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SPECIAL ISSUE

Issues and Challenges in contemporary Social work

- **Editorial** - *Gopalji Mishra & Ajit Kumar Jena*
- **Wellbeing of Youth and Coping during the Covid19 Pandemic** - *C. Devendran*
- **Construction Work, Workers and Welfare Board: A Study in Delhi** - *Rohit Bharti and Prof. Sanjai Bhatt*
- **Armed Conflict in Manipur and its effect on women** - *Prof. Gopalji Mishra & Lojita Khaidem*
- **Gandhian Philosophy on Peace and Development: Relevance for Social Work Education and Practice** - *Dr. Tarun Bikash Sukai*
- **Ecological and Pandemic Crises: A Cause of Structured Violence against Women** - *Deepika Singh*
- **Climate Change: Livelihood implications and Role of Social Workers** - *Rajiv Jena*
- **Crisis in Brewing Economy in Urban Tribal Community of Manipur** - *Gangmei Akhuan Rongmei and MC Arunkumar*
- **Single Motherhood: A Structural Perspective** - *Dr. Wandaia Syngkon*
- **Behind the Shadows of Public Adulation: The Private Lives of Meitei Women** - *Leenabai Kshetrimayum, Ratna Huiem and Kathiresan L.*
- **Vote Buying In Manipur: A Case Study On Lhangkichoi Village In Moreh Tengenoupal Sub-Division Chandel District Manipur** - *Manglien Gangte*
- **A study on Contributing factors to substance abuse among the clients of Silchar New Life foundation and role of social workers** - *R. Lalzo S. Thangjom*
- **Mat Making for Livelihood in Assam: Prospects and Retrospect** - *Chayan Deb & Gangabhushan M. Molankal*
- **Parenting style and its associated behavioural problems among adolescent student** - *Thokchom Roda Devi & M. Tineshowri Devi*
- **Health Care Facilities and Utilization of Services in Primary Health Centres of Manipur** - *Mr. Nula Bethel Anal & Dr. G. Albin Joseph*
- **The Unspoken Reality of Child Marriage in Durrung Tea Plantations: Social Work Intervention** - *Barsha Kalit*



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Editorial

We are happy to bring out the current issue of Social Work Journal of Department of Social Work, Assam University. This issue is predominantly covering papers centered on the issues and challenges in contemporary social work.

The paper on “Wellbeing of Youth and Coping during the Covid19 Pandemic” by C. Devendran describes about the emotional wellbeing of youth, their coping and family life in the midst of pandemic situation. The themes identified were emotional wellbeing, coping strategies, family relationships and outlook towards life.

In the paper on “Construction Work, Workers and Welfare Board: A Study in Delhi” The authors Rohit Bharti and Sanjai Bhatt discusses the problems related to construction workers in NCT Delhi and also highlights recent labor reforms initiated in India and its implications on the Welfare Board.

The article entitled “Armed Conflict in Manipur and its effect on women” Authored by Gopalji Mishara and Lojita Khaidem gives a brief analysis about the various form of violence carried out against the women in the state and how the women are facing human rights issues and sexual assault in the way of armed conflict.

The article entitled “Gandhian Philosophy on Peace and Development: Relevance for Social Work Education and Practice” by Tarun Bikash Sukai gives a brief analysis of the relevance of Gandhian philosophy for dealing with issues of peace, development and social justice, and it also discusses the relevance of Gandhian philosophy for social work practice and education.

The author Deepika Singh in the paper entitled “Ecological and Pandemic Crises: A Cause of Structured Violence against Women” Describes about the cause of ecological and pandemic crises and women’s particularly rural women’s vulnerability leading to gender violence.

The paper entitled “Climate Change: Livelihood implications and Role of Social Workers” by Rajiv Jena focuses on the issue of livelihood among the tribals and marginalized section of the society and suggested role of social workers in the field of climate change.

Another paper entitled “Crisis in Brewing Economy in Urban Tribal Community of Manipur” by Gangmei Akhuan Rongmei and MC Arunkumar, attempts to explore how the urban Kabuis, who have no land for cultivation and also those who are not in the service sectors, survive the onslaught of neoliberal economy, and also highlights the rapidly growing crisis of traditional brewing economy.

In the paper on “Single motherhood: a structural perspective” by Wandaia Syngkon Discusses about the contributions that can be made by social workers to

improve the daily life of single mothers' families psychologically, economically and socially.

The paper entitled "Behind the Shadows of Public Adulation: The Private Lives of Meitei Women" by Leenabai Kshetrimayum, Ratna Huirem and Kathiresan L. focusses on how women's role within the socially constructed divide of these two spheres, i.e., the private, which is marked as the women's world; and the public domain as the men's world has set a platform for women to remain vulnerable and suppressed by the gendered roles and constraints imposed on them by society.

In the paper on "Vote buying in Manipur: a case study on lhangkichoi village in moreh tengnoupal sub-division chandel district manipur, 2017 by Manglien Gangte Discusses about the vote buying in the electoral politics in the state of Manipur and suggested about the remedies for electoral practices.

The article entitled "A study on Contributing factors to substance abuse among the clients of Silchar New Life foundation and role of social workers" by Lalzo S. Thangjom discusses about the drug consumption and addiction among the youth of Barak valley and also focused on finding the socio cultural, economic and environmental factors contributing to substance abuse.

The joint paper on "Mat Making for Livelihood in Assam: Prospects and Retrospect" by Chayan Deb and Gangabhushan M. Molankal, discusses about handicrafts as livelihood in the Barak valley and issues related to Strength and Weakness of Mat Making as a livelihood.

In the paper entitled "Parenting style and its associated behavioural problems among adolescent student" by Thokchom Roda Devi and M. Tineshowri Devi. Focusses on the issues of adolescents and parenting style effectively during the adolescent period, and it provides a basis for many healthy developmental outcomes during adolescence.

Another paper entitled "Health Care Facilities and Utilization of Services in Primary Health Centers of Manipur" by Nula Bethel Anal and G. Albin Joseph describes the issues of conditions of existing health infrastructures, availability of health services and mode of utilization by the common population resided at the interior areas of undivided Chandel district of Manipur state.

Finally, the paper of Barsha Kalita on "The unspoken reality of child marriage in durrung tea plantations: social work intervention" describes the problem of women tea plantation labourers undergoing child marriage using feminist perspective through grounded theory methodology it also addresses the issue of child marriage through social work intervention, integrating theory into practice. It is based on the findings of the fieldwork in Durrung tea estate in Sonitpur district.

**–Prof. Gopalji Mishara
Mr Ajit Kumar Jena**

Wellbeing of Youth and Coping during the Covid19 Pandemic

C. Devendran¹

Abstract

Youth is one of the most active phases of one's life and involves extensive exposures to different aspects of adult life. During this stage, they are expected to find stability in their personal, social, economic and overall aspects of life. A lot of transitions from school to university life and from university to job seeking and work-life are involved besides their biological and psychological developments. However, since the covid19 pandemic, the world has paused and the vibrant lifestyle of youth has come to a standstill. This has affected people globally across countries, social status, gender and age without any discrimination. It has hindered the flow of transition and development among the present generation youth, essentially with disrupted education and job layoff. The purpose of this study is to understand the state of emotional wellbeing of youth, their coping and family life in the midst of pandemic situation. Seven participants were purposively selected and telephonic interview was conducted using a semi structured interview schedule while the data was thematically analysed. The themes identified were emotional wellbeing, coping strategies, family relationships and outlook towards life. Overall, heightened negative emotions were reported, coped with productive activities and stronger family ties and positive outlook towards their future life. To produce a healthy adult, it not only requires a multi-disciplinary but also a multi-institutional approach. Further, nurturing a young mind is much easier and effective than cultivating an adult mind since developing healthy ways of living, habits and patterns take time.

Keywords: Youth, wellbeing, coping, mental health, pandemic

Introduction

The United Nations defines 'youth' as individuals in the age group of 15 to 24 years. In 2019, the world's population of youth aged 15 to 24 years were estimated to be about 1.2 billion or 16 per cent of the global population (United Nations, n.d.). The age bracket of youth differs contextually and accordingly in India's National Youth Policy 2014, youth comprises of persons between the ages of 15 and 29 years consisting of 27.5 per cent of the population at that time (*National Youth Policy -2014*, 2014). These ages involve extensive transitions in their family life, academic life, personal and social relationships and career. Exposure to adult life begins

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gradually as they form their own identity and gain independence. Youth is one of the most active phases of one's life. A lot of transitions from school to university life, from university to job seeking and work-life and further establishing family life are involved. Youth life being a transitional phase, they are expected to find their self-identity, achieve education, built social relationships and network, find a stable job, date potential partner and start their own family by the end of their youth life. During and by the end of this stage, individuals are expected to find stability in their personal, social, economic and overall aspects of life. Hence, Gelhaar et al. (2007) pointed out the demand for consistent coping with the rapid transformations in their physique, psychology and social responsibilities (as cited in Ronen et al., 2016). However, since the covid19 pandemic, the world has paused and the vibrant lifestyle of youth has come to a standstill. This has affected people globally across countries, social status, gender and age without any discrimination. It has hindered the flow of transition and development among the present generation youth, essentially with disrupted education, job layoff and hindering future employment prospects. Besides these, some of the North Eastern Indian youth studying and working in the Major cities of India had to experience racial discrimination by being treated like the corona virus itself (Mazumdar, 2020). The covid19 containment measures affected the economic functioning, hampered education system and overall liberty and rights of people. Restraining the mobility and social distancing measures has impacted the wellbeing of youth in the likelihood of *“family stress, social isolation, risk of domestic abuse, disrupted education and uncertainty about future”*(ILO, 2020).

Suicide, which is globally the second leading cause of death after road injury among young people in the age group of 15 to 29 years (WHO, 2020a), has seen a high trend in India during the pandemic lockdown. In 2019, the rate for suicide in India stood at 10.4 per lakh population. According to the National Crime Records Bureau(2019), the ages belonging to 18 to 30 years was found to be one of the most vulnerable groups resorting to suicide. During the enforcement of nationwide lockdown as a measure to control the spread of covid19, national Medias reported a number of suicides and suicide suspected cases. According to Pathare et al.(2020), there were 369 cases of suicide in India during the lockdown from 24th March to 3rd May 2020. These includes a number of Indian celebrities who were alleged to have committed suicide due to financial crisis (Kar et al., 2020). Besides suicide, disability caused due to mental health issues has been a cause of concern. In 2010, according to the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2010 (GBD 2010), mental and substance use disorders

accounted for the leading cause of years lived with disability (YLDs) (Whiteford et al., 2013). The burden of mental disorders, particularly depressive and anxiety disorders, reportedly *“rises abruptly in childhood (1-10 year) and peaks in adolescence and early to middle age (10-29 year)”* (Chadda, 2018). Kessler et al. (2007) cited that *“half of all mental health conditions start by 14 years of age but most cases are undetected and untreated”*. The World Health Organisation acknowledged health during adolescence to determine the health in their adulthood and many of the adult health issues being rooted in their adolescence. As mentioned by the WHO (2020b), *“the consequences of not addressing adolescent mental health conditions extend to adulthood, impairing both physical and mental health and limiting opportunities to lead fulfilling lives as adults”*. According to the National Mental Health Survey of India 2015-16, nearly 11 per cent of Indians above 18 years of age suffers from mental disorders and yet do not seek and receive treatment and care for various reasons (Gururaj et al., 2016).

Researches related to covid19 are recent and its consequences on the mental health among the general population, particularly youth are limited to few. Studies conducted during the covid19 pandemic have shown related mental health complaints amongst the general population, particularly symptoms of anxiety, depression and distress (Rajkumar, 2020) and *“loss of a sense of purpose and unproductivity distress”* (Suhail et al., 2020) were reported. According to a study ‘covid19 blues’, there has been increase in self-harm and suicidal ideation among people during the pandemic and apparently, disappointment or shame lead young people to abruptly choose suicide; besides that there have been increase in relapse cases as well (Menon & Chakrapani, 2020). Furthermore, with the lockdown measure rendering people home 24/7, social support, which is one of the most sought after coping mechanism for any mental health issue has been curtailed with the implementation of social distance measures. Many are, in some way, in social isolation, limited to deal with their issues on their own. Hence, understanding the wellbeing of youth and how they process with the pandemic situation are the objectives of this paper since youth, particularly in their twenties, is a crucial time for educational achievement and career advancement.

Method and Data Analysis

For an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the youth, telephonic interview was conducted with a total of seven participants. The participants were selected purposively which consisted of three female and four male from a semi-urban community. The purpose of the study was explained to them in detail and assuring confidentiality of their identity and

with their consent, each of the participants was interviewed. The contents that were investigated include:

1. Emotional wellbeing during the pandemic
2. Ways of coping with the pandemic situation
3. Changes and development in family relationships
4. Outlook towards future life

Data was thematically analysed following the steps mentioned by Braun and Clarke from a deductive approach. The interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions were read over to code and identify themes. Firstly, the transcribed data was read over to get familiarised with the contents. Secondly, initial themes were identified and generated and coded with labels that fit into the questions being investigated. Thirdly, related codes were combined and broader themes were identified. These were then, collated into broader themes. Fourthly, the identified themes were reviewed and collated to answer the research questions. Themes were refined by removing or reordering them systematically for proper representation of the themes. Lastly, themes were defined and presented in the form of write ups and contextualizing the analysis in relation to the existing literature.

Table 1: Profile of the Participants

Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Educational qualification	Relationship status	Total no. of family members	Total monthly family income
Yati	28	M	Teacher	PG	Single	8	10,000
Vizara	28	F	Student	PG	Single	6	26,000
Kenso	28	M	Medical professional	Graduate	Single	9	40,000
Avi	27	F	Teacher	PG	Dating	5	20,000
Besie	26	F	Teacher	PG	Dating	7	17,000
Takho	27	M	Teacher	PG	Single	8	40,000
Kere	27	M	Teacher	Graduate	Single	5	50,000

Findings

Theme 1: Emotional Wellbeing

This theme presents the initial emotional reaction and the changes in their emotions as the pandemic continue. The initial emotional reaction, as revealed by the participants when the pandemic halted their life progress and plans were confusion, anxiousness, overwhelming, worries, frustration, stressful, lost, sad and demotivation.

Vizara: *“My future plans were halted and I could not make a proper plan and timeline for the future at my prime age....”*

Avi: *“The scenario was actually overwhelming from the very beginning...I was a little sad.”*

Kere: *“It was very stressful.”*

Besie: *“I felt as if everything was shattered.”*

Some of the participants reported heightened negative emotions during the pandemic such as fear about future, hopelessness, worries, irritation, frustration, anger, sadness and stress. The most common emotions expressed were hopelessness, fear, sadness, worries, stress and frustration.

Theme II: Coping strategies

This theme presents the ways of coping adopted by the participants to deal with the distress caused by the pandemic as well as the usage of their considerable time during the lockdown. Some of the ways the participants coped with the situation were engaging in various activities such as household chores, carpentry, gardening, reading, online games and watching online videos. Almost all the participants reported learning new skills and improvising their already learnt skills during the pandemic. Some of the skills mentioned were carpentry, sewing, embroidery and masonry.

Besie: *“...brushing up on my embroidery skills...”*

Takho: *“.....since most of the migrant labourers returned to their villages, I am utilising and improvising my carpentry and masonry skills in the neighbourhood.”*

Vizara: *“...gardening...learning a lot about E-learning and gaining knowledge on my subject matter.”*

The following are some of the ways the participants managed to cope with the distress caused by the pandemic; inculcating positive thoughts, self-reflecting, keeping busy with household activities, studying and learning.

Yati: *"....watching the contents on competitive exams from YouTube."*

Kenso: *"...trying to see positive in everything, inculcating good thoughts within...."*

Vizara: *"I spent time in understanding myself; my bad and good qualities....to live positively."*

Theme III: Development in Family Relationships

This theme presents any development, positive or negative, in the family and self as a result of the pandemic and its 'stay at home' measures. The participants reported a number of positive developments in their family life. Those mentioned were increased family time, strengthened family bonding, family prayer and realizing the importance of family time.

Yati: *"....spending time with the siblings, bonding grew stronger and closer."*

Kenso: *"A family prayer started during the lockdown."*

Avi: *"I learn that my family is the biggest asset...I often tend to forget to give time to our family when I am too much involved with my work...I realized that I should spare some time for my family as well because life is uncertain."*

Despite these positive developments in the family life during the pandemic, few participants reported heightened expectation from their parents as a result of financial crunch in the family. Besides these, some of the participants expressed developing bad habits during the pandemic in the form of increased laziness, procrastination, disoriented time management, idling and being addicted to phone. Increased laziness was one of the most common responses among the participants.

Besie: *"...became kind of addicted to use my cell phone..."*

Vizara: *"I became lazy....did not study as much when I had so much free time."*

Besie: *"...made me a little lazier as compared to the pre-lockdown period."*

Theme IV: Outlook towards future life

This theme presents the participants overview of the pandemic situation and their outlook towards life in the future. Most of the participants reportedly complaint about time being wasted by the pandemic at the prime

age, missed job opportunities, plans for a year or two being cancelled, inflation and sufferings caused especially to the vulnerable members of the community. Besides these, the participants acknowledge how the pandemic taught them to live hygienically and the need for constant adaptation to the demand of the situation.

Vizara: *“Finding a job anytime soon seems unattainable....”*

Takho: *“I’ve missed so many job opportunities.”*

Yati: *“The current pandemic situation has taught me to have hygienic living.....adapt with the environment to the arising need of the days.”*

Regardless of the disorder caused by the pandemic, most of the participants were positive and hopeful of a bright future despite the uncertainties of life ahead.

Kenso: *“I am 100 per cent hopeful my future is going to be bright.”*

Besie: *“Life is so uncertain....might as well be prepared to face it positively.”*

Takho: *“I’m hopeful for better days.”*

Kere: *“Future will be bright.”*

Discussion

The ongoing covid19 crisis has turned the whole world into a chaotic situation. At the beginning of the pandemic, participants experienced sudden fluctuation in their emotions which were mostly negative which supplements the finding of Suhail et al. (2020). Feeling of hopelessness, sadness, fear, worries, stress and frustration were reported to have heightened during the pandemic. This negative reaction to sudden triggers is expected and considered normal since the current generations have not experienced such a situation where the whole world was on locked down hindering movements not only internationally or nationally but locally as well. Many of these negative emotions seem to have steamed from the pandemic disrupting the participants’ plans for life since the pandemic is estimated to last for years and life in the pandemic seem to have become the new normal. Most of the participants also reported being lazier as compared to the pre-lockdown situation and addiction to phone use was acknowledged. While phone and internet could be used productively as well, being addicted to its use is another cause of concern of the present generation even before the pandemic.

With regard to coping, most of the participants reportedly utilised their time productively by learning new skills and improvising their skills and the strategies of coping to the distress caused by the pandemic were reportedly positive. Some of the healthy ways adopted to cope with the situation were e-learning, inculcating positive thoughts, self-reflecting and keeping busy with household activities. Particularly with the migrant labourers returning to their respective villages, many of the people were left to do their needed household chores and repairs by themselves. This led some of the male participants in taking up carpentry and masonry which is a constructive and healthy activity both for mental health and in being self-reliant that needs to be encouraged among the current generation youth.

Besides the chaos and distress, most of the participants acknowledged the positive development in their family life especially in building stronger ties among the members which also complements the finding of Suhail et al. (2020). Family could be both a source of distress and a source of support depending on the family dynamics. In the present study, family seem to be a strong source of support and the feeling of belongingness and a sense of security could be observed among the participants. Lastly, despite the uncertainties, chaos and plans being ruined by the pandemic, the participants were positive and hopeful about the future. This is a healthy outlook to their future, that despite the disruption caused by the global pandemic, they were able to look forward positively. These senses of optimism could have steamed from a strong primary source of care and support which is the family. Lastly, the overall wellbeing and coping seem to be positive which could perhaps be because the participants were employed and they were not laid off during the pandemic unlike many others. This positivity could also be because the participants belonged to the older youths who are normally assumed to be more experienced and matured in dealing with their lives as compared to their younger counterparts. Regardless of this, cultivating healthy ways of coping is essential and it needs to be nurtured from an early age.

Conclusion

In a developing country like India, mental health care is normally sought when the case have progressed to severity; such as the on set of psychotic symptoms and in the cases of self-harming behaviour or suicidal attempts. The present-day lifestyle involves enormous external factors that hinder healthy lifestyle and outlook to life. Particularly in reference to young people, perfection seems to have become the normal standard leading young people to increased trend in virtual life especially with the swarming of social

media. In this overwhelming environment, cultivating healthy thought process and outlook to life has to begin at an early age. In general cases, mental health does not breakdown abruptly but is a result of long term adjustment coping, struggle and neglect. Considering this, mental health particularly during the pandemic cannot be distinguished completely from mental health during normal situation. In certain cases, the pandemic could simply have been the catalyst for the breakdown of already deteriorating mental health and leading to suicide. Positive mental health or mental resilience, which is the key to prevent mental breakdown, is thus better instilled during young age. Nurturing young mind is also easier than cultivating an adult mind since habits and patterns takes time to develop; as mentioned by Kessler et al.(2007), half of all mental health conditions start by 14 years of age.

Mental health and wellbeing is a responsibility of multiple stakeholders. For an effective outcome, it not only requires a multi-discipline but also multi-institutional approach. Since family is the primary care giver, educating the parents is the outmost importance as children are the product of their parents' behaviour and lifestyle. A person undertakes years and decades of training for their profession but training in parenting was never considered seriously. Children, in one way, became a training ground for their parents to practice their parenting skills through trial and error. What children learnt learned from their parents. Considering the fact that a child's overall views and ways of life are highly influenced by their parents', training in family and parenting may be introduced and encouraged for the new generation parents. Secondly, educational institutions, particularly school education requires a reform in their curriculum by introducing basic mental health education including life skills, healthy lifestyle and moral science, which further need to be extended even in the college curriculum with age specific contents. Much focus on the basic subjects and specialised subjects has been given; while basic health care and life skills have been neglected by the formal education system. Since the purpose of educational institution is to produce efficient human beings and not machines, basic life skills incorporating health and mental health, lifestyles and moral science need to be introduced and updated constantly as the situation demands. Nurturing the younger population will produce a healthy and efficient adult. Hence, from a long term perspective, much focus on the younger population is needed and reform in the school curriculum and parenting are required if mental health of the future generation is to be taken seriously.

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Construction Work, Workers and Welfare Board: A Study in Delhi

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Abstract

Unorganized Sector has a crucial role in the Indian Economy in which more than 90 percent of workforce and around 50 per cent of the National Product are accounted for by the Informal Economy in which Construction Sector is 2nd largest employer after agriculture sector in India (National Statistical Commission, 2012). The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board is an affirmative measures established under the Building and Other Construction Workers Act (BOCW Act) has been great hope for millions of informal workers. The research paper is based upon M.Phil dissertation titled “Social Security Measures for Construction Workers in National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi: Issues and Challenges”. The paper also critically looks into recent labour reforms initiated in India and its implications on the Welfare Board.

Keywords: Construction Workers, Social Security, Unorganised Sector, Welfare Board

Backdrop

Unorganised Sector for a long time has been serious agenda of concern. Initially it was not paid as much attention but gradually out crying situation pushed policy makers to look into the situation. It has been also a challenge to identify Unorganised Workers, as there was not any acceptable universal definition. International Labour Organisation (ILO) was first to coin the term “Informal Sector”. The 15th International Conferences of Labour statisticians, held at Geneva in year 1993 came out with an elaborative definition of Unorganised Sector. Later, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector has also defined Unorganised Sector in a report on social security for Unorganised Sector in year 2006.

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National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in year 2004-05 pronounced that 94% of the total labour force comes under Unorganized Sector which constitutes 433 million workers. 2001 Census of India mention that the total workforce in our country is 402 million, in which 313 million are main and 89 million are marginal workers and out of 313 million main workers, 285 million are in the Unorganised Sector (91 percent). National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) pronounced that 8 percent of India's workforce only enjoys social security where as 91percent of India's workers lack social security coverage. Recent, Periodic Labour Force Survey (2017-2018) outlined 90.6 percent of workforce in this country employed informally. Economic Survey of 2018-19 also mentioned that 93 percent of India's workforce belongs to the informal economy.

National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) highlighted in its report titled "Social Security for Unorganised Workers" in year 2006 that 79 percent of workers in the Unorgansied Sector lived on an income of less than Rs. 20 per day. Such an unpleasant finding open up a discussions in the light of the provisions made in National and International Conventions, also the Constitutional framework The *Article 41* of Directive Principle of the State precisely highlight that "*State within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to educate and to public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other case of underserved want.*"

The study findings indicate Rs. 387 is average wage in Delhi in which female workers are getting Rs. 286 against the male counterpart of Rs. 429. The findings also pronounced that a large number of (93 percent) of construction workers are not covered under any social security measures and 96 percent of them have not heard of any Acts specific for them. The 58 percent of women faced sexual abuse at worksites, where as women gets just 10 days rest after delivery. Most (99 percent) of workers are migrant belongs to other backward class (90 percent), earning Rs. 12846 monthly in Delhi. There are hardly any legal framework regulating working conditions and social security of construction workers. Bhatt (2009) the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Service Condition) Act was passed in year 1996 to secure social security for workers in the Construction Industry. The Act outlined formation of a "Welfare Board" for all workers engaged in the Construction Sector to ensure them Maternity Benefit, Pension, Accidental Compensation, Loans and other benefits for the survivors in case of death of the construction worker.

Operational Definitions

Social Security: International Labour Organization (ILO, 1958) Defines Social Security “*The protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction in earnings resulting from sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age and death; the provision of medical care; and the provisions of subsidies for families with children*”(as cited in Jhabvala, 1998, p. L-8).

Unorganised Sector: National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NECUS) defines Unorganised Sector “*All unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the production and sale of goods and services and operated on a proprietary or a partnership basis and employing less than 10 persons*” (p. 18).

Construction Workers: It means a person who is employed to do any skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled, manual, supervisory, technical or clerical work for hire or reward, whether the terms of employment be expressed or implied, in connection with any building or other Construction work (The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996).

Construction Work and Workers in Informal Sector

Construction sector is a one of biggest areas from the point of view of employment as well as share of it to the GDP of the country. It covers real estate in which residential complex, offices, hotels, parks government and private as well as projects of areas development such as infrastructure for supply of water, availability of sanitation, transport, school and healthcare. As per Government of India, the Construction Industry is expected to become third largest sector globally by 2025, also the output is expected to raise by 7.1 percent on an average yearly and revenue gain from construction industry is estimated to touch 5 billion dollar. The Construction Industry share to India's GDP is 9 percent as per the Government of India and it engages 51 million people, also it has been observed that it was second largest employer, at the same time second largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) recipient in 2017 due to mega projects like Smart Cities, Industrial Corridors, Railway Stations, Mega Ports and Commercial Spaces.

The key findings of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by NSSO (July 2017-June, 2018) highlights that 70.7 percent of the persons are living in rural areas in India in which about 54.9 percent of

males and 18.2 percent of females were in the labour force. In rural space about 55 percent of the male workers and 73.2 percent of the female workers found to engaged in the agriculture sector. Even, male and female engagement in Construction Sector in rural area recorded 14.5 percent and 5.3 percent respectively. The industry sector comprising 'trade, hotel and restaurant' engaged about 24.5 male workers while manufacturing and 'other services' accounted for about 22.4 percent and 21.5 percent respectively during 2017-18 in urban India where as female workers in urban India shared the highest proportion of workers (44.4 percent) in 'other services'. Press Information Bureau (2016) finding of the labour force survey on employment and unemployment (2011-12) by National Sample Survey Officer (NSSO) pronounced 47.41 crore were employed persons on usual status basis of which 39.14 crore (82.7 percent) were in unorganised sector.

Labour Laws: Recent Reforms Undertaken

A large size of construction workers are working day and night on minimal wages. The workers are one of the important invisible but markedly a great contributor in construction industry in particular and economy in general. In spite of this fact, they face apathy, neglect and denial of rights like minimum wages. However a number of labour laws enacted in which some of labour laws formulated specific for the purpose of welfare of construction workers. The Second National Commission on Labour in June, 2002 submitted a comprehensive report on Labour to the Ministry of Labour & Employment. The report has given several recommendations including merging of existing around 44 labour laws into broad categories of Industrial Relations; Wage; Social Security; Safety; and Welfare and Working Conditions. In accordance with the recommendations the Government came up with four "Labour Code" in India.

1. The Code on Wages 2019: The Code on Wages based on the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. These Act's certain provisions merged altogether to enact the Code on Wages, thereafter these Acts repealed.

2. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019 (Bill No. 186 of 2019): The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill 2019 introduced in the Lok Sabha which is based on 13 major central labour legislation accounted for safety and healthy working conditions such as The Factories Act, 1948, The Mines Act, 1952, The Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986, The Building and Other

Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and others.

3. The Code on Social Security 2019 (Bill No. 375 of 2019): The Code on Social Security Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha which is based on nine major legislations meant for regulating social security of workers such as The Employees Compensation Act, 1923, The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, The Employees Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, The Employment Exchange (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959, The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, , The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996 and others.

4. The Industrial Relations Code, 2019 (Bill No. 364 of 2019): The Industrial Relations Code Bill combine altogether The Trade Unions Act, 1926, The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 and The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 which has been the crucial legislations for forming unions, raising voices, will be replaced by the Industrial Relations Code, once it got approval of competent authority.

The Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act, 1996

The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1996 & The Building and Other Construction (Regulation of Employment and Condition of Services) Cess Act, 1996 are one of prominent Act to provide safety, health and welfare measures for the building and other construction workers. It consists of eleven chapters in which there are 64 sections touching upon the various issues of construction workers. The Act also has provisions for setting up advisory committee, expert committee so that provisions can be revised and improvised (Chapter II, BOCW Act). The Act precisely put light on the provisions of registration of establishment as well as registration of building workers as beneficiaries. It also gives direction to States to Set-up the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board and utilized fund to run welfare programs like old age pension, financial assistance for housing, tool purchase, marriage, children education and financial support at time of crisis (Chapter V, BOCW Act). Therefore, workers are suggested to get enrolled in their respective State Welfare Board of construction workers to receive the benefit of welfare programs under Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (BOWW Board).

The hours of work, other welfare measures and other conditions of services of building workers has been mentioned and provisions laid down in details for betterment of the building workers. If there are more than fifty

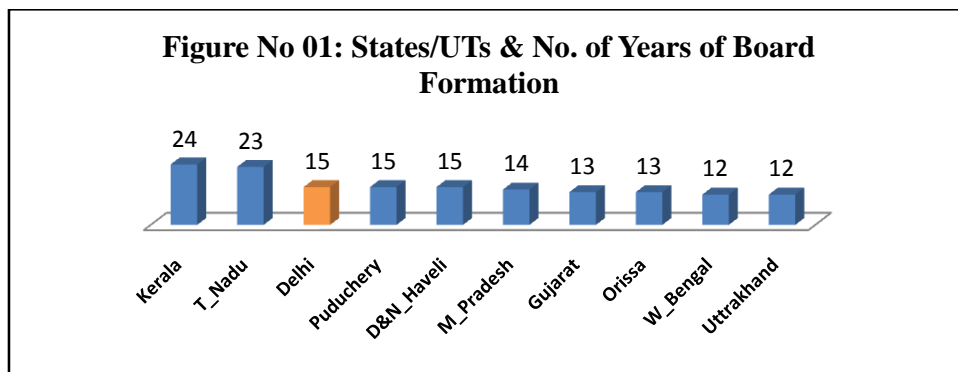
women construction workers are employed at construction sites or any establishment, the provision of crèches with trained staffs in child caring with adequate facility must be ensured by employer (Sec 35 of the BOCW Act). The Other facilities like drinking water, latrines, accommodation also need to be ensured as per the provisions in the legislation. The BOCW Board accountability for initiating, designing and executing the welfare programs of the building and other construction workers under the BOCW Act is a affirmative step to fulfil constitutional commitments.

The Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board

The Government of India enacted “The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Act in year 1996. However, The Government of Delhi constituted and notified “Delhi Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board” as per the provision mentioned at the section 18 under Chapter V of the Central Act. A detailed description of Welfare Board has been given in the Chapter V of the Act which instruct States to constitute “State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board” to exercise the powers conferred. The composition of the Welfare Board consists of a Chairperson, person to be nominated by Central Government and other member representatives from employee, employer and government, not exceeding fifteen appointed by the State Government (Section 19 BOCW Act). The major welfare programs incorporated are immediate assistance to a beneficiary in case of accident, pension to the beneficiaries, loans and advances, premium for group insurance, providing financial assistance for the education of children, medical expenses for treatment of major ailments and maternity benefit.

Cess Collection & Utilization of Welfare Fund

The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Cess Act, 1996” which not just put forward safety, health and welfare measures, it ensure to have enough fund to run welfare programs too which is a rare in existing legal framework in this country. The Ministry of Labour & Employment (2017) Lok Sabha Standing Committee Report (28th) on “Cess Funds and Their Utilization For Workers Welfare” mentioned that Cess has be collected at rate not exceeding two percent but not less than one percent of the cost of construction projects from every employer including Government/Public/Private and medium or small for implementation of provisions given under the Central Act.



Sources: Dubbudu (May 17, 2017)

Figure No.01 precisely highlights number of years of formation of Welfare Board in major ten States/UTs. Kerala is one of pioneer State, also most performing States providing welfare measures to its workers. Delhi is third on position in number of years completed since formation of Workers Welfare Board.

Figure No 02: Number of Construction Workers					
S. No	Name of State & UTs	Estimated Number of CW	S. No	Name of State & UTs	Registered Number of CW
	India	74316947		India	27751545
1	Uttar Pradesh	12138136	1	Uttar Pradesh	3607498
2	Rajasthan	7317894	2	West Bengal	3021365
3	Tamil Nadu	5987008	3	Madhya Pradesh	2919105
4	Madhya Pradesh	5014170	4	Andra_P+Telengana	2752748
5	Andra_P+Telengana	4848352	5	Tamil Nadu	2700749
6	Maharashtra	4484955	6	Orissa	1840000
7	West Bengal	4124747	7	Rajasthan	1650230
8	Bihar	3991224	8	Kerala	1464621
9	Kerala	3253990	9	Chhattisgarh	1206549
10	Orissa	3014066	10	Karnataka	1155521
11	Himachal_P	2873378	11	Bihar	818920
19	Delhi	1000000	17	Delhi	501814

Sources: Dubbudu (May 17, 2017)

7.4 crore construction workers are estimated by National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour (NCC-CL) in India. Out of 7.4 crore of workers, just 2.8 crore of workers has been registered till 30th June 2017 across the country. Above figure is representation of top 10, including performance of Delhi in registration against estimated construction workers. Delhi occupied 19th position in number of construction workers in States and gets 17th position in registration of existing workers in India.

Figure No 03: Collection of Cess Vs. Fund Utilized					
S. No	Name of State & UTs	Amount of cess collected (In Crore)	S. No	Name of State & UTs	Amount of Cess Spent
	India	37483		India	9492
1	Maharashtra	5484	1	Kerala	1580
2	Karnataka	4375	2	Madhya Pradesh	900
3	Uttar Pradesh	3369	3	Uttar Pradesh	799
4	Delhi	2548	4	West Bengal	764
5	Andra_P+Telengana	2312	5	Tamil Nadu	636
6	Madhya Pradesh	2123	6	Chhattisgarh	615
7	Haryana	1974	7	Rajasthan	591
8	Tamil Nadu	1871	8	Andra_P+Telengana	548
9	Gujarat	1690	9	Punjab	497
10	Rajasthan	1652	10	Orissa	404
			17	Delhi	152

Sources: Dubbudu (May 17, 2017)

A whopping amount of 37.5 thousands crore of amounts collected across the country in Workers Welfare Board. However, it is discouraging to acknowledge that only 9.5 thousands crore against the 37.5 thousands crore spend on safety, health and other welfare programs of the Workers Welfare Board. Delhi occupied fourth position in collection of Cess amount in India, but it stands on 17th position in terms of utilization of fund meant for welfare programs.

Politics over Workers Welfare Fund

A massive amount of 37.5 thousands crore (Figure No. 03) of Cess amount collected across the country as per provisions established in “The Building

and Other Construction Worker (Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Service) Cess Act, 1996” which asserted to be found satisfactory in the 28th Standing Committee on Labour (Lok Sabha) Report on “Cess Fund and Their Utilization For Worker’s Welfare” (Ministry of Labour & Employment, 2017). Delhi stands on fourth position in collection of Cess amount across the country but lagging far behind in utilization of fund collected. Delhi grabbed 17th position in utilization of fund by spending just 152 crore, which is just around 6 percent of 2548 crore Cess amount collected in Delhi. The Welfare Board is now completed more that 15 years (Figure No. 01), still 50 percent of workers have been registered only (Figure No: 02) in Delhi, besides just 6 percent of fund utilized in Delhi. In such bizarre circumstances question comes naturally in regard to laying such a huge amount idle, unutilized. National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour (NCC-CL) filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) regarding to know whereabouts of fund lying idle. In a matter of National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour (NCC-CL) Versus Union of India and Others, writ Petition (Civil) 318 or 2006 (Supreme Court) and a report filed by the Controller and Auditor General of India (CAG) a startling observation appeared as CAG remained clueless in regard to whereabouts of 20,000 crore (The Economic Times, 2017, Para 6).

It is unbelievable, even CAG had not idea about where is the huge amount of more than 20,000 thousand crore, meant for welfare construction workers? PIL also alleged the Government of Delhi in matter of illegally diverting Rs. 900 crore from “Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board” for other purposes (The Times of India, 2017).

Comments upon the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act and Labour Codes

The Government of India amalgamated around 44 labour laws into four labour codes taking into account the consideration of recommendations of Second National Commission on Labour, 2002. There are two major existing Acts to ensure social security protection of construction workers which are The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and The Building and Other Construction Workers Cess Act, 1996. The both of Acts recently integrated into Labour Codes in which the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulations of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 is now amalgamated into the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2019 and the Building and Other Construction Workers Cess Act, 1996 merged into the Code on Social Security Bill, 2019.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code Bill, 2019: It's a comprehensive document consisting more than 90 pages which incorporated XII chapters in which Chapter XI separated into VI parts; also Bill contains 134 sections and three Schedules. This is the document at very first looks a more suggestive in nature, rather action oriented. Although, it contains definition of Building Workers, Building and Other Construction Work, also it directs to establish "National Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board" (National Board) to act a custodian role which is encouraging part of the Bill but it lacks the sustainable approach on implementation part of the Bill. Chapter III of the Code Bill highlights the duties of the employers and employees at worksites, Chapter V and VI contains working condition from the point of view of health and welfare provisions which is suggestive in nature, rather enforcing. The Code Bill precisely mentions appointment of Inspector-cum-Facilitators or Other Authority to enforce the implementation across the country. The Code Bill is integration of 13 major Central Labour Legislations which requires more stringent structural support to ensure major push for implementation. The Part VI of the Chapter XI talks about welfare of Beedi and Cigar Workers which suggested States to bring such programs is an expectation to ensure more participation of States, rather than Centre to be accountable for welfare of Informal Workers.

The Code on Social Security Bill 2019: It's an extensive document of 143 pages separated into XIV chapters consists of 163 clauses. The great advantages of the Code Bill is integration of "Gig Worker" (Clause 35 of Code Bill), "Platform Work and Workers" (Clause, 55 of Code Bill) and "Wage Workers" (Clause 82 of Code Bill) with mainstream social protection framework. The provision of setting up "Welfare Board" in the Building and Other Construction Workers Cess Act has been also carried forward into the Code Bill is definitely an affirmative endeavour. Many other structural establishments has been mentioned such as formation of "Board of Trustees" consisting members from every stakeholders including employees and employers, "Workers Facilitation Centres" (Clause 112 of Code Bill) for dissemination of information, processing of applications, enrolment of workers. Along with such encouraging efforts the Code Bill did not fulfilled prolonged demand of dedicated team with skilled professionals support for effective implementation of the provisions.

Conclusion

Construction workers earning average Rs. 387 per day and their monthly income of Rs. 12846 in Delhi, including their other social and economical

condition make them more vulnerable. In such a distress state of affairs, the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act proved to be a great succour in which 2.77 crore of workers registered (Figure No. 02) and 37483 crore Cess amount collected through different construction sites across the country. However, total fund spent on welfare of workers are 9492 crore against 37483 crore in India and Delhi which stands on 4th rank in collection of Cess amount (2548 crore), where as it occupied 17th position in utilization of fund (152 crore). It indicates a serious lack in structural framework established through legislative provisions which on urgent basis need to take into consideration. The recent labour reforms undertaken by integrating major labour legislations into four Labour Code Bills incorporated the provision of setting up Welfare Board; also direction has been made to establish "Workers Facilitation Centres" are encouraging measures to highlight the priority of social security of informal workers in India. Although, the Labour Code Bills is a comprehensive prescriptive in nature, rather action oriented and it does not reflect upon any concrete structural establishment to fix accountability, also greater expectations from States has been shown in terms of protection of social security of informal workers in India. India with such a diversity expect enforcement of legislative measures from the point of view of achieving target set under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals to fabricate a decent work and economic growth across the globe.

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Armed Conflict in Manipur and its effect on women

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Abstract

Manipur under the turmoil of armed conflict affect the various sections of the society. A place where armed conflict predominantly exists more than five decades, the chances of occurrence of human rights violation is at high risk. Many young women are turned into widows with young children. These widows faced economic hardships as well as social stigmas. These widows again have to fight for the justice of their deceased husband against the security personnel which are guarded under the powerful act of AFSPA 1958. Many women also became victims of sexual assault at the hand of security personnel and some of them even lost their lives. And many women are again fighting against the government to stop the violation of human rights in the state. The paper will entail the various form of violence carried out against the women in the state.

I

Introduction

Manipur, a tiny state in north-eastern state of India, well known for its natural beauty and games and sports, is also famous for the armed conflict that last over decades. The never ending armed conflict between the security personnel and the insurgents group directly or indirectly gave negative effects upon the women of Manipur. Human rights violation is occurred on daily basis and above this 'Right to Life' which is a fundamental right is also violated. In Manipur, there is a tendency of increasing police forces by the government and at the same time as there are a number of ethnic groups in the state, for each ethnic group there is suppose to be a insurgent group and within that due to ideological differences with due time fraction group among them are again reproduced. There are more than 44,320 armed personnel of the central security forces stationed in the state which does not include the state forces. And Manipur tops the list of militias in the north east India having 35 insurgent groups.

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Few years back every people either women, children or men in the State were living in a nightmare. Many heart beak incidents took place where many sons were tortured and killed in front of their own mother. Many wives witnessed the torture of their husband and many young children saw the dead body of their father decorated with bullets. Many women became widows at a very young age with young children. Above all these challenges and difficulties, one more challenging thing is the spirit to fight for justice for their deceased husband. The fear of 'pick up' by the armed forces is very strong in the minds of people because most that are picked up were tortured or killed or made disappearance. And if they are killed, they will be tagged as "killed in encounter" (Hanjabam, 2008). So, extreme fear and hatred are filled in the mind of the people for the security personnel. And at the same time the violent activities of the militants such as bomb blast at public places, ransom demand, kidnapping, torturing, and keeping grenade at peoples' home also added fear to the common people.

II

Conflict and Violence

Conflict and violence are inter-dependable. We commonly understood violence as physical and readily visible through bodily injury or imposition of pain. But there is also another kind which is more indirect and subtle yet very powerful. Denying people important rights such as economic well being; social, political and sexual equality, a sense of personal fulfillment, self worth, starvation of people to death or even go hungry or when people are made suffering from diseases that are preventable or denial of education or affordable housing or opportunities to work or to raise a family or freedom of expression or peaceful assembly, a kind of violence occurred even if no bullets are shot or clubs wielded. A society also commits violence against its members when it forcibly prevents their development and erodes their well-being whether because of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual preference or some other reason. Thus structural violence is a serious form of social oppression and it is unfortunately wide-spread and often unacknowledged. It also includes political repression and psychological alienation which is often unnoticed and work slowly to erode humanistic values and impoverish human lives. By contrast physical violence generally works much faster and is more visible and dramatic and we likely pay attention to this tangible violence than to the underlying structural factors that may lead to the conflict. Thus, on the context of Manipur one can easily say that both the forms of violence are existed in the state from long run.

Going into detail many writers have given their view that expansion in military and its related activities has created large problems for civil society as government use most of the financial resources in police and armed forces which delay in the development of the state. Because of more military action programmes Manipur suffers from the breakdown of good governance. The government instead of fulfilling the state responsibility to development and welfare commitment they are more interested in military related activities. The security forces often retreat their vengeful violence on common people for attacks carried out by the militants. There are number of combining operations carried out by the security personnel and state force in the name of counter-insurgency operations. During this operation rape, molestation and sexual violence are common norms. Some of the operations are Operation Rhino, Operation Bazrang, Operation Blue Bird, Operation Tornado etc. These operations were famous for human rights violation in the history of Manipur. During the Operation Blue Bird, all the villagers of Oinam (where operation was carried out) including women and children were not allowed to communicate and even a pregnant woman was forced to deliver in front of villagers and the security personnel. Mishra (2011) stated that torture is common in areas where there is political group actively seeking independence or increased autonomy, especially when such demands are made by armed opposition groups. And these groups are active particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Northeast States. In these areas, armed opponents of the government have been responsible for numerous human rights abuses including torture, killing and hostage taking and he further said that torture and ill treatment occur routinely during counter-insurgency operations to flush out suspected members and supporters of these armed groups. 'Operation Blue Bird' was taken place in Manipur in 1987 in Oinam village. In that operation more than 300 villagers were interrogated and some of them were severely beaten that their limbs were broken, some of them were given electric shocks, burned with cigarettes or hung upside down, pregnant women were beaten and some of them have miscarriages, some of the villagers had chili powder inserted into the sensitive parts of their bodies and some other were buried up to their necks and led to believe that they would be killed. The youngest victim was one year old and the oldest was a man of 65 years. 34 children whose aged 12 and under boys of 15 and 16 were tortured with electric shocks. During these operations villagers were used as human shield to prevent possible ambushes from the militias.

III

Effects of Armed Conflict on Women

Plumber (2006) classified effects of conflict as direct and indirect. Killing, injuries harms etc are forms of direct effect and indirect effect are such as negative consequences on agriculture, infrastructure, public health provision and social order. These indirect effects are overlooked and underappreciated which are stronger than the direct effect and more likely to suffer these indirect effects by the women more than the men. Women in the state are experiencing violence from three sides' i.e, from the state, the militants and from their own homes. During and aftermath of violence and conflict, there is increased in female-headed households as many men were killed in encounters or raids or simply disappeared. And to solve the problem of insurgency in the state or to put an end to the conflict, the government imposed Armed Forces Special Power Act (1958). But under the umbrella of AFSPA, 1958 the security personnel started misuse their excessive powers granted by the Act. According to the Act, the security personnel were provided excessive power such as – they can use force or fire upon people on mere suspicion, they can arrest any person, they can search any place, can detain any person and they are provided impunity i.e. no legal proceeding or suit can be instituted against any armed personnel except from the central government. These powers were granted only to the central forces not the state forces. But the security forces and state forces in the name of counter-insurgency operations violate human rights of the people over the last six decades. Total cases of 1528 extrajudicial executions (fake encounters) were filled in Supreme Court of India out of which 1399 cases for male, 31 cases for female and 98 cases for children. Between the year 1992 to 2008, 5121 people have lost their lives in conflict related incidents in the state. So many young widows in the state are forced to head households and run their families.

These young widows face critical livelihood challenges on daily basis. Almost all the widows have young children to look after and to educate. Widowhood in India is a state of social death. Widow is considered inauspicious at happy occasions and also regarded as symbol of misfortune by our society. They are forced to withdraw or excluded from the social life. Like a normal widows these widows also faced these problems. But what makes her extraordinary is the extra burden of long struggle or fight for the justice of her deceased husband against the perpetrators. The state government rarely initiated the criminal investigation and prosecution against the perpetrators. Therefore, the burden of initiating civil, criminal or writ

proceedings of custodial deaths or encounter killings for compensation or securing accountability and punishment is placed on the victims' families. The provisions of AFSPA cause serious inconvenience to the families of the victims. Inquiries and investigations are neither properly instituted nor conducted. Thus punishment is not carried out and perpetrators go freely without any fear and repeat the violations of rights. The demand of the victims' families for independent judicial inquiry on the basis of army and police officers reports that the victims have connections with or are members of underground organizations. Thus, they feel the complete loss of trust and feel that the government will never deliver justice to them.

The continued armed conflicts and the immediate situation as a result of counter- insurgency measures undertaken by the state has resulted to increasing number of women being targeted – rape, killed and tortured. The incident of Thangjam Manorama on July 11, 2004 who was raped and killed by the security personnel security, the incident of Thokchom Rabina on July 23, 2009 who was a pregnant lady lost her life in broad daylight due to open firing by the police without any warning could be highlighted here as an example. Torture is used by the police and security personnel as a method of extraction of information. Women alleged to be member of insurgent groups are arrested without any women police personnel accompanying and without issuing any arrest memo, thereby violating the direction of the Supreme Court of India. They also experienced sexual abuse at the hands of police commandos and other security personnel. Women who are either sister or mother or girl friend or any close relative to any insurgent or alleged underground groups are made to suffer or go through these tortures and sexual assault. And also women activists who try to demand their legitimate human rights through protests and pleas are detained under laws like National Security Act (NSA) and Unlawful Prevention Activities Act (UAPA) framing different charges to suppress their demand (CSCHR, 2013).

Women suffer differently from men due to their lower position in the society. Again women may be regarded as the bearers of a cultural identity and their bodies considered as territory to be conquered, rebels also used rape or other form of violence against women to increase men's humiliation and subjugation. The armed conflicts have brought large number of widows in many countries. It affects the physical safety, identity and mobility of women. It is assumed that if women are capable to take their own decision then they are empowered. But this statement are found contradict to situation of Manipur. For these widows most of their family members didn't want to involve in decision making because they do not want to take any

responsibility regarding her and her children. And there is no uniform law in India governing the rights of widows to inherit property. This is because India has followed practice of allowing each community to be governed by their personal law which is based on their religion. These widows are not enjoying property rights after the death of their husband because the family members believed that they are young and could remarry again. The government of Manipur denied this type of widows any forms of benefit on the allegation that the victims were insurgents killed in legitimate counter-insurgency operations. Even in some cases of custodial death and death due to excessive use of force, compensation is paid by the state. But due to some corrupt officials the full amount sanctioned by the government could not reach the victim' families. These widows suffered from Post Traumatic Stress disorder and live in constant fear of further attacks, sleeping trouble, nightmares, anxiety disorder, hallucination, high blood pressure etc. Many of them are depressed and even thought of killing themselves but the hope of their children makes them alive. The lives of these widows are miserable because of the societal norms that are made to follow by them and their financial hardships.

As most of the ages of these widows are very young, the eligible criteria of the National Widows Pension Scheme of the widows to be 40 years of age are not desirable and helpful for them. And those who are eligible are not getting these benefits. Some of these widows said that although the form for this scheme is to be available at the Social Welfare Department but due to involvement of local MLAs the form are taken by them and basis of selection were according to them. Even the children of these widows are also made to suffer. Many widows viewed that the department of Social Welfare of Manipur rejects any support of children whose father have been killed in the alleged encounter. The National Foundation for Communal Harmony has a fund to help the children of armed conflict to go to school but these widow mentioned that their children got rejected for the scholarship due to branded of their father as terrorist by the police. They made this statement because the children whose father have been killed by the insurgents or unknown people got selected for the scholarship and as a proof to be a conflict affected children they have to submit the F.I.R copy of their late father. And they said they are not interested in applying various other programmes or schemes due to time consumption, difficulties in managing of certain required documents and less monetary benefit as compared to the high inflation rate of things or items.

IV

Conclusion

Thus we can conclude that women are directly or indirectly affected by the going armed conflict in the state. The mechanism to solve the problem of insurgency in the state has opposite result in term of increasing the number of insurgent groups. The demand of these insurgent groups are never met or fulfilled instead it negatively affect the lives of civilians. These two opposite parties should come to an end point through possible means for a peaceful and develop state. The government should also consider the idea of disastrous nature of structural violence in long run and to frame or to provide needs accordingly to regain or maintain good relationship between the people and the government. As many young widows are occurred due to this conflict so the policy makers should give special care or attention considering the problems shared by them while formulating any welfare schemes for them as well as for their children. The government and the policy makers should also emphasized on establishing proper counseling services for the women who went through mental trauma for their well being and for a positive coping mechanism.

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Gandhian Philosophy on Peace and Development: Relevance for Social Work Education and Practice

Dr. Tarun Bikash Sukai⁶

Abstract

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had the vision, the foresight and a predictive insight which can be applicable to the major dimensions of the global crisis experienced today. Gandhi tirelessly introduced to the world about the concepts of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Satyagraha (adherence to truth). Within the framework of these concepts, Gandhi's pursuit of "truth through non-violence" became a paradigm for those committed to peace and justice in the world. Gandhi's worldview embraced the entire totality of economic, political, social and cultural spheres of life. On the other, Social work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. Social work is not only concerned with individual and personal problems, but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment, social unrest and so on. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work discipline. This first part of this paper examines the relevance of Gandhian philosophy for dealing with issues of peace, development and social justice through discussion of the five fundamental concepts – satyagraha (adherence to truth), ahimsa (non-violence), swadeshi (self-reliance), bread-labour, and equality. The second part of this paper analyzes the relevance of Gandhian philosophy for social work practice and education.

Key words: Gandhi, Social Work, Peace, Development.

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) has left behind him a rich legacy of innumerable writings containing ideas that are having permanent value and worldwide appeal especially in the context of human predicament. Gandhiji had the vision, the foresight and a predictive insight which can be applicable to the major dimensions of the global crisis experienced today. In 1981, when the 53 signatories to the Manifesto of Nobel Prize Winners made a worldwide appeal for warning against the nuclear holocaust and the global holocaust of hunger and underdevelopment, the only person they thought worthy of mention in their appeal was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhi tirelessly introduced to the world about the concepts of *Ahimsa* (non-

violence) and *Satyagraha* (adherence to truth). Within the framework of these concepts, Gandhi's pursuit of "truth through non-violence" became a paradigm for those committed to peace and justice in the world. Gandhi's worldview embraced the entire totality of economic, political, social and cultural spheres of life.

Gandhiji firmly believed that individual happiness lies in the happiness of society and vice-versa. He was against the system which brought about moral degradation of the society. Gandhiji never drew a sharp distinction between economics and ethics. For him, economic policies that are harmful to the moral well-being of an individual, community, society, or a nation are immoral and therefore, sinful. '*Sarvodaya*' the greatest good of all through truth and non-violence became the ultimate goal of Gandhiji in social welfare. His methods of working towards this goal were different from those of many other social reformers and leaders. Gandhiji took an integrated view of life and disapproved of dividing an individual's life into different compartments. He also looked upon the individual not as a separate entity but as a constituent unit of society. To him happiness meant the happiness of the society as a whole primarily by its moral standard, and secondarily by its physical and economic well-being.

On the other, Social Work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. Social work is not only concerned with individual and personal problems, but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment, social unrest and so on. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work discipline. Social work is a broad profession that intersects with several disciplines such as (but not limited to) psychology, sociology, political science, philosophy, economics, ecology, health, education, law, anthropology, counseling including psychotherapy. Professional social work originated in 19th century in England, and had its roots in the social and economic upheaval brought by the Industrial Revolution, in particular the societal struggle to deal with the mass poverty and its related problems.

This first part of this paper examines the relevance of Gandhian philosophy for dealing with issues of peace, development and social justice through discussion of the five fundamental concepts – (i) *satyagraha* (adherence to truth), (ii) *ahimsa* (non-violence), (iii) *swadeshi* (self-reliance), (iv) *bread-labour*, and (v) equality. The second part of this paper analyzes the relevance of Gandhian philosophy for social work practice and education.

Gandhian Philosophy and Praxis

The Hegelian thoughts put spirit first and human beings in a secondary position. Marxism puts matter first and human beings in a secondary position. Gandhi ji rejected these postulations and made the human being central in the scheme of God's providence on earth. Gandhiji was an uncompromising believer in God not only in general terms, but in specific personal terms. He believed in his "inner voice" and intuition. He had immense faith in the goodness of the person, combining both divine and human elements. Although human beings had found themselves entangled in two World Wars and other distinctive negative forces, Gandhi ji maintained that there is goodness, love, and humanitarianism in the world that gives hope for optimism and not pessimism. He believed that the sum total of the energy of human-kindness is not to bring itself down, but to lift itself up and that is the result of the definite, but unconscious working of love. The centrality of the human being in Gandhian praxis has great significance in the arena of social, economic, and other facets of human life. The parameters of Gandhian praxis are examined below.

- (i) **Satyagraha:** It literally means "adherence to the truth". Gandhiji believed that adherence to truth could produce a form of moral power. His life was an experiment with truth. The weapon of nonviolent struggle is *satyagraha* – the Soul Force or Truth Force. Gandhiji advocated nonviolent resistance for all situations be it personal, social or political. The word *satyagraha* has a broad meaning to include various forms of social and political action – individual or mass civil disobedience (as in the "salt satyagraha" or fasting for communal harmony) and campaigns for social reforms (such as the abolition of untouchability). Injustice and oppression must be resisted and the oppressor's authority to exploit the weaker sections must be resisted through *satyagraha*. The ultimate weapon of nonviolence is fasting, which is inflicting suffering on oneself instead of on others. Resistance by fasting that is undertaken by courageous people simply makes powerful opponents powerless and those in powers often brand fasting as blackmail. Gandhiji succeeded in applying the extraterrestrial and deep religious principles to the realm of everyday life and social action through linking the concepts of *satyagraha* and nonviolence. "By doing so, he removed the distinction between religion as such and the projection of ethical laws through morally justifiable social instruments into the realm of social action" (Sethi, 1979).

- (ii) **Ahimsa:** Ahimsa means nonviolence or love is strongly an Indian tradition. Buddha's creed was *Ahimsa Paranio Dharma* (Nonviolence is the greatest law). Nonviolence became a creed for Gandhi ji in personal, social, and political life and relationships. He tried to make this a creed with his vast followers in India, to whom nonviolence was more a policy for attaining independence. Gandhi ji advocated nonviolence for very valid historical reasons. He explained violence leads to violence, even if the goals are good. No bloody revolution, even though successful, could ever sustain the revolutionary goals because they were again destroyed by violence. The establishment of an ideal society must be through nonviolent means. Nation states hardly succeed in ensuring peace through force, because someday these states will be destroyed by the same violence. He cites the example of Socialist authoritarian societies where socialism was enforced through force within and outside the state. Their slogan, "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but the chains", has only resulted in new chains for the workers in a totalitarian society. Class hatred is a destabilizer of a peaceful social order. Hatred divides society and leads to violence and disruption sooner or later. Gains realized through violence are only fleeting and will be destroyed by violence in a matter of time. Therefore, nonviolence is pursued as a weapon of social change as well as the governing principle of society.
- (iii) **Swadeshi:** It refers to nationalism and self-reliance meaning the principle of relying on the products of India rather than foreign goods. Gandhi ji said this especially during the days of struggle for freedom from the foreign oppression. However, he took care to explain nationalism within the context of internationalism, in terms of practicality. Gandhi ji made nationalism an instrument of service and urged all members of the society to participate in the service of people. He suggested that if every one of us duly performed our duty to our neighbours especially in poor countries, no one in the world who needed assistance would be left unattended. Therefore, one who serves one's neighbor serves the entire world. *Swadeshi* also reflects the need for self-reliance. Observance of one's religion, culture, and indigenous methods of production, education, health and local government are all part of the *Swadeshi* spirit. Again, this does not mean that the doors are closed against international exchange of views

and experience. Gandhi ji said, “I want my windows to be open to let other winds of other cultures into my room, but I will not allow my roof to be blown off by these winds”. Gandhi ji wanted the poverty of the masses to be removed, and attributed the deep poverty of the masses due to the ruinous departure from *Swadeshi* in the economic and industrial life. He said, “If we follow the *Swadeshi* doctrine, every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages those are not locally produceable”.

- (iv) ***Labour:*** Bread Labour simply refers to the Divine Law “In the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat thy bread”. This concept was first discussed by a Russian writer, T. M. Bonderef and later widely disseminated by Tolstoy. Gandhi ji found that Bhagavad Gita spoke of a similar concept that “he, who eats without offering sacrifice, eats stolen food” and equated sacrifice with Bread Labor. “Bread Labor” is an economic productive system where each individual must produce some economic goods and service. The fulfillment of needs of the human being must be produced by the human beings and such production must be limited to the essential needs of human beings. No single individual is exempted from involvement in the production process, neither rich nor poor. This system of production rules out classes and castes, ownership of production by a few, and dependence of the many on these few. It rules out class conflict between capital and labor and between landlord and tenant. It rules out production for a foreign market depriving means of livelihood for their own people.

Gandhi advocated a “Bread Labour” system, which generates employment for all through “production by masses and not mass production”. Total unit of production and the unit of human habitation are identical with the size of a village, a self-sufficient and self-governed administrative unit without any cutthroat competition for profit at the expense of others in the society. In simple words, “Bread Labour” will abolish poverty as well as national and international tensions, promotes harmony with nature, controls science and technology to serve the needs of human beings, and recognizes brotherhood and sisterhood as the basis of social life.

- (v) ***Equality:*** Gandhi believed not only in the equality of all men and women, but also was committed to realize this equality in the economic system of production and distribution. The pattern and quantum of goods produced and the pattern and quantum of

consumption of goods must ensure equality of all people in the country. He agreed that equality is an impossible ideal, and advocated the principle of equality of opportunity and equitable distribution. Lenin's principle, "from each according to his ability and each according to his needs", was an ideal that Gandhi accepted as neatly fitting into his system of production and distribution.

The strongest element in the Gandhian approach was the unity between theory and action. "If nonviolence and truth were fundamental doctrines, he objectified these concepts by launching *Satyagraha*. If brotherhood was a universal principle, he formulated it into action by serving the poorest of the poor. If equality and simplicity were laudable principles as answers to poverty, he adopted the loin cloth" (Sethi, 1979). Thus, the Gandhian philosophy and praxis emphasized the following:

1. It puts humans in the center of any social, cultural and economic system and resists all other forces that hinder this environment of human beings as the center of life.
2. It treats science, religion and society as one whole and should be accordingly interpreted and utilized.
3. Gandhi believed in the unity of theory and action and as such he is the greatest of Karma Yogis meaning "discipline (yoga) of action" set forth in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Gandhi interpreted it as a gospel of political and social action, performed in a selfless manner without desire for personal rewards.

Relevance for Social Work Practice and Education

The Gandhian perspective provides core principles for social workers to more effectively address problems of violence, oppression and exploitation. The adoption of Gandhian thought as the foundation of social work would bring about a paradigmatic shift in our professional consciousness about violence (Mohan, 1993). Such a shift implies that social workers engage in their practice and take actions based on an understanding of the relationship between violence and oppression that is inherent in the social and economic injustice and the need for community responses.

Given the reality of global problems of violence and injustice that impact the lives of millions of people worldwide, adherence to a Gandhian peace philosophy would inevitably mean a redirection of professional energies toward people-centered development, empowerment and commitment to social justice and nonviolence. All situations that threaten

human life and well being are within the boundaries of social work concerns, including struggles of underdeveloped communities. By understanding how different levels of violence fuel each other, social workers would be able to see the causes of violence and expanded solutions to such violence in a broader context. Equipped with an understanding of violence, the social work profession could thus reclaim its roots in community activism.

The central values of social work include social justice, equity, self-determination and human rights. These values are articulated in the professional code of ethics, policy statements and curriculum standards for professional social work education. In fact, the premises upon which the social work profession is based are the antithesis of militaristic values which trigger a culture of violence throughout the world. Crane (1986) points out that war and militarism are based on those human behaviours that are inconsistent with elementary social work knowledge, skills and principles. The difference between social work values and militarism is illustrated below:

Sl. No.	Social Work Values	Assumptions of War and Militarism
1	Humanistic and holistic	Technological fix
2.	Rational, spiritual and emotional	Rational solutions
3.	Interdependence	Independence
4.	Empowerment of others	Coercion, power and control over others
5.	Peace as justice & benevolence	Peace as absence of war
6.	Win-Win strategies	Win-Lose strategies

Social workers practice in a world of personal, social and economic violence, including the violence of war. Gandhian principles provide a way to understand this context of violence on a deeper level and suggest new intervention strategies of social work practice at different levels. The following discussion is intended to highlight the relevance of Gandhian philosophy and praxis for social work practice at individual, community and societal level.

(a) Individual Level Practice

When social workers help the victims of violence on an individual level, Gandhian thought suggests a practice accompanied by dignity and respect for the person, compassion, love and material supports. Similar compassionate

social work response to victims of violence is clearly evident in domestic violence, child abuse and human rights violation cases. Such caring qualities mean responding to injustice with nonviolent action and are the hallmarks of justice and nonviolence in the Gandhian framework (Walz, Sharma, & Birnbaum, 1990). Gandhi's strong faith in the goodness of people and his principle of love and nonviolence suggest the basis for social work practice with the perpetrators of violence as well as their victims. The centrality of the human being as God's instrument in Gandhian Praxis, if adopted by social workers, could have a transformative effect on both victims and their perpetrators. Empowering clients (both victims and perpetrators of violence) involves expanding their capacities to identify with the characteristics of "dignity, respect, equality, opportunity and love" and act accordingly by responding to injustice with nonviolent action. For Gandhi ji, this empowerment is justice or truth (Walz, et.al. 1990).

Gandhi's concept of *swadeshi* seems to have most relevance for social work as currently practiced on the individual level. However, serious consideration of Gandhian principles challenges social workers just not to serve those clients who approached them, but to devote their practice energies toward those in greatest need in our society. Walz et.al. (1990) charge that social work as currently practiced is increasingly skewed toward middle and upper class consumers. The concept of *swadeshi* also includes promoting the self-identity of those clients in greatest need by honoring their religion, culture, and indigenous rituals and practices rather than operating from an American and middle class social work practice perspective. Therefore, the Gandhian perspective calls for a reordering of our service priorities and for renewing our commitment to serve the poor and the oppressed.

(b) Community Level Practice

Social workers have a fairly sharp sensitivity to the issues related to physical violence among individuals, groups and communities. But, Gandhian thought points to the need to broaden our professional understanding of violence as well as our practice interventions. Professional social workers need to understand two distinct aspects of violence - physical and passive violence in the form of discrimination, oppression and exploitation. According to Gandhi, the delicate forms of passive violence give rise to physical violence. Therefore, in order to abolish physical violence, proper actions are needed to eliminate passive violence from the society (Dasgupta, 1968).

Social work practice based on Gandhian principles of nonviolence would thus include practice aimed at reducing both personal violence and 'passive' structural violence, which is present in unjust social structures. Structural violence is violence rooted in bureaucratic functionalism or oppressive social policy, in which any violent act is justified as necessary social control. While personal and behavioral violence may be obvious to social workers, structural violence gets very often unnoticed.

Gandhian philosophy emphasizes on interventions aimed at transforming oppressive, unjust and violent systems into non-oppressive and nonviolent alternatives by following the principle of nonviolence. Gandhi ji followed a clear set of principles in civil disobedience or *satyagraha* actions. Among these principles, most important was that all aspects of either community or organizational change must adhere to the principle of nonviolence. For Gandhi ji, success is not measured by winning or losing, but by the moral quality of the means used to achieve change (Walz et.al., 1990).

(c) Societal Level Practice

Gandhi's concept of 'Bread Labor' formed the basis of his economic, social and cultural system. He judged any economic system that did not include full employment as weak economic system. Thus, Gandhi ji viewed capitalism as irresponsible for its emphasis on mass-production and mass-distribution. Gandhi's belief in the potential of cottage industry for character-building and community-building formed the basis of promoting the decentralization of the economy.

His profound insights provide guidance for macro level social work interventions aimed at creating equitable economic systems. Based on Gandhian philosophy as the framework, social work interventions aimed at reducing poverty and its related forms of violence, must include strategies such as – (i) promoting economic alternatives at the grassroots (e.g. cooperatives, community-based credit schemes for poor people, etc.); (ii) promoting full and equitable employment campaigns aimed at creating decent jobs and making them available to all who seek them; (iii) taking actions to reduce conflicts between groups of people who fight over scarce resources; (iv) promoting personal and community efforts to reduce unnecessary consumption; and (v) working to reduce military spending (Collins, Ginsberg, & Goldberg, 1994).

The Gandhian value framework provides guiding principles for developing curriculum that socializes future social workers into a professional peace consciousness. The social work profession needs to

incorporate within its education and practice a fundamental and comprehensive philosophy of peace and commitment to peace. Professional social work would be based on a positive peace concept that includes more than a negative notion of peace as the absence of war, and it must include an understanding that violence is present whenever people are not being allowed to reach their full potential (Galtung, 1969). In this sense, justice is not only the development of the full potential of all human beings, but also involves the establishment of institutions which are humane toward human life itself (Serron, 1980). Thus, peace is inextricably linked with issues related to justice, human rights and development.

Social workers can stimulate positive change toward improving the human condition, promoting social justice, and reducing global violence. People who are attracted to the profession have a broad concern for society and the world. Social workers are inherently well suited for the primary role of peacemaking and community activism. In fact, the personal qualities and skills required to be effective social workers are parallel with those needed for peacemakers and are consistent with the core principles of Gandhian thought. Essential human qualities for peacemakers and social workers are alike such as empathy, compassion, a strong sense of self, independent identity, strong personal values, courage, generosity, tolerance, ability to perceive and forgive human weakness, and self-criticism (Keefe and Roberts, 1991).

The combination of Gandhian principles points out inter-relatedness between peace and social justice. Such understanding suggests that social work advocacy for social justice is also an important peace work. Oppressive political and economic conditions that foster injustice also foster violence in society. Thus, real peace is not possible as long as the legitimate grievances of people are ignored or suppressed. In underdeveloped countries, this means working for various things such as land reform, gender equality, democratization and creating participatory forms of governance. That is why the goal of social workers needs to include and work for reducing or ending such conflict and violence in order to secure social justice and peace.

Conclusion

If we examine Gandhi's thought, it is clearly evident that his main goal was the realization of the maximum potential by every human being. He fought against colonial liberalism in order to enable men to strive for self-liberation and full development through a just civilization and a just society. Gandhi ji dedicated his life to the goal of attainment of "swaraj", by which he meant

personal as well as political liberation. To him, peace was not something that can be achieved by just driving out the British from India. He declared, "I am a man of peace. I believe in peace ... Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the Godliness of human nature" (Gangal, 1960). Gandhi rightly emphasized that the peace he desired was the peace that "will not come out of clash of arms, but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds". The basic universal human urge for justice and peace found in Gandhi is a true and great example. Gandhi may not provide an answer to each and every problem faced by the society, but he showed the direction and goal toward which human civilization has to move. Through his life long struggle and work, he has left a message that will ever shine the path of our quest for justice, peace and moral progress.

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Ecological and Pandemic Crises: A Cause of Structured Violence against Women

Deepika Singh

It is widely known that women especially rural women share very intimate relationship with environment. Besides, it is also evident that women in most societies play a significant role in managing the diversity of the ecosystem, since they are responsible for sustaining the livelihood of the family. Women play a key role in fixing of land use pattern and its management. They supply inputs from the forests as fodder for the cattle as well as manures to the soil as forest by-product. Biodiversity occupies very significant and prominent position in women's life. As it is very evident that rural women's life is very much dependent upon environment for their basic needs as food, medicine and firewood. Deterioration of the environment has caused hardship for the rural community, particularly for women from the lower economic strata. Increased industrialisation has caused tremendous amount of deforestation which has subsequently made women's life more difficult as it has led to increase in time and distance involved in grazing and collection of fuel and food. This has adversely affected the health of women. In grappling with the crisis of ecology and of culture, women face one very important question of great depth and magnitude: the problem of survival and identity. It is observed that women are more deeply affected by the ecological crisis. It is because of the fact that their working day has been drastically lengthened by scarcity of water, fuel and fodder, and their traditional skills and occupations have been adversely affected by new technologies in agriculture, artisanal work and marketing, while new opportunities have not been sufficiently developed. Environmental resources are critical to poor women's productive and reproductive lives. This paper intends to focus on cause of ecological and pandemic crises and women's particularly rural women's vulnerability leading to gender violence. For the purposes of this paper the definition of violence as given by the World Health Organisation is appropriate to mention:

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The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.

This definition allows for the critical examination of various aspect of violence, the nature and forms of violence against women and the impacts of violence on women. Violence against women is manifestation of hierarchical power relationships based on various grounds like class, race, ethnicity and gender as well as other divisions. Here it should be taken note of the fact that environmental conflicts leads to a culture of violence where vulnerable are more likely to be victimised. The concept of vulnerability is important with regard to conceptualising both poverty and violence in society.

This section of the paper would examine how the present patriarchal mode of development led to ecological crises and which is causing violence against women.

The sustainability of the life on earth revolves around biodiversity as it serves as reservoir of the food security of local communities and the global community. It also very significant and of great economic value for animal and plant breeding and new industrial uses. Improper and misleading practices mainly from habitat destruction, over-harvesting, pollution and the inappropriate introduction of foreign plants and animals pose a serious threat to the biodiversity.

The environmental field has experienced a major transition in the past 20 years. Conservation finance, community resource management and the creation of “low impact” businesses are just a few of the unique approaches taking shape. Governments, corporations, and citizen groups around the world are using technological innovation and community resources to gain a foothold on environmental sustainability. The increasing deterioration of the earth's environment is having an impact on all of its inhabitants. For women worldwide, however, it has a particular severe adverse impact on their daily life, especially in rural regions. In this regard it is worthwhile to mention that Vandana Shiva the prominent eco- argues that the technocratic approach to development is mal-development because this has led to the fragmentation of society on gender basis and virtually destructive in nature because this destroy women's skills and expertise, survival base of the poor and of sustenance of life as a criterion for production. She emphasise strongly on the

colonial and patriarchal character of this imported development concept and projects a feminist indigenous culture which she expresses in terms like “feminine principle” *Śakti* and *Prakṛiti*, and characterises by features like holism, decentralisation, plurality and inter-dependence. One of the consequences of the growth of world economy and the promotion of Eurocentric models of development has been the increasingly rapid destruction of the world’s ecosystem. It is argued that before the rise of western colonialism and western science, indigenous peoples throughout the world had close and relatively harmonious relations with the natural world. It is significant to note that the natural world is generally perceived as feminine in most of the cultures because they represented the generative powers of fertility and birth. This is unfortunate to note that this relationship to nature and to natural resources has been damaged seriously by the rise of western colonialism which undermined communal land use and women’s land rights. One of the basic reasons for such ecological victimisation of rural women is the patriarchal model of economic development. This is evident from the fact that science and technology view nature merely as a source for men’s benefit and women has been excluded from such development. In this surmises feminist principles view ecological destruction, overuse of land and the spread of harmful technology as a result of the patriarchal set of the society.

Patriarchal character of Science and Technology:

The modern science and technology has been viewed as a patriarchal colonial project by the feminist scholars. This perception provides an important contribution to the debate on the question whether modern Western science and technology is “universal” and “neutral”, implying that the only crucial question is who controls and uses it. Ashish Nandy one of the prominent eco-feminist has pointed out the authoritarian and fragmenting colonial character of Western science and technology, and its inherent violence. Western science and technology has followed patriarchal character. In other words the substitution of an organic perception of life by mechanistic, technocratic paradigms has contributed to exploitation of nature and displacement of rural women.

Reconceptualising Productivity: The Production of Life vs. the Production of Profit:

Now the debate on the definition of productivity has become very important. As it has been mentioned above, eco-feminists have contributed in an important way to the debate on productivity, along with redefinition of

labour and reassessment of subsistence production. However this debate is being followed by the earlier debate on “production of life” verses the concept of “reproduction”. Maria Mies traces the capitalist concept of productivity to the predatory ideology of “man the hunter” and points out that this type of productivity, which is based on violence, is actually only a form of appropriation of nature and of other people’s labour, while the subsistence labour of women, slaves and subjugated people is often enough not acknowledged as “productive” at all. However, she maintains that capitalist productivity cannot be sustained without the subsistence labour of women, and of contract labour and rapid destruction of peasants in the colonies.

Women are the mainstay of subsistence economy -and of production of life. The destruction of subsistence economy creates the ‘housewife’ concept. With such destruction of subsistence the, middle class women are turned into consumers while housewifization in the Third World takes the form of capitalist exploitation of household based production in the Informal sector. Even in socialist societies, the “housewife” concept, and thus sexual division of labour, has not fully been overcome despite larger proportions of women participating in the extended production process. In the opinion of eco-feminists such developments leads to housewifization and consumerism. Further they argue that in order to overcome from such marginalisation of women much more labour intensive, need based, decentralised units of production is required in which sexual division of labour, class and the polarisation between head and hand could be overcome.

In order to understand the production of profit and production of life an understanding of the interaction of class and patriarchy is inevitable. Since patriarchy by definition operates to upgrade men and downgrade women, it creates a class within the class. The argument that women’s struggles divide the working class has to be countered by the argument that it is patriarchy which divides women and men of the working class, while struggles against patriarchy unite the working class. Patriarchal working-class men tend to make certain class alliances with the exploiter as can historically be seen in the struggles over “family wage” which accounts for unequal wages and assume women to be “housewives”. While women are often accused of spreading “middle class values” when fighting patriarchy.

It is remarkable to note that the State uses this interaction between class and patriarchy by trying to co-opt both women and ecology struggles into the existing development concept. Women are promised upward mobility and ecological crisis is tackled by technocratic means.

‘Development’ as a Project of Western Patriarchy:

'Development' should be viewed as a post-colonial project where the entire world modelled itself on the western notion of 'progresses'. 'Development' is generalised as the continuous enhancement of well-being of every unit of society. The emergence of such idea can be traced in western notion of economic categories, needs of productivity, and of growth. It is ironical to mention here that such categories of development and which actually emerged in the context of industrialisation not only occupied universal definition but were also universalised in their assumptions and applicability even in completely different context as for the people of the newly independent Third World countries. In fact it is the development which is the biggest problem. In reality it is the forced and asymmetric participation which is the real cause of women's increasing under-development rather than Insufficient and inadequate, 'participation', which actually led to the marginalisation of their share in the profit.

Remedial Measures for Preventing Women from Ecological Crisis:

It is the nation state which bears the responsibility of the development of its citizens. But for achieving the goal of development by adopting industrialization needs a careful planning of whole development process. The developmental process should always be focused on multidimensional growth and development of whole society and never be isolated to certain class of people. The planning has to be centred on rational exploitation of all available natural resources without disturbing ecological balance to remove the socio-economic disparities. But it is noticed in present scenario that both at the government and entrepreneur level serious steps had be taken to adopt rational developmental planning which effects the environment negatively. Now the question comes that how to go beyond victimisation, how to draw on vital experiences and skills of women to reverse the situation. In addition to this another over riding question is how to create a mode of production which does not depend on the exploitation of nature and labour power but which, in harmony with nature, provides for the survival needs of all. It is strictly advisable that the rapid and hurried exploitation of natural resources shall be restricted and an extra care should be taken to pollution control measures before giving final approval to any project. The adoption of only eco-friendly technologies and giving more emphasis on encouraging use of recyclable and renewable natural resources can really make revolutionary change in life of rural people. Discouraging the use of non-renewable natural resources not only preserves them for coming generations but also helps the rural women to live healthy and easy life. At

the social level women has to be ferociously present in decision making process within the family and community. It is always women who suffer more in rehabilitation after any sort of changes in her environmental region. It is time when she has to adopt more decisive role than to be a decision obeying body. It is worthwhile to mention here that women have practical skills and mental resources which need to be discovered and mobilised for this vast task. The wide publicity of traditional knowledge and indigenous technologies can help the rural women to understand the environment in more meaningful way and develop a feeling of social awareness. The other measure to prevent women from victimisation is to mobilise women's material and spiritual skill to work out the connection between the ecological and the cultural crisis caused by a development model which is neo-colonial, capitalist, patriarchal and violently assaulting the base for human material and spiritual survival and which is destructive in nature. The role of religion and tradition became very important in this regard where the natural resources are always taken as a god gift but are also treated as abode of god. The association of women in large number of social movement to protect their environment especially the hilly regions of India are an appreciating outcome of these spiritual awareness.

After the above discussion it becomes clear that poverty is viewed not only as being poor but also as linked to having higher levels of risk of becoming poor or poorer, especially in times of crisis and it also leads to gender-based violence. Those who use violence may bully, intimidate, verbally insult, sexually coerce, or physically harm others into submission and these forms of violence characterise environmental conflicts. This analysis underscores the contention that although much of the debate on violence focuses on physical violence and sexual violence, it is imperative that there is also a need to understand the dynamics of dominance and hierarchy in its various forms in society from one end of the continuum to the other. It is this understanding that permits a more nuanced comprehension of women's vulnerability during periods of environmental conflicts.

Covid- 19 has triggered the debate on every spectrum of life and gender is no exception as it has caused kind of cyclone or rather tsunami on every arena i.e. economic, cultural and public health system. Pandemic is not new to human kind but this global scale pandemic is certainly something which the world was not prepared for. In this context it is important to discuss the impact of this pandemic which certainly caused disproportionate burden on women particularly in societies where there is deep rooted gender division. In other words we can say as Ann Tickner has rightfully.

Though as per the prevailing statistics and literature available suggests that the fatality rate among women (1.7%) is lower than that of men (2.8%). Nevertheless there is a paucity of discussion to suggest how women can be more affected by the COVID-19 than men, specifically in low income and developing countries. Countries like India women are marginalised in every sphere the issue needs a more nuanced examination. It is important to mention here that women render their services in health sector across the world in very ferocious number i.e. approximately 68% globally. Since the risk of infection among the health workers are very high, it also brings the challenge of maintaining the mental health of the front line workers. This challenge gets aggravated in developing countries as there is huge lack of health infrastructure. As mentioned above since women contribute the greater number in frontline health worker their plight gets twined. Women are always adversely affected by any calamities whether man made or natural just as in case of war women are the most adversely affected population similarly natural calamities like flood or pandemic causes double burden because of their exclusive responsibility of children and elderly people at home since she stays out of home and the fear of their well-being may cause much stress on women. It is very discouraging to mention here that developing country like India in spite of having very significant number as health worker in form of women the government has reduced the reproductive and child health from 20% to 7 % of the total health budget. Nevertheless India is not the sole country to have such ignorant policy outlook towards women rather than this de-prioritisation is manifested in various developing and even developed nations. Such ignorant policy framework causes severity in women's health. During such pandemic when people are nearly confined within house, the incidents of domestic violence is increasing significantly. Wife beating in name of caregiving capabilities are becoming more prominent. In order to curb the pandemic caused by novel corona virus every country is exhausting its economic reserves and because of lockdown every economy is suffering from economic slowdown which has subsequently adversely affected the production and distribution system both at rural and urban level. This has adversely affected the food and nutrition security in the countries like India. This unfavourable situation caused by novel corona virus has doubled women's burden as they remain the most affected section of society in nutrition quotient.

As it is well known fact that the share of intra household distribution of resources is always low for women in developing countries like India. This can be attributed to the patriarchal nature of social structure. This patriarchal structure leads to the reduced share of resources for women which

ultimately causes malnutrition among them. As the corona virus gained momentum in its spread, there was urgent need for complete shutdown of every sector i.e. formal and informal. Since women participation in informal sector is very significant in number, its shutdown lead to a reduction in access to income by women, leading to further marginalization.

However it is encouraging to mention here that in Indian context the government has adopted to take aggressive steps to minimise the collateral damage of the COVID-19 that would hit the women harder. Here is satisfactory to note that the policy-level decisions have addressed the needs and safety of the female health workforces, especially the nurses engaged in front-line combat. But there is need for the society to come forward and strengthen the community-based support systems for domestic violence survivors including phone-in support systems, sensitized police, and neighbourhood watch.

Conclusion:

After the above discussion it is very clear that women are the most adversely affected section of society because of ecological and pandemic crises. Pandemics are also the outcome of ecological disturbances as is evidenced by novel corona crisis. The remedial measure in order to combat such severe problems should be addressed at the root level i.e. the patriarchal frame of society which is manifested at every level and economic development is no exception. Women participation in decision making should be ensured in significant number. In another words women's active and significant participation in policymaking and implementation would ensure a better understanding of women's social, cultural and health issues. Beyond this there is urgent need for deconstructing the division of labour based on gender based discrimination.

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Climate Change: Livelihood implications and Role of Social Workers

Rajiv Jena

Abstract

Climate Change has the potential to undermine human development across many countries, including India, and may even lead to a turnaround of current developmental advancement. It will affect the distribution and quality of India's natural resources, which will ultimately threaten the livelihoods of the most poor and marginalized section of the population who are closely tied to its natural resource base. How Environmental Social work as an emerging field can work towards addressing the problems of climate change induced vulnerabilities on livelihoods of the marginalized and poorer sections. An attempt has been made to understand this emerging field and deliberated on the role of social workers in this field.

Key words: *climate change, livelihoods, environmental social work, marginalized, vulnerabilities*

“What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction:

Climate change has emerged as an important issue that confronts humanity together. This concern arises from the fact that our everyday activities may be leading to changes in the Earth's atmosphere that have potential to significantly alter the planet's heat and radiation balance. “Vast scientific evidence has established that the earth is moving towards a point of no return, where ecological devastation brought about by climate change will be unavoidable” (Cowie, 2007). Climate change has the potential to undermine human development across many countries, including India, and may even lead to a turnaround of current developmental advancement. Actions taken, or indeed not taken, in the years ahead will have a huge impact on the future course of human development. India is confronted with the challenge of sustaining rapid economic growth amidst the rising global threat of climate change. Climate change will affect the distribution and quality of India's natural resources, which will ultimately threaten the livelihoods of the most

poor and marginalized section of the population who are closely tied to its natural resource base.

Homer-Dixon, (1991) maintains that a growing population, increased consumption and environmental damage will combine to deplete these resources quantitatively and qualitatively and make it increasingly difficult for policymakers in developing countries to intervene and prevent serious social disruption and conflict as their social and political institutions are often fragile. Further Homer-Dixon, (1994) hypothesizes that many of the environmental threats like climate change are casually interrelated and he identified four principal social effects that may, either singly or combined, greatly increase the likelihood of human insecurity and conflicts in developing countries: decreased agricultural production, economic decline, population displacement and disruption of legitimate authorities, institutions and social relations. He interconnects the events through example of decrease in agriculture production could lead to population displacement, which may exacerbate the decline in production.

What is livelihood?

A livelihood consists of the ability, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural base. Livelihood activities like agriculture, fishery, wood collection, honey collection, fishing, tourism, etc. are threatened by the impact of climate change. “More than 56% of workers are engaged in agriculture and allied sectors, while many others earn their living in coastal areas”(UNDP, 2007). Indeed most of the poorest people live in and are almost completely dependent on natural resources for their food and shelter.

How does livelihood relate to climate change induced vulnerabilities?

The range of vulnerabilities that poor people are facing in different parts of the world encompasses all aspects of life. Sea level rise will displace millions of the poor, with the areas least likely to be protected those where people are poor. Low lying coastal areas and deltas like Sunderbans, Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in the Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent are most likely at risk. In many case those displaced will have fewer opportunities to re-establish their lives. Rising sea level will reduce the natural capital in ecosystems such as coastal fisheries, mangroves and wetlands that are essential to the current livelihood patterns of many poor communities, while

the dangers of salination of water supplies will affect these and other coastal communities. Change to temperature and rainfall patterns are widely predicted, with many semi-arid parts of India likely becoming even hotter and dryer with even less predictable rainfall. These changes will both directly affect crop yield and will produce changes to ecosystem distribution and species ranges. The climate change pattern and especially the increased frequency will increase vulnerability to natural disasters such as floods and cyclones. This will affect many areas, but semi-arid areas, coastal and deltaic regions of India are particularly vulnerable. Dangers of erosion, landslides and flashfloods will also increase, particularly in hilly and mountainous areas. "The way climate change can and does undermine human security varies across the world because entitlements to natural resources and services vary across space, and the social determinants of adaptive capacity are similarly varied" (Barnett, 2007).

World Health Organization (WHO) considers the most vulnerable victims of flooding globally to be the poor and the marginalized, most of whom live in low quality housing, in flood or drought prone regions. Those fleeing floods often drink unclean water. If the drinking water supply and sanitation systems are already inadequate, flooding poses a major health risks. The WHO says that 'people who have lost everything in the flood-their home, their food, livelihood-are all more prone to disease.

How Agriculture is affected by climate vagaries

Carbon dioxide induced warming is expected to lead to rises in sea level as a result of thermal expansion of the oceans and partial melting of glaciers and ice-caps, and this in turn is expected to affect agriculture, mainly through the inundation of low-lying farmlands but also through increased salinity of coastal ground water. Food insecurity is associated with low levels of agricultural productivity which in turn may also result in inadequate purchasing power in regions in which sales of agriculture commodities are a major source of income. Population in the developing world, which are already vulnerable and food insecure are likely to be more seriously affected. Although agriculture contributes only 21% of India's GDP, its economic, social, and political fabric goes well beyond this indicator. "Rural areas are still home to some 72% of India's 1.1 billion people, most of who are poor and marginalized and rely on agriculture as their main source of income" (Parry, 2007). Small farmers are dependent on timely and sufficient rainfall during the monsoon for high crop yields. "Indeed, it is estimated that every 1 degree Celsius increase in temperature is likely to lead to a 5-10% reduction in some yields of crops" (Nilsson, 1993).

Impact of climate change induced Forestry on livelihood

The forests are important in two ways in the context of climate warming. Firstly, they store carbon, thus keeping carbon dioxide away from the atmosphere. Destruction of forests is emptying those stores and contributing about 10% of the emission of greenhouse gases. Secondly, a warmer climate will affect the potential for forest growth and regeneration. This in turn may affect the ecology of the forests as well as the economy of the regions that are dependent on forestry. “Tropical forests cover about .1.9 billion hectares of the world’s surface, representing 40% of the world’s forested area” (Sallinger, 2005). Most tropical forests are likely to be more affected by changes in soil water availability. Some evergreen species of the humid forests clearly will be at disadvantage in areas that experience more severe and prolonged droughts. Species in moist tropical forests, including economically important hard woods, are the least drought adapted in the tropics, and their survival in some areas must be considered at risk from climate change. Droughts would favor forest fire; therefore, with a likely increase of droughts, the incidents of forest fire may also increase. Climate change is expected to affect the boundaries of forest types and areas, primary productivity, species population and migration. With climate, the distribution of suitable habitat will change. Species will respond individually and differently to environmental changes. For some species a temperature increase of even 2 degree can change the environment from being suitable to totally unsuitable. For tropical forests, this could lead to the loss of many of the unique species at the expense of those that can tolerate the new conditions.

Impact on Fisheries

The impacts of climate change on fisheries are under mentioned (fresh water fisheries):

- Stress due to increased temperature and oxygen demand and increased acidity.
- Uncertain future water supply.
- Extreme weather events.
- Increased frequency of disease and toxic events.
- Uncertain future supply of fish meal and oil from capture fisheries

Vulnerable Asian countries face combination of three issues:

- High fisheries dependence
- Heavily exploited marine ecosystems
- High exposure of marine riverine and coastal fisheries to climate change

Fish constitutes a high proportion of export income in parts of South and Southeast Asia and a major source of dietary protein- typically 40% of all animal proteins consumed per year. South East Asian coral reef fisheries already appropriate four times their sustainable catch and their reefs are heavily at risk from coral bleaching induced by climate change. Predicted summer flows in the Ganges will be reduced by two-thirds. The consequence for the regions high productive river and food places fisheries- a vital component of rural economy- and uncertain and depend on the interaction between local rainfall and glacier melt profiles, water level for fish productivity and increasing irrigation demands for domestic, agricultural and industrial use.

Case Study: Sunderbans, West Bengal

The Sunderbans Island is located in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal in vast deltas of the Ganges, south of Calcutta and bordering Bangladesh in the East. The total area is 9630 sq.km and it is the largest mangrove diversity in the world including several threatened flora and fauna species. “Approximately four million people live there and seven thousand people have already been displaced and by 2030, it is anticipated that over seventy thousand people from this area will be expected to losing their homes and livelihoods due to sea level rise, increased cyclone intensity and flooding” (Sengupta, 2003). These communities are fully dependent on forest resources. At present four major types of livelihood activities are practiced: Agriculture, Fishery, Wood Collection and Honey Collection.

Approximately 65% of the total population is dependent on agriculture based economy because generally there is a single crop economy. “Paddy, potato, green chili, pumpkins etc. are the major crops. Similarly fishing activities are prevalent at various scales in the Sunderbans catering to livelihood to almost 15% of the population” (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2009). Organized large scale fishing activity occurs in sea and deep water and micro scale fishing activity in the shallow river bed to collect the baby prawns. “3% of the total population involved in Honey Collection trade and 5% of the population is involved in Wood Collection trade” (Sengupta, 2003). So the

local perception about changing climate is that span of summer season has increased and winter had decreased. The rainfall has considerably increased due to change in climate pattern. The span of monsoon season has shifted, is now delayed by fifteen to twenty days, the number of cloudy and humid summer days has increased. Villagers see definite changes in terms of sea level rise. There is sufficient increase in the level of water during high tides and settlement of the local habitat and river situation as major causes for flooding in rivers. The community perceives the threat of livelihood in form of intrusion of saline water into the agricultural land- which results in loss of yields and great risk to the farmers. “Permanent intrusion causes loss of agricultural land and making people migrate in the form of environmental refugee” (Oxfam India, 2009). The delayed winter hampers the cultivation of “Ravi Crop”. But the community has responded in the form of diversification into different weather resistance crops- which is not a secure mechanism since realization of money against the crop due lack of market linkages still needs to be addressed. There is construction of mud-barrages around the island to protect it from incursion of saline water but due to lack of finance and absence of a proper institutional mechanism are major deterrents. Thus there is high risk of losing livelihood emanating from climate variability.

Case study: Orissa’s vulnerability on loss of livelihood

“Greenhouse gas emissions from Orissa make up nearly one percent of global emissions” (Khatua, et al. 2006) Orissa’s industries and coal- fired power plants will be emitting millions of tons of carbon dioxide annually. Because of accelerated climate change, which, in, turn, is induced by greenhouse gas emissions from aluminium and other industries, Orissa has been frequently haunted by natural disasters, including cyclones, tornados, heat waves and droughts that are a regular feature of the western district of the state. “Every ton of Aluminium produced by NALCO generates 12-18 tons of carbon dioxide and 0.5 kg of tetrafluoromethane as a global warming agent” (Khatua, et al. 2006). For Adivasis in the districts of Orissa and Other People who have relied on the forest for centuries, the takeover of their land for mining, industrial and power generation related purposes effectively deprived of their sources of livelihood. The mining and industrial production will have adverse impact on climate change in the form of damage to seasonal crops, fruit bearing trees, paddy cultivation. To make matter worse, according to the local communities in Orissa, the pollution generated by NALCO’s refineries and smelters had the following negative consequences on agriculture, the major source of livelihood, as follow:

1. Drop in harvests in 300 acres of cultivable land due to the effluents

2. Germination problem of millets, ginger and turmeric
3. Damaged to stored potatoes, turmeric, ginger, arum and others, due to increase in temperature
4. Loss of cattle and goats due to pollution induced dysentery

The Paroja Kondha tribe of Adivasis, who lived in the Kashipur block of Rayagada district in Southwest Orissa, were being asked to give up their land to make the way for mining of bauxite by Utkal Aluminum International Limited (UAIL). It had an impact on the loss of livelihoods and the manifold effects on ecology. The project generated 1000 tons of ash per day that was dumped into the ash pond, which contaminated the cultivable lands and local streams in the area.

Following the climate convention protocol signed by most of the world's governments at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the developing countries of the Southern hemisphere were given lead time to "develop their economies" before they reduced greenhouse gas emissions contributing to global warming, which rich countries were given notice that their emissions would soon have to be reduced dramatically. The latter responded by funneling massive quantities of capital, via their corporations, governments and the world bank, into fossil fuel-driven power plants in the South, and by moving energy-intensive industries to the south, including India and the state of Orissa in particular. "Despite India's commitment at the Climate Convention, greenhouse gas emissions in Orissa have skyrocketed: Orissa's industries and coal-fired power plants emits 174 million tons of carbon dioxide" (UNDP, 2009). Marginalized people, whose only wealth might be a small plot of land must now endure global warming-induced fluctuations in rainfall, ash overburden and effluents that harm their agricultural lands and destroy their produce. They are forced to live with a scarcity of water as rivers are diverted for industrial use and are rendered unusable by pollution. They are no longer able to fall back on the forests that looked after their subsistence during lean months. The lands and forests are closely interwoven with their Adivasi inhabitant's livelihood practice, culture, wisdom, sense of dignity and sovereignty.

Role of Social Workers

"Social work since its initiation, growth and recognition as a profession, underwent considerable changes both in its philosophy (from charity to rights based approach) and method of addressing the problems of individuals, groups, communities, societies at large" (Chandrashekara, 2012). The present subject is yet to become an area of focus and intervention in social work.

Mary Richmond way back in 1922 itself acknowledged the physical environment as an important contextual consideration for social work practice. Social work has a role to play in ensuring environmental protection as it is necessary for sustainable development.

It is necessary for the contemporary social work profession to acknowledge the consequences of environmental injustice on vulnerable populations and begin to engage in such work, which may lead to a better understanding of the disproportionate effect that environmental degradation has on minority and poor communities. “In building research and knowledge about the need for social work’s involvement in addressing environmental concerns, it is imperative that social workers “include an analysis of the tensions between racism, classism, environmentalism, and economic development” (Teixeira, 2015). The challenge to include environmental justice as part of the profession’s social justice framework is necessary, overdue, and one that social workers should actively pursue in order to maintain relevance within the field of social justice.

Social workers, as community workers, play a role in developing both a global and a local community consciousness of environmental or ecological issues. Coates challenges social workers to embrace new roles and engage in community practice: ‘The importance of connectedness and relationship makes the re-establishment of a sense of community – of place and belonging – a primary concern for social work’.

“As change agents, social workers participate in social action at the individual and community levels; and ‘direct the future research and policy agenda toward priorities that most directly resonate with the people who are most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change” (Schmitz, 2012). Through community work, they can lead to transformative sustainable change by engaging individual and collective decision-making processes. At the local level, those marginalized by poverty need information about ecological environmental risks and their interconnection to poverty. They also need tools with which to demand social, economic and environmental justice.

Social workers have the knowledge and skills for serving as a facilitator in the process of community transformation and for participating in the creation of the context within which individuals and communities can empower themselves to act. Because sustainability requires civic engagement, it cannot be a spectator activity. With increased empowerment, individuals can take collective, concerted action at local levels to create a

sustainability pattern. Social workers play an important role in educating individuals for action within unique contexts. As change agents, community members learn the global dimensions of the issues they face while they become actors within their own community development context at the local level, drawing on the ecosystems model of intervention. As communities move to eliminate social, political, economic and environmental violence, there are lessons to be learned from cultures that value and respect the rights and needs of all sectors of the current and future community.

Conclusion

Climate change will have cascading effect on livelihood which will undermine the development of people but also there will be change in life style due to resources for sustenance becoming scare. Climate change is likely to cause widespread impacts on water availability, coastal regions, agriculture, extreme events and diseases. The impacts of livelihood will be more significant in sectors of the population with high resource dependency, and in more environmentally and socially marginalized areas. These impacts on livelihoods will be widespread both in developing and developed nations. The impact of climate change likely to increase the cost of providing public infrastructure such as water resources and services such as education and may decrease government revenues by weaker nations who are less prone to climate change. Migration may be one response of people whose livelihoods are undermined by climate change. Though social work profession through the prism of environment hasn't got its due recognition at present due to its limited understanding, social workers have quintessential role to play role in developing both a global and a local community consciousness of environmental or ecological issues.

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Crisis in Brewing Economy in Urban Tribal Community of Manipur

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Abstract

Neoliberalism emerged as a dominant discourse. It claims that human well-being can best be achieved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. However, this neoliberal dogmatism and irresistible market forces across the world become a serious threat to social justice, national cohesion, and democracy itself. It also produces structurally disadvantaged population, working and living on the margins of the labor market. Moreover, social inequalities had become more evident as the rich had become richer and the poor, poorer. In this backdrop, the present paper attempts to explore how the urban Kabuis, who have no land for cultivation and also those who are not in the service sectors, survive the onslaught of neoliberal economy. This paper also highlights the rapidly growing crisis of traditional brewing economy.

Key words: neoliberalism, privatization, market, free trade, brewing economy, social inequality

Introduction

Neoliberalism emerged as a ‘strong’ and ‘dominant’ discourse. To neoliberals, economic world is a pure and perfect order. It comes with certain policies and programs like reducing labor costs, reducing public expenditures and making work more flexible. It also has the power to subdue all the violations by sanctions through international institutions like International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, etc.

It imposes ‘a neoliberal utopia’ to the world. It also evokes a powerful belief- the free trade faith- not only among corporate worlds but also among the high-level government officials and politicians. It made the individual

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quest for the maximization of individual profit as a model of rationality (**Bourdieu, 1998**).

This utopian appeal to free markets and individual freedoms often entail a significant intensification of coercive, proactive, and invasive forms of state intervention in order to impose versions of market rule, to discipline unruly subjects and social fallout (**Jamie peck**, et.al 2018:6). In sum, Bockman (2011) defines it as a set of ideas about to organize markets, states, enterprises, and populations, which shape government policies. It includes deregulation, liberalization of trade and capital flows, anti-inflationary stabilization, and privatization of state enterprises (p.4).

Neoliberalism became a theory of political economic practices which claims that human well-being can best be achieved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. Indeed, it became a hegemonic as a mode of discourse. Deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision are not uncommon in neoliberal state (**Harvey 2005**).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and old-style social democracies and welfare states, almost all the states across the world have embraced neoliberalism, sometimes voluntarily and in other instances in response to coercive pressures of economic policy prescriptions of ‘Washington consensus’ (**Harvey, 2005; Steger and Roy, 2010**). India is not an exception. She adopted it in 1991. It is popularly known as the ‘New Economic Policy’. It is associated certain standard structural adjustment measures including the devaluation of the rupee, increase in interest rates, reduction of public investment, reduction in public sector food and fertilizer subsidies, restructuring of the industrial sector, increase in imports and foreign investment in capital- intensive and high-tech activities, and abolition of the cash compensatory support for exports(**Peet, 2011: 25**). While many scholars like Das (2006), Aiyar (2008) were of opinion that neoliberal reform led to a substantial increase in the rate of India’s economic growth, for instance, since 2003, India has recorded an impressive average GDP growth rate of 8.8% per year, this economic achievement, however, often came hand-in-hand with widening disparities of income and wellbeing in the society (Peet, 2011; **Steger and Roy, 2010:90-91**). Indeed, the positive outcomes of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s comprehensive neoliberal reforms are obvious: massive economic growth, exchange rate stability, and, until recently, substantial increases in foreign direct investment. These neoliberal reforms simultaneously bring a continuous gap between the rich and the poor.

For example, the privatization of housing has put home ownership out of reach for the majority of ordinary Indians (Steger **and Roy**, 2010: 96).

Neoliberalism is development for the already-rich. Indeed it helped to organize the emergence of a particular kind of globalization that benefits a newly re-emergent, super-wealthy, financial- capitalist class, mainly living in the leading Western countries, especially the U.S., but operating transnationally in terms of investment activity(**Peet**, 2011:13). It also extracts resources from poor people through privatization, indebtedness, environmental degradation, the loss of traditional rights to common property, and so on (Peet, 2011: 17).

In neoliberal state, Government programs are now run more like businesses. Growing poverty and inequality were not unintended bugs in the system of neoliberalism as much as they were defining features of a system where the state facilitated economic growth that produced ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ (**Schram**, 2018: 310).

The neoliberal dogmatism and juggernaut market forces across the world become a serious threat to social justice, national cohesion, and democracy itself. Large sections of populations had become structurally disadvantaged, working and living on the margins of the labor market; rapidly growing social inequalities had become more evident as the rich had become richer and the poor, poorer. Many companies were failing and underperforming; public services had been ‘stripped down’ and were unable to deliver even the most basic of services. In fact, many communities had become split and endangered by the rise of racism, Wars, crime, violence, unemployment, famine, poverty, inequality, alienation, environmental destruction, forced eviction, homelessness, recurrent economic crises and social exclusion (**Michael A Peters**, 2001:22;**Springer**,2018:626). Kabui is not an exception to such a socio-economic catastrophe.

The Kabui of Manipur

Kabui is one of the scheduled tribes of Manipur, a northeastern State of India. They live in both hill and plain areas of the State. Almost all Kabuis, residing in the hill areas of Manipur, have already been converted to Christianity. Most of them depend on agriculture and its allied activities. They practice shifting and terrace/ wet cultivation. For shifting cultivation, they simply use implements like hoe, dao and axe for shifting cultivation. However, they use modern technology like power tiller, tractor, pump, etc. in wet cultivation. Sometimes, they also practice fishing in riverine and hunting in jungle as an important means to support their livelihood. Fishing is usually done in group

and sometimes individually using nets, bamboo baskets and even poisons made of tree barks. Hunting is also practiced actively which is not only for food supplement but importantly associated with the customs and traditions like war and festival. They hunt different types of wild animals like deer, tiger, leopard, elephants, and etc. They hunt python even today as a part of a favorite sport which is even reflected in their folklore (Kamei, 2004). The hunted wild animal flesh and fish were dried and smoked for the future use during scarcity of food. And large sections of the population are also in service sectors as clerks, nurse, doctors, teachers, engineers, army officers, etc. Most of the Kabui politicians, bureaucrat officers and contractors are also from the hill areas. They are Kabui elites.

In the valley of Manipur, large chunks of Kabui population are living in rural and urban areas. They are not Christian convert. They still dearly embrace their traditional customs and traditions. In rural, people in service sectors are very limited. Most of the people depend on agriculture, brewing and small scale animal husbandry. Small scale fish farming is another source of income for some families. In urban areas, there is no land for cultivation. Majority of the population depend on brewing, piggery and small scale shop keeping. Only a small section of people are in service sectors. This paper attempts to explore how these people, who have no land for cultivation and those who are not in service sectors, survive the onslaught of neoliberal economy.

Kabui and Brewing Industry

Brewing is a time consuming, labor-intensive and a kind of continuous process. It is a domain of women. Men are hardly involved in brewing. Brewed wine is locally known as *Jou*. There are different varieties of *Jou*. They are *Jouju* or *Charing Jou* (distilled wine), *Joungao* or *Bulan Gaimei* (pounded rice beer), *Timpui* or *Kachingpui Jou* (rice beer), and *Phei Jou*. Rice is a basic raw material for *Jou* production. Almost all the *Jou* are prepared from fermented rice and *Khai*, a cake made of pounded rice flour and a creeper plant locally known as *Khaiparoi* (*Albizia myriophylla*) except *Joungao* which is prepared from pounded rice and *Nappok* (germinated paddy) by mixing with hot water. The alcoholic *Jou* is produced through simple distillation using fermented rice, *Khai* and water. Therefore, though brewing is simple but time consuming and labor intensive.

Traditionally women are engaged in brewing as full time occupation. Besides weaving and domestic chores, women are believed to be empowered through brewing. Their sense of pride and honor are believed to be existed in

the brewing and serving drink to the men and other guests. An ideal woman is one who knows how to brew *Jou* and to serve her husband and in-laws. This patriarchal notion is also reflected in Colonel McCulloch's description of the daily life of the Kabuis. "In the grey of the morning the females of the family are astir and the village resounds with blows of the long pestle in the wooden mortar beating out the rice from the husk. The finished, breakfast is cooked both for the family and the pigs, for the latter the husk mixed with other refuse serves the purpose. Breakfast over, which it usually is about sunrise, the women proceed for water, which they fill into bamboo tubes and bring on their backs in baskets. Then they go for firewood, and this brought, they set about the internal economy of the house; that is, to see to their husbands' drink being in proper quantity and quality, to their spinning or to their weaving, or any of the other household occupations except sweeping the house clean, an act in which they have no pride...if not employed in the labors of the field or the chase, the men do little more than loll about the house during the day, drinking their peculiar drink, a harmless one consisting of pounded rice mixed with boiling water brought into fermentation by the addition of germinated paddy. In the mornings and evenings they will be generally found sitting in groups in front of their houses on large flat stones which covered the graves of deceased relatives. They then appear to be enjoying themselves greatly; they are exceedingly loquacious and speak always in a loud tone".

For non convert Kabuis, *Jou* is one of the most important cultural items. It is associated with life cycle of a Kabui. They use it at the time of worship, birth, dead disposal, feast of merits and other festivals such as *Gan Ngai*, *Nanu Ngai*, *Ri Ngai*, *Mareng Ngai*. And they also used it as refreshment and energy booster at the time of working in the field.

In fact, brewing was the oldest and one of the most important and reliable occupations for Kabuis. Almost all the families used to brew wine. It used to be a backbone of traditional Kabui economy. Next to brewing, piggery was another important source of income in the society. They were proficient and well adapted to these occupations. There was a kind complementary relationship between brewing and piggery. Brewing was profitable because of piggery. They compensated each other. Deficit in the business of brewing used to be compensated through the selling of pigs. The piggery was successful when there was enough food supply for pig through brewing waste products locally known as *Parang*. *Parang* is good for pig's speedy growth.

Similarly, there was a socio-economic cooperation among the people. Some families brewed the wine en masse and supplied. And some became the retailers of the products. They even supply to other localities. There were families who have no capital for running the business. They used to take loan in the form of wine and recovered afterward. There were vendors who vend other food items like pork and chicken curries, pork and beef fry, cow skin chutneys, etc along with brew wine. This is how they used to survive in the society. In fact, this industry was boomed by the end of 1980s and in the middle of 1990s. They were self sufficient economically, if even there were not surplus production. They used to maintain and manage their families easily. Children were sent to school. They even produced some doctors, engineers, teachers and some other professionals like dancers, musician, and singers in the society. Some families even performed the feast of merit through the business of brewing.

However, Onslaught of new world economic system and market dictatorship crushed and smashed the simple subsistence tribal economy in general and brewing economy in particular thereby plunging the majority of people, who have no land for cultivation and those who are not in service sectors, into a difficult social terrain.

The Breakdown of Traditional Brewing Industry

In addition to onslaught of new economic system, there are other socio-political factors as well which aid in the breaking down of Kabui brewing industry. First, there were consistent increased of price of raw materials like rice (imported), firewood, water while the prices of product were relatively low in the market. Second, government imposed high tax against brewing and frequent police drives in the name of law and order situations which discourage the brewing and squeezed the customers. Third, the imposition of ban against the use of wine by civil society organization like Coalition Against Drugs and Alcohol (CADA) and All Manipur Anti-Drugs Association (AMADA) directly or indirectly affects the business. And also, the ban imposed by the valley based insurgent groups, one *Khullakpa* was killed in their action, gave a psychic trauma to all the people who depend on brewing. Fourth, the rapid urbanization and development hamper the industry. This rapid urbanization prevents them from rearing of pigs which used to be a buffer against the liability of brewing business or subsidiary sources of income to the family. Fifth, the emergent and ascendancy of Sekmai and Andro side by side with the bubbling of foreign liquors like whisky, rum, bears, etc. This is a big irony of the state where, despite dry state status, every brand of foreign liquors is available in the market.

Therefore, the technologically simple Kabui brewers cannot compete with them quantitatively and qualitatively in the market. Sixth, *Pei*, the council of elders, once a sympathizer of brewing, imposed more rigorous restrictions on brewing. And also there were frequent failures of fermentation of rice, which sometimes continues for months or years, which often discouraged the brewing.

Aside from unpredictable failures in the production process, the consumption of foreign liquors in certain occasion became not only a fashion but also became a status symbol. That's why people started using it in any occasions without any discrimination between men and women. It was looked in despise way in the society when a woman got drunk. It seems however, acceptable in the society unless it is locally brewed wine. Foreign liquors already have occupied an important place in the society. In sum, it became a class marker or class distinction. It gave negative impacts to traditional tribal economy in general and brewing economy in particular.

Lived experiences of poor Urban Kabuis

In fact, this new market forces shatter many people, who are not in the service sectors and those who have little/ no capital to initiate a business or those who, by and large depend on brewing. **Sabitri** is a twenty-seven years old young Kabui girl. She is the youngest daughter of the family. Her parents were expired when she was a little girl. She had four brothers and five sisters. She completed her fifth standard only from Moirangkhom Junior High School. But she quit her schooling because her family condition was deteriorating. The Only brother, who is now surviving, is a manual labor. He lives in Noney, Tamenglong District. He is also the only breadwinner of his family.

She is now living with her elder sister along with the children of her other deceased brothers. There are six mouths to feed in the family now. However, she and her sister only earn the bread of the family. Her sister was a sweeper in a hospital. And she is manual labor. Sometimes, she works as a helper in chicken center. She dresses intestines and gizzards of the chicken. She sometimes works as a housemaid in her own locality. She cleans and washes dishes. She works more than eight hours in a day. They pay her ₹ 150 and sometimes 200 with lunch.

“There is no security at all in such job. It is quite unpredictable. And it utterly depends on the whim and wishes of the owners. Sometimes illness and certain health conditions also prevent from the working”, she speaks with a heavy heart.

Amidst her struggle for survival, she has to pay some amount as interest to the local money lenders. The money was borrowed to treat her sick mother. She has to pay it until she could repay the capital. Besides this, she and her sister should have to take care of their children's schooling.

"It is our duties and responsibilities to give our children good education. We expect a lot from them. I even sacrifice my budding youth, passion, love and enjoyment for them. We sisters promise each not to disturb our children. We have not to talk or say anything which could be discouraging their studies" she states.

She expected help from kinsmen. She gets nothing more than lip service. Most of them belong to well to do families. Her family used to have a plot of land. But sold off when she was a young girl. They are now putting up at a rented house of *Pei*, the council of elders. They pay □ 600 per month for as rent and another □ 400 for electric and water. Apart from rent and electric bills, they have to bear the repairing and maintenance charge of the room. The *Pei* also hardly looks into the matters. They matter the rent only. There is no question of comfortable and quality maintenance.

Furthermore, the pains and pressure of the family, she has to bear the weight of the community. She has to participate in all the community calls and festivals as well. She contributes money to the *Luchu*, the girl's dormitory and *Khangchu*, the boy's dormitory. The contribution for a boy is 150 and that of a girl is 100.

This is not the end of their miserable stories. Her sister works as a helper in momo hotel when she has no duty in the hospital. And she (Sabitri) also sometimes works as tile labor. She got □ 300 a day. But most of the time she works as a helper in a chicken center. Not only that, she sells chicken and beef curries till late night when there is a festival like yaoshang (holi) and Krishna Jarma (birth day of lord Krishna). For which, she borrowed not only money but also utensils and knife for dressing chicken and beef. She is doing it with a belief that it may help something in the maintenance and the repayment of their debts. Little earning of hers and sister is not enough to maintain and manage the family. They borrow money from local money lenders with 10% interest. Her small daily earning and her sister's little salary are served as a security for borrowing.

However, they kept it secret. They never talk about the borrowing in front of their children. It may affect their studies.

Sometimes she felt very low. She used to think that if she were a boy or a man, she will not suppose to go to work. Men are carefree in the society.

They hardly concern in the maintenance of family. Being a woman, she is very much concerned for her family. I was born for it and I have to feel it.

“We have nobody other than our shadows. God is always with us. We struggle to survive. We learn to live and we fight the world. We were born for it and we have to feel it”, she consoles herself.

Rebecca Maringmei, 33yrs old of age is a local brewer. Her husband is masonry labor. Both of them not passed the matriculation. They have two sons. One is reading 7th standard and the young one is reading Kindergarten. They live in joint family. Her father in-law is a carpenter. He read 8th standard only. Her mother in-law is an illiterate. She is a vendor of *Singju* (a local vegetable salad) and *Tingpui* (a local rice beer).

It is very hard and tough to maintain and manage a family when there is no stable source of income. Her family is basically run through brewing and vendor. It is not enough to run a family from the little earning of brewing and selling of chicken and pork curries.

They brew once in a day. They use 10 kg of rice for a brewing and it produces sometimes 15 liters of wine. It depends on the luck of the day. Sometimes everything is thrown away due to rotten of rice or the failure of fermentation process. Once it started to spoil, it may continue for months or years. It spoils bags of rice. And sometimes it prevented the entire process of brewing. It is an unpredictable business. It is a kind of deficit financing. It sometimes damages the capital money invested in the business instead of earning profit.

In fact, there is nothing left when the net expenditure is being subtracted. Here the self labor is not counted. They buy almost everything for brewing such as fire wood, rice, Khai (a traditional catalyst used in the brewing), and water in the urban areas. They knew that brewing is not a profitable enterprise. There is no other option at all. And of course, brewing market is shrinking and squeezing. They could hardly earn □ 700 in maximum in a day. They couldn't produce en masse because they have no capital and at the same time no man power. Besides, the government also levies heavy taxes from the brewers. There is frequent police drive in the name of law and order situation. They pay heavy price for it. “We do brewing because we love our culture and tradition. That's all”, she said.

The *Pei*, council of elders which is supposed to be a guardian of its fellow people, imposes certain restrictions in the locality. No vendor is allowed after 8-9 pm. However, customers usually visit in the evening. It also fixes the price of locally brewed wine. It should not be more than □ 50 a

liter. However, there is no restriction at all to foreign liquors, Sekmai, Andro and Pheiyeng brands. Economically it affects the poor families of the Kabui. In fact, Kabui market is dominated by foreign liquors and other local brands like Sekmai and Andro.

Besides being unprofitable, it becomes an unaffordable enterprise for most of the Kabuis. Earlier it was a community enterprise. It is not now. Foreign liquors, Sekmai and Andro brands are bubbling in the markets. Besides, for many, financially brewing is beyond their capability. Brewing is no longer a community enterprise. Rather it became an individual venture for more profit. As a result, there are fewer brewers in Mahabali. Vendors started vend Sekmai and Andro wine instead of brewing. it crushed the Kabui brewing market.

In the recent past, there were competitions among the brewers. Those who do not brew wines buy the wine and sold it in retail. There was a chain of demand and supply among vendors. In short, the brewing industry or brewing economy was a boom. However, it dies gradually due to lack of unity and cooperation among the vendors. Internal jealousy and sabotage is prevalent. Amidst this internal conflict, the number of customers has also been decreasing day by day due to certain reasons.

Apart from pressure and economic hardship of a family, there are certain other compulsions as a member of society. The tradition of maintenance of status quo is a horrible thing among Kabuis. Gift and counter-gift is a must in every occasion. When violated, it looked in despises way. One is considered to be weird and unusual. These days, one felt uncomfortable to give ₹ 100 in reception. People try to give more without concerning their economic conditions. It became a fashion. Therefore, poor people in fact, lost balance to try to maintain family and status quo simultaneously in the society, she said.

“It is almost impossible for people like us to survive in such a competitive world” she said. People who basically depend on brewing, which is technically failed and who have no capital for doing business became more critical to survive. Brewing and her husband’s daily earning are not sufficient to maintain her family. She has to work every Sunday in a momo restaurant. For which she got 200.

Athoi Kamei, 46yrs old of age, is another female vendor. She is a school drop-out. Her husband died ten years ago. Her mother in law and father in law were also expired. She is now surviving with three children, a son and two daughters. Her husband was a labor. Her son has family. Her

younger daughter is going to take high school leaving certificate examination but she dropped the examination due to sick. Her elder daughter is a labor in Jaya's momo restaurant. She also quitted her study to help the family.

She vends wine. But she doesn't brew personally. She also keeps some chicken and pork curries as well. She maintains her family from her little earning. She expects help from relatives. She gets nothing. She vends wine from suppliers. She doesn't brew rice because she has no capital and manpower. She vends wine by borrowing money from local micro finance group as known *Senhunpi* and from local money lender; sometimes from *Pei*, the council of elders, and sometimes from *Khangchu*, boy's dormitory.

She has no plot of land. Her family is now putting up at rented house. She pays ₹ 3000 instead of 6000 per month. The owner took less seeing her condition.

Earlier, she used to brew rice. But she lost even the capital because all the rice is spoiled/rotten in brewing. She tried to brew many times again and again, but always failed. She went deficit instead of profit. Then, she bought the wine from the suppliers of Sekmai and Andro. Taking the wine from the suppliers is more profitable than self brewing because they resale the wine by mixing with water and sometimes through repackaging.

"I used to work in the houses of other people just after a few months of my husband expiry to maintain and manage our family. It was tragedy. Then, we borrowed some money and started the vending of wine. We lost our plot of land because we couldn't pay the money we borrowed. We still have debt to repay. It is more than 4 lakh. I don't know when I could repay the debts" she said with deep breathing.

Mrs Lanjairu Kamei, another local brewer, also shared her experiences. She said that the number of brewers is decreasing day by day because expenditure is much more than the profit. Most of the vendors who depend on local brewing started selling the wine brought from Sekmai, Andro and Pheiyeng.

"Our supply chain is shrinking now. We usually sell at the rate of ₹ 60 per liter. We have no manpower to be a vendor as such. Besides, I am not good at handling customers and all. We just brew the rice and supply. That's all", she further said.

"In the past, brewing rice was very much profitable. It is not now. Rather it became a cause for poverty and owing money. We usually spend more than ₹ 500 in one pot of brewing. Nearly 10kg of rice is used in a

brewing. It produces 9-10 liter only. It means only 600 per brewing in maximum. There is no profit when the exact calculation is done. We couldn't recover even the expenditure. Let's forget about the labor we endow in the brewing. When we came to know this, we became not interested in brewing ourselves but to run the business through suppliers from other localities like Sekmai and Andro. We, in fact, brew it sacrificing our sleep and eating. But we got such a little profit. It became difficult to maintain and manage the family. This business is no longer profitable because piggery is failed. Piggery is failed because local brewing is failed. And it is failed because suppliers of Sekmai and Andro are flooded and dominated the brewing markets. However, it may be successful if we could work as a joint venture or if we could develop a network of demand and supply chain", said Mr **Akhumei Malangmei**, an active service pensioner.

Thoipi Kamei, 40 yrs of age, is a manual labor. She is a Christian. She is an illiterate. Her husband named Ningthou alias Athou Kamei, 60yrs of age, is a pensioner. He read 8th standard only. He was a peon in Manipur High Court. He took voluntary retirement. He got ₹ 7500 per month as pension. They have five children, four sons and a daughter. Two of her sons got married and they got a daughter each. Her sons got married before the completion of their 8th standard. Only one of her sons has passed the 10th standard. And her youngest son and the only daughter are reading 9th and 8th standard respectively now.

She used to brew before the conversion. She quitted it. Her family doesn't brew wine, not only because of being Christian but also because of lack of capital for the business. She works in a momo point. She works nearly eight hour every day. She gets ₹ 100 per day.

"I work even on the Sunday because I have to feed my children and husband. I know it is against the Christian faith. But I have no option", she said.

Her pension is not enough to maintain the family. Besides the family, the maintenance for the children's education is not a joke. She has to buy books and uniforms for children.

Sometimes, she works as labor in the construction work. She washes the sand for construction and lifts the bricks and cement. She gets ₹ 400 in a day. It is better than momo labor. However, it is seasonal. There is no consistency. Sometimes, she was no invited for the job.

Apart from the burden of family, she has to attend certain functions or ceremonies if invited. She has to maintain the status quo of a community life. She has to give some financial aid or charity to the family if invited.

Moreover, she has been paying ₹ 500 as interest every month to a Meitei money lender from Wangkhei, Imphal. Thus, whatever she has been earning is for the payment of interest to those money lenders. She took the money when one of her family members got sick, she said.

Purnima Kamei, 38 yrs of age, is also a manual labor. She passed matriculation but her husband read 5th standard only. Her husband is also a labor. They have a son and a daughter. Her daughter is reading 4th standard and son is reading kindergarten. Her family is now putting up at rented house. They pay ₹ 1000 for rent. She also works as a domestic helper in the locality. She washes clothes. She gets ₹ 200 per day. Sometimes, she works in the momo point. She gets there ₹ 100. She works nearly eight hours. Her husband sometimes brought ₹ 10,000 and sometimes nothing. It is seasonal and unpredictable. He is working under Mayang mistry.

Their earning prevents them from starving but sometimes it is very difficult even to maintain the family. It is more difficult when there is illness among the family members. “We have no option but we have to struggle the live”, she said.

Majaguilu Panmei, 40 yrs of age is a vendor of chicken and pork curries. She didn't get any schooling. She came from a poor family. Her husband is a painting labor. They have a son and a daughter. He had a brother and two sisters. Her mother-in-law is a sweeper in PWD, Imphal. But her father-in-law died long time ago. They live in a joint family. Their family is jointly maintained by her husband, mother-in-law and herself. Their family used to brew wine.

They used to have a house and plot of land. They sold it to a resident of Keishamthong Kabui Khul. Her mother-in-law gave some money to pay her shares of money in *Marup*, a local syndicate. She couldn't repay the debt. The money lender took the house on ₹ 1.5 lakh. When they approach to return the house, the money lender asked to give ₹ 30 lakh which is impossible for them. “We are now putting up at our own house by paying ₹ 4,500 as rent”, she said.

She sells pork, beef and chicken fry for living. But she vends momo on Sunday instead of pork and chicken curries. There is no selling of momo when Dolly momo is opened. Dolly momo closes every Sunday. It is well known and it has its own regular customers. It also earns more than ₹

20,000-30,000 a day. Comparatively her business is very small. She hardly earns ₹ 2000-₹ 4000 a day. She has no regular customers.

They are living in a tough time. She earns money. She couldn't improve her life. She is still living a tough time. She is still paying interest to money lenders as if it is never ending process. "We could fail to earn money but the payment of money to money lenders can't be failed. This is a reality of our family", she spoke with an emotion.

Conclusion

Market dictatorship and breaking down of their traditional brewing economy gave a tremendous socio-economic impact to those urban Kabuis who have no land for cultivation and those who are not in the service sectors. Despite the fact that brewing is no more profitable, they cannot stop it because it saves them from starvation for a moment. And even some families became a debtor from brewing. They borrowed money from money lenders for brewing. Brewing failed and they couldn't repay the money. Sometimes, the money lenders took their house. Tragically they have to put in their own former house or to move to faraway places. And many of them are ended their lives with debt. Many of them are still brewing and vending wine to pay their debt in brewing. It became a big question whether they are brewing for living or paying debt or to become a debtor. In both the situation, they might not able to escape because they have no alternatives. They are in the vicious circle of poverty. Rather they are thrown into a pool of unskilled labor forces. They became a daily wager with unpredictable destiny. They are always succumbed to self-despair. In fact, they also have no essential capital (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) to participate in any developmental projects. While a select few are eating MacDonald, drinking coca cola, Pepsi, whisky, brandies, living skyscrapers, and riding a luxurious car, majority of people are scavenging for a single meal. For poor urban Kabuis, the basic postulation of neoliberalism that human well-being can best be achieved by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade is, therefore, quite far from reality. Indeed, it became just a pipe dream for those who have no relevant capitals in the market oriented society.

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Single Motherhood: A Structural Perspective

Dr. Wandaia Syngkon

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to describe the contributions that can be made by social workers to improve the daily life of single mothers' families psychologically, economically and socially.

The researcher chose this section of women for the following reasons: mothers with husbands who are an integral part of a stable social unit, such as family or kinship group, do not have to seek special avenues of adjustment and orientation on individual terms. On the other hand, single mothers face new problems which are new for other women. These issues are related to new roles, new status, adjustment and acceptance, and integration into society.

This study was conducted in Shillong city of Meghalaya with single mothers and their children belonging to the Khasi and Jaintia communities. The study was limited to two hundred (200) respondents, i.e. one hundred (100) single mothers, fifty (50) children of single mothers and fifty (50) key informants, including heads of organizations working for women and children, priests, pastors and chiefs from different localities in Shillong. (6) Governmental organizations and nine (9) non-governmental organizations working for the welfare of women and their children, which are located in Shillong City, were interviewed, as no governmental and non-governmental organization works exclusively for single mothers and their children. The age group of the targeted single mothers is between 18-45 year old and their children in the 8-14 age groups. The inclusion of respondents was limited only to divorced, separated, deserted, widowed, single mothers whose marriages were annulled and those who have children of their own.

Keywords: *Single mothers, Children, Structural Theory, Social Work*

Introduction

Parenting is the act or process of raising children. On the other hand, single parenting is exactly the same, but with a single parent raising their child or children. The single-parent family consists of a parent who raises one or more children on their own. Often, a single-parent family is a mother with her children, although there are single fathers. Single-parent families are families with a child or children under 18 (eighteen years of age) led by a widowed, divorced, separated or deserted parent who is not remarried. Single parenting

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is a full-time job that involves hard work, dedication, exhaustion and regular overtime.

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2012) out of 12.2 million single-parent families, more than 80 percent were headed by single mothers. 1 in 3 children, a total of 15 million are being raised without a father. Of that group, nearly half live below the poverty line.

(Mather, 2010) In the United States, the number of children in single-mother families has risen dramatically over the past four decades, causing considerable concern among policy-makers and the public. Researchers have identified the rise in single-parent families (especially mother-child families) as a major factor driving the long-term increase in child poverty in the United States. The effects of growing up in single-parent households have been shown to go beyond economics, increasing the risk of children dropping out of school, disconnecting from the labour force, and becoming teen parents.

Table no. 2: Current marital status in India

<i>Current population of India</i>	<i>1,21,08,54,977</i>
Unmarried	57,08,33,969
Male	32,28,70,527
Female	24,79,63,442
Married	57,95,84,783
Male	28,65,07,311
Female	29,30,77,472
Divorcee	13,62,316
Male	4,52,743
Female	9,09,573
Widow	5,55,38,707
Male	1,22,77,229
Female	4,32,61,478

Source: Census of India 2011

11 percent of the total households in the country are headed by females. Kerala claims the pole position, with 23 percent of households having a female as head while Lakshadweep has the largest number of such

households among Union Territories (UTs). The proportion of male-headed households has declined by 0.6 percent in 2011 compared to 2001, while that of households headed by females has increased by 0.5 percent during the same period. These findings have been revealed as part of the results of the first phase of the Census 2011 on "House Listing and Housing Census". The figure shows that there are about 49 lakhs single-member female households in the country, with 75 percent of them living in rural areas. Data also shows that more than 60 percent of female-headed households have permanent houses, while among SC and ST categories percentage of female-headed households dips to 55.8 percent and 33.4 percent, respectively (The Times of India, 2012).

As per census of India, Mizoram has the highest number of divorced or separated women with 6.9 percent compared to 4.8 percent men. Meghalaya (5.1 percent and 2.3 percent), Nagaland (2.8 percent and 0.9 percent), Sikkim (2.3 percent and 1.5 percent) and Kerala (2.1 percent and 1.9 percent) follow, in that order. These trends were revealed in recently released census data of 2011, which has given separate data for the population that is divorced and separated for the first time (The Shillong Times, 2015).

Over 3.2 million of those separated or divorced are women, compared to 1.6 million separated or divorced men. Both among those separated and among the divorcees, there are twice as many women as men. This is likely to be because it is much easier for men to remarry in a patriarchal society. Interestingly studies have also shown that although Meghalaya is a matrilineal society, the rates of abandonment and divorce are very high with women facing the brunt since they and their children are usually not supported by the husband or partner after divorce.

Jacob & Chattopadhyay (2016) mentioned that although India's divorce rate is low in cross-national perspective, the separation rate is three times as large as the divorce rate. There is striking variation across states, with marriage dissolution lower in the North compared with the South and North-east, consistent with previous arguments regarding relative female autonomy across regions. Surprisingly, there is very little difference between rural and urban rates of dissolution of marriage across states. Census of India 2011 reveals that the population that is separated is almost triple the divorced population: 0.61% of the married population and 0.29% of the total population is reported as separated, compared to 0.24% and 0.11% respectively for divorced individuals. Marriage dissolution rates in North-east states were relatively higher than elsewhere in India. In fact, Mizoram has the highest divorce rate (4.08%), over four times the state with the second-

highest rate (Nagaland, 0.88%) and over five times the highest non-North-East state (Gujarat, 0.63%). And Meghalaya has the highest separation rate (3.42%), more than double the highest non-North-East state (Kerala, 1.28%).

Single Motherhood: A structural Social Work perspective

In this world of growing inequality and oppression, there is a need for a social work practice that works for social justice and social transformation that can simultaneously meet the immediate needs of single mothers and their children. Structural social work is such a theory of practice that can positively address their problems.

Structural theory is a moral theory concerned with unearthing the causes of social problems and suggesting the type of society that should be built. Structural social work theory also provides guidance on the values that social workers should adopt.

In structural theory, the mechanisms of oppression and the internalization of “false-consciousness” for marginalized groups were explored (Mullally, 2007). Using the feminist notion that anything personal is political, practitioners were expected to identify the processes by which victims were blamed, linking service users to the broader structures that led to their domination as well as connecting them to others with similar problems (Payne, 2005).

(Wood and Tully, 2006) identified four main tactics for structural practitioners:

- 1) Connecting people to needed resources,
- 2) Changing social structures, where feasible,
- 3) Helping service users negotiate problematic situations
- 4) Deconstructing socio-political discourse to reveal the relationship with individual struggles.

Structural theory encourages alliances to promote the systemic change necessary to create a more equitable society. A long-term goal is the mobilization of clients through collective action to change oppressive social structures (Moreau, 1979).

The unjust and inequitable societies are the reasons for the personal problems and challenges that single mothers and children face. In order to

produce social, economic, political and cultural transformations, challenges must be worked on holistically.

Desertion, separation and divorce are the result of conflicts in families that ultimately disrupt peace and mutual understanding. Happiness in families has been taken with the anomaly of married life and there is sadness and pain in the minds of children. More and more children are being raised by mothers without fathers. Single mothers are left to fend for themselves and their children. They do not receive any support from their spouses, government or community. They are often looked down upon and are considered the cause of separation, desertion or divorce.

Being a matrilineal society, it becomes easier for the male population to make many excuses as to why they leave their wives and children. When meeting the key informants, a good numbers mentioned that husbands leave their wives because they do not feel valued and respected. The fact is that many men in this society do not want to take on the traditional roles of caregiver, protector and provider. The main causes of their unique status are bigamy, adultery, cruelty or disappearance of spouses. These practices of spouses degrade mothers and their children. According to this study, A large number of single mothers reported that their former husbands contributed very little or not at all to support their families while they were still together.

After separation, desertion or divorce, almost half of these single mothers falls below the poverty line due to lack of saving and financial support and they are the only earners in their families. Some have expressed concerns about unstable jobs because their job profiles address long, odd jobs with insufficient monthly income.

Due to a lack of awareness about legal rights, many single mothers are in distress because there is no support from their former husbands. Only less than one third of the respondents receive help from their former husbands, while more than half of single mothers are not even aware of their legitimate claim or the existence of any property owned by their former husbands.

Many of these single mothers interviewed find that there is little room for them among married couples. If they are economically handicapped, then they cannot participate in many social organizations. In addition to these single mothers, even their children are economically and emotionally hindered because many single mothers find it difficult to function effectively as parents.

As a result, their children would spend time with their friends and colleagues who they think would understand them. Children feel that they do not belong to their families and feel abandoned. Therefore, they would go elsewhere to find stress-releasing alternatives and therefore get involved with potential risks and immoral activities.

Many researchers believe that children's behavioral problems stem from conflict and marital breakdown. This indicates that the family is the key system for children's behaviors. Children from broken families are likely to be affected psychologically, economically and physically. These children are at significant risk for antisocial behavior problems.

These disparities should be eliminated as inequalities and oppression prevent people from being fully human (Freire, 1970) through its internalization that results in low self-esteem, a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness, self-blame, guilt, fatalism, superstitious beliefs, social withdrawal, and in group hostility, all of which are harmful coping mechanisms (Bock, 1980; Mullaly, 1997, 2002).

Implication of Structural Social Work Theory

These issues should be addressed through various social care and change strategies that can address the immediate needs of single mothers and children, as well as address structural issues that impact them.

a. Social Care

Support should be extended to single mothers and children individually and in groups. Material needs, such as health, education, economic self-sufficiency etc, as well as intra-psychic (low self-esteem, lack of confidence, depression, fatalism and alienation) resulting from their internalized oppression must be addressed. Education is a particularly important social care initiative, as education is essential for freeing single mothers and their children from their oppression. As such, all concessions should be extended to single mothers (who want to continue their education) and to their children in educational institutions.

A number of initiatives, such as vocational training, Community Economic Development Program, legal counseling centers, should emerge for the well-being of single mothers and children. In addition, awareness camps, street theater are essential to reach a greater number of single mothers and their children. All these interventions, directly or indirectly, will challenge the practice of inequality and oppression.

b. Social Change

Raising awareness is an essential part of empowering single mothers and their children. Younger generations should be inculcated in the hazards of early marriage. In schools and colleges, girls and boys should be taught about the family life education, the problems and contingencies that may arise in life and cope with such demands. This requires the intervention of social workers to raise awareness among educational institutions and to inculcate the young generation.

The belief held by single mothers and children that inequality was natural had to be proven wrong. There is a need to challenge oppressive stereotypes that single mothers should be blamed only for their status. Different types of programs should be carried out, and influential community leaders with more liberal views should be invited to show support and address issues affecting single mothers and children. The public speeches of these dignitaries in such positions, which support the cause of single mothers and denounce the practice of ill-treatment, help to influence others to critically review their personal position and to imitate these dignitaries.

Such programs will increase the interest and participation of single mothers in the public sphere, including candidates in elections and occupying positions of power, in order to pass through the otherwise elitist structure of power. Raising awareness will have a positive impact on single mothers, as they will manage to externalize their problems in larger structures. It will increase their confidence to initiate their participation in various social actions, because they know that they have the right to do so.

Awareness camps for both single mothers and children, wherein discussions take place in the social context of their problems and strategies for overcoming them should be organized from time to time. These camps will seek to develop awareness and build leadership skills among single mothers and their children to enable them to educate others in their localities and communities. To get rid of vulnerable feelings, the camps should be structured in a way that allows these single mothers to form their own self-help and support groups. Furthermore, these groups should focus on activities of interest to other single mothers in the community, such as economic sustainability, vocational training and advocacy. Camps should also encourage networks between localities or villages to take collective action and affect systemic social change.

According to (Freire, 1970), those who suffer injustice and subjugation, as well as those who perpetrate injustice and subjugation, are

dehumanized. Oppressive beliefs held by the community must also be challenged.

c. Social action

Social action should be emphasized in terms of improving the status and lives of single mothers and children. Addressing material needs is essential to support the needs of single mothers and children. The community should fight against Bigamy, adultery, cruelty or the disappearance of spouses, because these acts are degrading to mothers and their children. In line with the objective of structural social assistance, single mothers and children must be aware of their rights and privileges. It should stand up against injustice and protect its own rights and duties. Social workers should mobilize Governmental and non-governmental organizations, together with the community power structure, to support single mothers to be able to receive maintenance from their former husbands in the event of desertion, separation or divorced.

Social workers, single mothers and their children, along with the civil societies and community people, should persuade the government to provide assistance, such as protection, rehabilitation, housing, pensions, job reservations, scholarships, and so on for the single mother families who are in need of these provisions. The government must also be asked to pass a reservation bill in parliament for the welfare of single mothers and children.

Every action and program should be geared towards fundamental social change through structural transformation. Real change can only be brought about by social actions that cause these oppressive structures. Social work education must remember the essential professional values of social justice, equity and commitment, the marginalized groups in society, which guide professional practice. Society changes when we transform it. And we transform it when the organized and mobilized political forces, of the popular classes and of the workers, throw themselves into history to change the world.

Applying Structural social work theory will help to liberate and empower oppressed single mothers and their children. Their personal, interpersonal and political power will be enhanced to enable them to take steps to improve their lives. They will be able to reduce their alienation, feelings of helplessness and gain greater control over all aspects of their lives.

Conclusion

Single motherhood status brings several disadvantages. First, when the marriage is dissolved due to the death of the husband, divorce or separation, the existing life arrangements change. The risk of being a single mother 'head-of-households' increases with marital dissolution, when the husband is the major source of income, marital dissolution increases the likelihood of poverty among single heads of household. Single motherhood is a huge challenge in itself, because it has to deal with the situation in which they lost their loved one and, at the same time, they have to take on the responsibilities of raising the child and life as a whole.

Together with the single mothers, their children are also facing numerous problems. Children from single parent families are six times as likely to be poor as children from two parent families. Children living with only one of their parents do less well in school (Amato & Keith, 1991), obtain fewer years of education, and are twice as likely to drop out of high school as children who live with both parents (McLanahan & Booth, 1989).

Single mothers and their children have become a human rights issue for several key reasons. These issues fall under human rights, as a single mother who is a woman should be able to survive realistically and support her family on her own, if necessary, without criticism from society or lack of help from the government. The growth of single mothers' families is one of the major factors that determine the long-term increase in the suffering and poverty of children in the state.

Just like single mothers in other states and countries suffer from raising their children alone. Single mothers and their children in Shillong City too face many psychological, social, and economic problems, although many perceive that their status is better in this state because it is a matrilineal society.

Their conditions are, in fact worst in this state, because, if they were separated, abandoned, divorced or widowed, they are more likely to be the bread earners and head their families. They are assigned the responsibility of caring for their own children and families when there is dissolution of marriages or the death of a spouse.

Single mothers and their children in the state need more attention and resources. Social reformers, community leaders, voluntary organizations, government departments will have to work in unison to free single mothers from the compulsive image of "helpless mothers" and give them a respectable status in society.

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Behind the Shadows of Public Adulation: The Private Lives of Meitei Women

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Abstract

The position of women, their status, treatment towards them, and their levels of empowerment are clearly defined by the gendered relations, roles and responsibilities prevailing in a society. Manipur is a state in the north eastern part of India with its own rich culture and tradition where its women are assumed to enjoy independence and much empowered compared to other women in mainland India. This article is an attempt to outline the status of the married women belonging to the Meitei community which is the major ethnic group of the state. The contrasting or varying roles and responsibilities imposed on them within the private and the public spheres of their lives are what forms the focus of this paper. From early history up to the present day, women of the Meitei society are well known for their active roles and participation in the socio-economic and political aspects, which are highlighted by the existence of the 'Ima Keithel' and their roles as 'Meira Paibis'. In identifying the twist in the story of these women, the paper examines how being a traditional society with its strong cultural and traditional beliefs and practices; stigmas and concerns; married women despite being empowered in the public sphere are still kept subjugated. The veil of socially constructed norms weigh heavily on these women within the private sphere, especially in fulfilling the role of an ideal married woman. This paper identifies how women's role within the socially constructed divide of these two spheres, i.e., the private, which is marked as the women's world; and the public domain as the men's world has set a platform for women to remain vulnerable and suppressed by the gendered roles and constraints imposed on them by society.

Keywords: Private Sphere, Public Sphere, Social norms, Cultural practices, Married Meitei women

Introduction

Women in different regions of the world although belonging to different cultures have always been victims of discrimination and exploitation in one form or the other. Studies have revealed that the treatment of women and their relative power and status in society varies from culture to culture.

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Women are also vulnerable to various forms of crimes, violence and exploitations where they are far from having an equal voice with men both within the private and public domains.

The socially constructed private and public sphere dichotomy marks women's worlds within the boundaries of the household as the private sphere; and the public domain as the natural place for men where women fear to tread. This has put women in difficult circumstances. They are suppressed under this dichotomy where they indulge in unpaid domestic work which is treated as unproductive. In the Indian society where the status of women is determined by the patriarchal norms and perspectives, the issue of women's rights and their status as a whole are always under review and scrutiny (Pateman, 1989; Rogers, 1998). Thus, there have been continuous efforts to understand ways and means to empower them and bring about gender parity. Research and activism on women's concerns have been continuously ongoing to bring about a change in their lives. However, the patriarchal instincts that are deeply rooted in society have always been a major obstruction in this process. Let us now discuss in more detail what entails this division of spheres that has been so entrenched in society.

The Private and Public Divide

The private and public sphere divide is traced back to Industrialization, where the burden of household or domestic work vis a vis the work in factories/industries came up. This revolution had created a shift from home based production to factory production, where men started to work as labor for their wages and women stayed home and indulged in unpaid domestic work which ultimately continued to carry on as a practice. Such a separation thus led to the broadening of the distinctiveness between men's work and women's work that ultimately provoked new thinking about the significance and permanence of these two distinct arenas of work. Eventually men started to go out of the house and continued to engage in the factories while women stayed at home looking after the household chores such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, caring for the elderly and other home based needs. As such an occupation had no visible economic returns, it came to a situation where the work in the private sphere, i.e., domestic chores and care-giving became a submissive work in comparison to the work carried out in the public sphere as economic gains were the hallmark of this type of work (Pateman, 1989).

With this valuing of paid factory work and devaluing of unpaid household work, it created pathways towards treating women to be submissive and kept under the control of men, and continue to make them

responsible for the unremunerative domestic work (Karber, 1988). The public domain which is identified as the male sphere includes the social, economic and political aspects which are regulated by the government; while the private sphere or the women's world is surrounded with responsibilities and activities confined in the realm of home, family and child rearing. The ideology of this distinction not only rationalises the exclusion of women's participation from the political and economic aspects but also helped to obscure the subordination of women within the confinement of home and family as neutral and almost like a natural occurrence. Women's actions thus continued to focus on the needs of the family that are strongly influenced by the value of domestic or the private space; while on the contrary men's actions focused on the needs of the civil society in the broader context. These thus stood to be the defining aspects of the separate spheres (Daily, 1996; Prokhovnik, 1998; Wright, 2012).

As women are kept confined within the household, their lived experiences and works are made invisible to such a large extent that their experiences, interests, actions and contributions are excluded as not worthy of politics or the civil society which automatically leads to their subjugation and negotiation (Wischermann and Muller, 2004). Men are thus found to utilize their energies on labor and politics in the public sphere of the government, the capitalist and market place and the outside world; while women are confined within the encircled space where they are expected to focus on the sentimental aspects such as relationships, emotions and the domestic works (Wright, 2012).

Feminist Inquiry and the Private Public Divide

The challengeable dichotomy of this private and public sphere has always been one of the major concerns in the context of feminist writing that had led to the rise of the feminist movement because of this harsh discrimination prevailing in the society. This distinction of the spheres has been a primary focus of feminist inquiry as the central ideology in determining women's status in their social, political and economic lives (Pateman, 1989; Daily, 1996). Higgins (1999) also adds that the ideology of these separate spheres is clearly defined by the social norms and laws and showed that the line was drawn based on gender perspectives.

Such a divide left no choice to women but to face the consequences silently without much strength to raise their voices. The confinement of women within the institution of the family has also put women in a vulnerable situation where they are being isolated and subjected under the

control of men making them prone to domestic violence (Cohen and O'Byrne, 2013). Feminists have argued that this division had brought about domestic violence; overpowering women at home and beyond. The social relationship between men and women which are underscored by this private and public divide have been under consideration since a long time which is marked as the basic arrangement of the social existence in society (Reingardiene, 2003). Hansen (1987) further argues that this dichotomy is a predetermined and socially constructed classification which are reflected on the ascribed activities given to both genders, their feminine and masculine attitudes, and the normative order, i.e., men being superior than women.

The ideology of women being tied up within the private or the perceived natural domain which includes reproduction, caring and giving emotional support to the family, are ascribed as lower than the masculine and political, i.e., the public domain. Thus as a response towards the management of economic and family life, it ultimately led to the dependence of women on men. This has brought about the underestimation of the worth of domestic works, objectified and repressed their sexuality, and resulted in the suppression of women in public discourses. Analysing both the private and public spheres simultaneously will hence help in capturing a meaningful and clear understanding about the actual experiences of women in society rather than looking at them as distinctly divided spheres.

Therefore, merely understanding the public life experiences or only the private life experiences will not be able to capture or conceptualise the actual life experiences of women in society. There is a need for analysing both the spheres simultaneously as they intersect at almost all crossroads. Likewise, in order to understand the reality about the experiences of married women in Meitei society, only looking at the public discourses is not sufficient to capture the lived experiences of these women who are projected as thoroughly balanced and have managed to unshackle themselves from the bindings of the private sphere. Hence, a composite study and understanding of what entails within the private domain is essential to understand the truth about whether such a fine balance has indeed been struck in Meitei society and the women have broken free of such a divide.

Women in Meitei Society

Women of the northeastern states of India are highly adulated and considered to be better off than their mainland counterparts because of their distinct levels of empowerment. Amongst the states in India, Manipur is popular for the boldness of women and are admired widely because of their immense

participation in the public sphere i.e, the perceived men's world. Active participation in this platform breaking the stereotypes and even excelling in this sphere of life has led to immense glorification. Amongst these women too, women of the Meitei society (the major ethnic community of Manipur), especially the married women are well known for their active participation in the public sphere which are highlighted by the existence of the *Ima Market*, famous for being the only market run totally by women and their historical role as *Meira Paibis* which is the reflection of women's bravery and dynamic involvement in the social and political aspects of the Meitei society (Barua and Devi, 2004; Devi, 2012)

Thus, several discourses outline how women of the Meitei society occupy a prominent status in the public sphere which is treated as the men's world. It is therefore worth reckoning whether their burden is reduced in the private sphere, which is in turn perceived as the women's world that revolves around the domestic household. This much adulated achievement in the public domain has thus diluted as well as hindered the understanding of the private space and the private experiences of these women. Therefore, there is an immense need to go beyond the glorified image and try to understand this difference. This paper argues that such a dichotomy is unrealistic and impractical and it is pertinent to undo these two separate spheres or at least accept that they are not mutually exclusive. Developing such a perspective is extremely important in understanding and leveraging the status of women in society.

Women's status in society is related to the social and cultural traditions, stages of economic development achieved, educational level, attitudes of society towards women, social and religious taboos, women's awareness and political attainment of women in society (Sinha and Sinha, 2013). Since the historical days, women of the Meitei society especially the married women have been playing a vital role in all spheres of their lives by being actively involved in the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of the society. Such participation mark the uniqueness of the Meitei women and it is still continuing in the present day society (Devi, 2014). Here, all the spheres of life are intended to highlight that women in spite of the active involvement in the public spheres of the society, they still play vital roles within the private sphere.

Hallmarks of the Meitei Women

The prominence of the Meitei women in the public sphere of Meitei society from the days of yore are discussed in detail below.

Nupi Lan (Women's War)

The first *Nupi Lan* or *Ahanba Nupi Lan*, 1904 took place when the political agent of Manipur Maxwell tried to reintroduce the *Lallup* (a system of forced labour for the menfolk of Manipur) which had been abolished by the then king, and also forced the people in Imphal (capital of Manipur) to rebuild the burnt house of the British agent. It was the Meitei women of Imphal who rose up in protest and fought violently with the British officials and this marked the first women's agitation. Again, the Second *Nupi Lan* or *Anisuba Nupi Lan* 1939 broke out where women filed a petition to stop the export of rice because of the prior existence of scarcity of rice in the state. But when the petition was not taken into consideration the women protested against the British officials. The protests of these women were so strong that the political agent had to close down the rice mills and the export of rice was stopped immediately (Devi, 2001). These two women's agitations are very much important in the political history of Manipur as they changed the political dimensions of the state and the women were always ready to take up mass political action of the government; which affected their interests as well as the interests of the people at large (Yambem, 1976).

The outbreak of these two women's wars have put women of the Meitei society in a position where they are highly adulated and glorified. Such a glorification has put up a belief about the lives of Meitei women in general that they are brave and they possess high qualities of leadership which is indubitable (Devi, 2012). Ensuring these outbreaks, Meitei women now for generations have followed the trend of always coming to the forefront with regard to any form of protest or agitation against the government or any unacceptable situation that occurs in the society.

Role as Meira Paibis (Torch Bearers)

The legend of the two women's wars has thus become a tradition of women's active participation in any form of injustice or social evils that comes up in the society. This had also led to the formation of the women's groups of *Meira Paibis* who are always at the forefront to deal with the social evils and disturbances that exist in the society. This women organisation which continues to be an important part of Meitei society were earlier known as *Nisha Bandis* (women's voluntary group for anti-liquor) which later on took an active role in punishing the youths who are drug addicts and/ or indulge in thefts or crimes. The role of *Meira Paibis* is thus very significant within the Meitei society. Whenever discussion or talks on Meitei society are addressed, *Meira Paibis* always come into consideration as they are a part of the image

of the brave Meitei women, who have been emboldened enough to take on anti-social activities. The *Meira Paibi* movement started as a voluntary organisation of the womenfolk to prevent violation of human rights of the people in the hands of the armed forces. Their movement emerged stronger against human rights violation in the state of Manipur which has been declared as disturbed area under the Armed forces special powers act, 1958 since 1980 (Devi, 2001; Devi, 2012; Sudhir, 2013).

Being a state ridden with insurgency and underdevelopment, many conflict situations arise and therefore many protests and violent agitations have taken place which were always led by women. Women would emerge at the forefront without any hesitation and take it as their full responsibility. The role of these women came to the spotlight in a particular incident of the brutal murder case of a 32 years old woman, Thangjam Manorama, whose body was found mutilated and bullet ridden, allegedly by 17th Assam Rifles troops. In strong condemnation of the horrific inhuman violence, twelve women protested naked in front of the noted *Kangla Fort* with the slogan, “*Indian Army Rape Us*”. This incident shook the world; which in turn again focused the lens on the bravados of the Meitei women (Naorem, 2015). Such unimagined feats being achieved by the women’s movement in Manipuri society, particularly, the Meiteis, distinctly highlighted how Meitei women actively participate in the public sphere.

The Ima Market (Women’s Market)

Along with the roles played by the Meitei women in the political aspects, their economic independence and authority in the field of trade and business also had a major presence in the public discourses of these women. Such active participation and contribution in the economic aspects has been witnessed by the existence of this market. The *Ima Market* or the women’s market is the only market run exclusively by married women the world over. This is the place where women not only carry out trade and business. It is also the spot where women share and discuss about the social and political happenings in the state. This has been the scenario ever since the King’s regime, when Manipur was a princely state, before it merged with the Indian Union in 1949. This market was the place which supported the outbreak of the famous *Nupi Lan*. It plays a significant role in the socio-economic life of these women which sets a glaring example of women’s independent roles and the maintenance of an indigenous system which is also reflected in the presence of various cottage industries.

The control and ownership of the market by these women not only showed their involvement or participation in economic growth and their economic independence, but also the upliftment of their status within the society as a whole (Sinha and Sinha, 2013). The potential of the Meitei women to excel in all the aspects of society, be it social, economic or political and their capability to combat any form of imposition made on them have made these women an illustrious example of an empowered and independent woman, celebrated and glorified by all (Rajput, 2013). Such has been the discourse about Meitei women and their public excellence that their private woes remained in the shadows, ignored and unstudied.

Thus, so far, it is pertinent to underline that all the above discussions have illustrated how Meitei women have been walking the hallowed spaces that are perceived as the male domain. This has somehow led to an uninformed imagination that Meitei women do not suffer at all from the woes of patriarchy. To dispel this myth of men and women walking hand in hand in Meitei society as equals, we shall look at the private sphere that Meitei women inhabit.

The Private Sphere and Meitei Women

Very few discourses on the private life experiences of these women are available. This itself points to the sheer lack of understanding about their private lives, shrouded as they are by the public discourses of their achievements. There is no doubt that Meitei society too is a patriarchal society, as are societies across the world; where men hold more power and command over women. Because of this hierarchical system that prevails in the society, women are being suppressed and kept inferior to men despite their active participation in the socio-economic and political aspects. Though Meitei women are stated to have a considerably free position within society, gender inequality exists as women are kept under the control of men who are regarded as the head of the family (Irene, 2004; Devi, 2011).

The various customs and traditions, rituals and practices enacted with the advent of Hinduism were always in favour of the menfolk. The identification of women as someone who should be devoted to her husband and remain under the control of the male counterparts were imposed to the women in the Meitei society (Singh, 2006). Below are presented some illustrations that throw light on the prevalence of patriarchy in Meitei society.

Socio-cultural configuration

The status and treatment of women to a large extent is the product of the past socio-cultural configuration (Parvin, 2014). No matter how far they progress,

women are always bound by the socio-cultural boundaries with various sanctions imposed on them. Women of the Meitei society no matter how far they excel in the public sphere they are not exempted from the domestic works. They have to fulfil the role of a mother, wife and daughter-in-law and engage in all household domestic chores, child rearing and care giving. Men while excelling in the public sphere are not given compulsion to engage in the household but for women it is made a compulsion to fulfil their duties as a married woman.

As a tradition, women are expected to keep the house neat and clean, expected to be early risers before any menfolk of the family wakes, and are also expected to do all the cleaning and household chores. Such a classification of work also leads to oppression and discrimination which are otherwise treated as insignificant. Women struggle to fulfil all these imposed roles but their contribution is generally not taken into consideration especially the caring and rearing aspects in the home front. Thus, as they juggle between home and life outside, especially in the case of working women, the burden just gets heavier. It has rarely been a tradition that the menfolk lend a helping hand in domestic chores. This shows a deep divide where domesticity and its related affairs are thrust upon the women owing its roots to patriarchy. No amount of participation by women in the public sphere seemed to affect or reduce the expectations of women's roles that has to be rigidly performed and observed in the domestic or private sphere.

Patriarchal Influence

The dominant mindset of patriarchy strongly impacts the status of women. The status and the image of women came to be reflected by the two Hindu women idols, namely, Sita and Draupadi as depicted in the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, where the ideals of womanhood are framed from a male perspective. With this system being implemented men enjoy the advantage of being superior. The mythical divide that men's world is within the public domain only has exempted them from engaging in the domestic chores. However, in case of women they are bound to balance both the spheres. Despite the remarkable participation in the public domain and being awarded respect and honour and glorified in the public sphere, there is rapid increase in the reportage of violence on women within the private domains too (Irene, 2014). The deeply sown seeds of patriarchy in the Meitei society have not enabled women in this society to free themselves from violence and discrimination but rather continue to be the victims of mental, physical and sexual violence (Laltlinzo and Beeju, 2017). As women are bound to serve and take responsibility of the men, violence done on them are suffered

silently by the women and it is treated as normal. The internalisation of this harsh patriarchal influence has made women oppressed and discriminated and this has been going on for generations behind the camouflage of public adulation of their bravados.

Unequal workload distribution has also placed women in a state of exploitation in one sense to fulfil the role as responsible women and at the same time excel in the public domain. Multitasking with workloads all round the clock is the reality these women have to undergo. Absence of equal distribution of household chores and corresponding responsibilities added to various forms of domestic violence is the harsh reality women face within the private domain. The social structures already designed in favour of men derived from the patriarchal patronage continues to obstruct women despite their massive contributions to society (Irene, 2014). Hence such public adulations appear to be a farce in the midst of private agony.

Traditional practice and beliefs

The traditional practice and beliefs which impose women with several constraints is one of the major causes for the submission of women's status in the society which are not taken into account as a form of oppression. They are neutralised and implanted in the mindset of the people and are to be followed without any questions raised. Many less explored or neglected superstitious beliefs, taboos and traditional practices had kept these women suppressed and discriminated. There are several instances of the beliefs regarding prohibition of touching and handling of women's clothes by male members where it is treated as unusual and sacrilege if men happen to do so. Thus the ideology of purity and pollution is of concern in understanding the lives of these women. During menstruation they are treated as impure or polluted or dirty where they are restricted from going inside the kitchen or get in touch with any male member of the family. During the time of childbirth, the new mother is treated as impure or polluted and kept isolated from other male members of the family. The new mother is not allowed to touch or move freely within the house. The ideal logic behind keeping women from doing any form of common work was to make the new mother rest properly, but this isolation attempts more towards subjugation rather than giving care and protection to the women (Singh, 2006; Devi, 2013).

Another belief that is biased against women is the concept regarding *Phanek* (traditional women attire worn by wrapping around the waist). The *Phanek* is treated as an untouchable by the male and it is advised not to hang or dry this garment at places where it will be visible when male members of

the family go out of the house as it is treated as bad luck. The garment is restricted to be washed with other clothes of men. But this same *Phanek* if it belongs to an elderly, i.e., the mother of the male than it is regarded as very pure and sacred where men even carry a piece of the garment inside a talisman known as *Jantra* in the local dialect which is believed to give protection to them. Interestingly and contrastingly, the same garment which is sacred to the sons is again a bad omen to the husband or any other men. The notion behind the custom of understanding *Phanek* as polluted or untouchable if seen from a hygienic perspective, may mean that it might be stained with menstrual blood or vaginal discharge which are considered impure. But the problem is that it is taken from the perspective of only being impure or polluted which is attached with a sense of inauspiciousness to sight or touch regardless of its state of cleanliness or being dirty (Ningombam, 2015).

There is also a very petty sounding but significant thing. It is the practice of men being given the chance to enjoy *Chakmai* (*the uppermost portion of cooked rice*) whereas women only get the lower portion somehow carries the imagery that men are superior to women. Yet another instance is where men are not allowed to eat the leftover of women but women are made to eat or can eat the leftovers of men and also women are not allowed to touch while the male members of the family are having food (Basanta, 2010). Interestingly, women on the very first day of her marriage is made to eat the leftover food of her husband after he has finished from the same plate and this custom still continues to this day without understanding the meaning or the purpose of the act. The problem is with the underlying meaning that the act carries. It symbolises the wife's subordinate position to her husband which adheres to the logic of man's domination both physically and psychologically (Ningombam, 2015). These practices and beliefs which are very much deeply embedded in the mindsets of the people despite the modern scientific education and development has least succeeded in putting an end to these practices from the society which have been passed on from generations. These traditional practices and beliefs which are the outcome of the cultural configurations in maintaining and preserving archaic traditions need to be explored in the right perspective so as to gain a better understanding about the lived experiences of married Meitei women.

Undoing the Private Public Divide

From all the above discussions and the illustrations about Meitei women, we can clearly see that the life experiences undergone within these two spheres are starkly different. The socio-cultural practices enlisted above maybe

belittled as mere travesty but they indeed weigh heavily on the shoulders of the Meitei woman. It has therefore to be accepted and emphasized that the public sphere and the private sphere traverse and intersect upon each other at all points and cannot under any terms be treated as distinctly different from each other. The lived experiences in both the spheres have a different story to tell as can be seen from the above discussions. Hence, in understanding the status of these women, a composite and simultaneous analysis and study of experiences in both the spheres of their lives is important. A thorough and deeper understanding of the cultural beliefs and practices, social stigmas and taboos existing within the community is necessary which has a great influence in directing and regulating the actions and behaviour of the society which is mandatory for both genders. The patriarchal nature of society has built a deeply entrenched divide between these two spheres, which are almost synonymous with gender roles. The unspoken truth remains that Meitei women too continue to compromise and bear the burden despite the “red carpet” of glorification and adulation in their public world. No doubt, because of their active participation in the public domain, it has created a spotlight for them in comparison with the women in other societies. However, we conclude by highlighting that their daily life experiences within the private domain need to be duly explored as it will indeed unravel a plethora of hidden realities and experiences of these much glorified Meitei women.

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Vote Buying In Manipur: A Case Study On Lhangkichoi Village In Moreh Tengnoupal Sub-Division Chandel District Manipur, 2017.

Manglien Gangte

Abstracts:

In India vote buying has become a common electoral malpractice in the form of exchanges, offering cash, goods, and gifts. And yet we all know that vote buying has effects our society, it has become a part tradition of culture in the Indian society. The practice of vote buying is an illegal carry out by the political candidates. As to retain power politician are looking for opportunity to convince and offered cash, goods and gifts exchanges for vote to support during election. Vote buying is extremely widespread in national and local electoral politics. Furthermore, vote-buying efforts face serious problems in their targeting: as we have seen, political actors try to 'buy' the votes of those who look like their loyal supporters. The very term 'vote-purchasing' accepts one significance for an activity that has a few. Here, we analyze how vote-purchasing is completed, and different perspectives towards it, giving close consideration to individuals. We recommend that more consideration ought to be paid to a more extensive political economy of pressure and control portrayed and experienced by our respondent.

Key words: vote buying, electoral practices, political party, campaign, Money power, poverty, and education.

Introduction:

In a democracy, votes are the ultimate currency of power. Individual candidates (or, in the case of party-centered electoral systems, political parties) who obtain enough votes are given public office, which carries with it public decision-making authority. Possession of such authority then brings a number of rewards¹. Elections are a hallmark of any well-functioning democracy. But for any political party, participating in a nation-wide election requires significant amount of funds: there is the issue of campaigning where

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¹ . Geddis, Andrew. "Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying." Election Law Journal, vol. 7, no. 2, 2008, p. 1. Gale Academic One File, Accessed on 17 Jan. 2021

the political parties and their candidates attempt to “reach out” to the voters². India is one of the largest democracies in the world, today one of the segments that support every democracy is electoral system. Elections seem to have become a major factor in the stabilization and democratization of emerging democracies. It ensures that democratic pillars including rule of law, ballot secrecy, separation of powers, independence of the judiciary and many more are strengthened. Elections therefore allow citizens to take part in governance. Thus, elections give the every Individual citizen the opportunity to select their Choice leaders³. The electorates are the very heart of this political process where in the Indian political system, every legal age Indian citizens has the rights to vote and participate in the electoral process in in electing the representatives⁴. The distribution or offering of money in elections by candidates and political parties during elections plays an important role in determining the voting choice of the people. The predicament of irresponsible use of cash acknowledged by political parties and individual candidates from businessman and other sources from time-to-time for furtherance of their election prospects has already acquired upsetting aspect of our electoral system. It has also been pointed out that political parties and their candidates have spent money far in excess of limit imposed by the Representation of Peoples’ Act, 1954⁵.

India is often regarded as a ‘patronage democracy’. A large amount of money continues to circulate during Indian elections. In the run-up to elections in the state of Bihar in 2015, journalists reported that ‘almost 17 crore (\$2.5million) in cash’ and ‘1.5 lakh (150,000) liters of liquor’ had been seized under the electoral code of Conduct in a state where ‘cash and liquor are commonly use to influence voters Participants’⁶. Vote buying did not disappear with Mexico’s transition to democracy⁷. The predominance of vote

² . Cash for Votes: Evidence from India, By Anirban Mitra, Shabana Mitra and Arnab Mukherji, p, 1

³ . The menace of vote buying and selling in Nigeria and ways forward Adam Bassi Mohammed, Mohammed is a social and political analyst who is presently a Master student of Information Technology with the prestigious Nasarawa State University, Keffi. P, 1

⁴ . International Journal on Graft & Corruption, Volume2. January Prints ISSN 2362-7476. Online ISSN 2362-7492. The Veracity of Vote Buying: Perspective of the Philippine Electoral System, Ferdinand T. Abocejo, Cebu Normal University, Cebu, Central Philipines. P, 37.

⁵ . The Times of India, New Delhi, published on July 13, 1991, p.6

⁶ . Institutional Performance and Vote Buying in India, Oliver Heath1 & Louise Tillin2.browser 28/12/2020

⁷ . Serra, Gilles (2016), Vote Buying with Illegal Resources: Manifestation of a Weak Rule of Law in Mexico, in: Journal of Politics in Latin America, p, 141.

buying-where candidates and Intermediaries distribute commodities or money to citizens in exchange for their votes-has been known to Indonesian scholars for decades. While long viewed as a corrosive and corrupting influence on Indonesian politics, more recent scholarship has begun to focus on the nuances and complexities of vote buying. For example, Fionna (2014) found that intermediaries or “brokers” who distribute money on behalf of candidates often target the most persuadable voters and those who could be convinced to vote in an election⁸.

Practice of Vote buying in Manipur

Most scholars accept that vote purchasing is a terrible from the perspectives of majority rules system⁹. However, they also think that it is not bad from the points of view of democracy that politician issue campaign promises to the effect that if they get elected, they will enacts certain policies that predictably will benefits particulars groups of voters. Thereby trying to persuade these potential beneficiaries’ to vote for them¹⁰.Vote buying may be referred to as “exchanging political rights for material gains”. This definition, also stresses on an exchange which is also seen as a transaction. Thus, selling one’s right by accepting a gift, incentive, or benefit to vote for a candidate or a political party¹¹.

Vote buying occurs when a political party or candidate seeks to buy the vote of a voter in an upcoming election. Vote buying can take various forms such as a monetary exchange, as well as an exchange for necessary goods or services. This practice is often used to incentivize or persuade voters to turn out to elections and vote in a particular way¹².Vote-buying is extremely common in developed and developing countries: politicians use a range of tools, from covert or complex to simplistic and blatant, to attempt to purchase votes in democracies around the world. Vote-buying endangers the validity of election results; undermines public trust in the democratic system;

⁸ .<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-east-asian-studies/article/consistency-and-vote-buying-income-education-and-attitudes-about-vote-buying-in-indonesia>". Browser on 10/1/2021.

⁹ . Susan C stokes, “is vote buying undemocratic?” election for sale. The causes and consequences of vote buying, ed. Fredric c. Schaffer (Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, 2007, p

¹⁰ . Journal of Political Philosophy: Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen Political Theory, University of Aarhus; Vote Buying and election promises: Should Democrats Care about the Difference? P, 1

¹¹ . The menace of vote buying and selling in Nigeria and ways forward, Adam Bassi Mohammed, Mohammed is a social and political analyst who is presently a Master student of Information Technology with the prestigious Nasarawa State University, Keffi. P, 7

¹² . https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_fraud. Browser on 15/1/201

and negatively affects post-election politics, government accountability, and public perceptions of that accountability¹³.

Vote buying is extremely widespread in national and local electoral politics. Furthermore, vote-buying efforts face serious problems in their targeting: as we have seen, political actors try to 'buy' the votes of those who look like their loyal supporters¹⁴. Schaffer (2002: 6) and Cornelius (2002:7) have noted that Vote buying in other parts of the world such as Sao Tome and Principe, defined as the exchange of cash for votes before elections, has been a rampant phenomenon¹⁵. Government officials ordinarily attempt to get chosen by extending to money or blessings or employment opportunities to the nearby electors self-intrigued motivation to cast a ballot or by a political race guarantees are probably going to ponder based on apparent personal responsibility. Votes purchasing keeps on being an inescapable work on during races day, when citizens are going to go to surveying station to project their votes. This training is known to all citizens that's, on a basic level, it has become a piece of culture or acknowledged than see as illicit practice deserving of law. The People of Manipur the two slopes and valley experience the acts of vote purchasing and selling, individuals has revealed many vote purchasing cases during the 2015 neighborhood political race. Vote purchasing marvel and situations happening political race and casting a ballot work out.

Electors' members realize that it is occurring close and around the surveying stall station through vote's dealers, Agents laborers, supporter of the gathering competitors; anyway its' difficult to demonstrate this illicit practices since it is surreptitiously done. The researchers analyze and study the issue of vote purchasing in *Lhangkichoi Village Moreh* humble community during intermittent public and nearby political decision in the state. This paper will examine the illegal practice of vote purchasing or buying wonder in molding the discretionary arrangement of popular government from the perspectives of political up-and-comers and electors. Government officials and ideological groups target fundamentally to poor

¹³ .<https://www.iie.org/Research-and-insights/Publications/DFG-Williams-College-Publication>. Browser on 15/1/2021

¹⁴ . Muhtadi B. (2019) Does Vote Buying Affect Voting Behavior? Chasing winning Margins and the Prisoner's Dilemma. In: Vote Buying in Indonesia. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. Browser. 18/1/2021.

¹⁵ . Jimmy Chulu- PhD finalist in Development Studies Copper stone University, School of Post-graduate Studies Kitwe, Zambia: Research Report Vote Buying of Electorates: A Case Study of Zambian Parliamentary By Elections; p, 9.

people, youth, low pay gatherings, educated, unemployed youths and uneducated electors, they can without much of a stretch persuade the individuals by offering money at their entryway venture during political race. In our general public. Vote purchasing become another pattern which will assist with ending up casting their important vote during political decision, selling vote or purchasing vote become another methodologies for the contender to persuade the neighborhood people groups. The very term 'vote-purchasing' accepts one significance for an activity that has a few. Here, we will examined how vote-purchasing is done, and different perspectives towards it, giving close consideration to the village Peoples¹⁶. *Numerous researchers* consequently draw an association between various elements of financial modernization and the pervasiveness of clienteles trades (for example Jensen and Justesen, 2014; Brusco et al., 2004). Such researchers accept that needy individuals are more pulled in by vote purchasing than more well off residents. Stirs up (2007b: 618) presents the model of a high rebate rate, clarifying that “needy individuals are hazard opposed and consequently esteem all the more profoundly a sack of treats close by today than the guarantee of redistributive public approach tomorrow”¹⁷. In any case, a little research has not been done so far on vote purchasing on democratic conduct in the neighborhood town nearby political decision.

The Issue of Vote Buying in the Study Area

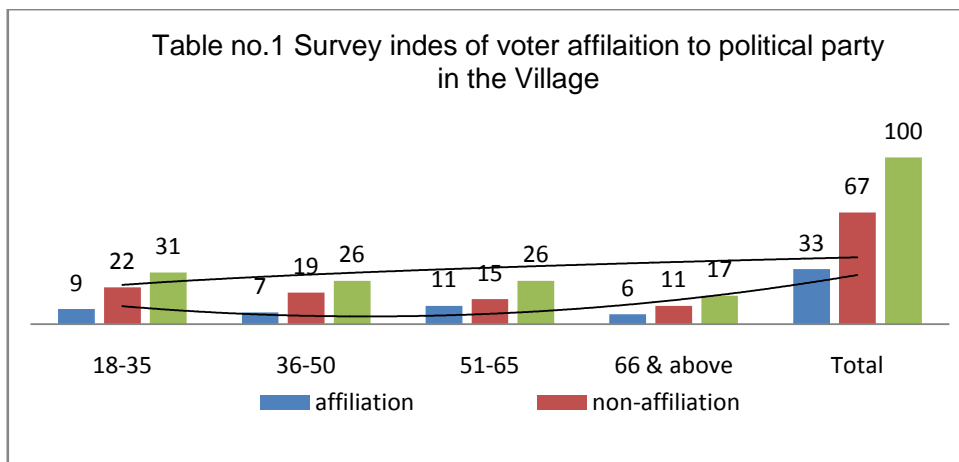
The people of Manipur acknowledge on useful administrative issues rather than theory, there is a lot of impermanent change in the political attitude toward authoritative issues. Vote buying or purchasing is authentically not a straightforward task, without understanding the close by people disposition, making vote buying work is remarkably irksome, especially inside seeing electronic majority rule machine (EVM). Anyway vote buying is high in the neighborhood optional authoritative issues. Also, vote-buying tries face troublesome issues in their centering: as we have seen, political actors endeavor to 'buy' the votes of the people who take after their social affair immovable, ally, experts worker and partners, yet all things considered breeze up giving most portions to various residents. The researcher inspected campaign ensures that are reliant upon the aftereffect of the political choice and frank confining portions. It is found that under mission ensures simply

¹⁶ . Clarinda Still & Srinivas Dusi (2020) Vote buying and ‘Money-Politics’ in village elections in South India, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*. Browser 16/1/2021.

¹⁷ . Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Vote Buying in Indonesia; The Mechanics of Electoral Bribery*, Burhanuddin Muhtadi Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta, Indonesia; ISBN (eBook). Accessed on 15/1/2021.

complete portions got by residents are higher and more all over across balloters than with blunt vote buying.

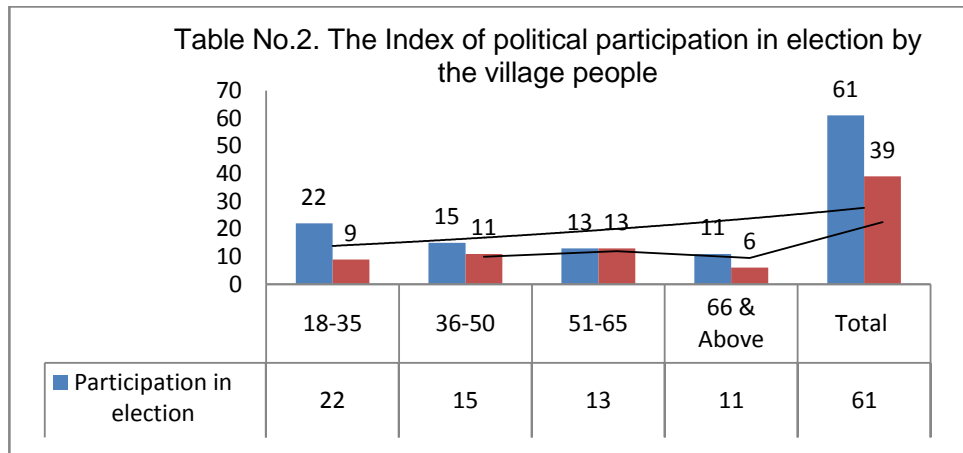
Likewise, capability is found to be liberated from the presence of vote selling and from the specific structures that it may take. Regardless, from the field amasses in area choosing measure, they do show the paces of effect of the distinctive like vote catch, delegate, and favors on the decisions balloters make on the genuine studying day. It is clear that lawmakers and philosophical gatherings do spend enormous proportion of money on a political race eve and some of which spent on blessings to the electorate, and have ended up losing the election. In order to study the malpractice of vote buying, a randomly selected sample of 100 voters of the local people of Moreh is asked a question based on the state Assembly election in 2017, as mentioned earlier the paper aims to explore the dynamic changes in the purchasing of vote bank during election by taking Lhangkichoi village of Tegnoupal sub-division as case study. The village has around 300 household. The data are gathered both from primary and secondary source. The primary data are collected by undertaking field work or survey through informal interaction and questionnaire are asked with the local people along with observation methods. On the hand journal, books, Articles and Newspaper etc. are used to gather secondary data. For the purpose of the present study the local people affiliation to political party are given below.



Source: own survey data 2017

When we analyses the above column, it shows the degree of voter affiliation to political party base on the four age groups respondents. Out of 100 samples voter respondents 33 voters are found affiliate to political a party which is 33% of the total sample. On the other hand 67 voters are found non-

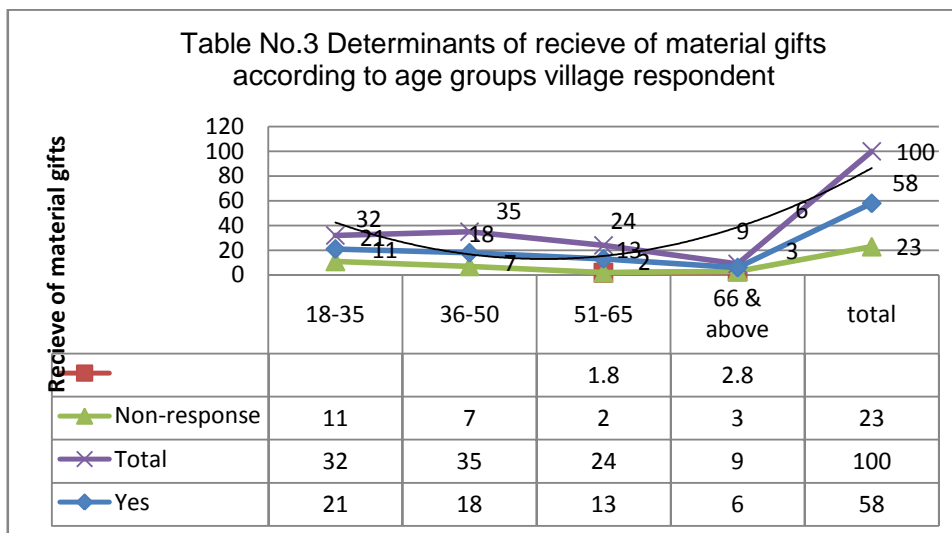
affiliate to any political parties. And regarding the affiliation in age groups with 9%, from 18-35 year, 7%, from 35-50 years, 11% from 50-65 years, and 6% from 65 & above affiliation to political party. However, it is found that's 50-65 year of age groups is highest with 11% and the age group 65 above age groups with 6% is the lowest affiliation. 22% from 18-35 age groups, 19% from 35-50 age groups, 15% from 50-65 age groups, and 11% from 65 above age groups are recorded non-affiliation to political party during field work in the Lhangkicho village. After critically examine the above data it quite clear that village people are not much aware of electorate rights as compare to other village. The village people can be easily influence by bribing money during election. The study reveals that there is loophole on the part of the government, civil society, and organization. The village peoples are not aware of party affiliation what exactly it means. Party candidates, social workers, party Agents, civil society organization, and different organization must draw attention toward the political rights of the village people to take part in the political arena. The voters' participation in election campaign age groups are shows in the given below table.



Source: Own survey data 2017

Despite the fact that electors' connection to ideological group isn't high, yet interest in different sorts of political race is extremely high with 61% citizens' respondents. The most elevated cooperation age groups is 18-35 with 22 citizens respondents, 36-50 age group with 15 electors respondents, 51-65 age group 13 citizens respondents and the least respondents age groups is 66 and above with 11 example electors respondents. Though the non-cooperation among the age groups is 18-35 with 9 electors' respondents, 36-50 age groups is 11 citizens respondents, 51-65 age group is 13 electors

respondents and 66 and above age group with 6 citizens respondent. Our survey shows that most elevated quantities of non-cooperation in political race are 13 with test citizens and 66 and above age group with 6 electors' respondents don't partake. The material gifts accepted by age groups of respondents are show in the in the given below table.

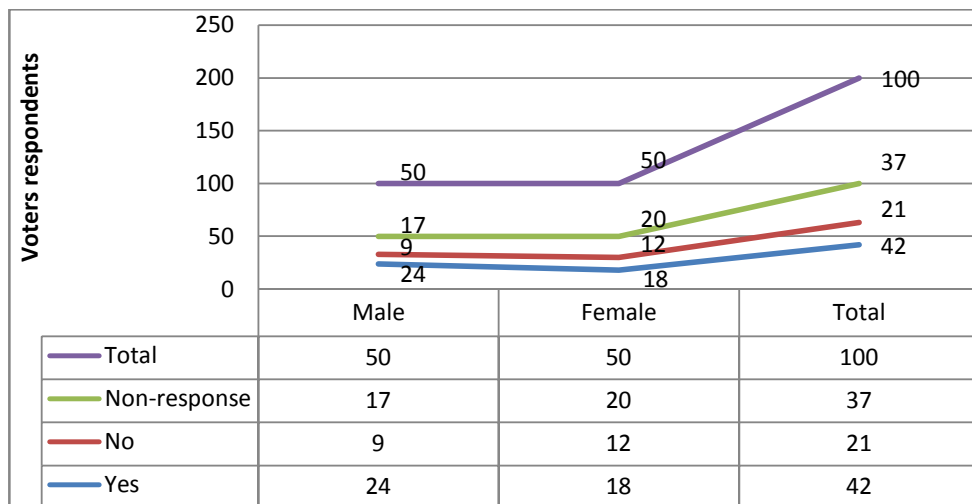


Source: own data survey 2017

When we examine survey data from the above table, it away from that larger piece of the respondents who recognized fulfillment as endowments and money during political choice were the age groups from 18 to long haul or more. Out of 100 samples voters' 58 people of respondents get cash on money during political race which is 58% of full scale model, 19 residents respondents don't recognized any construction enrichments or cash from the close by contender which is 19% and 23 residents don't know response in related to get of material gift in the political choice which build up 23%. Additionally, concerning the age groups, 18-35 is the most imperative recorded respondents with 35% and the age social events, 66 or more age is the least with 10.34% who having gotten gifts from the public authority official. 18% and 13% are recorded in 36-50 age social events and 51-65 age groups get gifts from the public authority official during political race. Vote buying during political choice age social affairs of respondents are show in the in the given underneath table. Despite how this arrangement was the less tended to in the model (9 respondents with 9% of the total models), with was the most important in term of getting material enrichments.

Over all the numbers or respondents who recognized enrichments during the state assembly election political choice was higher (58%) than those that didn't recognize favors which stayed at 19%. See the above table. Thus, the influence of material gifts on voters decision according to sex are shown in the given below table.

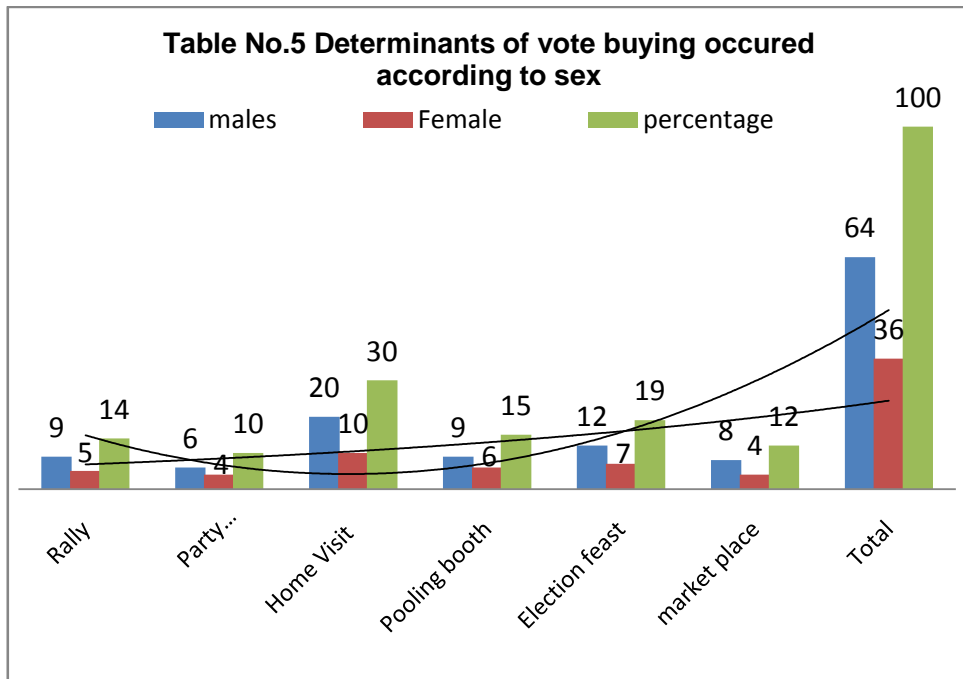
Table No.4 Influence of material gifts on voters decision according to sex



Source: own survey data 2017.

In order to understand the voters' influence of material gifts on voters decision a sample question is asked base on the election. In a survey 42 respondents are found to be influence by material gifts in the election which is 42% of the sample. Out of which 24 is the gender males' voter respondent which is the highest as compare to female representation 18 of all those who accepted receive of material gifts from the politician during election. And out of 21 respondents' 9 voters from male and 12 voters from the females respondents voters denied having being influence by the material gifts issue by the party candidates, agents, workers, and sympathizer. However, 37 respondents of the voters' respondents neither denied nor accepted having being influence by material gratification they received. Thus, it clearly indicates the influence of material gifts to the males' respondents is quite

high as compared to females' respondents. Table No.5 show the determinants of vote buying occurred according to Sex.



Source: own survey data 2017

After when we examine the data collected from the samples, the determinant of vote purchasing happen at various stage, the for most recurrence reaction among the 100 citizens respondents tests who have get cash or blessings before political race. Of the 100 electors' respondents' examples, citizens 14% concurred or acknowledged to have get cash at crusade rally. Also, 10% respondents get the cash from party crusade/meeting, 30% electors respondents get cash at their own home, a setting where the level of focusing on is likely high. 15% of the respondents get the cash from pooling stall, 19% of the citizens' respondents get the cash from the political decision feast, and 12% get cash from the commercial center, a setting where the level of focusing on is less clear. Concerning vote purchasing gender males is the most elevated with 64% as contrast with females that is 36% who acknowledged having offering get of cash from the politician. Thus, the table no.6 shows the vote buying respondent by their income and education.

Table No.6 Determinant of vote buying in response to Income and education

Voters Accepted	respondents			Refuse			
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Total
Illiterate	10	1	4	1	4	5	25
Under Secondary	2	1	8	3	5	4	23
Secondary	2	4	9	3	2	2	22
Higher secondary	3	2	3	2	1	0	11
Graduate & Above	2	5	2	2	5	3	20
Total	19	13	28	10	18	14	100

Source: own survey data 2017

When we analyses the data collected from the sample, we can see that there is a modest shifts in the vote buying respondents is higher in both the case among the income and educated peoples. Out of 25% illiterate voters 15% respondents accepted the money offering or gifts from the candidates, 11% under secondary, 15% voters from secondary, 8% respondents from higher secondary and 9% respondents from graduate & above accepted offering of money from the politician. We can also find that high income group's level respondent is higher than that of low and income group level in accepting the money offer of gifts from the candidate. Out 58 % voter respondents, 19% from low income level family, 13% from medium income level family and 28% from high family income level. Thus, vote buying, practiced either through giving selective benefits using cash money offer and other instrument has penetrated in all level in our society and strained in our electoral process. Vote buying has become like social sickness which is quite difficult to eradicate even if recognized as a negative societal reform which need concrete electoral reform. Thus, nevertheless as a development outlook, such reform should begin somewhere, somehow before it too late.

Conclusion

Thus, the study reveal that, the practiced of vote buying is one of the main issue of the village under study. Today, regardless of recommendation of various rule and regulation where frame on the issue of right to elect their on representative, free and fair election, Various agencies has initiative government agencies, NGOs and civil society sought for not to practices vote buying. But the people fail to adopt the guideline and the practice of vote

buying has penetrated all level of the bureaucracy and has deeply entrenches into the country electoral system. Vote buying is not a new trend at all it has been practices for the last five decades, vote buying take place at different form gifts, promises and offering money to exchanges their vote. Moreover, vote buying is a simple technique to convince the public through offering cash or money at the public meeting, rally, politician target mainly to the illiterate, educated, low income group's level and youngster as they are vote bank. In the election every political party is looking for opportunity to win election, candidates or parties offer money to citizens in efforts to "buy" their votes. However, more highly educated citizens appear more likely to pursue their preferences on the influence of money rather than loyalty and sincerity, vote buying has become culturally intricate with fraud and intimidation and even violent mean to win electoral race.

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A study on Contributing factors to substance abuse among the clients of Silchar New Life foundation and role of social workers

R. Lalzo S. Thangjom

Abstract

Drugs addiction is a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2014). The use of drugs has been increasing at an alarming rate among the youths in different parts of the country.

Drug consumption and addiction, particularly among the youths and students of Barak Valley is assuming serious dimension with its social ramification. Not a single day passes without the reports trickling in of the arrest of smugglers and their henchmen with a huge quantity of contraband goods from different areas, particularly close to the interstate and the international border with Bangladesh. Some such focused points are Churabari on Tripura-Assam border, Gharmoora on Mizoram border, Bhaga-Dholai on Mizoram border and the most vulnerable being Jirighat in Lakhipur subdivision of Cachar on Manipur corridor. Besides the above reason being the contributing factors, some of the other reasons are Family history of substance use, Favorable parental attitudes towards the behavior, Economic and social cultural factors, Poor parental monitoring, Family changing structures and problems, Association with delinquent or substance using peers and Lack of school connectedness and Low academic achievements among the many. The present study mainly aims at finding the socio cultural, economic and environmental factors contributing to substance abuse.

Key Words: Social, Cultural, Economic and Environment Factors

Introduction

The seven sisters of India which is also called eastern region have tremendously increased the use of drugs with an alarming rate. Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram are more prone to substance abuse as they share an international boundary with neighboring countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, China and Nepal. Production of heroin in the Golden Triangle – roughly the area that spans northern Burma, Thailand and Laos led to the abundant availability of drugs in Manipur and

Nagaland. Barak valley being the transit corridors for the rest of the country has an adverse impact leading to the ever rising numbers of substance abusers for the valley. Some of the major influencing factors which lead to drugs abuse are through peer pressure group, anxiety, isolation, conflict with their dear ones, psychological disorder. Prof A.S Kohli (1997) in his book *Drug Abuse and Drug Prevention* mentioned that in Meghalaya 54.69% of youngsters are caused by family problem. It may be added that family problems get the first ranking because of changing structure and function of family among Khasis where matrilineal culture existed in the past. Beside this drug was taken out of curiosity by 41.67%, for pleasure 33.33%, typical motivation towards life and fashion by 18.33% and due to frustration and friend pressure by 11.67%. It is also mentioned that Burma, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram Bangladesh and Nepal are the main sources of drug supply. Drugs available in shillong were reaching mainly through the Golden Triangle areas, Nepal and Bangladesh. Bhang was however locally available due to its wild growth in the area.

Rationale of the study

Substance abuse has become a global phenomenon in nature and is impacting to every mankind rich, poor, young, old, male, female etc. in every walks of life in different parts of the world. The vicious circle of substance abuse is increasing day by day all over the world which has also become a trend among the youth impacting directly or indirectly in every sphere of their lives (physically, socially, economically and emotionally). Therefore, there is need to understand its contributing factors of drug addiction and consequences for which accordingly the suitable intervention strategies has to be developed understanding the client's problem through the study.

Delimitation of the study

The result of the study is not applicable to any other state or region as the researcher's intention is to study only within the four walls of New Life Foundation Silchar. The researcher aims at developing insight knowledge and understanding different socio-cultural and environmental factors contributing to substance abuse among the patients through the study

Methodology

- **Research design**

The present study describes and analyzes various factors which contributes to substance abuse and use both qualitative and quantitative method.

- **Objectives of the study**

1. To find out factors contributing to substance abuse among the clients of silchar new life foundation.
2. To suggest role of professional social worker.

- **Research Questions**

- What are the different socio demographic characteristics of the patient?
- Major influencing factors contributing to substance among the youngsters?
- Relapse cases among the patient?
- Why is substance abuse more prone to youngsters?
- What could be the suitable techniques and skills be adopted by the care takers while dealing with the patient

- **Universe and sampling**

The universe of the present study has been clients of New Life Foundation, Silchar. Since the total population is known the researcher uses TARO YAMANE formula for calculating the required sample size. Total number of client for the period of January to June is 325. By calculating using 0.05 level of precision the result of the required population is 179.31 ± 5 .

$K = \text{constant (1)}$

$e = \text{degree of error expected}$

$n = \text{sample size}$

$$n = \frac{N}{k + N(e)^2} n = \frac{325}{1 + 325(0.05)^2} n = \frac{325}{1 + 325(0.0025)} n$$

$$= \frac{325}{1 + 0.8125} n = \frac{325}{1.8125}$$

$$n = \frac{179.31}{6} n = 29.83 \pm 5$$

Since paucity of time and money, the scholar intends to reduce the number of sample to a reasonable size. So, the result according to TARO YAMANE's formula has been further divided by 6(six). The number 6 has been taken keeping in mind the duration and time required for a particular person to go through the different stages of rehabilitation. Therefore the sample size is 179.31 ± 5

$$n = \frac{180}{6} = 30 \pm 5$$

- **Tools of data collection**

The researcher uses semi structured interview schedule as well as participant observation as a tool for data collection.

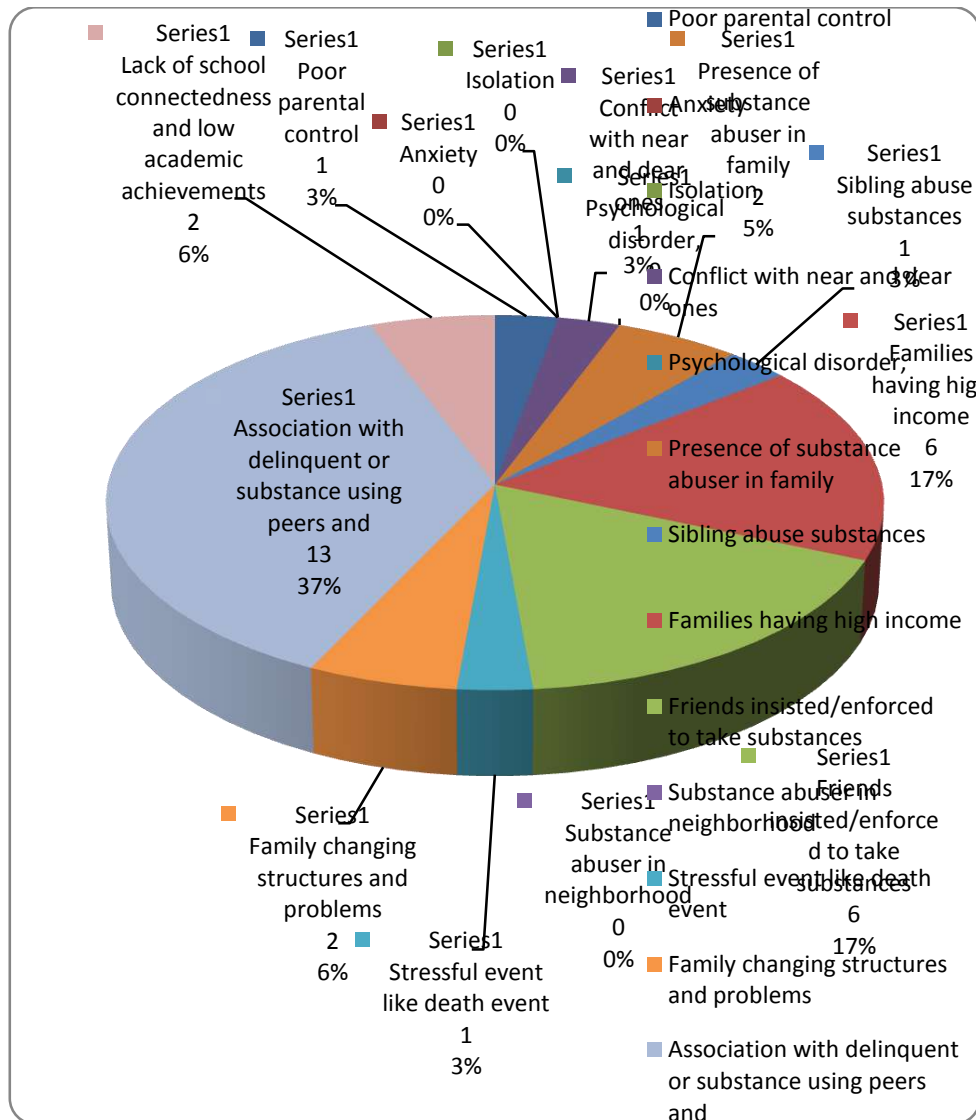
- **Source of data collection**

Data is mostly of primary in nature as the researcher directly interacts with the clients of New Life Foundation, Silchar. Data was also collected from secondary data sources which include books, journals, newspaper, both published and unpublished book, magazine, international, national and state records, reports and documents etc

Discussions

Higher the monthly household income, higher the chances of substance abuse among the clients was observed in this study, which is similar to the study conducted in Saudi Arabia.(Al-Musa HM, 2006).This could be due to higher access to money among adolescents among households with higher income

Picture representing percentage wise distribution of the factors contributing to substance abuse among the clients of Silchar, New Life Foundation



The present study shows that 17% of them belong to families having income more than Rs. 30,000 per months. It was also observed that peer pressure (friends insist to take substance) was associated with more than 37% more likely to abuse substances among the clients. It is the highest among the studied clients. Poor parental control, anxiety, isolation, conflict with near and dear ones, psychological disorder, presence of substance abuser in family, sibling abuse substances, substance abuser in close friend circle,

substance abuser in neighborhood and stressful event like death event, Family changing structures and problems, Association with delinquent or substance using peers and Lack of school connectedness and Low academic achievements has shared almost equally among the clients.

Friends insisted/enforced to take substances occupied the higher echelon in the percentage ranking almost equivalent to 17% of the total responses. Focus group discussion on the other factors was conducted and almost 90% of the clients said Availability of drugs or accessibility of drugs is one of the most common factors contributing to the increasing drug abuse during the present days. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' report in 2007, 22% of students in grades 9 through 12 admitted that they had been offered, sold, or given illegal drugs while attending schools. According to Majlis Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu, easy accessibility of drugs has been one of the current situations among the youths. It is obvious that, when accessibility of drugs is easy, chances of people trying out and consequently being addicted to drugs increased.

Since accessibility of drugs is an issue requiring immediate attention government and civil societies should focus on different actions and strategies that could be carried out to minimize or eliminate possible negative effects. Drug syndicates are becoming more creative in tempting people to be involved in drug abuse and consequently be addicted in order to obtain better income. When large number of people becomes addicted to drugs, these syndicates would not worry anymore about source of business, as in order to cope with addiction or to avoid the pain of withdrawal syndrome, drug addicts would try ways including illegal ones to obtain the drugs.

The easier communication and interaction among humans as a result of advanced technology, specifically internet, has been providing a diversity of benefits to human beings. Unfortunately, it is not without its disadvantages. In this case, in particular, internet has eased the transaction of drugs selling. Sales of drugs on net increase exposure and hence accessibility of drugs to non-drug users who might be tempted to later abuse drugs. Internet has been a popular tool for marketing and purchasing stuff including herbal dietary supplements. Among the herbal supplements sold on net, 48% has been found to be likened to illicit drugs such as marijuana and ecstasy. With just a click away, both first time drug user and chronic drug abuser are able to have drugs delivered to their door step. This is greatly favored by the individuals involved as both the sellers and the buyers get to maintain their anonymity. Furthermore, through internet, chronic drug abusers get to keep in contact with drug sellers to ensure continuous source of drugs.

In these days of borderless World, the World Wide Web acts as an agent for people especially the youth to get to learn more about drugs easily. This is especially awful when some drug abusers share in forum or their own websites and blogs regarding their positive experiences with drugs. Some feature tips on where to get a particular drugs, the different ways of ingesting the particular drug in order to obtain different levels of satisfactions, descriptions on the momentary happiness or “high” as a result of the drug, information on the duration of the effects, possible side effects and so forth. Undeniably, there is no dearth of websites advocating anti-drug messages by communicating the negative impacts of drug abuse and other related information. Unfortunately, when one hit the net in the name of drugs on a search engine such as Google, as compared to these advocating anti-drug messages websites, those advocating drug abuses directly or indirectly are most likely to be retrieved. This being the true case scenario, one can assume the havoc it would cause to the society if not treated on time. Literally Barak Valley is sitting on a time bomb ready to explode anytime.

Conclusions

Substance abuse was significantly high among friends who insisted/enforced to take substances. There is also positive association with individuals from families having high monthly income, time spent on internet more than one hour, no control over internet by others, Poor parental control, anxiety, isolation, conflict with near and dear ones, psychological disorder, presence of substance abuser in family, sibling abuse substances, substance abuser in close friend circle, friends insisted/enforced to take substances, substance abuser in neighborhood and stressful event like death event, Family changing structures and problems, and Lack of school connectedness and Low academic achievements. It may be concluded that Focus group discussion on the other factors was conducted and almost 90% of the clients said Availability of drugs or accessibility of drugs is one of the most common factors contributing to the increasing drug abuse during the present days especially amongst the clients of Silchar, New life foundation.

Some of the prominent roles for social workers could be to serve as a therapist, as therapists are professionally trained in the use of therapy. They can serve as a sounding board, as well as a haven for professional advice and direction. The social workers can be roped in as care managers and service providers working directly with clients and can be a great help working in detoxification centers and major awareness generational activities.

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Mat Making for Livelihood in Assam: Prospects and Retrospect

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ABSTRACT

The handicraft sector in India provides a significant number of employment in India after Agriculture. Handicrafts as a livelihood require minimal resources if compared with other sectors. However, despite employment generations, the Handicraft sector is lacking because of its inability to secure various resources that are essential for generating sustainable livelihood. In this article the emphasis has been given to understand the Strength and Weakness of Mat Making as a livelihood. Mat is one of the various popular handicrafts found in Assam and generate livelihood of a vast segments of population in the State. The article is based on the findings of a study conducted on the livelihood of Mat Makers in Barak Valley of Assam.

INTRODUCTION

In Assam, more than 63 percent of the primary workforce engage in agriculture and allied activities. Agriculture has remained the primary source of livelihood for most of the population in Assam, and it reflects in the major festivals of Assam, which are agriculturally based. However, with the increase in household size and decrease in land accessibility, agriculture is becoming more challenging to opt as the household livelihood.

However, the Handloom and Handicraft Industry of Assam provides maximum employment after major crop cultivation in the agriculture sector. For many, it provides supplementary income to seasonal agricultural workers. Artisanal activities do not need any formal education and use the family as a unit of production. Artisans use existing skills and locally available resources without disturbing the cultural and social balance. The handloom and Handicraft Industry of Assam provides the maximum employment after major crop cultivation in the agriculture sector. Assam is known for its rich,

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glorious tradition of making handloom and handicraft products. Various Handloom Handicraft product of both decorative and utilitarian purpose has been a significant employment source for a significant number of populations in Assam. Among all the handicrafts in Assam, Cane and Bamboo Based handicraft are very common. From the very ancient time, Cane and bamboo have been recognized as the most important works because of their ecological, cultural and economic upliftment for the people of Assam (Handique, 2010). The Cane and bamboo-based livelihood are generally of low capital but labor-intensive. Hence add as a sound employment generation and better income distribution to the people. The advent of available natural resources in general and the Cane and bamboo in particular give a scope of Cane based livelihood to rural masses.

However, the domestic Cane and bamboo-based industry have been held back owing to a wide variety of issues in its value chains, including regulatory barriers to cultivation and harvesting of Cane, challenges in its procurement, poor market linkage, lack of credit, absence of new skills and poor technology applications. With lack of skills, money, credit, infrastructure, poor health, absence of owned raw material on one hand, and exploitation of traders and middleman, artisans have to work more without achieving betterment in their lives.

Mat weaving is one of the most chosen occupations among the artisans of Barak Valley, Assam. There is an abundance of Cane in North East India. But in Barak Valley, many artisans use a particular type of Cane, locally called *Murtha* (*Cyperussps.*), to weave mats. Mat weavers are found in all three districts of Barak Valley, which are Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. For most conventional mat weavers, weaving is their primary occupation. For female members of the family, it comprises the predominant portion of their daily work. They spend most of their time in mat weaving, where male members of the family engage in other types of unorganized work.

METHODOLOGY

The article is based on the primary data collected through field survey and structured household interview schedule, and the unit of analysis is the household. The quantitative data is substantiated with qualitative data. Personal Interview of the households has been done to understand the process, needs and problems in mat making. In the study, the three districts of Barak Valley, Assam, have been taken, where a total number of fifty households were taken from each districts of the study. The Sustainable

Livelihood framework has been used to understand the livelihood pattern of mat makers.

DEMOGRAPHY OF MAT MAKERS

The average age of the respondent is 34.55, where the minimum and maximum age of the respondents are nine and a hundred years, respectively.

In the study, 49% of the total Household members taken, are Male, and 51% are Female.

Most (33.2%) of the respondents were found to have educational qualification of Lower Primary (class I to Class V) followed by Upper primary (Class VI to Class VIII) (20.1%), illiterate (never attended any formal school) (18.5%) and High school (Class IX to Class X) (17.2%). Very small number of them have educational qualification of and above Higher Secondary (2.6%) as well as graduation (.5%).

Almost half of the households have a joint family system leaving the other half as having a nuclear family system. The average household size is found to be 5.01 members. 46% of the households belong to OBC (Other Backward Caste) category, whereas 20.7% to SC (Scheduled Caste). 33.3% of the households belong to MOBC. 66.7% of the Households belong to Hindu Religion, whereas 33.3% of the respondents belong to Islam Religion.

MAT MAKING PROCESS

The process involved in Mat Making is laborious, painful, rigorous, time-consuming, which yield significantly less income. It requires the maximum number of household members to engage in order to better productivity. All the households follow an apparent division of labor regarding the various Mat Making processes. But there are exceptions in this process for certain groups of households. The differences among these diverse groups in regards to the process of mat making is explained below

Cane Cultivation

The very first steps in any Mat Making process starts with the cultivation of Cane. The Cane for Mat making are grown in the low lying areas of the valley. It is also grown in small number in those areas where Mat Makers don't reside abundantly. However, it is found that Mat Makers reside predominantly more in those areas where Cane are grown abundantly. Nevertheless, most of the Mat Makers don't produce a sufficient amount of Cane, irrespective of their types instead; they buy Cane from others. Unavailability of own land for cane cultivation makes the productivity of Mat

significantly less. Mat makers earn very little after selling in the absence of their own raw material. Those people who have land for cane cultivation are comparatively well off. However, there are very few families who own a large amount of land for cane cultivation. Mat makers, therefore, buy Cane from others.

Cane Collection & Preparing Cane for weaving

For making Mat, the Cane need to be split into little slivers. Generally, men in the family cut Cane into little slivers. It is time-consuming, and the men need to constantly sit for larger time to split the Cane. After the splitting of Cane into slivers, these need to be dried up in the sun to reduce in size. All of these are actually performed by men in the family.

However, all households don't have healthy and skilled male members who can split Cane. In the case of a skilled male member's death, collecting and splitting Cane by female members becomes very difficult. Moreover, some households choose Mat making as a secondary occupation because the male members are not skilled enough to prepare slivers for weaving. Thus these households with no skilled male members need the already prepared slivers for mat weaving. Trader also stock the prepared slivers for using during flood due to submerging of all areas, collecting Cane become impossible for a while during monsoon. The mat makers also stock the slivers for emergencies as they can be sold at any point of time during a family crisis. Demand for slivers thus creates new work opportunities for people. There are some families who only prepare slivers and donot engage in mat weaving.

Weaving Mat

In the study, it is found that women in the households engage in mat weaving predominantly. Except for few households, there is a clear division of labor in regards to mat weaving. The study found that the time of involvement ranges from 1 hour to 12 hours a day. Women provide substantial means of income even if the male members of the households don't engage in preparing slivers or even remain unemployed. In those cases, women collect processed Cane (slivers) and weave Mat for those mat makers who save prepared slivers. By weaving Mat for other households, they earn a fixed weaving charge. Collecting sliver provides opportunities to those mat makers (women weavers), who cannot collect Cane and split Cane. Women have so much importance in Mat making that in need of extra manpower in weaving, the households sometimes engage other Households' women in mat weaving by providing Slivers. Thus, the system helps both households who can

prepare extra sliver but cannot weave Mat because of the lack of women in the household and those households where the women cannot weave Mat because of the absence of skilled men in the household.

Marketing

It is found that most of the Mat Makers sell their Mat to traders. Very few engage in self Marketing of the Mat to the market.

PROSPECTS

Every livelihood seeks different kinds of Livelihood Resources. E.g. Agriculture and Allied activities require less formal education and skills, where the service sector requires skilled employees. However, the service sectors require less natural capitals, such as land and forest products, where Agriculture and Allied sectors require natural capital to generate livelihood. Like other artisans in India, Mat Makers are traditionally skilled and do not require many resources to earn their livelihood. Households are the units of production and each of the members of the households participate and responsible for the livelihood generation.

ABSENCE OF MAJOR VULNERABILITY IN LIVELIHOOD/ CONSTANT DEMAND OF MAT

Livelihood cannot be developed in the place of constant vulnerability. When work remains available throughout the year, people adopt and accept that particular work as their livelihood. The continuous demand for Mat throughout the year lead to the development of Mat making as a livelihood.

Mat making is different from most of the other artisanal activities. The cheaper, well designed and broadly available industrial products have replaced most of the traditional artistic products. However, Mat being an artistic product could not be replaced by other plastic mat owing to the fact that people always prefers to use Cane made Mat as it is more comfortable to use during summer season. Moreover, Mat has great cultural significance. Mat, which is locally known as *Shital pati* are rampantly used in marriages, funerals and other social ceremonies.

FAVOURABLE CLIMATE

Natural capital remains the most essential capital in the rural area where the other capitals are scarce. People in the rural area significantly remain dependent on nature to earn their livelihood. Mat making as a livelihood generation activity is not different.

1. Favorable climate for cane cultivation: Cane is the only raw material used for mat production. Thus in the absence of it, mat making is impossible. The present mat makers presume that their ancestors might have settled there because of this very nature of land and environment. The low-lying land and abundance of rainfall make the growth of Cane very favorable without any extra effort. As Cane needs moist and even survive even if submerged in water. Thus those people, who have any land, mostly use it for cane cultivation.

MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF HUMAN CAPITAL

In Mat making more the number of household members, more Mat can be produced. Mat making is not possible in the absence of human capital, and therefore a household with mat making as their primary occupation uses this human capital to its fullest. Even a household with Mat making as their secondary occupation utilizes women to earn their livelihood. Therefore, human capital is the most readily available capital in the process of mat making. Livelihood can be earned even without education and training as family play the role to provide training from a very early age.

1. Percentage of Employment is more: Mat making engages maximum number of household members compared to other occupation. Where mat making employs a larger section of women in the household, it also provides security to women during the absence of male members. In the absence of male members, any household may suffer from no income and food insecurity. However, mat making by employing women has secured their income. Though the income would be lesser in the absence of male members, there are still very few chances of starvation. We can see that among 623 household members, more than 83.14 percent are involved in earning a livelihood. It means these 518 household members contribute to their household income either with their primary occupation or secondary occupation. Out of 518 employed respondents, 71.62% percent of respondents are engaged in Mat making as their primary occupation.

2. Mat making is the secondary occupation of the majority of individuals

It can be noticed that out of 623 household members, 88.3 percent don't engage in any other secondary occupation, and 9.1% have their secondary occupation as Mat Making.

Category	Percentage
No Secondary Occupation	88.3
Mat Making as Secondary Occupation	9.1
Other Occupation	2.6
Total	100

3. Women's Contribution: In mat making, each and every member's participation is needed. Mat Making follows a division of labor, and everyone performs different sorts of work to complete a mat for selling. From cane harvesting to mat selling, the availability and participation of household members determine the outcome of the product. More the household members, more Mat can be produced. In mat making, women are considered very important as most male members in the households cannot weave Mat. Even in the absence of any female members, male members opt for splitting slivers but not weaving as the means of livelihood. If the total cost of a particular size of Mat is considered, weaving a mat cost a little less than one-third of the total selling price. In the absence of any female, the male members give the Mat to other women for weaving. When given to other women for weaving, the male members lose one-third of the selling price. In the study, mat making is the primary occupation of 88.66% of the total employed female household members. One respondent said, *"Both men and women in the household are important. However, it is true that without women, there would have been less profit in mat making as the household save the cost of weaving by others"*. The respondent added, *"We are very poor people and it is difficult for men in the family to solely carry out the family expenses. Women can earn extra one hundred Rupees per product if they weave. Otherwise, we had to spend this one hundred rupees on weaving by others. Therefore, women are necessary to weave Mat."* Some respondents assume their poor economic status due to not having any weaver in their own family and explained, *"Women are significant for mat making. My wife cannot weave Mat that's why we are facing economic hurdles."*

There are some instances where family members have either discontinued or reduced Mat making to a considerable extent. One of those respondents stated, *"After the demise of my brother, my father and mother became sick and discontinued. I don't want to continue as it involves hardworking and even after working for eight to nine hours, it is difficult to arrange money for daily expenditure. Moreover, there are no women in the household for weaving"* Another aged mother stated, *"My daughter got*

married, which has decreased the mat production. Now I am the only person in the household who can weave mat”.

4. Importance of family in transferring the skills of Mat making: Mat Making is the first lesson the children learn in their lives. Various reasons like environment, necessity, absence of any other occupation bound them to learn Mat making at their very young age. Most of the girls start learning Mat making in their 8th or 9th year of age. Mat making is generally performed as a household occupation. It means each and every household members, irrespective of their age, sex, participate in mat making. In mat making households, one of the very first things which a child encounter is the environment of mat making. A girl child when reaches ten years of age, she becomes acquainted with each and every step of mat making. Besides, the economic necessity of the household tries to find any helping hand available, thereby sometimes pressuring the children to participate in mat making.

Weaving Learning Age

Category	Minimum Age	Mean Age	Maximum Age
Female members of family	7	12.19	40

Unlike girl children, boy children learn Mat making skills at a later age compared to girls. However, the trainer of any children, irrespective of gender, are their household members. If a generation of mat makers don't engage in mat making, the later generations don't usually learn Mat making as their livelihood. The skills of mat making are learned at a very young age when other family members make Mat. By the time a boy child becomes an adult, he already has gathered the skills of mat production. It is not possible to learn the skill when a person becomes responsible for the daily income generation to meet the expenditure of his households. *“Though mat making was the traditional occupation of my family but my father did not know the work properly. Therefore I could not learn mat making. At present, I neither have any person to teach me Mat making nor I have time to learn it from anyone else as I have to run my household expenditure also,”* said a respondent.

There are other instances where after the sudden death of his father, the son did not have the time to learn skills of mat making as learning new skills does not provide the daily bread of the household. Therefore he chooses the most available livelihood option, which is a daily wage earner. His brother explained, *“After the sudden death of my father, my younger brother needed to be engaged in other economic activities. He was very young at the*

time of my father's death, and that's why my father could not teach him to work associated with mat weaving. Therefore he diversified."

IMPORTANCE OF MAT MAKING IN REDUCING SHOCKS AND SEASONALITY:

Economic capital helps to gain human capital like education as well as health services. The households where mat making is not the primary occupation, Mat Making helps to reduce shocks during sudden social responsibilities like marriages. It also reduces the burden of other earning members of the households in the absence of any other diversified income sources.

1. Mat making helps during crisis to those households where Mat Making is not the Primary Occupation: Mat making is not the primary occupation for many of the respondents. Moreover, their portion of earning from mat making is also less than those mat makers for whom Mat Making is the Primary Occupation. However, this small percentage of income is as important as the income from other Primary sources of income. Mat making helps the household to face a crisis. One mat maker stated, *"I had to be hospitalized for three months last year. Weaving Mat helped during that time. Besides household expenditures are also carried out by the income of mat making."* Another man praised his wife for contributing to household income. He stated, *"Women in my household save the money from mat making. Sometimes during the time of need, it helps running household's expenses. But the saving from mat making helped me most during the time of my daughter's wedding. A total of thirty five thousands rupees could be arranged from the saving of mat making."* For those households where the primary occupation of the household is remittances, money earned by mat making reduce economic stresses. One of such respondents quoted, *"Son cannot send remittances on time, so we are dependent upon mat making."* Most of the households with primary occupation as daily wage earners stress the importance of Mat making in their household. A respondent cited, *"It is difficult for men in the family to get job daily as they are daily wage earner. So, mat making helps in running daily household expenditure. During floods, getting job daily for men remain uncertain. Without Mat making, the family will starve."* For some households, earning from mat making helps to repay the loan as cited by a respondent, *"If I earn money from mat weaving it can be used during a crisis. My son got sick at that time I could use that money. Money from mat weaving can also be used to pay the weekly instalment in Bandhan (Micro Credit Institution). My husband is not paid on a regular basis during that time money earned from Mat weaving help."* Mat making helps in repaying the debt; it also opens up the avenues to receive credit

facility. Among mat making households, the most accessible source of credit is from the traders against the promise to weave a certain amount of Mat. A woman explained this correctly, *“My husband does not always get a job. When in need, I can borrow up to one thousand rupees from traders, which helps us earn our bread.”* For many where agriculture is uncertain, mat making and other diversified occupation help running household expenditure. A respondent quoted, *“Earlier, my husband worked as a farmer. After our four buffalos died, we did not have any savings to continue farming, so he moved to Silchar (nearby town) and started working as a daily labor. Mat making helped us during that period.”*

RETROSPECTS

Though Mat making a constant source of livelihood, it has its own shortcomings. These limitations halt the mat maker from progress in all spacers of their lives. The shortcoming can be categorized as the absence of various capitals in a livelihood process.

INSUFFICIENT NATURAL CAPITAL

The distribution of natural resources is not even to each and every mat makers. Though Cane can easily grow because of favorable climate, but mat makers hardly possess any land to grow Cane. Unavailability of land for cane cultivation reduces their income to a large extend.

Natural Capitals are more vulnerable as compared to other types of capital in a livelihood. E.g. Flood and drought can seriously influence the production of raw materials, making the production limited in a certain period of the year. Besides, Flood can directly impact people's health as flood brings other diseases, which can ultimately lead to a shortage of manpower to earn their livelihood.

1. Insufficient land for cane cultivation: The Cane produced by mat makers in their own land is not sufficient. The mat makers grow land primarily as their boundary fence, in the low lying areas of their home and don't cultivate in a more considerable amount because of the absence of land.

Only 33.3 percent of the households confirmed their availability of land for cane cultivation. The average possessions of land for cane cultivation has been mentioned as 16.28 Kata (11,721.6 sq. ft.) However, with this bit of area of land, mat making cannot be carried out from their own production of Cane. More than 60 percent of the households who cultivate Cane cannot even manage their mat production for five months of a year.

2. Absence of Raw material during monsoon: Cane cannot be grown in the dry land. It requires wetland, which means it can only be grown in low lying areas where water remains stagnant throughout the year. It also means that there will be some time between when everything will be submerged because of the heavy monsoon. Artisans have to bear the loss if they want to gain in the rest of the year. Though flood does not kill the cane plant however harvesting the Cane become impossible. Mat makers have to go through hardship as they need to minimize or completely stop the mat weaving. As the Cane have to be brought from a long distance, it increases the raw material price. One respondent replied, *“If the cane remains submerged, sliver splitting get affected. We remain dependent upon other’s cane. Sometimes we have to travel far from our place to collect cane. It increases our production cost”*. Some mat maker who generally sell their own Mat to market after production starts to collect other’s Mat for selling in the market. *“We cannot weave mat. So we collect mat from others and sell those mat to the neighboring villages,”* said the respondents.

RIGOROUS USE OF HUMAN CAPITAL WITHOUT FOCUSING ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

Human Capital is the most essential asset to start a livelihood. Human Capitals include Education, good health and skills of each of the members of the household. Without manpower there can be no livelihood. But all cannot choose any livelihood as all are not equally talented, healthy, skillful and knowledgeable. So based on one’s opportunities to avail good health, skill, knowledge, people choose different livelihood. Human capital can be improved by investing in the education, training, skill development and health. It has also been implied that human capital can also be increased by acquiring new skills by engaging in different activities.

Among mat makers while negligible emphasis is given on the development of human capital in health, education, and skill development, it demands laborious involvement of human capital. Hardship can have a direct impact on the Human capital of the livelihood. While it reduces the efficiency of the mat makers, it also reduces the longevity of human capital. Moreover, earning very little hampers human capital development as money cannot be invested in improving human capital like education, skills development, and health services.

1. Absence of training and Product Diversification

Although mat makers are skillful and inherited from their ancestors but with the changing demand and market, it is needed to understand many

entrepreneur skills. From design to management, they need to develop these by attending training and workshops. But unfortunately, most of them have never attended any such training. Most of them do not possess adequate information about any training programme. Only 1% of the total household members have received training. Ninety-nine per cent of the household members never received any training to upgrade their skills.

Those Mat Makers who have received training don't want to diversify because of the absence of Market and Financial Capital. One respondent stated, *"I can produce (new product), but what should I do if I can't sell the finished product. Moreover, other items take longer to produce which I cannot afford as my family is daily bread earner."* Here, the respondent mentioned two very important reasons: absence of demand and inability of mat makers to wait for a longer time to get the selling price. Another respondent stated, *"Only training is not sufficient if the market is unavailable. We carried out loss during our training as mat production was at halt."*

2. Sickness increases the risk of losing livelihood: 40 percent of the households had one or more person suffered from prolonged illness. Of which more are female than male, children of the households.

Health ailment directly influences Mat's production, especially in households where household members are less in number. One woman described, *"I am the only person in the household who weaves Mat. But after my surgery about six years back, it became difficult for me to weave. So weaving in my household is decreasing."* Old age and its associated diseases are reasons for discontinuing Mat making for many. Aged people cannot spend a more extended time in Mat making. *"Because of Old age, I cannot engage in Mat making for a prolonged period"*. Some traditional household, where mat making used to be the primary source of livelihood, have now diversified their income because of health issues. An elderly boy reasoned, *"Good Health is essential for mat production. Because of illness of my father and mother we diversified to other occupation."* Moreover, There are some households where because of sickness, household members are found to be diversified by migrating to other places. *"After my illness, my son was bound to do other jobs. Therefore he migrated to Bangalore"*. As known, mat making requires a more number of family members; therefore, the son migrated.

3. Hardship for earning livelihood: Though Mat making increases earning livelihood, it demands hardship. Earning livelihood in mat making is impossible without the constant engagement of household members in the

entire process of mat making. From harvesting to weaving, it takes a more significant amount of time and dedication. *“The total procedure to weave the Mat involves hardworking. There is not certain of places to collect raw materials. Sometimes we have to walk extra miles to collect the raw materials. We have to go for cane collection, ignoring the monsoon, jungle, water, dirt and other barriers. Those who have money can engage other people to collect the Cane. However, we can’t even engage other people because of the absence of money. Men in the households have to constantly engage in cane collection, cane splitting, making slivers etc, where women in the households remain engaged in mat weaving for the whole day without any break. After being engaged in mat production, our family hardly can earn one hundred and fifty rupees from mat production in a day. That is why the mat production in our family is decreasing. Member in our households is discontinuing mat production. And mat production is not possible in case of absence of human resources,”* A respondent stated.

A women in Mat making household remain engaged in activities almost the whole day. In the study, the average hours of engagement for women in mat weaving are found to be 4.73 hours, and it varies from 1 hour to 12 hours a day depending on the necessity of the household. The more the economic necessity, the longer time of engagement. Moreover, women also have to perform other sorts of household chores. All these household chores and mat making makes the day of mat makers very hard-hitting. A middle-aged woman stated, *“Back start aching just after staring weaving. We have to weave in constant pain.”* Another weaver reasoned Mat making as very crucial for her households daily bread earning. She explained, *“I sometimes have headache due to constant weaving. However, I cannot stop weaving as weaving a mat can earn me one hundred rupees which is crucial for running my daily expenditure.”*

INABILITY TO IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Financial capital denotes the economic flows and stock which are needed for production as well as consumption. Financial capital are not capital; they only help in promoting other forms of capital. While access to financial services is beneficial for livelihood generation, continuous indebtedness is harmful, especially when no development on the lives of mat makers are taking place.

Adequate access to financial capital and good earning are interrelated. While earning needs financial capital investment, investing financial capital

is also dependent on good earning. Mat makers neither have access to any good financial capital nor have good earning.

1. Continuous Indebtedness: Being indebted is part and parcel of the lives of artisans. The money for each and every expenditure made by the artisans in their daily lives come from one or other traders, middleman. The whole business of mat production depends on the advance money landing. Loan may be taken for a week, a month or even for half a year. The whole life of any artisan spent on repayment of loan which they take continuously one after another, throughout their lives. The wheel of development for them runs in the reverse direction.

Taking credit is one of the crucial aspects of Mat making process. It implies a lot about the economy of the mat makers. Mat making as a livelihood is primarily determined by credit availability at the beginning of the Mat making process. If we see the responses of the mat makers, 66.7 percent of them take credit. During the time of data collection, it was found that 66 percent of them were indebted. Taking credit in advance has its own drawbacks as this reduces the price of Mat during selling. About 44.2 percent of the households who take credit in advance have reported the influence of taking advance credit on the finished product price. The traders who provide advance money to mat makers decreases the cost of Mat when purchasing from them.

Mat makers generally take credit even before they start mat making. The amount of credit is usually not enormous, but this is important for running their household expenditure. This explains how poor they are to take care of their daily needs. They take this credit from traders to promise to repay their loan by making Mat and selling those to them. After repaying the loan, credit is taken again for maintaining household expenses and buying raw material to start mat production again. And the cycle of taking loan and repayment continues. During any sudden crisis, like a health issue, death of a family member, social functions like marriage and funerals in their family, they go into debt for a longer time. Flood is another reason for indebtedness to them. During the flood, raw material availability becomes scarce as the flooded water submerges most places. Having no other source of income, mat makers take credit from traders, which they have to repay by selling Mat to them.

Without access to any formal financial institutions, mat makers deprive them of taking loans, which will lead them to take loans at a very high level of interest rate. Because of the lack of financial capital, the artisans

take advance money from the merchants. It results in a lack of bargaining power at the time of selling the products. Because of agreement with the merchants, they cannot sell the products to other markets, making them bound to sell the products to merchants only.

2. Very Minimum Income from Mat making: The income from mat making is very least compared with other income sources. An average family size of 5 members cannot earn 120 rs in a day. *“Even a daily wage earner earns more than 250 Rupees per day; however Mat maker cannot earn rupees one hundred and fifty per day,”* said a respondent. Because of this very low income, some of the traditional mat makers have started diversifying their occupation. If we see the income from Mat making in a household, it is only 998.75 Rupees per week.

PHYSICAL CAPITAL IS ALSO INFLUENCED BY FINANCIAL CAPITAL:

While inadequate access to financial capital has its own drawback in developing the financial capital for livelihood, it also controls the development of other capital like physical capital. Mat makers can't avail marketing facilities because of their inefficiency to use financial capital to develop physical capital.

1. Self-Marketing is impossible without sound income and saving: Among the total one hundred and fifty households, only eight households sell the Mat directly to the market. Other mat makers don't market the product personally. A respondent has described the reason for not personally marketing the product. It says, *“A household needs at least three to four working individuals to sell the mats in the market. When we sell the product to the merchants, it does not include cutting edges, extra slivers, etc., of the Mat. However, to sell the product to the market requires a full furnished Mat without any extra sliver, and edges are well-cut. It takes a longer time to process the Mat to sell directly to the customer, and we cannot wait for a longer time to sell the product as we are daily bread earner. As we have only two members in our household, it would take a longer time to process Mat. For self-marketing manpower are needed to process the Mat after weaving, weaving a large number of mats are required.”* Another respondent stated shortage of manpower as the reason for discontinuing self-marketing. *“Earlier, when I had six daughters, the production was more as compared to today. Besides, my daughters were six in numbers to spare time to sell the product directly to the local market. We cannot sell the Mat in Silchar as we girl cannot go to Silchar for selling mat”,* the respondent stated.

The problem of manpower and bulk production could also be avoided if the household members can buy some time to save the daily production in order to sell in large quantity. However, being poor, they are dependent on daily income from mat making. They cannot save any number of Mat for selling in future. They have to sell that one finished product to the traders to earn their daily bread. For self-marketing, one or two items is not sufficient and need bulk of Mat which they cannot save to sell in the market altogether. Because they always are in immediate need of money, which can only be availed by selling their only Mat to the merchant. However, constant indebtedness to traders bound them to sell the finished product locally and lead a hand to mouth life.

WAY FORWARD:

1. Urgent need of financial Assistance: Financial assistance can solve a lot of challenges and improve their income significantly. Among all the issues that financial assistance can improve, the most important are preventing lifelong indebtedness, improving income, encouraging self-marketing, earning more money, and increasing the price of Mat by increasing its demand. *“With financial assistance, we can buy and stock a large amount of raw material to be weaved during monsoon as it is difficult to avail raw material during monsoon.”* a respondent quoted. Financial assistance can prevent indebtedness which is a perennial phenomenon in the lives of mat makers. Secondly, financial assistance can improve the ability of mat makers to buy raw material who generally can not buy raw material because of lack of saving and therefore take advance money from traders, which again negatively affect their income. A respondent described, *“Because of unavailability of money we can’t buy raw material which is only available to buy in bundles. But we don’t have that much money to buy a large amount of raw materials at a time. Financial assistance can help us in this regard.”* Another respondent quoted, *“If we get a loan then we can stock the product. Stocking our product is not possible at present as we have to carry our daily expenditure. Stocking the products will increase the demand of the product, so the price.”* It, therefore, can be understood that access to financial assistance can increase the selling price of Mat, thus automatically improving their income. Lastly, financial assistance can help the mat makers to market their products personally. Mat makers cannot market the Mat personally because of their inability to sell the Mat in bundles as one or two Mat cannot be sent for marketing because it demands more products at a time. Mat makers are daily bread earner and cannot stock Mat to sell in bundle. All the

reasons mentioned above damages the income of the mat maker. Therefore improving these can help mat makers earn a better income.

2. Providing market linkage: The mat makers have pointed out the absence of a proper market as one reason for not preferring to self-market. The selling price is more if the Mat is sold in the nearby town market; however, not being paid immediately after bearing the extra transportation charges stops them from selling the Mat in the nearby market. The respondents explained, *“Generally, there is no proper market for selling the Mat in Silchar. We have to rely on other’s shop for displaying our products. Most of the times, we are not paid fully and have to wait to get the selling cost of the product as the shop keeper doesn’t pay us the sold cost right at selling. So we stopped selling in the shops in Silchar.”*

The mat makers sell the finished Mat to local traders, where the traders reduce one-third of the selling price. The selling price of Mat in the nearby town is slightly higher than local traders, but still, they cannot enjoy the actual selling price of the Mat. While sold in the nearby town, having no proper market bound them to sit on others’ shop and share their profit. One respondent rejoined, *“We would be benefitted if any Govt. NGO open retail outlet to sell the Mat in retail amount.”*

3. Taking the initiative to facilitate raw material: A significant share of profit has to be spent on buying raw material. There is no institution who can regulate the production and distribution of raw material. The mat makers rely entirely on traders to purchase raw material. Moreover, retail purchasing of raw material is not possible as it is sold in a bundle. Not every mat makers are capable of buying raw material in bundle. The more difficult is monsoon time when raw material becomes scarce, and therefore Mat is stopped producing. *“If Raw material is managed and provided by Government, it would be beneficial to us”* A respondent answered.

4. Encouraging new entrepreneurs among mat makers to develop diversified mat products: Government Organizations and NGOs can encourage talented mat makers to start new business avenues where diversified mat products can be sold throughout the world. Developing entrepreneurial skills among a few mat makers will help bring new skills among the other mat makers to make diversified mat products and marketing of those products.

CONCLUSION

Mat making is the only livelihood option for many households without having any secondary occupation. However, because of hard work, absence of marketing and skill development training, low income and continuous indebtedness, some people are moving from their traditional occupation. Work towards giving access to credit by govt. Institutions, raw material, especially during floods, training to learn making diversified mat products, facilitating proper marketing not only for the Mat but also for other diversified mat products can improve the livelihood of mat makers.

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Parenting style and its associated behavioural problems among adolescent student

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent periods are often portrayed as stressful for both parents and adolescents. Adolescents undergo a number of developmental adjustments on their way to becoming adults. Parenting effectively during the adolescent period, requires a thorough understanding of these normative developmental changes. Parents can benefit from an understanding that how they parent, or their parenting style, provides a basis for many healthy developmental outcome during adolescence. Understanding the different parenting styles and their impact on the parent adolescent relationship may help parents and adolescents navigate adolescences more smoothly.

Key words: Adolescence, behaviour, parenting styles, developmental adjustment.

Introduction

An adolescent may be best described as one who is not alone strange to others but also strange to himself or herself. It is because; an adolescent is marked by rapid physical changes, development of secondary sex characteristics, and concomitant psychological changes. The adolescents therefore strive for self-identity due to feelings of uncertainty and role ambiguity as they are neither children nor adults. They strive for recognition and independence and when denied they become rebellious and undergo stress and tension. In addition there is increased competition in school setting and the parental expectations increase with regard to the performance of the adolescents. During such a vulnerable state, adolescents require both support and direction to proceed with confidence to meet the demands from various fronts (Nirmala, P. D., and Dano, E. T., 2013).

Parenting styles create different social environments in the lives of children within the home. Many studies have investigated the effects of parenting style on children's emotional development and behaviour (Liem,

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J.H., et al, 2010; Pezzella, F.S., 2010; Schaffer, M., 2009; Steward, S.M., and Bond, M.H., 2002; Timpano, K.R., 2010).

The quality of the parent-child relationship is the foundation for every human's life and has great importance for all domains of development (McCollum, J.A., et al, 2001). Parental unconditional acceptance, respect, and democratic cooperation with the child are most beneficial (Gfroerer, K., et al, 2004) and are particularly vital for the course of the child's psychological and social growth. The experiences parents acquire from the demands of the children they tend to change (Malhas, D., and Abouni, K., 1997) and some parents shape their child according to their way of upbringing. As a result parents realize about the different styles of parenting. Consequently, they show different upbringing styles. These parenting styles can influence in molding children's personality and traits. The individuals behavior and personality development affected by what parenting style he/she receives from the parents and this in turn affects different areas of life of the person (Baumrind D, 1991).

Objectives of the study

- 1) To study the behavioural problems of school going adolescents of the study samples.
- 2) To study the parenting style and its associated behavioural problems of the study samples.

Materials and methods

A cross sectional study design was adopted in the present study. A sample of 100 school going adolescents were selected using convenient sampling technique with 50 samples each from the government and private school. The data were collected from four higher secondary schools situated in Imphal East-West districts of Manipur. Necessary permissions were taken from the school authority and they were explained thoroughly about the aim and procedures of the study that the research was mainly taken up to explore the behavioural problems among School going adolescents of Manipur. Study aims, interviewing procedures and methods for maintaining confidentiality was explained to each potential participant. Then, they were administered self-developed semi structure proforma for collecting the socio-demographic factors, Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (Child Form) to find out the different forms of parenting style involved by the parents and strength and difficulty questionnaire to assess the various dimensions of behavioural problems of adolescents.

Results

The finding was based on a primary samples of 100 school going adolescents of Higher secondary schools of Imphal East-West Districts of Manipur. Out of these, 50 samples each were recruited from Government and Private higher secondary schools. The findings were given below.

Table No. 1

Behavioural Problems of School going adolescents of the study samples

Overall behavioural problems	Frequency	Percentage
Absents	68	68
Presents	32	32
Total	100	100

Table No. 1: It was perceived from the table that out the total 100 samples, 68 samples were found to have no behavioural problems and the remaining 32 samples were found to have any forms of behavioural problems.

Table No. 2

Mean and Standard deviation of gender and behavioural problems

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	d.f.	p-value
male	18.08	9.68	1.665	98	0.099
female	15.20	6.97			

** t-test is highly significant at 0.01 levels

* t-test is significant at 0.05 levels

Table No. 2: It was witnessed from the table that the mean score of behavioural problems of male school going adolescents (mean = 18.08) were higher than that of the female counterpart (mean = 15.20). However, when applied t-test the variation showed no significant difference between behavioural problems and gender as manifest by p-value = 0.099.

Table No. 3**Mean and standard deviation of type of school management and behavioural problems**

Type of school management	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	d.f.	p-value
Private School	14.26	7.01	3.073	98	0.003**
Government school	19.38	9.46			

** t-test is highly significant at 0.01 levels

* t-test is significant at 0.05 levels

Table No. 3: It was observed from the table that the mean score of behavioural problems of adolescents studying in government school (mean = 19.38) were higher than that of adolescents studying in private school (mean = 14.26) and when applied t-test the variation showed highly significant difference between behavioural problems and the type of school management as manifest by p-value = 0.003. The finding revealed that adolescents studying in government schools were having more behavioural problems than the student studying in private schools.

Table No. 4**Values of Correlation between behavioural problems and parenting style**

Sub types of behavioural problems	Parenting style				
	Involvement	Positive	Poor monitoring	Inconsistent discipline	Corporal punishment
Hyperactivity	0.625**	-0.740**	0.139	0.193	0.246*
Emotional symptoms	0.579**	-0.682**	-0.114	0.234*	0.198*
Conduct problems	0.615**	-0.611**	0.088	0.053	0.193
Peer problems	0.669**	-0.640**	0.456**	-0.095	0.197*

**r-value is highly significant at 0.01 levels

* r-value is significant at 0.05 levels

Table No. 4: This table showed the coefficient correlation (r-value) between different subtypes of behavioural problems and various types of parenting style. Parents who had involved positive types of parenting style in bringing up their children showed negative correlation with all the subtypes of

behavioural problems such as hyperactivity (r-value = -0.740), emotional symptoms (r-value = -0.682), conduct problems (r-value = -0.611), and peer problems (r-value = -0.640). Regarding parents who involved involvement types of parenting showed positive correlation with all the subtypes of behavioural problems such as hyperactivity (r-value = 0.625), emotional symptoms (r-value = 0.579), conduct problems (r-value = 0.615), and peer problems (r-value = 0.669). In case of parents who opted poor monitoring parenting style was positively correlate with peer problems (r-value = 0.456) at 0.01 levels. It was also found that inconsistent discipline type of parenting style had positive correlation with emotional symptoms (r-value = 0.234) among school going adolescents. Parents involving corporal punishment type of parenting style also found positively correlate with hyperactivity (r-value = 0.246), emotional symptoms (r-value = 0.198) and peer problems (r-value = 0.197).

Discussion

The present study was carried out to find out the relationship between parenting styles and its associated behaviour problems among school going adolescents of Manipur. The study revealed that 32% of school going adolescents were found to have any form of behavioural problems. This finding was in similar line with a research conducted by Sushma B, et al 2013 in which 33.24% were having behavioural problems among adolescents. Another study conducted by Rambha P, et al in 2011 also indicated that the prevalence of behavioural and emotional problems in adolescents was found to be 30%. Regarding, male and female adolescents, no relationship was found on behavioural problems however, there was a relationship found between adolescents studying in government schools and private schools based on behavioural problems indicating that adolescents studying in government schools were more prone to develop behavioural problems. Further, Parents who had involved positive types of parenting style in bringing up their children showed negative correlation with all the subtypes of behavioural problems and parents who involved involvement types of parenting style showed positive correlation with all the subtypes of behavioural problems. This finding was supported by a study “Aimed to examine difference in adolescents’ behavioral problem among parenting styles” conducted by Nirmala, D.P., and Dano, E.T., 2013. In case of parents who opted poor monitoring parenting style was positively correlate with peer problems. It was also found that inconsistent discipline type of parenting style had positive correlation with emotional symptoms. Parents involving corporal punishment type of parenting style also found positively correlate

with hyperactivity, emotional symptoms and peer problems. This finding was supported by a study conducted by Shahla, A., et al, in 2011, indicated that significant correlation between Authoritarian and permissive type of parenting style along with the internalizing and externalizing behavioural problems.

Conclusion

This study throws some light on the type of parenting style which are used and its impact on adolescent's behavioural problems. The study concluded that an alarming number of adolescents suffer from emotional and behavioural problems which have their roots in the family environment i.e. parental involvement in rearing their children. So routine screening of psychosocial health of the adolescents are necessary for the improvement of their mental health and it is recommended that the high risk students should be send for counselling. The present findings may offer helpful information to educators, psychologist, psychiatrist, psychiatric social workers, policy makers, etc. to design appropriate strategies which lead to encourage parents to perform their child-rearing responsibilities efficiently and can create awareness among parents about the substantial influence of care giving on development.

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Health Care Facilities and Utilization of Services in Primary Health Centres of Manipur

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ABSTRACT

Background: Health care service is one of the most important services that we all need in our day to day lives. Primary Health Centre is one of the first contact point between the doctors and community and it is the backbone of the rural health care services under the primary health care. The health centre is manned by a medical officer, nurse and paramedical staff; it has four to six beds covering a population of 20000 in the hilly, tribal, desert areas and 30000 populations in the plain areas (IPHS, 2012). **Aims and Objectives:** The present paper attempts to find out the conditions of existing health infrastructures, availability of health services and mode of utilization by the common population resided at the far flung areas of undivided Chandel district. **Materials and Methods:** A semi structured interview schedule was used to collect primary data and various secondary data such as government reports, articles and journals were used to get information for the proposed of study. A multistage sampling was adopted to identify the district and blocks of the district in which Chandel district was identify for field of study and a sample size of 300 was selected for the study. The period for collecting data and analysis was from 2015 to 2019. **Results:** The entire works indicates that all the existing Primary Health Centres of undivided Chandel district are functioning at the government building. Drugs and Medicines were available at the Primary Health Centres and age group of 25-29 years were the majority patients who availed the services available at the Primary Health Centres. **Conclusion:** It is concluded that the Primary Health Centres are smoothly functioning with all necessary services being provided and availed by all categories of age group irrespective of young or old. It has also observed that there was no issues of discriminations or abused so far at the primary health centres, the only problem faced by the patients is that those patients resided at the far flung areas has to arranged transportation facilities which are not easily available at their disposal. It was also found out that ASHA workers were playing a vital role in bridging the gaps between the Community and Health centres and by disseminating information on the availability of health care services at Health Centres.

Key Words: Primary Health Care, Primary Health Centre, Infrastructure, Utilization

Introduction

Chandel district is one of hill districts of Manipur located at the southern most part of the state sharing a border with Myanmar in the east and south, Churachandpur district and Thoubal district in the west and Ukhrul district in the north. It has an area of 3313 sq.km with a total population of 144,028 (Census of India, 2011). It is located about 64 Km away from Imphal and the national highway 39 Passes through this beautiful district. It is one of the most backward districts of Manipur as in 2006 Ministry of Panchayati Raj named Chandel as one of the country's 250 most backward districts out of 640 and was also identified as Aspirational district by the government of India among the 117 districts in India during the launched of Transformation of Aspirational districts on January 2018 by Honourable Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi. Chandel district undivided(Census, 2011) is situated near the Golden triangle being inhabited by different Tribes and Communities, the prominent tribes inhabiting the district are Anals, Marings, Thadous, Lamkangs, Zous, Moyons, Monsangs, Chothes, Koms, Aimols, Tarous, etc. there are also other communities like Meiteis, Meitei-Muslims, Nepalis, Tamils, Biharis and Punjabis in smaller numbers as compared to the dominant Tribes. There are five sub-divisions in Chandel district namely Chandel, Chakpikarong, Khenjoy, Machi and Tegnoupal whereas Moreh block is considered as one of the main block under Tegnoupal sub-division were most of the official department are located at the main town for administrative convenience and identified as international trade centre of the state. It is one of the famous places of Chandel district and state as a whole, situated at the southernmost part of the state sharing a boarder with Myanmar, when the Trans Asia High way comes into exist Chandel district will be the gate way to the south east nations. The district has a density population of 44 person per square kilometre, of which sharing a population of 5.5 percent of the total population of Manipur state, sex ratio of 933 females per 1000 males which is lower than the state sex ratio of 985, literacy rate of the district is only 71.1 percent lower than the state literacy rate of 76.9 percent. Majority of the district is inhabited by the scheduled tribe population of 88.9 percent, sharing state total average percentage of 3.4 percent. Schedule Castes population is only 0.37 percent lower than the state average of 3.4 percent. As per the 2011 census the district has only one urban area with total population of only 11.7 percent. Household average size of the district is 5.0 percent similarly with state average of 5.1 percent, the age group population of the district is 11.9 percent with child sex ratio population of 931 which is lower than the state child sex ratio population of 933.

Majority of them are engaged in agricultural activities with total cultivators of 56.7 percent in the entire district. There are about 437 revenue villages of which seven villages were uninhabited as per the data collected from 2011 census. As per (Rural health statistic, 2015) there are five primary health centres in undivided Chandel district, twenty six primary sub centres, one community health centre, one sub- divisional hospital and one District hospital. The primary health centres where located at the headquarters covering at least four to six primary health sub centres that acted as a referral services for these sub centres. Interms of kilometres a minimum of 1 km and maximum of 10 kms indicates the location of primary health centres, three of the primary health centres are located in the terrain hilly areas where as two of the primary health centre is located at the plain area of hill district. Most of the primary health centres are surrounded by contagious villages in which some of the villagers found accessible due to nearest location of the health centre whereas majority of the health centres are far away from the villages that makes the villagers hard to visit frequently to the health centres, due to poor transportation and rare availability of transport facility in the hill areas majority of the rural population are facing a hard time in availing the services provided at the primary health centres.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study is to find out the conditions of existing health infrastructures, availability of health services and mode of utilization by the common population resided at the far flung areas and surrounding areas of Chandel district.

Materials and Methods

Primary health care

Primary health care came into force with the international conference held at Alma-Ata USSR in 1978, as many of the countries both in developing and developed countries were facing a huge gaps in health inequality the conference adopted and declared Health for All in 2000 A.D. with primary health care approach as one of the factor in achieving the goal, the international conference was witness by 134 counties and voluntary agencies and defined primary health care as “ Essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and the country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self determination” (Park, 2015). Primary health care in India begins with the

acceptance of Alma-Ata declaration as India was also one of the nation signatory to the declaration held at Alma-Ata USSR, in 1978.

Primary Health Centre

Indian health care system consists of three tier health care delivery system comprising of Primary health care, Secondary health care and Tertiary health care. In India the government launched a Rural Health Scheme based on principles of 'placing people's health in people's hand, in which the three tier health care delivery system was the offshoot of Shrivastav Committee in 1978 (Park, 2015). Primary health centre falls under the primary health care delivery system which was propounded by Bhore Committee in 1946 that aimed to cover the overall population of ten thousand to twenty thousand by six medical officers, six public health nurses and other subordinate staff; however the Bhore's Committee recommendation cannot be fully implemented due to various limited resources in India. Taking into consideration the National Health Plan 1983 proposed the reorganization of the population to be covered by the primary health centres by recommending thirty thousand for one primary health centre in plain areas and twenty thousand in hilly, tribal and backward areas of India. As per the norms of (IPHS, 2012) there exist two types of primary health centres in terms of services delivery. One of the primary health centres is categorised as Type A if it has a delivery load of less than twenty deliveries in a month another primary health centre is tag as Type B in which there is more than twenty deliveries in a month. The following services are considered as essential or desirable under the IPHS norms. Medical care such as OPD services will be operated for six hours of which four hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon for at least six days in a week. A doctor will attend a minimum of forty patients per day and spend at least two hours of service for field visits and monitoring per day. Twenty four hours of services will be available for injuries, accidents, stitching, etc before the patient is refer to other higher health facility and this shall be done by the nursing staff, in case it is very critical and emergency the doctors shall be available at the patient's disposal. Maternal and Child Health including Family Planning like Ante-natal care, Post-natal care, new born care, Care of child, family welfare, shall be provided at the primary health centres. Medical Termination of Pregnancies such as counselling and appropriate referral services for safe abortion shall be provided. Management of Reproductive Tract infections and sexually transmitted infections shall be tested, treated and educated. Nutrition services, school health, National Health Programmes shall be provided at the primary health centres, considering all the norms of the above mention

services as per IPHS revised 2012 all the primary health centres of Chandel district are functioning and operating to some extent even though all the desirables cannot be achieved however all the services listed are provided till the time collecting data.

Research Methods

The present paper attempts to examine the present conditions of existing health infrastructure, mode of utilization by the patients and behaviour patterns of the staff and patients of primary health centres in undivided Chandel district of Manipur state. Essential source of data was collected from various angles like for secondary data it was mostly collected from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the directorate of health service, District Level Household Surveys, National Sample surveys, Journals, Books, print and online sources. Whereas for Primary data a sample size of 300 registered patients who had visited the primary health centre for more than thrice was identify through random samplings using lottery method and for selection of district and blocks of the undivided district was identify by adopting multistage sampling method, Chandel district was identify for field of study due to its backwardness and lagging behind many districts in terms of health care and developments. All together a population of five primary health centres were selected purposely from the three blocks that is Chandel, Machi and Tengnoupal block where as two blocks Chakpikarong block and Khenjoy block were omitted as the block itself has no primary health centres though there were Community health centre and Primary health sub centres in Chakpikarong and Khenjoy block respectively.

Results

Health Infrastructure

The present condition of health infrastructure in undivided Chandel district is functioning and operated in all government buildings and there is no shortage of health practitioners and para medical staff (RHS, 2015). There are five Primary Health Centres located at different areas of Chandel, Machi, Moreh and Tengnoupal blocks, 58 villages have to avail the services available at the Primary health centres at a distance of less than 5 kms, 74 villages have to travel at a distance of 5-10 kms to avail the health services at primary health centres and 292 villages are located at a distance of more than 10 kms from the primary health centres (Census of India, 2011). The five Primary Health Centres are equipped with all necessary laboratory equipments and medicines as per norms; there are four beds each for the patients at all the primary health centres, regarding the labour room all the five primary health centres

has labour room however the labour room at Moreh primary health centre is not conducting any delivery due to shortage of labour equipments therefore most of the delivery are conducted at the sub-divisional hospital just one kilometres away from the primary health centre (programme evaluation organization planning commission government of india, 2001). All the primary health centres have proper toilets for male and female, garbage dumps, water supply though Tengnoupal primary health centre has some issues on source of water supply in the month of summer season, electricity is installed in all the health centres with computer sets and internet facilities. All the primary health centres has required physical furniture like examination table, delivery table, I V stand, stretcher and trolley, iron bed, dressing trolley, instrument cabinet and trolley, instrument ray, almirah, rack, mattress, pillow, waiting bench and chairs for patients, etc.

Availability of services:

As per the findings through primary and secondary data it is found out that various services are provided at the Primary Health Centres such as Maternal Health, Child Health, Adolescent Health Care, Immunization, RTI/STI, National Health Programmes, School Health Programmes, communicable and non communicable diseases, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), Referral services etc. Laboratory equipment services like Blood and Urine test, Blood grouping, Diagnosis of RTI/STI, Sputum testing for tuberculosis, Blood smear testing for malaria, Rapid test for pregnancies, Rapid test for HIV, Bleeding and clotting time (IPHS, 2012).

Mode of Utilization

The mode of utilization indicates the accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability of the identified patients who had visited and availed the available health care services provided at the Primary Health Centres. The collected data both from the primary and secondary sources it is observed that 77 percent of the patients stated that doctors were available at the primary health centres. 47 percent of the patients were staying at a distance of two kilometres away from the primary health centres and majority of the patients resided nearest to the primary health centres. Patients at the age group of 25-29 years were the major patients who had availed the services at the health centres. Majority of the patients reveal that most of the medicines prescribed by the doctors were available at the health centres. It is observed that female patients were the main patients who visited the primary health centres which indicate the higher rate of female patients seeking treatment at

the health centre. Majority of the patients were married during the time of visiting the primary health centres. 80 percent of the patients belong to Christian community, this shows that as Chandel is a hilly district dominated by the tribal communities majority of the tribals are from Christian background. 30 percent of the patients were under metric educational qualification. Majority of the patients were having an annual income of Rs. 27000- 80000. 42.7 percent of the patients belong to cultivators as most of the rural population in the district are having an occupation of cultivation this shows the higher rate of cultivators who had visited the primary health centres. It is observed that 25 percent of the patients came to primary health centres for maternal health check-up. 73.7 percent of the patients reveal that doctors and nurses were present during their visit to the health centre. 65 percent of the patients were given advice on nutrition by the concern doctors during their consultation. 47 of the patient have not avail any family planning method during their treatment. 55.7 percent of the patients were not referred for blood or urine test to other health clinics this shows majority of the patients who had availed the laboratory test were been tested at the primary health centres. 58.3 percent of the patients reveal that some of the medicines which were not available at the primary health centres were referred to other pharmacies or drug store to get the medicines. It is observed that majority of the patients visited the primary health centres every month. It is also observed that 28 percent of the patients waited for 15 minutes during the consultation hour. 68 percent of the patients were very well aware about the availability of Lady Doctor at the primary health centre. 45 percent of the patients were aware about the meaning of posters pasted at the Primary health centres. Cent percent of the patients did not faced any physical or verbal abuse during the time of consultation or availing health care services. 77.7 percent of the patients were professionally treated by the health personnel. 50 percent of the patients were paid proper attention by the doctors during consultation hour. Majority of the patients reveal that they were examined properly by the health staff. 60.3 percent of the patients said that the doctors explained very well about their illness during their treatment.

Discussion

It is a proven fact that Primary Health Centre is a cornerstone of the rural health care system where it connects to meet the two people that is between the patient and doctor at the health centre, the patient have the chance of contact point with the doctors at the primary health centre, However to some extend some of the patients could not meet the doctors at health centres due to absent of doctor or engage in other work or due to various untold reasons

and problem. Even though staff quarters are constructed particularly for the medical staff majority of the staff are not confined to their designated quarters, this cannot be considered as a one sided blame game particularly to the staff but this is due to the policy makers and recruitment boards, for instance some of the staff are recruited from other parts of the areas of course that is not mean to speak against the recruitment rules and norms but it is seen that there is lightly chances of the staff to settle whole of his or her live spending at the rural areas where there are few facilities available for instance transportation facility, communication facility, educational facilities for those staff who are married and had children, and for those staff who has to take care of their old and aged parents or relatives, it will be very difficult to cope with this situation. Even the local practitioners who are employed at the health centres sometimes neglect their duty due to untold reasons and situations because the best reasons lies within them. So to function smoothly and to cater quality health care services especially at the rural and remote areas as per the national health policies the policy makers, law makers and people's representatives has to also think and implement other necessary developments to be taken up at the rural areas otherwise the same pictures will be seen in the days to come. Regarding the awareness and availability of health care services at the rural areas the ASHA workers had been inducted for bridging the gaps between the rural communities and the health centres, they act as health facilitators, counsellors and motivators however taking into considerations the ASHA workers have been discouraged due to less incentives and honorariums provided at their disposals. Instead a fixed amount of salary or honorariums should be provided to all the ASHA workers irrespective of her roles and responsibilities. Then we could see the higher rate of outcome in mobilization and motivations of villagers in availing the health care services, there will be higher rate of seeking treatment at the primary health centres, particular areas will grow up in health awareness and of course people will be conscious and aware of all related health illness and diseases prevailing in the present scenario and of course the mode of utilization of available services by all rural population will be increase. ASHAs should be properly trained and promote them through quality trainings, workshops, seminars, health camps and basic course on health care services.

Induction of medical social workers in the Primary Health Centres is a matter of a questions and need of the hour, till today the medical social workers are not be recruited in the primary health centres whereas we are talking about universal health coverage and quality health care. There has been neither induction policy nor proposals. Medical Social workers are

professionals who had been trained through regular mode of educations, practically and theoretically. They are the counsellors and facilitators suitable to aware the rural populations. If not today when it will be implemented otherwise it will be wastage of the professions because everyone cannot be a professor or work the rest of their lives in private organization or companies. And lastly but not the least Professional specialist doctors should be posted in the Primary Health Centres, even though the primary health centres itself is delivering preventive, promotive and curative care services to the rural populations most of the patients first of all have specific illness and that they wish to be treated by a specialist, the point is that why only countable specialist in District Hospital, State Hospital and Regional Hospitals why not in the PHC so that rural patients will not travel all the way from remote places to capital headquarters where there are lots of specialist available, instead of wasting the manpower in the big cities and metropolitans, doctors should be inducted at the remote and rural areas specially at the Primary Health Centres so that the rural people at least be treated or examine by the specialist doctors at their disposals and the cost of out of pocket will also be also reduce for the rural poor population in the our country.

Conclusion

The Primary health centre is the corner stone of the rural health care services that is delivering the maximum health care services through preventive, promotive and curative approach to the entire rural population in India. The availing of health care services lays in the hand of the rural population therefore awareness, education and prevention on the availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability of health care services should be mobilized to the optimum rate so that the poor population may witness the quality of health care services in our country. It is observed that majority of the primary health centres are functioning in government buildings as compared to the olden days which shows the commitment of the government in delivering accountability health care services to the rural population. From the data it is found out that various kinds of services are provided at the primary health centres such as child health, maternal health, adolescents health, family planning, immunization, RTI/STI, school health, national health programmes etc the only thing is that specialist is not provided at the primary health centres which is the need of the hour in this century, it is found that various age groups of patients were visiting the primary health centres even though they are higher rate of 25-29 years availing the health care services and it is also observed that various types of illness were treated or referred to higher health institution when the primary health centre cannot

handle the critical situations, considering the matters specialist on various medical disciplines are required to handle the critical conditions of the patients so that the patients may not suffer or bear the accessibility problem at the primary health centres. The road leading to the primary health centres and to the higher institutions are not that very good as it is found in urban areas and cities therefore taking note of the communication and transport facility, it is the need of the hour to repair or renovate all the necessary roads for easy accessible. Doctors, nurses and para medical staff are seen available at the primary health centres as per the findings however the regularity of the staff are sometimes detected therefore proper checking and reporting of staff attendance should be cross- check for the betterment of the rural population who are availing the rural health care services at their disposals. Even though the study did not content the quality services it is must for the health providers to provide quality services to the rural populations, taking into consideration even the national health policy talks about quality health care in the rural health areas. The infrastructure facility such as equipments and medicines are seen available at the health centre but the quality and expiry are not examine therefore for proper functioning of the health infrastructures a committee comprising of technical experts should be formed in order to examined the qualities so the at the eleven hour the patients who visited the primary health centre may not encounter or faced the non functioning or availability of equipments or medicines. Therefore to create a better health care services in the rural areas all stakeholders such as policy makers, practitioners, patients, civil organizations, NGOs and village heads are required to cooperate and coordinate in building a quality health care services in the rural areas.

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The Unspoken Reality of Child Marriage in Durrung Tea Plantations: Social Work Intervention

Barsha Kalita

Abstract

Child marriage is a world-wide phenomenon and a major cause of concern in present times. Child marriage is a human right violation which affects the physical as well as psychological wellbeing and development of an individual. However, in tea plantation, child marriage is the reflection of poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. Despite legislation and various initiatives by state and non-state machineries, child marriage is prominent and widely accepted in tea plantation society. Being born in an underprivileged family makes a girl more vulnerable and prone to social discrimination. Women in tea plantation face discrimination since birth and early marriage is one of the consequences of gender discriminatory patriarchal attitude. The repercussions of child marriage are however extreme having life time consequences on the victims. But the reality cannot be denied that women in tea plantation are isolated and ignorant which makes them more prone to being a victim of discriminatory practices. Moreover, over the years they have internalised gender discrimination against them as normal thus accepting it as a part of their life. Thus this article is an attempt to understand the lived experiences of women tea plantation labourers undergoing child marriage using feminist perspective through grounded theory methodology. Further, it attempts to address the issue of child marriage through social work intervention, integrating theory into practice. It is based on the findings of the fieldwork in Durrung tea estate in Sonitpur district.

Keywords: Child marriage, Gender discrimination, Social work issue, Social Work Practice

Introduction

A child refers to every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). According to Section 2(a) of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 “child” means a person who if a male has not completed 21 years of age and if a female has not completed 18 years of age. Child marriage or early marriage means a marriage in which either of the contracting parties is a child. While the minimum age of the marriage for girls should be 18, in case of boys it should 21 years of age (Section 2(b) of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006). Child marriage is defined as informal union before the age of 18 years acknowledged by the United Nation Human Rights Council as a harmful practice that violates, abuses and impairs human rights (United Nation, 2015).

The main driving force behind child marriage is poverty, the need to reinforce social ties and the belief that it offers protection from rape, unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (Nour, 2009). According to government data, although the prevalence of child marriage in Assam, at 40 per cent, is lower than the national average of 43 per cent (source: UNICEF), there are pockets, such as the tea gardens, where the levels are much higher. A study by the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association (ABITA) in one of the most tea garden intensive districts of the state, Dibrugarh, found that one-fourth of all respondents (4,100 parents) felt that it was appropriate for girls to marry between the ages of 14 and 18 years (Rehman, 2014). The tea tribes emphasize much on children's marriage for they are dependent on manpower for economic development. For them marriage means getting more labour in the family which in turn gives additional income. So, the parents do not like to miss the first opportunity of marriage of their male children. Similarly the parents tend to seize the first opportunity of marriage of their teenage daughter even at the cost of education. Thus the practice of early marriage hampers the education of the girl children and even also of the male children (Gogoi & Handique, 2014). Moreover, in the tea estate labour community, protection is usually understood as marrying off female children at early age. Girls are rarely considered as productive as boys, and are therefore perceived as a burden on their families. When a girl is married, the responsibility of supporting her is passed on to the husband. In addition, it is critical to a family's honour that their daughters are virgins when they marry. In the tea communities it is also not uncommon for adolescent girls to leave home with a boyfriend. However, the wider community rarely accepts this and the girl's whole family have to face stigmatisation. As a result, parents are anxious to see their daughters married to reduce the risk of them "bringing shame" upon their families (Akkas & Alam, 2015).

However, child marriage has many ill-effects. It negatively influences the growth and development of children affecting their education, health and protection. Child marriage violates their rights, it leads to frequent or early pregnancies, illiteracy, health problems, abuse and violence. Early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional consequences. For girls in addition, it will almost certainly mean early pregnancy, which causes higher rates of maternal mortality, and is likely to lead to lifetime of domestic and sexual subservience (Basha, 2016). Various state and not-state actors have made various interventions to tackle child marriages but still child marriages are practiced widely. Government has enacted various acts like the Child Marriage Restrain Act (1929) and The

Prohibition of the Child Marriage Act (2006). In Assam, the Department of Social Welfare, the Assam Social Welfare Board, the Assam Mahila Samata Society, the Department of Education & SSA, the Department of Health & Family Welfare, and the Department of Rural Development has made various interventions to curb child marriages cases in Assam (HRLN Report, 2015).

Central government initiatives that are being implemented in Assam to curb child marriage include: child protection programs, such as the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), social empowerment schemes like Child Line Services and Kishori Shakti Yojana, economic empowerment schemes, like STEP, and rescue and rehabilitation empowerment schemes, such as Ujjawala, and Vocational Training (HRLN Report, 2015). Non-state actors like UNICEF and UNFPA (United Nation Fund for Population Activities) have also intervened in Assam to end child marriage by addressing the social norms which are the predominant driving force behind child marriage. But despite legal norms and various interventions, child marriage is still widely practiced. Therefore, there is a need to understand the lived experiences of women tea plantation labourers to understand their perspective about child marriage and the need for intervention.

Rational of the study

Child marriage is a global phenomenon that cut across countries, religion and ethnicities. However in a patriarchal society, culture plays a pertinent role in encouraging child marriage. Further, in a tea plantation society, girls face discrimination from cradle to grave. Birth of a girl child is considered to be a liability. Therefore, to get over their responsibility, parents often marry their girls before the age of 18 years. Child marriage affects the physical, mental as well as developmental well-being of the individual. But due to their ignorance as well as societal pressure of fulfilling their marital responsibilities, girls often faces from various health issues which may also have life time consequences. Despite legal protection and rights, child marriages in tea plantation are rampant. Therefore, there is a need to comprehend the understanding and perspectives of women in tea plantation regarding child marriage as a phenomenon and its legalities. My study aimed to understand the causes as well as consequences of child marriage in tea plantation society.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the causes of child marriage among tea plantation labourers.

- To understand the physical as well as psychological effect of child marriage on the victims.
- To provide models by integrating social work theory into practice to address the issue of underage marriage

Research methodology

This paper is based on a research that attempted to understand the causes and effects of child marriage among tea plantation labourers. Thus, in order to get an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences and perspectives of women tea plantation labourers a qualitative approach was adopted. A feminist perspective had been assumed to study the problem from the perspective of women's experience as the voices of women tea plantation labourers are seldom heard. This guided the theoretical framework and the logic of procedure of the study.

For the purpose of the study, theoretical sampling had been used where theoretical interest had guided the selection of the sample cases. There was no pre-determined sample size. The criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category was the category's theoretical saturation. Grounded theory approach was adopted for developing theory that is grounded in the lived experiences of women tea plantation labourers. Constructivist grounded theory assumes that neither data nor theories are discovered, but are constructed by the researcher as a result of his or her interactions with the field and its participants (Charmaz, 2006). The methods selected for data collection were guided by the research questions, theoretical framework and logic of procedure. Unstructured, open-ended interviews had been conducted to collect data from the women tea plantation labourers. Besides, non-participant observation had also been adopted which gave access to the respondents' behaviour in an undisturbed social setting. The tools that had been adopted for data collection was interview guide. Using constant comparison method data collection and analysis was done iteratively.

The study area was Durrung tea estate of Sonitpur District in Brahmaputra Valley. The sample of the study had been selected from Durrung Tea estate. Women tea plantation labourers, belonging to *Mundas*, *Santhals*, *Kurukh*, *Gonds*, *Kharia*, *Bhumij*, *Tanti*, *Saora* communities, commonly known as *Adivasis*, had been interviewed for the purpose of my study.

Findings of the Study

The issue of child marriage is one of the emerging concerns of a developing country. According to the 2011 census there are 33.8 million girls, in India, under the age of 18 already married (Young lives, 2017). Child marriage in a tea plantation is a common phenomenon. In a tea plantation society, women have to face discrimination at every stage of their life. In Durrung tea plantation, the birth of a girl child is considered to be a liability. Therefore, to get rid of the liability, parents tend to marry their daughters before the age of 18 years. Girls as young as 13 years of age are forcefully married off, sometimes with a person twice or thrice their age. *“My father got me married when I was 13 years old to a person thrice my age (Rumaⁱ).”*ⁱⁱ Women in tea plantation have to face discriminatory attitude since birth. From a young age they are trained to learn domestic responsibilities and family management. Not much emphasis is given on their education because ultimately they have to manage domestic responsibilities which do not require education. Parents start searching for grooms soon after their daughters attend puberty. *“My elder daughter is 12 years old, I have to start searching for grooms to get her married early, before she decides to elope and bring shame (Lata).”*

Elopement in tea plantation is also a major issue in tea plantations. Girls as young as 14 to 15 years old elope and get married with their partners. *“I eloped with my now husband when I was 15 years old. He asked me to elope with him and I agreed, anyways my parents would have never agreed to get us married since we belonged to different caste (Puja).”* Caste hierarchy is strictly maintained in tea plantation and in such scenario; inter-caste or inter-religion marriages are strictly prohibited in tea plantation. Therefore, inter-caste or inter-religion couples prefer to elope and get married before they are being forced into marriage with someone from their caste. However, they need to perform a purification ritual to get accepted in the community.

Inter-caste marriages do occur frequently in our garden. Couples elope and get married, and then they have to perform purification rituals where the couple have to apologize for going against the community norms. They have to give a fine which will be fixed by the village elders and give a feast to the people of the community (Sita).

Therefore, most of the young couples get married even if inter-caste marriage is not acceptable. Parents also therefore, fix their daughter's marriage early so that they do not bring shame upon the family by eloping.

To prevent their daughters from eloping, parents take early marriage as a preferable solution.

I do not trust today's generation girls. I will get my daughter married within a year or two before she can elope and get married. She is 13 years old. I do not even allow her to attend school for the fear of her eloping (Sunita).

Thus, fear of elopement and shame associated with it is another reason which drives parents to marry their daughter early. The imposition of family honour on a girl's individuality, in essence robbing the girl of her honour and dignity, undermines the credibility of family honour and instead underscores the presumed protection's actual aim: to control the girl (Basha, 2016). In a patriarchal society, men often find ways to control and dominate women. By marrying daughters early, men control women, restricting her freedom and tying her to household responsibilities. "My boyfriend asked me to elope with him as his mother was unwell and there was no one to take care of domestic responsibilities and his sick mother (Puja)." Moreover, in a tea plantation society there is a social construct of marriageable age. Girls have to be married before a certain age and if she remains unmarried, she has to become the victim of societal ridicule and shame. People starts shaming or blaming her by finding faults in her.

When I did not marry till 27 years of age, people started gossiping that I may have some faults so no one is willing to marry me. Therefore when my husband approached me for marriage, I got married with him despite him having another wife and a daughter (Dimpy).

Girls in tea plantations get married earlier willingly or forcefully and it is socially accepted. No one questions their decisions or take any legal steps against child marriage cases. Moreover, due to lack of legal documents, the age of girls could not be determined and therefore girls aged 14-15 years are passed off as 18-19 years old. But, they have to face ridicule when they remain unmarried after the age of 25 years. Therefore, age constrain also has a major role to play in increasing number of cases of child marriage.

Child marriage has various physical as well as mental effects on child brides. Underage marriage negatively effects child development. A child is mentally unprepared to get married and undertake all responsibilities at such a young age. Therefore, when a child is forcefully married, they have to undergo tremendous amount of mental harassment and stress.

When my father fixed my marriage as 13 years of age to a person who was already married twice before, I was scared and insecure. I kept on reflecting on the question that why they left, whether it was my husband's fault or the wives characters are at fault. Again the question emerged whether both wives were at fault to leave him after marriage. But despite the fear, anxiety and confusion I had to marry and take responsibility of a marriage and house where there was no one to guide her. Again I was victim of domestic violence. I was subjected to physical abuse everyday by my drunken husband. I was not prepared for marriage and was not ready to take responsibilities. But no one listened to my pleas. I was forced to marry because my father and elder brothers believed that it is for my own betterment (Ruma).

Young girls getting married also have to face various health issues. Due to their limited knowledge on contraceptives they get easily pregnant. Men in tea gardens are also not trained to practice safe sex thus young girls have to suffer pregnancy complications due to early and frequent pregnancies. It also has harmful consequences on the health of the child. The rate of maternal mortality and infant mortality also increases.

A young girl aged 16 years gave birth few years back. She did not come for check-up despite being asked by ASHA worker. Her family also did not bother to bring her to the hospital for check-up. When she gave home birth few months later, her bleeding did not stop and later she died (Nurse in Durrung Health Centre)

Child brides have to suffer from various health complications due to pregnancy as well as unsafe sex. Most of the young women often suffer from vaginal infections and fistula. They are also more susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases. But, due to shame, they do not get treated which cause them to suffer from harsh consequences. Moreover, due to work as well as domestic responsibilities and inability to consume nutritious meals, they suffer from health complications like anaemia, malnutrition and water borne diseases. Child brides are often overburdened with domestic responsibilities even before they realize the meaning of responsibilities. They are not encouraged for education and even if they get admitted to primary education they are forced to drop-out after a year or two. Parents give more preference in teaching their daughters domestic chores than getting them educated. *"I educate my sons not my daughters. What is the use of education, when all they have to do is cooking, cleaning and bearing children? Education is not needed to learn domestic chores (Ruhi)."* Girls eloping and getting married

also have to drop-out of school after marriage as husband and in-laws do not allow their daughter-in-laws to continue school after marriage. *“I had to drop-out after eloping and getting married. My husband does not allow me to attend school and I have household responsibilities (Tina).”*

Child brides have to manage a lot of responsibilities at a very early age, often in absence of any guiding member. Therefore, they tend to make mistake for which they are being punished. Often young brides especially those who eloped and got married are not accepted by the family as a result they often have to face criticism and abuse in hands of in-law or their husband. Domestic violence is common and child brides have to face the consequences of their husband's or in-laws' wrath.

I got married at 14 years of age and soon my husband started beating me. He used to get drunk every day and abuse me physically and mentally. I was too small to stand against him. When I complained to my father, even he did not support me. I had faced abuse for many years as I was small and did not had the courage to resist (Laya)

Child brides have to suffer physically as well as mentally due to their early marriage. They are not prepared to accept the challenges of married life nor are they experienced in handling the pressure of married life. Sometimes it leaves a lifelong impact on the victim. They tend to lose their individuality and become dependent on other with no self-confidence. They silently accept all abuse, suppression and domination which take a toll on their health as well as development. Despite legislation and rights, child marriages in tea plantations are common. No one stand against such cases either due to their ignorance or isolation. Child marriage is an acceptable phenomenon in Durrung where young girls are married off or due to peer-pressure young girls themselves elope and get married and later face the consequences. Most of the time, girls are not prepared for early marriage but they are being forced to get married by the male members in their family. *“When my father asked me to marry at 13 years, I was not ready. I told my father about my unwillingness but he did not listen. My elder brothers also asked me to marry. My opinion never mattered (Ruma)”*. Women in tea plantation seldom have decision making power. Men controls and force their decisions on women without seeking their interest. *“My father is forcing my elder sister to get married. She wants to study but my father is not ready to listen. Her marriage is all fixed and within few month she will be married (Bina, 15 years)”*.

Even those who have eloped and got married early sometimes regret their decisions of early marriage.

I eloped with my husband when I was 17 years old. I left studies and got married against my parent's wishes. He used to love me but now he fights with me every day and abuses me. Sometimes I regret eloping and getting married. Now my parents also do not support me. I am forced to stay in this marriage for children's sake as I do not want to deprive them of their father's love (Manju)"

Sometimes, women do not get the support of their parents to come out of relationships when things deteriorate. So, she is forced to continue in an abusive relationship. Moreover, societal norm which believes that after marriage a girl's home is her husband's home often do not allow women to come back to her parental family. Thus, it can be said that early marriage negatively affects the life of child brides who have to undergo discriminatory attitude, abuse, suppression, domination having life time consequences on their health as well as overall development. Despite legal measures and interventions, underage marriages are common occurrence. However, no legal interventions are being taken to protect the victims. Non-registration of marriage, lack of legal documents proving their age, ignorance as well as isolation of tea plantation labourers play the predominant role in increasing child marriage cases. Therefore, there is a need for intervention to address the issue of child marriage in tea plantation society.

Social Work Intervention: Challenges and Resolutions

Social work as professionals can play a major role in addressing child marriages in tea plantations. Child marriage is a social issue influenced by the social structures of the society. To address the issue of child marriage, there is a need to understand the factors influencing it. Therefore, social worker can integrate its theories and methods to address the issue of child marriage in tea plantation. It will help in gaining better clarity to practice situations which may help in dealing with the root causes of the problem.

Social worker can adopt the theoretical assumptions of seekers after meaning of David Howe's Taxonomy of Social work, to address the issue of child marriage. Seekers after meaning believe that social world emerges out of social interactions. Individuals are mere puppets who react to external social forces (Howe, 1992). Societal norms in a patriarchal society believe that girls are a liability on the family who need protection. Therefore, to get rid of their responsibilities, parents prefer to marry their daughters early. Also, girls elope due to the societal age constraints that forces girls to get

married early. Thus, it can be said that, it is the external social forces which is responsible for the incidences of child marriage. The theoretical approach that can be adopted under Seekers after meaning is client centred approach. Client centred approach focuses on the needs of the client and seeks to empower the client through direct or indirect interventions (Howe, 2009). The Child marriage victims may need direct intervention to deal with the consequences of child marriage. Therefore, social worker can address the issue of child marriage through the method of case work and group work.

Social Case Work means those processes which develop personality through adjustment consciously affected, individual by individual, between men and their social environment (Mary Richmond, 1922). Through case work, social worker can take up cases where victim has undergone child marriage. With the help local community leaders, social worker can identify those cases where the victim has undergone child marriage. Child marriage impacts the physical as well as the psychological health of the women. So, by identifying such cases, social worker can provide the victims counselling and health awareness. Social worker can make the victim legally aware of the acts and laws which are against child marriage. Section 5(n) Protection of children against sexual offences (POSCO) act, penalises penetrative sexual assault on a child through marriage and section 375 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) penalises sexual acts with a girl below 18 years of age with or without her consent. Awareness about these laws will help them to take step against their husband if they are being forced for sexual relationship. Social worker can also make the girls as well as parents aware of laws and acts which restrict child marriages like The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006). There are also options available for minor wives to end the marriage under Section 13 (2) (iv) of Hindu Marriage Act and Section (2) (vii) of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939. Tea plantation labourers are ignorant about these legal provisions thus no steps are taken to curb child marriages. Social worker can make the tea plantation labourers aware of these acts and its implication of going against the law. It may instil a fear in their minds which may curb child marriages. Further, social worker can provide them awareness about the implication of early and frequent pregnancies on the health of the mother and the child. Family members can also be involved so that they can provide necessary guidance to the couple and do not force for pregnancy too early or frequently. Social worker can also link the victim with the organisations which can provide them legal awareness and legal aid if the victim desire to take any legal measures.

Social Group Work' is a method of social work which helps individuals to enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences and to cope more effectively with their personal, group or community problems (Konapka, 1963). Further, through the method of group work, social worker can form a group of adolescent girls aged 13-18 years with the help of local community leaders. Since most of the girls elope and get married before the age of 18 years. Therefore, social worker can conduct awareness session for these girls where they are provided awareness about the implication of early marriage on health and development. Social worker can also provide them legal awareness and also link them with agencies which they can approach if they are forced into marriage before the age of 18 years. Most of the time girls are not prepared for early marriage but they are forced by their family members, so in such situations, awareness about child helpline may help in complaining and dealing with the problem. Social worker can also conduct interactive sessions where the queries of the girls can be addressed. Such sessions will prove helpful for the adolescent girls in gaining awareness as well as make them empowered to deal with the problem if they are being forced into early marriage. Further, social worker can also conduct life skill programmes which may help them in utilising their skills for their development and empowerment.

Conclusion

Child Marriage being a socio-cultural practice has engulfed child brides into the complexities of married life. Child marriage is perpetuating the cycle of gender discrimination, where child brides have to become victim of oppression, subjugation and abuse. India as a country has developed in all extent but still the atrocities of child marriage could not be diminished. Legal provisions, human rights as well as social services failed to address the issue of child marriage. In tea plantation, the isolation and ignorance of tea plantation labourers have further encouraged child marriage cases. Child brides forcefully pushed into the complexities of marriage have to undergo various changes which affect their physical, mental as well as developmental well-being. However, there is an urgent need to bring about change to transform the future of girl child. Social worker as professionals can address the issue of child marriage by integrating theory into practice. They can help in bringing about change by addressing the issue at individual as well as group level. But, most importantly girls themselves should realise the implication of early marriage and stand against its atrocities. Women should stop internalising patriarchal attitude and be aware of their rights so that they can fight against the injustice done towards them. Stricter vigilance,

community awareness as well as gender equality can help in addressing child marriage and bringing about change.

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Notes

- i The names of all the research participants are changed as an ethical principle to maintain confidentiality.
- ii The verbatim quotation from field notes (primary data) has been italicised and placed in double quotes but the secondary data has not been italicised.

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