

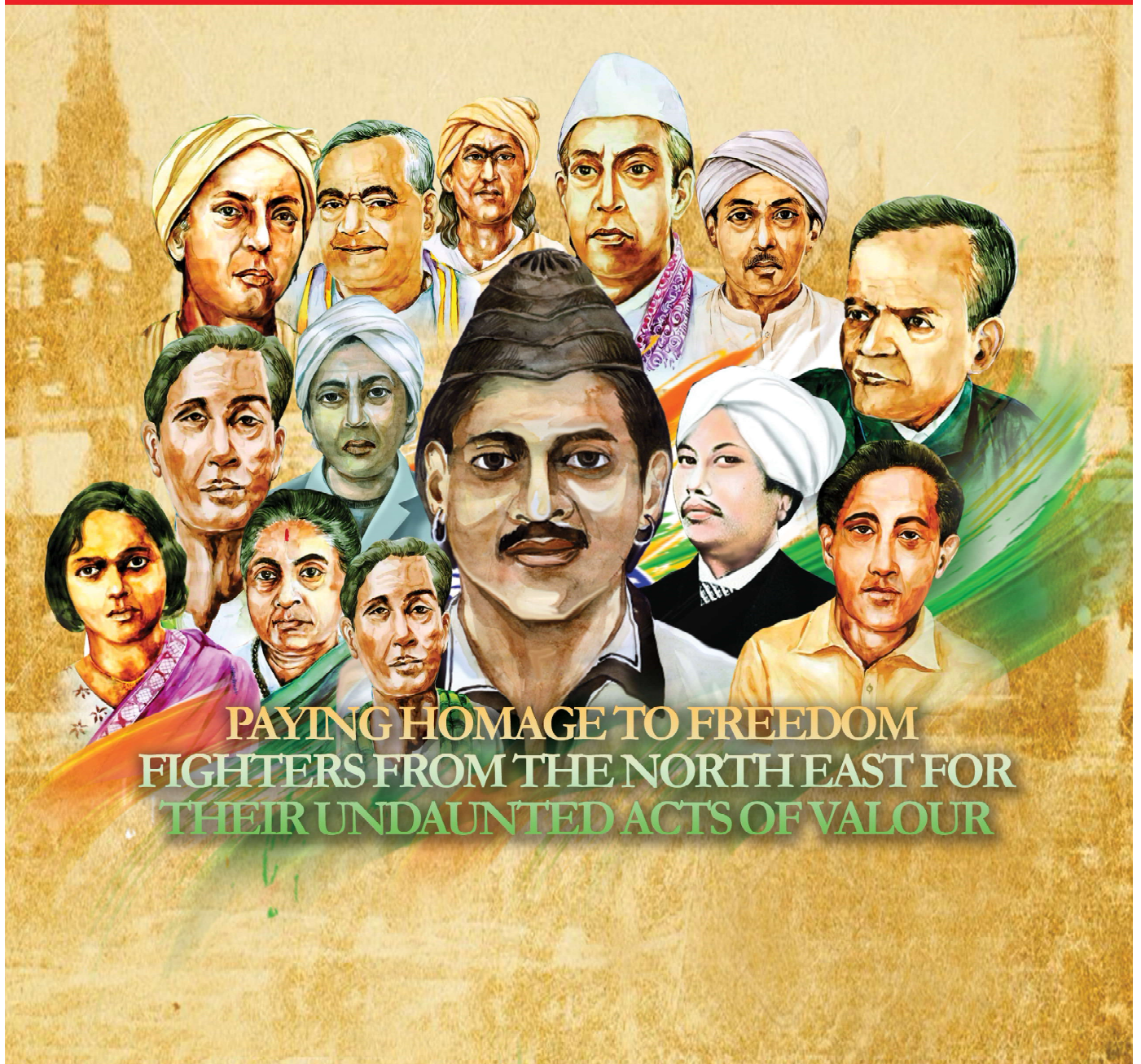
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HERITAGE EXPLORER

"LET KNOWLEDGE COME FROM ALL THE SIDES"

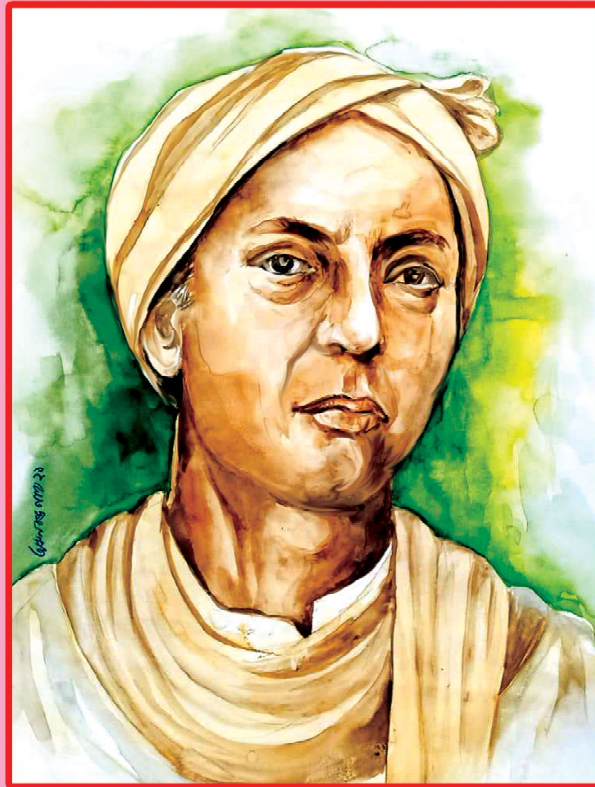
A Monthly News Bulletin

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PAYING HOMAGE TO FREEDOM
FIGHTERS FROM THE NORTH EAST FOR
THEIR UNDAUNTED ACTS OF VALOUR

India's Unsung Heroes



Gomdhar Konwar was a prince of the Ahom royal family. His father's name was Phena Konwar. In 1828, Gomdhar Konwar, organised an armed revolt against the British. He was arrested and sent to a jail in Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) and there is little information about him thereafter. Despite being one of the earliest freedom fighters, Konwar has remained an unsung hero.

In a 1987 publication by the govt of Assam, Gomdhar Konwar adorned the first position of a list of 30 martyrs from the State.

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e-mail: ourheritage123@gmail.com,
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Bhuvan Road, Near GMC Office, Uzan Bazar
Guwahati-781001, Ph: 0361- 2636365
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NE Indigenous tribes Struggle for Independence

On last 15th August we observed our 75th Independence Day with appropriate pomp and grandeur to express our joy and elation at becoming free from thousand year long bondage of foreign subjugation. For many of our compatriots spread over different corners of our country, this joy is mixed with an amount of pride for the contributions made by their freedom seeking forefathers. It is not the case with us who are born and brought up in the north eastern part of our country, because the country is largely ignorant about the chronology of events and the activities of our freedom struggle heroes who fought the mighty British regime without caring for their lives. Our brave hearts remained mostly anonymous for one reason or the other whereas names of thousands of freedom fighters belonging to Bengal, Punjab and the north and western Indian states became wellknown and are being worshipped by all Indians.

We are very happy that most of our countrymen are sufficiently knowledgeable about the sacrifices made by Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Khudiram Bose, Subhas Chandra Bose, Swatantryaveer Savarkar, Bhagat Singh, Bagha Jatin, Surya Sen, Subramania Bharati, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Sarojini Naidu, Pritilata Waddedar, Begum Rokeya and many others. At the same time it is equally unfortunate that few of our countrymen know about Kusal Konwar, Kanaklata, Major Paona Brajabashi, Bir Tikendrajit Singh, Rani Gaidinliu etc. the freedom fighters from north east.

There are more than one reason behind the failure to accord recognition to the sacrifices made by the freedom heroes of north east, especially those living in the hilly regions of north east. Even though Assam was comparatively advanced, the real story of the patriotic resistance did not find its due place of honour in the annals of India's freedom movement mainly because neither our own historians nor our academically accomplished people cared to record the resistance offered by the indigenous freedom fighters. In the case of the tribal communities inhabiting the north eastern states we must acknowledge the fact that most of them were living in the fringe areas of our country untouched by civilized way of communication. They also did not have their own scripts to record the stories of their uprising against the British colonizers. Whatever little that could be culled from the oral histories of different tribal communities, it can safely be concluded that the tribal heroes of north east fought the British like true heroes. Many of them

died of British bullets or due to their banishment to Andaman Cellular jail.

Remembering the exploits of some of our tribal heroes of north east may spur us to feel proud of our past heritage of love for freedom. The first name that comes to mind in this connection is Major Paona Brajabashi, the most revered figures of the Anglo-Manipur War of 1891, who fought the British under-manned and under-armed in the Battle of Khongjom and met his end on 23 April, 1891. Bir Tikendrajit Singh, the Crown Prince of Manipur, laid down his life to protect the territorial integrity of Manipur against British imperialist forces. Rani Gaidinliu, when she was mere 13 year old, gave a clarion call to all ethnic Naga tribes to rise against the British colonizers saying that "We are free people, the white men should not rule over us," Haipou Jadonang, a Rongmei Naga spiritual leader and preceptor of Rani Gaidinliu, preached total resistance to the British. U. Tirot Sing Siemlieh, a native chief of Nongkhlaw, a territory in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, led the Khasis in their fight against the British during the 1829-1833 Anglo-Khasi War. Moje Riba, a wealthy businessman of West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh gave up his everything to fight the British. U, Kiang Nangbah, the greatest freedom fighters from the Meghalaya fought against the British during the revolt of 1857. The British hanged him publicly at Iawmusiang in Galway town in the West Jaintia Hills district on 30 December 1862. Pa Togan Sangma, a Garo warrior from Garo hills, Meghalaya, died on 12 December, 1872 while battling British forces to protect the integrity of his motherland. Taji Mideren, a Mishmi leader fought valiantly against the unholy expansion of British rule and was later hanged for rebellion against the British. Shoorvir Pasaltha was the first Mizo freedom fighter who sacrifices his life while resisting the expansionist agenda of British rulers during the invasion of the Lushai Hills in 1890. Similar is the story of Matmor Jamoh, the Adi warrarior and Chengiapao Kuki (Doungel) who fought under Netaji Subhash Cnadra Bose.

We need to know more about our heroes and study about their deeds of heroism. We must unearth all possible facts of their lives to preserve the hallowed memory of these brave hearts who gave away their lives to bestow us the fruits of freedom. We should not lament about neglect and non-recognition of the region's contribution to freedom struggle, rather, we should try to extract what is legitimately ours.

Romen Chakrabarty
Chief Editor

The Eternal Religion in perspective of Malsom Janajati of Tripura

Chandra Krishna Malsom
(continued from july issue)

The Malsoms believe in many gods and goddesses (Dev-Devi) like Suprai, Nupang-ngwi, Asen-ngwi, Pavengpa, Thingkung-ngwi etc. Some of the well known benevolent and malevolent gods and goddesses are narrated in brief.

In fact, people of Malsom Janajati of Tripura State generally worship almost in all the occasions of joys and sorrows beginning from birth of a child to its death; offer various pujas to some common Gods and Goddesses namely Pathwnlwn (Head God, Mahadeb), Awinu (Mother Goddess, Tripureshwari), Arthwng-ngwi (God of Holiness, ruler of human fate- computers of the perfect horoscope), Thingkung-ngwi (Gods of Tree), Awipuma-ngwi/Asen-ngwi (Gods of custodian of human souls at the time of death), Sangrounu (Goddess of wealth and properties like elephants, horses, valuable domestic goods etc.), Tuipui (Goddess of Water, Ganga Devi), Tuipathwn-ngwi or Tuiswnau-ngwi (Sons of Water Goddess, Godadhar and Bidyadhar), Nupang-ngwi (a group of female harmful spirits, the witches), Pavengpa (a harmful male spirit old and ugly in appearance), Sengrak (God of warriors fighting

injustice and tyranny), Sakhi Darlongnu (Mother of Water Gods, Goddess Padmashwari), Likhi (Goddess Laxmi) and so many others.

Apart from the above, other powerful gods and goddesses like Baba Gorla, Songkotramnu, Inkil pathwn, Sasen pathwn, Mangalchandi, Choudadebta (fourteen gods and goddesses) etc. are also worshiped in Malsom samaj with due respect and sincerity. Moreover, it is also important to mention here that Brahma, Bishnu, Maheshwar, Kali, Durga, Kamdeb, Biswakarma, Krishna, Laxmi, Saraswati, Shonideb and so many more are also regarded as gods and goddesses for which they offer pujas with Prasad, Annabhog etc. in the appropriate time like other people of Hindu samaj. A little variation in the manner of offering pujas may be observed in a few cases but the basic pattern and moral obligation is found to be synonymous.

Suprai alias Subrai – The Godhead, sole Creator of the Universe:

The origin of Almighty Siprai alias Subrai is traced from the Tripuri civilization and their

religious belief. The root word of Siprai or Subrai is from the original word Siba. It has again derived from two root word of Tripura languages viz. Si+Ba=Siba. “Ba” means five in Boro/Borok/Tripura languages. This is the five elements which is essential for the creation of life in this world, i.e. earth, water, fire, air and sky or cosmic energy and “Si” means knowledge of five elements of the living or in other words one who has created life out of these earthly material elements. He is none but the Almighty Creator of life in this world and this universe, known as Siva. The word ‘-rai’ is affixed in Boro/Borok/Tripuri languages at the end of names of most of the male offspring, especially those who are very strong, stout and masculine.

In the word Siba, the ‘-rai’ word had been suffixed to denote the almighty as masculine and as supreme power, the creator of universe. So the word became Sibrai to Siprai to Subrai and so on in different dialects of Tripuri, Halam and other janajati communities of Tripura by convenience of pronunciation.

Sri Alindra Lal Tripura, one of the experts of religious history, mythology and philosopher had

written many books on Tripuri Hindu Religion. In his book “Tripurar Upajati Sanskriti O Tantrik Chikitsa” he stated that Subrai or Siprai is also known as Bathubrai by Boro people. It derived from the word Bathu=ba+thu, “ba’ means five and “thu’ means deep, that is having deep knowledge of five elements of life. This explanation of root origin of Subrai or Sibarai is same as that of Tripuri people. In the book of “Tripurar Sanhita” he wrote about Subrai as this “Subrai hambrai mili sristir karon, Sumadhur badya robe kore jagoron,” This means that Subrai is the sole creator of the Universe and the life on the Earth. Another famous religious writer, Sri Sujan Kumar Jamatia, who had published the book on Tripuri Hindu religion, “Kwthar Laikrang” wrote that Subrai is the sole Creator of Universe and the life in the earth. Here it is stated, “He Subrai, nwnngno bishwa brahmanda no mwthangnai, mwthwinai, butharnai.”

Many people offer to this supreme god sacrifices of various domestic animals like chicken, duck, pigs, pigeons etc. to get rid of diseases, other problems in life and also in anticipation of a long life, good health, wealth, property and so on. In popular Malsom language, Mahadev/Shiva is called Pathwnlwn (Goadhead, Motaikotor in Kokborok). Suprai is the most powerful ancestor Supreme Soul. According to common belief of the Malsoms,

He is so powerful that He, by His supernatural power, can save human beings from even death. So, He is worshiped by an Ochai by sacrificing two hens and some other offerings.

Sakhi Darlongnu:

It is a metal plate made in the shape of Sakhi Dar i.e., the shoulder of a deer slung down from one leg. This metal plate had been handed over by one of the Kings of Tripura to Malsom Dofa (Community) in the past in loving memory of Sakhi Darlongnu. Now, it is being worshipped by Malsom people as a sacred idol. Sakhi Darlongnu, the mother of traditional gods of water named “Tuipathwn-ngwi” as cherished by the people of Malsom Dofa and is being worshipped by them till date with deep respect. Sakhi Darlongnu is also known as Hasongnu who is believed to be helpful in miraculous recovery of any missing article, livestock and also human being while her sons are bestowed with blessings for good health, prosperity and peace to the worshippers.

Sengrak Pathwn:

Sengrak is the traditional God of Malsom Dofa whose temporary temple is situated at Manithangbari of Udaipur Sub-Division in South Tripura District. Sengrak is also an ancestor soul who was a great warrior in Malsom Dofa. It is strongly believed that Sengrak fought for the welfare of mankind in the past subduing all evil forces by His supernatural

power. As such, Khawser (Kerpuja) is performed by all the village headmen (Choudhuris) in every Malsom villages and centrally at the residence of Malsom Rai (Chief of the community) every year. This puja is arranged by collecting subscriptions from every house of Malsom village. The Sengrak is worshipped in the winter season. The puja is performed so that no mishap takes place during the time of cultivation, especially in Jhum related activities such as cleaning of jungle, setting fire thereon and the like.

Lord Sengrak is being worshipped with full devotion as a racial God by Malsom people since time immemorial which has a number of references in folklores, ballads etc. He was a gallant, a great warrior and incomparably beautiful. It is said that He fought against injustice, tyranny, immodesty etc., safeguarding and providing proper nourishment to the generous people. He achieved the everlasting reputation and honour by subduing His contemporary evil forces. It is also cherished that the great open sword honours His gallantry, patience and credibility for ensuring equitable justice. On the other hand, it is also said that the two great open swords set diagonally facing each other are considered as the symbol of invincible force of wisdom to overcome evil forces.

Arthwing-ngwi:

The most popular pair of

benevolent traditional gods are “Arthwing-ngwi” (Gods of holiness, also known as Akatha & Bikatha). The literal meaning of ‘Arthwng-ngwi’ is gods of holiness. Their prime duty is to prepare plan and estimate lifespan, fate & opportunities and other aspects in life covering joy and sorrows, that is a perfect horoscope before birth of every creature. So their duty is undoubtedly noble and thus they hold a high status, performing sacred job. It is believed that the fate of someone depends on the hairsplitting assesment of vice and virtue credited in his or her previous lives in the world. After their thorough observation on the extent of vice and virtue, they impartially prepare the plan and estimate for next life’s affairs as re-birth is believed to exist since creation of the universe. As such, persons who have done good work in their past lives are said to be bestowed with bliss of God and get rewarded by being born in higher degree, so that one can attain attachment of Almighty God by way of gradual spiritual development. These gods are worshipped by offering chicken or other domestic animals by an Ochai with aspiration of good health, good luck, purifying the state of unholiness due to birth and death in the cycle of human life.

Thingkung-ngwi:

They are a pair of two male Gods of Trees (Kalator and Bilator) worshipped by people

belonging to Malsom as well as Tripuri tribes in Tripura. They are said to be bestowed with powers to bless their worshippers with natural resources like trees, shrubs, plants, bamboos, creepers, crops, fruits, vegetables, grasses etc. for sustaining livelihood of mankind, animals, birds, insects and other mini living creatures of the world. Those who engage in agriculture, are very much acquainted with them. So their symbol is “a green Tree full of branches, branchlets, twigs, leaves etc.” They are believed to prefer staying on big trees in jungles in their leisures after performing their assigned duties conferred by the Siprai/ Subrai (Godhead). They make grow various trees, shrubs, plants, creepers, bamboos, crops, vegetables and numerous other floral species, bloom them with beautiful flowers oozing fragrances and bear fruits to maintain life generations after generations on the surface of mother earth. It is also noteworthy that every big tree has a shadow of its own around the root which is comparateively cool especially during hot summer season. Such a place is suitable for taking rest for human being and animals as and when they feel exhausted. Actually they are only donors never receivers. So they render selfless service in nature in order to maintain normal ecological balance.

The significance behind their symbol as a Tree is the fact that the trees are nourishers,

protectors, afford shelter and food to human beings, animals, birds, insects and other many living creatures to maintain the bio-diversity and ecological balance of the universe. So the worshippers pray to them for blessings of bumper crops, vegetables, fruits etc. They also pray for moderate natural service like rain, air, sunshine etc. since these are the essential ingredients for vegetation and food production. Because these natural phenomenon are believed to be controlled by them. Moreover, people bow to them for their good health, good fortune, long life, healthy children and peaceful life. As such, they are worshipped out of gratitude by sacrificing chicken, duck, goat etc. by an Ochai (priest). They are also worshipped in every event of life, in all joys and sorrows from the eve of birth of a baby to the death. So these gods of Trees, popularly known as Thingkung-ngwi (Kalator and Bilator) are worshipped by Malsoms with deep respect and awe since the inception of their civilization.

Awipuma-ngwi/Asen-ngwi:

Asen-ngwi, the evil male spirit generally related to mortality of human beings and are believed to come at the time of a person’s death. The Ochai worships the spirits in case of serious illness, by sacrificing two hens or a pig to prevent the untimely death of a sick person. According to Malsom’s common belief, Asen-ngwi are known as the god of

death. It is also stated that Awipuma-ngwi/Asen-ngwi are a pair of two male gods who perform as the sole custodian of human souls after death, deliver the departed souls to the Darbar (court) of Jamlok (Yamllok) to ascertain sin (paap) and virtue (punya) that are accumulated in the previous lives in the world. The sinful persons are said to be punished by making them take birth on earth as animals like dog, pig, cat, insects etc. to suffer for their sins. But good-doers are given better chance in the next life in the world, so that one can earn more punya to gradually attain salvation of the atma, rwtha (soul) which is known as moksha.

Nupang-ngwi:

Nupang-ngwi is a group of female evil spirits believed to reside in the forests. Their appearance is so ugly, odd-looking that every body is afraid of them. The symptoms such spirit related sickness are usually which starts with high temperature, headache and body-ache. To get rid of such possession by evil spirit, an Ochai worships the spirit by sacrificing two hens or one pig depending on their satisfaction. If the delirium continues, the Ochai, in addition, worships the Sengrak by sacrificing two hens to ward off Nupang-ngwi.

Pavengpa:

Pavengpa is also a male evil spirit believed to live in old abandoned houses away from

human habitations. He sets out from its residence in the darkness and moves around the village indiscriminately. If any one, especially children, crosses its path, it causes illness. The symptoms of illness are high temperature accompanied by shivering. The Ochai then sacrifices a black coloured hen in the evening and gets rid of the evil spirit. It is believed that certain trees in the forest are also the dwelling places of Pavengpa.

Hinduism is a broad category which encompasses both monotheistic and polytheistic tendencies, and variations of or mix of both structures. So common worship is largely polytheistic, while Hindu philosophers and theologians argued for a transcendent metaphysical structure with a single divine essence. This divine essence was usually referred to as Brahma or Atma, but the understanding of the nature of this absolute divine essence is the line which defines many Hindu philosophical traditions such as Vedanta.

Many Hindus believe in different deities emanating from Brahman, and the majority continues to worship a deity as a matter of personal belief or tradition as a representation of this supreme being.

In the Smartha denomination of Hinduism, the philosophy of Advaita expounded by Shankara allows veneration of numerous

deities with the understanding that all of them are but manifestations of one impersonal divine power, Brahma. Therefore, according to various schools of Vedanta including Shankara, which is the most influential and important Hindu theological tradition, there are a great number of deities, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Hanuman, Lakshmi, and Kali, but they are essentially different forms of the same "Being". However, many Vedantic philosophers also argue that all individuals were united by the same impersonal divine power in the form of the Atma.

In contrast to the Smartha sect, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism follow an established singular concept of a personal god, as panentheistic monistic monotheism, but differ in their conceptions of the Supreme God. A Vaishnavite considers Vishnu or Krishna as the only god worthy of worship, and worship of other deities as subordinate, or recommends worship of other forms of God as aspects or expansions of the Supreme. Many Vaishnavas regard Shiva as the topmost devotee of Vishnu, not to be confused with Sadashiv, who is regarded as an expansion of Vishnu. Shaivite worshiper's position is usually similar to Vaishnavism, however, they worship Shiva alone as the Supreme.

*(To be continued in
October, 2021 issue)*

Traditional Folk Theatre of Assam

Himangshu Sharma

Man is a social being. Without a society no man can live and without human beings society is misnomer. Human society is formed of some cultural elements. These elements are value based elements. The social sense of human beings comes through these value based elements. They are like traditional wisdom, faith, concept, art, moral relationships, customs, habits, behaviours and some other work-skills.

It may be said that culture is the backbone of human civilization, because culture directs the flow of living norms and tradition of human beings. The speciality of human race manifest through the continuation of culture and traditions. It also sustains the existence of humanity.

Cultural tradition is a dynamic process. It is a noticeable matter that the flow of cultural tradition change from time to time as the heritage of the society changes. Our judicious choices varies from time to time. Moreover, we include some extra elements in our culture from outside. The cultural heritage of aboriginals have been lost due to infiltration in their culture. However mixed culture dilutes the culture of villages.

Acting, dancing and singing, all these arts in effect expression of human imagination. From the primitive days these arts have been taken an important role in progressing the human race. These arts are the effective expression of the idea or feelings, amusement, entertainment and emotional aspects of day to day life of human beings. As the amusement and expression of joy are the natural qualities of a man so it may be said that these arts have also been derived from the primitive days of creation of human beings.

Both men and women take part in folk theatre. This art is spontaneous and not bound by any

grammar. The artists of folk theatre acquires the knowledge and skill of performance naturally. Their tune, beat, musical harmony, motion comes naturally to them. They acquire these arts by their eyes and ears. As a result of these features the folk theatres have been able to expand in the human society.

In Assam some Folk Theatre are Oja-pali, Putula Nach (Toy-Dance), Dhulia Bhaona (Dram Dancer), Kushan Gan, Dotor Gan, Bhari Gan etc.

Oja Pali is performed by a group of five artists. The first person is called Oja while his immediate helper is called Daina Pali. The other three persons are called Gor Pali. The Daina Pali (right hand person) takes an important role in the Oja-Pali and because of his skillfulness this Oja Pali function becomes very interesting and attractive. He is a dynamic person. His acting, dialogue, charm make the audience to joyfully enjoy the performance.

From ancient times this Oja-Pali folk theatre has been divided into three parts. They are Biahgoa or Byakhgoa, Ramayan goa and Sukanni (i.e. Singer of Sukabi Narayan Dev). This folk theatre is known as Panchali or Pachali. As there are five artists in Oja-Pali so five steps are also there in Oja-Pali. They are – Rag (Melody), Dina (Burden of song), Bani (message), Thoka (to come close) and Malita (Ballad). This Oja-Pali is an essential part of Manasha, Siva or Durga and such other pujas and are also performed during public religious functions in Assam.

Putula Nach (Toy dance) is another Folk Theatre in Assam. The formation of this Putula Nach is like the Oja-Pali. According to the critics Oja-Pali has acquired some elements from Putula Nach in Assam. Toys are made to dance by some threads. The main

(Contd. to Page 12)

Indian Women and Their Status in Society through Ages

Anuradha Dutta

“The incomparable radiance that was born from all gods and pervaded the 3 worlds, came to one place and took the form of a woman.”

(Source: Devîmahâtmyam 2.13, Markandeya Purana)

Life existed in holy land of India from the time the history was in making. It is a land where it is believed that the nature or the prakriti is the female force behind the marvel called life. Man, and women both walked side by side through ages, faced the changes of civilizations. The status of women as depicted in the works of the great sages through time indicates that it was never stagnant and it has been ever fluctuating. It is believed that from the ages of the Vedas, the Indian society has given the women a position that was not unequal to that of their male counterparts. There are many instances that lets us know that the women enjoyed freedom and equality in the society. The Rig-Vedic society, for example was a free society. Although the male child was preferred in a family, females were free as their male counterpart. Education was equally open for both boys and girls. Girls studied the Veda and fine arts. They enjoyed freedom in selecting their mates. Their Status in the family was of Ardhanginis. She was the supreme of the household and enjoyed freedom. Women helped their husbands in agricultural pursuits also. Husband used to consult his wife on financial matters. Unmarried daughters had share in their fathers' property. Daughter had full legal rights in the property of her father in the absence of any son. Mother's property, after her death, was equally divided among sons and unmarried daughters. There were women scholars and sages or brahmavadinis who composed hymns of Rig Veda. Vak Ambhrini, Lopamudra, Vishwawara, Sikta, Ghosha, and Maitreyi were the pioneers among them. The 39th and the 40th hymn of the Rig Veda, Mandala 10, is believed to have been composed by Lopamudra.

If we study the status of women as described in the epics, we can indulge ourselves with the knowledge that most of the female characters in Ramayana and the Mahabharata were well educated in all spheres of life. In Ramayana the characters of Mata Sita Tara, Mandodari, Urmila illustrates the qualities of Hindu women and the societal expectation from them. The Mahabharata on the other hand give accounts of women who were educated and politically empowered. Women characters like Satyawati, Draupadi, and Kunti changed and framed the course of mythological history with their strategic interference. As described by the great epic these women made Aryavart as it was. Women even offered their views and counselling to man for the betterment of the State and Dharma. While women enjoyed this high and honoured status in the epic ages their status was slightly deteriorated in the ages of puranas and the smritis. Although Manusmriti states -

“Where women are worshiped, there lives the Gods. Wherever they are not worshiped, all actions result in failure.”

“The family in which women (such as mother, wife, sister, daughter et al.) are full of sorrow that family meets its destruction very soon, while the family in which they do not grieve is always prosperous.”

However, Manusmriti includes certain number of verses on women and their rights that contradicts with the above verses. It also shows a declined position of women in the societal strata. Several examples are –

“Since women are not capable of living independently, she is to be kept under the custody of her father as child,

under her husband as a woman and under her son as widow.”
- Manusmriti 9/3

“While performing namkarm and jatkarm, Vedic mantras are not to be recited by women, because women are lacking in strength and knowledge of Vedic texts. Women are impure and represent falsehood.” - Manusmriti 9/18

As stated in Manusmriti, women do not have any economic right. He says, “A wife, a son and a Slave, these three are declared to have no property, the wealth which they earn is for him to whom they belong”. Thus, from the verses of Manusmriti or the ‘Manava Dharmashastra’, we come to know that women lost their high and revered status that they enjoyed in the vedic ages in the age of Puranas and Smritis. However, there are some mentions of contradictions found that raises further questions in this regard. Although Manusmriti seems quite harsh while stating the position of women in the society, it is worthy to be mentioned that various manuscripts of Manusmriti discovered in India are inconsistent with each other, and within themselves, raising concerns of its authenticity, insertions and interpolations made into the text in later times.

We can conclude that there are two schools of thought and philosophy in ancient India, one held woman with utmost respect and saw them enjoying a high status in the society while enriching and contributing towards its prosperity. The other school however, not only objectified women; it looked down upon them with positive hatred.

The status of women in the society saw some changes in the Buddhist era. Women were able to achieve distinctive place in the field of religion. They held their own Sangha called Bhikshuni Sangha. There were many well-known female arahants. Although early Buddhist texts such as the Cullavagga section of the Vinaya Pitaka of the Pali Canon contain statements from Gautama Buddha, speaking to the fact that a woman can attain enlightenment, it is also clearly stated in the Bahudhâtuka-sutta that there could never be a female Buddha. The Buddha provided the names

of women, both mendicant and lay, who were exemplars of attainment and character. These are listed in the Pañcama Vagga and Chamhha Vagga of the AĒguttara Nikāya.

According to ancient Hindu texts and tradition, until about 500 B.C. women in India enjoyed considerable freedom. But in the next thousand years that followed, women’s status in society deteriorated. Freedom that was abundant in the Vedic Ages like educational and religious parity was denied to them. The Muslims invaded India for first time in the eighth century. During this period, the Hindu society was evolving once again, under the leadership of Sankaracharya. He emphasised on the supremacy of Vedas. The Vedas as we know, had given a status of equality to women.

India was invaded for the second time by the Muslims in the eleventh century when Mohammad Ghazni conquered India. From this period till the middle of the eighteenth century, when the British rule was established in the country the breakdown of social institutions, the vast migration of people and the economic depression in the country contributed to a general decline of social life, particularly among women. The ‘Purdah’ system was followed which resulted in seclusion of women. Education of women in whatever form came to be stopped. Child marriage was started. During this period the inhuman practice of sati pratha was in vogue. Purdah pratha, sati pratha, child marriage, girl killing, polygamy etc. were the main social evils of this period.

However, during the fifteenth century, the Bhakti movement was organised by Ramanujacharya. During this period introduced new trends in the social and religious life of Indian women. The saints like Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Meera, Ramdas and Tulsi stood for the right of women to religious worship. Hence, this movement, at least, provided religious freedom to women.

The women of Indian subcontinent went through an era of oppression while the entire nation slowly drifted under the British rule. The rights

of the women were never looked to be a matter of concern by the East India Company and later by the British Government. But even in that dark time of oppression there were people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy who opposed the sati pratha, advocated for widow remarriage and right for women to hold property. There were women like the Queen of Jhansi who opposed the British rule and fought with such bravery that even Sir Hugh Rose, who led the British forces against her wrote - she was a "man among mutineers". Word of praise and honour by the enemy themselves. Later freedom fighters like Sarojini Naidu, Madam Bhikaji Cama, Kanaklata Barua, Usha Mehta etc fought alongside the great freedom fighters to earn our country independence.

In the post-independence era till the present day the status of Indian women in the society has been uplifted by many standards. The daughters of this holy soil are now excelling in every sphere of life. Be it science and technology, business, or

education; women are seen everywhere marking their presence. Even in the defence sector women are making their presence felt. Kalpana Chawla, a woman of Indian origin had made her presence known even in space. Indra Nooyi, Former Chairman and CEO of Pepsi Co, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon, Swati Piramal, Vice Chairperson, Piramal Enterprises are several well-known women who with their intellect and hard work shined in their respective domains. With a progressive governance in India right now, with schemes like Mahila E-haat, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre Scheme, Working Women Hostels, Nari Shakti Puraskars, ban in the prenatal sex determination etc, strictness of government while putting effort towards the eradication of child marriage, female foeticide, trafficking, and prostitution etc. the society is moving towards a better future. A future where women of India will enjoy their rightful place in the society.

(Contd. from Page 9)

Traditional Folk Theatre of Assam

person who make the toys dance hide behind the screen. He pulls the threads or moves the threads with the tune played on the stage. This toy dance try to carry a message for the society.

Dhulia Bhaona (Dram Player) is another noticeable folk theatre in Assam. In puja or any religious function or marriage ceremony this Dhulia Bhaona take an important role. In some function they use mask to indicate different characters like Ravana, Ram, Hanuman, Bakasur etc. This impresses the audience very much and keep alive their interest in the play. Sometimes they inject some hilarious dialogues which the audience enjoy. The dress they wear are colourful and uncommon. Some other folk theatres are Kushan gan, Bharigan

and so on.

Now a days it is seen that the originality of Folk Theatres have been lost to a great extent. The present mechanized civilization has taken a great role in damaging the originality of folk theatre. Moreover globalization which has made the world a greater village has brought some modern culture which is very different from our indigenous culture. All these have made us lose interest in the Folk Theatre. We must understand that Folk Theatre is the identity of our ancestors and it is our duty to protect it for our posterity.

**(The author can be contacted at 88764-99645
& E-mail: himangshusharma0@gmail.com)**

Information and Communication Technology for Tribal Development

Er. Sanjit Kumar Ghosh
A. Simhachalam

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed the world and has emerged as a very powerful tool in the developmental human societies. ICT plays a key role in multiple dimensions of development like community empowerment, education, skill development, health, infrastructure, employment and also in the planning and monitoring of various developmental schemes initiated by the government. The term ICT can broadly be defined as a system or blend of subsystems that integrate necessary software, computers, telecommunication systems and host of other electronic tools for processing, storing, replicating, retrieving and sharing information.

Government of India has undertaken numerous initiatives including some flagship programmes for delivering various government services to the doorstep of every citizens including in rural and underserved areas through digital mode. India is considered to be one among of the most advanced nations in the field of Information Technology but in spite of the technological advantages and availability of huge skilled IT manpower, digital services were found to be limited to the urban areas only. However, the recent big push of the government towards establishment and proliferation of the ICT infrastructure and facilities uniformly throughout the country has perceived a positive impact in the use of digital services in the rural areas too. The Digital India programme of the government is a pioneering ingenuity towards bringing a drastic change in the use of ICT tools in various sectors for the delivery of numerous citizen centric services in an efficient and transparent manner. By the introduction of government's massive IT infrastructure expansion programmes like Bharat Net

and Common Service Centre coupled with some private sector initiatives in the development of communication networks, digital services are now reaching to the rural and inaccessible areas of the country rapidly.

ICT which comprises numerous tools and techniques including cloud computing and mobile based applications is playing a pivotal role in rapid economic growth and citizen empowerment. ICT has become an integral part of our everyday activities and an effective means of availing e-Governance services like banking, health, education, agriculture, transport and other citizen services. Sharing of information has now become much easier than ever before through ICT and it has given a tremendous impetus towards skill development. The ambitious 'Digital India' programme, launched during 2015 has changed the entire landscape of digital transactions of every Indian representing different strata of the society. It is a programme to prepare India for a knowledge future. The motive behind the concept is to connect rural areas with high speed internet network and improving digital literacy. Digital India is the outcome of many innovations and technological advancements. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have the potential of not only bridging the great digital divide in the country but also of positively contributing to the growth of the economy, employment and productivity. Remoteness and isolation could be eliminated to a large extent through the intervention of Information and Communication Technologies.

ICT in Tribal Development

Tribal communities can be greatly benefitted in different aspects of their life and activities by integrating themselves with the prevailing digital world. The use of ICT in the various transactional

aspects assumed more significant among the Tribal populace of North East India as the region has the higher percentage of Tribal population than the national average. As per the census 2011, tribal communities constitute about 8.2 % of the total population of India. Tribal population are mostly concentrated in central and north east India. The north eastern region is the home of numerous tribal groups and each state in the region has higher percentage of tribal population than the national average. Four NE states namely Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh are having more than 60% tribal population.

Commonly tribal habitations are located in the hilly terrain, forested and far-flung isolated areas. Moreover, the issues cornering to tribal communities are similar across the country. Tribal societies are distressed by the issues like poverty, illiteracy, low income, unemployment, food insecurity, lack of civic amenities, poor health and educational facilities and meagre standard of living. Many tribal localities are plagued by the absence of basic infrastructure like road, communication, electricity, safe drinking water, housing and sanitation among others.

Tribal communities specially those live north east India have a very rich cultural tradition and their unique traditional knowledge and skill, handloom and handicrafts, medicinal plants and herbs, organic food products and beverages, cultural heritage and sports skills are well appreciated. However, in spite of having these many advantages, many of them are still suffering from the non-availability of proper market facilities, locational inaccessibility and lack of information about the outside world. The world is changing fast due to the swift technological advancement. To keep pace with the ever changing world, it has become inevitable for the tribal communities to be acquainted with the ICT skills and applications and at the same time it has become necessary for them to adopt digital means for doing activities. Some Tribal communities in NE region are having higher literacy rate compared to their counterpart from other region of the country which may put them in slightly advantageous position in terms of adopting the ICT.

ICT infrastructure facilities

The tribal communities living in the rural and isolated areas can take the advantage of the expanding digital services and the ICT infrastructure facilities in their respective locations for connecting with the rest of the world. The government of India has undertaken one of the world's largest fibre optic broadband network programme for providing internet connectivity in the rural areas. It has been envisioned to connect all the 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayat across India. As per the data available at the website of Bharat Broadband Nigam Limited, already 5,5,25,706 km of OFC has been laid and 1,73,79 numbers of Gram Panchayats have been connected as on August 2021.

Apart from the broadband connectivity, the government is also establishing Common Service Centre (CSC) at each of the 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country. CSCs act as a front-end contact point of rural citizens for availing various e-governance services. Thus, citizens can avoid visiting to the government offices which are away from their locality. Service facilities available at CSCs may empower tribal citizens in a great way for receiving all required services in digital mode.

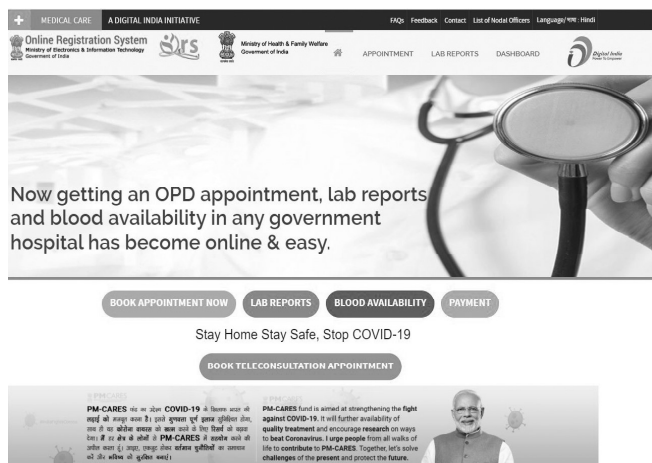
Applications of ICT for Tribal Development

There are some very popular digital applications although designed for all section of the citizen may be greatly utilised by the tribal communities for various kinds of activities effecting to their day to day life. Few of the ICT platforms which can be highly beneficial for all-round development of the tribal communities are discussed in the following sections-

Doorstep Health Consultation

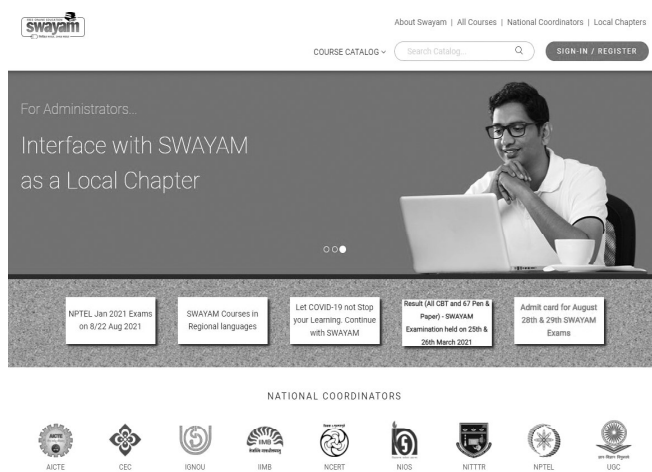
ICT plays a key role in providing of health information and guidance to citizen. Tribal areas particularly may extremely be benefitted by the ICT driven health platforms like telemedicine, health awareness campaign on internet, mobile and health talks on television. The digital India programme in the health sector like e-hospital, Online Registration System(www.ors.gov.in), eRaktkosh (<https://www.eraktkosh.in>) are particularly shall be very

helpful to the citizens seeking health services from remote areas. Under ORS, around 80 reputed government hospitals are linked and citizens can search and avail online doctor's appointment from anywhere. The tribal areas where health facilities are very limited can take the medical consultation from the expert health specialists from the prominent hospitals under these online platform.



Availing Online Education

ICT has a huge role in reaching out to the quality education by a huge section of people in the country. Advanced ICT enabled interactive teaching and learning environment are both suitable for classroom deliberation as well as remote learning. The SWAYAM (www.swayam.gov.in) is a Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) learning platform which offers a large number of online courses which can be availed from any location. This courses are well recognised by the UGC, IITs, Universities, AICTE and other reputed institutions of the country. The



courses are offered by the well-known academicians and can be very helpful to tribal students for acquiring knowledge and latest skills.

Similarly, the online platform like e-Pathshala (<https://epathshala.nic.in>) is a huge repository of eBooks under the various educational boards like CBSE starting from the nursery to class 12. These eBooks are freely downloadable and can be immense support to the poor and needy students. Moreover, various multi-media learning materials of school curriculum can also be a big support to the student aspiring for optimal learning. Introduction of Online scholarship system through National Scholarship Portal (<https://scholarships.gov.in/>) is also bringing a sea change in the scholarship registration as well as in timely disbursement of scholarships directly to the student bank accounts through the channel of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). The NSP is empowering students including poor and needy tribal students to claim and receive their due share in a time bound manner.

Enhancement of agriculture productivity and income

National Agriculture Market (<https://www.enam.gov.in>) is an electronic agriculture marketing portal which networked all the existing APMC Mandis to create a unified national market facility for agricultural commodities. With this, farmers can now instantly know the current market prices which in turn is helping them to get the justified rates of their agricultural commodities. This apart, farmers can also know the best agricultural practices and weather information from the portal. Similarly, through online soil health platform, farmers can avail instant information including understanding the soil conditions and crop-wise endorsements of fertilizers and nutrient components for a specific farming land. This help farmers to enhance productivity. Moreover, there is also a farmer portal (www.farmer.gov.in) which is specifically launched for the farmers provides a range of agricultural information like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, weather which increases the efficiency of a farmer. Since the tribal communities are commonly dependent on agricultural activities, tribal farmers can greatly benefitted by connecting

themselves in these kind of digital portals for increasing productivity, diversified cultivation and thus raising their income generation.

Empowerment through digital Literacy

The government of India has undertaken few multidimensional programmes for empowering citizens through digital literacy. Without basic digital transactional knowledge and skills, it may be difficult to reach the benefits of ICT interventions to the poor and underprivileged section of the society. Realizing this fact, government has launched Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (PMGDISHA) which aims at giving digital literacy to six crore citizens in rural area with some basic ICT skills like internet browsing, sending and receiving emails, information searching, digital payment including access of government services. Schedule Tribes come among the priority groups under the schemes. So one member from each rural household can avail this short term digital skill learning facility and certified themselves through CSC or other recognized training agencies at their localities. The details of the scheme are available at www.pmgdisha.in.

Moreover, National level Institute like NIELIT, is offering a number of job oriented courses which particularly are suitable for IT enable Service (ITES) industries in India. There are number of demand driven courses which are offered totally free of cost to the tribal students under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP). NIELIT have established centres in the North East, the tribal student of the region to take the opportunity offered by the government of digital skills which may help them for venturing into IT jobs and entrepreneurship.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in collaboration with Facebook. India has launched a unique digital mentorship programme 'GOAL (Going Online As Leader) specifically for the schedule tribe youths in a aim to empower tribal youth in the remote areas to integrate them with the digital world and use digital tools. This initiative is empowering tribal youths to become village level digital leaders of their communities by providing mentorship on life skills, entrepreneurship and digital literacy (goal.tribal.gov.in).

Employment Generation through IT and ITES

IT and IT enable service (ITES) sector in India are one of the leading job provider engaging a huge workforce through direct as well as indirect employment. Digital India programme, in a bid to create more employment in this sector has been promoting 'IT for Jobs' as one among the nine pillars of the digital India programme. 'IT for Job' pillar emphasises on providing training to the youth in the IT skills required for availing employment opportunities in the IT/ITES sector. It is targeting to train one crore youths in smaller towns and villages in the areas of Service delivery agents, BPO sectors and Telecom services. It also focuses setting up Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centres in every north-eastern state.

Over the years, the Indian BPO industry has observed momentous growth. Several factors including operational cost effectiveness, availability of skilled manpower have contributed to the growth of BPO industry in the country. However, the BPO centres mostly located in large cities in India where a good number of youths from NE Region seek employment.

The North East BPO Promotion Scheme (NEBPS) provides for establishment of BPO/ITES operations in North East Region thus creating a good employment opportunities in the region. Already a good number of BPO centres have been made operational in the region. Since tribal youths in North East are mostly English educated and fluent English speaking is one of the prime criteria for seeking employment in BPO sector and therefore these BPO centres shall create huge employment opportunities for NE tribal youths.

Common Service Centre (CSC) is a mission mode projects under the Digital India Programme which are located in the rural areas preferably at the Gram panchayat office premises are mandated to provide essential citizen centric services including financial, education, healthcare and agriculture services including several commercial services. It has been planned to establish 2.5 lakhs CSCs across India. Any rural youth can apply for CSC at their locality as a

Village level Entrepreneur (VLE). A CSC can be also be a good employment opportunity for tribal youths.

Moreover, a number of private agencies provide online job platform which offer scopes for working from home in the diversified areas of IT enable services. One can earn good income through these online job providers even from rural area provided he or she has acquired some basic online job skills and having internet connection at their locality.

Embracing of Digital Marketing

Tribal communities are endowed with the traditional skills of producing very good quality handloom and handicrafts items, jewellery, painting, medicinal plants and herbs, organic food products and beverages. The whole world appreciates the uniqueness of tribal products. However, due to inaccessibility of proper market linkages they are unable to raise the demand of the products and as a result unable to sell their products at the appropriate price. Adopting online marketing platforms will help to the tribal producers to get access to the huge online market with demand for their products from the worldwide customers. The online marketing platforms like Government e-Marketplace (www.gem.gov.in), Tribes India, Amazon, Flipkart are very popular where tribal products can be marketed to the wide range of customers irrespective of their locations.

Conclusion

The intervention of Information and Communication Technology have been proven to be very effective to alleviate exclusion within communities. The world has become a small village and the world communities are now well connected thorough digital media. Like others, Tribal communities can also reap the benefits in the multiple aspects of life by adopting the means of ICT for raising the aspirations of the community as a whole. It is the need of the hour for the members of Tribal communities to take the advantage of various ICT schemes initiated by the government for the enhancement of digital literacy, skills, education, employment, health and income generation.

However, there is a coordinated needs from all stakeholders to reach out to the tribal communities with connectivity and access to digital services.

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(Author **Er. Sanjit Kumar Ghosh** is a Sr. Computer Programming Associate with NIRD, Guwahati and can be reached at skghosh.nird@gov.in.

Co-author **Dr. A. Simhachalam** is an Assistant Professor at NIRD, Guwahati and can be reached at asimhachalam.nird@gov.in

Monolith after unsung heroes of 1891 Anglo-Manipur war

(21 names, including Maharaja Kulachandra, have been engraved on the monolith)

The Manipur government recently unveiled a monolith dedicated to the unsung heroes of the Anglo-Manipur war in 1891, whose whereabouts remained unknown after they were sent to exile at Kalapani during British rule.

The monolith was inaugurated by Manipur Governor designate Ganga Prasad on the occasion of Patriot's Day of Manipur. As many as 21 names, including Maharaja Kulachandra, have been engraved on the monolith.

The monolith has been constructed alongside "Sahid Minar", also known as the Martyr's Memorial, erected as a symbol of sacrifice made by the Anglo-Manipuri war heroes. On August 13, 1891, at this very park, Manipur prince Bir Tikendrajit and General Thangal, were hanged publicly for waging a war against the British empire while others were sent to exile at Kalapani.

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said the memorial complex is a tribute to all those who were exiled to Andaman and Nicobar Islands after the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891. He stated that "We must not forget the exiled martyrs who made supreme sacrifices for the sovereignty of our motherland. This day reminds us of the courage and selfless sacrifices made by our forefathers who fought the mighty British forces despite knowing that they would be defeated,"

Ng Uttam Singh, Director Arts and Culture, said the names engraved on the monolith was based on records

found in the Manipur Archives. "As per the records available, we found names of 22 persons who were sent to exile by the British. Initially names of only 21 were engraved as we came to know that the exile order of one of them was cancelled," said Uttam Singh. The Director, however, informed that there is room for inclusion of names on the monolith in case new records are unearthed.

Till date, it remains unclear as to how many Manipuris were exiled to Kalapani's Cellular Jail. Some reports suggest that 16 persons were exiled to the islands after Manipur was defeated while various sources indicate there were altogether 23 people exiled at Kalapani in different batches and at different points of time.

Another report suggests that freedom fighters imprisoned at the Cellular Jail during the period of 1901-1938 were 513 in number. The data is based on the wall inscriptions of the jail and divided into three phases – the First Phase (1909-1921), Second Phase (1922-1931), and Third Phase (1932-1938).



Not a game of politics!

E. Rajesh Pathak

The great war of Chamkore was fought in 1703. With only 40 courageous warriors Guru Govind Singh brought were far more powerful than the military personnels of Mughals. In all Govind Singh had four sons, but unfortunately two out of them, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, died fighting on the battleground. Thereafter, in 27th December, 1704, the commander of Aurangzeb the Mughal king wished to see India a land devoid of Hindu population. The Nawab of Sarhind, Vazir Khan, deceptively kidnaped Govind Singh's younger sons, putting them into prison. Barely about 8 years old, Joravar Singh, and about 6 years old, Fateh Singh, were now forced either to adopt Islam or be prepared for embracing death. Both the boys protected their Dharma, embracing death. There are, likewise, inspiring instances of so many talented and courageous boys in history – Aklavya and Veer Haqiqat Rai to name a few. But in the country the “Bal-diwās” is celebrated after the birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru, who had been a politician. And no such instance comes in the memory when he did something glorious in his boyhood so that it could motivate other boys at that threshold of their age.

In the perspective of this incident we need to see the initiative taken in the last days when the highest award of ‘Khel-Ratan’ in the field of sport had been renamed after the idol of the players, Major Dhyanchand, to that of Rajiv Gandhi, a politician. This step is a blow to that mentality which, in place of merit, once gave priority to personal relations or political vested interests in the selection for the Government assistance and for dedicating a public place after the name of a public figure. At one time when it came to offer a Government pension and other facilities for the freedom fighters, the list containing the names

caused to degrade the entire community of freedom fighters in the eyes of local people. The truth of the matter is that, contrary to this, the family members of the Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Batukeshwar Dutt and others had to lead the life of misery and disrespect due to the rejection of the then establishment.

When Muslim ruler, Bakhtiyar Khilji, invaded Bihar he killed more than five thousand Buddhist monks. Rest of the Buddhists fled to China, Nepal and Tibet. In order to revive Buddhism the followers later tried to raise monasteries, but till then 90% Buddhists had gone back to the fold of Hinduism. Therefore these efforts came a cropper. (“*Dr Ambedkar aur samajik kranti ki yatra*”; page no-321). Ambedkar said this after having embraced Buddhism. What is surprising is that despite Mughals and British having left the country, the townships were named after this barbaric king that is “Bakhtiyarpur” in Patna district still remains unchanged.

‘Rashtrapati puruskar’ awarded in different fields too has the story of its own. It might seem weird but it is upon the aspirant himself to make the slot in the list like an applicant, describing much of self-woven narration of his or her own performance. And thereafter, having made so many approaches and by the ‘blessings’ of government agencies confronted at different levels, he could succeed in gaining the award. In the face of this, it could be well imagined how the real talents are feeling about playing their roles. The involved people also know not what for a particular person has been endowed with the award.

What needs to be understood is that this degradation of ethics in the public life is destroying and discouraging the real talents from trying to achieve higher goals.

The Tortoise and Monkey

Dr. Uzzal Sharma

Once upon a time there was a tortoise and a monkey who were great friends. One day, they saw a man passing by the road carrying a lot of plantains and molasses. On seeing him, the monkey said to the tortoise - "You go and wait on the road, and when the man tries to catch you, run away, I will hide in the jungle, and when the man runs after you, I will whisk away the plantains and molasses".

On seeing the tortoise moving on the road, the man put down his load and ran after the tortoise. The monkey immediately came out of the jungle and took away the plantains and molasses that the man had left on the ground, and climbed atop the tree with them.

In spite of his best efforts, the man, failed to catch the tortoise and returned back to the spot where he left his plantains and molasses. He was aghast at not finding his goods and returned back home feeling very sad.

The tortoise also returned and rejoined his friend and asked for his share of the plantains and molasses. The monkey offered him potsherds for molasses and banana skins for plantains. The tortoise felt cheated and insisted for his share. The monkey got angry and hoisted his friend into the tree, saying "See for yourself, if there is any sign of plantains or molasses here". Saying this the monkey left the tortoise hanging on the tree and went on his way. The tortoise was in great distress as he could not get down. One by one most of his fellow animal came under the tree, but none could help him to get down. Last of all a very aged rhinoceros came to the spot and the tortoise begged for allowing him to jump on his back. The rhinoceros consented,

and so the tortoise leaped down, with such a force that he broke the back of the old rhinoceros. The tortoise then covered up the corpse with leaves, and took it to the king's court and concealed it under the king's throne. When the royal court assembled later, the tortoise sneezed loudly, "Who dared to sneeze?" said the king. "Cut off his nose!" All the courtesans said in one voice that they did not sneeze. The sneezing was repeated once or twice again, someone saw the tortoise under the king's throne. So he said respectfully "If your Majesty wishes, you can kill me, but I have something to say: There is some living thing under your Majesty's throne. Without doubt, it was that thing which sneezed." On which the king, looking under his throne, saw the tortoise, and ordered them to cut off his nose. But the tortoise said, "Do not cut off my nose, and in return, I will give your Majesty a rhinoceros." At first, the king was angry, but looking at his sad face ordered his men to fetch the rhinoceros in front of him. When his men returned with the body of the rhinoceros, the king was very pleased and gave the tortoise a horse.

And as the tortoise was riding back to his home, he met the monkey and told him that the king had given him the horse. When the monkey asked him why, he said that he had jumped on to a common lizard from the tree, on which he had left him and had killed it. The tortoise further added that after the lizard was dead, he had covered it up with leaves and told the king it was a rhinoceros. The king was pleased and gave him a horse. So the monkey killed a lizard, and went and told the king it was a rhinoceros and got his nose cut off for his cheating.

Traditional Folk Theatre of Assam



Oja-Pali performed by artists

An artist teaching kushan songs at a workshop



Kamrupi Dhuliya are traditional folk drummers from Kamrup who play large and wide big drums called Bor Dhul mostly in ethnic festivals

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