Becoming Something Else

Becoming Something Else:

Society and Change in India's North East

Edited by

N. William Singh, Malsawmdawngliana and Saichampuii Sailo

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INTRODUCTION:

METAPHORS AND DISCONTENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST

N. WILLIAM SINGH

Patterns of change among the communities of India's northeast are not extolled by the communities; rather, the communities dissent and question the patterns of change by recalling a sense of belonging and rootedness. The general consensus on change in India's northeast is simple: "change is dissent in India's northeast; because change overturns the socio-cultural fabric of these communities."

Institutionalisation based on rational-legal perspectives without customary linings invites dissent. Change in India's northeast brings forth contradiction and is totally non-fitting contextually. In the first section, this introductory chapter revisits some of the best research papers and commentaries written on India's northeast and attempts to link them up with the parameters of social change. Later, in section II, this chapter disseminates the central idea of change that brings uncomfortable transformations witnessed in the not-so-well documented communities of India's northeast. The chapters in this edited volume are written by young scholars who grew up in these societies with a sense of belonging and rootedness. They dissect the anatomy of social change and examine both its welcoming and discomforting aspects.

I

Economic backwardness and the communication gap are considered the objective factors to be solved. In a more problematic manner, tribalism, Christianity, conflict, insurgency, ethnic homelands, the modern ethos in conflict with customary belongings, elite conflict (Chaube 1975) and sub-nationalism (Baruah 2009) are broadly considered to be the negative

symptoms of contemporary India's northeast. No community remains stagnant, and the historical situation is subject to the process of social change.

Change and transformation were incepted in India's northeast through various agencies, one of the foremost being the colonial administrators who introduced modern education, alphabets for Mizo, Naga and Khasi, print dictionaries for the communities to read Western books and become acquainted with the values of Western modernity, translations of the Holy Bible into native languages, and who imposed rational laws and abolished head-hunting and enmities between habitations and villages. They gave their best shot at putting the communities of India's northeast under an effective rational law.

The colonial construction of India's northeast can be termed as an "administer with a difference." Preconceived and stereotyped labelling of the natives effectively colonized the fundamentally different and inferior subjects. That is the reason why stereotypical and derogatory tags, such as "primitive," "wild," "poor" and "tribal," were attributed to the least understood communities of India's northeast. The colonial construction of wildness and primitiveness were inherent to colonizers to justify their colonizing projects, accompanied by euphemisms like "civilizing mission" or "the white man's burden."

Colonial administrators brought missionaries to civilize and sanitize the natives, paving the way forward. Colonial memories of India's northeast exist not just in the archives and in photographs—missionaries still exist in the minds and souls of the communities, and missionary activities persist actively in spreading awareness, educating the poor and spreading religious harmony, and their records also fill up the bookshelves of many archives. Colonial administration is a closed chapter in the present scenario in India's northeast, but the missionary chapters cannot be closed because they are difficult to understand and are still active in the corners of India's northeast.

The cultural division between the planes and hills of India's northeast was manifested by the Inner Line Policy (ILP) of 1872–3, which is still in force. This is a policy measure inserted by colonial administrators to create a political cleavage between the planes and the hills for easier administrations in governing the hill areas. Communities from the planes of India still view ILP sceptically, seeing it as an extension of the colonial

imperialist policy which post-independence India simply adopts. This creates politics of tension between the hill and non-hill communities of India's northeast (Rao 1979). Christian Missionaries also believed that ILP generates a separatist tendency among the hill and non-hill settlers. There are no unifying aspects in ILP.

Furer-Haimendorf (1945), while characterizing the rebellions of aboriginal tribes of peninsular India as "defensive movements," distinguished the occasional uprisings of the frontier tribes in India's northeast as "more in the nature of resistance to the establishment of Government's authority than a challenge to the administration." Northeast India fell under British colonial rule during the mid-nineteenth century and was amalgamated into a polyglot of the newly independent Indian republic.

Communities from India's northeast remain in the limelight, but for disturbing reasons. We hear in the evening news, breaking news and newspaper headlines only bad issues about India's northeast, such as its being backward, its uncivilized tribes, its conflict zones, its being insurgent prone, its ethnic homelands movements, discrimination from central India, and so forth. We rarely notice good news about India's northeast, except regarding music, boxing and footballers.

Institutional changes accompany badly formulated policy orientations towards India's northeast. The region has a separate ministry headed by a central cabinet minister known as the Department for Development of the Northeastern Region (DONER), set up in 2001 as a part of this reorientation of India's northeast. It is the sole ministry looking after India's northeast. The idea itself is odd (Miri 2002). It also has a separate body called the Northeastern Council (NEC), established in 1971 by an act of the Indian parliament. The NEC plans for development and sustainability, but fails to make sustainable changes in India's northeast.

The discomforting question is—where is the sustainability in India's northeast? This region is more dependent than any other part of India. From electric power to basic consumer goods, the NEC fails to deliver for every household. India's growth and development story cannot be festive if India's northeast remain cornered and stereotyped by the central Indians. India will never glow when its northeast remain gloomy.

The role of agency in each society is peculiar. Also, the structure of each society in India's northeast is fundamentally different in terms of

language, culture, rituals and religious affiliations. The elite play a significant role in incepting social change within the communities of India's northeast (Chaube 1975). The hill districts of Assam were administered separately from the planes in the colonial period. After independence, the hill districts emerged into separate hill states precisely because of their compactness of elite articulation.

India's northeast as the other Indian

Ignorance of the Indian northeast's existence by other parts of India is a syndrome often felt in today's India. Indian independence is just 66 years old, while Assam's statehood is as old as Indian independence. The remaining seven states of northeast India are not that old. People from central India do not even know the state capitals of the eight northeastern states. A PhD scholar from the University of Delhi once asked me "Is Shillong the state capital of Assam?" I replied: "What's your score in geography?"

Former Army chief General Shankar Roy Choudhury, sitting in his bungalow at Kolkata, once remarked live on a national news channel (NDTV): "Frankly speaking, Northeast India does not exist to the Indian mainland mindset." Indian army and air force chiefs served tenures with different capacities in India's northeast and still talk in these outrageous terms. Indian government employees—administrators, defence personnel, scientists, judges, police officials and telecommunications and revenue employees—dislike transfer orders from central India to the northeast.

The legacy of poor governance, weak local leadership and violent ethnic politics constitute the living nemesis of India's northeast. New Delhi counts on other regional parties to form coalition governments, while regional parties from India's northeast cannot impact seriously on New Delhi's political graph. Thus, a fractured political theatre exists.

New Delhi provides financial resources in the name of democracy. Promises of infrastructure growth and incepting industrial facilities were strongly heard during election warm-ups in New Delhi and India's northeast states, but after the elections became quiet again. The Gandhi family (Rahul, Sonia) came to India's northeast before the elections, but have been rarely seen since.

Displaced Communities within the
Conflict Theatre of India's northeast

The state of displaced communities in India's northeast is alarming, and its complication continues to confound bureaucrats and politicians in New Delhi. Violence between the Bodo community and Bengali Muslims surfaced again and again on questions of land, sons of the soil and the nativism mindset. Some Muslims in Assam have spent their entire lives in refugee camps. An estimated 0.8 million people are displaced in this troubled part of India due to ethnic violence and secessionist movements.

Indian laws on protective measures provide the potential for the creation of ethnic homelands. For instance, the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution protects customary laws of communities and traditional rights to decide on questions of land and agrarian matters. Policies adopted by India turned the communities of India's northeast into more vivid communities, and language groups into ethnic blocks demanding ethnic homelands. Bodoland, Dimasaland, Maraland, Gorkhaland, Kukiland and Greater Nagaland are such cases in point. Enmity and "othering" between communities erupt due to ethnic homeland consciousness and autonomous district councils that are safeguarded by the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution.

"Ethnic ties in Northeast India do not neatly coincide with state boundaries, especially given the nature of the boundaries between states shaped by the political logic that I describe as a cosmetic regional order" (Baruah 2005). This is the root cause of what Baruah calls "Northeast India's durable disorder," which is a reflection of the complex "ethnoscape" of the region and the political failure of the colonial state of British India and the postcolonial state of India. The disillusioned ethnic groups of the region organised their respective militias or revolutionary organisations on ethnic lines to address their grievances and dissatisfaction with the existing order and sought autonomous districts within the states. They were forced to be part of political accidents or politically framed strategies.

Communities in India's northeast do not live in distinct areas; different communities overlap and community habitations cut across various autonomous district councils. Claims of ethnic homelands ignite violence and eventually internal displacements. Episodic killings between Naga and Kuki (1993–7) and Hmar and Paite (1997–8) are testaments to the Sixth

Schedule's ineffectiveness. Stability in India's northeast has simply failed due to the emerging unjust patterns of change. Ethnic conflict in India's northeast is not just on questions of land and resources, but also on the fear of the loss of identity and belonging (Oinam 2003).

The redrawing of the political map of northeast India in the postcolonial period was a hurried exercise in political engineering. It was an attempt to manage the independentist rebellions among the Nagas and the Mizos and pre-empt radical political mobilisation among other discontented ethnic groups. "From today's vantage point this project of political engineering must be pronounced a failure" (Baruah 2005). This failure gave birth to resistance movements. India's northeast has vast forests above natural resources filled with the largest number of ethnic militias or underground revolutionary groups. It was a failure because the "cartographic surgery" or "political engineering" was carried out without considering the pre-colonial traditional territories of the various distinct ethnic groups of the region.

India's northeast introduced insurgency to India. In 1952, Nagaland under A. Phizo started actions of secessionist violence, and similar separatist and secessionist violence has become entrenched in Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Assam since the late 1970s. Insurgency is multiplying in this region and has not been resolved, with many peace attempts failing. There cannot be lasting peace in India's northeast because the sense of alienation, negligence, discrimination and sidelining harpoons the peaceniks of Mizoram and Sikkim. Violence, insurgency and secessionism rock the newspaper headlines of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura every single day.

Mapping Changes in India's northeast

Change in India's northeast has fascinated "responsible social scientists" who examine the political and economic aspects of social change. In other words, change has multiple entities. Development has been the main theme for post-independence India. Post-1947, India's northeast transformations have occurred in four main parameters: tribal culture, language, territory and religious beliefs. These parameters are neither independent nor isolated from each other, often working in combination.

India's northeast is a polyglot of discrete formations of communities. Language, territory, religion, common origin and a host of other cultural

elements separate one community from another. A significant change is the emerging political awakening of identity revivalism with political translations beginning in India's northeast in the 1970s. A bewildering number of salient ascriptive identities (Baruah 2005; Hazarika 1994) have disturbed the traditional bond between communities. Despite continuing anti-New Delhi sentiments, the core of the contemporary conflict in India's northeast comprises local rivalries and resource disputes between tribal areas, between hill and plane areas, and between "sons of the soil" and migrants from the Bengal planes, Nepal or central India (Weiner 1978). New Delhi invests in state and group leaders in the northeast by distributing substantial financial and coercive resources, tolerating the erosion of democracy and the rule of law (Lacina 2009). This support allows local autocratic leaders to consolidate power and repress violence against what New Delhi considers the most sensitive targets, such as key infrastructure and industrial facilities.

The Northeastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 failed to solve ethnic habitations. The act divided many habitations of various communities of India's northeast and dissected these communities, merging the slices of these habitations into a legal state apparatus. This was an accident from the state's perspective, while from a community perspective it was an insult. Michiel Baud and Willem van Schendel (1997) observed in Asia that the statecraft of pre-existing highly developed native states, with their own conceptions of territorial integrity and boundaries (though different from the European model), powerfully influenced colonial administrations so that colonial borders were often superimposed on much older political and religious divides.

The mistake with re-organising frontiers (colonial) and state (postcolonial) was there even during the colonial period. Peter Robb (1997, 257–8) labels this process of chalking out frontiers as "unscientific":

> I began by thinking that we ought to refuse to take any cognizance of what may happen beyond the borders: but the more I thought about it and the more I considered the impossibility of restraining the Nagas, the less practicable did that policy seem. This conclusion is unsurprising because that colonial line/ boundary was "imaginary" and "not based on tribal boundaries or natural obstacles" like rivers, mountains and hills and was thus quite unfamiliar to the Nagas.
>   (Arthur Elliott's letter to Lord Ripon on May 28, 1881)

The pre-colonial setting of India's northeast was fluid and flexible, while the post-colonial settings have been less so, with boundaries becoming

more acute among the communities. Identity polarisation occurs more severely in post-independence India. India's northeast communities became ethno-political blocs. Identity markers were polished, and revivalist trends set in for various communities. The resultant effect is that the various social formations in India's northeast looked to their primordial cultural assets to define and consolidate their boundaries.

At present, changes in India's northeast social formations are often gripped with issues of ethnicity and identity politics among tribal communities, as well as non-tribal communities. The consolidation of identities along the lines of tribe and community had already been incepted. The socio-cultural boundaries provide resources for ethno-cultural mobilisation among some communities in India's northeast, mainly due to the evolvement of identity politics and ethnic mobilisation.

Post-independence India and New Delhi's approach to the tribes of India's northeast have radically altered from the time of the colonial administrators. The colonial policy of maintaining the status quo for forest settlers was replaced by development, modernisation and an integrationist ethos. This slogan of change coerced by New Delhi found many sceptics among the communities in India's northeast. Rather than celebrations, there has been dissent with loud noises of protest against the bureaucrats and policy makers sitting in swanky offices in New Delhi.

The post-independence period witnessed the acceleration of social change and the modernisation of various tribal groups in India's northeast. Inserting a modern ethos toward a community never becomes modern and rational in a pure sense. Communities want development and progress by blood, and do not welcome the individualist and profit motive underpinnings of modernity at all. The integrationist policy of inserting a modern ethos on tribal communities fails on many counts. Many communities have shown varying degrees of strain in accepting and adjusting to the demands of integration, which often has an assimilation overtone.

Amidst Violence, Conflicts and Signs of Transition

Ethnic self-consciousness and consolidation along the lines of tribes, community and language groups have become increasingly manifest in recent years across the entire region of India's northeast. Vilifying others and outsiders, terminologies like "us" and "they" circulate among its communities. This comic perception of who constitutes the "insiders" and

who are "outsiders" enhanced the gaze for blood and belonging, claims for resources, land, jobs, assets and deprivations of habitations. Regionalism along social and ethnic lines has been the dominant marker of post-independence social change.

The emergence of non-tribal culture among the tribal social formation has diluted the traditional tribal way of life in India's northeast. Communities often demand specified territories as politico-administrative units, which have recently multiplied. The platform for the smooth integration of tribals and non-tribals, of various language groups, of locals and immigrants and of various religious communities, appears to be dissented.

The consolidation of the ethnic upsurge in India's northeast can be foreseen as a strategy of adaptation of the indigenous inhabitants in contemporary times. Peace remains rarer and rarer in the present scenario, and discontent can be heard among the various communities. Unsettled conditions and the cry for progress are entangled in the whole political decision-making process. Post-independence history showcases social unrest and mass stirrings in India's northeast.

Less Appreciation and More Sadness
on Change in India's northeast

An expert committee called Transforming the Northeast, commissioned by the Government of India (1997), point out: "There are four deficits that confront the Northeast: a basic needs deficit; an infrastructural deficit; a resource deficit, and, most important, a two-way deficit of understanding with the rest of the country which compounds the others." Transforming India's northeast confronts senses of isolation, negligence, backlogs, gaps in basic minimum services and poor infrastructure, producing a vicious circle of economic stagnation and unemployment, which in turn leads to militancy and hampering investment.

Examining social change in India's northeastern communities opens up new trends and perspectives. Ugly debates on the nature of social change in India's northeast are often the talking point in many seminars and conferences. Less appreciation simply describes the theoretical framework for theorizing social change. It is less appreciative simply because communities in India's northeast often complain that communal ties and the sense of family have been hijacked by the outsiders in the name of progress. For India's northeast, progress and development does not mean

better lives and progress. The scenario at present is contrary to progress—class distinctions are more acute, the poverty rate is rising, farmland shortages are predominant, and winners are less predominant in the communities of India's northeast. There are many woes, and people rarely have cause to celebrate. Social change in India's Northeast is a force to reckon with, and an epistemological engagement worth documenting.

Ferdinand Tonnies's (1887; 1957) conceptual dichotomy of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft captures the images of change among communities in India's northeast, where customary social ties, social interactions, roles, values and beliefs are transforming into indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values and beliefs. The catalyst for such transformations from community towards state often remains absent. Traditionally, individuals in the community-based society of India's northeast were regulated by common mores and beliefs. Close and strong personal relationships, strong families and relatively simple social institutions have been diluted on many grounds due to Gesellschaft elements that have sprung up rapidly during post-independence India. In earlier times, India's northeast societies denied indirect social control due to their direct sense of loyalty whereby an individual revered the village chief.

Communities started forming associations granted by the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860, enacted during the colonial rule in India. Associations divide the community into a variety of interest groups, taking precedence over the individual's self-interest that lacks a level of shared mores. These associations are often led by elites for progress or self-interest. Elements of both Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft interplay in day-to-day life among the communities of India's northeast.

India's Northeast is also a part of Zomia (Scott 2009). Zomia represents the largest remaining region of the world where people resist being fully incorporated as a nation state. India's northeast communities were self-governing peoples a few hundred years ago. Today, they form the other Indian with a different culture, religion and lifestyle. The fact is that communities in India's northeast felt that they were being ruled not by their own laws, but by imposed laws from colonial to post-independence times. The Indian state's projection as a perfect state is often confronted by India's northeast because these communities' knowledge of the federal and sovereign state exists beyond their mentalities. The term "state" is difficult to digest in the forest and hill habitations of India's northeast.

Hill peoples are best understood as runaway, fugitive, maroon communities who have, over the course of two millennia, been fleeing the oppressions of state-making projects in the valleys—slavery, conscription, taxes, corvee labor, epidemics, and warfare. Virtually everything about these people's livelihoods, social organisation, ideologies, and (more controversially) even their largely oral cultures, can be read as strategic positioning designed to keep the state at arm's length. Their physical dispersion in rugged terrain, their mobility, their cropping practices, their kinship structure, their pliable ethnic identities, and their devotion to prophetic, millenarian leaders effectively serve to avoid incorporation into states and to prevent states from springing up among them. (Scott 2009, ix–x)

II

Disseminating the Edited Volume

Despite tragedies, conflicts, policy paralysis, ethnic homelands, corruption by elites and resistance to state-making projects, this volume hopes to shed some light and fresh perspectives on India's northeast by measuring the nature of change in some of its not-so-well-known communities. Social changes in these communities represent turning points in the life of a society, passing from one kind of articulation to another. The chapters in this volume are written by a group of young scholars examining the communities they live and grew up in, viewed in both sceptical and progressive ways.

The first chapter, "Impact of the Developmental Plan on the Perception of Social and Cultural Change in Mizoram" by Zokaitluangi, analyses the negative aspects of development based on sampling research. She attempts to delineate the psychological impact of society due to a one-sided understanding of development. Policy makers acknowledge and implement developmental plans as powerful tools of social change.

There is a growing awareness among social scientists on the importance of psychology to foster development programmes and for the successful implementation regarding individual behaviour, further to development at the national level. Any developmental plan is designed to change an individual's behavioural variables (Berry 1980) involving their creative cultures, such as his attitude, motivation or cognitive variables, and the level of analysis tends to be socio-psychological (Kelman & Warwick 1973). The authenticated impact of a developmental plan can be excavated from the perceived social and cultural change of the people for whom the

plan was designed and implemented, and the same would manifest whether the developmental plan was a success or a failure.

One hundred and eighty female subjects were sampled on the basis of a multi-stage sampling procedure, with respondents (thirty in each) for the six groups representing three levels of regional "development" (low, moderate and high) and two types of "beneficiary" (non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries of the development programme) on selected variables. This chapter incorporates an open-ended schedule to illustrate the perceptual domain of people regarding perceptions about socio-cultural change. The results reveal the differential patterns with regards to the two main variables of "development" and "beneficiary" on the perceived socio-cultural change of the population studied. The results clearly represent the importance of psychology in understanding the human mental faculty for designing a developmental plan and its successful implementation, as it remains at the centre of the development discourse.

The second chapter, "Shifting Marriage Practices—The Magar Community of Sikkim" by Amit Manger, examines the changing forms of the traditional ways of life of the Magar community in Sikkim. Sikkim is a multi-ethnic society, and the three main ethnic communities are Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalis. The Nepali community is further sub-divided into diverse groupings such as the Magar, which has unique socio-cultural practices, the most interesting of which is the cross-cousin marriage practice. However, this system is fading away in contemporary Magar society due to various factors like health and education.

The chapter captures the changing mindset of the Magar community, why it evolves and its impact on marriage practices in contemporary Magar society. In this context, an attempt is made to reflect on the process of social and cultural transformation taking place. This chapter also highlights the socio-historical changes occurring in the Magar community due to the process of modernisation.

The third chapter, "Institutional Changes in the Toto Community—A Discourse on Tradition and Modernity" by Anil Kumar Biswas and Mrinal Kanti Basak, examines change in the Toto tribes of West Bengal, which have the smallest demography in this region with a total number of 1,066. The Toto belong to the Mongoloid stock. They are of medium height with sturdy bodies and brown skin. They have straight hair, with scanty beards and moustaches. Their eye-folds are epicanthic like the Mongoloids. The

existence of the Toto tribe was first documented by Babu Kishen Kanta Bose (a British Government employee) of Rangpur in 1815. He noticed them in a village called Lukepur under the Falakata tahasil of western Duars and the Totopara village in Jalpaiguri district. Toto habitations were also traced by D. Sunder in his survey and settlement operation in 1895.

The government's attention was first drawn in 1955 by Roy Burman. He resided in and documented the border village of Totopara on the northern frontier of Bengal. Before this period, the government did not intervene in the affairs of the Toto, and Toto tribes were not recognised as Scheduled Tribes in the first Indian Constitution Order of 1950. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lists modification order of 1956 recognized the Toto as Scheduled Tribes. Due to this status, the Toto undoubtedly qualified for receiving special assistance from the government. Due to the unmindful categorisation, the census reports did not upgrade the demographic figure of Toto in 1961. During the sub-plan planning for tribal areas, the Government of India stressed the need for taking special care for the "Primitive and Isolated Tribal Groups." As per the definition of the Delhi Workshop, Birhors were identified as a "primitive Tribe" and the Toto were identified as an "Isolated Tribe" in West Bengal.

The fourth chapter, "*Zu* and the Mizos—Change and Continuity" by Grace Lalhlupuii Sailo and Henry Zodinliana Pachuau, delineates the changing forms of brewing and consumption of *Zu* (rice beer) in the Mizo society, a traditional phenomenon in its society and culture. However, the brewing of *Zu* for commercial purposes was not known of or recorded, and the abuse of *Zu* and any person misbehaving due to drunkenness were not considered taboo. Due to the spread of Christianity in Mizo society since 1894, however, the consumption of *Zu* became taboo and was eventually prohibited by the Church.

Despite restrictions, the drinking of *Zu* continues. *Zu* was once a traditional beverage with social values, but has become an important commodity with a market value in recent times. The volume of illegal *Zu* has also increased to a large extent. Along with it, social problems such as alcoholism, crime, family breakdowns and violence within and outside families have become more evident. The illegal brewing of *Zu* is now a public concern. The MLTP (Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition) Act of 1995 was enacted for the total prohibition of import, transport, manufacture, possession, sale and consumption of liquor in Mizoram.

The government as well as civil societies failed to define the banning of illegal *Zu* brewing, and the demand for *Zu* is persistent. Families involved in the brewing and selling of liquor have little voice and are subjected to police as well as social atrocities. Their trade is a vicious circle primarily the result of poverty. There is an imperative need to understand the issues associated with *Zu* in Mizoram, and this chapter highlights the perceptions of consumers using in-depth interview, focus group discussion and participatory techniques. The lived experiences of families engaged in the brewing and selling of illicit liquor are also highlighted in case studies.

The fifth chapter, "Aspects of Social and Cultural Changes—Mizo Society and Colonial Rule" by S. Haukhanlian Mate and Vanrammawii, measures the dilution of traditional values of the Mizo society. The British occupation followed by the introduction of Christianity in the Lushai Hills brought social transformation in Mizo society in many ways. As a result, some indigenous social practices were abolished. Some of the existing social customs and practices have been modified and some new patterns introduced to the Mizo society. The authors refer to this transformation as a process called "introduction, abolition and modification." This chapter recounts social and cultural changes among the Mizos due to the introduction of Christianity and Western education, presenting an in-depth analysis of Mizo society regarding marriage and divorce, the status of women, customs connected with birth rites, death rites, burial and superstitions.

The sixth chapter, "Ideas, Institutions and Social Change in Sikkim" by P. Newton, locates the ideas which inform institutional change in Sikkim. Sikkim was once a theocratic state with institutions like a monarchy, feudalism and Lamaism in full swing. However, Sikkim underwent change when new ideas of liberal democracy with principles of liberty, equality and citizenship started penetrating it during the 1960s and 1970s. There were forms of resistance from the traditional institutions, most importantly from the monarchy, but the new wave of democracy became too strong and ultimately the old institutions collapsed and gave way to the introduction of new kinds of institutions. The chapter delineates the process of resistance and reconciliation between the old and new institutions and how this process shapes the modern Sikkimese society and polity.

The seventh chapter, "Social Change and Women in Assam" by Nazmul Hussain Laskar, claims that social change is evident based on new

instances, continuity of time and new events. Identifying significant change involves alterations in the underlying structure of an object or situation over time. For instance, the lives of people alter as a result of changes in the economy, urbanisation, communications and technology in general. Materialistic factors like economic production and technology and idealistic factors like values, beliefs and ideologies play a great role in bringing change to the society.

The chapter explains social change in the context of women by examining social structures that address inequality. This chapter explains how social change affects women's lives and how women are also agencies of social change. The chapter examines the processes and structures that demand the role of women, especially women's agency in bringing social transformation to Lower Assam.

The eighth chapter, "Interrogating Social Change—Cinematic Representation of Hybrid Identity Formations" by Rukmini Kakoty, is an analysis of hybrid identities due to social transformations, viewing cinema and emerging literatures as an agency that helps in the formulation of hybrid identities. In this new age of immense blending and intermixing of cultures and languages, the term hybridity has gained new importance. However, the true sense of the term cannot be restricted to the mixing of elements only, being interpreted in different lights, which is why the term may sometimes remain ambiguous. Globalisation allows people to move to different countries, and diasporic communities have been identified by scholars like Homi Bhabha (1994), Paul Gilroy (1993) and Stuart Hall (1992) as creating an opportune position for hybridity to work.

Diasporic communities are unique communities placed between two or more societies, a position that is apt for cultural mixing and the creation of new forms of identities. These new identity formations are catalysts for changes in societal relations and structure. Homi Bhabha (1994) defined hybridity as a process of bringing "newness to the world." This chapter looks at diasporic cinema depicting diasporic lives to study the changes in the diasporic identity formations. Apart from commercial cinema, there has been a growth of a new kind of cinema by diasporic and "exiled" filmmakers that Hamid Naficy (2001) calls "accented cinema," which depicts transformations in diasporic communities. This chapter explains the social and cultural dimensions of new identity formations and how hybridity works upon diasporic communities placed between cultures and societies.

It also attempts to link hybridity and diaspora through cinema depicting the Indian diaspora. Two movies, *Mississippi Masala* (1992) and *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), are cases in point. *Mississippi Masala*, directed by Mira Nair, is the story of an Indian family settled in America after being expelled from Uganda in the 1970s. *Bhaji on the Beach*, directed by Gurinder Chadha, is about a group of Indian diasporic women who take a day trip to the United Kingdom. Both Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair are diasporic filmmakers of Indian origin. Through these two movies, this chapter examines the transformation of ideas and belief systems in the younger generation of diasporic individuals and the differences with their migrant parents.

The ninth chapter, "Migration and Social Change in Sikkim" by Sunil Pradhan, explains two waves of migration affecting the social and cultural transformation of space and place in Sikkim. The first wave of migration occurred due to the flight of Tibeto Sikkmese (Bhutias) from Tibet. Enmity between two schools of Buddhist thought led to the migration of Bhutias from Tibet, subsequently taking refuge in Sikkim and altering the Lepcha way of life. The Bhutias were able in due course to consecrate Phuntshok Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim during the mid-fifteenth century. Sikkim's cultural and social realties were in sync with the state-managed theocracy prior to statehood. The second wave of migration occurred due to Gurkhas seeking refuge in Sikkim. The British presence in the Indian subcontinent and the Gurkha expansion paved the way for a second wave of migration from Nepal to Sikkim. The industrious Newars from Kathmandu valley and the British Resident Commissioner in Gangtok brought in the Nepalese to work in plantations and mines. The settlement brought major transformations to Sikkim's cultural and social spaces by accommodating the new culture brought in with the migration. The Sikkimese identity as portrayed reflected the synthesis of varieties of cultural identities. The chapter discusses the social change of Sikkimese society by looking at the waves of migration and the interaction of different cultures that ultimately produced the present-day Sikkimese society.

The tenth chapter, "The Social and Cultural Transformation of the Damai Community—A Study of Sikkim Society" by Ridhima Sundas, explains the shrinking musical caste groups known as Damai. Social and cultural transformation also entails the development and woes for the society. Change is an outcome of internal forces (within a community, such as customs and values) and external forces (outside forces such as the

processes of modernisation and urbanisation). These forces work together in bringing transformations to the socio-cultural practices of the Damai community. Transformations in the Damai are not always smooth and involve a complex process because diverse unintended forces (inclusion and exclusion) play a determining role in forecasting the changes among them.

The Damai community faced various kinds of prejudice, humiliation and stigmatisation and had not been allocated a position of pride in Hindu society. The Damai still live in separate settlements, perform socially defiling tasks and suffer from numerous types of physical atrocities. The community's position in Sikkim has remained distinct from other scheduled castes of the country. This chapter focuses on the history of the Damai community. Despite its inferior status, it pursues education and aims for higher positions in various fields to achieve vertical mobility. The chapter intends to capture the nature and direction of this transformation by analyzing the socio-economic profile of the Damai community.

The eleventh chapter, "Rituals, Beliefs and the Traditional Occupation of Brewing Liquor in Chakpa Andro, Manipur" by Puthem Jugeshor Singh, explains the diluting forms of the traditional occupation of brewing and its necessities in cultural matters and ritual practices of the Chakpa Andro community of Manipur. The Chakpa Andro belongs to the Scheduled Caste community in the Imphal East district of Manipur. The community traditionally pursued occupations of brewing liquor and this is a significant cultural practice. Brewing liquor by Chakpa Andro communities is socially and culturally accepted. Liquor is indispensable in the cultural practices and rituals of Chakpa Andro and is connected to events such as births, marriages and deaths other social functions. This occupation also generates income alongside agriculture. Chakpa Andro women played a substantial role in brewing liquor, and brewing remains in the socio-cultural fabric of the community. In earlier times, brewing liquor defined its socio-economic and cultural practices. However, these traditional activities have been transformed due to legal reforms and trade perspectives. At present, there is transformation in the production of liquor. Market demands have expanded brewing liquors and the traditional ritual tag has often been sidelined. Rather, brewing liquor becomes market oriented and driven by illegal consumption. Such ethos have radically altered the picture of the socio-economic parameters of the Chakpa Andro community. Brewing liquor beyond legal measures has become a major

source for livelihood. This chapter focuses on the rituals, customs and beliefs of the Chakpa Andro and their links with brewing liquor.

The twelfth chapter, "Why English? A Historical Study from the Mizo Perspective" by Lalrinchhani, is a study of the language politics that exists in Mizoram as a result of the colonial influence. It traces the Mizos's historical affinity for English and how their scorn for Hindi, the official language of India, has developed. This chapter argues that an adulation of the West due to the Mizo sentiment is against the Indian sentiment. This chapter renders the essence of the English language in Mizoram and the relevance of post-colonial literature and the Orientalist influence in measuring the gap between a Western language (English) and an Orientalist language (Hindi). The central argument in this chapter reveals the essence of marginals within the marginality.

The last chapter, "Society and Women—An Analysis of Social Change in *Lali* by Biakliana" by Vanlalchami, delineates the status of the female Mizo character and its representation based on a short Story "Lali" written by Biakliana in 1936, translated into English from the vernacular by Dr Margaret. L. Pachuau. It was published in *The Heart of The Matter* (2004) by KATHA publications. It is a text in which the writer examines sensitivity and the plight of the Mizo Women and their marginal role. This chapter records and rewrites their daily routine through the story of the Mizo female protagonist Lali. The story highlights the unequal treatment of women in Mizo society and at the same time vividly records and depicts the Mizo society of the 1930s in the early years of conversion to Christianity. Through the story of Lali, the text highlights the change in religion, with the Mizo society embracing the Christian teachings. The text records the history of Mizo society undergoing transition from a pre-Christian tribal society to a post-Christian institutionalized society with all the confusion that this imposed on its individual members. This chapter also voices the need for the development of women's status in Mizo society while recording a time in history that was one of the most important eras in it becoming what it is today.

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IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL PLAN ON THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE IN MIZORAM

ZOKAITLUANGI

One of the largest research traditions in social science is perhaps the study of socio-cultural change and development. There is an increasing awareness among social scientists that the present economic and institutional levels of analyses are insufficient for dealing with the phenomenon of social and cultural change. It is true that intervention in designing social change can only be brought about by the joint efforts of social scientists and policy makers. However, this is only possible when social scientists with their own disciplines understand the impact of social change and the relationship between antecedents and consequents.

Berry (1980) reviewed cross-cultural studies on social change and pointed out that psychological studies must discover the locus, sources, directions, dynamics and sequence of socio-cultural change and development. Since psychology is concerned with the individual level of change, the locus of social change involves attitudinal, motivational and cognitive variables. The sources of change can be conceptualised as external or internal, and psychologists are largely concerned with the internal sources of social change.

Given the strong theoretical and research ties in cross-cultural psychology, there are two paradigms for researches: (i) Acculturation, which is the process of one culture dominating another, resulting in a two-way flow of change; (ii) Development, which implies the deliberate change of culture in one particular direction (Berry 1980).

Acculturation is a process that takes place in every society when some group is dominant and others are subordinate (less privileged). When one dominant cultural group interacts with another culture, the direction of change is generally set by the dominant one. The antecedents to change

are: attitudes and beliefs (Inkeles 1977), achievement orientation (McClelland 1961), authoritarian variables (Hagen 1962), social adjustment (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez 2013), operant condition (Guthrie 1970), personality (Wallace 1968), value differences (Kagitcibasi 1997), health and well-being (Penne 1995), indigenous beliefs (Jahoda 1961), depression (Su et al. 2013), work ethic (Weber 1905), and the "culture and personality" of "value orientation" (Mead 1967). These provide empirical bases on the differences with regard to the psychological characteristics within and between cultures, and describe these processes as the crucial factors that determine the strength of behaviour of people across cultures for development.

The directions of change appeared in the available empirical literatures as: (i) the direction of becoming "modern" in the usual sense of modernisation of world culture; (ii) the direction of a "traditional lifestyle" where there is a reaffirmation of characteristic values; and (iii) some novel lifestyle on a dimension of the "traditional-modern" axis (Berry 1980).

The development paradigm is where deliberately planned social change in a society is attempted. In a developing country, a variety of government agents are engaging in promoting development to pursue people to accept and adapt their ways of doing things, which are regarded as more appropriate to emerging changes in the world around them, and which are different from what they have known.

Yet, these innovations are not accepted among the projected population. The net outcome of the development plan tends to fall far behind the goal set for them. Social scientists reconsidered the place of traditional values in the developmental plan as a necessity for endogenous development, as development is centred on men. The idea of the man as the centre of development, along with his abilities, creative faculties and sociocultural factors, are now recognized as the determining factors (antecedents) and ultimate results (consequences) of development. The assertion of cultural identity for integrity and dignity is fundamental to any development on meeting the true needs and aspirations of peoples to ensure genuine fulfilment. The awareness forms the basis to demonstrate a theoretical conceptualisation and the associated psychological problems of social and cultural change at the individual level.

At the individual level, two psychological variables are implicated: external (behaviour and belief brought in by educator, missionaries,