies from the Manipur Valley, via Popolongmai, Samoogoodting, and the Dhunsiri to Mohung Dijooa on the Jumoona. They had literally to fight their way through the whole Kucha and Angami country. So irritated were the hill men by this invasion that British troops were sent to Mohung Dijooa to protect Assam from the threatened inroad of the united clans (Butler, 1854)".*

Apart from this contact, the British also came into contact with the Nagas through the Cachar Hill territory[5] which runs between the Angami Hills and Khasi Hills. North Cachar was annexed by the British in 1832. Though the British found that North Cachar was constantly suffering from Naga exaction and raids, but they were neither ready nor keen to annex the Nagas; so they asked Tularam, the Chief of North Cachar to check the Naga raids; however Tularam protested that he neither had control over the Nagas nor any means of checking their raids . The British government then requested the King of Manipur at Semkhor to occupy the Naga Hills; which was again unsuccessful as they only exacerbated the situation by conducting raids. Thus, it was left to the British to occupy the Angami Hills (Mackenzie, 2014). The intervention of the British to check Naga raids became a turning point for the Angami. Their social-economic, political, cultural, and religious life was to be drastically altered in the years to come. In fact, a fierce resistance against the British was carried out, but in time, even the indomitable Angami, would eventually fall under the imperial power.

The British made ten punitive expeditions into the Naga Hills from 1839 until the end of the period of non-interference in 1851. In 1839, Mr Grange, Sub-Assistant at Nowgong[6], was chosen to conduct the first Angami expedition. He was directed to investigate the causes of the Angami raids, and to punish the Chiefs of the large village of Konemah[7] and Mozemah[8] who had been active during the raids. Mr Grange discovered that there was active trade in slaves between Angami and Bengali Sylhet merchants, and one main objective of such raids was to procure the supplies of slaves[9]. In 1840, Mr Grange was again put in charge for survey expedition of building a road from Assam to Manipur, through the Angami Hills but had to turn back due to Angami resistance. Between 1841 and 1842, a survey expedition was carried out under the command of Lieutenant Bigge, which concluded with a temporary framework of peace with the Naga Hills, particularly with the Angami Hills. Thus, the Dhunsiri River became the boundary line between the British districts and the

[5] Presently known as Dema Hasao district of Assam.

[6] Presently called as Nagaon, a district in Assam.

[7] Presently called Khonoma.

[8] Presently called Mezoma.

[9] As per the report given by Moffat Mills in 1854 and B.C Allen in 1859, North Cachar was inhabited by six tribes namely Hill Cacharis, Aroong Kucha Nagas, Hozai Cacharis, Mikirs, Old Kookies, and New Kookies Among the six tribes, most slaves could have been the Aroong Kucha Nagas, since they suffered the most from the Angami raids. While Kookies were under a chief and Angami people avoided dealing with them. It also appears that in 1880 British raised 100 strong Kookie militia to check the Angami raids (Mackenzie, 2014).

Angami tracts. Slave traffic carried on by the Nagas with the Bengalis of Sylhet was to be suppressed with the establishment of this boundary. Besides, the boundary between Angami Hills and Manipur were also to be settled, a road was to be opened to Samoogoodting[10] from Nowgong, and finally a nominal tribute was to be taken from the Nagas.

In 1844 Eld led an expedition to collect tributes; the Angami tribe refused to pay the first year's tribute to the British, and continued their raid on the British outpost. The expedition concluded that it was essential for the British to occupy the Hills and control the hostility of the Angami. In 1845, Captain John Butler made a commercial survey of the Angami Hills and received tributes in terms of ivory, clothes, and spears. "He was directed by Francis Jenkins, the agent to the Governor General of North East Frontier Agency to discover lime, salt, coal, iron ores, indigenous tea, coffee, and any timber trees which might appear to possess useful qualities, and all hill products which were likely to become articles of commerce and to submit the result of his researches and samples of all such articles. Hence, Butler's discovery of indigenous tea plants brought joy to the government (Sema, 1992)".

During 1846 and 1847 Butler made his second expedition to Angami Hills, this expedition resulted in connecting the roads from Mohung Dijooa[11] to Samoogoodting. Samoogoodting was then put under the political control of a constable Bhogchand Derogha with a few Shan troops. However, Bhogchand was killed during his engagement in the clan feuds that occurred between Konemah and Mozemah in 1849. This prompted the British to occupy Mozemah and Konemah, and thus in 1850, under the command of Lieutenant Vincent; they fought the first battle with the Angami tribe and ended in capturing a strong Naga fort at Konemah; besides engaging in a bloody fight with Kekremah[12] village. However, in 1851, the British withdrew their troops from the Angami areas, and the non-interference policy under the direction of Governor General Lord Dalhousie was implemented till 1865 (Mackenzie, 2014). However, even during this time, nineteen Angami raids into British territory were recorded, in which 232 British subjects were killed or wounded. Verrier Elwin noted that the settlement of a trade blockage, could not secure the peace in the frontier (Elwin, 1969). Although, the policy of non-interference was introduced in the Naga Hills, the British were forced to acknowledge the failure of the policy[13]. Thus, in 1866, the non-interference policy was abandoned, and the forward policy was adopted by the British towards the Nagas; which led to the establishment of the British post at Samoogoodting, and marked the beginning of the colonization of the Naga Hills (Venuh, 2005).

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[10] Presently called Chumukedima.

[11] Presently called Manja Tin Ali in Karbi Anglong District in Assam.

[12] Presently called Kikruma.

[13] Administration Report of the Naga Hills 1868.

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When the news of forward policy of the British reached the Nagas in the hills, they became more defensive by making their own fire weapons, as well as acquiring them from Manipur by 1870s. During this time, there was also resistance to British rule, from other parts of Naga Hills. In 1876, Captain Butler was wounded and killed by the Lothas in Pangti village. Three years after the establishment of British outpost at Samoogoodting, the British shifted their Naga Hills District Headquarter to Kohima in 1879. This brought the British and Angami into great hostility and ignited the famous battle of Khonoma 1879-1880.

In 1879, Captain Damant was shot by the Khonoma warriors on his survey tour to Khonoma village. He was accompanied by sixty-five police, twenty-five were found to be killed or missing, fourteen more were wounded, and of the twenty military personnel, ten were killed and five wounded. Three domestic servants who accompanied the party were also killed. The Angami warriors had swarmed out and succeeded in dispersing the troops, who broke up and attempted to return to Kohimah (Kohima) in twos and threes. The Jotsomah men joined in the attack, and the Chetonoma Khel of Kohimah came out to cut off their retreat (Mackenzie, 2014). Subsequently, an alliance of thirteen Angami villages was formed to conduct a siege on the British garrison in Kohima, in an attempt to wipe out the British from their hills (Venue, 2005). Reinforcements of the British troops came from Wokha, Samoogoodting, Manipur, Shillong, and Dibrugarh. Thus, Alexander Mackenzie noted:

"Colonel Johnstone had, as soon as the news of Mr Damant's death reached him, asked the Maharaja of Manipur to put 2,000 men at his disposal, and these men, under the command of the Minister and the Maharaja's two sons, started the next day. Colonial Johnstone had also with him his own escort of 30 men of the 34th Native Infantry, and a small body of Cachar Frontier Police. The wholeforce accomplished the distance of nearly 100 miles, over a roadless and most difficult country, in five days".

"The news of Mr Damant's murder reached Shillong on the 18th of October. The 44th Silchar Light Infantry was at this time at Goalundo, having been ordered to Cabul; but these orders had already been countermanded, and they were directed to return. In the meantime, a party of the 43rd Assam Light Infantry under Major Evans, was dispatched from Dibrugarh on the 23rd, and marched from Golaghat to Samoogooding, where they were joined by Lieutenant Maxwell, the Assistant Commissioner who had pushed on with few Frontier Police, arrived at Kohimah on the 30th (Mackenzie, 2014)".

Vishier Sanyü and Richard Broome in '*A Naga Odyssey*' (2017) gave a brief account of the battle of Khonoma, which is quoted below:

"The British force surrounded the village and began their assault in the late morning. Their rocket attacked to burn the village failed, and the infantry was

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forced to make a frontal assault. However, the steep terracing of the hillside, the three-meter high stone walls, and the narrow paths funnelled the invading force into a narrow front, and they were cut down by a withering fire by the Angami. As daylight was fading, the British made a final push but lost a quarter of the forward assault force in so doing. At 10:00 pm that night, the Naga warriors whooped and yelled, flames engulfed the village, and then silence descended. Next morning the village was deserted: the villagers had left for the higher ground. The Naga reportedly lost over seventy, while the British force lost twenty, including three officers, with another twenty-four wounded. The villagers were forced to abandon their rice harvest; the British estimated several thousand large containers were left, promising much hardship for the Angami in the coming winter. The Naga built a new base higher in the mountains, which the British called Chaka fort. The British never attacked this fort, fearing large British casualties, and soon made peace with the Angami living there' (Sanyü and Broome, 2017)".

In1880 the British annexation of the Naga Hills was completed with the defeat of the Angami. As a result, the Naga Hills District was formally established in 1881. The permanent establishment of the district became a huge political achievement for the British in the region. Brigadier General J.L. Nation, who led the British force, wrote in his report published in the *London Gazette*, 27 April 1880, that the assault and capture of Khonoma was 'one of the most brilliant feats of arms' in recent times by British officers (Sanyü and Brooke, 2017). In the fighting that followed the invaders discovered that although armed with spears, daos and a very few old muskets, they were a foe by no means to despised. The Nagas encountered by early British explorers were tough warriors, divided into clans and sub-clans (Keane, 2010). Naga resistance as Niketu Iralu writes; the spontaneous, uncoordinated fight thus waged by the Nagas for what was most important to them, namely their land and their self-respect, ended in their first-ever subjugation by a mighty power from outside (Iralu ,2015).

Thus, the British annexation of the Naga Hills brought all the Nagas into the British Administered area. Apart from Angami Hills, the Lhotas and Rengmas came under the direct control of the British by 1882, and were made part of the British frontier tribes regulated under the Inner Line Regulation of 1873[14]. However, there were trans-frontier villages and tribes were designated within the frontier, like four Lhota villages and tribes like the Ao, Sema and Konyak. Between the years 1884 and 1885, Mr R. B Mcbabe, I.C.S., the then Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, conducted the first expedition into the trans-frontier area and by 1890, trans-frontier areas such as Ao territory was occupied and a sub-division of the hill district was established in Mokokchung. In 1904, the boundaries of the Naga Hills District were extended

[14] The Inner Line Regulation 1873 separated the Naga Hills from the British Assam by restricting the tea planters from acquiring land beyond the Inner Line. This also made the tea planters pay compensation to the Nagas for the land occupied beyond the Inner Line (Yonuo, 1974).

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to include the Sema country (Eaton, 1984). By 1909 to 1910, all other trans-frontier Naga tribes were brought under the administered area (Reid, 2013). However, in the later years of the British administration, the Naga Hills was kept outside the purview of the Constitutional Act 1935 and accordingly declared to be an Excluded Area[15] under the Government of India till 1947.

Revenue Assessment

In 1881 when Naga Hills District was formally established, the British introduced a uniform policy of revenue assessment in the Naga Hills although there were several weak Angami villages that were paying agricultural grains to the British in the form of tribute (A.J. Moffat Mills, 1854 cited in Elwin, 1969). However, the British were aware of their agricultural practices, and their traditional land tenure system, which they had gathered from various survey reports and expedition reports. As David Ludden pointed out that settling of land revenue was a primary concern of the East India Company, and consequently the revenue records are far more detailed than other alternative files (Ludden, 2003). S.K. Barpujari noted that the punitive expeditions undertaken during 1832-1851 were more exploratory than punitive; and many new things about the Naga country, its different tribes, manners, and customs, their political, social and economic conditions came to the knowledge of the administration (Barpujari, 1978).

Thus, the British incorporation of the hills land tenure system, into the standard policy of revenue assessment resulting in house tax as well as a tax on their rice grains. Both house tax and paddy rice were directly a tax associated with land and agricultural production[16]. Though the revenue policy was applied everywhere in the Naga Hills, there were variations of revenue assessment among the Nagas, which differentiated between terrace cultivators and jhum cultivators. The Angami were known by their terrace cultivation, while the other tribes like Lhotha, Rengma, Ao, Sema, Konyak, etc. were characterised by jhum cultivation. Terrace cultivation as a practice by the Angami was considered by the British to be more productive, which ultimately affected the rate of tax imposed on them. Between 1880 to1881, the Angami were paying house-tax fixed at two rupees and one maund[17] of rice, while the Lhota and Rengma during the same time paid a house tax of one rupee. In 1893, house tax on the Angami was increased to rupees three, which resulted in a net gain of Rs 6000; concurrently, it increased from rupees one to rupees two per house among the Lhota and Rengma. Thus out of total revenue of Rs. 8,285 resulted in a net gain to the government of Wokha subdivision from Rs. 7249. The British occupied the Ao territory only in 1890, and sub-division of the hill district was established in

[15] Some of the Excluded Area was earlier known as the 'Backward Tracts'. The areas under the Excluded Area were directly controlled by the Governor of Assam. The areas were Balipara Frontier Tract, Sadiya Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, The Naga Hills District, and Manipur state (Reid, 1944).

[16] Administration Report on Naga Hills District 1882.

[17] A unit of weight used by the British India. The equivalent of one maund is 40 kilogram (Elwin, 1969).

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Mokokchung with revenue of rupees two as house tax and 1500 maund of rice was to be collected annually[18]. From 1901 the whole areas of Sema and other trans-frontier tribes came under the British administration with a house tax of two rupees and one maund of rice (Reid, 2013). Thus, the revenue generated from the house-tax by the British in the Naga Hills District was assessed in lieu of land revenue (Allen. 1905).

Apart from revenue from land and rice grain, forced labour was another form of revenue that the British imposed on the Naga Hills. Barpujari noted that forced labour was a form of revenue that the British also used as a symbol of authority, and disciplinary measure (Barpujari, 1978). Force labourers were unpaid labour, which was used by the British either for making cart roads or construction of the bridle paths in the hills. They were also used in transporting the British stores from one place to another. Forced labour was thus collected as a form of revenue from the British subjects. Whenever a village worked against the interest of the British, the supply of forced labour by the villages was acquired, according to the requirements of the government. When the battle of Khonoma ended, Angami villages were asked to pay revenue from land, rice grain and annual supply of labour to the government (Mackenzie, 2014). Thus, forced labourers were also an important aspect of colonial enterprises.

Monetisation of Economy

The introduction of cash by the British in Naga Hills during the nineteenth century significantly transformed the traditional village socio-economic system. Although, the village remained independent of all control[19], the British considered it as the white men's burden to industrialise the Nagas[20]. Thus, traditional labour was transformed into wage labour, and a self-subsistent agricultural product of the village economy, was linked to the market. It may be noted here that wage labour occurs only within a capitalist mode of production (Marx, 1990). However, the wage labour and commoditization introduced in Naga Hills were governed by the colonial enterprise. Thus, the tribal mode of production namely the communal mode of production and individual ownership relations coexisted, with the colonial mode of appropriation.

Trade

Before the British colonisation, there was already a barter system of primitive trade relations. Merchandise comprising woven goods, yarn, live-stock, food-grains, and agricultural implements were interchanged within their community[21]. It has also been noted that trade relations existed between the Nagas and the valley state. The relations between the Ahom and hill tribes varied over time, at times the hills would

[18] Administration Report on Naga Hills District 1882.

[19] Administration Report of the Naga Hills 1878.

[20] Administration Report of the Naga Hills 1868.

[21] Nagaland District Gazetteers Kohima 1970.

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raid the plains; at the same time there were tribes which wanted the protection of the Ahom Army to intervene in an inter-tribal conflict. The Ahom government would also raise revenue from salt brought down by some hill Naga communities, to be retailed with the plainsmen; in fact, the Nagas also depended on the markets in the plains, for certain foodstuffs and goods. Thus the hill dwellers relations with plains were not only overshadowed by acts of warfare or their 'savage' and 'warlike' state of being; but they raided the plains from sheer necessity, when the adjoining areas, were the only source of supply, of essential commodities where they depended. The bounty from a successful raid on the plains consisted of grains, goods, weapons, agricultural tools, and persons, who were enslaved in agriculture or used as payment or tribute to the neighbouring tribes. The acute need for essential goods kept the hills in a mode of constant readiness to raid the productive plains, while on the other hand the Ahom state also depended on supplies of salt from the hills. The Ahom state, in due course changed its tactics in dealing with hill dwellers, by introducing a policy of seduction known as *posa*-system[22] which came to be recognized an alternative to Ahom suzerainty (Wouters, 2012). Thus, the pre-colonial trade relations between the Hills and plains were based on the exchange of goods, for instance, ivory, wax, a conch shell was exchanged in return for salt, brassware, iron, etc. (Elwin, 1969). However, with the British intervention in the hills, cash was introduced through trade and coolie labour. They expropriated the old system of trade relations by monetising the pre-colonial trade relations. Thus, *haat*[23] earlier known as Naga *khat* or *posa*-system of the Ahom state became a significant part in colonising the hills. Earlier exchange through goods like ivory, wax, cloths, salt, brassware, shells, cornelian beads, and agricultural implements became purchasable only by cash. Moffat-Mills reported that Angamis were purchasing cornelian beads and muskets from places like Calcutta (Moffat-Mills cited in Elwin, 1969). In 1854, John Butler mentioned that one thousand Angami Nagas visited the station of Nowgong to trade with the merchants in salt and cornelian beads (Butler, 1854). During the year 1878 one thousand nine hundred ninety-five Angamis took passes[24] to trade in the plains, of which one thousand seven hundred six took down Rs. 7943 to buy salt. While two hundred seven of them bought Manipuri clothes, and the remainder took forty-five ponies (Elwin, 1969). Thus, by the late nineteenth century, the region witnessed British establishing shops at strategic points, and market *haats* held in the interior, formed the local centres for the collection of exports and distribution of imports (Barpujari 1990). Trade and markets were therefore not only politically significant for the British to control the hill raiding on the plains, but eventually let the people of the Naga Hills into a modern economy. Another landmark in modern Naga history

[22] A system in which the hills were access to levy an annual collection of goods and also access the labor service of the Assamese pykes, in return they had to refrain from making inroads into Ahom territory (Wouters, 2012).

[23] Haat is a weekly market. It was a popular means of trade relationship which was practiced between the Nagas and Ahoms before the British Rule (Walling, 2016).

[24] Inner Line Regulation of 1873 made mandatory for both the people of the hills and people of the plains to trade or cultivate only with a pass from the British government.

is the invasion of Japanese that brought new patterns of trade and industry. Troops from all over India, from Great Britain, and from the Commonwealth countries came to rescue Kohima from the grip of the Japanese. Hence, not only multitude of new faces but also new patterns of trade relations came into being[25].

Wage Labour

To meet the demand for manual labour in different jobs, the British started to employ the locals as wage labourers known as *coolies.* Thus, it was through *cooli*es that cash became widespread in the Naga Hills. Besides agricultural occupation, working as *coolies* also became an important subsidiary occupation for the tribal communities, to tackle the economic hardship of taxation, imposed on them by the British. Thus wage earning by *coolies* became inevitable to meet the monetary demands of the cash economy. During the cold winter, majority of the Nagas would turn out to work as coolies in Kohima. They worked in the road construction and earned four to six annas[26] a day, but when they were employed as a means of transport by carrying goods, they earned eight annas. The wages of coolies were fixed throughout the Naga Hills and ranged from two to eight annas as daily wage (Allen, 1905).

The *coolies* were compelled by the British to work in various activities such as road construction and transportation of goods in the hills throughout the year[27]. Thus, the coolies were not confined to singular form of labour, but used in the form of what Ian. J. Kerr called the 'circular labour' that circulated from worksite to worksite (Kerr, 2006). Thus, coolies could be toiling up the steep hills with loads of rice and luggage, or employed in public works like construction of roads[28], pounding and sifting the unhulled rice stored in the British stockade. Besides, the coolies were also employed in the clearance of the roads in the hills district. In fact, each village was held responsible for the section of the road that passed through their village territory. The villagers were also required to clear the jungle twice a year, to dress the road surface once a year; and maintain the roads by clearing drains, trees, stones and earth that may have fallen on them. For this, they were paid at an average of about rupees thirty per mile (Allen, 1905). Lipokmar Dzuvichu refers to this road as the political road, which became an important colonial project of British rule in the Naga Hills (Dzuvichu, 2013).

Commoditisation

The introduction of cash into the Naga Hills resulted into commoditization of land and economy. Land thus became a commodity that could be sold; one acre of terraced land was selling at rupees six hundred in areas, which were connected by

[25] Nagaland District Gazetters, Kohima 1970

[26] A silver currency previously use in British India.

[27] The Future Administration of the Angami Naga Hills 1866.

[28] Roads were in the form of cart road and bridle path.

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the construction of the cart road. While in other parts, agricultural land was sold at rupees two hundred. An acre of terraced rice land was also leased for a year at three to nine rupees, depending on the quality of the terraced land. Jhum land was also leased for two seasons at a rupee and a half (Allen, 1905). During the year 1896, terraced land at Samoogoodting was highly priced and was often sold at a price equivalent to twenty-two British pound (Elwin, 1969). The British also articulated the traditional value of items used in exchange for monetary value. Moffat-Mills estimated that a cow was valued at ten rupees, salt at seven rupees per maund, the conch shell at one rupee, a male slave was worth thirteen rupees, a female slave fetched thirty four rupees, and a goat at two rupees. In 1875 a basket of pounded rice could be bought at four annas and fowl at two annas. In 1879 one maund of pounded rice was priced between two to eight rupees in Kohima (Elwin, 1969). While between 1898 to 1903, the price of the rice shifted from one rupee to fourteen rupees of three to eight per maund, the price of salt and dal dropped from eleven to ten rupees per maund; and between 1903 and 1904 it dropped to five and four rupees per maund (Allen, 1905). Food items like eggs, fowls, rice, millets, job's tears, and vegetables sold in the market; and cloth dyed in border was also sold at three to five rupees (Elwin, 1969). Wild birds like pheasants were also brought into Kohima by the Angamis for sale in the market (Hutton, 1921). During the year 1905 one kilogram of wax was selling at the cost of one rupee in Kohima town. Firewood was expensive, salt was also an expensive item in the market, one kilogram of salt was selling at eight annas. Thus, the pre-colonial economy of the Nagas was commoditised into a cash economy which became a pathway to modernity.

Urbanisation

During the initial years of Naga Hills District, Kohima was the only administrative centre with Deputy Commissioners' office, British officers and barrack of regiments; it gradually transformed into a town connecting Manipur and other parts of the Naga Hills, which led to the gradual development of external commerce[29]. Along with British political administration, Christian missionaries also took initiatives in urbanising Naga Hills through education. Ordinary education was to be imparted and according to the laws of the existing political economy[30]. As a result, education in Kohima developed through the initiatives of the Christian missionaries such as C. D King, Rivenburg, and Supplee who started schools in Kohima. In 1881, C. D King with the help of an Assamese teacher through the medium of Assamese language established the first school in Kohima. Later English became the main language of learning, and the Bible was considered a major textbook. After C. D King's departure from Kohima in 1887, Rivenburgs took the initiatives in 1889 to revive the school started by C. D King. After his retirement in 1922, Mr and Mrs Suppllee took up the charge of education in Kohima. Education was considered by the British government as part of their colonial

[29] Administration Report on Naga Hills District 1882.
[30] Administration Report of the Naga Hills 1873-1874

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administration, and schools were run in collaboration between the Christian missionaries, and the British government. The enrolment of students and the standard level of the class were regulated by the government; it was made compulsory for *Gaonburas*[31] to send the children of their village for education. Since engagement with natives for the day-to-day administration of the British in Naga Hills was required, thus those who got an education were employed as clerks the government office (Longkumer, 2011).

However, along with administration and education, there was also in-migration from other British provinces. Based on 1901 census ninety-four percent were Naga population and four percent of the population were from Assam, and few Nepalese serving in the regiments. There were other few groups who migrated to Kohima which included coolies and cart men from Bengal, artisans from Punjab, traders from Marwar, and a small population belonging to Manipur and Khasis. Nagas from nearby villages have also migrated to settle around Kohima. There were few shops run by Marwari merchants dealing in salt, kerosene oil, matches, agricultural implements, grain, cloth, umbrellas, thread, brass wire, etc. The Naga customers mainly bought salt, thread, agricultural equipment, kerosene, matches and brass wire from Marwari shops. There were also a variety of food items and goods produced in the Naga villages that were brought for sale in Kohima bazaar.

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Legitimising of the Institution of Elders

The tribal-village institution of elders was appropriated into *Dobashi*[32] *and Gaonbura* institution. They were given the task of civil affairs in the concerned village and were made to report to the political agent once a month. *Gaonburas* were given the task of collecting house tax and received a commission of not exceeding 20 per cent[33]. According to Piketo Sema, the *Dobashi* institution was one of the chief means through which the British government established successful relations with the diverse Naga tribes. The *Dobashi* were employed as the handmaidens of the British administration. As a medium of communication, they were entrusted with the responsibility of furnishing districts officers with native news; thus acting as informants, as well as the personnel of the intelligence department. They were in fact respected by the native people and acted as native judges, as they were experts in customary laws (Sema, 1985). The *Gaonbura* was the village elder, who represented the British authority, from each clan group. They were responsible for the collection of house tax from the villagers, and for supplying porters and rations at a nominal cost, whenever British officers toured their region. The offices of the *Gaonbura* and *Dobashi* was therefore introduced by the British to bring some uniformity to the village political structure, and facilitate the governance of the villages belonging

[31] Gaonbura is an administrative term introduced by the British which is used to denote village elders, village headman or chiefs.

[32] The word 'Dobashi', was derived from Hindu words 'Dobhasias' which etymologically means two languages. Literally, it means a man of two languages (Sema, 1985).

[33] The Future Administration of the Angami Naga Hills 1866.

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to different Naga groups (Joshi, 2012). The institution of *Dobashi* and *Gaonbura* was, therefore, a direct appropriation of the Angami traditional informal council of elders consisting namely of *Phichümia*[34], *Peyumia*[35], and *Pehümia*[36]. Therefore, the native judge, village headmen, the village chiefs, and the *Dobashi* were constituted from the extant *Peyumia* and *Pehümia*. The *Dobashi* system of administration, consequently, became a tool for the British to integrate the tribal structure into colonial administrative convenience. The *Gaonbura* or the village headmen or chiefs were given responsibility to collect and submit the revenue to the district office; while the *Dobashi* were given the role of administering justice. The *Gaonbura* and *Dobashi* thus became fully functional agents of the British, and consequently came to hold a considerable stake in the colonial project of rule (Dzuvichu, 2013). Hence, the administered districts were governed, and the regulated spaces were institutionalised, for taxing and legitimising the traditions surrounding land rights, by institutionalising the village level leaderships such as village chiefs and village headmen (Das, 2014). In this way, the tribal political institution was appropriated and became an important project of colonial modernity.

Christianity and Land

Christianity in the Naga Hills was brought by the American missionary E. W. Clark who arrived in Ao Naga Hills in 1872. While in 1878 the British decided to send a missionary to Kohima Angami country but were delayed by Khonoma rebellion and the siege of the Kohima garrison (Joshi, 2012). C. D. King reached Kohima only in 1881 when Angami hills were formally occupied by the British. In 1883, Kohima Baptist Church was founded and the first Baptism was given to an Angami person name Lhousietsü in 1885. Thus, Christianity began to spread across Angami villages in the latter part of the nineteenth century, followed by mass conversion in the twentieth century. However, the conversion of the Naga to Christianity took place at the expense of village cohesiveness (Eaton, 1984). The intrusion of Christianity into the Angami traditional village, created a social upheaval among the villagers. The common perception was that conversion to Christianity would necessitate discarding their traditional ways of religious life, restrict their food habits and ways of living. It would also directly come into conflict with many aspects of their socio-economic relations of production. Christianity also had a huge impact on the traditional social structure of the Angami. Since, those who got converted into Christianity formed their own agricultural labour group, by discarding many social and economic obligations imposed by the traditional society. In the traditional society agricultural labour not only functioned in a work cycle of mutual obligation among the members, but each individual was required to provide enough food and rice beer to his fellow men, working in his or her agricultural field, which was a burden for

[34] Those who have attained the age of 60 years and above.

[35] Those who have qualities of oratory skills, in-depth knowledge of history, rituals, ethical values, talent in singing, wisdom, diplomacy, honesty and wealth.

[36] Those Phichümia in the older category, having the qualities of a Peyumia (Nakhro, 2009, Yalie ,2016).

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the poor cultivator. Thus, for some poor cultivators conversion to Christianity was also an escape from this traditional hierarchy. Thus, there were Christian agricultural labour groups known as *Kehumia Peli*. Agricultural activities were performed in the new light without the attachment of traditional rituals and social practices[37].

Christianity also substantially increased the production of Angami rice crops. In the traditional society, most of the rice produced from terrace and jhum cultivation was consumed not only as rice for food, but was also used in making unlimited rice-beer known as *Zu*[38]. J.H. Hutton (1921) noted that the Angamis drank *Zu* all day long; in fact, it was not just a drink, but a staple article of consumption, the staff of life, and might be reckoned more appropriately as food rather than drink (Hutton, 1921). When rice ran out before the harvest, the poor cultivator either loaned rice or fed on the job's tears and other millets, which were also consumed by making *Zu*. When Christianity came to Angami areas, *Zu* was considered as a characteristic of the traditional Angami religion. According to the American missionaries, rice-beer was seen as a barrier to 'true' conversion (Longkumer, 2016). As such, the conversion into Christianity ultimately resulted in discarding *Zu.* Thus, Christianity directly increased their rice stock. Since rice and traditional *Zharha* labour are intimately related, the increased stock of rice also resulted in the disappearance of traditional *Zharha* labour relations[39]. Thus, Christianity like the market economy, also significantly affected their traditional agrarian class structure, by transforming many traditional values and cultural beliefs.

Christianity also directly affected their traditional land tenure system. In 1935, when Sir Charles Pawsey was the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills District, he was called to solve the land dispute that was regularly emerged in Chiechama village between the Christians and the Non-Christians. As a result, a boundary line was drawn on the basis of religion, with newly converted Christians moving out to new sites for settlement while the non-Christian continued to occupy the traditional village land[40]. Thus, when Christianity made its entry into the Angami villages, land rights, land ownership and became a significant identity marker of the non-Christian Angami. In fact, Christianity from the perspectives of the non-Christian Naga was seen as an alien force. However, mass Christian conversion took place by the middle of the twentieth century, and as Christianity began to spread among the Angami and the Church came to occupy a certain amount of land in the village.

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[37] Chiechama Baptist Centenary Seweda, 1910-2010.

[38] Zu is a fermented rice beer, which is of three types namely Zutho, Zutse and Dzüzu (Hutton, 1921).

[39] In traditionally Angami society, labourers were paid with a fixed quantity of unhulled rice. Zharha is earned by an individual as a one day wage; Zha in Angami literally meaning wage and Rha meaning basket, thus the basket filled with unhulled rice which the individual earns is called as Zharha. The existence of Zharha labour group and non-Zharha labour group clearly indicated that the pre-colonial economy of the Angami was stratified between the rich and poor. The rich are called Mhakenyimia as the term implied a person owning property of any sort, particularly land. The poor were termed as Mhakejümia or Zhakraketsümia. The term Mhakejümia does not strictly imply a person not owning property of any sort but owning a limited or small amount of land in comparison to the rich.

[40] Chiechama Baptist Centenary Seweda 1910-2010.

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Conclusion

The colonial rule brought about structural changes in Naga in society, by altering the traditional patterns of social relations of production, and paved the way to new social formation and new modes of production. In the context of land relations, there were significant changes in traditional land relations of Angami society. Their traditional land tenure system was meticulously rearranged, and revenue was imposed on their land and agricultural crops.

The traditional subsistent economy got monetised and commercialised through several means. There was expropriation of pre-colonial trade relations between the hill dwellers and the people of the plains. Like the Ahom state, the British invented the new tradition of a trade by providing goods, in which the hill tribes commonly traded in the plains. As such, market *haat* became a place in which the supremacy of the British was established. Wage labour in the form of the coolie, was introduced into the traditional economy as a new means of occupation.

The process of urbanisation and commercialisation also began to take place in Kohima. Education became an important tool for the British administration since native involvements in day -to-day administration became vital. As Kohima was urbanized, there was also in-migration of people for settlements, administration, and trading. Thus, there were not only Nagas migrating to town from native villages but there was in-migration from different parts of British India such as people belonging to Assam, Punjab, Manipur, Bengal, Rajasthan, Nepal and Khasi Hills. Markets and bazaars also became important characteristics of Kohima urbanisation, as such traditional economic goods and products were monetised.

The British rule also transformed the village political institution to garner the benefits of the village economy, by politically controlling their social institutions. As a result, the *Dobashi* and *Gaonbura* became important mediators and agents through which British rule was established. Likewise, Christianity also facilitated the process of colonisation, and in fact, brought certain radical changes in their land relations. The land was demarcated between Christian and non-Christian Angami, and new village settlements emerged with Christian inhabitants. It also brought transformation in their socio-economic relations of production. However, during the latter part of the twentieth century, almost all the Angami population was converted into Christianity. As a result, Churches came to occupy certain amount of village community land in the village.

This agrarian transition during the colonial period, paved way to the process of privatisation, commoditization, urbanisation, and agricultural commercialisation in the post-independence period as well as in the recent times.

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Note

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Assam Movement and Communal Polarisation

Monoj Nath[1]

Abstract

The Assam movement (1979-1985) is considered as a successful secular and democratic movement led by a student organization. However, there have been allegations that Hindu fundamentalist groups influenced the movement, although such allegations were rejected by the movement leaders. Against this backdrop, the present paper tries to understand whether Assam movement was influenced by Hindu fundamentalist groups. And the paper argues that although communal forces did not have any influence over the movement when it began, both Hindu and Muslim communal forces tried to use this mass movement for spreading their organizational strength. In the process, the Assam movement was communally divided and it left a legacy of psychological division between the Hindus and Muslims of Assam.

Introduction

During last more than three decades after Assam Accord was signed in 1985, which brought about the end to the six years long Assam movement, the Assam movement has always remained an issue of sharp contestation in academics as well as politics of the state. One of such contestation regarding the Assam movement, during this period, has been about its secular character. The leaders and supporters of Assam movement have been demanding that the Assam movement in true sense was a democratic and secular movement. Opposed to this, there have been strong allegations that movement leaders were influenced by communal forces and as a consequence, the Assam movement was communally polarized.

Depicting the influence of communal forces on Assam movement, Isfaqur Rehman writes:

> *From the very beginning, Assam movement was against democratic and secular traditions, values and rules. Another angle of anti-foreigners movement was the influence and domination of communalism and casteism. At one point of time,*

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> *BJP and RSS elements entered the movement and anti-Muslim feeling started to grow. Muslims were equated with the foreigners. As a result, people of Assam were divided into majority and minority. As a reaction to Hindu fundamentalism, Muslim fundamentalism also tried to influence the movement (Rehman 2016, 40-41).*

This gives an impression that Assam movement leaders were influenced by Hindutva organizations like Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS) and political parties like Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) and as a consequence Muslim communal forces stepped in the movement. However, the influence of the communal organizations, particularly of the Hindu fundamentalist organizations, on the Assam movement has always remained a big controversy since the days of the movement. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, the president of AASU during the movement who became the chief minister of Assam after the movement, declined the influence of right wing Hindutwa organizations on the movement. He argued that AASU appealed all organizations and political parties of India to support the Assam movement. In response, several political parties and non-political organizations supported the movement, several others remained silent, few political parties like Congress opposed it. Leaders like Atal Behari Vajpayee and Jaswant Singh etc. also supported the movement (Mahanta, 2007, p. 12). Even Hiteswar Saikia, the Congress chief minister during 1983-1985 who tried to control Assam movement with force, did not acknowledge of a big role of RSS in the Assam movement. In 1984, in an interview, he responded that although RSS tried to take the opportunity of the Assam movement, it failed (as cited in Saikia 1993, pp. 39-40).

However, after the Assam Accord was signed, AASU was first congratulated by the president of Delhi University Students' Union, Bijayendra, and the national president of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Dr. O.P,Kohli (Nivedan, swajan-cinta, 2007: 12). And most sharp criticism against the Assam Accord also came from Delhi and from a religious person. Maulana Asad Madani, national president of Jamiat and a Congress MP then, on October 9, 1985 in a letter to the prime minister of India alleged that Assam accord *encourages separatisms by treating Assam for Assamese and thus, it is unconstitutional* and such agreement *will encourage people in other parts of India to start such agitations to achieve their objectives reasonable or unreasonable* (Ahmed, 1999, p.173). These two incidents clearly show that the communal forces had interests in and influence on the Assam movements.

Against such contestation regarding the secular character of Assam movement, this paper tries to understand whether the Assam movement was influenced by communal forces. For that, it analyses different incidents during Assam movement which divided people into the Hindus and Muslims. And the paper comes to the conclusion that both Hindu and Muslim communal forces tried to exploit the biggest mass movement Assam experienced after independence in their own way, and as a result the movement brought about irreparable psychological gap between the indigenous Assamese and the Muslims[1].

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Beginning of Assam Movement and Muslims

The by-election to Mangaldoi parliamentary constituency in 1979 emerged as the background of Assam movement. On the basis of the statement of then India's chief election officer S.L. Shakdher on October 24, 1978 about large scale inclusion of foreign nationals in the electoral rolls in northeastern states, All Assam Students Union (AASU) demanded for postponing the by-election in Mangoldoi till the names of illegal foreigners were deleted from the electoral rolls. In the meantime on June 8, 1979 the AASU sponsored a 12-hour general strike to demand the 'detection, disenfranchisement and deportation' of foreign nationals from Assam. In August, 1979 a few political and cultural organizations including the Assam Sahitya Sabha came together to form a coalition called Asom Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP) to co-ordinate a statewide campaign to draw attention of Assam's problem of illegal migration. That was the beginning of the Assam movement (Baruah, 2001, pp 121-122). The organization behind the movement, AASU and AGSP, estimated the number of illegal foreigners in Assam to be as high as 4.5 to 5 million, or 31 to 34 per cent of the total population of the state in 1971 (Ibid. 118).

The Assam movement started in a period when the state was going through unprecedented political instability under Janata party coalition government in Assam after 1978 Assembly election. In the mean time, after the failed Janata experiment, Indira Gandhi led Congress (I) came back to power at the centre in January, 1980 with a thumping majority. AASU submitted a written memorandum to the Prime Minister on February 2, 1980 where it mentioned the demands of the Assam movement, which became the reference point of the entire movement and later of the Assam Accord. In the beginning of the memorandum, AASU mentioned: 'The problem which is agitating the minds of people of entire North East Region is the problem of foreigner from the neighbouring countries particularly Bangladesh and Nepal'. In its seven demands, the first was: 'Foreign national must be detected and deported from our country'. Among some Proposals included in the memorandum, the first was: 'The National Register of Citizens (NRC) of 1951 should be made up-to-date by taking into consideration the additions to the number of each family since the time of compilation of the Register'.

The demands and proposals mentioned above meant that the movement mainly targeted the illegal foreigners from Nepal and Bangladesh who immigrated to Assam after 1951. The leaders of the movement wanted NRC of 1951as the basic document to determine the nationality in Assam and strictly demanded 1951 as cut-off year for detecting and deporting the foreign nationals from Assam. The demand for 1951 cut-off year frightened the Muslims, particularly the immigrants, of Assam. A large section of immigrant Muslims came to Assam since independence till the birth of Bangladesh.

When the movement started in 1979, the leadership of the movement identified all

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'outsiders' (*Bohiragato*) as the enemy to the existence and identity of indigenous Assamese people. However, the movement shifted from the issue of 'outsiders' to 'foreigners' (*Bideshi*) within very short period and the memorandum submitted to the prime Minister in February 1980 mentioned only about foreigners. *Bohiragato* meant all the outsiders living in Assam, even from different states of India. In a liberal democracy like India, a democratic movement cannot sustain with such an undemocratic demand and Assam movement also had to shift its position from *Bohiragato* to *Bideshi* very soon. However, this shift created an impression among the immigrant Muslims that the movement leaders shifted its position only to target them.

Moreover, the movement leaders and supports began to label all the Bengali speaking Hindus and Muslims as 'Bangladeshis', i,e, illegal foreigners. In the course of the movement, the illegal Hindu immigration from Nepal and Bangladesh took a back seat and East Bengal origin Muslims became the target of the movement leaders and supporters.

Communalisation of Assam Movement

Both the Hindu and Muslim religious organizations tried to communalise the Assam movement. Even the state tried to communally influence the movement.

Influence of RSS and Jamiat

AASU formed a *seswasevak bahini* (volunteer force) in 1980 to mobilize the movement. And many believe that *seswasevak bahini* was formed as per the suggestion and instruction of the RSS. The supreme commander of the *seswasevak bahini,* Joynath Sarma who became minister under AGP government in 1985, was known to be very close to RSS (Manoj Nath, 2015, p.221). Many believe that the *seswasevak bahini* was involved with several communal clashes that occurred during the movement (Monoj Nath 2015 : 165). On February 21, 1982 RSS convened a *Purbanchaliya Hindu Sanmillan* in Guwahati where all Hindus were appealed to unite under Hindu religious flag, irrespective of caste and language, so that they could play a dominant and determining role in entire north east. Such appeal, in the midst of Assam movement, worked as a catalyst to unite Hindus against the Muslims (Borgohain 2001 : 15). ABVP strongly supported the cause of the Assam movement and it organized several seminars on the issue of the movement in different places like Delhi, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar etc. Even some prominent leaders of Assam movement joined the seminar held in Hyderabad. On the day of *Rakhi Bandhan* in 1983, ABVP used lakhs of *Assam Rakhi* in the entire country and observed the occasion as 'Save Assam' day. A delegation of the organization carried a *Swahid Jyoti* (Martyr Light) from Rajghat and handed over it to the AASU leaders in Guwahati on 1st October, 1983. Next day, ABVP organized a mass *satyagraha* in Guwahati in support of the movement where almost 1000 members of the organization from all over the country participated (Bhattachharya, 2011: 204-205).

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The Jamiat ul ulema e Hind (Jamiat), a Hindu religious organization, opposed the Assam movement from the very beginning. Assam movement made Jamiat very relevant among the Muslims of Assam against the idea that the movement was controlled by RSS. By the end of 1980, Jamiat began to advocate the cause of the minorities against the movement. It took the lead to unite all the minority organisatons against the movement. It even aligned with the Citizens' Right Preservation Committee (CRPC), which was an organization of Hindu Bengalis, the linguistic minorities of Assam. It played an important role in creation of the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) in 1980 as an opposition to the AASU and Assam movement (Ahmed, 1999: 149-151). During the movement, through regular publications, Jamiat tried to poisoning the minds of Muslim readers (Hussain, 1993: 132) against the Assam movement and the Hindus. Jamiat imported religious leaders from different parts of India, during the entire movement period, to campaign against the movement in the immigrant Muslims dominated areas in an objective to unite the Muslims against the movement. Jamiat even termed the leaders of the Assam movement as 'extremist' and 'secessionist'. In a resolution of the Jamiat, Assam unit 14th conference on 24th and 25th April, 1984, it said *due to abnormal situation arising out of the result of so called foreigners movement launched by the extremist secessionist force since the last 4/5 years constantly threatening the sense of security of the people belonging to all minority communities....* (as cited in Ahmed, 1999: 207).

It clearly proves that both Hindu and Muslim religious organizations tried to influence the Assam movement. Within one year the Assam movement began, AAMSU was born which marked the origin of Muslim counter to Assam movement. With the birth of AAMSU, the Assam movement started to get communally polarized. And the appointment of Anuwara Taimur as the Assam Chief Minister by Congress (I) high command in December 1980 also contributed significantly to this communal polarization

Birth of AAMSU

On March 29 and 30, 1980 a minority convention was held in Jaleswar, Goalpara district where mainly Muslim politicians and youths and a section of Hindu Bengali leaders participated. In this convention, AAMSU and All Assam Minority Yuva Parishad(AAMYP) were formed to protect and safeguard the minority communities from the Assam movement (Ahmed, 1999: 150). Till the beginning of the Assam movement, AASU was strongly supported by the students from immigrant Muslim community and the organisation had strong presence in the educational institutions located at the areas inhabited by these Muslims. The immigrant Muslims from Brahmaputra valley stood behind AASU as a community in the medium of instruction movement launched by the organization in 1972. After the beginning of the Assam movement, particularly after the formation of AAMSU, immigrant Muslims as a community deserted AASU. The community began to consider it as a

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threat and AAMSU emerged as the new platform of young leaders and students from the community. However, the indigenous Muslims of Assam opposed the formation of AAMSU. After the formation of AAMSU, in an appeal, Asomiya Muslim Public Relation Committee stated that the formation of AAMSU was unnecessary and it would bring about division between indigenous communities and Muslim community (Thakur, 2014: 26-27).

AAMSU came into existence as an antithesis to AASU under the patronage of the Congress. On 3rd March, 1980, in a talk with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who visited Guwahati for discussions with the leaders of Assam movement, the leaders of AAMSU declared their readiness to accept 1971 as the cut-off year for determination of illegal foreigners in Assam (Hussain, 1993: 121). And within less than one year of the beginning of the Assam movement, AAMSU emerged as a counter force of AASU and a counter movement was launched by AAMSU against Assam movement on 26th May, 1980 by observing 'Demand Day' throughout the state. On the demand day, in Howley town of Barpeta district, AAMSU organized a big rally where four persons were killed in police firing (Ahmed, 1999: 153). Many allege that in Howley rally, AAMSU supporters shouted the slogan 'Jai Bangla' by taking Bangladesh national flag in their hands (Borpujari, 1999: 50).

The formation of AAMSU was the institutionalization of Muslim opposition to Assam movement. While AASU was demanding 1951 as the cut off year for identifying illegal foreign nationals in Assam against 1971 cut off year wanted by central government, AAMSU demanded that 25th March 1971 should be the 'base date' for detection of foreigners from Assam on the basis of Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of 1972. Indira Gandhi led central government was prompt to make AAMSU a part of negotiation on Assam movement as the organization has accepted the proposal of Mrs. Gandhi regarding the 'cut off ' date. By making AAMSU a party in the table of negotiations, Congress led central government tried to show its concerns towards the causes of Muslims in Assam. However, the decision of the central government to make AAMSU a party of discussions vis-à-vis the Assam movement made the AASU anguished. AASU labeled AAMSU as the agents of illegal Bangladeshis living in Assam. There were reports of frequent clashes between the supported of AASU and AAMSU during the movement period. For instance, AASU called for 36 hours strike from 17th November 1980 demanding discussion on the situation of Assam in the winter session of parliament and during the strike a clash occurred between AASU and AAMSU in Dalgaon, Sonitpur. Assam government had to impose curfew in that area on 18th of November (Thakur, 2014: 35).

After AAMSU was patronized by the central government, the supporters of the Assam movement began to consider AAMSU as the organization of illegal Bangladeshis. On the other hand, AAMSU openly aligned with the Jamiat, a religious organization, to oppose Assam movement although it criticized AASU of being controlled by RSS. The organization mobilized and united the immigrant Muslim community against

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AASU and Assam movement. In the whole process, the community, particularly living in Brahmaputra valley, started to believe that they were not recognized as Assamese; rather they were recognized as illegal Bangladeshis, by the leaders and supporters of the movement despite their attempt to integrate with Assamese language, culture and society.

Anuwara Taimur as Assam Chief Minister

After 1978 Assam Assembly election, Janata party alliance formed the first ever non-Congress government in Assam. But, from the very beginning, Janata government was instable because of internal conflicts and contradictions among the parties in government. The Congress (I) returned to power at the centre under Indira Gandhi in early 1980. After Mrs. Gandhi assumed office in Delhi, massive defection took place in the politics of Assam. Congress (I), which won only eight seats in 1978 election, increased the strength of its MLAs to 45 in December 1980 as a consequence of defections, although the party failed to reach the majority number in the Assam Assembly. At this point of time, under the patronage of Mrs. Gandhi, Congress (I) formed a government in Assam on 6th December 1980 with Mrs. Anuwara Taimur as the chief Minister, which lasted till 26th June, 1981. Anuwara Taimur's elevation as the chief minister of Assam, at this point of time, turned the Assam movement into communal playground.

AASU strongly opposed the formation of Anuwara Taimur led Assam government. It successfully observed total black-out in the state to register protest on the day Taimur government assumed office (Hussain, 1993, p.147). The vernacular press of Assam began to term the Taimur government as a 'minority government'. From the number equation, Janata governments led by Golap Borbora and Jogen Hazarika, before Taimur took over, were also minority governments. However, the Assamese print media labeled only Taimur government as 'minority government' (Hoque, 2007, p.301) only because Taimur was a Muslim. The Assamese press played a crucial role in the origin and evolution of Assam movement. The Assamese press openly supported the movement. Most often it spread emotions in favour of the movement and hatred towards who opposed the movement or differed with it.

Assamese press began to spread that immigrants would be encouraged and Muslim would get the benefit of the government jobs and services under Muslim chief minister Anuwara Taimur. As a reaction to the Muslim threat created by press, the influence of RSS and BJP on Assam movement suddenly increased (ibid, 301). Taimur government, on the other hand, appointed several Muslim officers in chief minister's office. Muslim officers were assigned responsibilities of important department in Assam secretariat which created dissatisfaction among the non-Muslim officers (Manoj Nath, 2015: 115). This government, for the first time, tried to discipline ethic Assamese government employees, especially senior officials, who were known sympathisers of the movement. For many, the actions of Taimur

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government, on one hand, created a kind of legitimacy crisis in the state and on the other were aimed to de-Assamisation of state bureaucracy, which again reinforced the Assamese minoritisation at the hands of immigrants (Baruah, 2001: 128-129).

Anuwara Taimur's selection as the chief minister of Assam by the Congress High Command communally divided the society of Assam. Before Taimur, Muslim Congress stalwarts like Fakharuddin Ali Ahmed and Moinul Hoque Chowdhury were never considered for the post of chief minister of Assam by Congress High Command. On the other hand, Taimur was not a very prominent and mass based leader. Even she did not demand for chief ministership. Still, Congress made her the chief minister of Assam only to create a Muslim vote bank in favour of the party. Mrs. Gandhi realized that the Muslims of Assam were in crisis because of the Assam movement and if Congress could show its sympathy towards them at that point of time, the community would become a vote bank for the party. This Congress strategy gave dividend in 1983 Assam Assembly election when the immigrant Muslim community solidly stood behind the party against the movement. Assam Muslims are broadly divided into indigenous Muslims and immigrant Muslims and Anuwara Taimur represented both the groups. While Taimur was an indigenous Muslim, she represented Dalgaon constituency, overwhelmingly immigrant Muslim dominated. This link of Taimur with both the groups of Muslims in Assam worked in favour of her when Congress planned to create a Muslim vote bank in Assam by appointing a Muslim chief minister in the situation created by Assam movement.

A section of indigenous Muslims alienated themselves from the Assam movement after Taimur became the chief minister. On the other hand, the movement leaders, because of Taimur episode, began to label Congress as the friend of illegal Muslim Bangladeshis. As a whole, the Taimur episode sharply divided the Assam movement in communal lines.

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State's Attempt to Communalise the Movement

The government of India has always remained soft towards the Hindus remained in East Pakistan/Bangladesh, although India became secular after independence. The large scale and continuous illegal migration from East Pakistan to Assam since independence has always been ignored by the central government only to help the Hindus living in East Pakistan to migrate to India. No government at the centre, whether formed by Congress or non-Congress parties, has shown exception to this attitude. Even after almost seven decades of independence, in 2015, the Narendra Modi led BJP government has decided to give citizenship to Hindus and other religious minority groups of Bangladesh in India who have already migrated.

The Congress led central government also tried to communalise the issue of foreigners in Assam movement. The government urged the movement leadership to treat the 'displaced persons' from East Pakistan/Bangladesh specially. By the

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'displaced persons', government wanted to safeguard the Hindus immigrated from East Pakistan/Bangladesh. However, the leadership of the Assam movement declined to distinguish the illegal foreigners on the basis of religion.

AASU's stand in the whole issue was visible from its letter dated November 13, 1980 sent by its general secretary Bhrigu Kumar Phukan to the Home Minister of India. The letter clearly said,

> *Only yesterday the Prime Minister mentioned the Assam problem in the NIC meeting and said that any solution must not harm the minorities. Will you kindly explain to the people of Assam how detection of foreigners, on the basis of 1951 NRC only to avoid harassment to any genuine Indian, would harm the Indian minorities irrespective of religion ? On the other hand, in the last Delhi meeting you suggested that the 'displaced persons' should be given special treatment, implying thereby that religion should be a factor in the detection process. We are all opposed to it. If the Central Government adopts such an attitude, the unity of the different section of Indians residing in Assam and belonging to different religious groups will be jeopardized. We can never allow such a situation to develop. The detention process, therefore, must be on the basis of the constitutional provisions and the 1951 NRC (Cited in Ahmed 1999: 201-202).*

Communal Polarisation in Assam Movement

The influence of Hindutva organizations on Assam movement leaders, role of Muslim religious organizations to counter the movement, the origin of AAMSU and Anuwara Taimur's chief ministership communally divided the Assam movement. The happenings of Assam movement since the mid 1981 were consequences of this communal division.

Election 1983

In the post independent period, 1983 was the most violent year in Assam. The Assam Assembly election held in February of that year and the Nellie massacre just after the election significantly influenced the future course of Assam movement and created everlasting distrust between the indigenous Assamese and immigrant Muslims.

The sixth Assam Legislative Assembly was dissolved pre-maturely on March 19, 1982. So according to the constitutional provisions Assam would have to go in for an election before March 18, 1983 in order to elect a new House (Hussain, 1993: 147). Mrs. Gandhi led central government was adamant to held Assembly elections in the state in due time. The government was sure that an election with a moderate to high turnout would weaken the claims of the movement about its representativeness and its power capability. On the other hand, the movement leaders were also adamant to oppose any election without removal of the names of illegal immigrants from the

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electoral rolls, as they claimed that large number of illegal foreigners had already entered their names in electoral rolls. The organizers of the movement called for a boycott of the election, calling it Assam's 'last struggle for survival'. In this backdrop, the election of 1983 became the focus of a contest between the Assam movement and the Indian state (Baruah, 2001: 131).

The boycott call given by movement leaders was largely successful in the ethnic Assamese dominated constituencies. In some strong ethnic Assamese constituencies the polling was as low as 0.38 per cent, 0.40 per cent, and 0.68 per cent. In spite of such low voting percentage in ethnic Assamese dominated constituencies, the average voting in Assembly Elections, 1983 was 31.46 per cent. This became possible because of normal voting turnout in North Cachar (55.91 per cent) and Karbi Anglong (39.54 per cent) districts, both hill districts mostly unaffected by the Assam movement (ibid, 133) and normal voting turnout in Hindu and Muslim Bengali dominated constituencies in lower Assam and Barak valley.

In 17 constituencies (out of total 126) elections had to be cancelled because of total breakdown of law and administration. However, the immigrant communities participated in the election in large numbers. The Bengali Hindus and immigrant Muslims participated in the election to form an immigrant friendly government which could protect them from the Assam movement. Congress leaders including Prime Minister Indira Gandhi appealed the minorities in the election campaigning to vote for Congress and promised their protection. The immigrant Muslims and Hindus rallied behind the Congress in this election for their protection. Because of their support, Congress won 91 seats out of total 109 constituencies where elections were held. Total 33 Muslims elected to the Assembly in this election, which is the highest number of Muslim MLAs in Assam Legislative Assembly till now. Among 33 Muslims elected 26 won in Congress ticket.

The 1983 elections established the immigrant Muslims community as the main enemy of the movement leaders and supporters. The movement leaders appealed to boycott the election and the immigrant Hindus and Muslims participated in the election in large number against this call of boycott. And, thirty three Muslims were elected to the Assam Assembly in this election. So many Muslims could win in this election as most of the indigenous communities did not take part in the election. In 1972 Assam Assembly elections, 21 Muslims were elected to Assembly and that was the highest number of Muslim MLAs till then. In 1978 election, the number of Muslims elected to Assam Assembly increased to 28. This increase of number of Muslim MLAs in Assam Assembly became an argument at the hands of the movement leaders and supporters in favour of large scale illegal immigration of Bangladeshi Muslims to Assam. The election of 33 Muslims to Assam Assembly in 1983 election, which was largely boycotted by indigenous Assamese, made this argument even stronger that illegal Bangladeshi Muslims were becoming the threat to the political existence and identity of the indigenous Assamese.

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During 1983 election campaigning, both the supporters and opponents of the election tried to communally polarise the election and the Assam movement. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi campaigned for consecutive three days from February 10 and she addressed election meetings only in immigrant Muslim and Hindu inhabited areas from Barak valley and lower Assam of Brahmaputra valley. Another two central ministers Abdul Ganikhan Chowdhury and Nihar Ranjan Laskar also campaigned in minority dominated areas. All these Congress leaders appealed the Bengali Hindus and immigrant Muslims to rally behind the Congress to oppose the Assam movement. There were reports that the central ministers, Chowdhury and Laskar made highly communal comments during their election campaigning in minority dominated areas (Manoj Nath, 2015: 134). On the other hand, BJP leaders like Atal Behari Vajpayee campaigned against the election. And Assamese press, during the election, blindly supported every move of the movement leaders and labeled every minority as illegal Bangladeshis who participated in the election.

Nellie Massacre

AASU not only boycotted the 1983 election, but also decided to stop the holding of election by using all the means available and at any cost. This stand of AASU made the 1983 election a battleground between the movement supporters and the central government. Government imposed different black laws like Assam Special Power (Press) Act which censored the media, imposed ESMA on state government employees to ensure their participation in the process of the election. Assam was flooded with paramilitary forces to hold the election and the government even imported polling personnel from Bihar to hold election as a large section of Assam government employees defied all dictates of the government and stood with the movement.

Assam movement became leaderless during the election. All the top leaders of the movement were arrested and kept in jail for holding the election. In this critical stage, the movement was led by second rank leadership. This is one of the causes that Assam movement made several mistakes during 1983 election. Assam experienced unprecedented breakdown of law and order and violence during 1983 Assembly election**.** AASU declared that 130 movement supporters were martyred in government violence during the election. On the other hand, government declared that 3026 persons lost their lives in election related violence. According to the Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Assam Disturbance, 1983, during 1st January and 30th April of 1983, in election related violence, the loss of lives in different districts were: Dibrugarh – 54, Sibsagar – 88, Lakhimpur- 350, Nagaon – 1811, Karbi Anglong – 16, Darrang – 493, Kamrup – 92 and Goalpara – 119 (ibid, 135). At different places, Assam movement supporters used force and involved in violence to stop the holding of the election. These election related violence eroded the non-violent character of Assam movement**.**

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During the election, communal clashes occurred at different places. The election was held in three phases on 14th, 17th and 20th February, 1983. During the second phase of election, in communal clashes, 500 immigrant Muslims and same number of Hindu Bengalis were killed in Saolkhowa, south of Mangaldoi and in Khairabari, north of Mangaldoi. During 10th and 12th February, several villages were burnt in Gahpur of Sonitpur district where at least 150 people died and 2500 became homeless (Borpujari, 1999: 52). On February 18, 1983, a large-scale massacre took place in Nellie, near Jagiroad of Nagaon District, where around 1600 people died. In this incident, the local people, including the Assamese and tribes attacked the Muslim immigrants from East Bengal (Kimura 2003: 227).

The Nellie massacre severely affected Gandhian ideology of the movement and brought about significant changes to the direction of the Assam movement. The movement leaders declined any role from their part in Nellie massacre and pushed the blame to the Tiwa tribe who inhabited in nearby areas of Nellie. However, it was clear to everybody that the massacre was a revenge on the immigrant Muslims living in that area for their participation in the election. On April 10, 1983 newly elected chief minister Hiteswar Saikia alleged that the volunteer force of AASU led the Nellie massacre (Manoj Nath, 2015: 207). The leaders of volunteer force sent a secret written appeal to all its members by giving instructions for stopping the holding of election. In this appeal, the volunteers were urged to use all kinds of violence like burning the government offices, to cut trees for blocking communication, to disrupt electric supply, to physically torture those who support the election, to use bow and arrow etc. for stopping the election (Bora, 2007: 353-357

The 1983 Assam Assembly election and the Nellie massacre while on one hand sharply divided the Assam movement on communal lines, on the other, visibly established the enemies for both the supporters and opponents of the movement. While the election made the immigrant Muslims 'enemy' for the movement supporters, Nellie massacre posited the movement supports as the 'enemy' for the immigrant Muslims. Even a section of indigenous Muslims, who supported the movement from its beginning, began to rethink about their position because of the growing anti-Muslim tone of the movement that became visible in Nellie.

Exclusion of Muslims' Interests

The 1983 Assembly elections and its related violence, especially one in Nellie, raised a question mark on the non violent and secular character of Assam movement. In this situation, Muslim leaders of AASU organized a special meeting among themselves on 11th and 12th April, 1983 in Guwahati which discussed about the communal violence occurred during the election. Among these leaders, vice president of AASU, president and organizational secretary of Kamrup district AASU, general secretary of Bokakhat AASU were also present. The meeting sent a letter to the central committee of AASU expressing their concerns in post Assam Assembly

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election (1983) situation and demanded steps from the AASU leadership to contain the spread of communal violence.

The content of the letter showed how Muslims felt alienated from the Assam movement after the Nellie massacre. The letter openly alleged, referring some reports published in national media, that the supreme commander of AASU volunteer force, Mr. Joynath Sarma, had close association with RSS and he should be immediately expelled from AASU. The letter questioned AASU's role in declaring the attackers as martyrs during communal clashes and demanded a well formulated policy in declaration of martyrs. It appealed the central leadership to ask all units of to be vigil against any kind of activities of communal organizations like RSS, Viswa Hindu Parishad, Jamat-E-Islami, Jamiat etc. so that the movement can be saved from communal conspiracy of these organizations. The letter demanded that steps be taken to stop forthwith the practice of publishing any attack as attack by Bangladeshis or *Miyans* by regional media (Ahmed 1999 : 154-157).

However, the central leadership of AASU rejected the allegation that any leader of the organisation, including Joynath Sarma, had any association with RSS. Without giving any importance to the concerns of Muslims expressed in the letter, AASU leadership alleged that the meeting of the AASU's Muslim leaders was Congress sponsored. On this allegation, the central leadership of AASU suspended its vice-president and expelled all other leaders from AASU who organized the meeting. This intolerance showed by AASU central leadership towards the concerns of the Muslim leaders of the organization clearly proved how Assam movement ignored the interests and views of the Muslims. For many, the expulsion of the Muslim leaders by AASU central leadership was a clear indication of strong influence of Hindu communal organizations over the movement leaders (Hussain, 1999: 127).

The Muslim leaders of the Assam movement were mainly from the indigenous Muslim community. The expulsion of these leaders compelled the whole community of indigenous Muslims to introspect of their role in the movement, Already, Nellie massacre clearly showed that Muslims had become the main target of movement supporters. Gradually, a section of the community alienated itself from the movement.

Imposition of IM(DT) Act

The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) [IM(DT)] Act was the state's response to the Assam movement. The IM(DT) Act,1983 was to provide for the establishment of tribunals for the determination, in a fair manner, of the question whether a person is an illegal migrant to enable the central government to expel illegal migrants from India and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The Act set up tribunals in each district, which are to be presided over by retired district/additional district judges. Congress (I) ruled both at the centre and in Assam at the time of its formulation. The parliament passed the Act to address the issue

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raised by the Assam movement, i.e., the identification and deportation of illegal foreigners from Assam. The central government led by Indira Gandhi formulated the Act in an objective to marginalise and weaken the movement by making the issue of illegal foreigners in Assam very complex. And Congress party, by formulating this act in parliament, tried to create vote banks among the immigrant communities in Assam who became the target of the movement.

The IM(DT) Act, besides making the process of identification and deportation of illegal foreigners from Assam very complex, also divided the society in communal lines. The IM(DT) was an immigration act and had no relation to majority or minority community. However, since the imposition of the Act on Assam, Congress had been openly arguing and campaigning in the state that the act was to safeguard the interests of the minorities. During Assam movement after the act was implemented, Congress argued that it was for safeguarding the interests of the minorities from the movement. After the signing of Assam Accord, Congress started to publish that the act was to safeguard the interests of the minorities from the clauses of the accord. The Act became a tool at the hands of Congress to show its solidarity towards the minorities. The argument and campaigning of the Congress in favour of IM(DT) Act clearly showed why Congress government at the centre formulated it and how the party used it for vote bank politics. The imposition of IM(DT) Act on Assam helped Congress in Assam electorally as the minorities, particularly the immigrant Muslims, began to consider the party as an ally against the political parties and organizations who supported the Assam movement. Against the Congress politics of vote bank via IM(DT) Act, most of political parties and non-political organizations of the state continuously demanded the repeal of the act since its implementation. During the period the Act was in force, the politics of Assam was sharply divided into pro and anti IM(DT) groups. And the anti IM(DT) group began to label the entire immigrant Muslim community of Assam as illegal Bangladeshis for the community's support to the IM(DT) Act. This has, again, alienated the legal and genuine immigrant Muslims from the society of Assam.

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The Assam Accord

The Assam movement came to an end with the signing of the Assam accord on August 15, 1985. The Assam Accord fixed 24th March, 1971 as the cut-off date for identification and deportation of illegal foreigners from Assam against the demand of the Assam movement to fix 1951 as the cut-off year. Moreover, the IM(DT) Act, which was an obstacle to the process of identification of illegal foreigners in Assam and was considered as a safeguard by immigrant communities living in Assam, was not withdrawn by the government as a result of the signing of the accord although the movement leaders strongly demanded for its repeal. In both cases the demands of the minority organizations like AAMSU prevailed. Still, the Muslim organizations strongly opposed the Accord. In a convention of the Minority Coordination Committee attended by CRPC, AAMSU, Jamiat, Minority Yuva Parishad and Minority Forum

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of Assam held on 28th and 29th September, 1985, just after the Assam Accord, at Guwahati strongly opposed the Accord and resolved that "*The Convention considers the Accord detrimental to the interests and safety of the minorities living in Assam. It has created a fear psychosis in the minds of the minorities*"(Cited in Ahmed 1999: 229-234).

Assam Accord again divided the indigenous Assamese and immigrant Muslims, this time politically. Assam movement leaders formed Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) after Assam Accord was signed. The CRPC formed United Minority Front (UMF) against AGP. Assam Jamiat actively supported CRPC in the formation of UMF. A large section of immigrant Muslims voted for UMF in 1985 Assam Assembly election against AGP. The UMF bagged 17 seats in this election, mainly from immigrant Muslim dominated constituencies. However, after the 1985 Assam Assembly elections, Assam Jamiat left to patronise UMF. Opposite to it, Jamiat tried to determine the electoral behaviour of immigrant Muslims in consecutive Assam Assembly elections since 1991. And in 2005, after Supreme Court of India repealed the IM(DT) Act, Jamiat formed Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF), which became All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in 2009, to safeguard the rights of the minorities in post- IM(DT) situations. The Assam Jamiat has been partonising the AIUDF in all consecutive elections held in Assam since 2006. The active role played by Jamiat during Assam movement helped the organization to play an electoral role in politics of Assam after Assam movement and a political role via AIUDF since 2005.

Assam Accord was vehemently opposed by the minority organizations led by immigrant section of Muslims. However, within one decade of the Accord, the Muslim organizations started to support the Assam Accord. In 1994, Assam Jamiat resolved to support Assam Accord. In the whole process, Ganatantrik Adhikar Sangram Samiti (GASS) played a crucial role. After Congress came to power in Assam in 1991 under Hiteswar Saikia, Assam witnessed a situation where all the democratic processes were made hostage by army and paramilitary forces under direct patronage from the government, in the name of containing terrorism of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), an outlawed organisation. Then GASS, a civil society organization, emerged to protect the democratic institutions and processes from becoming a pawn at the hands of armed forces. Maulana Abdul Hoque and Hafiz Rashid Chowdhury, both Assam Jamiat leaders, were among the organizers of the GASS. In that time, GASS leadership tried to bring a consensus among different communities and groups of Assam on the cut off date fixed by the Assam Accord. Till then, different recently immigrant communities in Assam were opposed to the cut off date fixed by the Assam Accord. As a result of this attempt of the GASS leadership, the immigrant Muslim community started to accept the Assam Accord and the cut off date fixed by it. Hoque and Chowdhury appealed the immigrant Muslim community to accept Assam Accord and actively campained for convincing them on cut off date fixed by the Accord (Gohain 2018, 1&8).

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Conclusion

The Assam movement leaders successfully defeated the central government's attempt to communalise the issue of illegal foreigners during the movement. But they could not contain the influence of religious fundamentalist organizations from influencing the movement. The role of the Hindu fundamentalist organigations in the Assam movement was not direct, although they tried to influence the movement. But Muslim opposition to Assam movement came directly from the communal organization, the Jamiat. Jamiat led the process to form AAMSU, the Muslim counter to Assam movement. And after the emergence of AAMSU and Anuwara Taimur was made the chief minister of Assam, the Assam movement was heavily influenced by both Hindu and Muslim communalism. This polarized the society of Assam in communal lines and created unprecedented distrust between indigenous Assamese and immigrant Muslims.

This distrust has made the immigrant Muslims of Assam defensive and communal in attitude. The situation has been explained by Mosudul Hoque as-

> *The incidents and publicity during the Assam movement hurt the minorities of Assam who for centuries lived together with the majority and shared common culture. The orthodoxy among the Muslims of Assam, particularly of upper Assam, started from here. The first thing was that Muslims became introvert. More number of Muslims began to participate in Janaja. Use of mike for Ajan, attempt to show Muslim solidarity, emphasis on Muslim dress also started from then. The Maulavis from north India started to visit Assam frequently. With the increase of the visit of Hindutva leaders and journalists, Mulla-Moulanas visit to Assam also increased proportionately. Ordinary Muslims began to spend lots of time in reading Quran and religious discussions in Masjids. Communal elements began to root in Muslim mentality (Hoque 2007).*

Notes

1. Muslims are the largest religious minority group of Assam consisting 34.22 per cent of total population of the state (2011 census). According to 2011 census reports, among total 27 districts in the state, nine districts are Muslim majority and three other districts have Muslim population more than 35 per cent. Another seven districts have Muslim population between 10 and 35 per cent.

Muslims of Assam are divided into two broad categories: indigenous and immigrant. The indigenous Muslims migrated to Assam since the 13th century till the took-over of Assam by British. On the other hand, the immigrant Muslims migrated to Assam under British colonialism and during 1951-1971 after independence. The immigrant Muslims of Assam are also known as *Miyan* Muslims. The Assam movement targeted mainly the immigrant section of Muslims.

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Vocational Training and Education in North-East India: Access and Labour Market[1]

Anupam Sarkar[2]

Abstract

India's north-east region, comprising of eight States is one of the less industrialised and economically backward areas of the country. Although the average literacy rate of the region is higher than the country's average, the youth lack employable skills. Recently, the government of India has embarked on an ambitious target of improving the skill base of the country through expansion of the vocational education and training (VET) programmes. In this context, the paper examines the access to VET among the working-age population and the impact on employment and earnings using the recently published Annual Report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18. The paper argues that despite the recent initiatives on massive skilling of the country's youth a very little section of NE has accessed formal VET. Moreover, although it has some impact on raising labour force participation, there is no evidence that formal VET courses are effective enough to increase earnings, bridge the gender gap in wages, or the improving work conditions of the VET holders.

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Introduction

Skill development of India's working-age population has received priority in recent years among policymakers in India. It is perceived as a tool to make the current workforce more productive, afford opportunities for gainful employment, fostering entrepreneurship, making India a skill hub for the export of skilled personnel to countries facing an acute labour shortage, and earn a competitive advantage in the global market for commodities and services. It is said that the window of opportunities opened up by India's demographic dividend, which is expected to continue for the next 35 years, can best be utilised to the country's advantage if proper skill training can be imparted to the young generation. Often cited is the examples of advanced economies that could benefit from similar phases of demographic transition by

[1] Views Expressed in this paper are author's own and do not nessarlily belong to the organisation to whom the author is affiliated.

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investment in skill development of the youth. In India, there has been an increasing thrust on skilling for unhindered supply to meet industry demand for skilled professionals which is necessary for its expansion and realisation of the 'Make in India' dream (Joshi & Bhattacharya 2018). Skill development is also perceived as a strategy to engage the youth who have dropped out from or discontinued from school education at an early age in acquiring skills and knowledge that would be rewarding economically.

India has an elaborate structure of vocational education through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). The government of India has also initiated several short term skill development programmes with ambitious targets. However, all the recent all India surveys on labour force and employment throws light on poor skill base and the high unemployment rate among the youth population. The Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey of National Statistical Office (NSO) shows only 2.5 percent of the Indian population aged between 15 and 29 years have received formal vocational education and training. The scenario has not changed in the last decade despite several policy initiatives and the launching of new schemes on mission mode by the government of India. In 2004-05 this proportion was just 2.4 percent (NSSO 61st round EUS). In this context, north-east India needs special attention.

North-east India having a population of 45.59 million population as per the 2011 Census is composed of eight States- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. In recent past the region has performed better than the nation in terms of human development, particularly improving literacy rate among the masses (Bezbaruah 2010). The region also has performed better as compared to India in terms of gender parity with a higher sex ratio and female literacy rate (NEC 2015)[3,4]. But on the economic front, the region has fared poorly as compared to the country's average with lower workforce participation, per capita income, and per capita consumption. Except for Meghalaya (41.8 percent) and Sikkim (44.1 percent) in all other north-eastern States labour force participation rate (LFPR) is lower than all India average (38.2 percent). The relatively better performance in the social indicators hides wide disparities across States, gender, and rural-urban sectors.

The north-east region of India is one of the least industrialised regions of the country (Dikshit & Dikshit 2014). The share of the secondary industry comprising of manufacturing; construction; electricity, water, andgas supply contributes just over eighteen percent of the region's income (*ibid*.). The boom in the information technology, telecommunications, and banking sectors that India's urban centres have witnessed in the past two decades has largely passed by the north-east States

[3] Combined sex ratio of north east States was 973 females per 1000 males as per 2011 Census, while for India it was 945 females per 1000 males (NEC 2015).

[4] Except for Arunachal Pradesh in all other north east States female literacy rate is higher than the country average (NEC 2015).

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(Sharma 2019). There has been inordinate growth in the Central government funding in various flagship programmes and construction works that have turned the region into a donor-driven economy (*ibid.*).

The Vision 2020 for the north-east region recognises the shortage of professionally trained people and skilled workers due to good training facilities and weak quality of instructions in the region (NEC 2008). The regional plan of the North-Eastern Council emphasized on the urgent need to significantly improve the pool of highly skilled and trained manpower for economic development and attracting higher investment in the region (NEC 2017). Out of the 15697 ITIs all over India, only one percent was located in the north-eastern region (Khuntia 2017), however as per the latest data of 2019, there are a total of 15697 ITIs in the country and only 0.49 percent are located in northeast region. In several States like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Meghalaya each district do not have even one ITI (*ibid*.).The opportunities for formal skill training was even lower for women with some States like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Sikkim has less than a hundred seats for womenin ITs (*ibid*.). According to Sahu & Kumar (2017), the inadequate quality of education and skill deficit are some of the major constraints in the path of long term economic growth and sustainability of the region.

Vocational education and training of the youth in the north-east assume critical importance in view of lack of employable skills, high unemployment, in ability to attract private capital in the region, the imperative to check the rapid spread of drug abuse, and the influence of insurgent elements on the youth. The present study takes a look at the issues involved in access to VET and the labour market outcomes of VET courses. The specific questions it asks are- what are factors that influence access to VET? What is the status of labour market participation and employment among VET holders and the non-VET population? Does VET lead to higher earnings and better access to social security? Does obtaining a VET qualification helps to reduce the gender gap in wages? This paper is divided in four sections Section 1 describes the data source, Section 2 presents the results of our analysis, Section 3 discusses the major findings, and Section 4 concludes the paper with few policy implications.

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Data Sources and Methodology

This study is based on the micro-level data of the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS 2017-18) conducted by the National Statistical Office. This is a nationwide sample survey carried out between July 2017 and June 2018 covering 56108 households in rural areas and 46005 households in urban areas. A multistage sample design was followed in PLFS. In rural areas, 2011 census villages formed the first stage of sampling units. Each rural household was visited only once and one-fourth of the first stage units were covered in each quarter of the survey period. For urban areas, a multistage rotational panel design was followed where urban blocks from Urban Frame Surveys constituted the first stage sampling units. In the

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rotational panel scheme, each urban household is visited four times- once with first visit schedule and thrice with revisit schedule. The survey collected a wealth of information on the employment and unemployment of each member of the sampled households, including earnings, education, skills training, type of job contacts, and access to social security benefits. Each member of the household was asked whether they have received any vocational education or training. To those who received/ receiving formal training, detailed questions were asked on the duration, field, and source of funding for the training. The present study has used the data from the micro-level database of PLFS belonging to eight northeast States[5]. PLFS asked persons between 12 and 59 years of age whether they ever attended any vocational education or training course. The present study covers the population in the age group of 15- 59 years. The study has primarily used tabular analysis to analyse the level of access to VET, employment, and wages among the workers who have a VET background as compared to the others, quality of employment of the VET holders vis-à-vis others with general education.

Results and Analysis

Access to Vet in North-Eastern States

The analysis begins by looking at the longitudinal trend in the proportion of the population in the NE States who are skilled or have received formal vocational training and education. As can be seen from the Table 1, a very small share of the population in north-east has received formal VET and the number has not changed much in the last decade. Only 1.08 percent of the male and 0.61 percent of the female population has undergone any formal VET course. This makes only 0.85 percent of the population formally trained in 2017-18. In fact, there is a marginal decline in the proportion of persons who have received formal VET from 0.89 percent in 2011-12 and 2017-18.

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Table 1: Proportion of formally skilled workers in the total population of NE States

NSS rounds/ years	Male	Female	Person
NSS 61st round 2004-05	0.42	0.26	0.34
NSS 66th round 2009-10	0.77	0.52	0.65
NSS 68th round 2011-12	1.07	0.71	0.89
PLFS 2017-18	1.08	0.61	0.85

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of Employment and Unemployment Surveys of various rounds and PLFS 2017-18

If persons who received informal training (i.e. who are skilled through informal ways like hereditary, learning in the job, self-learning, or others) are taken into account, then also the picture does not change much. Only 2.70 percent of the male and 2.23 percent of the female population has received VET of any form- formal or informal.

[5] For more discussion on PLFS, see Jajoria and Jatav (2020) and Annual Report, PLFS 2017-18

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There also exist some differences in achievement between rural and urban sectors. While 5.25 percent of the population has received some form of VET is urban areas, the proportion is just 1.96 percent in the case of rural areas. A sizeable section of the population who received informal VET has acquired it through self-learning (0.75 percent of the total VET). Around 0.32 percent has accessed VET through hereditary learning and another 0.46 percent through learning on the job (Table 2).

Even within each State of north-east India, there exists substantial variation among districts depending upon the socio-economic development of the region. Appendix Table 1A shows the proportion of the population in the working-age group who received VET in the aspirational districts of the northeast States vis-à-vis the overall figures in the respective States[6]. It is clear that the backward districts (termed as aspirational districts) are far more disadvantaged in terms of access to formal skill education as compared to the average population of the State even when the overall access is low. For example, aspirational districts in several of the north-eastern States like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, or Meghalaya do not have a single person who received formal VET.

Table 2: Population which received vocational training per 100 persons- detailed description, NE States

Sector/ Gender	Received vocational training						Did not receive vocational training
	Formal	Non- formal				Total	
		Hereditary	Self-learning	Learning on the job	Others		
Rural							
Male	0.90	0.21	0.38	0.41	0.09	2.00	98.00
Female	0.43	0.38	0.84	0.24	0.04	1.92	98.08
Person	0.67	0.29	0.60	0.33	0.07	1.96	98.04
Urban							
Male	2.11	0.40	1.94	1.90	0.28	6.62	93.38
Female	1.54	0.58	1.14	0.51	0.11	3.88	96.12
Person	1.83	0.49	1.54	1.20	0.19	5.25	94.75
Rural+ Urban							
Male	1.08	0.24	0.62	0.64	0.12	2.70	97.30
Female	0.61	0.41	0.88	0.28	0.05	2.23	97.77
Person	0.85	0.32	0.75	0.46	0.09	2.47	97.53

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of PLFS 2017-18

As compared to northeast India, opportunities for access to VET are higher at the all India level. Appendix Table 2A shows the all India average proportion of the

[6] Aspirational districts are 115 districts from 28 States identified by NITI Aayog on the basis of indicators of socio- economic backwardness. For more information visit https://niti.gov.in/about-aspirational-districts-programme.

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population who received different types of VET. Apart from proportion of persons who have received formal VET (2 percent) at all India level, the opportunities for self-learning (1.8 percent) and learning on the job (2.2 percent) is also comparatively higher for the national average vis-a-vis northeast States. Though the difference is not high in each individual category of VET, considering all types of VET together the states in northeast India (2.47 percent) have a much lower proportion of persons with VET compared to all the States (9.2 percent) taking together.

Employment and Unemployment among VET Holders

In this section, labour market participation of the VET holders is discussed, focussing specifically at the labour force participation and unemployment situation among VET holders vis-à-vis others in the NE States. We have used the concept of the usual principal and subsidiary activity status approach for the classification of persons within the labour force, unemployed or outside the labour force.

Labour force participation rate (LFPR) which is the percentage of the population in the labour force is higher among VET holders of NE States (Table 3). Similarly, worker population ratio (WPR) which measures the proportion of employed persons in the population is comparatively found to be better among VET holders than others. But at the same time, it is also important to note that the proportion of the population unemployed (PU) is very high among formal VET qualified persons in the case of both males (8.8 percent) and females (14.5 percent).

The data also highlights a wide difference between formal and non-formal VET holders in terms of employment indicators. This is particularly true among the male population- there is a 19.5 percentage point difference in the WPR among formal (73.2 percent) and non-formal (92.7 percent) VET educated males. In the case of LFPR, the difference is 13.3 percentage points between male formal and non-formal VET holders. (Table 3)

In the case of females, LFPR, WPR, and the proportion of unemployed are highest among technical degree holders. However, there is a significant improvement in labour force participation and worker population ratio of the females among VET holders as compared to general and elementary educated females and LFPR is much higher among formal VET holders than informal VET holders(Table 3). It can thus be inferred that formal VET courses have been more effective than informal methods to improve female participation in the labour market.

Appendix Tables 3A and 4A show the labour force participation rate (LFPR), worker population ratio (WPR), and proportion unemployment (PU) among VET holders across gender and rural/urban sectors at the State level in the northeast States. The corresponding figures at all India level for these variables are also shown in the tables for reference.

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Table 3: Employment and unemployment in vocational and general education (%)

Type	WPR	LFPR	PU
Male			
Formal	73.2	82.0	8.8
Non- formal	92.7	95.3	2.6
All VET	84.9	90.0	5.1
General	44.6	50.4	5.7
Elementary	77.8	84.4	6.7
Technical	81.6	89.2	7.6
All	60.1	66.1	6.0
Female			
Formal	46.5	61.0	14.5
Non- formal	48.7	49.8	1.1
All VET	48.1	52.9	4.8
General	8.7	10.0	1.3
Elementary	18.4	22.8	4.4
Technical	54.4	76.9	22.5
All	14.5	17.2	2.7
Person			
Formal	63.7	74.5	10.8
Non- formal	71.0	72.9	1.9
All VET	68.5	73.4	4.9
General	26.7	30.2	3.5
Elementary	49.0	54.6	5.6
Technical			
All	37.8	42.1	4.4

Source: PLFS 2017-18

Two things that become clear from the tables are that there exist significant differences across States in the proportion of the population that is unemployed among all VET holders and the incidence of unemployment among VET holders in northeast States in high as compared to the average of all India. Among the northeast states Sikkim has the highest worker population ratio (92.9 percent) and low unemployment (5.8 percent). On the other hand, the unemployment rate is highest in Nagaland (18.7 percent). The other States with very high incidences of unemployment are Arunachal Pradesh (16.7 percent) and Meghalaya (10.1 percent).The unemployment rate is lowest in Manipur (2.4 percent). Finally, Tripura has the lowest LFPR (58.5 percent) and WPR (50.9 percent). High unemployment among VET holders in NE State has been reflected in various other surveys as well. For example, a study by Mott Macdonald and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)

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on ITI graduates in 2018 found that 58.2 percent of the students under the Centre of Excellence scheme (CoE) and 46.7 percent of of the students under the Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS) are unemployed and looking for a job[7]. These proportions are much higher than all India level figures (34.9 percent for CoE and 36.4 percent for CTS).

Table 4 occupation-wise distribution of all VET qualified workers (formal+ informal) in the NE States. Craft and related trade works provide the largest opportunity of employment for VET holders, both in rural as well as urban sectors. Nearly one-fourth of all VET/ skilled labourers are absorbed in craft and related trade occupations (24.6 percent). The highest proportion of urban skilled workers is working as professionals (22 percent). In rural areas, quite a high proportion is working as skilled agricultural and fishery workers (15.3 percent) or technicians and associate professionals (17.3 percent).Also noticeable is the very little access of VET holders to white-collar jobs like legislators, senior officials, and managers.

Table 4: Distribution of VET trained workers across occupations in north-east India

Occupation	Distribution of VET holders		
	Rural	Urban	All
Legislators, senior officials, and managers	2.8	3.3	2.9
Professional	13.2	22.0	16.2
Technicians and associate professionals	17.3	12.6	15.7
Clerks	1.9	7.9	3.9
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	4.8	12.0	7.3
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	15.3	2.4	10.8
Craft and related trade workers	26.4	21.1	24.6
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	7.7	11.6	9.1
Elementary occupations	10.7	7.2	9.4
All	100	100	100

Source: PLFS 2017-18

The industry-wise distribution of skilled workers, both formal and informally trained, is given in Table 5. Like all other workers agriculture is the largest employer of skilled workers (40.05 percent) also and this is true for both rural (45 percent) and urban (30 percent) sectors. Mining and quarrying employ a sizeable share of skilled workers as well. Together the agriculture and mining and quarrying employs more than half of the skilled workers (53.27 percent). The other large employer of skilled

[7] The Centre of Excellence Scheme was introduced in the Union Budget of 2004-05 to upgrade 500 it is in the country as Centre of Excellence through domestic resources and World Bank assistance. For more visit https://dgt.gov.in/VTIP. The Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS) was introduced by the Government of India in 1950 by establishing by establishing 50 ITIs for imparting skills in various vocational trades to meet the skilled manpower requirement for technological and industrial growth of the country. For more see https://dgt.gov.in/CTS

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workers is the other services (25.63 percent), a significant share of whom constitutes people engaged in personal, community, and administrative services. As against this, the share of manufacturing in the skilled workforce is just above 2 percent. This is clear from the data that there is very little opportunity for skilled workers outside the primary sector or government sector.

Table 5: Distribution of VET trained workers across industry in north-east India

Industry	Distribution of VET holders		
	Rural	**Urban**	**All**
Agriculture and allied sectors	44.95	30.03	40.05
Mining and quarrying	11.57	16.60	13.22
Manufacturing	1.79	2.77	2.11
Electricity, gas, and water supply	0.02	0.58	0.20
Construction	7.42	6.15	7.00
Wholesale, retail trade, & repair work, hotel, and restaurants	2.00	7.34	3.76
Transport, storage, and communications	4.91	7.29	5.69
Financial intermediation, real estate, and business activities	1.29	4.48	2.34
Other services	26.06	24.76	25.63

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of PLFS 2017-18

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The availability of formally skilled workforce across sectors is given in Appendix Table 5A. It can be seen that although agriculture is the largest employer of the workforce in the NE States, only 0.2 percent of the agricultural workforce was formally skilled in 2017-18. There is an expansion of workforce engaged in the community, social and personal services between 2011-12 and 2017-18 but the share of formally skilled workers in total workforce engaged in this sector has remained unchanged. The share of skilled workers has significantly declined in electricity, gas and water supply; finance, insurance, and real estate, and wholesale and retail trade. The only industry which has experienced a drastic improvement in the proportion of skilled workers in its workforce is mining and quarrying. Although the share of mining and quarrying has not improved in the total workforce, nearly one-fourth of the workers it employs are skilled workers or have received formal vocational education and training.

Earnings of VET Qualified Workers

In this subsection, we analyse the earnings of VET qualified workers vis-à-vis non-VET workers. We consider three types of employment – casual workers, regular wage employed, and self-employed workers. In the Tables below we have shown average earnings of VET holders of both types taken together. Average earnings in each quarter, as well as the combined estimate of all the four quarters, are given in the Tables below.

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PLFS 2017-18 provides data on the daily earnings of casual labourers. Around nine percent of skilled workers (taking both formal and informal VET together) are employed as casual labour. Most of the casual skilled workers are employed in agriculture, forestry, fisheries (15 percent), construction (24 percent), and domestic workers (22 percent). Among male casual workers construction sector is the most important employer. Around one-third of male VET qualified workers are engaged in the construction sector. On the other hand, around three fourth (74 percent) of the skilled female casual labourers are engaged as domestic workers.

Table 6 shows the daily earnings of VET qualified workers as well as other workers. Looking at the average of all four quarters, among the casual workers' earnings of VET qualified male workers is higher (Rs. 355) than their counterparts who received only general education (Rs. 297). But among female workers VET holders earn (Rs. 161) less than those who attained a general degree (Rs. 182) and or an elementary degree (Rs. 208). Within the VET qualified casual workers the daily earnings of female workers (Rs. 161)is less than half of what male workers earn (Rs. 355) on average in a single day.

Table 6: Wages and earnings for vocational and general/ elementary educated casual workers (in rupees per day)

Type	July-September 2017	October-December 2017	January-March 2018	April- June 2018	July 2017-June 2018
Male					
All VET	351	366	377	336	355
General	280	290	301	329	297
Elementary	275	301	309	299	300
Female					
All VET	280	200	151	163	161
General	110	160	153	219	182
Elementary	173	198	233	223	208
Person					
All VET	346	361	268	321	315
General	279	284	301	324	296
Elementary	267	298	307	289	290

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of PLFS 2017-18

PLFS 2017-18 collected data on the monthly earnings of the regular salaried workers. Around 45 percent of the skilled/ VET qualified workers of both types work as regular wage earners/ salaried persons. The most important employers of skilled regular workers are the education sector (29 percent), health and social work (11 percent), and public administration and defense (10 percent). Among women, however, participation in public administration and defense is less. Most of the

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skilled women workers who have regular wage earnings are engaged in education (32 percent) and health/ social work (23 percent) sectors.

In general, regular salaried persons who have attended VET courses earn more per month than others (Table 7). Although earnings of VET qualified males regular workers is higher than general or elementary workers, this is not always true for female workers. In the first quarter of the survey period as well as for the average of the whole year VET qualified females earnless than the females who have general education. The seasonal variation in the earnings is higher for females than males. There exists a wide difference in the earnings between VET qualified regular salaried males and females workers. Males earn much higher than females. Hence, it is clear that VET education is not effective in reducing the gender gap in earnings among regular salaried workers.

Table 7: Wages and earnings for vocational and general secondary qualified regular salaried workers in the NE States and India (in rupees per month)

	July-September 2017	October-December 2017	January-March 2018	April- June 2018	July 2017-June 2018
Male					
All VET	23083	30068	25356	28302	27043
General	21340	23193	23733	24240	23573
Elementary	12935	11083	11392	11542	11665
Female					
All VET	9820	14989	18883	21391	16217
General	18401	13324	16393	20703	17545
Elementary	6260	5477	5194	6089	5688
Person					
All VET	17476	25024	23755	26701	23878
General	20469	21192	21644	23308	21933
Elementary	11566	9707	9909	10527	10360

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of PLFS 2017-18

Next, we analyse the earnings of self-employed persons. The largest employer of self-employed skilled workers in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (28 percent). The second-largest employer is the manufacture of textile (9.5 percent) and wearing apparel (12 percent).The weaving of textile and apparel is the major source of employment of self-employed skilled women. Around half of the women in this category are employed in these two sectors.

A similar trend is observed in the monthly earnings of self- employed persons as in the case of casual and regular wage earners. Overall, the VET educated self-employed persons earn a higher monthly income than the workers who received

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only general education. But the earnings of female workers who have VET are less than women who have only a general degree. Among VET holders, self-employed females earn less than one-third of the average income of males.

Table 8: Wages and earnings for vocational and general/ elementary educated self-employed workers (in rupees per month)

Type	July-September 2017	October-December 2017	January-March 2018	April- June 2018	July 2017-June 2018
Male					
All VET	9168	13991	15382	19702	15327
General	9700	11604	11030	12509	11358
Elementary	7476	7614	9657	9944	8657
Female					
All VET	5498	6235	6068	5373	5729
General	3922	10069	5970	7143	6692
Elementary	2567	4161	5311	3392	3818
Person					
All VET	8367	10563	13056	14686	12353
General	9117	11487	10620	11988	10943
Elementary	6887	7292	9199	9131	8124

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of PLFS 2017-18

Quality of Employment among VET Holders

The quality of jobs is an integral part of the well-being of workers. Many crucial decisions like whether to work, whether to quit, and how much effort to put crucially depends on the quality of the jobs in the market. However, the quality of work is a multi-dimensional concept. From an individual's perspective quality of employment refers to the conditions, ethics, working time arrangements, monetary and non-pecuniary benefits associated with employment, and the non-working life of an individual (UNECE 2013). It is generally expected that the secured and quality of employment is available to skilled workers. In this section, an attempt is made to analyse access to quality jobs by VET holders in the NE States. The quality and security of employment is indicated in terms of type and duration of job contract, availability of social security benefits, and eligibility of paid leaves.

Distribution of workers with formal VET and other education categories by the type of job contracts is shown in Table 9. It can be seen that around 43 percent of the workers with formal VET are working with no written job contracts. The condition of formal VET holders is certainly better than the workers with only elementary education but still worse than general or technical degree holders. Even in terms of job security which can be measured as the length of the contract, general and technical qualified

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workers are better off than formal VET holders as a higher proportion of these two education categories have secured job contracts of more than three years. Data shows that a very high proportion of workers who received formal VET do not have access to any social security benefits (39 percent) (Table 10). Gender differences in access to social security benefits are stark among VET qualified workers. Nearly half of the female VET workers are not eligible for any of the social security benefits listed. A high proportion of female workers who received VET are not eligible for maternity benefits. Only 19.3 percent of female workers have access to all benefits provident fund/ pension, gratuity, health care, and maternity benefits. A little over one-fourth (27.9 percent) of the VET qualified female workers have access to maternity benefits.

Table 9: Type of job contract of ALLVET holders and others in the NE States

Type of contract	VET	Elementary	General	Technical
Male				
No written job contract	42.5	88.2	42.7	31.0
Written job contracts for:				
1 year or less	3.2	0.7	1.5	1.0
More than one year to 3 years	4.5	0.9	2.8	2.7
More than three years	49.8	10.3	52.9	65.3
Female				
No written job contract	44.1	58.5	28.8	28.0
Written job contracts for:				
1 year or less	3.3	0.1	2.1	0
More than one year to 3 years	4.6	0.4	6.6	4.9
More than three years	48.0	41.0	62.4	67.0
Person				
No written job contract	43.0	84.3	38.5	30.2
Written job contracts for:		0.0		
1 year or less	3.2	0.6	1.7	0.8
More than one year to 3 years	4.5	0.8	3.8	3.3
More than three years	49.2	14.2	56.0	65.7

Source: PLFS 2017-18

Table 11 shows the eligibility for paid leave among VET workers (formal+ informal). A less number of female VET workers are eligible for paid leave (41.9 percent) as compared to male workers (65.7 percent). Overall around 39 percent of the VET workers are not eligible for paid leave.

In terms of social security benefits among skilled workers, NE States seem to have been more inclusive than all India, but this better performance is entirely due to comparatively higher access of NE males to such benefits than their counterpart at all

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India level. In the case of females, NE States are more disadvantaged than average female workers in India. For example, nearly half of the skilled women workersof NE in regular and casual employment are excluded from any social security benefits such as those listed in Table 10 at the workplaces, the comparable number at all India level is 40 percent.As compared to females the position of males is much better- nearly 34 percent of NE males has been excluded from any form of social security benefits at the job which is much lower than 54 percent at all India level. Such patterns are observed in case of access to access to paid leave as well.

Table 10: Availability of social security benefits to ALL VET trained workers in the NE States (ps+ss)

Type of benefits	Male	Female	Person
Only PF/ Pension	20.4	12.4	17.9
Only gratuity	5.3	2.1	4.3
Only health care and maternity benefits	0.5	2.1	1.0
Only PF/ Pension and gratuity	0.2	0.0	0.1
Only PF/pension and health care and maternity benefits	1.5	3.4	2.1
Only gratuity and health care and maternity benefits	0.6	5.2	2.0
PF/pension, gratuity and health care and maternity benefits	34.0	19.3	29.4
Not eligible for any of the above social security benefits	33.9	50.2	39.0
Not known	2.7	2.9	2.7

Source: PLFS 2017-18

Table 11: Eligibility for paid leave among ALLVET holders in the NE States

Whether eligible	Male	Female	Person
YES	65.7	41.9	58.3
NO	32.5	54.7	39.4

Source: PLFS 2017-18

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In comparison with all India figures, skilled workers in the NE States have better access to paid leave. While at the all India level only 38 percent of skilled workers are eligible for paid leave, in NE the proportion is 58 percent. However, at the all India level a higher proportion of women workers (52 percent) are eligible for paid leave than in NE (42 percent). Thus, it can be seen the achievements of women in social sectors havefallen short of strengthening their positions in the workplaces in the NE States.

Discussion

The above analysis has seen participation in VET is very low in the NE States and the situation has remained the same for more than a decade. There are several explanations for this low participation. One of the important reasons could be the

failure of the VET system to reach scheduled tribes, women, and the population living in backward districts as hill districts and states have very low proportion of ITIs. Even the short term courses launched as part of flagship programmes of the Government of India could not cover a vast section of the population to make up this deficiency. Scheduled Tribes comprise a large share in population group in hill states and districts in NE. However, they live in scattered habitations in remote areas and are at a disadvantageous position in terms of access to VET. Similarly, disadvantageous are the women, less than one percent of whom have accessed formal VET. The population living in the backward districts termed 'aspirational districts' by NITI Aayog are also lagging behind their in terms of access to formal VET system. Unless the hurdles in accessing formal VET education by the large sections of the population who are from the socially disadvantaged communities, women, or residing in backward/ poorer regions is removed through proper planning of VET programmes, the expected success in improving its coverage is unlikely to see an improvement.

Though the data shows that VET education has been successful in improving labour force participation among both males and females but the proportion of unemployed is also higher among VET holders. The incidence of unemployment is much higher among those who received formal VET than those who received informal VET. There are several plausible reasons for this. Most of the informal VET holders are self-employed where knowledge and skills are passed on hereditary or acquired through self-learning. Many of the informally trained workers are employed in informal sectors and have acquired skills by learning on the job in the workshop of their employers. In case of formal VET, a case study by Dey and Devi (2019) in Cachar district of Assam has shown, although there was high placement of candidates initially, many of them chose to leave the job due to dissatisfaction with salary, far away workplaces, and skill mismatch in terms of training imparted and work requirements. Especially, the placed females expressed their inability to continue in their jobs as the workplace was very distant from their homes. Also, aspirations of youth increase after receiving formal VET, and if personal finances permit people can afford to remain unemployed to wait for better opportunities.

The other important fact to note is that formal training programmes have not been effective in raising the earnings of the trained candidates. Partially this has to do with the underdevelopment of manufacturing industries in the NE States. The mining and quarrying industry which has the largest share of the skilled workforce has been highly capital intensive and has witnessed a decline in the total employment. Formally skilled labour is mostly engaged in weaving, traditional, informal and low productive sectors like agriculture, weaving, transport, public administration, and education. Many of these sectors are (eg. agriculture, weaving, and transport) traditional, with low productivity, and employs large informal labour force. Agriculture still remains one of the main sources of employment of skilled labour, but the stagnation of agricultural productivity, decline in farm incomes, and a corresponding rise in

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the pressure on land have marginalised rural workforce (Chakrabarti 2019) and prevented any significant increase in earnings. Even among the formal VET trained workers engaged in education or public administration a high proportion is working without written contract or less than one year contract. So there is always a room for questioning how gainfully employed these workers are[8].

The study has found low earnings of skilled women workers which reflect the gender gap in earnings. This can be partly explained through a lack of decent work opportunities for educated women in the NE region. As Borah (2019) notes, the nature of female employment in northeast states seems to be distress driven and improvement in education levels have not resulted in better opportunities in the labour market for the women of this region. Another part of the low earnings of women has to do with less participation of women in more productive sectors of the economy. Sectors such as manufacturing; transport, storage and communication; financial insurance; business, etc; and public administration, education, and community service, etc. are all male-dominated (Panda 2019). On the other hand, women are mostly engaged in agriculture, construction, and domestic work which are low productive and low remunerative sectors.

Policy Implications and Agenda for Further Research

The paper has studied the recent trends of vocational education and training and labour market consequences in the NE States. It has tried to understand the issues of skill training in the region against the backdrop of industrial stagnation, growing unemployment, and outward migration of the region's youth. The findings reveal low coverage of VET, high unemployment among VET trained labours, the high gender gap in earnings, skill mismatch, and insignificance of VET (especially) in improving earnings. Notwithstanding the economic backwardness of the region, a poor coverage and outcome of VET calls for strengthening the coverage and outreach, better planning and implementation to make the VET courses relevant and popular among people. Special efforts need to be given for improving coverage of skill development programmes among numerous tribes in NE who constitute majority of the population and live in sparsely populated areas in remote locations. Residential training programmes will be more effective in reaching out to the youth who live in backward regions and are constrained by the underdeveloped communication and transport facilities as the report of the Sub-group of Chief Ministers recognised that "unless the training programmes are residential and placement linked, there may be (a) poor response from the candidates in areas such as northeast" (NITI Aayog 2015).

Entrepreneurship should be made an integral part of the skill development/ vocational education. As National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

[8] Nearly 43.6 percent and 52.9 percent of the formal VET workers in education and public administration respectively in NE are working without wriiten job contract or less than one year contract (PLFS 2017-18).

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(NABARD) notes, there is a need for boosting entrepreneurship among youth by identifying locally relevant sectors, proper handholding and convergence of and assuring connectivity to markets (NABARD 2019). This cannot be more suited for any other region than the states in the north east region of India where opportunities for gainful regular wage employment have been limited. Entrepreneurship based on locally available resources may help to rejuvenate the labour market. At the policy level, there is a need for a bottom-up approach to identify opportunities and aspirations of local youth, making a diverse set of schemes within the reach of youth, and convergence of schemes run by different departments on self-employment/ entrepreneurship development of the youth (*ibid.*).

The growth process of the region should be firmly based on the inherent strength and resource endowment of the region (Bezbaruah 2010). The agriculture and forestry continue to be the largest employer of workers in the region, but the availability of skilled workers is abysmally low in these two sectors. Skill development efforts should be demand-driven and aligned with the latest industry trends and needs. Planning from above is unlikely to yield the intended results.

Finally, there is an urgent need to bridge the gender gap in wage/ earnings and social security benefits to improve women's participation in work. Workplaces and work conditions need to be women-friendly. A large section of women is excluded from labour market, few who find access are in a disadvantageous position in respect of coverage under social security benefits like paid leave, maternity benefits, health care, PF/ gratuity by their employers. There is need for convergence on programme implementation under VET and the employment of the trained people in various sectors where the statutory requirements from employers are also ensured and regulated to see better outcomes. In the absence of convergence there is likely to be casualization of trained manpower and worsening labour market and employment outcomes in the long run in the region.

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Appendix Tables

Table 1A: Proportion of population received formal VET in aspirational districts in NE States

States	Aspirational districts	All districts
Sikkim	2.10	1.18
Arunachal Pradesh	0.00	0.20
Nagaland	0.00	0.65
Manipur	0.09	2.90
Mizoram	0.17	1.13
Tripura	2.07	1.90
Meghalaya	0.00	0.65
Assam	0.02	0.58
ALL NE	0.14	0.85

Source: Author's calculation from unit-level data of PLFS 2017-18

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Table 2A: Population which received/ are receiving vocational training per 100 persons - detailed description, All India

Sector/ Gender	Received vocational training						Did not receive vocational training
	Formal	Non- formal					
		Hereditary	Self-learning	Learning on the job	Others	Total	
Rural							
Male	1.5	3.0	2.6	3.1	0.4	10.5	89.5
Female	0.9	0.9	1.2	0.7	0.4	4.1	95.9
Person	1.2	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.4	7.4	92.6
Urban							
Male	4.1	5.9	2.3	5.0	0.8	18.0	86.7
Female	3.3	2.7	1.0	1.0	0.6	8.6	93.7
Person	3.7	4.3	1.7	3.0	0.7	13.3	90.2
Rural+ Urban							
Male	2.3	3.9	2.5	3.6	0.5	12.8	88.6
Female	1.7	1.4	1.1	0.8	0.5	5.5	95.2
Person	2.0	2.7	1.8	2.2	0.5	9.2	91.9

Source: Author's calculation from unit level data of PLFS 2017-18

Table 3A: Employment and unemployment status of VET holders

States	Male			Female			Person		
	LFPR	WPR	UR	LFPR	WPR	UR	LFPR	WPR	UR
Sikkim	97.6	87.9	9.7	100.0	99.0	0.98	98.7	92.9	5.80
Arunachal Pradesh	100.0	99.1	0.9	74.1	15.7	58.43	92.9	76.2	16.68
Nagaland	100.0	78.7	21.3	60.2	48.9	11.33	89.6	70.9	18.69
Manipur	77.4	72.9	4.4	54.7	53.8	0.91	64.0	61.6	2.40
Mizoram	92.9	87.0	6.0	50.6	45.9	4.74	75.3	69.9	5.45
Tripura	70.5	61.2	9.2	24.6	21.7	2.91	58.4	50.9	7.58
Meghalaya	75.8	55.9	19.8	60.5	59.7	0.88	67.9	57.9	10.07
Assam	95.9	93.3	2.6	52.5	45.6	6.91	77.0	72.5	4.47
ALL NE	89.9	84.8	5.1	52.9	48.1	4.77	73.4	68.5	4.94
ALL INDIA	95.4	91.8	3.6	54.1	53.7	0.46	83.3	80.6	2.68

Source: PLFS 2017-18

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Table 4A: Employment and unemployment status of VET holders across gender in NE States

States	Male			Female			Person		
	LFPR	WPR	UR	LFPR	WPR	UR	LFPR	WPR	UR
Sikkim	97.6	87.9	9.7	100.0	99.0	0.98	98.7	92.9	5.80
Arunachal Pradesh	100.0	99.1	0.9	74.1	15.7	58.43	92.9	76.2	16.68
Nagaland	100.0	78.7	21.3	60.2	48.9	11.33	89.6	70.9	18.69
Manipur	77.4	72.9	4.4	54.7	53.8	0.91	64.0	61.6	2.40
Mizoram	92.9	87.0	6.0	50.6	45.9	4.74	75.3	69.9	5.45
Tripura	70.5	61.2	9.2	24.6	21.7	2.91	58.4	50.9	7.58
Meghalaya	75.8	55.9	19.8	60.5	59.7	0.88	67.9	57.9	10.07
Assam	95.9	93.3	2.6	22.3	19.3	2.93	48.4	45.6	2.81
ALL NE	89.9	84.8	5.1	32.3	29.4	2.92	57.3	53.5	3.86
ALL INDIA	95.4	91.8	3.6	54.1	53.7	0.46	83.3	80.6	2.68

Source: Author's calculation from unit level data of PLFS 2017-18

Table 5A: Distribution of workforce across sectors and share skilled workers in each broad industry group

Sectors	Share of the sector in total workforce		Share of skilled workforce in the sector	
	2011-12	2017-18	2011-12	2017-18
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	49.9	42.3	0.9	0.2
Mining and quarrying	0.6	0.3	5.1	24.5
Manufacturing	5.2	6.4	1.6	3.3
Electricity, gas, and water	0.2	0.3	12.5	2.3
Construction	16.5	11.1	0.3	0.4
Wholesale and retail trade	11.5	13.2	1.3	0.5
Transportation, storage and communication	4.1	6.6	1.8	1.1
Finance, insurance and real estate	0.8	1.2	8.3	3.6
Cummunity social, and personal services	11.2	18.5	3.2	3.1
All	100.0	100.0	1.3	1.2

Source: Author's calculation from unit level database of PLFS 2017-18

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Understanding Communal Violence in India: A Review of New Perspectives

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Abstract

The paper discusses the recent trends in studies relating to communal riots in India. Communal riots have been endemic in India since pre-colonial period but the problem became more acute in the colonial period. After the partition riots which accompanied independence, communal riots subsided but did not disappear. Since the early seventies in the post independent period communal riots gradually became a recurring feature in several parts of the country. Historians and social scientist have analyzed the causes of communal violence in India from different perspectives. In the last two decades some new interpretations and approaches have been developed by social scientists by doing extensive ethnographic works along with study of archival data. Here an attempt is made to understand the contributions of these new perspectives to the literature of communal conflict in India. In these approaches, civic engagements in civil society, electoral connections, caste rivalry and colonial origin of problematic relationship in between Hindus and Muslims have been explored from multiple perspectives.

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India since the pre colonial period has been witnessing problems of Hindu-Muslim conflict which in the colonial period became more acute leading to large scale violence. According to most of the Indian scholars though there were tensions in between the two religious communities in the pre-colonial period, the communal problem became more pronounced in the colonial period because of the introduction of new colonial governmentalities. Since the first half of the 20th century, the emergence of communal organizations further promoted rivalries of the elite and middle classes of both the communities in the contexts of electoral fortunes, business interest, contest for government jobs which led to growth and development of communal discord and violence resulting in partition of India in 1947. The partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947 created unprecedented communal violence which was responsible for killing and migration of millions of people. Communal violence became endemic in certain parts of India especially in urban areas even after 1947.

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Historians and social scientist have analyzed the causes of communal violence in India from different perspectives. The primordialist approach explains Hindu-Muslim violence in India in terms of the 'given' difference between these two communities. The colonial administrators popularized this notion of 'given' differences between Hindus and Muslims and though it is discarded by the social scientist, this approach is still popular among the communal organizations and the politicians who subscribe such views. Some social scientists have explained communal violence from the point of view of ideological approach where the communal ideology of the organizations and the political parties are primarily responsible for such tensions and violence. The instrumentalist approach explains communal violence as strategy of the political elites to further their political and economic interest. According to this approach the political elites for their own interest instigate and organize violence. The social constructivist approach tries to understand the emergence of the communities in terms of social constructs through time and space where prevailing discourses determined the course of relationship in between these two communities. In the last decade some new interpretations and approaches have been developed by social scientists by doing extensive ethnographic field works along with study of archival data. Here an attempt is made to understand the contributions of these new perspectives to the literature of communal conflict in India. The books discussed here were published in the last two decades.

(i)

In his book "Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life : Hindus and Muslims in India", Ashutosh Varshney enquires into the existing frameworks of analysis of Hindu-Muslim problems in India and tries to give an alternative explanation in terms of civic engagements in between the two communities. The intensity and dynamics of civic engagement in between the rival communities is explained as the determining factor in emergence of ethnic violence. Varshney states that inter ethnic tension and conflict in between communities are a common phenomenon but this tension does not invariably lead to inter ethnic violence. He says that "ethnic peace should, for all practical purposes, be conceptualized as an institutionalised channeling and resolution of ethnic conflicts. It should be visualized as an absence of violence, not as absence of conflict" (Varshney 2002:25). This difference in between ethnic conflict and ethnic violence is not properly investigated in the existing literature on Hindu-Muslim violence in India. In a multi ethnic and multi cultural state there will always be ethnic conflict arising because of socio-economic, political and cultural factors but conflicts does not always necessary leads to violence. According to him, it should be investigated why in spite of communal tensions, certain cities and localities in India continuously face communal violence whereas some other areas remain safe from such phenomenon. His main research question is to understand why ethnic conflict turns into ethnic violence. The answer to this question is answered in diverse ways by the social scientist and historians. According to him, most of the explanations suffer from two deficiencies. First, they fail to distinguish between ethnic conflict

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and ethnic violence. In a multi ethnic society, ethnic conflict is a reality which if regulated through institutional system does not lead to violence. Secondly, existing explanations are 'pitched at a high level of aggregation- global or national'. Though global or national causes can help to understand the context, they don't enlighten us to understand specific violence which is concentrated in certain local areas. Generalized explanations fail to take into account the local specifications which are more important as in spite of similar demographic presence; certain areas remain free of the violence whereas some areas witness endemic violence. Varshney argues that it is strength/ weakness or the dynamics of inter communal civic relationship which is only variable that determines why in spite of having communal tensions certain localities see intense communal violence whereas other areas with similar communal tensions see relative communal peace. According to him, "the pre-existing local networks of civic engagement between two communities stand out as the single most important proximate cause. Where such networks of engagement exists, tensions and conflicts where regulated and managed; where they are missing, communal identities led to endemic and ghastly violence" (Varshney 2002: 9). In order to maintain peace in a particular locality in spite of communal tensions the civic engagements in between the communities must be inter-communal and not intra-communal. Where civic engagements are only intra communal there is always a greater possibility of emergence of communal violence. According to him, these interethnic civic engagements can be associational forms of engagement and everyday forms of engagement. He states, "Both forms of engagements, if inter communal promote peace, but the capacity of associational forms to withstand national level exogenous shocks – such as India's partition 1947 or demolition of Babri Mosque in December 1992 in full public gaze by Hindu militants – is substantially higher" (Varshney 2002: 9).

He explains that if engagements is only intra communal and not inter communal, even unconfirmed reports, rumors, victories and defeats in sports can lead to violence and "a multi ethnic society with few interconnections across ethnic boundaries is very vulnerable to ethnic disorders and violence" (Varshney 2002:12). Varshney shifts the attention from political institutions and elites to structure of civic life to explain causes of ethnic violence. He states, "The same political party, for example choose to polarize ethnic communities in one place but not in others, and even if it seeks to polarize, it may not succeed in engendering ethnic divisions. It can be shown that structures of civic life constrain the political strategy and their outcomes (Varshney 2002: 13). In spite of nasty rumors, tensions and small clashes between the two communities in different towns, there were different outcomes in terms of communal peace and communal violence. This explains the importance of local networks of inter communal engagements to understand why tensions led to violence in certain cities and localities where as relative peace was possible in other areas with similar demography.

In his explanation of civil society, Varshney makes a critical evaluation of existing

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literature on studies of civil society, its origin and functions. He states that ethnic associations or religious associations must not always be understood as organizations which cannot perform the functions of civic organizations - allowing people to come together, making public discussion possible issues, challenging the caprice or misrule of state authorities and promoting modern business activities (Varshney 2002: 43). If such conditions fulfilled the function of an ethnic organization, it should be considered as a form of civil society. In rural India in spite of absence of formal associations, civic interconnections exist among communities. Even village commons, play grounds and entertainment or community functions can also provide space for group interaction. According to him "Informal group activities as well as ascriptive associations should be considered part of civil society so long as they connect individuals, build trust, encourage reciprocity, and facilitate exchange of views on matters of public concern-economic, political, cultural, and social" (Varshney 2002 : 46).

Varshney specifies the links between civic life and ethnic conflict. Continuous contact and communication among different communities always provide the space to discuss the tensions, rivalries and helps to moderate the conflict so that it does not lead to ethnic violence. If such engagements in between the communities do not exist there is never any possibility of local level moderation of the conflicts. Moreover, in cities where there is active associational and day to day engagements between the communities the foundations of peace is much stronger. As without a nexus between politicians and criminals big riots does not happen, cities with strong inter-ethnic associations and vibrant civic life has the potentiality to contain such happenings (Varshney 2002: 47). Every day and informal forms of civic communication may contain conflict and tensions in the villages but associational civic engagement is necessary in urban areas to serve the same purpose.

The thesis of civic engagement of Varshney is tested with data which he collected along with Steven I Wilkinson as part of a collaborating project to put together a database on Hindu-Muslim riots in India from 1950-1995. To prove the thesis of civic engagement as the determining variable of ethnic violence he analyses the data of violence in three sets of paired cities where each pair contains one riot affected city and other one a relatively peaceful city with substantial portion of minority population. In first place he compares and contrasts the cities of Aligarh and Calicut. To answer the questions why do Hindus and Muslims lived peacefully in Calicut but not in Aligarh, he tries to investigate the history and dynamics of civic engagement of the two communities in these two cities. There is a strong civic engagement between the two communities in Calicut which determines why politicians failed to become successful in politics of religious division and tension. On the contrary in Aligarh the civic engagement in between the two communities is very fragile which explains the endemic communal violence. The civic networks in Calicut were politically constructed since the early 20th century. Kerala politics witnessed the assertion of social justice within the Hindu society rather than communal rivalry

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and caste mobilization became central to Kerala politics. On the contrary communal politics is the central narrative of politics in Aligarh. Communalism in Aligarh emerged because of a declining Muslim aristocracy who wanted to maintained their interest to which the Hindu middle caste where opposed. The British also used this divide to further their colonial interest. Aligarh civic life is epitomized by highly segregated educational system which has been primarily intra-communal. On the contrary, in Calicut intra-communal links exists along with inter-communal links. This explains why Aligarh witnesses recurring communal violence and Calicut is relatively peaceful.

In the second pair of cities Varshney selects Hyderabad and Lucknow. Both these cities were part of erstwhile Nawabi Muslim rule. Here Hyderabad is prone to communal conflict and Lucknow witnessed relative communal peace. Explaining historical reasons of civic engagements in Lucknow he mentions, "If in the first comparison Hindus were badly divided along caste lines in the city of Calicut, it is the Shia-Sunni conflicts in the city of Lucknow that have been functionally equivalent. By identifying the main enemy within the Muslim community, Shia-Sunni conflicts facilitate Hindu-Muslim integration" (Varshney 2002:171). In Lucknow there is a mass level integration in between both the communities which works as defender of peace and this engagement is based on mutually dependent economic activities. This economic inter dependence in between the two communities works as a bulwark of peace in Lucknow. But in Hyderabad there is only elite Hindu-Muslim integration and absence of mass level Hindu-Muslim civic engagements which aggravate communal tensions to develop into communal violence. Of course, the history of freedom struggle and participation of common people of both the communities fostered the civic engagement in Lucknow whereas the troubled history of Hyderabad prevented such engagements in between the common people of both the communities which also determined post independent troubled civic relations.

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In the last pair of the cities of his study, he selects two Gujarat cities, Ahmedabad and Surat, both of which were part of the Bombay presidency during the colonial period. Here, Surat was mostly peaceful but Ahmedabad had endemic riots. In the early part of the 20th century, due to dominance of Gandhian politics and mobilization across religious lines, both the cities witnessed strong civic bonds across socio-economic life. Though riots erupted in Ahmedabad in between 1941 and 1947, these could be brought to control due to the pre existing civic relations. Surat was free of such tensions as there was strong civic engagement in between the two communities. But in the post independent period there was a steady decline of the pre-independent civic communications and civic order, decline of Gandhian social institutions, rise of bootleggers and growing strength of the non electoral wings of Hindu nationalism which led to a series of riots in Ahmedabad. But Surat remained free of such riots as the business associations which were inter communal remained vibrant where as such inter communal business organizations were continuously on the decline in Ahmedabad. But in 1992, Surat witnessed riots where 197 people were killed in

just five days. Most of the cases were reported from the shantytowns where inter communal civic unions had declined. On the contrary, the old city where the civic relations of the two communities were still strong did not suffer as the business organizations were interested to maintain peace.

In his alternative explanation of the causes of the communal violence in terms of civic engagement Varshney states, "In short, for communal peace, inter communal civic engagement is better than no engagement or only intra-communal engagement; and within the former category, as the size of the locality increases, associational engagement is better than everyday engagement. The key determinant of peace is inter-communal civic life, not civic life per se"(Varshney 2002: 282). Varshney in his new perspective on communal violence does not give much importance to the instrumental theories which puts the blame on the politicians, bureaucracy, police forces and the role of the states. According to him the view that blames the biases of the state officials specially the police for riots needs revision. Though he accepts that biases are there at various levels but the argument that they are primarily responsible for riots or for states failure to prevent riots is flawed. He feels that, "Police biases should of course be worked upon …but one does not have to wait until the biases disappear to work for and secure peace" (Varshney 2002: 296).

These fresh explanations about the causes of communal violence in India in terms of the dynamics of civic engagements in between the two major communities, Varshney is criticized for not taking into account the agency of the communal organizations, politicians and the nexus in between the police force, politicians and criminals. Varshney does not explain why in spite of strong civic engagement at the local level, certain localities witnessed severe communal conflict. The active engagement of the communal forces to create problems in pre-existing civic relations in between communities is also explored. In such cases the role and agency of the communal organizations in collaboration with the interested political parties with active support from the state agency, police forces and criminals to vitiate the atmosphere is not properly worked upon.

The active collaborative engagement of the different agencies in the riots was studied by Paul Brass. According to Paul R. Brass, places where riots are endemic three phases can be discerned: preparation/rehearsal, activation/ enactment, and explanation/ interpretation. And these three phases is meticulously worked upon by the active nexus in between the political parties, communal organizations and criminals with tacit support from the police force in the period of riots. According to him "Especially important are what I call the 'fire tenders', who keep intergroup tensions alive through various inflammatory and inciting acts; 'conversion specialists', who lead and address mobs of potential rioters and give a signal to indicate when violence should commence; criminals and the poorest elements in society, recruited and rewarded for enacting the violence; and politicians and the vernacular media who, during the violence, and in its aftermath, draw attention away

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from the perpetrators of the violence by attributing it to the actions of an inflamed mass public"(Brass 2006: 5). Brass states that in Northern and Western India since independence there have been active presence of institutionalized system of riots production which are activated at the time of elections or for political mobilization (Brass 2006: 65). He developed the theory of Institutionalized Riots System in the context of the communal violence in Meerut city from 1961 to 1982. From ethnographic studies done in Meerut city he explains the presence of institutionalized riots system which worked through the nexus between communal organizations, political parties, police and local criminals. He explains through his research that even where there is strong civic engagement, they succumb to the power of political and communal machination. According to him, "From a policy point of view, it is a pure diversion to invest resources in promoting civic engagement, when attention and resources should be directed towards uncovering the system and process of riot production and the producers thereof" (Brass 2006: 69). He strongly feels that "It is politics and police, not civic engagement or is absence that determines the course of communal violence" (Brass 2006: 93).

(ii)

Steven I. Wilkinson's book **"**Votes and Violence: Electoral competition and communal riots in India**"** starts with a interesting comment made by Richard Nixson who said "Riots are spontaneous. Wars require advance planning". Wilkinson says that ethnic riots, far from being relatively spontaneous eruption of anger, are often planned by politicians for a clear electoral purpose. Though Varshney and Wilkinson use the same sources and data of riots in India from 1950 to 1995 which they collected together, Wilkinson arrives in a different conclusion regarding the causes of communal violence in India which is entirely different from that of Varshney. Wilkinson gives an electoral theory of communal violence in India from his readings of the same data. Of course, he collected new archival data regarding communal violence in India that happened in the early part of the 20th century by extensive fieldwork. According to him the riots are solutions to the problems of how to change the salience of ethnic issues and identities among the electorate in order to build a winning political coalition. Political competition can lead to peace as well as violence, and he identifies the broad electoral conditions under which politicians prevent ethnic polarization and ethnic violence rather than incite it. He shows that electoral incentives work at two levels-the local constituency level and the level of government that controls the police – which interact to determine both where and when ethnic violence against minorities will occur, and more important, whether the state will choose to intervene to stop it.

The relationship between electoral politics and riots had been discussed and indicated by other scholars as well. Even Human Rights Watch on the basis of a worldwide survey of ethnic violence in 1990s stated that ethnic riots and pogroms are usually caused by political elites who play on existing communal tensions to entrench (their)

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own power or advance a political agenda. But these pre existing explanations were critiqued by Wilkinson for three reasons. Firstly, these explanations cannot explain why some politicians seem to do exactly the opposite and use their political capital and control of the state to prevent ethnic conflict. He states that there has no proper explanation why in 2002 Narendra Modi of Gujarat failed to contain large-scale anti-Muslim violence in his state, whereas other chief ministers such as Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh or Digvijay Singh in Madhya Pradesh were successful in preventing riots in their states. Secondly, the political explanations for ethnic violence cannot properly explain the variation in patterns of violence within states. For example why riots erupted due to the "national" issue of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi in 1989-92 in some towns and states but not in others are not adequately explained. Thirdly, though such explanations speak some sort of political gain for the elites, there is no proper explanation and investigation regarding the political incentives which are responsible for the riots at the local level (Wilkinson 2004: 2-3).

Wilkinson addresses the question of interstate and town-level variation in ethnic violence in India: why do apparently similar towns and states have such different levels of violence and the conditions under which the politicians who control the administration have an incentive both to start and / or prevent ethnic violence. His main argument is that town-level electoral incentives account for where Hindu-Muslim violence breaks out and that state-level electoral incentives account for where and when state governments use their police forces to prevent riots. According to him whether violence is bloody or ends quickly depends not on the local factors that caused violence to break out but primarily on the will and capacity of the government that controls the forces of law and order (Wilkinson 2004: 5). He gives a comparative evidence to suggest that large-scale ethnic rioting does not take place where a state's army or police force is ordered to stop it using all necessary means.

According to Wilkinson riots occur because of the incentives at the local level and state level. At the local level riots happen because of electoral competition. If the political competition is very competitive, parties that represent elites within ethnic groups use anti-minority protests, demonstration and physical attacks that precipitate riots in order to 'encourage members of their wider ethnic category to identify with their party' (Wilkinson 2004: 4).

He argues that it is the state government which is responsible for law and order which determines whether to prevent violence or not. According to him state governments protect minorities when 'minorities are an important part of their party's current support base, or the support base of one of their partners in a coalition government; or when the overall electoral system in a state is so competitive in terms of the effective number of parties-that there is therefore a high probability that the governing party will have to negotiate or form coalitions with minority supported parties in the future' (Wilkinson 2004: 6-7). Even concern for vote pooling changes the behavior

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of nationalist parties who does not have much of minority support because of the compulsion of coalition politics where other partners in the ruling coalition might have minority vote support. If the ruling party have no minority support and a electoral competition in that particular state is very low and there is no possibility of having support from minority supported parties, politicians in government will not be interested to stop riots by enforcing law agencies.

Most Indian states can be included in category A, where intense party competition leads to better security to minorities as they are important in the political alliances or for future alliance. Some of the states can be included in B category, where bipolar party competition is present. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan are such kinds of states. Among them Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan can be included in the sub-category B_i where the ruling party have to rely on multi ethnic support base with substantial Muslim support. According to him only in Gujarat in 2002 the worst-case scenario happened (subcategory B_{ii}) where there were both low levels of party competition in the state (2.97 effective parties) and a government in power, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), that did not have any minority support base and therefore had no incentive to protect Muslims.
He explains that bipolar party competition at the local level leads to violence but multi polar competition at the state level in most Indian states results in containment of violence. At the town level where competition is bipolar violence may result in constituencies where there is very high electoral competition which he measures by the margin of win or defeat in previous election.

He shows that in the post independent era Hindu-Muslim violence happened even in Congress rules states and "At one time or another, Congress politicians have both fomented and prevented communal violence for political advantage. Congress governments have failed, for example, to prevent some of India's worst riots (e.g. the Ahmadabad riots of 1969, the Moradabad riots of 1980, and the Meerut riots of 1987) and in some cases Congress ministers have reportedly instigated riots and have blocked riot enforcement" (Wilkinson 2004:153).

Wilkinson uses statistical analysis along with qualitative data based on archival research, extensive field work and primary and secondary sources. He tested his theories of electoral explanation of Hindu-Muslim violence in India by using state and town level data on Hindu-Muslim riots in India for over five decades. He says that "Because the resulting data are town-level as well as state-level, and extend back more than a century (unlike Government of India aggregate figures on communal violence, which have only been published since 1954), they allow me to test theories of Hindu-Muslim violence much more completely than has been done before, which should increase confidence in my conclusions." This novel explanation of the communal riots in terms of the electoral politics is criticized by Varshney (Varshney 2005:4219-4224) Varshney states that as the data was town specific it needs further investigation to arrive at the conclusions drawn by Wilkinson. Moreover, regarding

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the power of the Indian state to prevent conflict at will gives the impression of the Indian state as a monolithic and omnipotent entity. He states that though ruling party is the boss of the beauracracy and the police forces, the opposition parties also wield considerable power. Moreover, the police forces and officers can also 'subvert the ruling parties through subterfuge, dissimulation and feigned compliance' which explains why ruling parties may not be able to control the riots in spite of the best intentions (Varshney 2005:4223).

(iii)

Through intensive ethnographic fieldwork in Gujrat, Ward Berenschot tries to explore the local contexts of the riots and understand the inner working of the ideology, machinations and the networks which fomented violence in three localities. In his book "Riot Politics: Hindu-Muslim Violence and the Indian state", Ward Berenschot investigates to answer fresh questions regarding the making of the institutional riot system, the character of the state and how different agencies function in the context of communal riots and why the common people participate in such riots. He states that "Although today most authors agree that many communal riots are instigated by political actors, there is little insight into the actual mechanisms that underlie the mobilization for, and the instigation of violence. Lacking documentation and an understanding of these mechanisms, the available literature about the political instigation of violence cannot account for the capacity of politicians to induce large mobs to commit violence: those who make up the mobs are depicted as docile followers, who can easily be swayed with the help of a little alcohol or money" (Berenschot 2013: 8). Taking a cue from Horowitz who argued that attention needs to be paid to developing theory that links elite and mass concerns and answer the insistent question of why the followers follow, Berenschot tries to explain the process of mobilization and instigation through which the common people become part of the communal game (Berenschot 2013: 8). His research questions are regarding how actually the riot networks are formed and how they function, the modus operandi of the networks which work through a meticulous division of labour at the time of riot and why the sane voices are not given due importance at the time of the riots. Through field works in three localities of Gujarat after the Gujarat riots of 2002, he tries to understand the electoral benefits of the politicians due to riots and how a system of patrons and clients function at the ground level which co-ordinate the people with the communal organizations and the various wings of the states. He also tries to understand why some cities or parts of the cities escaped the cycles of violence in spite of highly provocative situations. Ramrahim Nagar in Ahmedabad could escape from the rioters due to the active working of the inter-communal civic organizations. Through ethnographic work he tries to answer these questions by trying to understand and unravel the everyday affairs of the people, the localities, the interest and functions of politicians and the different intermediaries which function between the state system and citizens. He argues that, "The daily functioning of the networks around politicians as mediators between state institutions and citizens shapes the mobilization

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and instigation that take place during the communal riots. Gujarat communal violence can be seen as the outcome of the historical process through which the state has come to be embedded in Gujarat's society: as wide-ranging networks of various brokers and intermediaries have formed to facilitate the interaction between state institutions and ordinary citizens, politicians have acquired the necessary local authority, contacts and incentives to foment violence" (Berenschot 2013:10). Through ethnography of the everyday state he explores the practices of brokerage, patronage and particularization – the practice of undermining the application of legal system for the advantage of private interest in Gujarat in three localities. He feels that the different networks which have been functioning in Gujarat should not be understood only in terms of institutional riot system as they are not created for the only purpose of creating violence as most of these networks functions as mediation between the citizens and the state for distribution of welfare schemes. According to him, "A focus on political mediation can help to understand how and why politicians, goondas, political workers, social workers and the police contribute to the occurrence of communal violence: the capacity of these actors to instigate and perpetrate violence, as well as their interests in doing so, is closely related to the different positions they occupy in the patronage networks that provide access to state resources" (Berenschot 2013:12). He shows that multiple right wing forces are well integrated into the local patronage in which the common people are dependent to have connections for getting state support for various schemes such as healthcare, education, or government jobs. Being associated with them or support to Hindu Nationalist Ideology serves to legitimize and strengthen these local networks. The dependence of citizens on political mediation to be incorporated into the welfare measures of the states creates an arena in which political actors with communal, exclusivist discourse control access to state resources (Berenschot 2013:13). He characterizes the state in Gujarat as a mediated state for the dependence of the state institutions on political mediation for functioning (Berenschot 2013:17). He observes that the violence of 2002 was in fact a planned and organized event, co-ordinate by relatively a small group of people. From the observations of the residence he discovers a 'fairly closely- knit network of municipal councilors, MLAs, the police, party workers' (Berenschot 2013: 7-8). He observes that in the riots " a division of labour emerges: some actors were involved in spreading rumors and accusations, some occupied themselves with the logistics of the mobilization, some instigated and led the mobs while others kept up morale and support by providing relief and by securing the release of those arrested. Throughout, Gujarat politicians seem to have played a pivotal role in these activities" (Berenschot 2013:7). Though he also uses the perspective of relational approach done by Varshney, he tries to understand the political context that required civic bodies to counter rumours and prevent hostilities and how different political actors actually function in creating communal tensions. He states "To revert to a well-worn metaphor, it is as if we would explain the occurrence of fire by looking at the presence or absence of a fire extinguisher, without looking at how or why the fire was lit in the first place. What is needed is a more inclusive approach: attention also needs to be

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paid to how the structure of relations between communities (including associational life) as well as relations within a community creates incentives and opportunities to organize and instigate violence" (Berenschot 2013: 36). Rather than being confined to the question of the presence or absence of inter-communal civic engagement, Berenschot focuses on the evolving social and political life within the localities. He states that to understand the continuous violence we must try to understand the changing patterns of interaction between the elites, politicians, their supporters, the state officials and local residents of a single community. He tries to unravel the relation of mechanism behind the violence through understanding of the day to day interaction of the different agents of the state, the politicians and the patronage system for which the followers accept the ideology of the politicians and participate in riots. The communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 was possible because of active cooperation between the politicians, state officials and goondas, and he tries to understand the relationship in the light of the limited capacity of the state institutions to uphold laws and regulations. He states that, "The limited capacity of the police and the court to dispense the justice creates incentives for local politicians to make use of goondas as alternative enforcers of authority, which again poses obstacles for the police and the judicial in upholding government laws and regulations" (Berenschot 2013:135). His book also throws fresh insight into the question of political mediation, politics of identity and election. He shows the meticulous planning, the manipulations and strategies to create a Hindu vote bank and the compulsion or willingness of the voters who are dependent on the politicians and the organizations to facilitate their interaction which state institutions. He also tries to understand the infrastructure of violence through intensive ethnographic work in three localities where he shows the division of labour of the different communal organization in managing, instigating and mobilizing the people for riots. By negating the theory of spontaneity for the riots in Gujarat after the Godhra incident, he states that quite a lot of energy and money was spent on mobilizing crowds and spurring them into action at that time. The same networks which serve in the peace time as versatile networks of patronage that provide livelihood for their members by mediating between state institution and citizens, become active as institutionalized riot system in the time of riots. And this explains the power of the networks to make their followers complicit in the riot programme. He states "The links between goondas, politicians, the police and local fire tenders did not come about because of a shared interest in fomenting violence; they came about because of a shared need to cooperate in order to develop a profitable hold over the distribution of state resources and the implementation of state polices. For these actors communal violence is a beneficial strategy within a larger game of capturing (state) resources, gaining support and winning elections" (Berenschot 2013:167). By creating local base of supporters and earning legitimacy by mediating state resources for the citizens, these networks could spread rumours and create tensions. He states "Rioting can - depending on the political context in which it occurs - provide a chance to develop and strengthen these relations, whereas the prevention of violence might damage these relations. Rioting is maintaining

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relations" (Berenschot 2013:185). He shows the limitations of the thesis of Varshney who makes a relations between communal violence and civic engagements by arguing that these networks could foment violence not only because of the decline of civic engagements between Hindus and Muslims but also because the gradual encroachment of state institutions on the terrain of even intra-ethnic civic activity (Berenschot 2013:175). Regarding relations in between violence and elections he states that the dependence of voters on politicians to gain access to resources can help to explain why communal violence helps politicians to win election. Moreover, these networks which work as patronage system during peace time and as fomenters of violence at the time of riots sustain because of the difficulties of the citizens in dealing with state institution and to get access to welfare schemes. The cooperation and coordination that can be observed during riots between neighborhood leaders, the police, local criminals, Hindu-nationalist activists, political party workers and politicians should be understood against the backdrop of the daily interaction between these actors as they cooperate with each other to develop and maintain lucrative access to state resources. Their daily exchange of favours shape and cement the infrastructure that, can be used to spread rumours, bring people to the streets, distributed weapons and prevent the police from interfering at times of communal tension (Berenschot 2013:190-191The intentions and the motives of those who participate in such riot programmes are determined by the interdependence of these stakeholders. Regarding the future of Hindu-Muslim relations in India, Berenschot states that it will depend on the courage and political will to enact measures to reduce the dependence of poorer citizens on political mediation. He reiterates that, "Inclusive economic growth and a more accessible and responsive state can lay the basis for a political arena that is less violent and more conducive to communal harmony" (Berenschot 2013:201)

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Sudha Pai and Sajjan Kumar's book 'Everyday Communalism: Riots in contemporary Uttar Pradesh' offers a new model of institutionalized everyday communalism to analyze sustained and constant low key communal tensions which became a new normal in Uttar Pradesh especially after 2000. The new model to based on the studies on the communal phenomenon in eastern and western UP since 2000 have added new and significant dimension to understand how communalism is being manufactured and institutionalized in everyday life.

The authors show that the Ramjanambhoomi-Barbi Majsid mobilization which provided the context for communal riots in the late 1980s and early 1990s was mostly based on 'history, mythology, fate, and culture and was planned as a large scale, highly visible, participative movement, using a *rath yatra* to appeal to mainly upper caste Hindus across UP and the country.' The main purpose and strategy of this mobilization was to foreground Hindutva as a 'powerful religious and rightwing political ideology and tool for building a Hindu nation.' However, after

the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the gradual weakening of the temple movement especially after 2004 national elections when the BJP lost power, there had been a new strategy centering on institutionalized everyday communalism which was different from the earlier Ramjanambhoomi phase of mobilization. This new strategy resulted in 'a combination of quiet nationalism, quiet communalism and low intensity incidents' and a consequent rise of communalism without communal riots'. According to the authors, "riots no longer promote communalism, rather it is the steady and long term work at the grassroots among the common people by the right wing forces that promotes the growth of constant, everyday, communal tensions and polarization, which only at times spills over into big and violent riots (Pai and Kumar 2018:276)."

The study takes into cognizance the shift in the location of riots from the earlier endemic sites such as Aligarh and Kanpur to new areas especially in eastern and western Uttar Pradesh which remained by and large free from the riots during the 1990s due to the Ramjanambhoomi -Barbi Majsid imbroglio. According to the scholars there is a change in the locations where riots have been taking place in Uttar Pradesh in the recent past. Since the 1960s and 1970s communal riots were endemic in urban areas of Uttar Pradesh such as Moradabad, Meerut, Aligarh, Kanpur etc and the riots mostly occurred due to economic competition between the Hindus and Muslims. Since 2000 riots have spread into new areas such as Muzzafarnagar, Shamli, Mau, Gorakhpur and the new series of violence have also new socio-economic contexts. It is observed that the new sites of everyday communal mobilization were carefully selected, "where it was felt that assertions, anxieties ad conflicts were emerging over issues such as a growing agrarian crisis and falling income in a once prosperous region, emergence of Mafia dons, rise of a class of frustrated, educated but unemployed youth, increasing cultural conflict over religious practices, decline in local industry due to globalization etc (Pai and Kumar 2018:275)."

Apart from spread to new location, the communal riots in the recent past have also spatially spread mostly from the urban areas to the rural areas. The form of construction of communalism have also been changing where instead of large scale and state wide mobilization there have been 'a series of low key, restrained and carefully calibrated communal incidents to avoid large scale riots.' According to the authors, "These small incidents were responsible for making Uttar Pradesh a tinder box and eventually sparked off major riots in Eastern and Western Uttar Pradesh. The new form of low-key mobilization has continued afterwards in UP and elsewhere in the country despite the BJP gaining a majority at the Centre-through strategies such as love jihad, conversions, attack on Christian churches, beef ban, the alleged exodus of Hinds from Kairana and cow vigilantism which has kept the communal pot boiling (Pai and Kumar 2018:29)."

The authors have also pointed out that the everyday communalism have also successfully transcended the upper caste norm of Hindutva mobilization of the 1990s

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and has successfully introduced ideology of non-Brahmanical Hindutva to enlist the support of the subaltern segments of the Hindu society. It is observed that, 'In the 1990s for the dalits and backwards, the Hindu upper castes were the others to be challenged, today the attempt is to Hinduize the former and bring them closer to the latter and render the Muslim the alien for all sections of a united Hindu community (Pai and Kumar 2018:30). The politics of caste mobilization by the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party in UP could successfully stem the tide of BJP in the 1990s and early 2000s but the growing disappointment on the part of the backward and lower castes against these party's performance provided the space for the BJP to reconsolidate. The authors explain that the failure of the parties such as SP and BSP and the consequent rise of BJP were coterminous with the promotion of non-Brahmanical Hindutva strategy to rope in the subaltern caste into the Hindutva fold. According to the authors, "the promotion of this variety of Hindutva is visible not only in UP but in states in the Hindi heartland and others such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh (Pai and Kumar 2018: 281)." Rather than emphasizing on just the instrumental role of the new strategy the authors also point out that the mobilization of the low caste towards Hindutva became possible as 'affected by the process of modernity, these groups are attracted by the idea of being associated with an upper caste Hindu party.' According to the authors, "the process of subalternization of Hindutva is primarily interplay of the active agency, cultural and political aspirations of the Hindu subalterns and the democratic compulsions of the Hindutva discourse (Pai and Kumar 2018:282)."

Institutionalized everyday communalism became operational by taking recourse to petty, banal incidents to create communal blocks which lead to electoral dividends by the Hindu Right. This process continues to get fresh lease of life due to the active support of the institutions and machinery of the state which creates new social and cultural norms to enforce "the minority community to conform to the values and customs of the majority (Pai and Kumar 2018: 288)." The new socio-economic and cultural contexts which fuel the main ingredients of everyday communalism are mostly related to 'social jealousies, cultural aspirations, and economic anxieties' of the different groups of people.

The authors have also delineated the intricate relationship between institutionalized everyday communalism and electoral politics. This intricate relationship was clearly visible in the communal mobilization process especially in eastern and western Uttar Pradesh. According to the authors, "An initial stage of sustained, everyday grassroots mobilization over a period of time, which eventually is used to create a communal electoral campaign during an election, which the party hopes to win (Pai and Kumar 2018: 30)." Due to the continuous everyday institutionalized communalism there is the arrival of a new normal in the everyday relationships of Hindus and Muslims where it becomes almost impossible to revert back to the earlier relationship. The authors for their ethnographic studies had selected the districts of Mau and Gorakhpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh in 2005 and 2007 and Muzzafarnagar and Shamli districts in

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2013 in western Uttar Pradesh. The authors mostly emphasize the difference in terms of strategy, ideology and operational aspects of the construction of communal riots since 1980s and the new design since 2000. The selection of these locations and the time frame provided opportunity to, "Examine the contrasting context, methods and strategies through which communalism has taken route and Hindu-Muslim relations are constructed and reconstructed over time (Pai and Kumar 2018: 31)."

By using the model of institutionalized everyday communalism the authors have innovatively expanded the concept of institutionalized riot system developed by Paul Brass. According to the authors the central difference between their everyday communalism model and the concept of institutionalized riot system as developed by Paul Brass mostly depends on 'deliberate, planned, long term and continuous everyday grassroots communal mobilization by the local leaders belonging to the area.' According to them, "these leaders are recruited for the purpose, using small, mundane but provocative local incidents to gradually create animosity and social jealousies between Hindus and Muslims who have lived together for a long time (Pai and Kumar 2018: 26)." The model of everyday communalism has three concentric circles or layers where the innermost centre, 'consist of core BJP leaders providing leadership in terms of ideology, strategy and methods, of grassroots mobilization.' The second circle is manned by the local leaders, 'recruited for the purpose of institutionalizing communal tensions in inter-community relationships over a period of time.' According to the authors, "it is at this level that the work of institutionalizing everyday communalism is created out through agitations for cow protection, love jihad, beef politics, *ghar wapsi* and anti-conversion and random other agitations against people, art, events, etc (Pai and Kumar 2018: 27)." The third circle of this model is provided by the social media forums 'which provides support to the strategy of everyday communalism through constant propaganda and messages targeted at the host population of the region.'

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In his book 'Colonial Origins of Ethnic Violence in India', Ajay Verghese contextualizes the origin of problem of ethnic and communal violence in India in the evolving colonial administrative apparatus specifically after the revolt of 1857. Verghese in his explanation and arguments tries to capture the limitations of the scholarly works emerging in the recent past specifically the arguments put forward by Paul Brass, Ashutush Varshney and Steven Wilkinson. These explanations according Verghese have two specific limitations. The first limitation is relating to the historic problem of Hindu-Muslim riots which had its origin in the pre-colonial past but these three theories mostly deal with the Hindu Muslim riots in the twentieth century and more specifically in the post-Independent period. The existing arguments do not clearly deal with the problem of the occurrence of Hindu—Muslim riots for hundreds of years before the introduction of the electoral system. Similarly the Hindu nationalists cannot be part of an explanation for the pre-colonial conflicts.

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Verghese also points out that the existing research of ethnic violence in India has its narrow focus on religion.

Verghese in his research prioritizes the historical legacies of communal violence which are transmitted into contemporary politics and the historic role of institutions in this transmission into the post independent period. The book argues that "Historical legacies create cultures of conflict or cooperation that reinforced over time through institutions, drive patterns of ethnic violence in multi-ethnic states (Verghese 2016: 4)." In India, according to the author, 'the era of British colonialism structured long term ethnic conflict outcomes.' The author in his explanation of the colonial origin of ethnic violence in India gives primacy to the changing nature of colonial administration in India especially after the revolt of 1857. The British administrators mostly believed that the rebellion of 1857 was a religious uprising and in the post-1857 period, caste was devised as the central organizing principle of the emerging society. The rebellion of 1857 which shook the British Empire in India forced to abandon the project of complete integration of the Indian princely states with the Raj. Henceforth, princely states were no longer forcefully integrated and the policy of indirect rule was introduced to have control over the princely states.

After 1857 the British administrators introduced the Indian model of colonialism which combined both direct and indirect rule to prevent the occurrence of future rebellions. According to the author, the areas which were directly ruled by the Raj were organized and administered differently where "colonial rulers created disparate policies of ethnic stratification (Verghese 2016: 4)." The princely states which were indirectly ruled had their own autonomy where different rules of social stratification worked. Different conception and administrative mechanism to deal with ethnic diversity were followed in the British provinces and in the indirectly ruled princely states. In the British provinces caste became the central trope of administration whereas the princely rulers gave primacy of religion over caste identity. This resulted in the making of two different political cultures which subsequently emerged across the provinces and the princely states (Verghese 2016: 4). According to the author in the provinces, "British administrators implemented policies that benefitted high castes, discriminated against the low caste and tribals, and protected religious minorities. In the princely states, native kings did the opposite. Their policies benefitted their co-religionists, discriminated against non-religionists and protected low castes and tribes (Verghese 2016: 4)." These ethnic fault lines and differential political cultures came to be subsequently reinforced in the body politic after independence through the different institutions. In his explanation these institutions are not narrowly defined only in terms of rules, norms and procedures but also encompass the symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates which provide meaning to human action (Verghese 2016: 6).

After independence the existing patterns of ethnic violence became embedded in the society through the continuity of the multiple social institutions. The book argues

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that in the directly ruled British provinces there occurred mostly caste and tribal violence and in the erstwhile princely states religious violence against the minorities had been the recurring pattern. According to the author, "In the former provinces on the one hand, low caste and tribal groups continued to suffer under the weight of historic discrimination, and reform efforts have failed to minimize the violence. In the former princely states, on the other hand, it is mainly minority, religious groups that suffer from discriminatory legacies (Verghese 2016:5)."

The British administrators in the directly ruled areas or the provinces have introduced new administrative policies which favoured the high caste and discriminated against the low caste and the tribes specifically after 1857. At the same time the British also introduced the policy of religious neutrality which protected the minority Muslims. In the princely states where there was a continuity of pre-colonial political traditions, ethnic politics was organized differently. In the princely states the native kings mostly tried to gain legitimacy from religion. According to the author, "In these areas politics was organized around the centrality of religious legitimation, laws, shrines, customs and rituals. Religion was inherently central to the princely states, but the British also reinforced this ethnic categories….to highlight the divide between modern provinces and backward princely states (Verghese 2016: 203)." In the princely states the dominant religious groups were favoured whereas there was discrimination against the religious minorities which resulted in recurring religious violence but the princely states did not witness violence along caste line. It is observed that, "Across India's provinces and princely states, different conceptions of ethnicity led to different political cultures, then different policies of ethnic stratification led to different fault lines of ethnic violence (Verghese 2016: 204)."

This central argument of the book which gives a new interpretation of British Indian history is based on extensive qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative research is based on archival material and interviews where both British and princely sources are taken into account. In view of India's enormous diversity, case studies which help in controlled historical comparisons were selected from northern, southern and eastern India. Controlled historical comparisons had been defined as "the study of two or more instances of a well-specified phenomenon that resembled each other in every respect but one (Verghese 2016: 11)." The author picked up Jaipur and Ajmer districts of Rajasthan for his first controlled historical comparison. According to the author, "These two cases are remarkably similar except that during the colonial period Jaipur was a princely state and Ajmer was a British Province…. in Jaipur on the one hand Hindu kings implemented policies that were discriminatory toward the Muslim minority (Verghese 2016: 11)."

In the second controlled historical comparison the author studies the South Indian state of Kerala where the northern Malabar region of Kerala is compared with the Southern Travancore region. The Malabar region of Kerala was under the direct control of the British whereas Travancore was a princely state. Though Kerala had

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remained mostly a peaceful state and in the post-independence period had emerged as a developmental success story there had been ethnic tensions and occasional violence which were different in the Malabar and in the Travancore region. In Malabar, which was ruled directly by the British, there had been the growth of caste politics and conflict whereas in the princely state of Travancore, there had been a legacy of communal violence involving Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

The author tries to establish through archival sources that the British administration emphasized the centrality of caste and tribal identities. In Ajmer in the early 19th century the British administrators codified the untouchables and due to the impact of the census operations the caste identities got prominence over religion in Ajmer. Similarly in Malabar, the British agrarian policies promoted political mobilization of the local caste and the adivasis in the region. In both of these directly administered British provinces the challenge of religion was minimized and the minority Muslim population got protection due to the policy of religious neutrality practiced by the British. According to the author Muslims were recruited in substantial numbers in the administrative apparatus and the policy of religious neutrality "led to the religious divide slowly receding over time" (Verghese 2016: 205). Though the Muslims in Malabar in the early part of the 20th century were involved in uprisings against the British "the vast majority of the rebels were actually recent low caste converts and the history of this region since the advent of colonialism included repeat episodes of inter caste tensions and violence (Verghese 2016: 205)."

Comparatively the trajectory of ethnic and religious divide had been different in the princely states of Jaipur and Travancore where the centrality of religion was always emphasized by the respective rulers. In both these princely states the primacy of religion led to favourable dispensation for the Hindu majority population against the rights of the minorities- Muslims in Jaipur and Christians in Travancore. Jaipur had been continuously reported in the newspapers to be inflicted by recurring communal violence since the early 20th century. In both these princely states the administration introduced protective policies for the lower castes and the adivasis. The Meena tribe was acknowledged to be the rulers of Jaipur in the medieval period and consequently the ceremonial position in the kingdom and a certain allotment of government jobs was introduced by the Jaipur state. Similarly "the Raja's of Travancore also pushed aggressively for low caste uplift after the mid 19th century, opening the doors of Hindu temples to untouchables before any other region of India (Verghese 2016: 205)."

The author through his comparative studies of the four cases outlines the difference in terms of ethnic policies of the British administration which emphasized the centrality of caste and simultaneously protected religious minorities. On the contrary the princely rulers in their administrative policy of ethnic stratification emphasized the centrality of religion, discriminating against the religious minorities whereas the lower caste and the adivasis were protected. Consequently in these areas, 'religious

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violence increased but caste and tribal violence was minimized.' According to the author, "These four cases drawn from such different geographical regions of India- regions with sharply contrasting cultural and historical attributes highlight that bifurcated colonial rule created clear fault lines of ethnic conflict." The author to validate his argument also studies the princely state of Bastar presently located in the state of Chattisgharh which does not fit to this theory proposed in the book. Through archival evidence the author shows that Bastar was nominally a princely state which witnessed continuous colonial interference and this according to the author constitutes the original cause of tribal violence in the kingdom. Through archival research the author shows that the tribal revolt which started in Bastar in the 19th century was the consequence of continuous British interference in the administration of the princely state. He states that, "Bastar is the exception that proves the rule; where the British were in power, tribal rebellion soon followed (Verghese 2016: 206)." In the post-independence period these colonial patterns of ethnic violence which were the result of the different salience given to different ethnic arrangements continued in the post-independent period. In Ajmer and Malabar 'respondents detailed that conflicts still revolves around caste and tribal identities'. In Jaipur and Travancore, however, respondents highlighted the central role of religion in fomenting political violence (Verghese2016: 206). The author argues that after the Babri Majsid demolition in 1992 riots broke out in Jaipur and Travancore but similar communal violence didn't occur in Ajmer or Malabar. The colonial patterns of violence continued in the post-independence period as they became embedded in both formal and informal institutions of the post-Colonial state. The political parties, political symbols and the mode of mobilizations mostly continued the religious divide in Jaipur and Travancore. Moreover, the same patterns of violence also continued in the post-independent period as the governments of independent India failed to implement effective reforms.

The author traces the origin of conflict to the British administrative policies to unravel the post colonial communal problems in India but does not delve into the functioning of the communal organizations and the political parties, the electoral dimension and the role of the state agencies in the making of communal riots.

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In his book " Communalism , Caste and Hindu Nationalism : The Violence in Gujrat" Ornit Shani contextualizes the development of communal politics in Gujarat since 1970s in the broad framework of caste politics in Gujarat which led to anti-reservation movements by the upper caste but in due course of time the riots transformed into communal riots in between Hindus and Muslims. In the background of emerging caste politics in Gujarat since 1970s Shani explains the problems arising out of the decline of the vibrant textile mills of Gujarat. The closer of the mills was expected to make a common platform for the huge numbers of workers for emergence of class conflict. But instead of conflict in the class line caste and communal conflicts started

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to emerge in the industrial cities of Gujarat. According to Shani the structure and mechanisms of industrial relations in the textile industries and the division of labour within the mills and the labour unions emerged as constraints for a full fledged labour struggle. Moreover the changing economic structure and the new economic policy since 1990s continuously resulted in decline in the power of the workers and unions. Some of the workers also alleged that the Textile Labour Association was working as an agent of the mill workers when the textile mills were gradually closed down by the owners. According to Shani this led to the downward mobility of the workers which had ramifications in the caste and class identities of the people across society. The deindustrialization which happened in 1980s in Gujarat led to the decline of the socio-economic status of the upper caste groups as well as the upward mobility of the backward sectors of society.

Shani shows that the reservation policies which were aimed at the scheduled castes and backward castes gradually developed conflictual relations among the different sections of the Hindus in Gujarat. Reservations in the educational and service sector worked as successful instruments for creating opportunities for the lower and the backward castes. According to Shani, " The access of lower and backward castes to higher social echelons through reservations was perceived as potentially undermining the superior status of upper castes. Reservation policies therefore generated uncertainties within the Hindu moral order and resulted in the growth of tensions within forward and backward caste Hindus (Shani 2007: 52)."

The caste disputes which emerged in Gujarat due to the policies of reservation for the backward caste gradually transformed into tensions between Hindus and Muslims which resulted in the consolidation Hindutva forces in Gujarat. According to him the policy makers, politicians, and the judiciary in their articulations regarding the reservation policies 'addressed issues of equality on the basis of caste and class considerations as if they were synonymous with religious rights of minorities.' And in this process 'they constituted a link between in caste, class and communalism to develop and deepened communal rivalries.'

The politics of reservation and empowering of the minorities formed the winning strategy of the ruling Congress party which was known as the KHAM strategy till the 1980's. KHAM stood for the Khatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and the Muslims and these segments constituted 55% of this population. The caste groups in this electoral alliance were 'either entitled to or being considered for reservation'. According to Shani the different segments of KHAM block 'were identified on the basis of class by employing categories of class and religion'. This successful electoral strategy which combined the backward and the minorities together had the potential to challenge the existing the social and political dominant order and hegemony of the upper castes. Especially the Patels perceived to be excluded from the centres of the emerging new power arrangement which generated concerns and anxieties across the upper castes who were not included within the reservation policies. Just after the

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election of 1980 when Congress swept the elections in Gujrat through their wining electoral strategy, the frustration of the upper caste due to the politics of reservations and gradual consolidation of political mileage by the lower and backward castes led to eruption of anti-reservation riots in which the lower caste and the dalits were primarily targeted.

This also resulted in skepticism about the politics of secularism as it was gradually being perceived that the politics of redistribution was connected with the benefit of the lower and backward castes and the minorities. According to Shani this historical conjunction between caste conflict and communalism gradually developed in Ahmedabad leading to the consolidation of right wing Hindu politics. Anti-reservation riots again recurred in Ahmedabad in 1985 after the electoral success of Congress again on the basis on KHAM alliance but very soon this anti-reservation riot transformed into a communal conflagration into Hindus and Muslims. This unexpected turn in events of emerging tensions between the Hindus due to reservation policies gradually sliding towards communal rivalry between the Hindus and Muslims have been explained by Shani. The riot of 1985 in Ahmedabad which started as class conflict and ended as Hindu Muslim riot also 'marked the beginning of the political shift in Gujarat from Congress rule to the rise of the BJP which further strengthen the upper caste position (Shani 2007: 132).'

Shani examines the interconnectedness of caste, class, communalism and the state taking into account the political rivalries and economic pressures within the context of changing social structures at multiple levels in Gujrat. In her study Shani critically studies the high politics where the political parties and their ideologues fight for electoral strategies to gain power. In the next level she investigates the changing patterns of social and economic dynamics where the politics of caste and religion interplay. In the third level she contextualizes the workings of individuals and groups in their everyday life in the 1980s.

During the riot of 1985 there was a strategy to win back the dalits within the politics of the Hindu right. This conscious attempt to rope in the dalits and other backward classes gradually led to the strengthening of the social base of the Hindu right in Gujarat which also signaled the erosion of KHAM politics and the transition of political power from Congress to BJP. According to Shani, "Rather than addressing the cultural clash among the Hindus, upper castes transformed it to a conflict with the Muslims. In their aspirations to restore their position, as well as the Dalits, within the Hindu order to its former state, upper caste substituted Muslims for Dalits. In the circumstances of the 1980s the fault lines in society were thus redefined along the lines of religion (Shani 2007: 195).' The Mandal Commission report which envisaged reservation for the backward caste mostly among the Hindus and some Muslim groups as well became the bone of contention as the Central Government led by V.P. Sing accepted the report for implementation in 1989. The process of transformation of conflict from caste to religion became more apparent as the upper caste apprehended

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of their more restricted entry within the government services after 1989. In the 1990s most of the non-BJP parties at least politically articulated their demands to extend the policy of reservation the Muslims which helped the BJP to overtly accuse these parties of vote bank politics by minority appeasement. According to Shani the riot of Gujarat in 2002 exposed the already strongly entrenched Hindutva politics which started from the early 1980s.

According to Shani the communal riot in Gujarat in 1969 did not lead to the growth and consolidation of Hindu right forces in Gujarat but the riot of 1985 which started as an anti-reservation movement ended as an Hindu Muslim riot promoting the consolidation of Hindu Right in Gujarat and also the reemergence of dominance of the upper caste in the political structure.

Conclusion

Rather than being confined to the existing pool of knowledge on communal conflict, the above mentioned scholars have opened up new understanding regarding the endemic problem faced by India. Their thrust on localized specifications and characteristics, rather than on general explanations based on macro understanding, have enriched our perspectives on riots which happen due to interplay of multiple factors working simultaneously, the textures of which can be unraveled empirically by meticulous fieldwork and ethnography at the ground level only.

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Book Review

Agrarian Relations in Tripura

Arunima Deka[1]

Socio Economic Surveys of Three Villages in Tripura A Study of Agrarian Relation, (2019),Madhura Swaminathan and Ranjini Basu (eds.) Tulika Books, New Delhi, pp. 376. Rs. 600.

'Social Economic Surveys of Three Villages in Tripura A Study of Agrarian Relation' edited by Madhura Swaminathan and Ranjini Basu is an important contribution both to the study of agrarian situation in the country and also contextualizing the situation in northeast India. While we find major studies on the agrarian situation from around the world in journals like Journal of Agrarian Change, Oxford Agrarian Studies etc there was lack of literature on the Northeast India. One of the reasons could be the peculiarity of the region itself in terms of its geographical contours where the nature of agricultural practices differed greatly from that of elsewhere in India making it a challenging subject of research. Nonetheless, as a part of the Project on Agrarian Relation in India (PARI) of the Foundation of Agrarian Studies, this book draws on the primary data collected for the study. Importantly the study draws data with in-depth household and village level questionnaires from three villages with distinguishing agrarian systems, jhum, upland and lowland cultivation.

The authors have divided the book into five sections, the context, agrarian structure, production and agrarian relations, aspects of income generation, standard of living and finally an overview. In locating the context of the book and the overall development situation in the state, the book opens with an interview between V. K. Ramachandran and Manik Sarkar, former Chief Minister of the state (1998-2018). Sarkar traces the history and achievement of the Left Font government in Tripura and also touches upon the situation after 2018 including hostility to the Left and also rise of one party authoritarian rule. He outlined the deplorable economic situation in rural areas where starvation, migration and even sale of children in some tribal areas have been reported attributing the reasons to the lack of democratic political space to the rise of such issues today.

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The first section of the book 'the context' provides a detail introduction to the sample villages of Mainama of Dhalai district, Muhuripur of South Tripura district and Khakchang of North Tripura district, surveys in which were conducted during May-June 2016. The village profiles are detailed and in-depth also because of the fact that they were surveyed in 2005 for the Tripura Human Development Report 2007. This in a way provides the reader a picture of the changes that occurred in the nature of settlement, agricultural practices and changes, village infrastructure, population and demographic data, land use, irrigation and cropping pattern, employment and income for over a period of nearly a decade. The economy of Tripura is predominantly dependent on agriculture. Land reforms programmes therefore play a vital role in determining the relationship between the peasants and the state. Furthermore, the demographic transition of the state owing to Bengali migration lead to wider political struggles against alienation of tribal land, refugee issue, against the backdrop of which the Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reform Act (TLRLR) 1960 was enacted. The third chapter of the book provides a detailed history of the land reforms in the state and the role played by the Left Font government in implementing them. The chapter also provides detail of cropping pattern, land distribution and data relating to percentage of population engaged with agricultural, horticulture and allied activities. This detailed chapter on the agrarian economy of the state is followed by a short but important chapter wherein V. K. Ramachandran and Madhura Swaminathan highlight the key achievements of the noted 'Tripura Model' which laid importance not just on ensuring lasting peace and repeal of the AFSPA but which 'involved investment in human development and people's participation in the implementation of socio-political and economic policy' (p.59).

The second section of the book provides a detailed picture of the agrarian structure, production and agrarian relations in the three sample villages based on survey data on socio economic classification of households, type of cultivators, cultivation practices etc. This section also has detailed chapters on each selected village, studying the land tenure and land use pattern, cropping pattern, crop yields, income, irrigation facilities, labour absorption in agriculture. These chapters discuss detailed agrarian production relations along with providing interesting details of peculiar prevalent practices like lottery system for land allotment in places where jhum cultivation is undertaken, contract leasing system etc. The discussion brings to light the differences in production system and land and labour relations in areas with different cultivation practices comprising of jhum, lowland and upland. This is followed by a detailed chapter on the employment scenarios of the state across cosec economic class. The authors of this chapter highlighted the critical employment scenario of the state where wage labour is the primary source of employment for majority of the households in the state. In this context the authors pointed out the role played by schemes like MGNREGS both in employing and providing cash earnings to the households. This scheme also played an important role in creating employment opportunities for women in a scenario where women's employment is

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remarkably low. The following chapter highlights the scenario of banking sector in state wherein the author concludes that the features of underdevelopment are evident in the banking services of the state. The author suggested efforts to strengthen the outreach of banking particularly in underbanked /unbanked pockets and to make available bank credits, which according to the author is low owing to lack of demand for credit from households, for higher economic growth. However, the subsistence nature of agriculture and economic activities makes Tripura and the Northeast region a peculiar case where demands for cash were bound to be low.

The third section highlights aspects of income generation in the state. While estimating the poverty situation in the state and income diversification the authors took into count the data on crop production, agriculture and non agricultural wages, animal husbandry, rent from agricultural land, salary, remittances, etc. again emphasizing how geographical factors importantly determined household income, which was found to be lowest in area with jhum cultivation. The second chapter in this section provides us a picture of the homestead economy of the state which is found to play a major role in ensuring food and nutritional security to the households. The next chapter highlights rubber plantation in the state and the authors calls it a 'harbinger of change'. The authors shows us how rubber cultivation improved income of the people and brought down extremist activities, resettled tribal households who were earlier practicing jhum, gave people better access to health and education services. This chapter points out the success of rubber cultivation in states like Kerala where industries have grown around this sector similar success can be anticipated for Tripura too. However, the very shift from food to cash crop and that too, for rubber plantation, where the price of rubber is determined by international market makes those engaged with the sector highly vulnerable. The loss can be greater than the benefit accrued, by this shift to cash crops.

The fourth chapter highlights the standard of living in the state with data from the selected villages and provides readers with a picture of the features of asset ownership, availability of basic amenities and housing, literacy and schooling. The concluding section provides an overview of the three study villages highlighting major findings. The final chapter provides the reader a picture of the public support system for rural households in the state including income support through income generation schemes, or provisions like free school education etc. It also highlights implementation of government schemes like the Forest Right Act in the state, along with the status of the Public Distribution System, MGNREGS and the livelihood support extended by the government in the state, the 'progressive transformation' under the Left Font government of rural people.

The chapters in this volume have provided a detailed picture of the agrarian relation in the state. It has very well highlighted how in a country and a state which is predominantly dependent on agriculture as the main source of earning and employment of people, the agrarian issue becomes a political question. It is not just

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about improving the standard of living of the people but also ensuring equitable distribution of land and resources, access and ownership of land, ensuring welfare schemes to benefit the people and overall the willingness of the state to address issues of poverty, landlessness, and employment. This is where the success of a Left Font government can be counted in ensuring a democratic space for participation of people irrespective of class, caste and belongingness. The agrarian issue cannot be bereft of the State, land and labour relation and this book has very successfully portrayed the dynamics of this relation. This book becomes all the more important in the context of the rising farmer protest against the newly proposed bills for reforms in the agriculture sector. The new trend to redefine the state society relation with dictates from monopoly capitalist houses attempts to turn agriculture into a mere commodity rather than a relation, a practice with defines relation between land and labour.

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