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About the College

KROS College is situated at one of the ancestral land at Leirie Colony, Kohima known as "ZHÜDOUGEI," meaning, the place where warriors laid down their shields and take rest after war. The College is named after the initials of its founder, whereby "K" stands for Kevisiezolie, "RO" stands for Rokovino and "S" stands for Suohu. Established in 2010, KROS College is managed by the registered society known as KROS Education Society, headquartered in Kohima. It is affiliated to Nagaland University and offers courses in Seven Major disciplines: Economics, Education, English, History, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. A Chapel known as KROS Chapel maintained by a full-time Chaplain, addresses the spiritual needs of students and provides holistic education based on the principles of Christian faith. KROS College stands out for its commitment to both academic excellence and holistic development and remains dedicated to its mission i.e., to provide innovative education, opportunities and experiences that enables individuals, communities and the region to grow, thrive and prosper. The College rigorously adheres to its motto, "Not Word but Deed" and the emblem features a handful of seeds, symbolizing the dissemination of seeds of knowledge.

About The Journal

ZHÜDOUGEI (A Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed Journal) is an annual Peer- Reviewed Journal which was first published in September, 2024 by KROS College, Kohima, Nagaland. The name of the Journal has been inspired by the ancestral name of the location of the college. In the olden days, Zhüdou was the hallowed land where warriors could safely take off and place their war shield, thereby taking rest comfortably. Hence, the name ZHÜDOU.

The Journal aims to foster rigorous research and scholarly discourse across various fields. The Journal invites academic scholars, teaching faculties and researchers from all disciplines to contribute scholarly work and be a part of the academic initiative.

Scope of the Journal

The scope of the Journal is National. The journal aims to promote rigorous research and scholarly discourse across multiple disciplines, including Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education. The journal primarily focuses on contributions within the country while welcoming original papers and articles on diverse topics from related fields.

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ZHÜDOU

In the olden days, **Zhüdou** was the hallowed land where Warriors could safely take off and place their war shield, thereby take rest comfortably. Hence, the name **ZHÜDOU**.

Today, **Zhüdou** has become a spot of learning under the name and style- **KROS COLLEGE**.

I am glad to witness KROS College grow from strength to strength, rendering all possible holistic guidance and assistance for the growth of students to become good citizens.

The 'Present' tells us how the 'Future' would be, every 'Sunrise' gives 'Day of Hope'. By God's Grace, I am pleased to unveil "ZHÜDOU JOURNAL" with prayers- "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge".

I wish the Principal and Research Committee all the best in their endeavors.

(KEVISIEZOLIE SUOHU)
President,
KROS Education Society
Kohima: Nagaland

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Zhüdougei

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The Influence of Social Media on the Hornbill Festival: Fostering Unity among Nagaland's Tribes and Drawing Global Audiences

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Abstract

Nagaland, renowned as the Land of Festivals, showcases a rich tapestry of cultures and stories embedded within its people's lifestyles and beliefs. Amid this diversity, there is an inherent need for unity and heightened social awareness. In the face of rapid technological progress and economic expansion, it becomes increasingly apparent that our cultural heritage is at a critical crossroads, vulnerable to the risks of disappearance and dilution. At this critical juncture, it is imperative to safeguard our rich cultural heritage and protect it from the threat of discontinuation and disappearance at the same time collaborative initiatives between the central and state governments are strategically prioritizing tourism promotion, leveraging the Hornbill Festival as a cornerstone event. Social media serves as a pivotal tool in amplifying the festival's reach, significantly enhancing its global visibility and accessibility. Over time, the festival has drawn hundreds of thousands of visitors from various states and countries. This study examines how social media platforms contribute to attracting tourists to the Hornbill festival and how effective in promoting the event by encouraging people to visit the festival. By conducting interviews with festival attendees and residents, complemented by secondary sources, the research explores how social media shapes tourism engagement and the evolving dynamics of tribal identities in digital spheres.

Keywords: Cultural festival; Naga culture; social media; tribal unity

Introduction

Nagaland is situated at Northeastern India bounded to the north by Arunachal Pradesh, to the west by Assam, to the south by Manipur and shares an international border with Myanmar to the east. According to the 2011 Indian census, it has a population of 1,980,602 people living in an area of 16,579 square kilometers. It attained its statehood on 1st of December 1963 becoming the 16th State of India.

Over the span of decades marled by colonization and social upheaval, the Naga people have demonstrated resilience and unwavering fortitude. Amidst this backdrop, Nagaland has experiences significant strides in both social and economic spheres. Among these, advancement, social media and technology emerges as a notable and swiftly evolving facet. Particularly noteworthy is its impact on the majority of consumers, predominantly the youth, who have reaped manifold benefits. As a result, Nagas are progressively integrating into the global community, fostering connections that transcend geographical boundaries. According to Imnasenla (2012), as various telecommunication companies enter the market and with increased emphasis from the state government on information technology, the urban areas of the state are experiencing a notable shift in user attitudes and behaviors

The state, comprising seventeen major tribes and numerous sub-tribes, is a treasure trove of cultural richness, where festivals pulse vibrantly throughout the calendar year, celebrated with fervor by all its diverse communities. Among these, the Hornbill Festival, fondly dubbed the 'festival of festivals,' emerged in 2001 as an annual extravaganza spanning the first ten days of December, nestled within the picturesque Kisama Heritage Village, Kohima.

Within this festival grounds, meticulously arranged are a total of 17 tribal morungs, each strategically positioned to reflect their geographic origins within the state. These morungs, echoing echoes of tradition, once served as vital social hubs for the youth of early Naga society, fostering learning and camaraderie. However, in the contemporary landscape, where social interactions are predominantly mediated through online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the traditional role of the morung has undergone a profound shift. Today's

younger generation, ensconced in the digital realm, finds their sense of community and shared interests in virtual spaces, where information flows swiftly across the globe in mere moments. Consequently, the original cultural significance of the morung, rooted in physical gatherings and face-to-face interactions, no longer resonates with a populace deeply entrenched in the allure of social media.

According to Miah (2017), that the craze for social media raises numerous questions about its societal impact as it is widely acknowledged that social media influences people's lifestyles, and ongoing efforts are being made to understand the nature of these effects across different societies and countries, particularly on youth. Spanning diverse geographic and socioeconomic landscapes, the northeastern region of India is forging connections with the global community through the pervasive influence of social networking. This burgeoning trend has not only facilitated interconnectivity but has also ushered in a realm of unprecedented opportunities, ranging from innovative marketing strategies and academic collaborations to viable avenues for generating income. It provides quick and easy method of disseminating information and mobilizing social movements (Sharma, 2016). For Diani (1992) such social movements can be defined as networks of informal interaction between a pluralities of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged, in a political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity.

Blessed with a rich tapestry of tribal culture and adorned by its distinctive geography, flora, and fauna, Nagaland stands as a beacon of untapped potential in the realm of tourism. Despite these inherent charms, the hilly state has languished in obscurity, its allure obscured by inadequate infrastructure and the challenging terrain it encompasses. Moreover, the shadow of a tumultuous past looms large, as decades of insurgency and military conflicts have cast a pall over the state's image and the collective psyche of its people.

For over sixty years, the Naga quest for independence has manifested in various movements, each leaving an indelible mark on the socio-political landscape. This protracted struggle has sown seeds of doubt and uncertainty among the populace, fostering an atmosphere of apprehension. Yet, amidst these challenges, Nagaland's potential as a vibrant tourist

destination remains undimmed, awaiting discovery and exploration by those willing to traverse its rugged paths and delve into its rich cultural tapestry

Therefore, the Hornbill Festival serves as an ideal occasion to unite various Naga communities by offering the various platforms for cultural exchange and celebration. The festival also provides an opportunity to promote mutual understanding and cooperation among the tribes, helping to bridge any divides and strengthen the social fabric of the region. It provides an opportunity not only to showcase their handloom crafts but also to share a civic space free from the region's militarized political atmosphere (Kikon, 2004). Nagaland leverages this vibrant allure of the festival and exotic appeal of its location, emphasizing the warrior and tribal identity often linked to the Nagas. Thus, by capitalizing on these elements, Nagaland not only promotes its cultural and historical legacy but also positions itself as an attractive destination for travelers seeking an authentic and immersive experience (Longkumer, 2013).

Collaborating closely, the Central and state governments have made promoting the tourism industry a top priority, aiming to showcase the state's rich culture and its people. The Hornbill Festival, being the most significant celebration in Nagaland, serves as a focal point for this effort. Social media plays a crucial role in promoting and drawing visitors to the festival, making it an ideal case study for examining the impact of digital outreach on tourism promotion.

Objective of study

This research involves a descriptive analysis of the influence of social media on the representation of Naga culture and the changes in local attitudes through festival tourism.

Methodology

The primary data lies on semi-structured interviews conducted with both tourists and local residents gathered during the Hornbill Festival, providing firsthand insights into their perceptions and experiences. Additionally, secondary data from diverse sources such as books, journals, and news articles supplement the study, enriching the analysis with broader context and perspectives.

Tribal Identities in Digital Spaces

Tribes and their societal dynamics have long been a focal point for anthropologists and various social scientists, who strive to elucidate the intricacies of tribal communities and identities through their scholarly discourse. In recent times, the advent of globalization and technological advancements has woven the world into an intricate tapestry of interconnectedness, transcending geographical and temporal boundaries. Central to this phenomenon is the pervasive influence of social media, which has emerged as a pivotal force in shaping global discourse and facilitating unprecedented levels of connectivity.

Through the omnipresence of social media platforms, marginalized tribal groups are afforded a platform for representation and engagement with wider audiences. This online visibility serves as a conduit for effective networking and communication, enabling these communities to assert their presence and share their narratives with the world at large. The potential of social media to amplify the voices of minorities and provide them with a digital platform for expression underscores its transformative impact on contemporary societal dynamics.

Social media has become a ubiquitous platform where individuals can create online personas based on their interests, with limited emphasis placed on their heritage or origins. Here, talent and creativity serve as the primary drivers of viewership and subscriptions to content. However, there is a growing recognition of the importance of content creators and influencers from minority communities in representing their heritage and origins. Their content serves as a medium through which their tribal roots are conveyed to a wider audience, thus playing a vital role in cultural representation. These content creators often incorporate cultural elements into their content to attract a larger audience. Their popularity and influence within digital spaces make them valuable partners for promoting cultural advertisements. The process of forming partnerships between online personalities representing their culture and their audiences is crucial in shaping the image of tribal communities in digital spaces. Social media extends the lifespan of festivals beyond their duration. Memories shared on social platforms contribute to a festival's legacy, creating digital archives of past events that inspire future

generations. Festivals with a strong social media presence can maintain year-round engagement, building anticipation for upcoming editions

It is important to acknowledge the duality of the tribal image that exists both in digital spaces and in the real-world experiences of outsiders. While social media may offer a platform for cultural representation, the perception of tribal communities is influenced by both online and offline interactions, highlighting the complexities of identity portrayal in the digital age.

In contemporary times, social networking platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and others play a pivotal role in both preserving and showcasing Naga culture. The widespread usage of social media among the populace cannot be overstated, facilitating the rapid exchange of information within the community. This digital landscape presents an invaluable opportunity for raising awareness and sharing information in a cost-effective and user-friendly manner. Recognizing the immense potential of social media, the state tourism department has established official pages for the festival on online platforms. These pages serve as centralized hubs where individuals can access a wealth of content, including program details and event proceedings, enhancing the festival's visibility and accessibility to a global audience.

Nagaland, in its trajectory as a developing state, witnesses a growing trend among the younger generation to pursue higher education and seek employment opportunities. Amidst the swift pace of development and rising economic prosperity, there is a noticeable shift away from cultural traditions and heritage. The pervasive influence of social media, particularly among the youth, permeates various aspects of their lives, from academic pursuits to social interactions. However, this demographic also stands at a critical juncture, vulnerable to the allure of Western and Korean cultures propagated through digital platforms.

While social media poses challenges in preserving indigenous culture, it also presents an avenue for its revitalization and dissemination. By harnessing the power of social media, efforts can be made to impart cultural knowledge and foster appreciation among the youth. Through engaging and educational content, the digital realm can serve as a tool for reconnecting younger generations with their cultural roots and nurturing a sense of pride in their heritage.

"Mekhalamama[1]," a well-known Instagram account boasting over 30 thousand followers, is committed to preserving the rich heritage of Naga indigenous textiles while also uplifting local weavers and designers. Operating under the helm of a multitasking working mother who also serves as a professor, this platform showcases her daily attire, seamlessly blending traditional Naga garments with elements of Western fashion. Revered among women across the region, she has emerged as a significant influence, inspiring countless individuals to embrace traditional clothing and accessories in innovative and imaginative ways. Through her creative fusion of styles, she has sparked a cultural renaissance, encouraging a broader appreciation for Naga heritage and craftsmanship. As time progresses, cultures undergo evolution and transformation, often relegating traditional attire to special occasions such as festivals. However, there is a growing recognition of the value in integrating traditional garments into everyday wear, particularly among the youth of today. This shift toward incorporating elements of cultural heritage into daily outfits reflects a responsiveness to the changing dynamics of contemporary society.

Social media stands out as a significant platform for both networking and promoting the festival. Upon engaging with tourists, it becomes evident that a considerable portion of them became aware of the festival through various social networking sites. Among the 20 international tourists interviewed during the 2022 Hornbill Festival, a staggering 15 recounted discovering the event via social media channels. Moreover, these individuals had previously acquired knowledge about Naga tribal culture through online resources.

Among the multitude of remarks shared by tourists regarding the festival, the recurring themes centered on the captivating allure of traditional costumes, mesmerizing dances, and delectable indigenous cuisine. A tourist's reflection upon their experience at a cultural festival serves as a potent ambassadorship, wielding the power to inspire others to partake in the festivities. This phenomenon can be likened to a snowball effect, wherein the enthusiasm of a single tourist cascades, influencing a wider audience to consider attending the event. Furthermore, interview inquiries regarding the likelihood of revisiting the festival elicited

[1] Link to an the Instagram handle https://www.instagram.com/mekhalamama/?hl=en

resounding assurances from the majority of respondents, indicating a strong inclination towards returning in the coming years. This steadfast commitment to revisit underscores the lasting impact and appeal of the festival experience, highlighting its enduring significance in the hearts and minds of attendees.

Nagaland has confronted significant political unrest since India's independence from British rule. In response to the ongoing turmoil, the Indian government implemented the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 1958. This legislation empowered the armed forces with special authority to restore and maintain order in regions deemed "disturbed". However, recent events, such as the tragic incident in Oting village, Mon district, on December 4th, 2021, where 13 civilians and one military personnel lost their lives in a botched military operation, have further exacerbated tensions.

The portrayal of Naga struggle for independence and the subsequent military responses in various news outlets and articles has often been misleading, painting an unflattering and hostile image of both the Nagas and the region. Despite Nagaland's rich cultural heritage, which has attracted global interests, aspects such as the historical practice of headhunting among tribes have sometimes overshadowed its broader cultural context.

Nagaland's complex history, from traditional practices to insurgencies, is often misunderstood or misrepresented in the media. However, the emergence of social media has provided a platform for the public to voice their perspectives and correct misconceptions. This is particularly evident during the Hornbill Festival, where the presence of tourists, travel vloggers, and YouTubers has significantly increased, drawing attention to the festival's success and showcasing Naga culture to a global audience.

For instance, a tourist from Israel expressed apprehension about safety in the region due to past military operations, yet upon visiting the Hornbill Festival, he found the Naga community to be exceptionally warm and welcoming. Travel vloggers, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of the festival through their creative content and interactions with attendees. Their videos capture the essence of Naga culture, from traditional dances to indigenous cuisines, fostering a deeper appreciation for the region's heritage.

Through social media, the Nagas have become more integrated into larger online communities, allowing them to share their stories and perspectives directly, countering previous misrepresentations. This shift underscores the transformative power of social media in reshaping narratives and fostering understanding among diverse audiences.

Impact of the Hornbill Festival on Nagaland's Economic and Social Landscape

The surge in festival attendees in recent years has brought about significant economic and social implications for both the state and its inhabitants. During the festival period, the state government places special emphasis on enhancing infrastructure, including the improvement of roads and other essential facilities. The increased spending by tourists at the festival, along with their investments, serves as a catalyst for economic growth, consequently improving the livelihoods of tribal communities.

With the burgeoning tourism industry in the state, private enterprises and entrepreneurs have emerged as key stakeholders in the festival's operations. They play a pivotal role in meeting the demands of tourists, offering services such as home stays, culinary experiences, transportation, and more. The provision of facilities and hospitality for tourists is predominantly overseen and managed by these private enterprises. This symbiotic relationship between the private sector and tourism fosters economic development and cultural exchange, ultimately contributing to the overall prosperity of the state and its residents.

Encouraged by the government, locals are now opening up their homes to offer home stay accommodations, which have become immensely popular among tourists. The concept of home stays aims to provide visitors with an authentic experience of local life, allowing them to immerse themselves in the rich cultural tapestry of the region.

During the Hornbill Festival 2022, a local youth initiated a project named "Mechuki," which translates to "community hall" in Tenyidie[1]. This venture, inspired by the Naga tradition of communal dormitories, emerged as one of the most sought-after home stays. The communal living concept not only provides tourists with lodging but also facilitates cultural exchange and fosters a sense of camaraderie among guests. Renowned for their hospitality and warm

demeanor, the Naga people contribute significantly to enhancing the overall experience for tourists in the region. Their welcoming attitudes, coupled with the immersive cultural encounters offered through home stays and community initiatives, leave a lasting impression on visitors, enriching their journey through Nagaland.

Interactions between tourists and tribal communities, whether at home stays or festival sites, foster a dynamic exchange of information and experiences. Tourists, intrigued by the tribal way of life, eagerly seek to learn and immerse themselves in the local culture, while tribal members express a genuine curiosity about the background stories of their visitors.

It is noteworthy that Nagaland is predominantly a Christian-majority state, whereas many tourists come from diverse religious backgrounds or hold no religious affiliation. However, these differences in belief systems do not pose a threat to the formation of friendships or meaningful interactions. Instead, they serve as opportunities for mutual understanding and sensitivity toward each other's choices and attitudes in life. Locals and tourists seamlessly blend together, forming a harmonious amalgamation, expressions of admiration and respect for the ethical values and traditions of the tribal community, fostering an environment of mutual appreciation and cultural exchange.

As the tourism industry flourishes in Nagaland and the region becomes more accessible to visitors, a noticeable transformation is underway in the work culture, particularly among the younger generation. Traditionally, there has been a societal preference and pressure on securing government positions, leading to a surplus of educated but unemployed youths in the state. However, the rapid development of Nagaland has ushered in a surge in entrepreneurship and the establishment of private enterprises. With the tourism sector expanding rapidly, entrepreneurship is emerging as a dynamic driving force in the state's economy.

Youths, recognizing the potential opportunities brought about by the tourism industry, are harnessing their creativity and innovation to generate income, especially during festivals like the Hornbill Festival. The Hornbill Night Carnival, a focal point for entrepreneurs, features hundreds of stalls offering a variety of products. Among the most popular items are the local

[1]Tenyidie is a Tibeto-Burman language of the Bodo-Naga sub-group. It is spoken by the Angami Nagas in

fruit wines, which undergo a year-long process of harvest and fermentation, providing employment opportunities to several individuals. Nagaland's favorable climatic conditions allow for the cultivation of a variety of fruits with minimal investment, making local wineries a profitable venture.

Moreover, many Nagas possess exceptional artistic skills and craftsmanship, which are showcased at the festival's artist corner established by the government. During the festival, paintings featuring traditional elements and authentic to the artist are in high demand among tourists, with some fetching significant sums, such as one painting sold for rupees one lakh and several others for tens of thousands.

In a culturally diverse state like Nagaland, maintaining social unity and awareness is paramount. The Hornbill Festival serves as a platform for all Naga tribes to come together, express tribal solidarity, and celebrate their rich ancestral heritage. Through folk dances and songs, such as the Lotha Naga's 'Rukhyo Sharu[1]' or 'victory dance' performed during head hunting times, the festival offers a glimpse into the diverse traditions and narratives of the various tribes. Overall, the festival instills a profound sense of belonging and pride among the people, reinforcing their connection to their ancestral roots and cultural identity.

Findings and Conclusion

The Hornbill Festival in Nagaland stands as a momentous celebration, dedicated to the preservation of the rich Naga culture and the fostering of unity among its people. The aim of this study was to delve into the impact of social media on both attracting visitors to the festival and influencing the attitudes of the local populace. Undoubtedly, social media has played a pivotal role in the festival's success, evidenced by the substantial presence of both domestic and international tourists.

Over the years, the festival has experienced a gradual yet significant increase in visitor numbers, marking a triumphant narrative spanning two decades. Through adept representation

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Nagaland.

[1]It is a victory dance of the Lotha, men go around in circles and crisscross in complex patterns, diverging in different directions in order to confuse the enemy and ensuring that they are not followed to their village. They

and promotion of Naga tribes on various social media platforms, this unique indigenous community has garnered attention from across the globe. Moreover, social media has served as a corrective tool, bridging gaps created by misconceptions and wrongful representations of the Naga people. Another notable aspect stemming from the growth of the tourism industry is the shift in work culture preferences, with a notable inclination towards entrepreneurship over traditional government roles. The festival has also instilled a deep sense of pride in ancestral roots and cultural solidarity among the diverse Naga tribes.

Social media has revolutionized the way festivals are conceived, organized, and experienced. Its pervasive influence has democratized access to cultural events, empowered attendees as content creators, and enriched the overall festival landscape with digital connectivity and engagement. As festivals continue to evolve in the digital age, the symbiotic relationship between festivals and social media will continue to shape the future of cultural celebration and community engagement. It is imperative to acknowledge the transformative power of social media, which has not only opened new opportunities but also empowered the people of Nagaland to represent them and engage in social issues. By facilitating social change and connectivity to a larger population, social media has become an indispensable tool for fostering positive growth and mobility within Nagaland's dynamic socio-cultural landscape.

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also exhibit a crisscross movement of the footprints so that they can escape and the enemy cannot trace their route.

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Feminism and Patriarchy: A History of Struggle

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Abstract

Feminism has for long suggested that the reason for women's subordinate position in society has been due the system of patriarchy rigid in the fibre of manmade political and cultural setup. While this is the main point of content, feminist worldwide has to study the position of women based on locality, culture, tradition and socio-political structure of their own unique system. This paper attempts to understand feminist's stance on patriarchy and how different theory and criticism breaks down the reason for women's low stature in society and its effect on womanhood. It brings different school of thoughts to present a minute view of feminist theory on patriarchy.

Keywords: Feminist, Patriarchy, Theory, Cultural, Religion, Political, Economic, Woman, Man, Gender, Literature.

Introduction

The focus of this paper is to study the growth and function of feminists worldwide and also national into bringing consciousness to the issues and struggles of women. The feminist problem of patriarchy is a topic of study since feminist take patriarchy to be one of the reasons in women being subordinated and controlled. The working hypothesis is to find relevance and connection of feminists' theorists and writers both global and national in understanding the role of patriarchy in shaping the role of women within a society. This paper is purely theoretical in

nature and is intended for delving into some various schools of thoughts on the feminists view on patriarchy and can be assessed for further study and research.

Feminism and Patriarchy: A History of Struggle

In its basest term patriarchy means the rule of the father or the eldest male member over his family. Patriarchy is, then, where men are regarded as the power figure over not only the women of the household, but also towards younger male members. In the nineteenth century, anthropologists refer to patriarchy as a social norm where men are the head of the family, they were priests, lawgivers and community norms were laid down by them. Women had always and still lived in a state of restrains than men. Since their body which define their sexuality was not under their control, "women were not actually disadvantaged but psychologically restrained in a very special way" (Lerner 214).

Family nucleus, religion, tradition, art and education, are all societal creation that effectively reinforce the unequal distribution of power between men and women. Since this medium effectively conveys to the world that women are the weaker sex, they live amongst society and eventually believing that they are destined to be a minority member in the society, a "muted group", a subordinate being to their male counterpart.

In "*Perceiving Women*", anthropologists Edwin and Shirley Ardener developed a theory that defined women as belonging to the muted group and whose silence is necessarily not only of the socio-political construction but due to the dominant group's inability to hear them. They defined how women are excluded because the dominant group had formulated the language, speech and social norms which the subordinate group must express themselves by learning and using the language of the dominant group. But the language and vocabulary became muddled and distorted in the translation because the muted group cannot articulate clearly as the language of communication is the language of the dominant group and the dominant group also turned to ignoring the voice of the muted group. And, because much of history and documents have been written based from a male perspective where "women are classed as inauspicious, dangerous and the like" (Lewin 49) and that the failure of society has been the exclusion of the other half of society.

While it is true that the right to work has been the main cause of feminist movement in the early 1900s, its attainment has not solved all the issues and problems faced by women. By 1990s feminist theory and women thinker has brought to the forefront many questions and problems the idea and issues of feminist and feminism, mainly from the black women and the Third World women. They began to question feminist which seem to be relevant only to the white women belonging to the upper strata of society. Internationally, women started to examine women issues in relation to race, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and internal politics. The postcolonial feminism has raised issues like women's health, legal and domestic rights, wage legislation, the rights of the tribal and under-privileged women.

Problems and Issues of Indian Women

In India, by the late 80s and beginning of the 90s, women were detangling the state, history, culture, society, caste, class, traditional customs and practices, literature and art, to examine the patriarchal society of India. Their study focused on the traditional and cultural aspects that has stopped women from active participation in public life and has subsumed them to the household. Beside these areas, arguments were also based on how public field and institution tend to exclude women, how the state and the law has failed to support women's right and equality.

Indian patriarchy system was discussed with the form of production and reproduction keeping in mind the unique system of India in terms of "family and household; kinship and caste; culture and religion and the Indian state, whose policies have a dynamic bearing on all other social structures" (Geetha 61).

Bina Agarwal, the feminist economist notes that the family resource is a negotiation between men and women, in which men leads and women becomes the followers. Women's position and her choices then depend on the agreement in which the negotiation took place. So, an understanding of these on family and social system and state policy is necessary to learn how and why women are restricted and which they stand by protest or re-arrange. Agarwal notes that this social system, though unjust, is still retained, not because of lack of opposition,

but because when it is opposed it faces challenges against all the values, ideas and beliefs of society. The social reality is pertinent to the authoritative power that rule over women.

She also opines that woman tend to be economically dependent on men because they do not own land or do not have claims to land owning. The rights to own land in a family is given to men. And in rural India, land belongs to the community; it does not belong to an individual. So, family cannot divide their land according to their will, because leaders in the community could oppose to hand over land to women as it goes against the system and custom of their community.

In most of the Indian culture, tradition and religion is used as a reason for how men and women are treated and perceived. Traditional custom is taken to explain the social ethics and norms. Religious laws and scripture are used to justify certain practices and limitations. All the traditional and religious ideas have a direction to women and set male to a higher status and rights.

In a patriarchal society like in parts of India, lineage and family line are worked out through the father and property, especially in the upper caste and class of society. It is then passed down to the eldest son and his siblings and extended relatives are also provided their share of property and wealth. Girls are not inherently given any share, except in some states where special legislation is crafted for girls to claim her family property. And girls who do not inherit family assets are given certain gifts like jewels and utensils or land by their mothers at the time of her marriage. These gifts bestowed to the girls by the family is cited for not receiving her share in the family assets.

The kinship contract is useful in India because it allows men access to "ownership of land, starting a business, beginning life in the city, is all initiatives that require and are sustained in most instances by kin support" (Geetha 89). Kinship does not benefit women, rather it restricts them to engage with the society in their own condition. When women turn to the country's law for guarantee of their freedom of expression, they are often overturned by cultural and community laws, family law, and religious laws which are all backed and defined by men.

In India, women's public-private order cannot be separately analysed because men exercise their civic capacity through the kinship they had formed. The public command of men is interlinked to their family relationship. In the same way, women, too can gain admittance to the outside through the friendly bond they might have formed with men in power and authority, or they are part of a large political group, or very wealthy. For example, in the 33% reservation for women in the self-government, some women take up leadership role by their own accord. But in some cases, women who are placed in the office are elected because of the status of their men in the community.

Feminist Theory and Patriarchy

Feminists have consistently been of the view that all women are subjected to oppression by patriarchy. In *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Gerda Lerner comment, "The matrix of patriarchal relations between the sexes was already firmly in place before economics and political develops fully institutionalized the state and long before the ideology of patriarchy was developed" (Lerner 75). Radical feminists see all women as equal and linked by a common thread of patriarchal oppression. Mary Daly, an ecofeminist, linked nature and women as victims in a patriarchal- capitalist modern society. Juliet Mitchell, psychoanalysis feminist, states that while woman is born feeling a "lacking", man is born believing he is complete. Gender differences is constructed within the family and then to society and all other traits of a woman is assigned to her by the patriarchal society.

Gerda Lerner defined specific social role especially for women. The first was as a form of exchange as a bride. "The obverse gender role for men was to be those who did the exchanging or who defined the terms of the exchanges" (214). Next social role for women was the "stand-in" wife among elite groups that were established and institutionalized. This role gave women power and control, but that too depended on the status of their men in society and on the performance of the women in their sexual service to their men and in procreating. Once the women performance is deemed unsatisfactory, she is stripped off of her entitlement and privileges. Lerner states that while for men class depends on their 'relationship to the means of production' which means men that own the means of production also gain access to the

commodity of women and their social class is mediated through their sexual ties to a man" (215). She goes on to say:

"The patriarchal family has been amazingly resilient and varied in different times and places. Oriental patriarchy encompassed polygamy and female enclosure in harems. ... European development was based upon monogamy, but in all its forms a double sexual standard, which disadvantages women, was part of the system." (216)

Since then, patriarchy has been employed chiefly to understand male power in the social context that naturally authorises men to have privileges and control and for women to fight to claim any political, sexual or intellectual rights. This discourse of male dominance seems to prove male superiority and that it provides an accepted norm of society and those who accept their respective roles are recognised members of society. For women, their role of wife and mother are defined, and it is celebrated in all forms of art and religion, so much so that women strive to essay these roles in their society.

The system of patriarchy can only function with the cooperation of women. This cooperation is secured by a variety of means: gender indoctrination; educational deprivation; the denial to women of knowledge of their history; the dividing of women, one from the other, by defining "respectability" and "deviance" according to women's sexual activities; by restraints and outright coercion; by discrimination in access to economic resources and political power; and by awarding class privileges to conforming women (Lerner 217).

Patriarchy is not only the domination of men over women, but this subordination can also be targeted towards men who are weaker, younger, poorer, lower caste or class, homosexual and gays, eunuchs are all oppressed, discriminated exploited by their own sexes. But, most of these men, though a victim of discrimination does not altogether lose their civic rights. They can lay claims to family and property rights and wield some sort of power and resource much more easily than women.

To summarize about patriarchal society:

i. It can be understood that men are organically more logical, higher in status and strength than women; therefore, they are designated to be the dominant figure of society. For this reason, they exercise political power and hold the responsibility for policy making of the whole group.

ii. It is clear that men and women are created different biologically, and their needs, wants, function and capacity also are socially different which the natural way of life is.

iii. Men is thought to be more rational than women, they define the rule and set the whole order and system of the world. Women are set to nurture and sustain the species of the world, and the work of men has far superior significant as provider and lawmaker, which has given them the power over women.

iv. Men have control inherently the sexuality and the reproductive functions of women, but women have no such control over men.

v. Men are the direct mediator between men and God. Women have no such authority; they can only reach God indirectly through the mediation of men.

These assumptions that is the laws of the patriarchal system are neither natural nor societal, but they have been incorporated into the laws of human. Patriarchy system functions in human society in various forms and level, in varied force at different periods of the history of humanity. The change in the outlook of patriarchy in specific period of time is a reflection of the change in the position of women and their status in society during the particular point of history.

Carol Gilligan and Naomi Snider defined patriarchy as a 'culture based' that:

i. Leads us to see human capacities as either "masculine" or "feminine" and to privilege the masculine.

ii. Elevate some men over other men and all men over women.

iii. Forces a split between the self and the relationships so that in effect men have selves, whereas women ideally are selfless, and women have relationships, which surreptitiously serve men's needs. (9)

Juliet Mitchell linked production and reproduction as the cause of the domination of men and the subordination of women. She came up with four connecting levels which are:

i. the area of work where women worked at jobs that pays less or in typically 'feminine' field of work

ii. motherhood and household work, that was understood to be distinctively their vocations;

iii. all those cultural and ideological norms and beliefs that has made it society believe that men and women identification is natural and define each other in being what they are, men, the dominant and active, women, subordinate and passive;

iv. Sexuality or the component of our personal and erotic lives denotes the authority and preference to men's desire and for their pleasure (Geetha, 52-53).

Culturally, patriarchy demands us to perform in certain manner or characteristic based on dual gender and hierarchy. It made us see human ability as either masculine or feminine, and give more honour to masculinity, which made some men more powerful and rule over other men and rule over all women. Patriarchy divides the self and relationship, but while men can claim to have his own identity, women cannot claim to have selves, and this lack of self in women serve men underhandedly.

Since culture has lain down the set rules and values for mankind, it has set into the mind and has shaped us into how we perceive ourselves. Carol Gilligan and Naomi Snider observe the invisible presence of patriarchal laws and values in the minds of women, and as much as women cry for independence and equality, yet there is a looming sense of guilt when women put their self and their needs above others. This is the powerful effect of cultural patriarchy has upon the psychology of women. When women or even men try to break away from the social norm of patriarchy there is consequences and seen as unnatural. The social code of conduct enforced by patriarchy has been deeply embedded in our psyche, that any sort of rebellion or crossing the boundary is a matter of shame and guilt.

They state that "through the initiation" for boys and girls during their adolescents "femininity comes to be associated with pseudo- relationships (and the silencing of self) and masculinity (and the shielding of relational desires and sensitivities)" (18). Patriarchal dominance steadily steers humans toward selfless femininity and detached masculinity. Thus,

distancing oneself from real relational connection and attaching to socially appropriate human connection conforms to the rules of femininity attest by patriarchal tradition.

In her book, *When Boys Become Boys*, Judy Chu talks about the 'initiation' when boys learn about masculinity at the price of concealing his empathic instinct and stifling weakness to appear superior and to hide any form of rejection. Even without being taught, boys learn the duality of gender, as responding to the omnipotent presence of the force of patriarchy. Chu's research shows that for boys to become a member of men, some of them replace their emotional attentiveness and uniqueness for 'relational pretence and posturing'. So, boys detach their relational impulse and in order to be perceived by the other boys as a 'real' boy.

Feminism, Patriarchy and Literature

The most significant study of feminist theory against patriarchy has been the literary canon. The Marxist school of theory has pointed out that the medium of art and culture reflect the society in which it resides, therefore, it finds expression in literary works showing the unequal power distribution in society in the field of politics and economics between class, groups, gender and individuals. By reading and studying literary works women adheres to the stereotyping of women in the book who is represented as obedient daughter, selfless mother, innocent girl, or seductress. Literature, therefore, becomes the rulebook to which women and girls began to believe is the acceptable standard for girls to acquire and to achieve these roles. While most of the standard reading and availability of the literary canon have been men and their viewpoint of the feminine gender, the women's own experience and sentiments have somehow been side-lined. Women writers and critics' mission have been to reclaim woman's text wherein a woman's emotion, state and psychology can be depicted.

Virginia Woolf writes that women did not have creative space in the literary world because they were not given education, financial independence and space at home. She points out that in order for women to write creatively, they must have economic independence and 'a room of her own'. She justifies her points by taking the examples of Lady Winchilsea who had great talent in poetry but was not allowed to master her it because she was a woman. Jane Austen was another great novelist who could find time to write only when her family went out

and she hid her manuscript from men and visitors, and hid her identity for fear of being mocked, criticised and attacked for doing an unwomanly pursuits.

In mythology and religious writings too, women were always portrayed as second to men. Some citations are: In, *Devee Bhagvata* Urvashi was created out of the thigh of Narayana, in the book of Genesis God creates Eve out of the rib of Adam to give him company, Pygmalion in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* brings a beautiful statue of a woman that he had sculpted into life. All these suggest that history and literature had made women to be how men had wanted to be and has relegated them to a lower rank. She is, as St. Augustine says, neither decisive nor constant, and equal but separate. And so, feminist theory firstly started to analyse female characters' representation in male-authored books.

Feminism in literature attempt to deconstruct male writings to explore how in their writing women are typified and objectified. It points out that "all that has been written about woman by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuits" (Prasad, Paul 12). Feminist literary theory see the power reality of social and culture structure in literary text and since men had created and shaped the society and its language, men become the voice and narrator of women's conscious, body and soul and women their mere subject literature and in society. Rowbotham said that women have 'dual consciousnesses where women's historical self is always kept hidden from the social and cultural construction of womanhood. Simone De Beauvoir *Second Sex* examined five male authors to show how they represent female subordination in their works, and those literary writings were a "subject to implicit social ideas about the roles of men and women" (Waugh 326). Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* also describe that woman were subject to false ideas about woman and the relationship between men and women can be seen as a power structure with political undertones. She says that "all aspects of society and culture functioned according to a sexual politics that encouraged women to internalize their own inferiority until it became psychologically rooted" (326). Millet undertakes to study four male writers of the twentieth century, most famously, D. H. Lawrence to expose how literature aid in sustaining sexual inequalities by their use of language and imagery.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Guber researched women authors' response to patriarchy in their book *The Madwoman in the Attic*. They implied that within the text of woman's writing there is secret text that exposes needs and dreams, power politics and meanings. They argued that woman author has to comply by the male perception of the female, either as the submissive one or the seductive monster. They stress that the madwoman image by these writers is a representation of the author's dual personality, her anger and rage in her works.

Literary tradition has always perceived patriarchy as the eye we view the world. The superiority of men has been the tradition of India and women have always been looked at as inferior so they are a subordinate subject of male dominion, less of a human and not deemed worthy of respect. She is considered hopeless when she is not married and has a husband. Society is quick to label a woman who breaks conventional model of a woman. Thus, she is under intense scrutiny and every action of hers is judged and scrutinised.

Patriarchal tradition further inscribes myths and cultural laws of a meek, obedient, chaste and self-sacrificing image which is stuck into our genes and upbringing further lower women's status in society. This practice makes women into two beings- a sexual object for men's desire and a devoted mother. Man has trained women to be his servant for his selfish gains and this has restricted women of their freedom and the will to choose their own destiny.

This aspect of women's suffering and the patriarchal laws of society are depicted in the novels of women writers. Their novels show how male domination has caused the most suffering and struggles for women.

Conclusion

So, while society have clearly demarcated the gender difference and served inequality to the one group of society, the result is that not men or women are to be blamed for the inequality that prevails in society among the two genders. The earliest function of society has built a wall of separation between us. And, men and women have, for centuries accepted theses norms of society. But it would now be a good time to retrospect and begin to see both sides of the coin, namely the male and female perspective and start looking at people not as gender but as individuals.

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An Analysis on the Theme of Conflict in Mahesh Dattani's *Tara*

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Abstract

The early beginning of Indian English Drama can be traced to the nineteenth century from the first play written in English. Over time. each phase has had its distinctive characteristics adhering to the traditional way of writing with added experimentation. It has also seen the gradual influx of modern, creative writers like Mahesh Dattani who have contributed immensely in his field and opened new possibilities for the upcoming generation of young writers. *Tara* is a play in which the plot of the story revolves around the tragic story of the conjoined twins, Tara and Chandan. The characters surrounding or influencing them are presented through the mouthpiece of a narrator writer within the play. This study is an attempt on the part of the scholar to understand the theme of conflict together with other sub-themes like guilt, gender discrimination, values and the like impacting the individual self, the family unit and society in general.

Keywords: Tara, Conflict, Guilt, Gender, Self, Family, Society

Introduction

Mahesh Dattani was born on August 7th 1958, in Bangalore, Karnataka. He was a playwright, stage director, screenwriter and filmmaker. He won the prestigious central Sahitya Akademi Award for his book *Final Solution and Other Plays*, the highest award for a literary work in the country becoming the first playwright writing in English to receive this award.

Dattani's work has brought to the world of Indian English Drama, a modern sensibility and conviction that only few could assay.

Dattani's interest in theatre developed initially, when his father told him stories, he had watched in his own time. Later, when he himself watched plays being performed, he wanted to be a part of it. He started his own theatre group, Playpen in 1984 and began directing plays. *Where There is A Will* was his first play written in 1986. He identifies three "ideological" spaces that help understand the purpose of drama- the traditional that makes use of Indian art forms, the continual which is a mix of identities of the past moving forward together. This continuity in turn leads to change (Nagpal 20-21). The play *Tara* was first performed in 1990 by Playpen with the title *Twinkle Tara.* It was later changed to its current title. The play itself has been a subject of constant study with its myriad themes that the playwright has consciously or unconsciously brought forth. The present paper is an attempt to study *Tara* through the lens of the theme of conflict, in an inclusive analytical study.

Conflict with the Self

Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara* is a play in two acts about the Siamese twins- Tara and Chandan- conjoined at the chest and the plot that revolves around them. The play is rampant with the conflicting ideas of the characters with their own selves. The narrator Dan is a writer and he is a grown-up projection of the Chandan of the past. As the play begins, he talks about the contrast of poetry and drama where poetry brings out the "most turbulent emotions" even when an individual is half asleep, whereas in drama one has to recall "tranquility…with emotion" (Dattani 47). He has to remember his past if he were to bring out his locked emotions and he has been running away from these very memories. All throughout the play Dan the writer is conflicted about typing the words on the blank paper which only has his name and address typed on it, with only the consistent change of dates. He is conflicted to write the story from his past which according to him is at the expense of Tara's situation and experience. He says the following in one of his musings.

This isn't fair to Tara. She deserves something better. She never got a fair deal. Not even from nature. Neither of us did. Maybe God never wanted us to be separated. Destiny desires strange

things. We were meant to die and our mortal remains preserved in formaldehyde for future generations to study. Our purpose in life was maybe that. Only that. But even God does not always get what he wants. Conflict is the crux of life. (54)

He is caught in the conflict of his own self-doubts and fears of the past. He feels that the fact that conflict is the very core of life is the reason that God himself suffers loss and does not get what he wants. The readers or the audience are gradually introduced to Dan's viewpoint of the world around him at this point, including his notion of a defeated power.

The younger version of himself, Chandan grows under the shadow and protection of his twin sister Tara, he calls her strong. The major decisions of his life which include his studies, the job offered by his dad, the physiotherapist schedule all seem to be empty activities without Tara taking part in them. The conflict of self-identity began for Chandan when he was born as a twin. He only understood this conflict as he grew older. Nevertheless, there is always the sense of conflict pervading both the younger Chandan and his adult self Dan.

Conflicted Sense of Guilt

In the play, the sense of guilt dominates characters like Bharati and Patel, Tara's parents as they waver in between a conflict that is both emotional and psychological. Both of them handle it in their own way, Bharati, for instance, seems to give her unwavering attention to Tara. She does not want her children to be treated as subjects of experiment. She is appalled at the thought of including them in the medical journal findings once again. The readers are taken aback by the obstinate sense of protection that Bharati holds on to, in a male dominated society. However, this is soon laid to rest when readers realize that the mother has had her fair share of plotting in the agreement of giving away the third leg that was supposed to be rightfully Tara's, to her twin Chandan. In his essay, J. Edward Mallot writes 'Dattani's Bharati…employs dangerous thinking of her own, assuming that one "useful, able" male body would be better than a "useful, able" female' (197). Thus, even though Bharati is herself a woman, she is not free from the traditional thinking and choice of male child preference and falls prey to being one of the perpetrators along with her father (the twins' grandfather) and Dr. Thakkar. This decision of Bharati would hereon haunt her for the rest of her life giving her a "split

personality…torn between loyalty to Tara and obedience to Patel…Bharati's agreement in the act…has left her a mental wreck ever to remain troubled and guilt-ridden" (Prakash 204). She fusses and dotes over every little thing that concerns her daughter even to the extent of bribing a neighbor, Roopa to be friends with her because she is afraid that Tara would not make any new friends.

Besides Bharati, Patel, the father is another character who feels guilty and conflicted. The readers get to know that Patel had been against the decision and had not agreed to the daughter and father duo's decision. He expresses it to children in the play "Maybe if I had protested strongly! I tried to reason with her that it wasn't right…unethical! The doctor had agreed" (Dattani 102). Patel was placed in a conflicted situation and the fact that he could not do anything elevates his guilt, more so, when he faces Tara and Chandan everyday trying their best to cope with life. He also worries about the failing mental health of Bharati. Here, the readers might empathize with the character and his sense of guilt seems justified since he could not do anything against his powerful father-in-law who in turn influenced his wife and the doctor's decision too. However, it must be reminded that Patel remained a passive observer of the whole situation even though he was rightfully the lawful father of his children. He himself says that he could not protest strongly which makes the readers wonder whether he chose not to or felt it futile under a traditional mindset. Still, the consequence of his action is the psychological and emotional conflict that weighs upon him.

Conflict within the family

The opening of *Tara* brings to its audience most of the cast of the play centred around the family of four, the twins Tara and Chandan and their parents Bharati and Patel. It shows that the family have shifted to their current residence recently since they are in the process of unpacking. The mother is fussing over her daughter to drink milk while the brother and sister are having a friendly tussle over words. Even when the husband and wife enter into a quarrel about what the former allows the latter to do it still seems like a normal family of four because petty quarrels do take place in any family which gets resolved over time. However, as the play progresses each individual seems to be conflicting against their role in a family, as some

expectations are placed too high while others are not met. The parents overshadow their children in their own understanding of life. The children are deprived of their own independence, as "they are a site over which the parents fight their own battles at numerous levels." (Prakash 208). The patriarchal mindset of societal tradition can also be seen here as the father gives more attention to the male heir Chandan, insisting that he has to complete his studies, help him in the office; and at one point he becomes angry when he sees Chandan helping her mother detangle knitting wool that had gone loose, asking her if she planned to make him a "sissy". This mindset of the father widens the distance between him and his wife and daughter. Tara feels that her father does not like her or gives her the same attention he gives Chandan. It was not about being doted upon by her father that Tara had complains about, but she wished to be recognized as an individual. In certain instances, in the play, she is also verbal about it. At one time when Patel insists Chandan to go to the office with him to get an idea about how office works, Chandan refuses to go and says he should take Tara. Patel is at a loss and says Tara can come too if she wants to. At this point Tara simply thinks of herself as a liability as she replies to Roopa who was visiting "…the men in the house were deciding on whether they were going to go hunting while the women looked after the cave." (Dattani 52).

Bharati, the mother is also presented by Dattani as insecure and the past guilt she has makes her a worrywart, which in turn puts tension on her relationship with her husband which was already going through a rough stage because of the impact of the past. There is conflict in their relationship over many issues, one of them being Patel not agreeing to make Bharati a kidney donor for Tara. As the reader or the audience, the initial thought is that Patel might be doing that for the sake of his wife's health but the following lines from the play give a different light on this supposition.

BHARATI (pleadingly). Why won't you let me do it?

PATEL (controlling). Because…need I tell you? Because I do not want you to have the satisfaction of doing it.

BHARATI. I will do it!

PATEL. You will have to obey me. It's my turn now. (68).

In this contest between parents the family and within that, the children remain conflicted, unable to take sides. Tara, suffers a great shock after she hears about her doting mother's past decision, although it also does not improve her relationship with her father. The readers get to know about her years in the future when Dan mentions Tara's death. Chandan also chooses to leave behind the reminders and memories after all these transpire.

Social Conflict and Disability

Tara is a play which brings out the ugly conflict of society too. There are characters who represent modern as well as traditional social values with certain expectations. Dr. Thakkar who represents modern society with its scientific progress and advancement is placed with the opportunity of performing an operation that would impact science and new knowledge. Besides that, he is given the conflicting choice of remaining true to his ethics or to choose the root of social evils, money and he chose the latter. Nothing is stated about his own state of mind throughout the play except for his constant explanation in the interview, about the intricate and complex operation. This shows that there are individuals like him in society without qualms about their misdeeds. Roopa and her two friends represent the society which feeds off the stories and tragedies of others. Roopa builds a "relationship with the twins, but continues to reflect and articulate the community's scorn." (Mallot 185). The impact of society on Roopa is more as she goes to their place only for the gossip and also the number of movies that she can watch. Towards the end an argument breaks out between them, breaking the feeble relationship. She openly ridicules and laughs at their disability and towards the end of the play Roopa and her friends represent the other conflicted part of society who are still not ready to receive individuals like Tara and Chandan with disabilities, calling them out with posters of 'We don't want freaks' and shouting out "Freaks" (Dattani 102). It can also stand for a conflicted society still unable to accept situations, individuals or experiences which are different from what society envisions the normal to be.

Conflict between Modern and Traditional Values and Lifestyles

In the play *Tara,* there is also conflict between the characters in terms of their values and lifestyles since they represent two different generations. Rabi Mistry and Dr. Jyotsna Sinha

write about Chandan as Patel and Bharati's preference, whereas Chandan recognizes and respects Tara's identity and talent; whereas Bharati is satisfied to be a housewife, Tara is ready to assert her identity. Patel has traditional Indian male qualities who considers household chores to be female activities. Chandan on the other hand is opposite to his father and he, like his own radical generation, believes in equality and cooperation when it comes to household work initially done by women. (5964-65).

The conflict of science and nature can also be seen in the play. Dr. Thakkar is a very competent professional in his field and even when the play is staged, he is given the role of a god since life and death depends on him. Nature had brought a very complicated, if not impossible situation of conjoint Siamese twins. When science and nature work together, they are believed to bring unified solutions. The twins had the chance of surviving through surgical procedure and other such scientific methods. The conflict situation arises between the traditional course of nature as against the modern technique when the third leg which had better chances of survival on the girl since a major part of the blood supply to the third leg was from the girl, was given to the preferred male child only to rot away like a piece of meat which did not belong. Science represented by Dr. Thakkar, could have taken the rational decision and remained neutral instead of falling to the vices of society- bribery. It also shows the imbalance between scientific progress and social and cultural advancement. The result of this imbalance is not only Dr. Thakkar but other characters like Bharati and her father… "the play is not about illiterate or uneducated people. It is about the people who belong to the highest class of the society…claim to be quite cultured and civilized…modern people who do not believe in any orthodox and conservative practice of society." (5966).

Conflict between Gender Preference

It cannot be denied that one of the major themes of the play is gender discrimination. In the play Tara the readers are introduced to the story about the conjoined twins Chandan and Tara and the result of their tragic surgery. However, the character who suffer discrimination here is the female, Tara which first begins with the mother's preference of the male child being perfect with two legs as against the female child who is the rightful owner of the pair of legs.

The sad plight of the third leg being cut off from the owner results in the piece of flesh being rejected by the other twin after two days. This is mirrored in Tara's profound longing when she wistfully wishes for a pair of legs and not "Jaipur" legs or prosthetics that they were using; and her sensitive reaction when Chandan tells her not to mind being one-legged. It shows that unconsciously she yearns for the part of her body that had been cut off from her, though she only came to know of it later. Though Patel is not very vocal about it the readers also see instances of the impact of the traditional values in him as well as the belief in the patriarchal society which in turn influences his likes and actions. The belief of having a male heir is strong and he wants Chandan to grow up to be a man, while Chandan differs with his father. He is receptive to helping in the housework and views his sister as a strong, independent woman, their father on the other side doesn't seem to worry about Tara losing weight or going to college, it was not his lack of care but it shows his perception of how women should stay confined to their houses, been taken care of by their fathers, brothers or husbands as bread earners.

The conflict in gender is also highlighted when Dr. Thakkar, the individual who is supposed to save lives, succumbs to the pressure of money and power. He becomes selfish and forgets his human ethics as his surgical procedure and scientific knowledge cuts off a "piece of meat" which had belonged to the female cutting off a part of her that would never grow, which in itself would be a criminal offence for which he is never convicted. Society is another factor that bring about conflict on gender. One such example is Roopa and her two other friends Prema and Nalini (whose names are mentioned but they do not appear with the cast). Even though Tara is also a female, Roopa leaves no stone unturned to find ways to bring her down. Bharati is also not spared from Roopa's vicious gossip and banter about the Patel household, the crazy mother and the "horrible" twins and calls Tara "one-legged thing". At one point she talks about the preference of the Patels for boys rather than girls and she repeats what she had heard "…Patels in the old days were unhappy getting girl babies — you know dowry and things like that – so they used to drown them in milk." (Dattani 72). Roopa becomes an

ignorant part of the very system which discriminates gender and the conflicting and ironic situation is that she also is part of the gender that is victimized in the play.

Conclusion

The study analysis of *Tara* has usually been done on separate backdrop of different themes. However, the aim of this study has been to analyze it from the theme of conflict that resonates in the play highlighting the individual, family and society bringing to the forefront related issues like guilt, values, gender preference etc., which form a significant part of the progress of the play in itself. It also leaves readers and scholars with more questions on how or why the plot of the play goes a certain way paving the way for further study and discussion. In conclusion, *Tara* as a play is intriguing and provides an interesting study into what the playwright and the characters communicate through the means of the stage expressed in written words, as this thematic study ensues.

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Zhüdougei

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Review of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of Nagaland

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Abstract

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector in an economy is considered as an important component as it contributes and create opportunities in areas like employment, entrepreneurship, industrial production, and alleviating poverty. It is often regarded as the engine of growth for economic development of a country. There is an immense contribution of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises to the Nagaland economy in terms of creating employment opportunities, encouraging balance economic growth and discouraging regional inequalities. Nagaland is a state with its unique blend of traditional craftsmanship, diversified population and abundance of natural resources has the capabilities of becoming a centre for MSMEs. This study analyses the structure of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector of Nagaland with the help of various secondary sources from MSMEs Annual Reports, Government Reports, Journals and Research papers. The purpose of this study is to focus on the structure of MSMEs in Nagaland.

Keywords: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, employment, Nagaland.

Introduction

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector has come into view as a significant driving component for the enlargement of the Indian economy. Huge contributions is made by this sector. They contribute 55% of the total companies in the agrarian areas encouraging a comprehensive development and regional equality. Further, they play a pivotal role in reducing

unemployment and contribute a creditable part to the Gross Domestic Product, industrial management and country's export (Shelly et al., 2020). Over the last five decades, after the agriculture sector the Micro, Small and Medium sector was also considered as the second largest contributor to the economic development as it grown to be very dynamic sector. To meet the needs of private and international markets the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector are expanding their area across various sectors of the economy by offering different kind of products and services. The widening of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises is the foremost element particularly in a state as it creates an opportunity in empowering business environment by providing greater efficient use of resources, generating employment growth, scientific transformation, fostering multi-sectorial interdependence, increase exports and develop skills in entrepreneurial sectors. Attention to the various Government plans and policies becomes a requisite segment to let the sector from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to grow and work efficiently. According to the Annual Report of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises 2020-2021, in 2018-2019, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector has contributed 33.50% to Country's Gross Value Added and 30.27% in all India Gross Domestic Product (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, n.d).

Objectives

The key objective of this study is to briefly underline the structure of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nagaland.

Methodology

The study is done basing on secondary data taken out from Government Annual Reports on MSMEs, research articles, journals and statistical data from government websites.

Concepts of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Earlier in India Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises was known as Small Scale Industries (SSIs) but after identifying the huge endowment and prospect of this sector the Government of India decided to widen the definition of SSIs, which led to the introduction of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act 2006, it was only after the passing of the Act the sector came to be known as MSMEs (Tingo, 2016).To enhance and

promote the competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises the Act was introduced, after which the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 was amended. In accordance to this and also to address different issues affecting the coverage and investment of the sector, the Ministry of Small-Scale Industries and the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries join force to form a single Ministry, presently known as the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME). The Act also focuses on enterprises promotion to enhance the competitiveness of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises sector. Correspondingly the enterprises have been classified as manufacturing enterprises and service enterprises and basing on their investment in machines and equipment values the sector have been further classified as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Annual Report 2020-2021).

Before 2006, the classification of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises was created only on investments in plant, machinery and equipment. But after 14 years since the economy has undergone significant changes, a new package called as the Aatma Nibhar package was announced on 13th May, 2020. The package announcement brought changes to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. One of the significant changes about this package is easy conduct of business, establishment of more classified and objective system in a realistic time. The Government of India on 1st July, 2020 further decided to revise the MSME definition. As a result, new composite of classification has been notified. This new criteria is expected to bring many benefits that will aid MSME to grow. Keeping in mind that limits of the updates for any types of MSME units be it in micro, small and Medium would not include the turnover related to exports sector. Consequently, this will remarkably increase in investments and creation of job opportunities in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector. (Koka and Kaurinta, 2022a)

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nagaland

The significance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises not only add to the industrial sector but it also creates a social order of equality, justice and employment in Nagaland. The MSME sector in Nagaland, primarily driven by agriculture, handloom and handicrafts, faces challenges related to infrastructure and market access due to its remote location. However, with

the state Government's initiatives in creating various policies it is fostering entrepreneurship and innovation, offering potentiality for sustainable growth and economic development in the region.

For this industrially backward state, there is an immense and increasing need for healthy MSME. The development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector is required in a tribal economy like Nagaland, which is particularly an agrarian economy. It is absolutely necessary to pay more attention to the state Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector policies and growth under various MSME plans and programs formulated by the Central Government and State Government as such. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector play an important role in the present context by providing greater resources in capacity building in employment generation, technological innovation, raising exports and developing entrepreneurial skills.

The functioning of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector in Nagaland is done accordingly with Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry of Development Act, 2006. With MSME policies and programmes functioning actively in the last five years there has been a significant growth in this sector (Koka & Kaurinta, 2022 b). Each year the report indicates that there has been an increased in the number of registrations in MSME sector which on the other hand show huge growth in employment and investment.

The Government of India under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises on September 2015 started an online registration of MSME called as 'Udyog Aadhar Memorandum' which continued till 2020. Later, on 26th June 2020, the Ministry of MSME replaced the former process of filing with 'Udyam' registration on a portal on compound criteria of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector classifications (Koka & Kaurinta, 2022 c). According to the Ministry of MSMEs Annual Report 2019-2020, the state of Maharashtra tops the list of MSMEs registration whereas Nagaland is listed in 34 number according to the state and union territory wise registration (Statistic and Data Division). The table below indicates the registered number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nagaland from the period of 2015-2020.

Table 1

Registered MSME of Nagaland from the period 2015-2021 (Udyog Aadhar Memorandum)

Year	Micro	Small	Medium	Total MSME registered
2015-2016	7	5	0	12
2016-2017	125	44	1	170
2017-2018	103	34	2	139
2018-2019	251	107	5	363
2019-2020	632	124	4	760
2020-2021	399	163	13	575
Total	**1517**	**477**	**25**	**2019**

Source: Registration of MSMEs in India (Udyog Aadhar Menorandum) State/UT wise registration (2020-21)

The table reveals that the Micro enterprises is the highest total number of registered Micro, Small and Medium, Enterprises amongst the other two enterprises with 75.13% whereas the small and medium enterprises consist of 23.62% and 1.23% respectively from 2015-2021.

The total number of employments from 2015-2020 under the MSEMs in Nagaland is also indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Total employment from the period 2015-2020

Year	Micro	Small	Medium	Total employment
2015-2016	63	45	0	108
2016-2017	1103	753	6	1862
2017-2018	784	510	209	1503
2018-2019	1770	1437	281	3488
2019-2020	2924	1297	50	4271
Total	**6644**	**4042**	**546**	**11232**

Source: Registration of MSME in India, (Udyog Aadhar Menorandum) State/UT wise employment (2020-21)

The data show that highest number of total employments among the registered MSMEs each year is the micro enterprises with 59.15% followed by the small enterprises with 35.98% and the least is registered total employment is the medium enterprises with 4.86% (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises n.d.).

Table 3

District- wise Udyam registered MSME of Nagaland

Sl no	District name	Micro	Small	Medium	Total Udyam
1.	Dimapur	7180	153	15	7348
2.	Kohima	3441	32	1	3474
3.	Mokokchung	1547	13	1	1561
4.	Phek	1369	1	0	1370
5.	Zunheboto	1354	4	0	1358
6.	Mon	1313	5	0	1318
7.	Wokha	1221	9	0	1230
8.	Chumoukedima	1105	6	0	1111
9.	Tuesang	1047	0	0	1047
10.	Peren	863	0	0	863
11.	Kiphire	658	2	0	660
12.	Longleng	598	0	0	598
13.	Nuiland	292	1	1	294
14.	Tseminyu	276	0	0	276
15.	Noklak	260	0	0	260
16.	Shamator	62	0	0	62
Total		**22588**	**226**	**18**	**22832**

Source: dashboard.msme.gov.in/ Udyam-ditrictwise.aspx

According to the district wise Udyam registrations in India, Nagaland has a total of 22720 MSME Udyam registered. The data shows that the district of Dimapur has the highest number of permanently registered MSMEs with 31.44 % of the total MSMEs registered. While the capital of Nagaland, Kohima stands second with 15.07% total MSMEs registered. The District of Shamator is listed as the least registered MSME. Amongst all the registered MSMEs, micro enterprises is the most registered enterprise constituting of 98.93% which indicates that the investment in this enterprises has low capital for investment. For such reason it is recommendable for the government to make available of access to credit facilities flexible to the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises sector from various sources. Small enterprises comprise 0.98% and medium enterprises comprises of 0.07% which is quite very low (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises). The low percentage in the small and medium enterprises indicates that there are some major challenges and issues faced by these enterprises.

Lack of capital formation, locality remoteness, problems in managerial skills, problems in access credit facilities are some of few reasons which lead to low growth in these enterprises. By using the available resources there is a significant potentiality to develop and strengthen the capacity of MSMEs in Nagaland. By strengthening the capacity of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector there is a huge opportunity to expand and unleash more industrial growth. Therefore, it is crucial for this sector's development as it holds the key to all round growth in the states and districts.

Conclusion

For comprehensive economic development of Nagaland Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has been playing a crucial role through the separation of industries into rural, semi-urban, and backward areas. The sector been characterised by low investment requirements, operational flexibility and locational adaptability solves the problem of regional disparity and inequality. It bridges the gap of inequality in many sectors by giving worthwhile employment chances with reasonable investments. To enable Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector increase across all districts the federal government, local government and various development organization must work together. Furthermore, to let Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises develop to its full potential the state Government should be the driving force to provide ample help and take necessary measures. Hence, for comprehensive development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Government must carry on to put efforts in areas like human capital development, awareness services, easy access to finance, technology, infrastructure and market approaches to enlarge productivity and give rise to economic growth.

Findings

1. The study found that Micro Enterprises are the highest total number of registered MSMEs with 75.13%.
2. The study found that small and medium enterprises consist of 23.62% and 1.23% respectively, from 2015-2021, indicating a low presence of these types of enterprises in Nagaland.
3. The study found that Dimapur has the highest number of permanently registered MSMEs with 31.44% of the total MSMEs.

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Zhüdougei

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Focusing on Student Mental Health and Well-being: Schools as a Vital Component

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Abstract

Schools are the first and foremost place of learning, building competencies and academic achievement; however, schools are also places of safe keeping, care, and encouragement in developing the health and the confidence required for future independence in adulthood. Schools serve many purposes and provide unprecedented opportunities to improve and enhance the quality of life of adolescents. As nations progresses towards universalization of education, schools need to broaden their functions by offering mental health services, to address issues interfering with school. Since school is considered as the second home where children spend most of their active hours, it gives the potential to amplify mental health interventions, bridge the gaps, deal with issues early, and lessen the stigma associated with psychological disorder. This paper explores the importance of mental health initiatives within school highlighting their potential to prevent problems, provide early intervention, and foster supportive environment. It also highlights how teachers and school counsellor can play an important role in positively contributing to the mental health provision/ services within the school by providing guidance and assistance and also creating a safe and stimulating environment for children.

Keywords: Mental Health, Well- being, Intervention, School, Teacher, Counsellors, Programs

Introduction

Mental health and well-being of students provide foundational base for imparting holistic development and fostering the qualities and life skills necessary for their growth, resilience and sustainable development. Mental well- being is closely linked with all facets of health, such as physical, social and emotional aspects and that any compromise in one aspect can have a profound effect on all of them (Sibia et al., 2022).

Today, mental health is a significant concern affecting children's lives. It is widely agreed that numerous mental health issues starting in early stage of life persist into adulthood or emerge later in life (Vieira et al.,2014 as cited in Daiz, 2020). In the past, the role of the schools was primarily focused and concerned with the future of children immersed in preparing for workforce or job, whereas at present they are recognized as an important institution in promoting and safeguarding student's mental health and overall well-being. According to the World Health Organization (2018), the role of schools in promoting health is linked with two primary factors; firstly, providing a healthy environment for children while they are in school and secondly, helping students develop skills to promote healthy practices in their lives. Both factors are essential to ensure a future life that promotes mental well- being of the students. National Education Policy 2020 in Para. 2.9 also states that Children who are undernourished or unhealthy are unable to learn to their full potential. Therefore, addressing nutrition and health, including mental health is essential by providing nutritious meals and integrating trained social workers, counsellors and community into the educational system (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). The European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health organized by the World Health Organization in 2005 also emphasized the importance of mental health and endorse the statement "There is no health without mental health" (Ministry of Health, 2022, p.6). Endorsement of this statement underscores that the role of mental health is fundamental and essential.

Methodology

The study primarily employs an analytical approach gathering secondary data from different sources to gain a conceptual understanding of how schools are imperative in

promoting and preventing student's mental health. The method used in the study is a combination of both qualitative and descriptive approach. Various secondary data was collected from different sources such as websites, magazines, journals, articles, blogs, newspapers and other online and offline publication. The study also takes into account the extraction of document and reports related to mental health policies to assess important and relevant information necessary for drawing conclusion.

Growing Need for Student Mental Health Support

Mental health challenges among children and adolescents is a global concern. World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately one out of every seven individuals between the age group of 10-19 experiences mental health issues, yet these often go unnoticed and untreated (World Health Organization, 2021). In India, studies indicate a significant occurrence of mental health concerns among school-going students (Sibia et al., 2022). Neglecting to address mental health problems during early stage of life can have lasting effects into adulthood, affecting both physical and psychological well-being and reducing the chances to lead a fulfilling life. Therefore, it is crucial to protect children and adolescents from adverse experiences, fostering socio- emotional development and mental well- being, and providing access to mental health care to ensure their health and well- being throughout adolescence and into adulthood (World Health Organization, 2021).

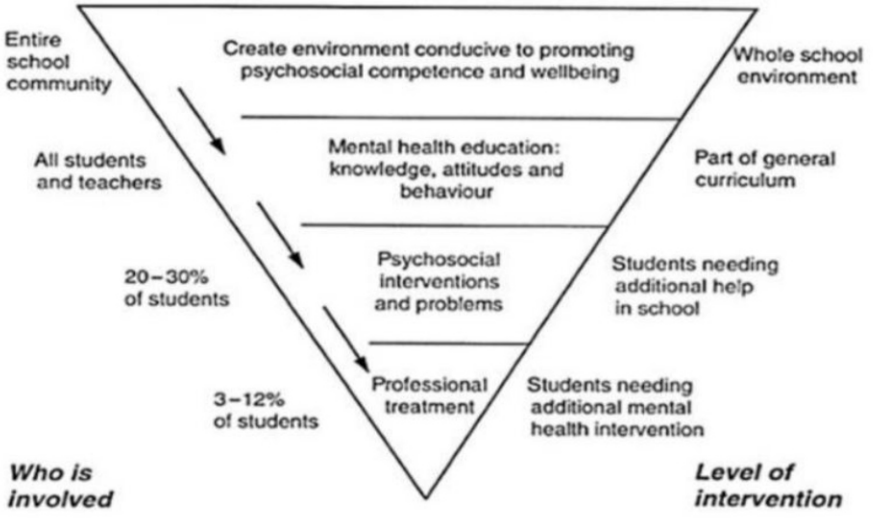
School's Potential for Promoting Mental Health

School environment refers to the "living and learning" climate of the school and schools have an unprecedented opportunity to positively enhance the lives of the children. Schools and early education settings are pivotal in addressing students' mental health, as well as providing support for those who may be vulnerable to developing mental health issues. Schools are crucial in children's holistic development, impacting various aspects such as peer relationships, academic achievement, emotional regulation and moral development (Fazal et al., 2014 as cited in Patil, 2020). With their central role in children's lives, schools provide significant opportunities for promoting, preventing and supporting students' mental health.

World Health Organization (WHO) in 1994, has outlined a model for promoting mental health in schools. According to this model, schools should prioritize on creating a conducive environment, fostering psychosocial competence, increasing awareness among families and communities and enhancing capabilities to promote emotional wellness (Patil, 2020). **Figure 1** highlights the actions that aimed to maximize mental health and well-being of entire school community and individual by improving social, physical and economic environment-strengthening the understanding and the skills of individual to support their efforts to attain and maintain mental health (Wyn, et al., 2000).

Figure 1

WHO's four- level, whole school approach to school change



Note. This model was produced by World Health Organization 1994, summarizing multi-tiered approach to school change and to promote psychological wellbeing among young people. From "NEP 2020: Mental health and Emotional wellbeing of students and the changing role of Teacher as a Counsellor," by R. D. Patil, 2022, *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 3* (3), p.502. (https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V3ISSUE3/ijrpr2915-nep-2020-mental-health-and-emotional-well.pdf). Copyright 2020 by IJRPR.

The broadest part of the figure highlights the primary focus of the holistic school approach, which is to establish a 'health promoting' environment for everyone involved. It

encompasses the whole school community; school ethos, nature of school policies; and the quality of relationships with parents, students and communities. Along with the ease of accessibility and affordability, mental health service has become a multidisciplinary object that involves teachers, parents, counsellors, professionals and school administrative bodies (Patil, 2022). Kidger et al., (2009) also found out that the most effective efforts to mental health in schools are those that implement or adopt a holistic school approach. This approach takes into account school policies, the overall school ethos and environment, collaborations with other agencies and staff training, rather than solely focusing on classroom activities.

Issues related to well-being and psychosocial competence have a broad impact on the entire school community. Implementing specific programs on mental health can enhance coping mechanism, reduce stress and cultivate a supportive environment within the school. Students and teachers are all influenced by mental health education, awareness, attitudes and actions. Educational initiatives, programs and strategies can have a significant effect on recognizing and addressing psychosocial and mental health issues. Early detection of children with psychosocial challenges is vital and should target them with the necessary support and interventions. Early issues in school frequently endure and predict later, more serious issues like academic failure, dropout, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, delinquency and low levels of adult earnings. Some children may even develop severe mental health conditions due to their specific physiological vulnerabilities, just as some children may develop other medical disorders. Therefore, it is essential for children to receive treatment from mental health professional, coupled with a supportive school environment that fosters receptively to addressing mental health concerns (Hendren et al., 1994).

Teachers' Role in Students Mental Health

The role of teacher in addressing the problem of mental illness at best seems to be an unclear one and at worst, a refusal to accept any responsibility. However, in reality teachers plays a significant role in addressing mental health issues among the students. SSVM World School (2016) pointed out that teachers have a dual role. Firstly, when a student is identified as facing mental health issues, the teacher can provide essential support and assistance. This

includes providing resources, making necessary referrals and simply being a compassionate listener. Secondly, a teacher can also help prevent the development of mental health problems by creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that fosters a sense of worth and belonging in students. When students experience a sense of belonging and value, they are more likely to thrive academically and emotionally. Additionally, teachers can help students in developing resilience and adopting healthy coping mechanism, empowering them to effectively navigate various challenges they may encounter.

Teachers have a significant impact in shaping students' knowledge, behavior and mindset due to their regular interaction and engagement with them. Teacher's timely recognition of students with mental health issues and their initiative in referring these students for appropriate support and assistance is appreciated. However, it is also important to acknowledge that many teachers may lack the necessary skills to provide help and support students who might need mental health assistance. Hence, sensitizing teachers on mental health issues and providing them with essential skills and training they need to assist children and make subsequent referrals of students who may be having possible issues is also crucial (Rothi et.al., 2008).

In addition, positive relationship between students and teachers also helps children who are likely to show behavioral issues by promoting and encouraging coping mechanism. According to Obsuth et.al. (2017) a positive relationship between students and teacher is linked with reduction of violent behavior of student, conversely negative relationship with teachers can be a predictive factor for the onset of psychological disorder and academic failure. The need and importance for positive relationship with teachers does not diminish as the children grow older. Support in the context of relationship with teacher is of fundamental significance and crucial throughout key transitional phases like transition from primary to high school and from high school to college and so on. Teachers who show affection, acceptance, empathy and readiness for communication help establish positive relationships with students. This relationship will positively influence students' engagement in academic pursuits, academic success and their relationship with peers (Nikolaou & Markogiannakis, 2017).

Role of School Counsellors

While teachers play a crucial role in effective school- based mental health support and provision, it is also essential for school to host a counsellor as part of a whole- school approach which will enhance the provision of mental health services. School counsellors offer a service that students can voluntarily choose to access when seeking assistance for various issues related to their psychosocial wellbeing or behavior (Thorley, 2016). Counsellors in schools play an important role in early detection of emotional and behavioral problems relating to mental health. Studies indicates that students are slightly more inclined to consult with a counsellor about their mental health concerns than to a teacher (Young Minds as cited in Thorley, 2016). This highlights the importance of counsellor in providing a dedicated and confidential space for students to discuss their concerns and seek support.

Many counselling services in school provide a drop-in service, making the counsellor the first point of contact for students concerns. School counsellor often play a key role in both evaluation and referral process, working together with other staff to ensure students receive appropriate support. School counsellor provide students the opportunities to navigate, understand and overcome life challenges that may lead them to distress or confusion. These challenges could indicate the initial signs of developing psychological issues (Thorley, 2016). Therefore, in order to prevent the possibility of developing more severe mental health issues, counselling services within the school are employed as a form of early intervention. Although school counsellor does not provide prolonged mental health therapy in schools, they do offer a comprehensive counselling program tailored to address the developmental needs of all students.

According to the CBSE Mental Health Manual (2020), counsellors are expected to continuously update their knowledge on the latest career trends and development to fulfill their role effectively, for this purpose-

a) School counsellor play a crucial role in providing academic and career guidance to students who may feel directionless or lack guidance from home or elsewhere. Acting as a mentor, counsellor can help students better understand their academic potential and explore various higher study options after school.

b) School counsellor also play a crucial role in addressing peer- related issues such as bullying, groupism, unhealthy exposure to social media which is often seen in schools. Counsellors are expected to be aware of these serious issues and if necessary, asses and report the school authorities and collaborate with school and family members to rectify the situation.

c) A major part of a counsellor's time in school is spent in identifying and addressing problematic behaviors in children to prevent them from escalating into major concerns. In such cases, the counsellor may collaborate with parents to seek their support in enabling the child to resolve their issues.

d) School counsellor may seek the help of parents to monitor their children's behavior after school and ensure that the strategies suggested during counselling sessions are being used effectively.

e) Teachers play a vital role in providing support and referring students to the school counsellor when needed. Teachers can be instrumental in supporting the counsellor to ensure that a student manages to cope with stress and help unburden the child- emotionally and mentally.

School- Based Mental Health Programs

Mental health initiatives in school are essential for promoting students well- being and creating a supportive learning environment. To effectively implement mental health programs in school, it is essential to adhere to fundamental guidelines that ensure comprehensive student support and foster a healthy culture and positive environment in the school. In the article, 'Setting up School Mental Health Programs' (2014), Mental health programs in school can be Environment- Centered or Child-Centered approach. In environment- centered approach, the emphasis should be on improving the school climate and provide opportunities for students to participate in healthy programs, while the child- centered approach includes a range of personalized interventions tailored to meet individual needs of the students. Additionally, child-centered approach may involve implementing classroom programs aimed at enhancing coping skills, fostering social support and boosting self- esteem among students.

Environmental- Centered Programs School can Conduct

a) Programs and workshops aimed at enhancing the skills of administrators, teachers and support staff in dealing with emotional or behavioral challenges that the students encounter.

b) Programs aimed at enhancing teacher's ability to effectively understand and make use of external agencies that provide mental health services for children.

c) National campaigns focused on reducing the prevalence of certain behaviors harmful to mental health such as bullying, raging, corporal punishment etc.

d) Improving the social environment of the school by encouraging parent participation and involvement through supportive parent programs aligned with school activities.

e) A multidisciplinary mental health team can be established in the school to offer consultation and support in the managing student behavioral problems.

f) School mental health team can monitor, track and assess the effectiveness of interventions and provide feedback so that appropriate modifications and adjustments can be made in the program.

g) Schools can serve as the center for community enhancement projects, including programs aiming at promoting both physical and mental health. Additionally, they can serve as training centers where parents can gain insights about child development, effective parenting skills and receive encouragement and support to boost their sense of self-worth and competence.

Such program provides a coordinated, collaborative effort to improve communication, understanding and respect between staff, students and parents. This provides a sense of direction and ownership of the program promoting its effectiveness and sustainability.

Child- Centered Programs School can Conduct

a) Children and family experiencing difficulties can be referred to seek guidance and help from the school counselor or mental health professionals.

b) The counsellor is involved in providing advice to both parents and teachers and in some cases, may refer students for external treatment beyond the school setting.

c) Children who are at risk can be identified and recognized, and they can be engaged in focused, targeted interventions to help prevent maladjustment. These interventions may include close contact with non-professional child-care providers, like special educators, resource room teacher's and peer mentors.

d) Involving parents as teacher's aides can be a beneficial learning experience for everyone involved- the parents, the teacher and the child. Having parents participate in the classroom setting gives them a unique insight into their child behavior by observing interactions with other children, engaging with other parents and closely collaborating with the teacher.

e) Early intervention programs aiming at addressing high- risk behaviors like aggression, anxiety, smoking, precocious sexuality, deteriorating social interaction, absenteeism, low academic achievement, irritability & moods swings etc. can effectively prevent severe consequences.

f) School can also use screening tools to identify psychosocial problem and mental disorder among students. While this approach helps schools in determining children with significant mental health problem or at risk of developing them, there is a risk and danger of labelling and stigma related with it. However, these tools/ instruments can still be useful in guiding the planning of management strategies for addressing mental health issues in schools.

Initiatives taken by Government for Supporting Mental Health Programs

The burden of mental health problems is rising across the country and to address the challenge, the Government of India has taken various policy level initiatives and programs to deal with the mental health situation in the school. District Mental Health Program (DMHP) under the National Mental Health Program which covers 704 districts, is being implemented with the support from Central Government. This program focuses on detection, managing, and treating of mental illness/ disorder. The program includes counselling in schools and colleges, stress management, training in life skills, suicide prevention services and awareness campaigns to combat stigma around mental health issues (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 2022, Para.1). As part of the School Health Program under Ayushman Bharat, NCERT has designed a comprehensive material called, "Training and Resource Material: Health and Wellness of School – Going children". The material contains specific modules on, "Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health" and activities focusing on mental health and well-being of students and teachers (Ministry of Education, 2021, Para. 5). The Ministry of Education in collaboration with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) on September 6th, 2022 introduced a Modular Handbook on Early Identification and Intervention for Mental Health Problems in School

Going Children. The handbook offers guidelines for early identification and intervention of mental health issues in school going children and practical training of teachers, counsellors and other stakeholders (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 2022, Para. 4). The Ministry of Education Government of India on 2020, has taken a proactive initiative named, 'Manodarpan' as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, encompassing various range of activities to provide students with psychosocial support for their mental health and well-being during and after the COVID pandemic (Ministry of Education, 2020, Para.2).

The Government's effort and initiatives to address and improve students' mental health would be achieved only with the active engagement and involvement from schools at various levels i.e., from State level to block level. Therefore, each school from highest to the lowest level, has to take ownership and responsibility for implementing the policies and programs effectively.

Challenges & Recommendations

i. **Stigma:** Fear of judgement can prevent students from seeking help. Schools need to actively combat stigma through awareness campaigns and open dialogue.
ii. **Resources**: Limited funding and shortage of mental health professionals pose challenges. Creative solutions, like technology- assisted programs and collaborative community partnerships, can be explored.
iii. **Cultural Sensitivity**: Programs must be adapted to fit India's diverse cultural context and address particular challenges and stress factors that people in the country face.
iv. **Prioritizing Teacher Training**: Teacher are acknowledged for their role in promoting social and emotional learning. However, there is insufficient emphasis on equipping them with the necessary skills for ensuring students well-being. This calls for strengthening the training of teachers, both at pre-service and in-service levels, to ensure the mental and emotional health of students.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to explore the existing literature concerning school mental health with a view to contribute a conceptual understanding of how schools are

imperative in promotion and prevention of student's mental health. It is evident that schools are much more than just places of learning; they significantly shape students overall well-being. School plays a vital role in diagnosing, intervening, and preventing mental health issues. Early detection and identification of emotional challenges in children, along with designing preventive measures and interventions are important aspects of providing mental health support to students within school communities. Schools not only provide trained personnel and a convenient setting to coordinate services but they also serve the demographic where interventions have the most significant impact (Brener et al., 2007). As student's mental health issue rises, schools will increasingly be expected to offer emotional support services to help students thrive academic success and emotional well-being. It is also essential to broaden the integration of mental health programs in school by involving family, community as well as policymakers, with a view to ensure holistic support for promoting and preventing mental health. By creating supportive environments, training staff and implementing evidence- based programs, schools can make a lasting difference in the lives of children and adolescence.

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Zhüdougei

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Prevalence of Depression Among the Unemployed Youth in Nagaland

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Abstract

Unemployment is a significant concern worldwide, and its impact on mental health, particularly depression, cannot be overlooked. In the North Eastern states of India, Nagaland has the highest unemployment rate. While various factors contribute to depression, unemployment is consistently associated with increased rates of depression in adults. This is a significant problem that greatly affects their daily lives, often leading to depression due to their inability to cope with challenges or lack of awareness to seek help and support when they need it. This paper focuses on unemployment and highlights the prevalence of depression especially among the unemployed youths in Nagaland. Furthermore, it aims to explore the need to change societal perspectives on mental health and also seeks to offer valuable insights to families, friends, communities, churches, and therapists, enabling them to offer more effective aid and support to the youths.

Keywords: Unemployment, Depression, Youth, Nagaland, Coping Strategies

Introduction

In India, the rate of unemployment is growing rapidly with each passing day; and a majority of people are depending upon the government for a more stable job, however, only a few can get employed. According to Worldometer (2024) elaboration of the latest United Nations data, India has surpassed China as the most populated country in the world, with a population of 1,428 million people, which makes India 17.76 % of the global population. This

has become a major issue, particularly for nations like India with limited resources. While a larger population can be beneficial, it can also give rise to social issues such as poverty and unemployment.

Unemployment is one of the leading factors of depression, which is a serious mental concern and often invisible illness that is affecting the lives of numerous young people. Depression is typically characterized by emotions of guilt, low self-esteem, decreased enjoyment or engagement, and reduced appetite, which can affect a person's overall well-being. People with depressed moods may experience emotions such as sadness, anxiety, feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness, lack of worth, guilt, irritability, shame, or restlessness.

In India, studies indicate that at least 6.5 percent of the population experiences some form of serious mental disorder, with no evident differences between rural and urban areas. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), India ranks as the most depressed country globally, closely followed by China and the US. Furthermore, the National Mental Health Survey (2015-2016) also reports that one in every six people in India requires mental health support (Lifestyle Desk, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary that mental health should be recognized, and propagated diligently.

Present Situation of Unemployment in Nagaland

According to the annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) covering the period from July 2021 to June 2022, issued by the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Nagaland registered a sharp decline in the rate of unemployment (Directorate General of Employment, 2023). Nonetheless, despite this decline, Nagaland still ranked fourth among 36 States and Union Territories in India, exhibiting the highest unemployment rate of 9.1% in the Northeast region **(Table 1)**. The issue of unemployment in Nagaland is complex and has been persistent for an extended period. Even with the existence of an ever-growing workforce, the job market in both our state and country has failed to meet the demand for employment opportunities.

Table 1

State-wise Worker Population Ratio & Unemployment Rate in Northeast India

State	Worker Population Ratio			Unemployment Rate		
	2019-20	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**
Arunachal Pradesh	44.3	48.5	47.1	6.7	5.7	7.7
Assam	43.2	50.5	52.1	7.9	4.1	3.9
Manipur	45.5	41.0	40.6	9.5	5.6	9.0
Meghalaya	58.6	62.0	60.5	2.7	1.7	2.6
Mizoram	50.7	54.5	48.9	5.7	3.5	5.4
Nagaland	**44.8**	**49.5**	**58.4**	**25.7**	**19.2**	**9.1**
Sikkim	68.8	71.3	69.9	2.2	1.1	1.6
Tripura	49.6	53.8	50.6	3.2	3.2	3.0
ALL INDIA	**50.9**	**52.6**	**52.9**	**4.8**	**4.2**	**4.1**
*15 Years and Above						

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey Reports, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (2023, July 5)

Depression among Unemployed Youth in Nagaland

Unemployment, a pervasive socio-economic challenge, has far-reaching consequences for individual well-being. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), unemployment refers to those who have actively searched for work in the past four weeks and are currently unemployed. In Nagaland, the state faced notably high levels of unemployment due to an increase in the number of graduates and limited job opportunities within the government framework. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report highlighted a concerning scenario among the youth of 15-29 years, with nearly one-third of this demographic being unemployed. The report indicated that a total of 30.9% of them were unemployed during the period from July 2021 to June 2022 in Nagaland. In the rural areas of Nagaland, it was found that 27.7% of youth were unemployed while it was 40.4% in urban areas (Directorate General of Employment, 2023). Unemployment, especially when prolonged, goes beyond

financial strain; it becomes a destabilizing force that affects one's identity and mental well-being. Regarding the impact of unemployment on mental well-being, Nordenmark (1999) points out that those without employment are at risk of experiencing depression, anxiety and mistreatment, as employment represents a means of personal and social fulfillment. Additionally, the absence of a structured daily routine and a sense of purpose can contribute to poor mental health.

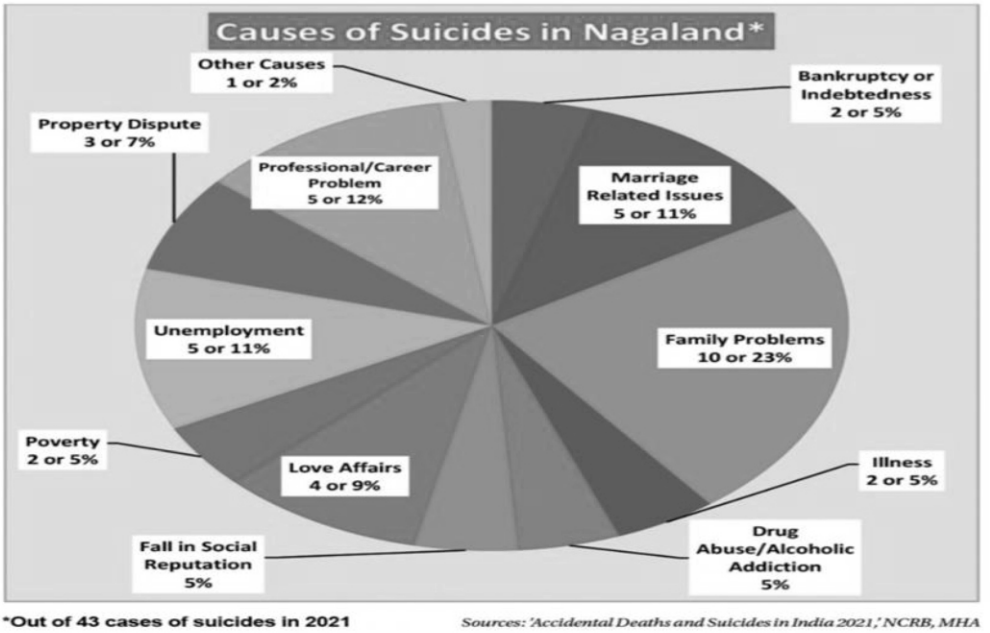
Depression is a widespread mental health problem that affects people worldwide, irrespective of their background or circumstances. It is marked by excessive and prolonged sadness, reduced energy, and lack of interest in previously enjoyable activities. To address this issue, it is important to understand the problem and simultaneously the diagnosis of mental health conditions.

In recent years, there has been a notable rise in the prevalence of depression among the unemployed youth of Naga society. Many young people are dealing with numerous challenges related to personal growth and societal expectations. The monotony of job hunting, taking competitive exams year after year, and facing financial difficulties, coupled with uncertainty about the future add to stress and anxiety, leading some people into the realms of depression. In a study conducted by McGee and Thompson (2015) regarding the relationship between depression and unemployment, it was found that unemployed young people are at greater risk of depression in comparison to their employed counterparts. Depression among unemployed youth represents a poignant intersection of aspirations and harsh realities, encapsulating the psychological toll of unmet expectations and societal pressures. It is often associated with poor quality of life and is a major contributor to suicides. Although Nagaland continues to exhibit one of the lowest suicide rates in India, suicides within the state have surged by approximately 14 percent during the same period in 2022, as indicated by the National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) report. The 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India 2022' report by NCRB indicates that the number of suicides in Nagaland rose from 43 cases in 2021 to 49 cases in 2022. Upon closer examination of the suicide cases in 2021, there appears to be a potential connection to economic hardships **(Figure 1)**. Out of the total of 49 cases, 29 cases were in the category of

low-income group. Regarding the classification of suicide cases based on professions, 14 out of 49 were classified as 'unemployed', 13 were labeled as 'self-employed', and 4 were categorized as daily wage earners. These groups accounted for 63.27% of all suicides in the state, indicating a potential link between financial instability and suicidal thoughts (Jamir, 2023). The adversity of this problem needs to be addressed through mental health awareness, career guidance, and skills development, all of which can help a person cope with the complexity of unemployment and maintain their mental well-being amidst adversity.

Figure 1

Causes of Suicides in Nagaland



Source: The Morung Express, "Relationship and Economic Issues Leading causes of Suicides in Nagaland." (2022, September 1) (https://morungexpress.com/relationship-and-economic-issues-leading-causes-of-suicides-in-nagaland). Copyright 2020 by The Morung Express.

Symptoms of Depression

Unemployment depression is a type of situational depression that may emerge following a job loss or during a period of unemployment. The American Psychiatric

Association (2022) classifies situational depression as a form of adjustment disorder with a depressed mood. "Adjustment disorder" encompasses a range of symptoms that a person may experience during or after a stressful life event (Farnsworth, 2023).

The symptoms of depression can differ from person to person, but they usually include:

1) **Feeling of Emptiness, Sadness or Hopelessness**

Although everyone may feel sad occasionally, the sadness experienced by a depressed person is more profound and persistent, lasting for weeks or months, eventually leading to their inability to function normally or carry out their daily activities. In addition to feelings of inadequacy, a sense of hopelessness and self-blame are closely associated with depressed mood and are connected with significant anxiety (Zahn et al., 2015). Unemployed youth may endure persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness regarding their current situation and prospects, affecting their overall mood and outlook on life.

2) **Anger, Irritability or Frustration**

A person who suffers from depression may become easily irritated and frustrated. The stress and frustration stemming from unemployment may lead to irritability or outbursts of anger as individuals struggle to manage their emotions and circumstances. In some cases, depression can result in challenges with emotional regulation, causing abrupt and intense feelings of sadness, anxiety, or anger that are difficult to control.

3) **Fatigue and Lack of Energy**

Some people with depression may find it difficult to wake up in the morning because they often feel exhausted. Unemployment can be physically and emotionally draining, resulting in feelings of fatigue and a lack of energy. This can impede individuals' ability to participate in daily tasks and activities.

4) **Insomnia or Lack of Sleep**

Sleep disturbances are a common symptom of depression, and research has shown that depression is often considered a contributing factor for developing insomnia. It is widely known that sleep disruptions have long been regarded as a key secondary indicator of depression in the past few decades (Tsuno et al., 2005). The stress associated with

unemployment can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to either insomnia or oversleeping, further affecting mood, energy levels, and overall well-being.

5) **Feeling of Worthlessness or Guilt**

Unemployment can sometimes trigger feelings of worthlessness or guilt, as individuals may struggle with self-esteem issues and negative thought patterns about their abilities and worth.

6) **Reduced Energy Levels or Lack of motivation**

Being unemployed can result in a lack of motivation and loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities. This can often result in feelings of boredom and isolation.

7) **Lack of Appetite or Overeating and Weight Gain**

People with depression may experience changes in appetite, which may cause a reduction or increase in food intake. Some may experience decreased appetite that can result in weight loss, while others may turn to overeating as a comfort mechanism for negative emotions or to combat feelings of boredom and loneliness. These can result in fluctuations in weight and overall physical health.

8) **Suicidal Thoughts or Attempts**

Suicidal inclinations can be a severe indication of depression, especially among unemployed youth. People with depression may have persistent thoughts of death or self-harm, and in some cases, they may devise plans to end their life. Recognizing the signs of suicidal ideation and promptly intervening to mitigate potential harm is essential.

Coping Strategies

Several studies have shown that unemployment can have a significant effect on our mental well-being, resulting in higher rates of depression among young individuals. Coping strategies play a pivotal role in mitigating the negative effects of unemployment and promoting well-being for vulnerable youths.

1. **Reach out to a Counselor or Therapist for Professional Help:** If symptoms of depression persist or worsen, it is crucial to seek specialized professional assistance from a therapist or counselor with expertise in treating depression. They can offer guidance, support, and evidence-based therapies tailored to individual needs.

2. **Seek Help in the Right Time for Support from Friends and Family:** According to Hammer (2002), there is a connection between social isolation, financial difficulties, unemployment, and mental health, stating that "Enhanced social integration can increase an individual's capacity to cope in a way that reduces mental health symptoms and prevent social exclusion" (Hammer, 2002, p. 55). Unemployed youth must reach out to friends, counselors or family members who can offer emotional support and understanding during difficult times.
3. **Organize Proper Counseling Services in Educational Institutions, Churches and Community:** Educational institutions, churches and community organizations offering counseling services can facilitate convenient access to mental health resources, it is a vital step for providing support and guidance to those requiring assistance. Through coordination with mental health professionals, these educational institutions and community centers can establish counseling centers to enhance the mental well-being of the community.
4. **Promote Mental Health Services (Helpline):** Promoting mental health services can ensure that individuals with depression receive the necessary support and care they need to effectively cope with their condition.
5. **Change People's Perceptions of Mental Health and Breaking Down the Stigma Associated with Therapy and Counselling:** It is crucial to raise awareness about depression to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health. Organizing awareness programs on depression can serve to educate the public about the symptoms, signs and available resources for seeking aid.
6. **Sensitize Teachers, Parents and Stakeholders:** By sensitizing teachers, parents, and stakeholders, the community can help create a supportive environment for individuals dealing with depression.
7. **Offer Vocational Skills and Training:** The rising unemployment rate is often attributed to the lack of skills development and vocational training. Many jobs require specific skills or qualifications that most of the youth do not possess. Providing vocational skills and training not only improves their prospects for employment but also has a positive impact on their overall well-being and mental health.

Conclusion

In conclusion, unemployment is a concerning issue in Nagaland that is leading to depression. Despite the government's efforts to alleviate unemployment rates, the increase in population and lack of dignity of labor among the youth are contributing to the high rate of unemployment in the state. Depression is a vital concern that affects the mental health and well-being of unemployed youths and requires attention from both public health authorities and the communities at large. With the help of appropriate strategies, it is possible to prevent and find early detection of depression. Initiatives focusing on providing mental health support, offering skill development programs, and establishing economic opportunities can play a pivotal role in mitigating the challenges faced by unemployed youths.

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Navigating Tradition and Transition: Women's Property Rights in Nagaland

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Abstract

This study examines how customary laws affect women in Naga society with a particular emphasis on property inheritance practices. Property inheritance plays a crucial role in shaping the status of women within societies worldwide, and the context of Naga society, a culturally rich and diverse community inhabiting the northeastern region of India provides a compelling study in this regard. Despite societal acknowledgment of women's importance, traditional customs often deny them equal rights, particularly regarding property inheritance. Drawing upon a diverse array of scholarly literature and articles, it becomes evident that patriarchal structures perpetuate the marginalization and exploitation of women in property matters. However, amidst societal transitions towards modernity and influences such as Christianity and modern education, change is perceptible but gradual and it occurs only in limited areas. Some families are beginning to diverge from traditional norms, granting daughters property rights. Nevertheless, there is a pressing need to amend inheritance laws to ensure fairness for women and foster inclusivity in Naga society. This abstract encapsulates the complexities of customary practices, discrimination, and evolving societal norms concerning women's rights in Nagaland.

Keywords: Customary, Patriarchy, Inheritance, Women, Change

Introduction

The intricate tapestry of customary laws in Nagaland, unveils a profound story of women's right, tradition, and societal evolution. The Naga society follows a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal structure where the family name is carried forward by the son. Inheritance of family properties, typically lands for residence or cultivation, is reserved for male children, while female children seldom receive such entitlements, except in rare instances where it is bestowed upon them as a marriage gift. Naga customary laws do not grant inheritance or property rights to the daughters, even if they are the sole child. Consequently, if there is no male heir, family's land and property are inherited by the nearest male kin, which might extend to distant male cousins or any member of the clan. This traditional practice reflects the patriarchal structure, where male descendants hold significant privilege and authority to control over family wealth and resources. It is worth noting that within Naga society, customary laws have historically been viewed through a patriarchal lens, leading to biases against women. These laws primarily transmitted orally, can be subject to interpretations favouring men, given their unwritten nature. One common justification for denying inheritance to women is the belief that they become part of their husband's family upon marriage, leading to the loss of parental resources. Additionally, the clan-based land system dictates that land should pass down to male clan members, preventing daughters from inheriting land to avoid it going to other clans (Adiana, 2018 p. 2-4).

Customary Law and its Impact on Women

The following points cover the elements of customary law concerning property and law of inheritance in Naga society.

1. Discrimination occurs when prejudice, backed by societal norms, results in the denial of privileges and rights to a particular group.
2. Exploitation takes place when someone unfairly benefits from another's lack of power.

3. Oppression manifests in the dynamics between the oppressed and the oppressor (North East Network, Nagaland, 2016).

Customs and traditions often fail to grant women equal rights, despite acknowledging the importance of both genders in society. The conventional notion of women being confined to household chores influences the mind-set and behaviour of both men and women towards women. While some traditions aimed to benefit women, they also perpetuated discrimination against them (Vitso, 2003).

Upon close examination of various tribal communities in Nagaland, it becomes evident that despite their diverse origins, linguistic nuances, and cultural intricacies, a common thread of customary law governs behaviour and governance within these societies.A shared foundation of customary laws underpins their social structures and governance systems, shaping various aspects of inheritance and property rights (Longkumer & Bokth, 2020).

Inheritance of Property among the different tribes of Nagas

In Naga society, the concept of property inheritance encompasses both immovable and movable assets. However, among these, land holds paramount significance as it serves as the cornerstone of economic sustenance and stability. Land ownership not only symbolizes familial heritage but also functions as the primary source of economic prosperity and social standing within the community. Naga society follows a patrilineal structure, where inheritance of assets and succession are primarily passed down through male line.

Women traditionally lack the right to inherit property, as the patriarchal system grants this privilege exclusively to men. These custom aims to maintain property within the male lineage, preventing it from being dispersed among different clans. Even a woman's occupational status does not influence her inheritance rights. While married women may control family property to some extent, they cannot inherit it themselves; instead, they facilitate its transfer to their sons. Divorce or widowhood often strips women of these limited privileges, and they may even lose property rightfully belonging to them. Despite advancements in religious, educational, and occupational status, women remain marginalized in property inheritance. Conversely, men typically retain control over property, regardless of marital

misconduct. However, during marriage, the bride's parents may gift her movable and immovable assets, such as household items and land, aiming to foster familial bonds across generations (Vitso, 2003).

In Angami tradition, clan-owned land and inheritance rights are exclusively male privileges, with women incapable of inheriting ancestral land, but competent to use it for cultivation. While women are prohibited from obtaining ancestral lands and possessions, they can purchase land independently. Individual landowners have the freedom to use, sell, mortgage, rent, or gift their land, including two daughters during marriage or after their parents' passing, known as 'Pozephü' land. However, ancestral property, called 'Siephru', can only be owned by male children, with next of kin inheriting it in the absence of a male heir, a practice known as 'Kayie'. This tradition persists today in Angami villages like Viswema and Kedima (Pienyu, 2017).

In Ao Naga customary law, women have historically been marginalized in terms of succession and inheritance compared to men, reflecting a deeply entrenched male-dominated social structure. The Ao Naga have a rigid patrilineal system in which the male line is the exclusive source of descent, with daughters becoming part of their father's social group and, upon marriage, partially integrating into their husband's family and clan. Property, both movable and immovable, is exclusively inheritable according to custom, with males holding ownership rights in common ancestral property, while women are generally excluded from inheritance, aside from personal possessions received at marriage. This disparity in property rights for women is not a reflection of their desires or knowledge but rather a consequence of systemic injustice perpetuated by societal, religious, and familial norms. Despite sharing the same human instincts and emotions, women have been historically deprived of their rightful inheritance due to societal norms and practices (Dhanaraju&Nukshirenla, 2021).

In Lotha society, women are not entitled to land that is classified as family, clan or village property. Rather, family land descends to sons, and if a man dies without leaving an heir, it either goes back to the clan or to his nearest male relative. Women can inherit personal items like clothing, jewellery, and equipments for weaving. Sons and daughters who are single

may receive land through parental wills or as a gift upon marriage. Women in the Chang Naga tribe do not inherit their father's property. However, if divorced; they receive full support from their male siblings. Children living with a divorced woman remain part of her family and have some economic influence.

Rengma customs dictate that women exclusively inherit personal belongings. In the northern group, a woman cannot inherit her parent's land; she and her husband are only permitted to temporarily cultivate it. In the group from the south, a father can give his daughter land, but she is not allowed to inherit it. Sons inherit men's belongings like weapons; while ornaments were inherited by women. If the woman passes away without having children, the husband or father inherits a woman ornaments. Every western Rengma son constructs a house after getting married. Upon her husband's demise, the widow is allowed to use the house and its belongings but she is not allowed to sell it. If deemed wasteful, male heirs can intervene. Upon her death, the youngest son inherits the house while the eldest son receives only the pounding-table. When a son marries among the Eastern Rengma, the parents and surviving children relocate to a new home. A widow of a deceased man has a life interest in his movable which passes to her eldest son upon her demise. A father may give his daughter land while he is still alive, but she is not allowed to sell it. It passes to her father's closest male successor upon her death. Eastern Rengma women usually bring dowry land, which the husband can use but reverts to the wife's family upon his death.

The prevailing notion suggests that women often do not inherit their parents' property. However, among the Konyak Nagas, it is customary for the eldest daughter to inherit movable assets like necklaces, jewelry, and beads (Pereira et al., 2019). Similarly, within the Chakhesang Nagas, female members receive movable property from their mother, grandmother, and other maternal relatives, including items like gems, jewelry, clothing, traditional outfits, and knitting and weaving tools. Such items are exclusively inherited by female members and, if there are no daughters, these possessions are passed on to a maternal niece. This practice of maternal inheritance is a long-standing tradition. Additionally, immovable assets like paddy fields are transferred to daughters for two generations under a

custom called ‘yiphe’, ensuring ownership remains within the female line from the mother to her daughter (Fernandes, et al., n.d.).

Transition from Traditional to Modernity

According to various literature reviews, scholars have extensively discussed the intersection of tradition, modernity, and women's roles. Tiwari (2002) examined how tradition influences women's status in modern times, where tradition represents continuity and modernity signifies progress. Tiwari highlighted that while modernity creates job opportunities structurally, it often fails to address gender role issues. Similarly, Ghadially (1998) pointed out how women's low status is linked to development patterns imposed on existing social structures that disadvantage women. Despite legal progress, entrenched social norms hinder significant transformations in women's lives. The study reveals how the intersection of tradition and modernity impact the lives of women in Naga society. In traditional Naga society, women were marginalized compared to men, as they were excluded from activities like warfare and village governance. Despite advancements like formal education and increased opportunities in various fields, women still struggle to assert themselves due to entrenched cultural norms that prioritize men as providers and leaders. While Naga society has adopted some modern advancement, it hasn't fully integrated modern values into social relations, hindering women's emancipation. Women often have to navigate between traditional expectations and modern individualism, often sacrificing their aspirations to meet traditional roles. Additionally, women's access to resources is largely determined by cultural practices, further cementing their secondary position. Overall, modernity has not significantly improved the status of Naga women due to the rigidity of traditional structures (Longkumer & Bokth, 2020). Tribal societies are currently undergoing a shift from traditional ways to more modern practices, with rural communities adopting urban cultural norms as their guide. This transition has altered the values and customs of tribal cultures, particularly impacting the roles of women. Today, women are actively engaged in various jobs alongside men, reflecting a significant departure from the historical division of labour in rural areas (Zehol, 1998).

Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution up till 2017 codified Naga traditional rules, came to light when they were invoked to safeguard perceived men's rights from what some Naga tribal men saw as encroachments by women. It's crucial to recognize that striving for gender neutrality isn't about favouring one gender over another but about fostering inclusivity and sparking conversations across gender and race lines. Women in Naga society have consistently been relegated to subordinate positions, with their social standing and identity often confined to the status of second-class citizens. This pattern of marginalization is a familiar experience for Naga women, who have historically been denied rights and dignity under the pretence of preserving social practices. Nonetheless, there is a gradual but perceptible shift occurring in this narrative. The degree of freedom granted to women in Naga society may be disputed, even though it is frequently claimed that they enjoy a higher status than women in most societies (Pou, 2015, as cited in Longkumer, 2019). Eyinbeni Humtsoe, a scholar of Naga society, notes that as modernity influences Naga society, there's a decline in traditional culture, yet there's resistance to compromising on tribal laws and traditions. In terms of freeing women from cultural shackles that are represented in customary laws, the Nagas have not been able to subdue cultural factors (Pou, 2015, as cited in Longkumer, 2019).

The traditional values and customs of the Naga societies, which once held significance, are now becoming outdated and disconnected from the evolving social landscape. Despite shifts in gender roles, inheritance laws remain inflexible, lacking provisions for women's property rights. It's crucial to amend these laws to ensure fairness for women. Nevertheless, there are signs of change as some families are beginning to use their own discretion to provide daughters with immovable properties, particularly those acquired by the parents directly, breaking with long standing patriarchal traditions that prevented women from inheriting land. This change is particularly notable in urban areas. Acquired land, unlike ancestral land which is restricted to avoid inter-tribal transfers and maintain village territories, is located in urban settings and doesn’t carry the same restrictions. Education and growing professional opportunities for women have further enabled them to purchase land independently (Das, 2018, 16 August).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of customary laws and their impact on women in Nagaland reveals a complex interplay between tradition, discrimination, and societal evolution. Despite the acknowledgment of women's importance in society, customary practices often deny them equal rights, particularly in property inheritance. These practices reflect entrenched patriarchal structures, perpetuating marginalization and exploitation of women. However, with the transition towards modernity and the influence of Christianity and modern formal education, there are signs of change. While traditional values persist, some families are beginning to deviate from customary norms, providing daughters with property rights. Nonetheless, there is a pressing need to amend inheritance laws to ensure fairness for women and foster inclusivity in Naga society. This study underscores the importance of addressing gender disparities within customary practices to promote gender equality and social justice in Nagaland.

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Considering the Boundaries of Right to Privacy

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Abstract

Interaction is a crucial component of being human, and it can only occur when we share information or ideas. But since we are individuals first before social creatures, there are certain aspects of our life that we want to keep private. This leads to the issue of privacy. Our Constitution has provided citizens with the right to privacy considering that it is an essential right for full development of human capacity. But there have been issues relating to our privacy, especially when it comes in conflict with our liberty of speech and expression coming within its scope, the right to knowledge and freedom of press as well. Also, because of technological advancement our privacy has become vulnerable online with culprits ready to steal out personal information to take advantage of us. There are certain provisions that penalize offenders who try to take control of our private information and hence safeguard our privacy. But when it comes to our privacy protection it is more effective for us not to fall prey rather than the remedial measures and as such it becomes our responsibility to protect our private information and be cautious before disclosing it online.

Keywords: Personal information, Cybercrime, Cyber stalking, Indian Penal Code, Laws on privacy violations

Introduction

Humans have a habit of intermingling or interacting with others. They are social in the sense that they maintain relationships with their fellow beings, whether family, friends or strangers. Without these interactions or sharing of ideas, they cannot be regarded as social animals. But despite being social and despite these interactions, there are some aspects that individuals do not wish to share with others. These aspects can be regarded as relating to his private life. Privacy is a crucial part of an individual's existence. It is part of his right to liberty granted to him as members of society and as human beings. Thus, privacy can be understood as something personal to the individual, something he does not want to share with others, something he wants to keep to himself.

Privacy is a very sensitive issue and people are always conscious about it. Just the fact that someone eavesdrops on our conversation can be felt as a violation of our privacy, or prohibiting the use of hijab may be taken as an invasion to the privacy of women, (Mahapatra, 2022) or when someone peeps on your phone while you are using it may make you feel like your privacy is being infringed. Every small matter becomes a big issue when it is related to our privacy.

In the modern world, in particular, many of our personal records are stored online since we use a lot of online tools to register in different services. It has become an important concern to think about how far our privacies are protected regarding our private data online. It is also time to think about how safe is providing personal information to online agencies, or how far can they ask us regarding our information.

The Framework of Right to Privacy

Privacy has been a common topic of concern recently; it is regarded very important and hence is recognized by law. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution ensures 'Right to Life and Personal Liberty' (Dalal, 2009). The right to privacy under Article 21 is a person's right to assert control over the use and disclosure of his private information. Private information may be about "personal interests, habits and activities, family and educational records, communications, medical records and financial records." (Singh, 2011, p.663)

The scope of liberty has been widened in India through the decision of the Supreme Court's in Maneka Gandhi vs. Union of India (1978) where Justice P N Bhagwati noted, the term "personal liberty" in Article 21 contains a wide range of liberties that define human freedom (Noorani, 2005). Finally, in the Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017) case, the court upheld the right to privacy as necessary component of right to life and personal liberty (Kumari, 2024).

These days, so many of our tasks are completed online, owing to the widespread and helpful use of technology. Application for colleges, jobs, courses, even bank accounts, and other registrations are all completed online. For one, this technological advancement has made our work feasible and less time consuming. However, as more and more jobs move online, people's concerns about their personal data being kept online by businesses, banks or other organizations are growing. We can never be assured that our information would not be used against us. Any personal information of a person that may be incorrect can easily be given to an unauthorized individual or organization that can use that information to harm that person. Hence, even though technological advancements have many benefits, it has led to issues related to privacy as modern technologies provide easy access and exchange of personal data. Individual and organizational data must be secured in such a way to ensure that privacy rights are not violated (Singh, 2011).

As citizens and as individuals we all have the right to protect any information that we do not wish to share with others. We should be the one to decide with whom to share it and nobody, not even the state should intrude in our private life. According to Jude Cooley, privacy is same as "the right to be let alone" (Cooley, 1888, as cited in Singh, 2011, p.664).

But that is hardly possible in a digitalized world where everything is connected online. For example, 'Google' can track and know where we have been a few days ago, shopping sites know what we are interested in, or online travel agencies know where we are going. All these agencies or application providers are aware of our actions, interests, banking activities, social interactions, physical well-being, mental condition, travel destinations, etc. (Kumar, 2019). With every other necessity easily available online, we are drawn to use online applications and

the more we use online applications, the more we are circulating our information the web. This leaves a permanent mark of us on the internet. Justice Kaul defines this growing pattern as follows:

The impact of the digital age results in information on the internet being permanent. Humans forget, but the internet does not forget and does not let humans forget. Any endeavor to remove information from the internet does not result in its absolute obliteration. The foot prints remain. It is thus, said that in the digital world preservation is the norm and forgetting a struggle (Kumar, 2019, p.83).

Protection of Privacy vs. Liberty of Thought and Speech

Protection of one's privacy and liberty of speech are both important freedoms provided for all citizens of India under Article 21 and 19 respectively. Right to privacy helps protect ones' information and right to speech and thought is the freedom to share ideas or opinions. The right to speech and thought also includes the autonomy of the media as well. It has been interpreted that Article 19 implies Freedom of press even though it does not mention it specifically (Singh, 2011).

People and the media have a right to express their views about governmental policies or failures of the government. The state, on the other hand has also a duty to inform the citizens about the decisions and working of the government which is guaranteed by the liberty of knowledge of the citizens. Especially in a democratic country like India, news agencies, the press or every citizen have a right to report on any wrong doing by those in authority as to prevent the abuse of such power. This right comes within the ambit of both freedoms of thought and the privilege to be informed.

If the freedom of thought and speech were not provided, people will fail to establish an awareness of individuality. The protection of rights depends on the upholding and protection of every person's self-worth, and their ability to survive independently while connecting with others. It is, hence, possible that one's right to privacy may be violated upon by another's freedom of expression, and vice versa (Jaiswal, 2021). The tension of right to privacy being

infringed is strengthened by the increase in modern technology. Technological advancements have no doubt broadened the opportunities for freedom to express and share data, but they have also significantly extended the possibility of privacy violations never seen before.

Thomas Emerson remarked that while privacy and free press may exist side-by-side, there are two likely areas of dispute: the first is the issue of privacy and the second, the right to insight (Acharya, 2015). Freedom of expression and freedom of privacy is an essential component for any democratic country for progress and to allow people to enjoy their other rights. In order to maintain a balance between right to expression and privacy, it is important to understand that, "Right to privacy is a necessary precondition for the meaningful exercise of the right to freedom of expression." (Jaiswal, 2021). Hence, the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of thought and speech, allowing individuals to voice their views on certain issues. Also, individuals have the right to life and personal freedom that is attained only through legally authorized procedures (Singh, 2011).

In the case of "People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) vs. Union of India (1997), the Supreme Court observed that right to information of a voter or citizen is thereby promoted." (Singh, 2011, p.670) But this does not mean that in the name of voter's right to knowledge, they can breach a candidate's privacy during elections. In spite of that, in certain cases when there is a conflict between right to privacy and freedom of information, mostly, the latter serves precedence as it serves the greater good. In order to deal with this issue, there should be a balanced harmony between collective good and personal freedom of individuals because both are important rights of the citizens.

At the same time, just because individuals have the right to speak and express themselves, it does not mean that they can say whatever they choose. In the following decisions, "In Re Ramlila Maiden Incident vs. Home Secretary and Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. vs. Securities and Exchange Board of India, the court held that the freedom of speech and expression as provided under Article 19(1) (a) is not an absolute right." (Keswani, 2017, p.141). This means that the right to freedom of thought and speech is not a limitless liberty or unrestricted right. In other words, there exist specific constraints and limitations that

could be imposed on the use of this right under certain conditions. These restrictions can be imposed keeping in mind the preservation of other person's right and interests or for the good of the community as a whole.

Further, when it comes to freedom of press, in India, there is no particular law that safeguards the right to privacy from intrusive coverage in the press. The media's aim is to narrow the gap between public complaints and government policies. The Supreme Court in 'Destruction of Public and Private Properties vs. State of Andhra Pradesh' stated that the foundation of media reporting should be centred "upon the principles of impartiality and objectivity in reporting: ensuring neutrality; responsible reporting of sensitive issues, especially crime, violence, agitations and protests; sensitivity in reporting women and children and matters relating to national security; and respect for privacy" (Singh, 2011, p.669).

Privacy Issues in Cyber Space

Privacy rights encompass a range of domains in life. Major issues of concern include the privacy of private interactions, intimate relationships, public image, banking and health information, etc. Protection against unauthorized monitoring and information leaks is another aspect of privacy rights. Personal communication such as phone calls, messages and emails are regarded secret and personal and people expect them to remain private and not be checked or examined without their approval (GGI Insights, 2024). There are several issues concerning privacy of an individual. Infringement of privacy rights can occur both in the real and the virtual world. The virtual world may be regarded as *'Cyberspace'*[1] and any crime committed in cyberspace is termed as *Cybercrime*[2].

One important issue of privacy right in 'cyberspace' is regarding personal data protection. Many of our data about our age, occupation, contact number, religion, family, status, etc. have been provided by us as we apply for any institution or organization. Additionally, a lot of our information about our likes, dislikes and interests is stored in our social media accounts.

[1] The term "Cyberspace" indicate, "the environment where the communication takes place using internet" or "a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructure..." (Keswani, 2017, 133)

[2] Cybercrime is a criminal offence on the web or internet, a "violation of law on the internet", or illegal activities committed on the web. (Kapur, 2023)

This makes our information vulnerable to be violated. For example, hackers may enter the system and steal our identity by attaining ownership of our personal information and use our name for illegal activities by hacking the password of social media accounts. Online scams are also regarded as cybercrime; 'phishing' is the most popular kind of cybercrime which involves sending fraudulent emails and attachments to customers in order to gain access to their system (Kapur, 2023).

Another issue relating to privacy in the cyberspace is *'cyber stalking'*[1]. Cyber stalking is commonly referred to as online bullying or online assault. It consists of repeatedly bothering or threatening an individual by either following him/her, causing property damage, placing threatening notes or items, or making annoying calls via phones (Keswani, 2017). Cyber stalking is motivated by anger, frustration, and an urge to exert power over the victim, and it can be triggered by the victim's own actions or inaction (Pittaro, 2007 as cited in Banerjee & Banerjee, 2021, p.37). Cyber stalkers mostly rely on cyber space to stalk their victims because the internet provides them to remain anonymous and allows them to monitor their victim's activities without exposing their identity.

With the aim to protect the privacy of an individual, any organization or service provider should make sure that individual's private details are not disclosed or readily available to others. Individuals should also be mindful to protect their personal data online by always reading privacy policies before logging in or registration. It is also imperative to keep a strong password for any accounts and to be on the safe side, continuing to change passwords from time to time. Data protection of individuals has become crucial in this era. Data protection is a legal defense against unauthorized use of an person's private data.

It is adoption of administrative, technical, or physical deterrents to safeguard personal data. The main principles on privacy and date protection enumerated under the Information and Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008 are defining date, civil and criminal liability in case of breach of data protection and violation of confidentiality and privacy (Singh, 2011, p.671-672).

Laws against Privacy Violations

Statutory safeguards are required to protect individuals from privacy violations and with that aim India has enacted the "Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act)", revised in the year 2008 and "Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC)" to deal with cybercrimes (Chavan, 2021, p.60). Section 354D of IPC defines "stalking" and states that a man commits an act of stalking when he pursues or contacts a lady to promote personal engagement despite an obvious sign of lack of interest by such woman, or when he watches a lady's usage of the web, email or other types of digital medium (IPC, 1860, No.45 as cited in Keswani, 2017).

Sections 67, 67A and 67B of IT Act, 2000 deals with prohibiting stalking and publishing of inappropriate content in digital form (Gupta & Gupta, 2023). Similarly, Section 292 of IPC defines "obscenity" making it an offence if a stalker sends obscene content to the victim (Keswani, 2017).

Section 72A of the IT (Amendment) Act, 2008 specifies the penalty against revealing a party's private information by violating a legitimate contract; it states that a person found to be guilty of such an offence will be either imprisoned for a period not more than three years or fined with not more than five lakh rupees, or he/she can be charged with both depending on the nature of the offence (Kapur, 2023).

Further, Section 66E of IT Act, 2000 and Section 354C of IPC deals with the crime of "voyeurism". Section 66E states that anyone who purposefully or deliberately records, creates or sends an image of an individuals' private area without their consent, or under conditions that violate the individual's privacy shall be penalized. (IT Act, 2000, No.21 as cited in Keswani, 2017). Likewise, Section 354C of IPC states that any male who views or records any picture of a female engaged in an intimate activity under conditions where she would not expect to be viewed either by the offender or by any other person, or if the offender shares such image will be liable to be punished (IPC, 1860, No.45 as cited in Keswani, 2017).

[1] "Cyber stalking" is defined as "an act of unwanted following of a specific person in a digital apce on any digital

Conclusion

Despite provisions provided by the constitution against the violation of our privacy rights, it is crucial that individuals remain cautious online. Instead of being ignorant, be vigilant while storing any data or while using social networking sites. It is advisable to be mindful of the information we provide online, share as little personal information as possible in social media to prevent data breach. Using strong passwords online will also help protect ourselves from hackers. Above all, it is important to be aware of the safeguards provided in our constitution regarding privacy. If anything were to happen, if we are aware of our rights and the acts against data breaches, we can file a complaint and be compensated for our loss. Seeking assistance from legal experts and professionals at the right time will help recover our private information before it escalates even further.

The advances in technology have acted as a tool for crime prevention but at the same time it also provides a means of committing crime. Cybercrime does not harm an individual physical but it can cause sadness, psychological trauma, stress and harassment. It can also inflict negative publicity and monetary damage to a person.

In this ever-advancing computerized environment, it is challenging to keep away from technology. The world has become increasingly digitized and continues to grow as such. There is no saving ourselves from these innovations. In this context and in this kind of arena, our right to privacy has become endangered. The only way is to take precautions to protect ourselves form any violations. Safety measures should be taken to protect our public image, to stop people from using our name, photo or information without our approval. For any reasons whatsoever, it will be wise to not allow anyone to use our personal data or identity.

Only when we, as individuals, are careful with our private data, then we can enjoy our right to privacy to the fullest. Whether it is physical privacy or online privacy, it depends on how watchful we are regarding our protection. Apart from external factors affecting our privacy and apart from culprits wanting to steal our identity or harm us both physically and virtually, it mostly depends on how careful we are that stops us from being victims of such crime. Right to

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or social media platform." (Gupta & Gupta, 2023)

privacy is an integral part of our life and hence both individuals and state should consider this right and protect it at all cost.

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Zhüdougei

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Issues of Human Rights in Border Areas of North-East India

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Abstract

Northeast India consists of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim. It connects to the rest of the country via a thin strip of land called the Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal. With ninety-nine per cent of its boundaries being international borders, the Northeast Region has its share of issues and anomalies, chief among them the violation of human rights. All over the world, the lives of people living in or close to border areas are very different from those living in inland regions. Such places are typically hard to access, which increases the difficulty and expense of providing basic amenities. Furthermore, criminals and insurgents, especially drug traffickers, can easily cross the border due to their porous character. These locations give organised human trafficking syndicates a simple way to enter and exit India while remaining hidden from authorities. The regular violations of human rights have led to radicalisation and militarisation of the region. This region faces numerous issues, including violence, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and other social challenges like prejudice against women, human trafficking, and so on. Human rights in this region are facing a denial every day. The present paper will examine the various human rights violations in border areas of Northeast India. Issues like the trafficking of humans

and drugs, illegal migration, and lack of development and security in the border areas will be discussed.

Keywords: North-East Region, Human Rights, Border Areas, Violation

Introduction

Northeast India comprises eight states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim. It connects to the rest of the country by a narrow stretch of land called the Siliguri Corridor or Chicken's Neck in West Bengal. Over ninety-nine per cent of the region's overall geographical boundaries comprise its 5,182 km long international border. It is a triangle-shaped region that borders China (1,395 km), Bhutan (455 km), Myanmar (1,640 km), Bangladesh (1,596 km), and Nepal (97 km) on the international side. Northeast India is situated on the foothills of the Himalayas, and the mountain range serves as a physical entryway between India, China, and South-East Asia.

In addition to serving as physical indicators of a state's sovereign power and territorial limits, borders also serve as psychological markers that separate people and their sense of belonging. Borders play a crucial role in the creation of national identity narratives.

International laws guarantee human rights. The law mandates states to manage and secure their borders in a way that respects, upholds, and fulfils everyone's human rights. With 99 per cent of its boundaries being international borders, the North-East Region has its issues and characteristics. Furthermore, the border's porous nature makes it simple for criminals and insurgents, particularly drug traffickers, to cross it. All border areas in Northeast India need security measures and necessary actions to prevent illegal activities and check the arrival of undocumented migrants. Nonetheless, the rights of those living near borders are often violated daily.

Objective

The paper aims to bring light to the issues of human rights violations in the border areas of Northeast India.

Methodology

The paper employs descriptive and qualitative techniques. The paper uses secondary sources. Secondary data were collected from newspapers, articles, and books to supplement the study and provide a comprehensive understanding of the people residing in the border areas of Northeast India and the various problems they faced.

Human and Drug Trafficking

A significant issue and growing trend in Northeast India's border area is human trafficking. The Northeast region of India, which shares open, unguarded international boundaries with nations like China, Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, and Bhutan, becomes inevitably an easy entry point for organised human trafficking. These areas serve as the origin, transit, and destination points, giving organised human trafficking syndicates a simple way to enter and exit India while remaining covert. Young girls are compelled into the commercial sex trade or forced into domestic employment after being enticed by unauthorised recruiting organisations. Traffickers have taken advantage of poverty and dispossession, mainly for the sex business but also for domestic work. Organisations against human trafficking have documented cases of women and children from Northeast India who are trafficked both domestically to Mumbai and Goa and abroad to Singapore, Thailand, Dubai, and Malaysia. False promises of education or training deceive the relatives of trafficked children into believing that their children would be trained or receive proper education in towns and cities when, in reality, domestic servitude or begging is what awaits.

The majority of the trafficking victims are often carried into or out of the county via West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh's porous borders with Nepal. Before sending the victim out of India, the traffickers used to transport them straight to cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and other towns in India. However, with airport security in the cities becoming stricter, the traffickers are increasingly choosing land routes, which means transporting the victim to places like Manipur and Mizoram, from where it is easier to enter Myanmar (D'Souza, 2016). With its 700 km international borders situated between Bangladesh and Myanmar, Mizoram is highly susceptible to human trafficking and is frequently used by trafficking organisations as a safe

haven. The border town of Moreh is closely linked to the Golden Triangle (Myanmar-Loas-Thailand), which is said to produce 20% of the heroin manufactured worldwide. There is a tonne of sex workers, intravenous drug users (IDUs), and illicit drug smugglers. Due to this circumstance, residents of the border region are particularly susceptible to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), the Human Immune Virus (HIV), and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). It is also notorious for illegal trades and smuggling, from cheap Chinese products to precious stones, contraband drugs, teak, gold, and arms.

Illegal Migration

Migration and infiltration are considered a security threat to the stability of any region. The influx of migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar has turned into a severe problem in North-Eastern states. The immigrants enter the state covertly through Cachar and Karimganj in Assam or by crossing the border with Bangladesh and Myanmar (Singh, 2009). The migration from across the border has decreased the tribal population in Tripura to a minority. Tripura is the only state in the country to have gone from having a predominantly tribal population to a minority (Singh, 2013).

India's efforts to restrict illegal immigration across national borders are still woefully inadequate and will continue to be so in the absence of a political agreement on the matter. Unrestrained cross-border immigration, however, has significant demographic and social ramifications and has the potential to incite conflict and tensions between immigrants and natives, particularly among the latter who reside in border regions. Being the target of cross-border immigration for many years, Northeast India is most affected by this tension and conflict. India's anti-migration movement also creates communal divisions among its populace.

Lack of Socio-Economic Development

The people of border areas have been deprived of socioeconomic developments and modern infrastructure facilities for so long. Due to a tiny population and limited business activity, there is almost no marketing infrastructure. People living in the border areas are usually dependent on agriculture. Besides insufficient road infrastructure, inadequate public transportation is a problem in the border region. There are also no banking services in the

border areas, and people must travel significantly to access the services. The people also suffer from inadequate power supply, which remains a significant barrier to the region's economic development. The border region has a meagre literacy rate. Only a few primary schools in most villages are operational and are not accessible enough due to the long walking distance. The unfavourable impact on education is also rather lamentable. Another issue is the insufficient access to healthcare facilities. These facilities cannot reach the remote border areas of hilly Northeast India due to hostile climate and terrain and lack of proper road and communication systems. The healthcare system provided in the border areas lacks quality and quantity. In border PHCs and hospitals, absentee doctors, paramedical staff, and a shortage of necessary medications are frequent occurrences.

The administration is lax in the border regions. This is one reason for the high prevalence of theft, robbery, dacoit invasions, and crime against women. The border police forces need to be adequately equipped.

Border Fencing

In India's northeastern states, managing the international border continues to be a vital and challenging matter. In an era of growing independence, pressure from outside forces poses a more significant challenge to the country's security. An uncontrolled border creates easy entry and exit points, highlighting such concerns. The country's border with Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan draws attention to the weak aspect of these borders, which go through rugged and untamed areas with woods, rivers, and mountains, making it difficult to control. The mid-1980s saw the realisation that these borders, particularly the 4,096 km Indo-Bangladesh border, needed to be regulated. Subsequently, the boundary fence with Bangladesh was put into service as a possible defence device for the peace and tranquillity of the northeastern states. The demarcation of the border needs to be identified and clarified. Without this, many whose land, property, and houses fall on the other side of the fence will lose everything.

The fencing erected around India's western borders has succeeded in limiting the operations of smugglers and subversives as well as the movement of militants. Fencing, wherever it may be found, can prevent the passage of insurgents and criminals. Nonetheless,

the quality of the fencing in the northeast has continued to be an issue. Therefore, passing across or breaching the fencing in these states is relatively easy. The lack of a proposal to introduce a floodlight-like system along the western borders makes the militant's job even less complicated. Additionally, no plans have been made to establish a friendly populace as a second line of defence along the fencing. However, fencing around the borders will have to be erected, considering thousands of people (Indian citizens) living on the other side of the border area.

Some incidents which account for the infringement of the human rights of the people living in border areas are:

Assam and Bangladesh

A handful of citizens living within the boundary of Indian territory have been spending their days in the most miserable conditions in the two bordering villages of Bhogdanga and Fauksarkuti of Dhubri district, Assam, in the far western part of the Indo-Bangla international border. Like the rest of the Indian citizens, they, too, have the right to vote and all other rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of India. However, their living conditions are so heart-rending that it cannot be imagined. The administration has kept the citizens confined by house arrest year after year for the sake of national security due to their geographical location. As soon as it was 5 pm, the Border Security Force (BSF) jawans locked the huge iron gate No-G51 of the Indo-Bangladesh international border. A total of 125 families in the two villages have to remain confined daily like prisoners inside the gate, being completely isolated from India till 5 am the following day. During this 12-hour time, the inhabitants sign their name and address in the entrance guarded by BSF men, come out for their daily business, and return to their jail-like village by 5 pm. From 5 am to 5 pm, the villagers can do their school, college, marketing, etc., but after 5 pm, they must get special permission from the BSF men.

The three sides of the two villages, which Bangladesh surrounds, have no scope to raise barbed wire fencing because, as per international law, there cannot be any permanent infrastructure or human habitation up to 150 meters area on both sides of the barbed wire fence. The circumference of the entrance to Bhogdanga and Fauksarkuti villages is about 300 meters.

Under such circumstances, the government could not raise barbed wire fences in the villages. It is for this reason that the inhabitants of the two isolated villages have been gripped with a sense of fear, psychosis, and insecurity.

Meghalaya and Bangladesh

The Indo-Bangladesh border of Meghalaya has more than 100 "unfenced areas" of streams, rivers, drains, and culverts along the 443 km border and a 90 km unfenced section (The Northeast Today, 2017). Intruders damage barbed wires in locations where the boundary is fenced, making it simple to enter and exit Meghalaya (Majaw, 2020). Illegal immigrants from Bangladesh can enter Meghalaya through the open gaps at the border. Regular entry and departure sites are Baghmara, Ghasuapara, Mahendraganj, Borsora, Shella, Nongjri, Haat Thimmai, Dawki, and other borderland villages (Majaw, 2020)

Villagers living in Bhagmara to Moheskola in the South Garo hills of Meghalaya are compelled to relocate as they reside across the boundary barrier. Over 80 families from 15 villages living between the border fence and the zero line have been affected. The majority of border fence construction is longer than 150 yards. More than 80 families reside outside the fencing in South Garo Hills, and hundreds of families have already been forced to relocate. Thus, people residing beyond the fence are not eligible for government benefits. In their own country, the people are living like refugees. Poor farmers make up the population that lives outside the fence in the border zones. People worry that the fencing process will force them to give up their sizable landholdings, which are their only source of income.

Myanmar and Nagaland

Since work on building a fence between the current border pillars separating India and Myanmar has begun, 3,500 fertile acres on India's eastern border with Myanmar will probably become "No Man's land." Nagaland shares a 215-km border with Myanmar. Naga people are settled on both sides of the international boundary. Hence, building a fence without proper investigation will significantly sever the Naga people's long-standing social, tribal, historical, and economic links to those who live on both sides of the international border. The restrictions would be highly inconvenient for the Naga people residing in border areas because many own

agricultural properties across the boundary. The Nagaland Assembly, Naga Civil Societies, tribal bodies, Naga Political Groups, and Chief Angh of Longwa Village in the Mon district, whose house has been divided into two nations, have opposed the Centre's decision to suspend the Free Movement Regime (FMR) and to fence the Indo-Myanmar border (Yhoshu, 2024). The Centre's Act East policy gave rise to the FMR in 2018, which permits visa-free cross-border travel up to 16 kilometres (The Hindu, 2024).

The villagers of Noklak district in Nagaland opposed the fence construction, saying that the change would impact their livelihood as they have used the area for years. According to village councils, the fence between the current boundary pillars 139 and 146 will deprive 10,000 Khiamniungan Naga tribe members who dwell on both sides of the border of a means of subsistence. They claim that despite being split and living apart across the imaginary border between India and Myanmar, there have never been any territorial conflicts or encroachments in the history of the Khiamniungans.

Findings and Conclusion

The paper has attempted to examine the problems faced by the people living in the border areas of Northeast India. It is without a doubt that the government of India has ignored the border areas in Northeast India for several decades despite deserving equal attention as the other parts of the country. There is no proper surveillance to secure these areas. It was found that only recently has importance been given to securing the areas. The people also suffer due to the lack of socioeconomic development in the border areas. Shortage of clean drinking water, inadequate power supply, absence of health care facilities, poor road conditions and non-availability of schools or lack of quality education are some of the problems that plague the people living in the border areas.

Civil society organisations are not consulted or involved in any matters relating to border issues or security. There is also no awareness of human rights violations among the general population. Hence, many young girls and boys are trafficked within or outside the country in the false pretence of providing education or training in towns and cities when, in reality, they are forced into commercial sex trade, domestic servitude or begging.

One cause for the increase in illegal migration and human trafficking is that there is no well-regulated system for proper verification of IDs and travel documents. The border police force and security are also not adequately equipped. The Integrated Check Post (ICP) authorities must be aware of any suspicious movements at the borders.

Governments of states with international borders must bear heavier burdens for providing basic facilities to those living in such areas and for the broader national goal of securing the border. The people living in the border areas are forced to live in constant fear because of the failure of the government. They often witness violence, and allegations of encroachment of land have become a standard feature. The people in border areas are most often neglected and marginalised by the Government. The agreement to maintain the status quo along the border is also frequently violated. It is vital for the central government and governments of countries sharing borders with India to understand the ground realities.

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The Cultural Symbolic Interactionism and Indigenous Knowledge: Exploring the Angami Society in Nagaland

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Abstract

The Angami people, an indigenous Naga tribe from Nagaland, are renowned for their rich culture and vibrant traditions. Primarily agrarian, they rely on agriculture for their livelihood. With a strong sense of community, they are known for their intricate traditional attire, lively festivals, and unique customs. The Angamis have made significant contributions to the cultural and social life of Nagaland and continue to played a crucial role in shaping the identity of the region. This study explores the nexus of cultural symbolic interactionism and indigenous knowledge within the Angami society of Nagaland, India, and its implications for social development. This study employs Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory, which emphasizes the subjective meanings given to cultural symbols and interactions, and integrates insights from indigenous knowledge based on traditional practices and wisdom. The study delves into how cultural symbols, rituals, and traditions shape social dynamics and identity formation within the community. The findings highlight valuing indigenous knowledge for community well-being and cultural sustainability, emphasizing culturally sensitive social development rooted in local contexts. This research enhances understanding of culture, identity, and social development interplay, informing inclusive interventions in indigenous communities.

Keywords: Angami, Tradition, symbolic interactionism, symbolic meaning.

Introduction

In Angami societies, cultural symbolic interaction plays a significant role in shaping social dynamics, identity formation, and community cohesion. Symbols, gestures, and rituals hold profound significance in Angami cultures. These symbols often represent shared values, beliefs, and norms within the community. For example, traditional attire, dance forms, and ceremonies carry symbolic meanings that communicate social status, identity, and belonging.

Social interactions in Angami societies are heavily influenced by cultural symbols and rituals. People communicate and express themselves through gestures, greetings, and non-verbal cues, all of which are imbued with cultural meaning. For instance, greetings rituals such as handshakes or receiving gift with two hands may vary in significance depending on the context and cultural norms. The Angami Symbols, gestures, and rituals hold profound significance in Angami cultures. These symbols often represent shared values, beliefs, and norms within the community. For example, traditional attire, dance forms, and ceremonies carry symbolic meanings that communicate social status, identity, and belonging. Angami's attire and adornments feature diverse colours and intricate designs, each signifying specific "gender and status symbols" (Purkayastha, 2020, p.11).

The Cultural symbols and interactions play a crucial role in shaping individual and collective identities. In traditional Angami culture, the feast of merit symbolizes an abundance of "richness, splendour, and extravagance" (Kire, 2019, p.3). The Angami people draw on cultural symbols to express their sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group, community, or cultural heritage. For example, language, clothing, and religious practices serve as markers of identity and affiliation.

The significance of Angamis traditional clothing is often learned and transmitted through socialization processes within families and communities. Children are taught the meanings behind specific garments, patterns, and accessories from a young age. For example, young girls in many Angami societies learn about the significance of certain beadwork patterns or colours from their mothers or grandmothers, thereby perpetuating cultural traditions across generations. The ornaments of both the Angami people and North American Indians share

similarities and hold significant meaning, often serving as a "defensive purpose" (Hutton, 2003, p. 32).

Thus, this study highlights how cultural symbols and rituals profoundly influence social dynamics, identity formation, and community cohesion among the Angami people. By analysing traditional attire, festivals, and socialization, it reveals how these elements serve as markers of identity, convey social status, and preserve cultural heritage across generations. Through Blumer's lens of symbolic interactionism, the research provides valuable insights into the intricate interplay between symbols, meanings, and social interactions within Angami society, contributing to a deeper understanding of human social life and cultural significance.

Understanding the concept of Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism

Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism presents the 'meaning' which is not inherent in objects or ideas but, socially constructed through interactions between individuals. It highlights the importance of symbols, language, and gestures in shaping human behaviour and perception. Blumer's theory defines the process of "interpretation" as having two distinct parts. The first part involves the actor's role, indicating the "internalized social process" with which the actor interacts within themselves. The second part involves the process of "communication," where "interpretation becomes a matter of handling meanings" (Blumer, 1986, p.5). In line with Mead's ideas, Blumer emphasized the importance of starting the study of human behaviour from the perspective of human interaction. This concept contrasted with the early American sociological perspective, which tended to view the individual and society as separate entities (Carter and Fuller, 2015, p.2).

Blumer identified three core principles of symbolic interactionism: the first is the 'meaning' that individuals attribute to symbols, objects, and events is based on their social interactions and shared understandings within a particular cultural context. The second is 'language,' which is a fundamental tool for the creation and communication of meaning. Through language, individuals negotiate and interpret symbols, shaping their social reality. The third is the 'thought': Human thought is a social process that emerges from interaction with

others. Individuals develop self-concepts and interpret their experiences through ongoing social interactions (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

Blumer's theory suggests that reality is constructed through social interactions. The discussion of "gestures" represents interaction as an "exchange of attitudes," where attitudes signify the initial actions of the interactants (Fink, 2015, p. 6). Blumer's symbolic interactionism views social institutions as "social habits" that develop within particular contexts shared by those involved in them (Carter and Fuller, 2015, p. 2). In symbolic interactionism, social interaction is central to the construction of reality. Through face-to-face encounters, individuals negotiate meanings, develop shared understandings, and create social order. Interaction is not simply a passive exchange of information but an 'active process of interpretation and negotiation.'

Application to Indigenous Knowledge

Blumer's symbolic interactionism can be applied to the study of indigenous knowledge by examining how meanings are constructed and negotiated within indigenous communities. Symbolic interactionism arises from social communication, which involves the "creation of meaningful symbols or gestures" (Fink, 2015, p. 6). By focusing on the role of symbols, language, and social interaction, researchers can gain insight into the cultural significance of indigenous practices, beliefs, and worldviews. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding indigenous knowledge within its cultural context and recognizing the agency of indigenous peoples in shaping their own realities.

Symbolic interactionism, when applied to a larger scale, views cultures, societies, and institutions as tangible manifestations that should only be considered in relation to interactions between individuals within them. This perspective, emphasizing "meaning-in-interaction," introduces a certain ambiguity to reality (Fink, 2015, p. 9). In the context of indigenous knowledge, this means that meanings and understandings are shaped within indigenous communities through shared experiences, rituals, and storytelling. Indigenous knowledge encompasses the collective wisdom, practices, and beliefs of indigenous peoples, often passed down orally through generations (Grey, 2014, p. 3231). It is deeply rooted in cultural traditions,

local eco-systems, and spiritual worldviews, offering holistic perspectives on the interconnectedness of humans and nature. Indigenous knowledge systems are socially constructed through ongoing interactions within indigenous communities. Language, ceremonies, and traditional practices serve as symbolic frameworks through which knowledge is transmitted and interpreted. For instance, oral histories and creation myths convey ecological wisdom and moral teachings, reinforcing communal values and relationships with the environment.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth interviews and participants observation to gather rich and contextualised data. A purposive sampling technique is used to select participants, ensuring diversity in age, socio-economic status, and marital status among Angami women. Ethical considerations are upheld throughout the research process, with informed consent obtained from all participants.

Cultural Symbolic Interactionism of the Angami

The symbolic interactionism within the Angami community can be observed through various cultural practices, rituals, and traditions that hold symbolic meanings and facilitate social interactions. Here are some of the symbolic interactionism in Angami society:

1. **Traditional Attire**

In the context of Angami society, the attire worn by both men and women during festivals and ceremonies holds significant symbolic value, aligning with Herbert Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism. The choice of attire communicates not only individual identity but also social status, group affiliation, and cultural pride. For instance, the distinction between the *'pfhemhou'* [1]worn by married Angami women and the *'Loramhoshü'*[2] worn by unmarried women reflects both marital status and cultural tradition. Through this attire, women

[1] Pfhemhou is a specific style of married women's mekhela, characterized by black and red or maroon patterns.
[2] Loramhoshü is a type of attire worn by unmarried women mekhela (rapped around skirt) used in their prime, featuring a white colour with black and red patterns.

symbolically express their social roles and identities within the community, with married women signalling their status as wives and mothers, while unmarried women signify their eligibility for marriage.

Similarly, in men's attire, the use of *'tsüphrie'*[1] by middle-aged or high-ranking individuals and *'terha'*[2] by young men carries symbolic significance. The wearing of *tsüphrie* by esteemed members of the community symbolizes their authority, leadership, and maturity, while the use of *'terha'* by young men signifies their transition into adulthood and their adherence to cultural norms and traditions. According to Herbert Mead, "without symbols there would be no human interaction and no human society" (Haralambos and Heald, 2007, p. 544). Overall, the symbolic meanings embedded in Angami attire illustrate how individuals interact with cultural symbols to construct and negotiate their identities within the social context. By adhering to traditional dress codes, individuals engage in symbolic interactions that reinforce cultural values, social hierarchies, and collective identity within the Angami society, aligning with Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism. Here, traditional attire is a symbolic interactionism which is an "internal symbolic" process of actors attempts to fit their respective organised pattern of behaviour (Turner, 2017, p. 342).

2. Cultural Festivals

Festivals such as '*Sekrenyi*[3]*'* are important occasions in Angami society, where symbolic rituals and ceremonies are performed to commemorate ancestral traditions and promote social cohesion. These festivals involve activities such as traditional dances, feasting, and religious ceremonies, which serve as symbolic expressions of community values, beliefs, and solidarity. In the celebration of *Sekrenyi,* the Angami community's practice of *'muodi,'*[4] a feast, embodies Herbert Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism. Through *'muodi,'*

[1] Tsüphrie was a type of headgear for men crafted from bear hair.
[2] Terha is a sash-like attire for young unmarried individuals, typically in red or yellow hues with zigzag designs.
[3] Sekrenyi, a significant festival among the Angami community of Nagaland, is celebrated over a ten-day period during the month of 'Kezeiu khrü,' typically falling in February. This month, known as the month of darkness, carries cultural beliefs suggesting that marriages occurring during this time may not be auspicious, potentially leading to challenges in marital harmony or fertility. Consequently, the Angami people tend to avoid marriage ceremonies during this month due to these traditional beliefs.
[4] Muodi is a festival where beef meat is served in portions approximately the size of one's clenched fist or larger.

individuals engage in gestures laden with cultural meaning, interpreting, and reinterpreting their rich heritage. This symbolic interaction fosters social cohesion and identity formation within the community, as participants collectively construct and reaffirm their cultural identity through shared symbols and traditions. In the context of the Angami's traditional festival, symbolic interaction occurs when individuals uniquely create and "interpret gestures," relying on their capacity for "symbolic communication" (Turner, 2017, p. 350)

3. **Cultural Context and Customs**

In the Angami cultural customs where individuals are viewed as 'rude' if they stare at others during 'mourning or moments of distress,' underscores the significance of symbolic meanings in social interactions. This custom reflects how individuals attribute symbolic significance to behaviours such as staring, shaping social dynamics within the Angami society. The symbolic meanings attached to this custom and its implications for social cohesion and identity construction within the Angami community. The interpretation of another person's gesture serves as the foundation for "one's own response to foster social cohesion" (Blumer, 1936, p. 518).

4. **Language**

In Angami traditional societies, language plays a vital role in conveying cultural values, facilitating social interaction, and shaping identity. According to Angami Dictionary with English equivalent words (1984) states that:

"Angami language is a very peculiar language. A word may mean many different things, which can only be distinguished by High and low tones."

Here, language serves as a medium for expressing shared meanings, reinforcing social norms, and creating symbolic representations of cultural beliefs and practices. According to Nickerson (2023), in society, people grasp their surroundings by exchanging ideas using "language and symbols." Blumer's symbolic interactionism suggests that language is not just a tool for communication but a means through which individuals interpret and construct reality.

Women's Roles in Angami Society through Interactionism Perspective

In the Angami society, women play various roles that are deeply embedded in cultural symbolism and social interactions. Some of these roles include:

1. **Caregivers and Nurturers:**

Symbolic interactionism provides a valuable framework for analysing how indigenous knowledge shapes a young one's experiences and identities as caregivers and nurturers. The indigenous knowledge of the Angamis highlights the importance of young girls engaging in games like *'galikhunuo'*[1] and *'Oh yi yo, O ho,'*[2] which are passed down through generations. These activities serve as a significant symbol, preparing girls to assume roles as caregivers and nurturers from a young age. As Blumer explains how children learn to understand different perspectives through play; human's uses "symbolic gestures in which there is a common meaning and understanding (Turner, 2017, p. 335). Here, the young girl often takes on roles, like a mother caring for a baby, either using toys or imagination. This process involves speaking and acting as both characters, creating a social dialogue within themselves (Blumer, 1934, p. 151).

2. Economic Contributors

In Herbert Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism, individuals derive meaning from their "social interactions and roles within society" (Blumer, 1986, p. 15). In the context of Angami society, women's engagement in various economic activities aligns with this theory as it demonstrates how their roles as economic contributors shape their identities and interactions.

Women's participation in agriculture, weaving, and entrepreneurship reflects their agency and contribution to the economic sustainability of their households and communities. For the Angamis 'Weaving,' is a vital industry which is traditionally handed down from mothers to daughters, emphasizing its significance in familial and societal continuity (Zetsuvi, 2014, p. 36).

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[1] Galikhunuo refers to a playhouse where young girls mimic cooking, washing dishes, and serving meals, thus acquiring skills associated with domestic tasks.

[2] Oh yi yo o ho,is a game where young girls engage in nurturing play with their dolls, comforting them with soothing sounds to help them fall asleep.

Agriculture formed the core of Angami livelihoods, with women and children continuing to labour in the fields even during times of conflict (Pienyu, 2017, p. 52). By actively participating in these activities, women not only fulfil practical economic roles but also symbolically assert their capabilities and value within the family economy. Furthermore, Blumer's theory emphasizes the importance of symbols and interactions in shaping social reality by "the meaning of a thing a person grows out of the way" (Blumer, 1986, p. 4). In the case of Angami women's economic contributions, their involvement in agricultural work, seeds collection, flowering, weaving, or running small-scale businesses serves as a symbolic affirmation of their autonomy, skills, and role in the community. Through these economic endeavours, women challenge traditional gender roles and redefine societal expectations, contributing to the ongoing negotiation and construction of gender identities within Angami society.

Angami Traditional Games as a form of Symbolic Interactionism

The traditional games of the Angami people involve counting numbers using sticks and stones, typically after completing tasks like carrying a basket of firewood or fetching a pot of water. In these games, participants place a stick or stone to represent each completed task. This method of counting reflects a cultural practice rooted in illiteracy, where tangible objects are used as a means of numerical representation. This illustrates how symbols, meanings, and social interactions intersect to shape cultural practices and behaviours within their community, aligning with the core principles of Blumer's symbolic interactionism. According to Herbert Blumer, 'interaction' within this framework, there exists the potential for new objects or practices to be introduced and incorporated into their cultural practices over time (Turner, 2017, p. 340).

The traditional game known as *'Atuo-o-o,'*[1]along with others like *'pran pra hie,'*[2] *'Bounge,'*[1] *'vüdzü kepra,'*[2] *'tefü chüru'*[3]and *'kene,'*[4] symbolizes competition while also

[1] Atuo-o-o is a traditional breath-holding competition game. Participants compete to see who can say "atuo-o-o" without pausing to breathe, with the winner being the one who can sustain the longest duration.
[2] "Pran pra thie" is a game involving either looping or high jumping. The competitor who achieves the highest jump is considered the most skilled or clever among the participants.

fostering the development of intelligence, leisure, recreation, and friendship within the community. Traditional games and their symbolic meanings also reflect Blumer's perspective on "human thought and conduct," wherein symbols do not merely represent objects but define and shape how individuals perceive and respond to them (Haralambos and Heald, 2007, p. 544).

Angami Folklore and Traditional Riddles Serves as a Form of Symbolic Interactionism

Angami folklore and traditional riddles serve as a form of symbolic interaction within the culture. These riddles are not just puzzles to solve but are deeply rooted in cultural symbolism and communication. They often contain metaphors, allegories, and cultural references that carry layers of meaning. When people engage in solving or sharing riddles, they are not only exercising their cognitive abilities but also participating in a shared cultural practice that reinforces social bonds, transmits cultural knowledge, and fosters a sense of belonging.

Angamis folklore serves not only as entertainment but also as a means of transmitting cultural values, knowledge, and wisdom from one generation to the next. The folklore about eating burnt rice to keep one's hair black serves as a reminder not to waste food. Herbert Blumer suggests that for social life to function smoothly, there must be a significant degree of shared understanding of symbols among members of society (Haralambos and Heald, 2007, p. 544).

In Blumer's symbolic interactionism, the process of unravelling a riddle like the one posed by the Angami involves the interpretation and negotiation of meanings within their

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[1] "Bounge" is a traditional game in which competitors use their rhinoceros beetles to engage in contests and battles.

[2] "Vüdzü kepra" is a traditional game resembling a cockfight, where community members engage in a competition emulating the tactics of such fights to emerge victorious. This activity also serves as a symbol of intelligence or cleverness.

[3] "Tefü chüru" is a group competition involving the manipulation of animal bones or, alternatively, stones. Participants work together to transport the bones or stones from one end to the other, showcasing their collective energy and competing to accomplish the task.

[4] "Kene" is a traditional wrestling game that fosters friendship between two men from either the same village or different villages. It's not only a form of friendly competition but also a means to resolve disputes between individuals. The loser of the match utters the phrase "No vi ho," signifying their acknowledgment of defeat and their commitment to maintaining friendly relations in the future.

community. The riddle itself reflects the dynamic nature of symbolic interaction, where individuals attribute significance to symbols based on shared understandings and interpretations. In this case, the riddle prompts individuals to engage in a process of interpretation, drawing upon their cultural context and collective understanding to decipher its meaning. The riddle: What consistently grasps its own waist and never wearies of the task? The answer, "a cup," symbolizes an object that is commonly associated with gripping or holding, even when it is not actively being used or tired. The riddle: What entity fails to respond when beckoned at the front door but promptly emerges upon being called from the back door? The answer, "a snail." This interpretation demonstrates how symbols, such as the cup in this riddle, acquire meaning through social interaction and shared understandings within the Angami community. According to Blumer's approach "self-conception," "internalised need" are a successive phase of interpretation of gestures and definition of situations (Turner, 2017, p.342).

Key Findings

1. **Cultural Symbolism in Attire and Festivals:**

a. **Traditional Attire:** Angami traditional clothing, such as the *'pfhemhou'* for married women and the *'Loramhoshü'* for unmarried women, symbolizes social status and cultural identity. Men's attire, like the *'tsüphrie'* for middle-aged or high-ranking individuals and the *'terha'* for young men, signifies authority, leadership, and transition into adulthood.

b. **Cultural Festivals:** Festivals such as *'Sekrenyi'* involve symbolic rituals that reinforce community values, beliefs, and solidarity. The *'muodi'* feast during these festivals embodies Blumer's symbolic interactionism, where gestures laden with cultural meaning foster social cohesion and identity formation.

2. **Social Customs and Language:**

a. **Customs:** Social customs, such as avoiding staring during mourning or distress, reflect the symbolic meanings attached to behaviours and their role in maintaining social cohesion and identity.

b. **Language:** The *Tenyidie* language, with its complex tones and meanings, serves as a medium for expressing shared cultural values and creating symbolic representations of cultural beliefs and practices.

3. **Women's Roles and Economic Contributions:**

a. **Caregivers and Nurturers:** Traditional games and activities prepare young girls for roles as caregivers and nurturers, symbolically shaping their identities from a young age.

b. **Economic Contributors:** Women's participation in agriculture, weaving, and entrepreneurship illustrates their roles as economic contributors, asserting their capabilities and value within the family and community, thus reshaping societal expectations and gender identities.

4. **Traditional Games and Folklore:**

a. **Traditional Games:** Games such as *'Atuo-o-o'* and others promote intelligence, leisure, recreation, and friendship, symbolizing competition, and social cohesion within the community.

b. **Folklore and Riddles:** Folklore and riddles serve as symbolic interactions that transmit cultural knowledge and values, reinforcing social bonds and a sense of belonging. For instance, riddles like "What entity fails to respond when beckoned at the front door but promptly emerges upon being called from the back door?" (answer: a snail) engage individuals in interpreting symbols based on shared cultural understandings.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of cultural symbols and indigenous knowledge in shaping social interactions and identity within the Angami society. By applying Blumer's symbolic interactionism, the research reveals how these cultural elements contribute to social cohesion, resilience, and sustainable development. It advocates for valuing indigenous knowledge and promoting culturally sensitive social development rooted in local contexts.

The findings highlight that understanding and integrating cultural symbols and indigenous knowledge can inform inclusive interventions in indigenous communities. Policymakers, researchers, and community members can use these insights to collaborate on approaches that empower indigenous peoples and preserve their rich cultural heritage, thereby enhancing social development and cultural sustainability.

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