

Vol. IV, Issue No. 1 (January - June 2019)
ISSN: 2395 - 3128

UN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



A Journal of ICFAI University, Nagaland



IUN Journal of
Social Sciences
A journal of ICFAI University,
Nagaland

A Peer Reviewed Journal



FINGERPRINT
123 MMHA Ki Building
Duncan Basti, Tajen Ao Road
Dimapur, Nagaland - 797112
+91 9612 741780
fingerprintnagaland@gmail.com

Copyright© : ICFAI University, 2019

All right reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the permission of the copyright owner.

Vol. IV, Issue No. 1

Jan' - June 2019

The views and opinions expressed in the journal are those of the individual author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICFAI University Nagaland

ISSN 2395 - 3128 ₹ 300/-

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Aosela Pongen

ICFAI University Nagaland

EDITORIAL ADVISORY MEMBERS

Prof. Charles P. Alexander

Vice Chancellor, ICFAI University Nagaland

VRK Prasad, Ph.D

Former Vice Chancellor, ICFAI University Nagaland

Prof. Moses M. Naga

North Eastern Hill University, Shillong

Jyoti Roy, Ph.D

Patkai Christian College (Autonomous), Nagaland

M.N. Rajesh, Ph.D

University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

Saji Varghese, Ph.D

Lady Keane College, Shillong

G.N. Bag, Ph.D

Former Associate Professor of Economics, KITT University, Odissa

Vulli Dhanaraju, Ph.D

Assam University, Diphu Campus

Kevizonuo Kuolie, Ph.D

ICFAI University Nagaland

Azono Khatso, Ph. D

ICFAI University Nagaland

S. Elika Sumi, Ph.D

Tetso College, Dimapur Nagaland

Temsurenla Ozükum, Ph.D

ICFAI University Nagaland

Khrukulu Khush, Ph.D

ICFAI University Nagaland

CONTENTS

Editorial	v
Contributors	vi
Impact of Christianity on the Belief System of the Angamis in the 19th Century -Kevizonuo Kuolie	1
A Dog-Eaten Script: Transmitting History Through Folk Medium in The Pre-Colonial Ao Naga Society -Sensonaro Longchar	10
Ao Naga Folk-Culture: A Re-Appraisal Through Folklore -Rongsenzulu	22
In Search of an In-Between Space - Examining Jhumpa Lahiri's Novels Through Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity -Gwanile Irine	31
The Reader and the Text: Examining Chinua Achebe's Girls at War from Wolfgang Iser's Theoretical Standpoint -Sentilemla Lemtur	35
Chasing the Cultural Matrix of Comedic Crime Sequences: A Study on the Comic Configuration of Crime in Malayalam Cinema -Sudeesh K	43
A Study on Socio-Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs of Nagaland with Special Reference to Kohima District -Meyisangla Longkumer	54

Editorial

The quest for knowledge is the basic principle behind research. The quality of research work directly renders to the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom, thereby benefiting the students, the society and the country.

In an inclusive and globalised world, the task of research in an academic institution is significant for its sustainability and development and it is vital to have knowledge driven growth based on innovation. In the recent years, our Indian education system has laid emphasis in skill based and vocational skill development in order to equip the younger generation for more employability opportunities. The promotion of research along with skill based education system can in fact tap into students' independent thought processes which can be utilise to help the nation evolve as a knowledge reservoir and producer of highly skilled professionals in the international arena. Our education system faces a number of constraints and challenges - quality research is one of them. Barring few impressive institutions, most display a depressing picture in terms of quality and quantity research. Quality research should enable us to study patterns in the past, feelings, attitudes and opinion then use it for determining future aspects and also help us to determine how to innovate.

In India, not many educational institutions have compulsory research goals for individual faculty and most do not have sufficient and proper systems or infrastructure for quality research. Consequently, the IUN Journal of Social Sciences aims to promote and produce theoretical and empirical knowledge with a view to drawing quality research. To help explore the state of knowledge, the IUN Journal of Social Sciences invited like-minded academicians and scholars to explore and discuss issues, implications and awareness relevant for quality and research oriented work, including controversial ideas. The papers published in this issue consists of works on literature, cultural aspects and conditions of women entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, the papers in this issue were peer reviewed by various distinguished subjects experts and has undergone plagiarism test to check the originality of the papers contributed. Each paper benefitted from the comments and suggestions made by the respective reviewers. All the papers represent independent view of the authors.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Kevizonuo Kuolie Assistant Professor & HoD, Department of English, ICFAI University of Nagaland.

Sensonaro Longchar M.Phil Scholar, Department of History, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad.

Dr. Rongsenzulu Anthropologist.

Gwanile Irine M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, ICFAI University Nagaland

Sentilemla Lemtur Assistant Professor, Department of English, ICFAI University Nagaland

Dr. Sudeesh K Assistant Professor, Department of English, ICFAI University Nagaland

Meyisangla Longkumer Ph.D Scholar, Department of Economics, Nagaland University.

Impact of Christianity on the Belief System of the Angamis in the 19th Century

KEVIZONUO KUOLIE

ABSTRACT

The progress of Christianity among the Angami tribe in the 19th Century was challenging because of the hostility of the villages. Both British officials and American missionaries had emphasized on their resistance to change. However, for the latter, the conversion was accompanied by western education and medical care making their work easier and effective. Christianity and modern education played the main role in the spread of western ideology and culture on the Angamis significantly affecting their lifestyle and traditional practices. In the wake of such domination, the cultural customs and practices of the Angamis went through drastic changes.

The present paper is a moderate examination of the impact made on the belief system of the Angamis. It focuses on the changes which occurred in the last two decades, particularly the last five years of the nineteenth century and more so on the impact of Christianity on cultural practices related to belief system. It is definitely not exhaustive. Numerous studies can be made from different sub-topics. The seemingly gaps in-between are intentional so that concentration could be given to the topic requirements.

Keywords – *Angamis, Belief System, American Baptist Missionaries, Christianity*

British Entry into Angami Territory - Kohima

Like any other ancient tribal societies, in absence of a written script or historical accounts, the Nagas had handed down their folklores and oral history with remarkable feats of memory. This method of oral tradition has been recognized as a keystone in the reconstruction of tribal societies. Naga Culture generally can be understood as the inherited behaviors and thoughts, and conservative lifestyles in the form of customs, traditions, beliefs and conventions acquired through the passage of time and passed down from one generation to another through oral traditions and practices. These would include village governance and customary laws, warfare and head-hunting, genna (taboos) and festivals, rituals and ceremonies, animistic beliefs and superstitions, carvings, weaving and pottery, song, music and dances,

dress and ornaments, folk-lore, language and dialects, tools and weapons, food and drinks, feasts of merit, family and marriage, the Morung, and so on. In the backdrop of such aged cultural practices, British imperialism and the Christian faith came to the Naga Hills.

The first notable entry into the Angami country was, as B.C. Allen (2015) recorded, in January 1839 when Mr. Grange, Sub-assistant to the Commissioner of Nowgong, was deputed to lead the expedition. He was 'directed to investigate' the Angami raids on the Plains which was under the direct control of the Britishers and to 'endeavour to punish the Chiefs of the larger villages of Konemah (Khonoma) and Mozemah (Mezoma) who were known to implicate in these outrages' (Mackenzie, 2014). However it ended briefly due to the inadequate provision provided. In 1840, he led a second expedition, meeting oppositions which compelled him to burn down the resistant villages.

Subsequently over the next four decades, the British government implemented different policies towards the Naga Hills from forceful suppression to non-interference. In 1878, Kohima was occupied and made into their headquarters, without much resistance from the Nagas (Allen, 2015).

Advent of the American Baptist Missionaries

The American Baptists were the first missionaries to gain foothold amongst the Naga. In 1839, Rev. Miles Bronson unsuccessfully tried to make an opening. After a gap of almost three decades, in 1871, the first missionary to the Nagas, Rev. E.W. Clark came to Sibsagar in Assam. But he was more attracted to the Nagas and slowly worked his way into the Ao region along with his assistant Godhula.

Once Kohima became the centre to the Colonial Rule, Rev. C.D. King and his wife were deputed for mission work among the Angami tribe. They arrived at Chumukedima, then known as Samaguting, on 27 June 1879. However, when G.H. Damant, the Political Officer to the Naga Hills District was shot dead by the Angamis of Khonoma village in October 1879 resulting in a war between the Britishers and the Nagas, he left for Sibsagar with his wife for security reason. Colonel Johnstone, with a strong supporting force, was deputed and ultimately resulted in the destruction of the village and firm establishment of the British rule in Kohima (Linyü, 2004).

It was then, the Kings returned and went to Kohima on 25 February 1881. Thus the American Baptist Missionaries (ABM) made their first entry into Angami territory (ibid).

Two Decades of Christianity – Resistance and Breakthrough

Following his settlement, on 29 March 1883, King organized the first Kohima Baptist Church but without any Angami member. F.S. Down said, “The Angamis did not respond to Christianity in the same way (like the other tribes). They clung to their old ways with a tenacity remarkable even for the Nagas” (Linyü, 2014).

It was only after five years, in 1885, four Angamis were converted; Lhousietsü, SieliezhüZierietsu and Lhusele. However, later two of them were excommunicated. King resigned and left in April 1886 (ibid).

In 1887, Rev. Sidney W. Rivenburg with his wife Hattie was transferred to Kohima from Molung. However, it was not easy for him too. In-between those years, the remaining two were also excommunicated. Thus by 1891, practically there was no Christian among the Angamis. Narola Rivenburg (1941), their daughter, notes in her epistolary book *Star of the Naga Hills*, “Five years and not a single convert for the Kohima Baptist Church” (p. 89). ‘Broken in health and utterly discouraged’, the Rivenburgs applied for their first furlough (1892-1894). After attaining a Medical degree from Baltimore Medical College, Rivenburg returned to Kohima in 1894 to continue his mission to be imparted through education and medical work (1941). A story is told of Rev. Rivenburg who used to go around Kohima village to see whether he can find any ailing person and give medical attention and in the process minister the gospel. Once he came across a man with severe stomachache complaining that there are rats in his stomach because a tephrimia (non-Naga) has cast an evil spell on him. Rivenburg diagnosed his problem and gave him de-worming medicine and in the next few days, the man was completely healed.

In 1895, Sieliezhü was restored to the Church. Rivenburg (1941) records, “Saliezhü, the Christian boy who was excluded from the church membership after Mr. King left seems particularly rejoiced to have a return” (p. 91).

In 1897, Neisier was baptized becoming the first Angami convert during the ten years work of Rivenburg in Kohima. 1900, the church membership in Kohima grew to fourteen. By the turn of the twentieth century, responsibility was handed over to the locals. In 1905, Sieliezhü was made Pastor, Neisier as Deacon and Kruneizhü as the treasurer of Kohima Church. By 1910, there were 75 baptised members in Kohima (Linyü, 2014).

Initially the missionaries started schooling the people at the same time stressed on health care consequently opening mission and primary education centres

bringing to the people an entirely new culture. The attraction of western education and medical attention were the two main attractions to them. In such a context, the people struggled to find a balance between both the cultures which resulted in their inability to find a firm footing in either.

The inevitability of change is foreseeable in any given society. The Christian faith and modern education introduced to the Angamis brought in new attitude and new perspective in life. In such a changing scenario, the indigenous customs and traditions went through a paradigm shift.

Effect on the Angamis' Belief System

The belief system of the Angamis, like any other Naga tribe, is intricately woven with their socio-political, economic and cultural practices. The rites and rituals which they perform, the gennas they observe and their superstitions pervade and affect their way of life. As such, one cannot precisely segregate the impact of an external force towards their belief system in particular without including their cultural practices too. This validates the understanding that when Christianity was introduced, the change pervaded all areas of their life. Due to their resistance to change, the shift was slow in the initial stage, however, once the ABM fully established their stay in Kohima region, alongside imparting education and medical care, the transformation penetrated into the social fabric of these people. Every area of their life and attitude fully exhibited this shift which is presented in the ensuing paragraphs.

The Angamis in the pre-colonial and pre-Christian era adhered to Pfutsana referring to religious practices of forefathers. It was a system of belief centred on a 'Supreme Being' with many other spirits both malevolent and benevolent. These spirits were considered to be manifested in natural phenomena like river, hill, forest, stones, trees, etc. To them, the Supreme Being is detached from the life and affairs of human beings. Taken to be male, he is held in awe and fear and thus exist no close relation with human beings. Less powerful than him are the benevolent spirits whom the people approach to seek blessings for matters directly related to their life like physical well being, crops, rain, human fertility, death, etc. On the other hand, the sacrifices or rituals are done towards the malevolent spirits to appease them in order to protect human beings from being harmed or destroyed by these spirits. Every unexplained phenomenon, good fortunes or misfortunes were attributed to spirits or ghosts. Their concept of life after death was vague. All their beliefs were rather life and death centric.

An authentic account of the traditional religion is found in John Butler's *Rough Notes on the Angami Nagas*:

It is at quitting the actual pleasures of living, which he has experienced, that a Naga shudders, and not the problematical torments to be met in a hell hereafter, of which he knows nothing... All his religious rites and ceremonies, his prayers, incantations, and sacrifices, are due to a trembling belief that he can thus avert some impending evil (Elwin, 1969).

The ancient Angami belief system involves sacrifices, rituals and ceremonies. These ceremonies were either conducted by the community, household or individual. Genna, rituals and ceremonies go hand in hand. Genna refers to severe restrictions or taboos laid over certain activities during the time of rites, rituals and ceremonies. It indicates that the people are forbidden to conduct the normal mode of life and is strictly observed because it is believed to produce evil effects. Genna is observed during preparation of head-hunting, expeditions, Feast of Merit ceremonies, erection of stone monuments, sowing of seeds, harvesting of crops, rise of new leadership, death of some important person, unnatural death of a person etc. They are observed by every village with some variations.

Traditionally agrarian folks, all the major religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals of the Angamis focus on and revolve around the agricultural cycle. Each agricultural stage was preceded and followed by one or the other ritual and ceremonies which were performed either by the individual household or the community as a whole. Among the private ceremonies performed by the individual household, the most important is the Feast of Merit. On the other hand, the sowing ceremony, harvest ceremony, purification ceremony are those in which the entire community, village or tribe participate. Such festivals involve numerous rituals and genna either for invoking blessings on their sowed crops or by way of thanksgiving for the harvested crops and to purify themselves to start eating the new harvested grains or produce.

With the coming of the colonial rule and introduction of Christianity and Western education, the Angamis entered into an atmosphere of cultural dilemma - trying to accommodate both their culture and their Christian faith. The missionaries started discouraging the people of their cultural practices and beliefs, and in a matter of few years, their custom of sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies and observing genna were discard eventually becoming obsolete. The new lifestyle that accompanied these two factors did not have any place to accommodate or compromise the culture and traditions which they were following before British occupation in Angami area. Christian principles were implemented strictly. The outcome was the conversion to

the new religion and denouncing of the ancestral belief and practices either under spiritual conviction or the desire for Western education.

From socio-cultural centric narratives handed down over informal discourses, it is learnt that conflicts arose between the new converts and the others in their own community. For the converts, the repercussions of participating in rituals and festivals, observing gennas, drinking rice beer were either excommunication from the church or from Christian community. Even the candidates desiring baptism were required to know Christian doctrines and furnish evidence that they had not participated in any 'heathen ritual' nor drunk any beer for three months (Rivenburg 1941). Moreover, once a person becomes a Christian, he was shunned by the others. The Christian principles and the western culture became the parameters to judge the morality and cultural practices of the people.

One major change which permeated the Angami traditional culture and consequently their belief system was the abandonment of the Morung known as kichūki. The kichūki was the Angami indigenous institution and the center of their culture. It was a common term for both male dormitory and female dormitory. Zetsuvi (2014) explains that elders "prepare their young men for life. All the clan history, legends, songs and the traditional practices were taught here." This served as traditional institution where cultural values were imparted and handed down. Young boys and girls were taught and trained in their respective morungs. Head-huntings were planned and discussed, warfare skills were imparted (p. 24f).

Soon it was totally abandoned, and with it the values and customs faded. Today, this institution which served as the true source of oral tradition is almost non-existent.

Once the Mission centre was set up and the Church established, the villagers were discouraged to attend Morung gatherings or sleep over since it was considered as a place where 'heathen' culture was propagated. These restrictions were slowly imparted at the initial stage but later enforced. Alongside, restraining them in conducting and participating in Feast of Merit, festivals, head-hunting ordeals, livelihood related ceremonies marked the beginning of the end of rituals and gennas.

Thong (2012) also wrote in general context of the Nagas,

Everything done in connection with the pagan rituals, ceremonies and festivals was regarded as an act against Christianity. The house decorations-animals head. Human heads which the Nagas valued as their trophies of valour, and the mithun horn which were a symbol of their prosperity as well as objects of art, were all destroyed. Even

the wood carvings on the pillars of their houses were all ordered to be burnt down. The weaving with designs and colours and the dying of clothes and dresses for religious ceremonious were all discouraged. Their beautiful ornaments of great artistic and human value like cowries, ivory, scarlet hair of enemy and hornbills were all burnt as they were ornaments used for worshipping the spirits. The art of dancing and colorful social and agricultural ceremonious were all given up (p. 159f).

Even in the context of Christianity in Ao region, Mar Imsong (2011) notes in his book *God – Land – People*,

Christian missionaries halted the Nagas from killing in perpetual feud, forced them to abstain from drinking their favorite rice beer, forbade traditional religious rites and rituals considered as taboo and heathen. Prohibited observance of genna since considered as economically demanding and superstitions; they banned from sleeping in a morung or taking part in a Feast of Merit...strict observance of Sundays forbidding any work...restricted agricultural festivals and celebrations...Christians who break these were threatened with excommunication from the church (p. 116f).

In the next few decades of the twentieth century, the change which came over the people and society was so eminent leading J.H. Hutton (1969), who began his book *The Angami Nagas* in 1912, to write in his first preface "Old beliefs and customs are dying, the old traditions are being forgotten, the number of Christians or quasi-Christians is steadily increasing, and the spirit of change is evading and pervading every aspect of village life" (p. vii).

Juxtaposing the Two Worlds

Looking at the influences that the Christian missionaries brought with them, one can notice that it was not just a different faith but a whole new lifestyle which was propagated among the new converts.

In Naga context, Christianity and education (which remains another major topic) can be considered the two sides of the same coin. Besides being the two main features that changed the tribal world of the Angamis, they also helped each other in enforcing themselves in the Angami society. One eased and paved the way of the other. Bringing the modern educational process to the Angamis turned out to be the most important factor which aided conversion. Modernization was the result of these two factors.

Change is inevitable and culture is not static. As such, sacrifices and compromises have to be made. Losing and gaining are part of life. Accordingly, from a cultural point of view, many indigenous practices were affected by the introduction of Christianity and primary education. It is also noted that these practices were also key factors in emancipating the people from ignorance, being subjected to fear of spirits, burdened with rituals, warfare and head-hunting which isolated one village from the other. They also open up a new world and understanding to the people who had remained isolated to the rest of the world. Education, not just intellectual, but knowledge about proper sanitation and a healthy lifestyle was also taught. The 'missionaries taught hygiene, temperance from heavy drinking and chewing beetle nut.' In other words, they brought a cleaner life (Imsong 2011). Yonuo (1948) also wrote, "...the Christian missionaries along with the British administrators took a leading part in bringing an end to the evil practices among the Nagas by teaching them how to live together in peace, love and tolerance with one another as good neighbours" (p. 120).

Thus in an atmosphere pervaded by constant fear of spirits, taxing rituals and ceremonies, danger of head-hunting and fear of retaliation, enemy's attacks and village feuds, the Christian message of a merciful God abounding in love and grace, brotherly relation and heavenly life after death was accepted as protection and deliverance.

The impact of Christianity on the Angamis created a new spiritual, social and physical consciousness at the same time uplifted their lifestyle. Every aspect of their culture was transformed. It changed the entire life-style of the people from warfare and head-hunting to new life based on the gospel of salvation. Moreover, as mentioned before, the Angamis' resistance to conversion was because of their insistence to have some concrete reason to rely on. So, diagnosing of their sicknesses and medicinal remedies by the missionary (here specifically referring to Rev. Sidney Rivenburg) provided also became a powerful ground for them to open up to the missionaries and the gospel.

Nonetheless, the cultural heritage which was compromised in the process proved to be of a great loss to the people. Though modernization still remains the greatest threat (to an extent eroded many customs) to these old-aged cultural practices and traditional knowledge of the Angamis, the value of the cultural heritage has also been recognized and great many efforts are in the process of preserving it by the state government, intellectuals, scholars, historians, students, researchers, elder folks, indigenous organisations, etc. Understanding the value of one's own culture, the people are trying to improvise and relate the aged belief system in a Christian context with the intention to preserve their culture without compromising their faith.

References

- Allen, B.C. (2015). *Gazetteer of Naga Hills and Manipur*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Elwin, Verrier. (1969). *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century*. E-text. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Haimendorf, Christoph Von. (1976). *Return to the Naked Nagas*. London: John Murray Publication.
- Hutton, J.H. (1969). *The Angami Nagas*. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Kuolie, D. (2006). *Structural Description of Tenyidie: A Tibeto-Burman Language of Nagaland*. Kohima: Ura Academy Publication.
- Linyü, Keviyiekielie. (2004). *Christian Movements in Nagaland*. Kohima: N.V. Press.
- Mackenzie, Alexander. (2014). *The North-East Frontier of India*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Ramunny, Murkot. (1993). *The World of Nagas*. New Delhi. Northern Book Centre.
- Rivenburg, Narola. (1941). *The Star of the Naga Hills*. Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society.
- Sema, Hokishe. (1986). *Emergence of Nagaland: Socio-Economic and Political Transformation and the Future*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
- Thong, Joseph S. (1997). *Head-Hunters Culture-Historic Culture of Nagas*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Venuh, N. 2004. *Naga Society: Continuity and Change*. Kolkata: Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies.
- Yonuo, Asoso. (1948). *The Rising Nagas – A Historical and Political Study*. E-text. Delhi: Manas Publications.
- Zetsuvi, K.S. (2014). *The Angami Nagas Under Colonial Rule*. Dimapur: Heritage Publishing House.

A Dog-Eaten Script: Transmitting history through folk medium in the Pre-colonial Ao Naga society.

SENSONARO LONGCHAR

ABSTRACT

Writings among the Ao Nagas though seem to be a complete new introduction; it was not necessarily an alien invention among the Ao Nagas. In most of the Colonial as well as postcolonial writings on Nagas, it is an accepted notion that, Nagas did not have a written script prior to the coming of the missionaries and the colonial state. The paper attempts to critically examine the construction and its historical relevance of a myth that the Ao Nagas did had written Script prior to the coming of the missionaries and the colonial state, which unfortunately was eaten by a dog. It is in this connection, the researcher also tries to argue how not having a written script need not necessarily be out of ignorance but, can also suggest some other realities which may need a deeper comprehension.

Keywords: *Ao Naga, Myth, Scripts, Folklore, Culture*

Introduction:

In today's world, where every parts of the globe is interconnected, cultural shift is an inevitable phenomena. The coming of the missionaries and the Colonial state saw a drastic change in the culture of the Ao Nagas and Nagas in general. The introduction of Writing as an "Ultimate abstraction of sound and meaning with the representation of phonemes by the letter of the alphabet" (Denise, 2014) and as a systematic record keeping mechanism seems to be a crucial factor that was responsible for the transformation that took place among the Ao Nagas and the Nagas in the 19th and 20th century.

In most of the Colonial as well as postcolonial writings on Nagas, it is an accepted notion that, Nagas did not have a written script prior to the coming of the missionaries and the colonial state. Against this background, the myth of the Ao Nagas suggest that, the Ao Nagas did had written Script prior to the coming of the missionaries and the colonial state, which unfortunately was eaten by a dog. Keeping this in mind, this article will attempt to critically examine the construction of such myth and its historical relevance. It is in this connection, we will try to argue how not having a written script need not necessarily be out of ignorance but,

can also suggest some other realities which may need a deeper comprehension. In the absence of a systematic writing system, the Ao Nagas systematically preserved their history and tradition using Folk medium.

The Myth of the loss script and its historicity:

According to the oral folklore the Ao Nagas, once upon a time are said to have written Script, which they received written on an animal skin but, was unfortunately eaten by a dog. It is said that, the Ao Nagas started their journey to the present land with the script which was inscribed on an animal skin. It so happened that, before reaching their destination, tired and weary after a long and tiresome journey, wanting to feel themselves afresh; they stopped in a shed to relax and have some food and drinks. They had the scripted text, taking care of it, with utmost care. The person who was supposed to be taking care of the script, decided to keep the script outside under a tree despite, opposition from some of his mates. Hoping that nothing would happen, he ignored their advices and kept it outside under a tree. Unfortunately, the script being scripted on an animal skin "Happened to be eaten up by a dog never to be seen again" (Semetemba, 2015). They had no option but to give up.

The fact that, the story being orally transmitted would certainly bring up the question of authenticity and reliability of the story which, of course is irrefutable. The same story may have a different interpretation from a different individual; however, the myth of the Ao Nagas, once having a script even prior to the coming of the Christian missionaries was well circulated. Whether one accept it without scrutinizing its historicity or reject it, is a matter of personal choice. Having a panoramic view, and by critically analysing the issue concerning its authenticity, we might however, be able to comprehend the idea behind the story. Being a product of the present and trying to interpret things of a different space and time, our way of looking at things might alter, even while trying to remain impartial. The question is, how does one construct historical relevance out of the myth, which seems trifling or frivolous?

James C. Scott (2010) in his book "the Art of not being governed" made an argument that, "for the hill people, the world of writing and text is also associated with state". In his writings, Scott gives an elaborate description of how the people living in the hills of South East Asia, which is also called by the name 'Zomia' (a geographical space coined by Willem Van Schendel) whose culture and tradition has been transmitting through oral tradition, have got similar justification of how they had lost the art of writing. In many cases, their lost had been attributed to their own recklessness, and, sometimes, because they were being cheated or, by the act of treachery. Scott (2010) argued that the absence of writing in these areas by what

he called 'Shatter Zone' or 'Zone of refuge' is a strategy positioning them from the intrusion of the State. These are people who evade from the state making policies. According to Scott (2010) "the absence of writing and text provides freedom of manoeuvre in history, genealogy, and legibility that frustrates the state routines. Was the absence of writing among the Ao Nagas then a strategy positioning themselves from the intrusion of the state? Or any reason in particular for this matter.

Tracing back the origin of the Ao Nagas, through oral tradition and owing to its linguistic and cultural similarities, many suggested the possibility that the Ao Nagas and Nagas as a whole migrated from place like China, Thailand, and Burma and so on. Ignoring for ones the controversies and debates that concentrated around defining one's identity using race as a medium, the Nagas in general can be racially categorised as Mongoloid.

Judging from what has been observed about the theory of migration among different scholars, in regard to the migration of the Nagas to their present land it is very likely that, Scott's argument might somehow come in line with the Ao Nagas, and their story of the lost script, as an intentional act of defiance to avoid state hegemony; an act to set free of themselves from the clutches of the State Making policy. It might also have been created as a defence mechanism, a way of justifying themselves in response to the adjacent neighbouring plains of Assam whose culture and civilisation has developed the Art of writing way back in 9th - 10th century. Another possibility that can be deduce from the story is that, the Nagas might have once been a part of the state, without having a chance to learn the art of writing due to their status in the society, as writing was in most cases, for the elite in the earlier centuries unlike today, where in many cases, the Constitution itself guarantees Right to educational to all its citizen. There is also a possibility of having a common consensus to completely ignore the use of writing which may be associated with state or any other reasons. Traditionally, the Ao Nagas believed that they emanated from 'longterok' (six stone) at Chungliyimti. Their history starts from Chungliyimti and not beyond Chungliyimti. And there is these six individuals, forming three different families; representing three different clans who are regarded as the progenitor of all Ao Nagas; Tongpok, Longpok and Lonjakrep representing Pongen, Longkumer and Jamir clan. These three individuals may have been the leader under whom the Ao Nagas might have migrated in search of a new place for any possible reasons. Once they reached Chungliyimti, in order for a fresh start; they must have wanted to create a whole new social structure intending to forget all that of their earlier experiences or history as such, a clan based society with an elaborate system of transmitting history using folk medium may have been the result of their effort over time. there is also a possibility that, the six stone that the Ao Nagas revered upon as, the stones from where their progenitors are believed to

be originated, may have been erected as a symbol of the six individuals who are supposed to be their leaders and not necessarily emerging themselves out of the stone. In the process, either with a common consensus or as a result of the initiative of the six individuals, who probably might have been their leaders, the Ao Nagas might have given up their Script. However this is based on mere speculation and therefore can be subjected to further analysis. Less likely to accept, but, the story could also have happened in reality, which of course, might makes no sense to many of the scholars today. Whatever the reason might have been, for constructing such a myth; if one is to assume that, this story of the lost script is just a myth constructed out of necessity, so as to deviate a community or a group from the state making mechanism or, any other reasons which one may or may not be able to define or comprehend in particular, however the fact that the Ao Nagas, considered their script to have been eaten by a dog cannot be dismissed. One is therefore made aware of the fact that, 'the Ao Nagas too had the knowledge of writing even before the advent of the missionaries and the Colonial administration'. Our argument is that, writing was not an alien introduction to the Ao Nagas. Whether they really did knew the art of writing or, that it was just a myth is in fact, a difficult problem which this article may not be able to deal with. However, a careful observation would suggest more of an inclination towards an intentional or purposeful selection not to have writing as a source of historical transmission. If at all they feel the need of writing, it was never an impossible task. It seems to us a more of disinterest than failing to achieve or, failing to have a form of writing.

In this connection, the description of the Ao Nagas as Barbarous, uncivilised or savage, or having no History in many of the writings can be subjected to question. Their every act seemed calculative and determined to achieve certain objectives.

The question then arise, how, therefore, did the Ao Nagas without a written script retained their history? Or how accountable is the history of the Ao Nagas without a written script? Before giving an answer to this question, one should be vigilant not to force oneself in determining a society as more advance or civilised on the basis of the historicity of a society. In other word, Historicity should not be the criteria or the determinant for social division among different societies of the world. Different societies have got their own way of dealing with the world inside and outside the environment they live, and, it might not always be comprehensible for us or may not always favour our way of defining a well-structured society. One must not be too obstinate in defining a society according to one's approximation of an ideal society, in order that one do not fall in the trap of categorizing a society wholly on the basis of development of technology, transportation; modern politics, the art of writing so and so forth, which one may put as 'modern mode' (all that has to do with modern developments) rather, one must try to apprehend a particular society as a unique entity encapsulating various norms, beliefs, laws, politics etc. in

the form of 'Culture' of a particular society. Having said that, the Ao Naga society may serve as a precedent of how, a particular community or a society adjust and adapt with the environment that surrounds them, and, how they could preserve their rich tradition and history through an entirely different mode using orality as a medium corroborated by motifs embodied with symbolic meanings and mythic symbols which was passed down from one generation to the other in the form of story-telling and songs which we would term as 'Folk-medium'. The Ao Nagas were aware of the significance of history and therefore their social life was much centered on creating an impactful history for the generations to come. This can be seen at every level of their day to day existence. One best example of such is the agency called the institution of Morung known by the Name 'Arju' or 'Ariju' in Ao (Panger Imchen, 1993). Morung was a dormitory for the bachelors'. Every male member of a village would leave their parents and enter the institution of Morung after attaining puberty where he would be trained in various aspects. Morung acted as an educational institution for the Ao Nagas and Nagas as a whole. It was where the boys would be taught the art of warfare since the Ao Nagas were once upon a time always under the threat of enemy villages. "Much of Naga culture, its customs and tradition have been transmitted from generation to generation through folk tales and oral traditions, carving of figures on stones and wood, and design on clothes. It was also used as a guard-house during the times of war" (Mhonthung Yanthan, 2016). In short Morung was an institution where its members learnt their culture, traditions and values of life. 'Boys who do not attain the institution of Morung were being disgraced by the villagers' (Aoloin Kichu, 2018).

Talking about the female members of the society, 'girls like boys would leave their parents after attaining puberty and would sleep in the house of the widows which, the Ao Nagas called as Tsuki where like boys, girls learnt the art of painting, weaving, dyeing, pottery and various activities which they would pass down from generation to generation (Resenmenla Longchar, 2011).

While, having a glance at the role played by Morung as an agency through which history was transmitted, it would be wrong for us to dismiss the role played by family as an institution in transmitting their tradition and culture and in preserving their history. "Before one enters the Ariju, one learnt the primary education from parents and mostly from grandparents. This learning included basic art, handicrafts, stories of the past, legends, mythology, folktales and songs and traditional customs" (Panger Imchen, 1993). A careful and critical study on various, Folklores, folksongs, folkdances of the Ao Nagas would suggest that these folk mediums, in the absence of writing was their unique way of maintaining and transmitting their history and their identity. The Ao Naga society can be categorised as a Clan based society. By having a closer look, one would be fascinated to know how even this clan as a social entity act as an agency of transmitting their history. Clan as a social group not

only help in tracing the genealogy of that particular clan, but, different clans have their own set of stories, myth, songs, and have different set of dress and ornaments which all speaks in itself.

Talking about symbols and motifs as an important element in transmitting history and culture of the Ao Nagas, one would find a good number of motifs and symbols that carried meanings which were to be revered by all members of the society. Taking the example of 'Tsungkotepsú' (warrior shawl) it might look like a simple shawl, yet every design and colours imprinted on it has deep meaning and significance. The white strip in the middle symbolizes courage and bravery, for a man who has not taken the head of an enemy was forbidden to wear such shawl with the white strip in the middle. The ordinary man would simply wear just the red and black combination of the shawl. The picture of the sun, the moon and the stars would be imprinted on the shawl of the ruler or a leader only the rulers also known as Tatar had the privilege to wear shawls with such pictures. (Pursowa, 2011) It must be noted that only those warriors from each clans who had successfully taken the head of the enemy were entitled to become the representative of the village council. For a man who has successfully given the feast of merit, while mentioning about the feast of merit, it is undeniable that giving the feast of merit even once in a life time was not an easy execution. It required a person to be generous enough to serve the whole village population with food and drinks on that particular day, when they determine to do so, it was therefore natural that a man who could offer such feast were economically rich and were much respected in the society. For those men, the picture of the Mithun head was imprinted on their shawl, signifying the wealth of the one who wears it. The image of Mithun (a buffalo like animal) indicates the wealth of the wearer because only the rich people could rear this animal. The symbol of cock in the shawl of a man would mean the wearer as a priest as, only a priest could wear the symbol of cock on his shawl. If we see the ritual and sacrifices in the traditional Ao Naga Religious practices, Cock was often used for all rituals and ceremonies. And most of the sacrifices were done by the priest. Motifs of head of a man were also imprinted on the shawl of those warriors who could successfully cut the head of an enemy. Along with the figures of animal, a man of wealth would often imprint the figure of Jabelli (Jabelli was used as a currency for exchange in the Traditional Ao Naga Society) signifying a person's wealth. The animal figures such as tiger, and elephant in the shawl (Tsungkotepsú in Ao Naga dialect) depicts the physical power, bravery and courage of man, thus, those figures of animals printed on the shawl of a person redirected to one's success in getting the head of an enemy courageously. Other figures such as spears and daos (machete) also represented success in head taking.

Lanutola (2018) remarked, "My husband insisted me not to cover him with Tsungkotepsú (warrior shawl) on his death body because he thought, it would be

undeserving for him to cover with the shawl of honour even on his death bed. This kind of remarks made by those individuals who had tasted both life before and after conversion to Christianity throws to light, the kind of reverence that was given to the meaning and significance of the shawl, and, the person who wears it prior to the coming of the colonial administration.

Apart from Tsungkotepsü, one also finds an interesting differentiation in attires on the basis of one's status in the society. For example, 'Tapensasü' also known as Warusü is a shawl representing the wealth of a person. Pursowa (2011) in his book describes that in order for a person to put on this shawl, one should successfully complete at least five times of Mithun sacrifice in his life time or, he should be a man whose father and grandfather must also have successfully done giving the feast of merit. Being able to possess such shawl was a pride and an honour for the man who possesses it. It was a symbol of wealth for a man who ever owns it.

There were also shawl such as 'Süpusü', mostly worn by the slaves and common men and Takar lipasü which was generally associated as a shawl for rich man. One can also find certain restriction in wearing certain dress and ornaments on the basis of phratry and clan or in that sense; some phratry has the advantage of wearing certain shawl over the others, even without being a warrior or a wealthy person. For instances, Takar lipasü is a kind of shawl entitled to be worn by men who has done Mithun sacrifice, yet Pongen and Imsong clan, are entitled to wear even without having done the Mithun sacrifice. (ibid) Why would one phratry have the advantage over the other in possessing or having the privilege to wear certain cloth and ornament which other phratry have to earn it? Or, even to the extent of prohibition of wearing certain attire can be a matter of concern. To give an answer to that, the Ao Nagas had well preserved their oral narratives that trace as back to their history. According to Chungli phratry, Pongen clan as a senior phratry had more rights over the other, followed by the Longkum and Jamir clans. The story goes on to say how the Ao Nagas, once settled at Koridang, had a fierce rivalry between the Pongen and Longkum clan, on the issue of rights over ornaments. The story describes how Rosangba the protagonist of the Pongen clan was as ugly as a monkey while, Mangyangba the protagonist of the Longkumer clan was not only a handsome man but a great traveller with the knowledge of the outside and, had friends everywhere. Mangyangba in order to deprive the right of wearing certain ornaments from Rosangba took the issue to the Raja of Assam, whom the Ao called as 'Chuba' (king). He persuaded Rosangba to come down to the plain in order to come to a decision over the matter. The Raja of Assam put a serious of test where they were made to choose between the top and the bottom of a log of Nahor wood: a fine cock and an egg, and two cups one of which was a beautiful red clay cup and the other a dull metal made cup. In the entire test Mangyangba would be the first

only help in tracing the genealogy of that particular clan, but, different clans have their own set of stories, myth, songs, and have different set of dress and ornaments which all speaks in itself.

Talking about symbols and motifs as an important element in transmitting history and culture of the Ao Nagas, one would find a good number of motifs and symbols that carried meanings which were to be revered by all members of the society. Taking the example of 'Tsungkotepsü' (warrior shawl) it might look like a simple shawl, yet every design and colours imprinted on it has deep meaning and significance. The white strip in the middle symbolizes courage and bravery, for a man who has not taken the head of an enemy was forbidden to wear such shawl with the white strip in the middle. The ordinary man would simply wear just the red and black combination of the shawl. The picture of the sun, the moon and the stars would be imprinted on the shawl of the ruler or a leader only the rulers also known as Tatar had the privilege to wear shawls with such pictures. (Pursowa, 2011) It must be noted that only those warriors from each clans who had successfully taken the head of the enemy were entitled to become the representative of the village council. For a man who has successfully given the feast of merit, while mentioning about the feast of merit, it is undeniable that giving the feast of merit even once in a life time was not an easy execution. It required a person to be generous enough to serve the whole village population with food and drinks on that particular day, when they determine to do so, it was therefore natural that a man who could offer such feast were economically rich and were much respected in the society. For those men, the picture of the Mithun head was imprinted on their shawl, signifying the wealth of the one who wears it. The image of Mithun (a buffalo like animal) indicates the wealth of the wearer because only the rich people could rear this animal. The symbol of cock in the shawl of a man would mean the wearer as a priest as, only a priest could wear the symbol of cock on his shawl. If we see the ritual and sacrifices in the traditional Ao Naga Religious practices, Cock was often used for all rituals and ceremonies. And most of the sacrifices were done by the priest. Motifs of head of a man were also imprinted on the shawl of those warriors who could successfully cut the head of an enemy. Along with the figures of animal, a man of wealth would often imprint the figure of Jabelli (Jabelli was used as a currency for exchange in the Traditional Ao Naga Society) signifying a person's wealth. The animal figures such as tiger, and elephant in the shawl (Tsungkotepsü in Ao Naga dialect) depicts the physical power, bravery and courage of man, thus, those figures of animals printed on the shawl of a person redirected to one's success in getting the head of an enemy courageously. Other figures such as spears and daos (machete) also represented success in head taking.

Lanutola (2018) remarked, "My husband insisted me not to cover him with Tsungkotepsü (warrior shawl) on his death body because he thought, it would be

undeserving for him to cover with the shawl of honour even on his death. This kind of remarks made by those individuals who had tasted both life before and after conversion to Christianity throws to light, the kind of reverence that was attached to the meaning and significance of the shawl, and, the person who wears it prior to the coming of the colonial administration.

Apart from Tsungkotepsü, one also finds an interesting differentiation of attires on the basis of one's status in the society. For example, 'Tapensasü' known as Warusü is a shawl representing the wealth of a person. Pursowa (1962) in his book describes that in order for a person to put on this shawl, one should successfully complete at least five times of Mithun sacrifice in his life time. He should be a man whose father and grandfather must also have successfully completed giving the feast of merit. Being able to possess such shawl was a pride and honour for the man who possesses it. It was a symbol of wealth for a man who owns it.

There were also shawl such as 'Süpusü', mostly worn by the slaves and common men and Takar lipasü which was generally associated as a shawl for a warrior man. One can also find certain restriction in wearing certain dress and ornaments on the basis of phratry and clan or in that sense; some phratry has the advantage of wearing certain shawl over the others, even without being a warrior or a wealthy person. For instances, Takar lipasü is a kind of shawl entitled to be worn by a man who has done Mithun sacrifice, yet Pongen and Imsong clan, are entitled to wear it even without having done the Mithun sacrifice. (ibid) Why would one phratry have the advantage over the other in possessing or having the privilege to wear certain cloth and ornament which other phratry have to earn it? Or, even to the extent of prohibition of wearing certain attire can be a matter of concern. To give an answer to that, the Ao Nagas had well preserved their oral narratives that trace as back as their history. According to Chungli phratry, Pongen clan as a senior phratry has more rights over the other, followed by the Longkum and Jamir clans. The story goes on to say how the Ao Nagas, once settled at Koridang, had a fierce rivalry between the Pongen and Longkum clan, on the issue of rights over ornaments. The story describes how Rosangba the protagonist of the Pongen clan was as ugly as a monkey while, Mangyangba the protagonist of the Longkumer clan was not only a handsome man but a great traveller with the knowledge of the outside and had friends everywhere. Mangyangba in order to deprive the right of wearing certain ornaments from Rosangba took the issue to the Raja of Assam, whom the Ao call as 'Chuba' (king). He persuaded Rosangba to come down to the plain in order to come to a decision over the matter. The Raja of Assam put a serious test where they were made to choose between the top and the bottom of a log of Nahor wood, a fine cock and an egg, and two cups one of which was a beautiful red clay cup and the other a dull metal made cup. In the entire test Mangyangba would be the first

to choose. He had chosen the top of the tree over the root, a bag of salt over the earth, cock over the egg and the beautiful clay cup over the dull metal cup. But to his disadvantage, his perception about his choices left him with no rights over the ornaments that he desired. Rosangba on the other hand chose the root over the top from which all trees grows, egg over the cock from which fowls are hatched, bag of earth from which all things grow and the metal cup which would not break. The Raja therefore pronounced that, Rosangba made the better choice in the entire test therefore; Rosangba and his descendants were made greater than Mangyangba and his descendants for all generation. (Mill, 2003) Accordingly the Raja divided their ornaments both for men and women mostly to the advantage of Pongen clan. This is how justification over the right of wearing certain ornaments was given.

The idea in exposing such oral narration is not to bring out the division or categorization over the right to wear certain ornaments by certain clans, but, to explain the kind of adherence the pre- colonial Ao Nagas had over their customs and traditions though, the authenticity of the story may seem questionable to us. This kind of oral narratives were turned into customs of the land which was strictly followed and observed by all members of the society.

The Ao traditional attire is incomplete without the ornaments. Cambridge dictionary defines ornament as a 'decoration that is added to increase the beauty of something'. In the case of the Ao Nagas, ornaments are not just merely an object of beautification, but, carries intensive meanings many of which are symbols of honour and wealth for the wearer.

Hornbill feather known as Ozūmi in Ao dialect is one such attire that is used as an ornament by the Aos. One can find the use of Hornbill feather irrespective of gender unlike other ornaments, the usage of which are differentiated on gender base. Hornbill feather represents the fame and wealth of the wearer. It was also a symbol of pride for the woman who wears it, for it could be only be worn by women whose father or husband has taken the head of an enemy or had successfully given feast to the whole village. The number of hornbill feather a person wears represents the number of feast or the number of head a person had taken Owing not only to its beauty but, also because of the difficulty one undergoes in hunting the Hornbill bird, the Ao Nagas considered one feather of hornbill an equivalent of one Mithun head ornaments such as 'Lakepmolung' the Boar tusk Necklace, 'Yimyu pen' the Drongo, 'Tamkhu' which is the Coronet, 'Kumpang' Armlet, the Sash which is also called as SÜkuzi in Ao, 'SÜgi sÜko heko Pong' or The Casket, the Gauntlet 'Kaap' in Ao etc. are different forms of ornament used by the Ao Nagas, the use of these ornaments were not just to enhanced the beauty of the attire, but carried with different symbols and meanings which the Ao Nagas certainly looked in, before they finally put on their ornaments. For instances, Lakepmolung, is a necklace made

the form of 'Culture' of a particular society. Having said that, the Ao Naga society may serve as a precedent of how, a particular community or a society adjust and adapt with the environment that surrounds them, and, how they could preserve their rich tradition and history through an entirely different mode using oral medium corroborated by motifs embodied with symbolic meanings and mythical symbols which was passed down from one generation to the other in the form of story-telling and songs which we would term as 'Folk-medium'. The Ao Nagas were aware of the significance of history and therefore their social life was more centered on creating an impactful history for the generations to come. This can be seen at every level of their day to day existence. One best example of such is the agency called the institution of Morung known by the Name 'Arju' or 'Ariju' in Aizawl (Panger Imchen, 1993). Morung was a dormitory for the bachelors'. Every male member of a village would leave their parents and enter the institution of Morung after attaining puberty where he would be trained in various aspects. Morung acts as an educational institution for the Ao Nagas and Nagas as a whole. It was where the boys would be taught the art of warfare since the Ao Nagas were once upon a time always under the threat of enemy villages. "Much of Naga culture, its customs and tradition have been transmitted from generation to generation through folk tales and oral traditions, carving of figures on stones and wood, and design on clothes. It was also used as a guard-house during the times of war" (Mhonthung Yanthan, 2016). In short Morung was an institution where its members learnt their culture, traditions and values of life. 'Boys who do not attain the institution of Morung were being disgraced by the villagers' (Aoloin Kichu, 2018).

Talking about the female members of the society, 'girls like boys would leave their parents after attaining puberty and would sleep in the house of the widows which, the Ao Nagas called as Tsuki where like boys, girls learnt the art of painting, weaving, dyeing, pottery and various activities which they would passed down from generation to generation (Resenmenla Longchar, 2011).

While, having a glance at the role played by Morung as an agency through which history was transmitted, it would be wrong for us to dismiss the role played by family as an institution in transmitting their tradition and culture and in preserving their history. "Before one enters the Ariju, one learnt the primary education from parents and mostly from grandparents. This learning included basic art, handicrafts, stories of the past, legends, mythology, folktales and songs and traditional customs" (Panger Imchen, 1993). A careful and critical study on various, Folklores, folksongs, folkdances of the Ao Nagas would suggest that these folk mediums, in the absence of writing was their unique way of maintaining and transmitting their history and their identity. The Ao Naga society can be categorised as a Clan based society. By having a closer look, one would be fascinated to know how even this clan as a social entity act as an agency of transmitting their history. Clan as a social group not

only help in tracing the genealogy of that particular clan, but, different clans have their own set of stories, myth, songs, and have different set of dress and ornaments which all speaks in itself.

Talking about symbols and motifs as an important element in transmitting history and culture of the Ao Nagas, one would find a good number of motifs and symbols that carried meanings which were to be revered by all members of the society. Taking the example of 'Tsungkotepsú' (warrior shawl) it might look like a simple shawl, yet every design and colours imprinted on it has deep meaning and significance. The white strip in the middle symbolizes courage and bravery, for a man who has not taken the head of an enemy was forbidden to wear such shawl with the white strip in the middle. The ordinary man would simply wear just the red and black combination of the shawl. The picture of the sun, the moon and the stars would be imprinted on the shawl of the ruler or a leader only the rulers also known as Tatar had the privilege to wear shawls with such pictures. (Pursowa, 2011) It must be noted that only those warriors from each clans who had successfully taken the head of the enemy were entitled to become the representative of the village council. For a man who has successfully given the feast of merit, while mentioning about the feast of merit, it is undeniable that giving the feast of merit even once in a life time was not an easy execution. It required a person to be generous enough to serve the whole village population with food and drinks on that particular day, when they determine to do so, it was therefore natural that a man who could offer such feast were economically rich and were much respected in the society. For those men, the picture of the Mithun head was imprinted on their shawl, signifying the wealth of the one who wears it. The image of Mithun (a buffalo like animal) indicates the wealth of the wearer because only the rich people could rear this animal. The symbol of cock in the shawl of a man would mean the wearer as a priest as, only a priest could wear the symbol of cock on his shawl. If we see the ritual and sacrifices in the traditional Ao Naga Religious practices, Cock was often used for all rituals and ceremonies. And most of the sacrifices were done by the priest. Motifs of head of a man were also imprinted on the shawl of those warriors who could successfully cut the head of an enemy. Along with the figures of animal, a man of wealth would often imprint the figure of Jabelli (Jabelli was used as a currency for exchange in the Traditional Ao Naga Society) signifying a person's wealth. The animal figures such as tiger, and elephant in the shawl (Tsungkotepsú in Ao Naga dialect) depicts the physical power, bravery and courage of man, thus, those figures of animals printed on the shawl of a person redirected to one's success in getting the head of an enemy courageously. Other figures such as spears and daos (machete) also represented success in head taking.

Lanutola (2018) remarked, "My husband insisted me not to cover him with Tsungkotepsú (warrior shawl) on his death body because he thought, it would be

undeserving for him to cover with the shawl of honour even on his death bed. This kind of remarks made by those individuals who had tasted both life before and after conversion to Christianity throws to light, the kind of reverence that was given to the meaning and significance of the shawl, and, the person who wears it prior to the coming of the colonial administration.

Apart from Tsungkotepsü, one also finds an interesting differentiation in attires on the basis of one's status in the society. For example, 'Tapensasü' also known as Warusü is a shawl representing the wealth of a person. Pursowa (2001) in his book describes that in order for a person to put on this shawl, one should successfully complete at least five times of Mithun sacrifice in his life time or he should be a man whose father and grandfather must also have successfully done giving the feast of merit. Being able to possess such shawl was a pride and an honour for the man who possesses it. It was a symbol of wealth for a man who ever owns it.

There were also shawl such as 'Süpusü', mostly worn by the slaves and common men and Takar lipasü which was generally associated as a shawl for rich man. One can also find certain restriction in wearing certain dress and ornaments on the basis of phratry and clan or in that sense; some phratry has the advantage of wearing certain shawl over the others, even without being a warrior or a wealthy person. For instances, Takar lipasü is a kind of shawl entitled to be worn by men who has done Mithun sacrifice, yet Pongen and Imsong clan, are entitled to wear even without having done the Mithun sacrifice. (ibid) Why would one phratry have the advantage over the other in possessing or having the privilege to wear certain cloth and ornament which other phratry have to earn it? Or, even to the extent of prohibition of wearing certain attire can be a matter of concern. To give an answer to that, the Ao Nagas had well preserved their oral narratives that trace as back to their history. According to Chungli phratry, Pongen clan as a senior phratry had more rights over the other, followed by the Longkum and Jamir clans. The story goes on to say how the Ao Nagas, once settled at Koridang, had a fierce rivalry between the Pongen and Longkum clan, on the issue of rights over ornaments. The story describes how Rosangba the protagonist of the Pongen clan was as ugly as a monkey while, Mangyangba the protagonist of the Longkumer clan was not only a handsome man but a great traveller with the knowledge of the outside and, had friends everywhere. Mangyangba in order to deprive the right of wearing certain ornaments from Rosangba took the issue to the Raja of Assam, whom the Ao called as 'Chuba' (king). He persuaded Rosangba to come down to the plain in order to come to a decision over the matter. The Raja of Assam put a serious of test where they were made to choose between the top and the bottom of a log of Nahor wood; a fine cock and an egg, and two cups one of which was a beautiful red clay cup and the other a dull metal made cup. In the entire test Mangyangba would be the first

to choose. He had chosen the top of the tree over the root, a bag of salt over the earth, cock over the egg and the beautiful clay cup over the dull metal cup. But to his disadvantage, his perception about his choices left him with no rights over the ornaments that he desired. Rosangba on the other hand chose the root over the top from which all trees grows, egg over the cock from which fowls are hatched, bag of earth from which all things grow and the metal cup which would not break. The Raja therefore pronounced that, Rosangba made the better choice in the entire test therefore; Rosangba and his descendants were made greater than Mangyangba and his descendants for all generation. (Mill, 2003) Accordingly the Raja divided their ornaments both for men and women mostly to the advantage of Pongen clan. This is how justification over the right of wearing certain ornaments was given.

The idea in exposing such oral narration is not to bring out the division or categorization over the right to wear certain ornaments by certain clans, but, to explain the kind of adherence the pre- colonial Ao Nagas had over their customs and traditions though, the authenticity of the story may seem questionable to us. This kind of oral narratives were turned into customs of the land which was strictly followed and observed by all members of the society.

The Ao traditional attire is incomplete without the ornaments. Cambridge dictionary defines ornament as a 'decoration that is added to increase the beauty of something'. In the case of the Ao Nagas, ornaments are not just merely an object of beautification, but, carries intensive meanings many of which are symbols of honour and wealth for the wearer.

Hornbill feather known as Ozūmi in Ao dialect is one such attire that is used as an ornament by the Aos. One can find the use of Hornbill feather irrespective of gender unlike other ornaments, the usage of which are differentiated on gender base. Hornbill feather represents the fame and wealth of the wearer. It was also a symbol of pride for the woman who wears it, for it could be only be worn by women whose father or husband has taken the head of an enemy or had successfully given feast to the whole village. The number of hornbill feather a person wears represents the number of feast or the number of head a person had taken. Owing not only to its beauty but, also because of the difficulty one undergoes in hunting the Hornbill bird, the Ao Nagas considered one feather of hornbill an equivalent of one Mithun head ornaments such as 'Lakepmolung' the Boar tusk Necklace, 'Yimyu pen' the Drongo, 'Tamkhu' which is the Coronet, 'Kumpang' Armlet, the Sash which is also called as SÜkuzi in Ao, 'SÜgi sÜko heko Pong' or The Casket, the Gauntlet 'Kaap' in Ao etc. are different forms of ornament used by the Ao Nagas, the use of these ornaments were not just to enhanced the beauty of the attire, but carried with meanings which the Ao Nagas certainly looked in, before Lakepmolung, is a necklace made

out of the task of Boar and can be worn only by a successful warrior. Kūmpang the armlet is another kind of ornament made out of the elephant tusk for a privilege of wearing the armlet in both the arms unlike the Jamir clan, whose to wear Kūmpang was restricted to one arm, exception being made to those were empowered to do sacrificial rites in the village. Meaning to say, only a p could wear on both side of the arm for Jamir clan. In the same way, the Ca called by the name 'Sūgi Sūko' or 'Henko Pong' was a well decorated casket us goat hair, and hairs of women which they acquire from the enemy village dur headhunting. It had the appearance of a Mithun horn and was used for carry bamboo spikes, which they kept alongside the path of the enemy. It was one the main weapons of defence during the process of headhunting. This casket w meant only for the real hero or the leader even among the warriors. Ordinary m were not entitled to wear this casket. Like that of the armlet, (Lakepmolung) on Pongen, Imsong and Longkumer clan could wear it. Jamir clan were prohibite from carrying this warrior casket. (Pursowa, 2011).

As pointed out earlier, the right to wear certain ornaments being divide according to the judgment of the Raja of Assam, one can find an interesting pictur of how the Ao Nagas though it may seem unfair, would dare to challenge th accountability of the legend story over the distribution of ornaments. Introspectin into the matter once again, may throw us to light the very nature of all Ao Naga customary practice and traditions, being based on value system of honesty and dignity. Customs and tradition of the Ao Nagas encompasses moral ethic, the root of all social relationship for the Ao Nagas.

Digging deeper into the matter concerning the use of different ornaments would certainly widen our knowledge of the social, economic, religious and political history of the Ao Nagas. "Each clan has their own mark of dress hand woven or embroidered upon the cloth" (Panger Imchen, 1993). Resenmenla Longchar (2011) described the Ao women and their attire and how it differs according to class differences. "The Ao women in the pre-British period were identified by the attire they wore and there was a statement of their class whether she belonged to rich or poor". Like that of men, the identity and status of a women was also easily recognised by the kind of cloth and ornament she wears. For example an outsider could easily observe whether an Ao women belongs to Mongsen or Chungli phratry just by a glance at the kind of hairband she uses called as 'Kúpok' in Ao. A Mongsen women would band her hair using a white Kúpok while, Chungli women use a black colour hairband. Also, the wife or daughter of a man who had done Mithun sacrifice were entitled to put Ozúmi or hornbill feather on their hairband. Necklace "Azúk" and earring were also differentiated and distributed according to the status of a women.

For instance, 'Lakep wangkom' and Mejunghangshi can be worn by any women provided they can afford to buy them. 'Yiptong Wangkom' necklace however, was entitled only for women whose father or husband had done Mithun sacrifice. Women also wears 'kumpang' armlet, of two types 'Merangkumpang' and the other known as 'Korakumpang'. As mentioned earlier, the Ao Nagas consider Tongpok, Longpok and Longjakrep to be the progenitor of all clans and sub-clans. For the Ao women, the privilege of wearing Kumpang (armlet) is distributed according to these three group. The descendants of Tongpok are entitled to wear both the armlet, Longpok descendent were enabled to wear only the Korakumpang whereas those descended from Longjakrep were prohibited from wearing any of the two. (Pursowa, 2011)

Mekhala ('Sūpeti') also called as Teperem sū (teperem means waist and Su means cloth in Ao dialect) also served as an important marker of identity for an Ao women during the pre-British period. One could easily identify to which clan or group she belongs just by looking at the Mekhala or skirt she wears. It not only serves as an identity marker, but also displayed the status of women in her community. The daughter or wife of a men who had done Mithun sacrifice wears a different kind of skirt which was more profound and sumptuous in comparison to the simple designed skirt a poor women. In this regard according to J. P Mill (2003), one can observe that, the tag of once being a rich man's daughter cannot be taken away even if a woman from a rich family is marries off to a poor man and therefore, she has the right to wear those dress and ornaments which she gained from her father's wealth. Like that of men, women too wears ornaments not just for enhancing her beauty, but, served in maintaining her social, economic, religious and political identity.

During the pre-British period, no Ao women could wear dress or attires which she was not entitled. The social and economic standing of a woman was easily recognised by the kind of dress and ornament she wears. One thing that differentiates men and women in this respect is that, for men in order to get the entitlement to wear certain dress and ornaments, he was expected to achieve certain requirements as a member of the community. Women on the other hand, were free of such requirements in order to mark a position in the society. For a woman, the availability of clothes and ornaments generally depended on the status of his Father and her Husband. This does not necessarily mean women were inferior or were socially lower in status than that of men. The amount of sacrifice a woman had to provide for the success of her husband cannot be undermined. It indeed was a matter of equal distribution of works among men and women in the society. Further examining the above mentioned observation would in fact throw us to light the respect and privilege an Ao women enjoyed during the pre- colonial period.

After considering all the above discussion, one might question and challenge the notion of pre-colonial Ao Nagas society as an 'egalitarian' society as labelled by many scholars and writers. Interestingly with all these differentiations even in terms of dress and ornaments, when carefully observe one would find it applicable to consider the pre-colonial Ao Naga society as an egalitarian society. It can be noted that most of the dress and ornaments were worn during festival or certain occasions and not on any other days; say for instance, a man is entitled to wear his shawl of merit on the day when he offers the feast of merit (Panger Imchen, 1993). Likewise the observation of feast of merit itself was an indication of wealth distribution among the members of the community. For an Ao Naga, wealth is not merely an achievement of a person for his hard work, but bestowed upon him by god. According to Panger Imchen (1993) "His social status is automatically a result of God's blessing. Not to host such a feast could result in loss, destruction or even an unnatural death". Being religiously sanctioned, it became the responsibility for the rich to share their wealth to the poor. This way the disadvantage section of the society was not downcast. Indeed their belief system was framed in such a way that the whole idea of a man becoming rich was not for himself but for the community as a whole. The sumptuously designed warrior shawl was also worn only during the festivals. Those who wear the warrior shawl wear greatly honoured and looked upon. It was the desire of every man in the community to become one like them. The objective of displaying such shawl during the time of festival was to encourage the people to work hard and also, to honour those men, who were responsible for protecting the village from the enemies and also contributed their wealth for the welfare of the community. The status of a person chiefly depended on the amount sacrifice a person offers to the community.

It may seem as though these symbols and motifs were just a mere representation of one's status and position in the society. However if we critically examine the symbols and motifs which seems to be just an indicator of one's identity and position; one would find a great deal of historical account lying deep within those symbols and motifs. For instances; the symbol of head in the shawl of a man would not only mean that individual had taken the head of the enemy but, would immediately take us to the practice of head taking, which was an integral part of the Ao Naga society. Similarly the symbol of a Jabelli would not only indicate the wealth of the one who wears but, it suggests a presence of trade relation with their neighbouring plains of Assam. The different ornaments on the basis of clans indicate a clan based social structure.

One can argue that, despite not having a well-structured written script. An intense study on the symbols, motifs and design in the attire and ornaments, their folksongs and stories all speaks in itself and it all carried their aged old history and tradition. One can also observed that, the Ao Nagas reflected upon what had

been done by their predecessors and lived out in accordance with their customs and tradition and made sure that, in the midst of all, their history was carried down from generation to generation

Combining all the above discussion in a nutshell, one can conclude that writing though seems to be a new introduction among the Ao Nagas with the coming of the missionaries and the colonial state, it was actually not an alien introduction. In the absence of a systematic form of writing, there was a deliberate attempt among the Ao Nagas to preserve their history in the form of folk stories, songs, motifs and symbols of their tradition attires which many a time became the law of the land or so called as "customary law". Their very art of living or in other words, their lifestyle was executed in such a way that their existence would to be known to the unknown.

References

- Denise Schmandtbesserat, (2014). *The Evolution of Writing* (accessed on 25-Jan 2014 at <http://sites.utexas.edu/dsb/token/th>.)
- J. P Mill, (2003). *The Ao Nagas*, 3rd edition, Directorate of Art and Culture
- James C Scott, (2010). *The Art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland South East Asia*. Orient Blackswan Private limited.
- Mhonthung Yanthan, (2016). *Relevance of Naga Morung Culture*. The Morung express, 18th, July, 2016.
- Panger imchen, (1993). *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*. Har-Anand Publications.
- Pursowa, (2011). *The Ao Naga Traditional Dress as a Medium of Communication in the Society*.
- Resenmenla Longchar, (2011). *Attire of the Ao Naga Women: Representation, Memory and History*. PhD Thesis (Unpublished), University of Hyderabad.
- Other sources:
- Semetemba Longchar, interviewed by Sensoraro on 5th March 2015.
- Aoloin Kichu, interviewed by Sensoraro, 2018, Chungtia village
- Lanutola, interviewed by Sensoraro, 2018, Chungtia village

Ao Naga Folk-Culture: A Re-appraisal Through Folklore

RONGSENZULU

ABSTRACT

The Ao Naga culture of Nagaland is a deep inculcation of its encompassing oral convention. The thought processes of mankind, their feelings and world view are preserved consciously or unconsciously through rich and eclectic folklore. It is a medium of expression that is unsanctioned socially and is impossible to achieve biologically. Metaphorical representations of the habitat and the habitants therefore need a re-evaluation. The representation of the habitants accompanied with diverse material and non-material culture needs more than an overview and thus, the paper deploys explanations on how to understand the eclectic folk-culture of the tribe. The paper also attempts to understand these manifestations which are mainly on oral transmission of its cultural content and experiences. Integrating its rich eclectic folklore, the paper seeks to answer on how to address and examine folk-society that finds a deep embodiment in their insightful oral tradition.

Keywords: *folklore of the Ao Naga, metaphors in folklore, folk-culture, folk-society*

I

The term or the concept 'folk-culture' and 'folk-society' are widely used uncritically in the explanation of much simpler societies or their cultures. The definition of 'folk-culture and society' in terms of ideal polar types, is just a construct for empirical research and for framework, fondly, used in exploration and generation of more theories of culture. For example, in Anthropology, Redfield in his 1930's study, felicitously used the concept or this expression - 'folk-culture' first for the type of society which he encountered in Tepoztlan and subsequently as an ideal opposition to the city life. The creation of folk-urban dichotomy is problematic in many ways. The move from this dichotomy to a conceptual usage of the term 'folk' in addition to the word- 'society' to it encompassed and helped in defining it as a folk-society which is not a whole society - an isolate, in itself. It is a "half-society", a part of a larger social unit. The folk, thus, making a component of this larger unit which bears a symbiotic spatial-temporal relationship; here, folk and urban are not polar opposites, rather they are recognized as integral parts of certain socio-cultural unit.

George M. Foster (1953) mentions that, a folk-culture may be thought of as a common way of life which characterizes some or all of the people of many villages, towns and cities within a given area. Folk-society therefore, is considered as an organized group of individuals characterized by that folk-culture. He mentions that, many elements of folk-culture may occur in social aggregates which are not basically folk-societies, but folk-societies cannot exist apart from folk-culture

Folklore which is known as the 'the lore of the people', can be a verbal art (Reddy 1989), the archaic thought of mankind, their feelings and world view (Sen 1985); or that part of a people's culture which is preserved consciously or unconsciously (Gaster 1969). Thus, it is an outlet; a medium of expression which is collective and not of individual. This outlet can be either in terms of the verbal art - like the folktales, legends, myths, proverbs, riddles, poetry, etc., or it can be in terms of non-verbal art - like crafts, tools, costumes, beliefs, ethno-medicines, etc.

It has become customary for ethnographers and culture historians to speak about 'traditional culture'; implying all those cultural contents and values which are transmitted orally, folklore being one aspect. This linguistic convention has been accepted in the present work on folklore of the Ao Naga tribe of Nagaland, India.

One of the major sources of any traditional values, be it about life, death, religion, or nature, is the oral tradition. It is told that the Ao Nagas who have a rich oral tradition but no written material account of its past is explained by an oral myth where it says that "shikep nung züluba azü-i shir ao" meaning that the written script which was inscribed on the hide of an animal was taken away by a dog, thus losing the written script forever. Therefore, the Ao Nagas believe that almost all the folklore which is orally transmitted and passed on from one generation to the other has been modified time and again according to the teller as well as by the listener themselves.

In the words of Dundes (1980: 38), folklore "has been created, passed on, and enjoyed for considerable time long before the analyst arrives on the scene". He continues "folklore as autobiographical ethnography, as a mirror of culture, is a natural projective test...devised by the people themselves". With these in mind, the paper attempts to put forward the argument that the meaning of the folklore is an unconscious fantasy more in a Freudian sense of repression (more often in a taboo manner).

Amongst its diverse functions, folklore functions as a medium of expression of what is unsanctioned socially. Bascom (1954) calls it escape into fantasy from a) frustrations and repressions and b) geographical environment and biological limitations.

Ao Naga Folk-Culture: A Re-appraisal Through Folklore

RONGSENZULU

ABSTRACT

The Ao Naga culture of Nagaland is a deep inculcation of its ever-encompassing oral convention. The thought processes of mankind, their feelings and world view are preserved consciously or unconsciously through rich and eclectic folklore. It is a medium of expression that is unsanctioned socially and is impossible to achieve biologically. Metaphorical representations of the habitat and the habitants therefore need a re-evaluation. The representation of the habitants accompanied with diverse material and non-material culture needs more than an overview and thus, the paper deploys explanations on how to understand the eclectic folk-culture of the tribe. The paper also attempts to understand these manifestations relying mainly on oral transmission of its cultural content and experiences. Integrating the rich eclectic folklore, the paper seeks to answer on how to address and examine a folk-society that finds a deep embodiment in their insightful oral tradition.

Keywords: *folklore of the Ao Naga, metaphors in folklore, folk-culture, folk-society*

I

The term or the concept 'folk-culture' and 'folk-society' are widely used uncritically in the explanation of much simpler societies or their cultures. The definition of 'folk-culture and society' in terms of ideal polar types, is just a construct for empirical research and for framework, fondly, used in exploration and generation of more theories of culture. For example, in Anthropology, Redfield in his 1930's study, felicitously used the concept or this expression - 'folk-culture' first for the type of society which he encountered in Tepoztlan and subsequently as an ideal opposition to the city life. The creation of folk-urban dichotomy is problematic in many ways. The move from this dichotomy to a conceptual usage of the term 'folk' in addition to the word- 'society' to it encompassed and helped in defining it as a folk-society which is not a whole society - an isolate, in itself. It is a "half-society", a part of a larger social unit. The folk, thus, making a component of this larger unit which bears a symbiotic spatial-temporal relationship; here, folk and urban are not polar opposites, rather they are recognized as integral parts of certain socio-cultural unit.

George M. Foster (1953) mentions that, a folk-culture may be thought of as a common way of life which characterizes some or all of the people of many villages, towns and cities within a given area. Folk-society therefore, is considered as an organized group of individuals characterized by that folk-culture. He mentions that, many elements of folk-culture may occur in social aggregates which are not basically folk-societies, but folk-societies cannot exist apart from folk-culture

Folklore which is known as the 'the lore of the people', can be a verbal art (Reddy 1989), the archaic thought of mankind, their feelings and world view (Sen 1985); or that part of a people's culture which is preserved consciously or unconsciously (Gaster 1969). Thus, it is an outlet; a medium of expression which is collective and not of individual. This outlet can be either in terms of the verbal art - like the folktales, legends, myths, proverbs, riddles, poetry, etc., or it can be in terms of non-verbal art - like crafts, tools, costumes, beliefs, ethno-medicines, etc.

It has become customary for ethnographers and culture historians to speak about 'traditional culture'; implying all those cultural contents and values which are transmitted orally, folklore being one aspect. This linguistic convention has been accepted in the present work on folklore of the Ao Naga tribe of Nagaland, India.

One of the major sources of any traditional values, be it about life, death, religion, or nature, is the oral tradition. It is told that the Ao Nagas who have a rich oral tradition but no written material account of its past is explained by an oral myth where it says that "shikep nung züluba azü-i shir ao" meaning that the written script which was inscribed on the hide of an animal was taken away by a dog, thus losing the written script forever. Therefore, the Ao Nagas believe that almost all the folklore which is orally transmitted and passed on from one generation to the other has been modified time and again according to the teller as well as by the listener themselves.

In the words of Dundes (1980: 38), folklore "has been created, passed on, and enjoyed for considerable time long before the analyst arrives on the scene". He continues "folklore as autobiographical ethnography, as a mirror of culture, is a natural projective test...devised by the people themselves". With these in mind, the paper attempts to put forward the argument that the meaning of the folklore is an unconscious fantasy more in a Freudian sense of repression (more often in a taboo manner).

Amongst its diverse functions, folklore functions as a medium of expression of what is unsanctioned socially. Bascom (1954) calls it escape into fantasy from a) frustrations and repressions and b) geographical environment and biological limitations.

Example 1: Longkongla's Myth

When the Chungliyimti warriors attacked Longkongla with darts and spears, they slipped on the spread millet and as they struggled, Longkongla killed them one by one with her weaving stick. Longkongla was attacked by the warriors continuously but her supernatural allies always came to her rescue. As she was pulled up towards heaven with the help of a thread, by her god Anüngtsungba she shouted to her hens, cows and goats as "an jagi orakoshie kumang ni, ku nashu shitsü mesü kumang ni, napong jagi jangsa nunger kumang ni", (let the hen become jungle fowl, let my cow become stag and deer, let goat become sambar and alike). It is said that the rope from the heaven snapped (rakdang) and she fell on a tree called Kabusung.

The given example illustrates an escape into a fantasy which is limited by physical and biological limitations. 1) the limitation to fly/navigate into the sky and 2) killing all the warriors with just a weaving stick. The help from Longkongla's 'supernatural allies' also explains the deep rootedness in a strong belief system that existed before. It also points towards a situation that is impossible to achieve physically.

The Ao Naga, in the past had a deep inclination towards a supreme being. One can come across many such lores relating to such a belief system, which need discussion in some other paper. Nevertheless, some examples worth mentioning are:

1. 'The villagers sighted a group of gods dancing and indulging in tug-of-war' (also mentioned in Sentinaro and Chandra 2010),
2. 'The first three days were a solemn celebration offering prayers and sacrifices to the gods or demigods and the last three days were celebrated with a lot of merry making, festivities and drinking' (mentioned in Origin of Tsüngremong festival, Sentinaro 2010),
3. 'Away to Ongangla (the sorceress) went by tearing leaves; To worship the pond (mentioned in discovery of water, Sentinaro 2010), etc.

Secondly, folklore is an 'unconscious fantasy' that draws its opening from the understanding of 'unconscious existence'. Folklore in this sense is imperative in that although an individual is a fluent speaker of a language, one cannot perfectly understand and articulate the underlying meanings and principles.

The unconscious nature of symbols and their projections that are impeded in the folklore does present a serious challenge to folklorists who are seeking meaning in folklore. But these materials that have entered into the unconscious realm can be brought out of the unconscious. Dundes mentions one way of doing it by playing upon the 'literal versus metaphorical' (Dundes 1980: 47). Among the Ao Naga folklore, there are various metaphorical expressions found in a very consistent manner. Given below are some of the examples of consistency of metaphors in Ao Naga folklore.

However, for the purpose of this paper, the usage of the word 'metaphor' is advisedly somewhat loosely for our understanding. Metaphors in this context are hence are literally unconsciously uttered and well as sung, some that are merely pieces of the imaginary that signify multiple symbolic usages. They can also be of comparisons to natural objects to express their ideas and feelings. Vividness and freshness are qualities always present in them.

Example 1:

- a. **Zuni seka** tongtep a kone
We battled with them every **sunrise**),
 - b. **Ipangerbo arr** tzü yonger tesha
(People drink the juice of the **cane vine**),
 - c. **Tebur: Tayip zoni** chokakü
Süngtipangko yajonger,
Kümong jen wadang **aingjanoa**,
- Tetsür: Naro** nüla zoni meti
Tonglong pangko jentak oshi
Ningmen yushanülateya,
Nila menjen la-oa.

Translation:

Male: This morning **sun** has risen,
Covered over the **tree groves**,
My farmyard looks deserted,
Female: **Flowers** cannot resist the sun,
Should have adorn the **ear lobe**
Do not hear **rumours**
I will never decay.

- d. **Yunu wata liona**
O onpag süngyo kong darni
Li tsü ngko o naro
Marong lenji sünggyu kong darni.

Translation:

The sun is setting
Even in the forests the mushrooms are blooming
It's time to return home
The bird is crowing, setting in a tree.

Example 2:

Obao! Obao!
Nok tembang ka amer,
Nu tembang ka amer

Translation:

Father! Father! In others' field
Holding the **dao**,
Holding the **spear**.

Example 3:

Female: Oh! Arr atsü tep
Oh! **Ongpanger** atsü tepti ni
Ozü zünga pur **molosungzü**

Male: Oh! Arr atsü tep
Oh! **Ongpanger** atsü tepti ni
Ozü zünga tsür
Atsü teyong **molü naro**

Translation:

Female: Oh! Let's play tug of war
Oh! People from high sunlight area
Lion of our same age set

Male: Oh! Let's play tug of war
Oh! People from high sunlight area
Females of my same age set
Flower bloomed in the middle of the garden.

One characteristic which is helpful in studying folklore is its play upon 'literalisation in metaphors'. In order to understand this, the researcher tries to explain through three simple classifications

- a) Metaphors related to environment (both inanimate and animate).
- b) Metaphors related to men
- c) Metaphors related to women.

Ao Naga folklore is richly embedded with metaphors circling around themes from their day-to-day activities. Instances of exquisitely crafted handicrafts made from cane vines and bamboo, of daily life cycle rituals, jhum cycles, of kins, of village(s), etc. Metaphorically, most are aware of the meaning related to sunlight and sunset, among the Ao Nagas too, such is seen prominently. However, sunlight not only represents the beginning of life but it also represents the weather of the day. Clouds and thunder storms in dreams and lores, thus are representations of impending shame, disgust, and, in some cases, even death. Correspondingly, sunset represents one's life's end, of death and accidents. It not only represents the time for getting back from warfare, or from agricultural fields, but it also reflects metaphorically to a time of great sorrow in family, a time when the forests are engulfed with darkness and mystery, and a time when one has to cross the river that separates the living from the death.

Men in the past were known for their blood thirst, of hunger for pride and valour. It was a time marked by territorial markings and head-hunting of enemies. In order to protect the village at the polar ends of the village or at the two extreme gates (súngkum) of the village, trenches (setto) were made and the whole village was fenced from all the corners. The people were seen occupied in the hunt for pride and honour (konangnarokum) by giving village feast by sacrificing mithun. This feast was known as kikasūachiba. Men are generally, associated with dao, spear, shield, etc.; their pride and success of the hunt represented by 'blood smeared in dao'. They are referred in lores to lions, which have no fear and is feared by all

near around it. Daos and spears also representing the definite age set system. Ao Nagas still follows as they are granted with one, upon enrolling into the system. The youngest age group is called 'sungpuzunga'.

Women on the other hand, are represented metaphorically in two forms as a helpmate - in agricultural works, the one that encourages men for a successful hunt for trophies and praise them on their return to the village; and the other refined lady - that serves the man with local brew, they dance and respond to men's sweet callings through songs and socialize the children. Both can be seen as an overlapped combination among the Ao Naga women. References to beautiful flowers that adorn the garden and the village are also made with regard to women.

III

Thirdly, it brings us to the 'question of the interrelationship of historical events and folkloristic fantasy'. Before the arrival of the Christianity religion, the people practised the old religion that included worship of stones, wood, forest, mountains, ranges and valleys, mounds, etc. Therefore, the people talked and conversed with the departed souls and the souls of all the mentioned sentient or animate beings. They worshipped them by sacrificing the best available pig or the desirable hen/rooster and dogs. It was believed that the sacrifice redeems the people from harm and unseen trouble(s); also in return, blessed them with bountiful harvest and successful hunting.

During the time before Christianity came to the Ao Naga villages, the people were involved in animistic beliefs. It was the worship (kulemba) of the stones and trees. It was told that the main worship place of the old religion in some villages were concentrated at the centre of the village, one such example is of Lonko Long(stone) of Longkong village. Apart from these, there were many gods that were worshipped by the people. These included Yimkong Tsüngrem (village deity), Lijaba Kulem (worship of Lijaba), Long Kulem (stone worship), Tzü Kulem (water worship), Alu Talen Kulem (worship at the cultivated places) and many more. The worship of these gods marked general abstinence of the people from their daily chores (anempong).

Apart from these, there were practices and rituals involved in all walks of life. The list of worship continues- Kitsung Kulem (fire worship), Tiar Kulem (the worship of the one who blesses), Tanurasoba anempong (birth ritual) and nisun asü dang lep khumong (death ritual). Among all these, the most important, strongest and strict ritual was 'Menen Mong' (genna related to sudden accidental death in the family or in the village). When there was any death, there was a strict abstinence of

the people from their activities which was strictly observed. If it was a male, then the ritual continued for six days, if it was a female, then it was reduced to five days. The rituals involved in cultivation include Mo asuba mong (death of the paddy ritual), Mo dak mesen apuba mong (the start of the caterpillar infestation in the paddy ritual) and Ayim koya agi mo achiba mong (the ritual of wild rat, which has started to eat the paddy). There was also a ritual involved in controlling the spread of diseases and sickness in the village called Wara mong.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Christianity came to the Ao Nagas and the new belief slowly took over in an assimilated form with the old religion.

The abstract given below on the attack of 27th May 1956 in Longkong village exemplify that:

.....As seen in II Kings 19 35-36, we don't fight with our enemies, but our God Jehovah who fought for Israel against Azariah, the same God fought for the people of Longkong against our enemies. The large group of enemies who search for heads to head-hunt gnashing their teeth, the Saviour God has stopped their plan(OtsúKaket (1922-1997).

Within few decades the Ao Nagas have landed themselves in 'a world of cultural dilemma' as the people have disregarded the old religious belief systems (limapuryimsü) and neither are able to go with the reality of Christian ethics nor with the old traditional practices and customs. A predicament where the traditional ideas continues to predominate and continue to survive.

Dobrowolski (1971: 277-298) talks about two 'fundamental though contrasting tendencies that manifest themselves in different phases of historical development'. One that 'manifest with greatest strength in all those cultures which rely exclusively on oral transmission and direct demonstration in handing down their cultural contents and experiences'; and the other, that is the 'apt to come to the fore in the crucial periods of social upheaval and revolution which are known to have opened up new eras in human history'. These two manifestations have been found to be also true among the Ao Nagas.

The question on how to address the unresolved issues of understating folklore lie on examining how to integrate this rich eclectic folklore. Folklore for any folk society are thus, deep embodiments reflected through insightful oral tradition.

References

- Bascom, William, (1953). 'Folklore and Anthropology' *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 66.
- Dobrowolski, Kazimierz, (1971). *Peasant Traditional Culture*. Pinter, Harmondsworth.
- Dundes, Alan, (1980). *Interpreting Folklore*. Indiana University Press.
- Foster, George M, (1953). *What is Folk Culture*. American Anthropologist.
- Gaster, Theodor Herzl, (1975). *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*. Harper and Row.
- Reddy, Kalikiri Viswanadha, (1989). *An anthropological study of Telegu folk songs: a case study of Chittor District, Andhra Pradesh*. Tirupathi: s. v. University Press.
- Sen, Soumen, (1985). *Folklore in North-East India*. New Delhi: Omnia Publications.
- Sentinaro, I., (2010). "Ao Folk Songs." *Journal of Literature, Culture and Media Studies* 2.3
- Sentinaro, I., and N. D. R. Chandra, (2010).. "A Discourse on Ao-Naga Folktales." *Journal of Literature, Culture and Media Studies* 2.3

Other Sources:

1. [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/aa.1953.55.2.02a0001:abstract](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/aa.1953.55.2.02a0001.abstract). Accessed 08/05/2019.
2. Kum Tenem Buba Longkong Arogo (Golden Jubilee) Otsü Kaket (1922-1972).
3. Longkong Baptist Arogo (Platinum Jubilee) Otsü Kaket (1922-1997).
4. Longkong Senso Mongdang (Golden Jubilee) Otsü Kaket (1942-1992).

In Search of an In-between Space - Examining Jhumpa Lahiri's Novels Through Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity

GWANILE IRINE

ABSTRACT

Hybridity has become one of the most discussed topics in the post colonial context of literature. With the ongoing globalization, mixing and exchanging of culture has become a constant move. Over the years, a lot of writers have come up addressing the issues of migration and hybridity. Thus, this paper has further taken up to discussed the dilemma faced by the immigrants in Lahiri's novels in support to Homi Bhabha's concept of Hybridity.

Keywords: *Hybridity, amalgamation, multiplicity, diaspora, in-between, immigrants*

Hybridity in simplest understanding is an amalgamation of two or more things. This term is widely used in the post colonial study particularly to examine the position of the people living in diaspora. This concept has also been used in the study of post colonial theory, to examine the aftermath of the colonial era where a lot of cultural shifting and exchanges took place. Hence, with emergence of this exchanging culture, the perception of authenticity and purity of the culture is challenged. Hybridization takes many forms such as linguistic, cultural, political and racial. Over the years a good number of scholars and writers have rendered their solidarity to the diasporic community, through their writings by depicting the life and struggles of this community. The struggle of the diasporic community in whichever way has been intense and traumatic on occasions. However, with the change in time and the ongoing phenomena of globalization, mingling and mixing of culture has become less stressful. This concept of hybridity will be dealt in depth taking in the support of the theoretical approaches.

To understand hybridity, Ascroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's concept will be further discussed. Hybridity, according to them, is produced from post-colonial societies because of the transculturalism, creating a third space. However, hybridity as a cross-cultural 'exchange' has been criticized, as said by the authors due to its imbalance take on the unequal power relations. In the sense that it is not just the cross-cultural difference, but a degenerating term for the immigrants or the

colonized people, as the other belonging to the in-between space (Ashforth et al. 136). While many other critics see this term as inferior and undermining hybrid community, Bhabha takes it as tool of resistance against the colonized dominant group.

Bhabha in his collection of essays "The Location of Culture" defines culture as something that is ever changing. According to him, there is no culture that is fixed and unchanging. Therefore all the cultures are a hybrid of one or the other. As he says that purity of a culture is a myth, as such there is no culture that is completely uninfluenced by the others. Bhabha here breaks down the idea of the superior and the inferior, as all the cultures according to him are a consolidation of an influence of the other culture, as it is ever changing and flexible, adapting and assimilating to all kinds of changes. Therefore, the essence of the pure culture as an illusion is brought out to the limelight by Bhabha, in order to frame hybridity as more passable and admissible identity in the post-colonial society. Bhabha uses Frank Fanon's notion of national culture as fluid and that it is not fixed in historical reality. He also calls hybridity as the 'third space'. This space according to him has paved a new way to the new culture and also challenges the steady concept of culture as he writes, "The intervention of the third Space, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is continuously revealed as integrated, open, expanding code" (Bhabha 208).

While taking this in support to examine Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* and *The Lowlands*, in both the novels, some of her characters like Ashima, Gogol, Subhash and Gauri are the kind of hybrids that find concoction of culture unifying and creating an individual that is unique in its own sense, hence, celebrating the differences. Ashima the mother of Gogol is a first generation immigrant who has travelled to America, along with her husband Ashoke to begin a new life. Though it sounds exciting and fairly overwhelming for a listener or a reader, it doesn't seem so for Ashima as she goes through an emotional stress, recounting the memories of her home back in India. Nevertheless, she finally decides to love America and become part of the culture, through her continual engagements in the activities that mostly involved the Indian culture and heritage. This allows her to create the 'third space' as Bhabha calls it.

Gogol as a hybrid individual is a little different from his mother. As a second generation immigrant, adapting to the American culture was less stressful for Gogol, because that was the culture he was raised into. Therefore adapting into it was effortless for him. Though identity crisis was inescapable reality for him as belonging to two different culture, one of his origins an Indian, and another of an

American which he has adapted to, and inexplicably bearing the name of a Russian author led to more complexity. Nevertheless, he finds himself balanced between the two opposing culture. At the same time Gauri, the wife of Subhash, is another radicalist. She has come to the United States not by choice, but by the way of an escape. She finds herself advancing in the land she never thought would give her so much of solace. Through the observation of the progress she makes in the host country or the alien land she appears to be at ease with her altered identity or the dual identity.

Hybridity in the post-colonial context can also be analyzed in a more favourable approach, to see how it has made the post-colonial society more acceptable to changes and growth. Certainly, undeniable of the fact, that it has caused lawlessness among the post-colonial community. It nevertheless has, on one hand, helped in promoting and accepting the multiplicity of culture. To be a hybrid can be upsetting and stressful at times but not always. To accept hybridity is to celebrate the multiplicity of culture, to debunk the binary oppositions of the inferior and the superior. Ashima in *The Namesake*, and Gauri in *The Lowland* were both initially hesitant about accepting an alien culture. However, at the end, were delighted because they both found some sense of relief in their newly found identity. The feeling of alienation they experienced as hybrid immigrants is subverted through Bhabha's concept of hybridity. As he says, all cultures are hybrid and so there is no question of what is pure and what is not pure. Hence the need to accept the changes and belonging to that place becomes important (Ashcroft et al. 137). While debunking America or India as pure and original culture, he advocates the need to accept the in-between space.

People like Ashima and Ashoke, Subhash and Gauri, as the first generation immigrants need to come out of that myth of pure culture, which hampers their peaceful co-existence and accept the change instead, through which they can obtain a sense of belonging somewhere though not fully erase from the memory of the homeland. Apart from blending into the culture and accepting the alien culture, the hybrids tend to be marginalized, because they do not have a fixed centre to cling on. They become an amalgamation of both cultures. Like Gogol, Sonia and Bela most importantly, they feel marginalized in both the spaces because Americans do not completely accept them as the Americans, nor do they feel completely at home in India because the culture is alien to them. At the same time unpleasant experience makes them detach from their homeland as the novel reads, "Bela had been eager to go out of the house that day, to accompany Deepa to the market, to explore the place she'd traveled so far to see. But now she wanted to return inside. Not liking, as they retraced their steps, the way some of the neighbors were pulling back their curtains to look at her" (Lahiri 236).

Though, Homi Bhabha debunks this in-between space, so as to avoid an uphill because one has to remain a part of both the cultures as long as one is part of the diasporic community. The in-between space for Bhabha is to celebrate the differences and a space for creation and acceptance, however, it is not a matter of acceptance alone for a person living in an in-between space, but to claim an identity as one or the other becomes crucial. As seen in the life of the Gangulies in *The Namesake* as well as the Mitras in *The Lowland*, though they all negotiate the in-between space or the hybrid identity they are never rid of their original roots. They remain Indians living in America all throughout and accept both as their home. Therefore, acceptance does not necessarily mean an absence from all kinds of biases and criticisms. In fact, to be accepted is also to be on guard of that position and acclimatize one to the changes so as to create a more suitable environment in the process. Nonetheless, the diasporic community has continued to celebrate their differences of cultures and with the numbers of the hybrid community increasing their culture and practices have become more acceptable, though cultural alienation remains an inescapable reality for them.

References

- Ashcroft, B., Gareth, G., & Helen, T., (1995). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (3rd, ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B., Gareth, G., & Helen, T., (2013). *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (3rd, ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Barry, P., (2010). *Beginning Theory* (3rd, ed.). New Delhi, Delhi: Viva Books.
- Bhabha, H. K., (1994). *The Location of Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dayal, S. (1996). *Diaspora and Double Consciousness*. *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 29, 46 – 62.
- Lahiri, J., (2006). *The Namesake*. Noida, UP: Harper Collins.
- Lahiri, J., (2014). *The Lowland*. Gurgaon, Haryana: Penguin Random House.
- Rastogi, A., (2015). *Cultural Hybridity in the Select Fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri*. *Novelty Journals*, 2, 1-4.
- Web Sources
- Mambrol, N., (2016). "Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity." (Literariness). Retrieved from <https://literariness.org/2016/04/08/homi-bhabhas-concept-of-hybridity/>.

**The Reader and the Text: Examining Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War* from
Wolfgang Iser's Theoretical Standpoint**

SENTILEMLA LEMTUR

ABSTRACT

Reading is a phenomenal aspect intimate to every individual. Every person reads a thing or two starting with expressions to signs, written record and more. This paper is a study and an experiment of Reader Response Theory to examine and deduce the importance of readers in a reader-writer tussle, while at the same time highlighting some setbacks of the same. Modern and recent approaches have many a times threatened the ultimate position of a writer and have debunked the writer's status. This paves way for the readers whereby they can establish a status as meaning generators, for the cause of which it should be noted that the status of the writer has to run slow; Because until the writers are exalted with all glory, readers can never step up to find that 'space'. This paper examines *Girls at War* written by Chinua Achebe to study the reading process of a reader and thereby presents an artistic mechanics that goes on to play while reading a literary text. It aims not just to highlight the importance of a reader but also to equalize the status of a reader and a writer.

Keywords: *Reader Response, Reader, Literary Text, Reading Process*

Roland Barthes, the French philosopher and literary critic, in his texts "Death of the Author" and "From Work to Text" talks about the writer whose authority diminishes and becomes a mere guest himself to his work once his part is over as a writer. The writer is artistic and has a well-established reputation. However in Reader Response his position is questioned as attention is shifted to the reader. This theoretical approach tries to elevate the importance of the readers and aims to find a status for the readers.

Belonging to this school of thought is the German literary scholar Wolfgang Iser, popularly known for his contribution in Reader Response Approach. In his essay "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach", Iser exalts the readers and their importance in making a creative work of art come to life. He allots the aesthetic pole in a creative work to the readers who should recreate the imaginative world artistically created by the writer in his work (Iser, 1972, p. 279).

The essay is divided into five sections and each discusses a tenet that is important in a reading process. They are:

- The work of literature is text and the reader's response. (Iser, 1972, p. 283)
- The reader modifies his expectation during his reading process. (Iser, 1972, p. 287)
- There is an active interweaving of anticipation and retrospection during reading process. (Iser, 1972, p. 287)
- The reader seeks unity in the text. (Iser, 1972, p. 288)
- The readers experience the alien 'me' and the real virtual 'me' during reading process. (Iser, 1972, p. 298)

These are the tenets serving as parameters for the analysis that has formed this study. Upon these foundational standpoints, Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories* is examined below.

Girls at War and Other Stories, collection of short stories by the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, is written in a context that is native to the writer. The writer uses English language known as 'dominant' by many critics to write about his people, his native culture and place, etc., as rightly said by Vanessa Guignery about Achebe in her essay "Hybridity, Why it Still Matters". (Guignery, 2011, p. 3) This piece is a work that talks about everyday life and simple matters that are usually overlooked but are of significant.

In order to examine the selected literary text from this theoretical approach, four stories have been selected from the text viz. "Akueke", "Dead Men's Path", "Uncle Ben's Choice" and "Girls at War". The study depends immensely on the reader's interpretation to produce an objective outcome.

Text and Reader's Response

"The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence..." (Iser, 1972, p.279). According to Iser the two poles of literary work is 'artistic' and 'aesthetic', and he attributes the aesthetic pole to the readers (Iser, 1972, p.279). Both poles are equally important, one of the purposes of an artistic work is to create an aesthetic aura through it and if an artist is unable to create this aura through his work he fails to bind the work with a charm that keeps the work alive. Iser endows the readers with the responsibility to draw this aesthetic side of an artistic work through their creativity by giving life to the written images in his mind during the reading process.

In reading Achebe's four short stories from his text *Girls at War and Other Stories*, the reader is reminded of Iser's statement. While reading the written part of the text the images come to life in the mind that the writer has created in his work. For instance the images come to life in the mind that the writer has created in his work. created by public in the compound of the school, as a reader the scene could be pictured in the mind. It may not be the same as the writer had in his mind but all the more a different image that is originally created through imagination. It can be said thus that, that particular image is one that a reader owns. Similarly to the story of "Uncle Ben's Choice" the reader responds with many different creative images as the reading process proceeded; like in the scene when Ben realizes that the girl in his bed was not the girl he expected to be. A dark room could be imagined with just the two of them where the protagonist is shocked and doubtful of the unexpected guest, he could not even light a match to see the face of the woman whom he doubted was not a human. The stories "Girls at War" and "Akueke" within the text engage the readers in similar reading experience. While reading "Girls at War", the image of a tense situation during war could be pictured even though the reader had never experience any such situation. "Akueke" too invites the reader to imagine a family setting where tensions swell. Here the author writes about a woman whose individuality is not independent and the reader can imagine her situation along with a critical thought of treatment of women in African society. The author also writes about local rituals that the people conduct and the reader is thus made to form an image of how must these rituals be like.

With these experiences it can be noted that the readers respond with their own imagination which is creative because even those minute details as written by the author are given life while playing it in their mind as the reading process take place. The writer/author is exceptional in creating such artistic works of art, but the role of the readers as put forward by Iser is also accurate because they bring out the aesthetic quality of these artistic works while recreating the world created by the writer. However as Iser points out, the reader's worth can only be acknowledged when the writer may offer a space for them to play their part in exercising their creative imagination. Therefore a little suspense and unexpected turns in the narration is also important as found in the story of "Uncle Ben's Choice". One could expect that the woman in his bed must be someone whom he knows or someone who knows him, but it turns out that she was not even a human being. She turns out to be the "lady of the River Niger" by the name 'Mami-Wota'. All of these mechanics of writing that the writer uses keeps the attention of the readers intact and allows him to make changes, form new images and expand his boundary of imaginative talent which forms the "unwritten part of a text" (Iser, 1972, p.280).

The Process of Reading

The reader modifies his expectation during his reading process. (Iser, 1972, p. 283) Iser's second section of the essay talks about the importance of sentence structure in the text that keeps the fluidity intact. He says that the function of sentence is to indicate 'something that is to come' (Iser, 282), such a function allows readers to form a virtual dimension of the text where he 'establishes an interrelation between the past, present and the future' (283). The dynamic nature of the text thus procured by the readers. Under such a process of reading the reader irrefutably forms many expectations from the text prior to which anticipation too consumes him. Iser believes that a "great writer" should destroy these expectations of the readers so that it may allow the reader to perform his role better in bringing out the best of the aesthetic quality of the text. The reader thus modifies his expectations and form new images and new ideas during the reading process. (Iser, 1972, p. 283)

While reading "Death Men's Path", a formidable impression of the protagonist was formed at the beginning of the story. One could expect that this ambitious character is certain to do a noble job of bringing change in the school administration. What you find is that the protagonist ends up disturbing the local people's way of living and in return his aim to present a reputable school before the school inspector is destroyed by the people. The character does not perform as the readers expect him to perform; the writer exalts his character at first and stains him by the end of the story. Such turns allow the reader to modify his expectations and form them anew. "Girls at War" is another story where one could expect that the hero might end up saving the girl that he so dearly admired. A sense of security is felt when the hero is with the girl, when an unexpected situation takes place and the girl dies due to a bomb explosion. What could be observed in it is that the reader is also left helpless, because the expectation that was built is eliminated in just few lines of sentences. There is not even a single time when you find the author offering sympathy to his readers, the narration bluntly ends with the line "And he let out a piercing cry and fell down again" (Achebe, 1973, p.61). Had the story ended in a happy note, the reader's expectation would have been fulfilled without any space for further thought; but the tragic ending induces a thought beyond, even after the narration had concluded.

Iser also mentions that "there is an active interweaving of anticipation and retrospection, which on second reading may turn into a kind of advanced retrospection." (Iser, 1972, p.287) A second reading of the text is another important matter for it can be observed that many details which a reader may miss out during his first reading catches the attention of the reader. A better picture is then formed in the reader's imagination. As the reading process take place the reader anticipates of what to come next while analyzing each line and decoding every meaning.

Anticipation actively takes place while reading the story of "Akueke" and "Uncle Ben's Choice". One tends to form ideas of what might happen next as the reading process proceeds, while retrospection take place simultaneously. Giving an effort to do a second reading provides a better understanding of the text because all the details that went unnoticed in the first reading catch the reader's attention in second reading. One also tends to see a better view of the picture as if the vision has been magnified. On reading "Akueke", an anticipation of what might the girl Akueke confront with is formed. Whether she will be healed of her sickness, whether she will be allowed to stay with her grandfather, whether all the rituals conducted to cure her would work or would not - these are some thoughts that make the readers anticipate and form expectations. "Uncle Ben's Choice" is such a story that makes the reader form anticipation by reading the title itself, 'what must his choice be?' even before one has started to read the text a curiosity over takes the reader and he starts to anticipates what the story must be about.

The next thing after anticipation is retrospection i.e., trying to understand more than what the plot narrates. Iser rightly points out that the second reading turns into 'advanced retrospection' (Iser, 1992, p. 287). A second reading of "Akueke" gives an understanding of women and their status in Umuofia society. It is noticeable from the first reading but a better view is obtained where a reader can point out the tendency of men to think that women are dependent on them and that they have to decide for them. This idea becomes evident when Akueke rejects her suitors and her elder brother sternly remarks that "proud girls who refuse every suitor often came to grief..." (Achebe, 1972, p.18)

"Uncle Ben's Choice" makes the reader understand that it is a story of a life changing experience of Ben, the narrator himself. His experience is quite intriguing, but a second reading teaches the reader that it is about life's choice, one that man makes constantly in their lives followed by consequences. Many philosophical thoughts could also be noticed such as "I remember my father's word: Never let a handshake pass the elbow." (Achebe, 1973, p.43) These are thoughtful lines which are for every reader to imagine and retrospect while generating multiple interpretations.

Readers and their Experience

The reader seeks unity in the text.

"...the reader will strive, even if unconsciously, to fit everything together in a consistent pattern." (Iser, 288). Iser talks about a consistent reading that knits all the patterns written in the text both consciously and unconsciously. 'Gestalt' i.e., a sense of wholeness of the text is thus achieved by the reader. Therefore consistency

of reading is an important aspect to fulfill the aesthetic purpose of the text. Reading at different levels also forms illusions in the reader says Iser. Iser adds that it's (i.e., illusion) in completeness gives a more productive reading means in the reading process illusions must not take over the essence of illusion of the text so as to maintain a balance between the essence of illusion and the various interpretations of the text generated by the reader. (ibid. p. 21)

All of these stories that are picked for this study have an abrupt beginning. They are short stories therefore much of detail knowledge of the characters is not available which must be a reason why the reader is compelled to start reading the text with intense attention from the introductory lines. A consistent meeting from the beginning lines formed a meeting between the text and the imagination conceived while reading the text. Thus on reading "Girls at War", "Uncle Ben's Choice", "Akueke", and "Death Men's Path", an 'oscillation' between 'the possibilities of the fictional world' and 'the realities of the text' (Iser, 291) take place. The reader realizes and deduces the fictional aspects of the text thereby inducing the realities of the text instead, without being carried away by the illusions formed by the fictional aspects. Some realities could be the choices man get to make and the consequences followed by it in "Uncle Ben's Choice", women and their helplessly dependent status in Umuofia society in "Akueke", imbalance collision of modernity and tradition in "Death Men's Path" and how war change people in "Girls at War" especially girls.

The readers experience the alien 'me' and the real virtual 'me' during the reading process.

'...but in reading the reader becomes the subject that does the thinking' (Iser, 297) and while thinking takes place, the reader is met with two levels of self - i.e. the alien 'me' and the real virtual 'me'. Identification of these levels is where the ideas of the reader meet with the unfamiliar ground which the writer offers in his work.

These four stories of Achebe makes the reader identify with a self who is experiencing all the events along with the characters. Sometimes the reader finds himself/herself in the helpless girl, or in the character of the Reginald, or the headmaster, or even in 'Jolly Ben'. The plot becomes the reader's and it is as if the experiences of the characters belong to him. Then the reader also draws a clear line between illusion in the text and the real and identifies himself/herself with the real self. The reader thus analyzes the plot critically and draws resourceful meaning like choices and consequences in "Uncle Ben", imbalance collision of modernity and tradition in "Death Men's Path". Since the writer has offered a needful space for the reader, it enables his unformulated faculty to awaken and decipher the coded meanings.

In conclusion, Wolfgang Iser's "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach" and Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories* have been resourceful texts in bringing out the importance of the readers. Achebe's collection of short stories has many voices that need to be heard. He brings in different narrations that speak volumes of propositions. The four stories have much discourse to deliver. Iser's approach has been ideal in identifying these aspects, the study is conducted through a single reader's experience but multiple meanings can be generated if a large experiment is conducted among a large group of different readers. As such, the following conclusions can be drawn; that aesthetic pole of a text is rightly attributed to the readers because of their ability to recreate an imaginative world based on what the writer has written. The reader thus expounds the dynamic nature of the text. A reader can also be accredited for a writer's status and fame because in the process of reading, arguing, contradicting, praising and generating plurality of interpretations, the writer has often found himself in a position of gaining an easy fame. Lastly it is essential that a reader's expectation is destroyed in the process of reading because it makes the reading process more intriguing and allows further modification of creative image in a reader's mind.

These are some of the findings of this study; however certain contradictions that came to attention are also worth mentioning. Here one can argue that not all readers are same, imaginative capacity at times depends upon substantial knowledge acquired by keen study. In the case of a well-read person it becomes easier to decipher meanings and reading the text is much easier without any breakers in understanding vocabularies, or to identify its relation with other texts, etc. The above stated notion is however not the case of a person who has good imaginative capacity but is not well read, he/she may find it difficult to generate valuable meanings and thoughts from the text due to insufficient images of ideas. Sometimes in conducting an experiment with large group of readers, some interpretation may not be satisfying while others may be exceptionally good. Iser begins by stating that he allocates the aesthetic pole of the text to the readers, therefore quality interpretation seems to matters most in a valuable reading process. It is however, acknowledged that this theory firmly enables to establishes the significance of the reader in meaning-making of a text.

References

- Achebe, Chinua, (1991). *Girls at War*. Retrieved November 15, 2018, from www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://gfold1.webnetfile.com/download/GIRLS_AT.
- Barthes, Roland, (1986). *The Rustle of Language*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, Roland, (1967). *The Death of the Author*. Retrieved December 5, 2018, from [www.tbook.constantvzw.org...PDF The Death of The Author - T Book](http://www.tbook.constantvzw.org...PDF%20The%20Death%20of%20The%20Author%20-%20T%20Book)
- Foucault, Michel, (1984). *Foucault Readers*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Guinery, Vanessa, (2011). *Hybridity, Why it Still Matters*. In a Vanessa Guiner
- Catherine Pessa-Mitgang, Herbert, (1994). *Cleanth Brooks, Yale Professor in Prominent New Critic*, 87. Retrieved December 5, 2018, from www.nytimes.com/1994/05/12/obituaries/cleanth-brooks-yale-professor-and-prominent-new-critic-87.html
- Miquel and Francois Specq (Eds), (2011). *Hybridity: Forms and Figures in Literature and Visual Arts*. (pp. 1-8) UK: Cambridge Scholars.
- Iser, Wolfgang, (1972). *The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach*. JSTOR,3.2, 279-299.
- Ransom, John Crowe, (1937). *Criticism, Inc*. Retrieved December 17, 2018, from www.vqronline.org/essay/criticism-inc-0
- Turner, Catherine, (2016). *Jacques Derrida: Deconstruction*. Retrieved December 5, 2018, from www.criticallegalthinking.com/2016/05/27/jacques-derrida-deconstruction

Chasing the Cultural Matrix of Comedic Crime Sequences: A Study on the Comic Configuration of Crime in Malayalam Cinema

SUDEESH K

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at those varieties of Malayalam crime films which are featured by the lighter ingredients of laughter and romance. It highlights the process of genre mixing and socio-cultural factors of comedic crime films in Malayalam cinema. By critically looking at the lighter treatment of crime in comedy crime films in which everything is perceived to be an object of carnivalesque pleasure, it tries to unpack the ideological foundations of the cultural symbolic field through which the real and fake identities of characters are dramatized. These types of films often capitalize on the marketability of cultural stereotypes. The frequent appearances of imposters and fraudulent identities are common features of Malayalam CID films. In order for Malayalam crime comedy to effectively deliver on its promise of evoking thrills with laughter, it needs to invoke licentiousness of the awkward and the ridiculous, often bordering on the replaying of existing cultural stereotypes. Fraudulent and hollow identities are created to affirm the authenticity of hegemonic identities that are otherwise endangered by the post-liberalization policies of the political modernity of India.

Keywords: *Malayalam Crime Films, Comedy, Hegemony, Comic Pleasure, Malleability of Identity, Fraudulent and Authentic Personality Traits, Politics of Representation and Comedic Transgressions.*

Introduction

This paper will discuss various features of comedy crime films by focusing on the persistence of the sacred, with regard to the forging of authentic identity, in a supposedly post-sacred liberal society, even after the deluge of comic laughter. By post-sacred society, I refer to the Benjaminian world of post-aura culture of mass consumption which accelerates the movement of capitalist modernity. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Walter Benjamin observes that there is a shift in the modes of human perception in the wake of the advent of film technology and photography in the 20th century. He describes the transformation in the modes of perception in terms of the loss of aura and originality

in the work of art. There is also the aura and power of moving images associated with the special effects of hegemonic tradition which cut across Benjamin's idea of a post-auratic culture of mass consumption.

Comedy is one of the chief ingredients of CID films in Malayalam Popular Film and Television Comedy, written by Steve Neale and Frank Krutnik is a significant work which lays out the organizing principles of comedy films. This work indicates the terminological distinction between "the comic" and "the comedy". While the former refers to the forms that make us laugh, the latter refers on the one hand, specifically to narrative forms, and, on the other, to the field of comedy forms as a whole.

One can define the subgenres of crime film based on the treatment of crime and the method of investigation by the respective investigating heroes. Crime comedy is a hybrid of crime and comedy films. The inclusion of a romantic subplot among other things, enables the protagonist to take part in the casual drama of fraudulent and genuine identities which, in turn, culminate in the forging of a fantasy matrix of gaining the authentic identity and heroic personality. Crime comedy is a genre which revolves around most wanted thieves, smugglers, mafia-like criminal gangs, built on a comedic plot line usually involving a chase or sidesplitting situations involving comedic digressions, disguised appearances and masquerade. Vijay George's interview with the director Siddique gives a hint about the period of transition in comedy. In the interview, Siddique suggests that the demand for comedy increased after the release of Nadodikattu:

Comedies were not much in demand here before films such as Nadodikattu happened. Lal and I were instrumental in popularizing comedies to a great extent. Moreover, that trend happened in Malayalam much before the genre became a trend in other languages, including Hindi. We have always been miles ahead in handling comedy and even supporting artistes here have impeccable comic timing. That could be on account of our culture and history of appreciation of intelligent comedy, right from the times of KunjanNambiar. (George 2013)

The CID figure is one of the most popular detective-figures of investigation in Malayalam cinema. While the police and CBI film series which are very much prevalent in Malayalam cinema can be treated as full length crime films, CID films work by the mixing of genres and comedic digressions. In Malayalam CID films, policemen are generally portrayed as weak or inefficient sleuths who fail to nab the criminal while the amateur CIDs succeed in doing so, out of sheer luck and opportunities which come in favor of them. The treatment of crime and the method

of investigation by the respective investigating heroes can be used as a criterion in general which categorizes the genres of Malayalam crime films. The CID films do not promote an aggressive brand of masculinity. Neither do they follow the action formula of an average cop movie where the protagonist, in thundering khaki outfit and with a serious outlook on fighting crime, is always in charge of annihilating the criminal, and needless to say always with a triumphant spirit.

With PremNazir, the renowned star persona who played an influential role in shaping the course of the early phase of Malayalam popular cinema, the detective genre in Malayalam Cinema started gaining momentum. In the budding stage of Malayalam cinema, the black and white screen phase, there were no actors other than PremNazir who could emulate the Sherlock Holmes's style of investigation in the Malayalam detective films. He was the main lead actor with whom directors tried out various roles in crime thrillers. Malayalam CID film, in general, adopts a comical standpoint towards crime. Avakashi (Antony Mitradas & Anthony Mithradas, 1954) is the first CID film in Malayalam, though CID (M. Krishnan Nair, 1955) and CID Nazir ((P. Venu, 1971) set the tone of CID films in the history of Malayalam cinema (Vijayakumar 2012). CID crime films rely extensively on comedy and comic elements. In CID films, crime is generally treated in a light-hearted manner. CID figures are often amorous and vulnerable to all sorts of human follies and in solving difficult crimes; they often play the role of imposters. Most of the CID films contain the generic features of romantic comedy. Nadodikattu (Sathyan Anthikad, 1987) and Pattanapravesham (Sathyan Anthikad, 1988) are two CID films that popularized the duo of Dasan and Vijayan. Dasan and Vijayan, respectively played by Mohanlal and Sreenivasan, are hilarious CIDs whose quixotic feats and follies forged a Malayali audience who can appreciate the language of neorealist sentimental humanism which is at one connected with comedy, a hybridized genre that can alleviate the tragic experience of human existence. The presence of a jobless youngster is an integral part of any CID film in Malayalam. In general, CID films look at organized crime from a comical standpoint which tends to break the stereotyped representation of gangsters as heinously tough, serious and mysteriously evil characters. This lighter treatment of law and order in comedy crime films grants it poetic license, albeit at the cost of caricaturing the subaltern bodies, and the experience of humiliation and subordination. Although, these films tend to break the stereotypical perceptions towards the image of the criminal, they do follow the cultural prejudices regarding subaltern identities; a representational issue to which I will touch upon at a later point in this paper.

By the end of 1970s, with the rise of immigration due to the employment prospects facilitated by the oil boom in Gulf countries, there was a perceivable shift in the way Kerala economy was modelled and it accelerated the upward social mobility among the subaltern segments of the society, especially among the OBCs or middle castes such as F. Zhavas. Muslim and Christian communities. It brought in a structural transformation from the old order to the new consumerist world of TVs, VCRs, Refrigerators etc. With the and popularity of new consumer desires and pleasures of possession with the aura and originality associated with the elite Hindu attachments, the traditional artefacts and architecture began to fade. Possessing newly consumer goods became a matter of social status and prestige. At this juncture, Malayalam cinema is noted for its production of different types of length comedy films. These assemblages of the new sensorium of desires drew reactionary responses from the caste elites. Ratheesh Radhakrishnan's study of the relationship between the Gulf economy and Malayalam cinema between 1970s and the 1990s indicates these shifts in perceptions where Gulf emerges as a significant point of reference for imagining the cultural identity of Kerala during these three decades. To quote the words of Ratheesh Radhakrishnan.

By the late 1980s, the picture had changed considerably. The hopes that were associated with the Kerala model were waning, at least in the popular imagination. The complacency that had marked the middle classes seemed to be changing and the issue of unemployment among young educated men was articulated as the most vexing concern in the state. The saturation of jobs in the service sector and the initial signals of the state's imminent withdrawal from sectors of welfare could be seen as possible causes for this anxiety. The worries were also about the loss of jobs for the upper castes because of the reservation policies followed by the state, as was foregrounded by movies of the time. (Radhakrishnan 2009)

Jenny Rowena's study on comedy films is highly significant in locating the socio-cultural milieu through which comedy films produce their pleasures of laughter. Instead of dismissing comedy films as silly slapstick which merits no serious attention, Jenny Rowena's study demonstrates, among other things, the factors that led to the popularization of the comedy genre from the 1980s. Rowena argues that these conditions led to a re-masculinization of Malayalam cinema's narrative conventions, as comedy tracks, which were until then subsumed under the dominant narrative of family romance, thereby began to assume a generic autonomy. (Rowena, 126) To put it in a nutshell, the influx of Malayali Gulf migration and the

...of consumer culture and the subsequent commercialization of cinema towards
...entertainment value or 'hit value' that ensures instant profit can be
...as the main factors behind the popularity of comedy films in the 1980s and
...90s.

The interplay between Fraudulent and Authentic Identities in CID films

Rowena's study foregrounds the acts of fraudulence displayed in the
laughter film which became popular in 1980s and 90s. Here, fraudulence is used as
a ploy to present non-hegemonic locations as dominant and powerful. To quote the
words of Jenny Rowena:

Most men in the laughter films churn out their fraudulent selves in attempts
to act (before their parents and relatives or before desired women) that they
are rich and well-placed. In other words fraudulence is used to cover up the
fact that they are in small time jobs and 'subordinate' positions. Otherwise,
it is used to win upper-caste women, who are seen as stepping stones to
financial success. More importantly, fraudulence also came to justify a move
to gain access to the luxuries— like mansions, big cars, and women— of the
consumerist 1980s, from a location of utter depravity. (Rowena, 139- 40).

Though fraudulence, mistaken identity and struggle for survival etc., are
the important thematic features that determine the narrative patterns of Malayalam
comedy films, one can pose a theoretical question to Rowena's proposition. Is there
a real identity behind the fraudulent, masked or feigned identity? My contention is
that one can find only a mask behind a mask. Within the prison house of language
and the changing discursive fields of social conditions, every search for authenticity
and credibility of identity is futile. Therefore, it is quite possible to embark on
a deconstructive reading of the mythologies of genuine and credible identity
constructed by comedy crime films as they harp on the comedic playfulness of
fraudulent identities.

Sathyan Anthikhaad's CID films are known for its comic portrayal of
investigating officers as well as gangster characters as they are reduced to all sorts of
human follies. His trilogy *Nadodikkattu* (1987), *Pattanapravesham* (1988), *Akkare
Akkare* (1990) is most popular for its CID characters- Dasan and Vijayan.
The film *Nadodikkaattu* portrays Pavanayi, a flamboyant professional killer, who
boasts about his skills and valor but dies by his own mistake. Anandan Nambiar, an
easily frightened and paranoiac gangster, is another funny villain in the film. As a
rule, the job of a private detective involves spy work, information gathering, helping
the business firms by supplying vital clues regarding how the competing companies
are running in the market. Private detective agency gets legitimacy when the police

forces are inadequate to solve or crack a case. The private detective figure emerged as the scaffolding for the smooth functioning of various entrepreneurs. The idea of public welfare and delivering justice to the state is not the concern of the private detective. Contrary to the image of such private detective, Malayalam cinema has produced a very pro-poor and pro-women CIDs who act like a true public servant and protects the interest of the common man as well as the state. CIDs are portrayed as the parallel investigation team of the government.

Dasan and Vijayan crack the cases where the local police have no clue. However, unlike Sethuramalyer who plays the serious role of an investigator in the CBI series, Dasan and Vijayan commits a lot of blunders during their CID operations. They brag about themselves though they are just lucky in solving crimes. With his educational qualifications, Dasan tries to boss over the less educated Vijayan. The role of Vijayan is equivalent to the role of a subordinate who assists the superior CID officer Dasan. While Dasan represents the modern upper caste male who, despite his merit and educational qualification, fails to find a good job, Vijayan represents the black lower caste body that is struggling to retain his dignity which is threatened by the charismatic and bossy presence of Dasan. In a way, these films represent the problems of widespread unemployment and poverty during the 1980s. At that time, Kerala's social issues were primarily identified as the struggle of the unemployed Malayali youth and the difficulties they face in finding employment where the uselessness of educational degrees and the search for job opportunities in the Persian Gulf region becomes an object of a series of amusing comic sequences and dialogues. Even in the case of investigation, whatever that is mean and of lower in status is attached to Vijayan, especially proving crime through wretched roles of impersonation such as house servant as in *Pattanapravesham*. Vijayan's black-skinned body becomes the natural choice to play the role of a servant as part of investigation. The logic that is put forwarded in the film is that it does not suit the dignified body of Dasan. This is a clear example of the racial stereotyping of the black body of Vijayan. In this regard, Sujith Kumar Parayil's observation on the typecasting of dark-skinned subaltern bodies on silver screen where the hilarious scenes of humiliation, mental and moral pain assume the form of a pleasurable entertainment package is relevant. His paper attempts to contextualize Kalabhavan Mani, one of the Malayalam film actors, by arguing that the mainstream Malayalam cinema's visual perception, far from excluding the subaltern Other, espouses a 'subordinated inclusion' of the marginalized social groups. His paper makes the following arguments:

Contemporary popular Malayalam cinema uses different visual and narrative techniques to re-establish the preconceived cultural notions of typified subaltern castes through indirect (without mentioning the caste identity of

the characters) but certain legitimized signs and norms— such as name, habits, occupation, body, behaviour and occupied spaces. I argue that contemporary popular Malayalam films – whether driven by a “megastar”, “superstar”, or “popular star” – works in a complex manner while dealing with the question of subalternity or marginality, where the difference is articulated not through the exclusion of the marginalized communities but through a careful and strategic politics of inclusion. In this inclusive perspective, the presentation of subaltern histories and their worldviews are integrated into cinematic narratives as subordinate views and as indicators of lower caste identity.(ibid, Parayil)

As Sujith Kumar Parayil has rightly pointed out, these floods of screen images are the historical signs which arouse the spectator’s unconscious memories where caste markers function as sign of superiority and inferiority. Nevertheless, rather than simply reading the subordinated inclusion of the subaltern body as a consciously calculated strategy of caste conventions, I view the CID films from the point of view of generic convention of comedy. Comedic features are applicable and extendable to all types of genres and star bodies. Even an orthodox and effeminate Brahmin figure, despite the fact that he is occupying a privileged upper caste social background, can be a butt of ridicule and an object of comedy. Nevertheless, the comic laughter directed at reinforcing the subtler subaltern position of subordination deserves to be foregrounded with all its political ramifications.

The film CID Moosa (Johny Antony, 2003) is a genre hybrid combining slapstick comedy, crime and romantic comedy. The film can be treated as a comedy of errors, laughter being evoked through stupid activities of the characters. CID Moosa is full of comic sequences with all the popular ingredients in it— comedy, action, thrill, suspense and the reunion of the romantic couple. Moosa meets a pretty girl and wins her heart by saving her from the dangerous plot of a villainous police commissioner. This film has a very predictable structure where the arch-villain and his supporters are introduced in the beginning itself. CID Moosa is also a film that re-captures the hilarious methods of investigation introduced by the Dasan and Vijayan duo about which the chapter has initially explained. Here Moolamkhuzhiyil Shadevan aka Moosa (Dileep) plays the role of a young private detective who busts a criminal gang by sheer luck and chance. Moosa tries to project the pride of a pan-Malayali identity that safeguards the chief minister of Kerala from a Tamil police commissioner, who is working in tandem with the mafia gang of Khaled Muhammed aka Baba, a North Indian-based Muslim terrorist leader who is imprisoned in Thihar Jail. Ravi Menon, the current chief minister of Kerala, was a former Home minister of India. Baba wants to take revenge against Ravi Menon as it was Ravi Menon who issued the order to wipe out the terrorist presence in

the country, which resulted in the police brutality against the families of several terrorist suspects, culminating in the imprisonment of Baba.

What is often treated as an arch villain with no foundation in reality is not just a cinematic fantasy. It is a fantasy which justifies a lot of activities in the realpolitik. In other words, it generates certain world of reality through which the public imagination of crime is constructed. It is notable that the arch-villain are from stereotyped linguistic and religious backgrounds. For example, the arch-villain in the film CID Moosa is a North Indian Muslim character who is convicted for anti-national activities and who is hell bent on taking revenge upon the chief minister of Kerala as he, as a former Union minister, had played a crucial role in the imprisonment of the arch-villain. It is the tricks and mischief of CID Moosa that finally save the Chief Minister when Kerala police exhausted its entire means to protect the head of the state. Therefore, the film does not follow any mysterious thread of crime investigation. In short, the CID figure protects the Savarna Malayali pride by eliminating the external threats coming from outsiders. Banking largely on the liberty and poetic license of comedy film, the final sequence of the film shows CID Moosa boarded in a chartered flight, leaving to Scotland for training as the government of Kerala wants him further trained as sophisticated detective. In the flight, we find a comically-charged improbable condition of the madman character played by Salim Kumar in the pilot's seat and the flight moves in a comically zigzag way. The film ends on this uproariously comical note.

Oru Vadakkan Selfie (PrajithKaranavar, 2015) is one of the latest CID crime films. It deals with the domain of cyber-crime. Vineeth Sreenivasan, the script writer of the film, draws on the already existing genre conventions such as romantic comedy, CID suspense thrillers and he himself acts in the film as CID officer. It is interesting to note that his father, Sreenivasan has also given life to the popular CID figure Vijayan, the features of which has already been discussed. While the early CID films hilariously deals with the acts of crime that takes place within the physical space, Oru Vadakkan Selfie talks about a cyber-crime that occurs in virtual space. The film tries to represent the dreams and aspiration of upper caste young generation of the north Malabar, a life world marked by the rising aspirations and anxieties over the uncertainties of the virtualized technological modernity. The film revolves around the hilarious turns of events in the life of Umesh whose character is depicted in the movie as a good-for-nothing engineering student having 42 back papers to clear. Obviously, Umesh's parents are also convinced about the fact that he is not capable of clearing his supplementary exams. At this critical juncture, Umesh leaves home and boards a train to Chennai with the hope of becoming famous director one day by assisting the director Gautham Vasudevan Menon, a popular Tamil filmmaker.

Umesh nurtures the dream that film industry is the smooth passage to fame and money. During the train journey to Chennai, Umesh sends a picture message to his friend. He finds Daisy in the train, who is also his newly arrived neighbor in the village. The picture message of a selfie that Umesh captures with a girl, during the travel to Chennai changes the whole course of action. Umesh's idiotic friend spreads the wrong message back in the neighborhoods, regarding the missing case of Umesh. He twists the whole story into a romantic relationship as though Umesh eloped with the girl in the picture message. When he goes back home after spending a few days at Chennai, with a failed dream of becoming a director, he was astonished to know the strange turns of events with stories making rounds about him eloping with the girl. Entangled in the conspicuous stories of taking the girl along with him to Chennai, he had no other choice but to go to Chennai, along with his friend who spread the rumor, in search of the girl. In Chennai, they incidentally meet a private detective, Jack (Vineeth Srinivasan) and he helps them to track and find out the girl. However, the investigation does not stop there as they find out that the girl is in search of one Harinarayanan, whom the girl loves. Later, with Jack probing further, they end up in the village of Harinarayanan, only to find out that Harinarayanan whom the girl loves is no more. They came to know that he was cheated by his business partner and had committed suicide. In fact, the girl built her romantic relationship with a fake Facebook ID of Harinarayanan created by John Mathew, business partner of late Harinarayanan. John Mathew, the antihero of the film as a fake Facebook ID user, is revealed only at the end. Using the method of online chatting through the Facebook profile of his friend, John Mathew, an experienced internet fraudster tricks the heroine of the film into a romantic relationship. The film gives a clear warning on such cyber fraudsters. The image of an innocent Tamil Brahmin male, whose Facebook profile is used by a Christian male, produces a cultural stereotype of honesty and treachery. These cultural identities are evoked in the film, so as to fit in the hegemonic imagination of usual suspects and victims.

During the course of investigation, Jack reveals to Umesh and friends that, he is in fact a government CBCID, working for Tamil Nadu, for investigating economic offences and he has been trying to nab John Mathew, a cyber-economic offender, whose modus operandi is to lure girls into romance and exploit them for financial gains through fraudulent online activities. Later on, Jack tracks John Mathew and traps him. The film ends with a spectacular revenge scene in which Jack allows Umesh to thrash the villain, before taking him into custody. The film ends with such a moral register, satiating the extra-judicial rage of the common man. When Umesh, who was otherwise treated as a useless man, hit the head of the masquerading villain and thereby he assumes an authentic heroic identity responding to the demand of the ego-ideal of Malayali masculinity.

This film shows that with the arrival of new social media, technology has let loose new types of crime. The inherent danger associated with the virtual space where human beings are duped and denaturalized to the extent of dethroning them from the organic vitality of everyday life is highlighted in the film. The make-believe that there is real human identity behind the virtualized entity of Facebook is the prime element of suspense in the film. The film makes binary opposites between real and fake human entity in the virtualized world. In this context, it is not just that the bogus identity of John Mathew, the crooked villain, is passed off as a real identity. But, the already satirized identity of Umesh turns out to be a genuine and heroic identity with masculine symbolic authority, whereas the dead identity of Harinarayanan undergoes a symbolic rebirth in order to pass himself as another person.

The paper has tried to develop an argument that Malayalam crime comedy is hybrid genre of movies which represents hilarious versions of crime. It discussed the caricatured images of subaltern bodies through which the main narrative of comic pleasure is derived. Comedy crime films parody the established modes of representing crime only to the extent that the audience can still continue to cling on to its ideological pleasures of the existing tradition. Though the Malayalam comedy crime films indicate a movement towards a post-sacred society, one cannot overlook the ideological constellations of a free market society which constantly reshapes and rejuvenates the notion of the sacred through the construction of a flexible Neo-Savarna subject..

Pillai, Meena T, (2010). *Becoming Woman: Unwrapping Femininity in Malayalam Cinema*. Woman in Malayalam Cinema: Naturalizing Gender Hierarchies. Hyderabad: OrientBlackSwan, Print.

Pillai, Meena T, (2010). "The 'Laughter Films' and the Reconfiguration of Masculinities. *Women in Malayalam Cinema: Naturalising Gender Hierarchies*. Hyderabad, Orient Black Swan, Print.

Radhakrishnan, Ratheesh, (2010). "What is Left of Malayalam Cinema?" *Cinemas of South India: Culture, Resistance, Ideology*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Rowena, Jenny P. (2002). *Reading Laughter: The Popular Malayalam "Comedy-Films" of the late 80s and early 90s*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad.

Sujith Kumar Parayil, (2014). *Visual Perception and Cultural Memory: Typecasts and Typecast(e)ing in Malayalam Cinema*", *Synoptique-An Online Journal of Film and Moving Images*, Vol.3, No1. Retrieved from <http://synoptique.hybrid.concordia.ca/index.php/main/article/view/40>

The Gulf in the Imagination: Migration, Malayalam cinema and regional identity. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.) 43, 2 (2009): 217–45.

Vijayakumar B (2012). *Old is Gold: CID 1955*, The Hindu. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/features/cinema/old-is-gold-cid-1955/article2931992.ece>.

Vijay George, (2013). *Siddique speaking*, The Hindu . Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/features/cinema/siddique-speaking/article4605926.ece>

Zupancic, Alenka, (2008). *The Odd One In: On Comedy*. Cambridge: The MIT P.

A Study on Socio-Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs of Nagaland with special reference to Kohima District

MEYISANGLA LONGKUMER

ABSTRACT

The involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities has changed the socio-economic status, has acquired unusual attention in the context of economic growth of India as well as states. Woman Entrepreneur as a “confident, innovative and creative women capable of achieving self economic independence individually or in collaboration, generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life.”(Kamal Singh). This study has been under taken in the area of Kohima district of Nagaland. By adopting random and convenience sampling method 100 samples have been collected.

The study discerned that the socio economic status of women entrepreneurs of this region is modest.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurship, socio-economic status.*

Introduction

Women in India comprise half of the population of the country. The literacy rate of women was 40%, work participation rate was 28% and urban population share was 10% compared to 60%, 52% and 18% respectively on the male counterparts (Khanka2015). The favorable conditions of women entrepreneurship in the country during 1988-89 (Desai 1992). But the condition of women in Nagaland is totally different from the main land of India. Women were equally treated like men in the society. There is no difference between men and women. Women were allowed to take jobs like men. Hence, many women have taking up own business. They were able to do the business conveniently while looking after their families and during rest time. This supports their families financially.

Meaning of Women Entrepreneur

Women Entrepreneurs may be defined as the women or a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India has also defined 'Women entrepreneurs based on women participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise.' Accordingly, the Government of India (GOI 2006) has defined women entrepreneur as "an enterprise owned and controlled by a women having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women." These definitions attempt to define the women entrepreneurs and their functions only (Khanka2015).

Meaning of Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status refers to an individual's level of income, wealth, education, and prestige. Disparities in socio-economic status are a great cause for concern today as they are increasing throughout the world. Status is a condition applicable to a point of time. Status in the sociological sense denotes position in a social system and by implication the distribution of rights, obligations, power and autonomy within the same system (Krishna, 2011). Thus, the term socio-economic status denotes the relative position of a person on a publicly recognized scale or hierarchy of social worth. It is the honor or prestige attached to one's position in society.

Review of Literature

Several studies has been conducted to know the Socio Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs by various scholars and academicians. However no study is conducted to ascertain the Socio Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs of Kohima Districts of Nagaland.

This research deals with the society attitude and its supports and various important factors that determine and contribute to the success of the women entrepreneur. Javillonar and Peters (1973) in their studies found that the socio cultural situation of entrepreneurs is positively related to entrepreneurship emerging in open social structures and in situation where there is relative freedom of occupational choice. Babu (1978) in his study found that the sociological factors contribute to the development of entrepreneurs. This study shows that community and family background are the major contributor to the success of prospective entrepreneurs.

Mayers (1981) in his research study found that the economic pressure on married women force them to take up employment to meet the needs of the family. The modern society supports them to take up any business activity (Vasanthagopal

... (2008) Commercialization and modernization of the sector
 provided opportunity to do business. As a result women have emerged as primary
 entrepreneurs (Arvinda, C.H. and S. Renuka, 2001)

Statement of the Problem

The contribution of women to the state is totally different compared to other Indian states. Society has given them equal opportunities like men. Many women were allowed to take jobs and allowed even to do business like men. Many women in this area have taken up their own business to support the family financial. In Kohima district many women were seen, having own shop and sell vegetables in the street. Even large scale industries were been also run by the women. The paper attempts to study the significance of establishing business by the women at Kohima and also seeks to answer whether it is profitable or not. Moreover, the paper attempts to examine the socio-economic condition of women entrepreneurs in society.

Research Methodology:

A survey was undertaken in the area of Kohima district. The data was collected with 'Yes' or 'No' questions. The values are given '1' for 'Yes' and 'No'. 100 samples have been considered for this study. Besides these, secondary data were also collected from different journals and other publications as per need.

Results & Discussion

A. 'Socio Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs of Kohima District'
1. Item Selection to Measure the Degree of Socio Economic Status of Women Entrepreneurs'

In order to achieve the objective, items of the scale were identified in literature review relating to the latent variable considered for the study. Responses are measured by 2 point scale.

Table: 1. Item to

Items	Statement
1.1	Age
1.2	Marital Status
1.3	Educational Qualification
1.4	Type of family
1.5	If Married, No. of Children

1.6	Number of Non Earning Members
1.7	Husband Employed
1.8	Husband Helps in Business
1.9	Nature of the Business
1.10	Does the profit of the business able to meet the entire family expenditure?

Source: Compiled from Survey of Questionnaire

The present paper consider above mentioned variables to measure the degree or intensity of Socio-Economic status of women entrepreneurs in Kohima District. Socio-economic status in general deals with the standard of living style of women entrepreneurs. Here, women entrepreneurs' business, investment, income, expenditure and profit were taken into account to determine the Socio-Economic status.

Kohima district is one of the commercially developed districts of Nagaland. It is well connected by road with other parts of Nagaland. Kohima is the Capital, head quarter of Kohima district as well as in Nagaland. Women are engaged in number of economic activities in the district.

2. Area and Sample Size

This district administration of Kohima is divided into: Kohima, Jakhama, Botsa, Chuboboza, Chunlikha, Tsuminyu, and Sechu (Zubza) which is presented in the Table No-2. The total of 100 samples was collected from below mentioned area according to the availability. Random sampling and convenience sampling method was adopted to collect the sample. The sample collected from each area is presented below mentioned table:

Sl.No	Area of Kohima District	Sample
1	Kohima	30
2	Jakhama	13
3	Botsa	8
4	Chuboboza	12
5	Chunlikha	10
6	Tsuminyu	14
7	Sechu (Zubza)	13
	Total	100

Source: Compiled from Survey data

1.1 Age:

Age was considered as one of the factors that influence of socio-economic. In general persons at young age will do more work rather than at old age. Thus, it has been considered as main variable to study the socio economic status.

Age ^a	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 - 30 years	40	40
31 - 40 years	25	25
41 - 50 years	15	15
51 - 60 years	10	10
61 years and above	10	10
Total	100	100
a. District = Kohima		

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-3 it is discerned that 40% of the women entrepreneurs fall in the age group of 20-30. This conveys that majority of the women entrepreneur are youngster.

1.2. Marital Status

A marital factor is another indicator of the social status of women in the society. In society married women were given due respect and honor. Their role as a mother, wife, and sisters in the family, is remarkable.

Status	Percentage (%)
Married	62
Unmarried	30
Widow	8
Total	100
a. District = Kohima	

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-4, it is discerned that 62% of the women entrepreneurs are married. This discerned that majority of the women have take up business after marriage and due to family responsibility. Women irrespective of marital status take up entrepreneurial activities.

1.3. Educational Qualification

Education is the back bone of the society which develops thoughts and idea. In general, entrepreneurs need knowledge on investment, income, expenditure and profit in order to maintain business accounts and survey the market condition. Hence, educational qualification in such areas would make them to be a successful entrepreneur.

Educational Qualification ^a	Percentage (%)
Matriculation	10
Higher Secondary	25
Graduate	30
Post Graduate	15
Others	20
Total	100

a. District = Kohima

Source: Compiled from Survey data

Here, it is discerned that 90% of the women entrepreneurs have education above matriculation. Some women entrepreneurs possess education in skilled areas and are very skilled in doing some work. Skill enables them to undertake entrepreneurial activities efficiently. This makes them to earn respect and reputation in the family as well as in the society.

1.4. Type of family

Type of family ^a	Percentage (%)
Nuclear family	70
Joint Family	30
Total	100

a. District = Kohima

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-6, it is discerned that 70% of the women entrepreneurs are from nuclear family. This conveys that family responsibility enabled women entrepreneur to take up entrepreneurial activities to support their families and children financially.

1.5. If Married, No. of Children

Table No-7	
If Married, No. of Children ^a	Percentage (%)
No Child	18
1 - 2 Children	45
3 - 4 Children	25
5 -6 Children	8
7 and above	4
Total	100
a. District = Kohima	

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-7, it is discerned that 45% of the women have 1-2 children and 37% have more than 2 children. This conveys that majority of women have taken up entrepreneurial activities to support their families and children to support them financially.

1.6. Number of Earning Members

Table No-8	
Number of Earning Members ^a	Percentage (%)
0 - 1 Member	57
2 - 3 Members	28
4 - 5 Members	15
Total	100
a. District = Kohima	

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-8, it is discerned that 57% of the women entrepreneurs are the single earning members for their entire family. Hence women entrepreneurs' economic position may not be very supportive.

1.7. Husband Employed

Table No-9	
Husband Employed ^a	Percentage (%)
No Husband	38
Employed	42

Unemployed	20
Total	100
a. District = Kohima	

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-9, it is discerned that 42% of the women entrepreneurs' husbands are employed. These families economic position may be better because their husbands also contribute income to the family.

1.8. Husband Helps in Business

Husband Helps in Business ^a	Percentage (%)
No	20
Yes	42
Unmarried/widow	38
Total	100
a. District = Kohima	

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-4 and 10, it is discerned that 62% of the women entrepreneurs are married of which (Table No-10) 42% of women entrepreneurs husband help them to do business. This conveys that majority of the women entrepreneurs have better social status in the family and in the society.

1.9 Nature of the Business

Nature of the Business	Percentage (%)
Bakery	5
Coaching centre	4
Family Establishment	9
Family nursery	2
Pre school	2
Food stall	8
Home based production	7
Individual shop	20

Craft Work	5
Partnership	8
Pharmacy	5
Salon	4
SHG	7
Vegetable vendor	14
Total	100
a. District = Kohima	

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-12, it is discerned that 20% of the women entrepreneurs have individual shops and 14% of them are vegetable vendors. This shows that women have taken up lower level investment based business as compared to higher level of investment based business.

1.10. Does the profit of the business able to meet the entire family expenditure

Profit of the business able to meet the entire family expenditure ^a					
Valid	Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No				
	No	20	20	20.0	20.0
	Yes	35	35.0	35.0	55.0
	Some How	45	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	
a. District = Kohima					

Source: Compiled from Survey data

From the above Table No-12, it is discerned that 35% of the women entrepreneurs are doing business profitably. But 45% were able to managing their business but not profitably. This conveys that the income from these businesses may be very small and their economic status is modest.

Conclusions

Women entrepreneurs proved that they are not lesser than men. The socio economic status of women entrepreneurs of this region is good. The recorded data discerned that they have high social status in the society but the economic status

is modest and need special attention. This needs urgent attention on the part of government, NGOs and financial institutions to come forward to support them best possible way to promote women entrepreneurship to improve the standard of living in the society.

References

Arvinda, C.H. and S, Renuka, (2001). *Women Entrepreneurs: An Exploratory Study*, SEDME, Sept..

Babu, P.(1978). "A Study on Sociological Characteristics of Small Scale Industrialists", unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Dept. of Sociology, University of Kerala.

Chattopadhyay, Arundhati, (2005). *Women and Entrepreneurship*, Yojana, January.

Desai, Vasant,(1992). *Dynamics of Entrepreneurial Development and Management*, Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay.

Javillionar.G.V and Peters G.R., (1973). "Sociological and Psychological Aspects of Indian Entrepreneurship" *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.24 No 3 pp. 313-328.

Khan, Noman Shibly A.M.M. (2009). *Women Micro Entrepreneurship and Social Capital in Bangladesh*, SEDME, March, 36.1

Khanka.S.S.,(2015). *Entrepreneurial Development*, S.Chand & Company PVT. LTD, New Delhi.

Krishna Ahoojapatel. (2011). *Development has a Woman's Face – Insights from within the UN*", A.R.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.p.148

Myers, Frederic Alan (1981). PhD thesis, Florida University, U. S

Vasanthagopal, R and Santha, S (2008). *Women Entrepreneurship In India*. New century publication, New Delhi, Pp. 1-5.

Manuscript Submission Guideline for IUN Journal of Social Sciences

1. Manuscripts and editorial correspondence should be addressed to iunjournal@iunagaland.edu.in
2. Manuscripts should be in:
 - a. MS word format
 - b. Font style: Times New Roman
 - c. Font Size: 12
 - d. Spacing: 0 pt
 - e. Line Spacing: 1.5 lines
3. All Manuscript must be 6000 words approx and should include 4-6 keywords in about 200 words and carry contributor's affiliation(s) and e-mail address.
4. IUN Journal of Social Sciences accepts manuscripts written in English (UK) only.
5. Photographic illustrations included in the manuscript should be provided in JPEG or TIFF format, with minimum resolution of 300 dpi and 1500 pixels.
6. Words from Sanskrit, Ardhamāgadhī, Prakrits including the Apabhramsa and Dravidic languages should be indicated with Diacritical marks, when written in English. For other languages, namely Persian, Arabic and other modern European languages, the current international conventions for translation should be followed.
7. Articles submitted for the Journal should be original contributions and should not be under consideration for any other publication at the same time. A declaration is to be made by the author in the covering letter that the paper is original and has not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere.
8. All the manuscripts should type in double-space with 12 point font and ample margin on all sides on A 4 size paper.
9. The cover page should contain the title of the paper, author's name, designation, official address, and address for correspondence, contact phone/mobile numbers and e-mail address.
10. Please follow APA Style for in-text citations and References. The main text should not contain footnotes. References should be given at the end of the manuscript and should contain only those cited in the text of the manuscript. The full reference should be listed at the end in alphabetical order running the following style:

Diacritical Marks

Vowels

आ	ā
ई	ī
ऊ	ū
ए	ē
ओ	ō

(long)
(N.B. long ē and ō are for the particular syllables in Dravidic languages.)

ऌ and not ṛi; (long ऌ, which rarely figures, may be rendered as ṝ).

Nasals

Anusvāra

(·) ṁ and not ṁ
anumāṣikas

इ	ṅ
ऊ	ṅ
ण	ṅ (or ṅa as the case may be)

Hard aspirate

Visarga

(:) ḥ

Consonants

Palatals

च	ca and not cha
छ	cha and not chha

Linguals

ट	ṭa
ठ	ṭha
ड	ḍa
ढ	ḍha and not ḷha

Sibilants

श	śa
ष	ṣa
स	sa

Unclassified

ळ	ḷa
क्ष	kṣa and not ksha
ज्ञ	jñā and not djñā
र्	ṛ and not ṛi

General Examples

kṣamā and not *kshamā*, *jñāna* and not *djñāna*, *Kṣṇa* and not *Krishṇa*, *sucāru chatra* and not *suchāru chhatra* etc. etc., *gaḍha* and not *gaḷha* or *garha*, (except in Hindi)

Dravidic (conjuncts and specific) characters

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I/We would like to subscribe the IUN Journal of Social Sciences.
Please dispatch the Journal to the address given below:

Name.....

Address.....

.....City.....

State/ Province.....

Zip/PostalCode.....Country.....

Email.....

Contact No.....

Please find enclosed a Cheque/Demand Draft for Rs..... in favour of ICFAI University Nagaland, as per the subscription rates given below:

Subscription Rates				
(Please tick the choice of subscription)				
Three Years (6 Issues)			Yearly (2 Issues)	
	Institution	Individual	Institution	Individual
India	Rs. 1700.00	Rs. 1620.00	Rs. 600.00	Rs. 500.00

The ICFAI University Nagaland (IUN) has been established by an Act of Nagaland State Legislative Assembly (vide Act No. 2 of 2006, dated 30th August 2006; under the notification No. LAW/ACT-11/2006, dated 19th September 2006). Consequently, the University has been empowered by UGC for award of degrees, under Section 22 of UGC Act 1956. The University is a member of the Association of Indian Universities, and also a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.



The ICFAI University, Nagaland
5th Mile, Sovima Village, Dimapur 797112, Nagaland

www.iunagaland.edu.in

Email: iunjournal@iunagaland.edu.in

ISSN 2395 - 3128

₹ 300 /-