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A Monthly News Bulletin



Glimpses from Rangali Bihu



Heritage Explorer

A Monthly News Bulletin

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A Glimpse into Bihu Songs of Assam

- Runjun Saikia



blessings together with Bihu dance (Bihu Nach) and Bihu songs, is performed on the court yard of every family of a village or locality and the Huchari party bless the house hold of the family for a new and prosperous new year.

Bihu songs are songs of love, songs of emotions, songs of youth. Specially young boys and girls dance bihu, singing songs where they express deep

emotions spontaneously. They play on *dhool, pepa, flute, gogona, sutuli, cymbal* and *toka* etc.

Bihu songs are nothing but the expression of emotions and deep feelings of innocent, unsophisticated folk. Earlier young girls of a village got together in a paddy field or an isolated jungle and danced Bihu dances while singing Bihu songs. No male persons were allowed to see or participate in their joyful gathering. The theme of their songs is love and about loved ones. The spring naturally arouses passions. So these songs often become expression of courtship, it has the nature of mating calls. The yearning and hunger for companionship or the wound caused by deserted love, separation and frustration are also expressed through these songs. Sometime the craving for sensuous pleasure is also expressed through these songs. The young man even desires to be transmuted into something that will place him nearest to his beloved is expressed in the following Bihu songs.

Being a bird I will swim in your pond. Being a pigeon I will drop on the roof. Being sweat I will enter in your body. Being fly I will kiss on your cheeks.

(Hanhe hai charimgai tomare pukhurit, para hai parimgai chalat, Ghame hai somamgai tomare sarirat, makhi hai chuma dim galat.)

Spring is the symbol of youth, youthful vigor and enthusiasm. Bihu is also symbol of youthfulness –

Climbing the mountain,
I will bring *kapou* flower to you.
(pahar bagai bagai chenimai kapou phul mai ani dim)

In some songs love is described as divine thing with a divine origin.

First God created the world,
Then He created the creatures,
That very God fell in love,
Why should not do we?
(prathame Isware sristi sarajile Tar pichat sarajile jiva Sei jana Isware piriti korile Amino nakarim kiya?)

In Bihu songs young man's hopefulness is expressed in superb rhythm. He even expresses his desire to overcome the barrier of caste and religion –

If you so desire, if I so desire what the kalita caste will do?

(Toro mone gole, moro mone gale ki kariba kalita kule?)

Both of them are so deeply attached that a kalita (high caste) girl ready to marry a low caste boy. He disclosed his dreams of a happy conjugal life.

You go on with your planting paddies and I go on with my ploughing. You set to weaving the gamosa I will make the loom.

(tumi kari jaba ruwahi oi dawani, mainoo bai jam hal, tumino oi boba phulamkai gamosa, mai pati dim sal.)

It is the picture of a couple building their happiness on mutual understanding and co-operation.

Thus, folk psychology and their instant feelings of love and dreams are expressed superbly in Bihu songs. These songs no doubt, help them to relieve their minds amidst hardship of life.

(- R. Saikia, Lecturer Margherita College)

Three Bihus are the lifeline of Assamese culture. Bihu literally means merriment and festival. Three Bihus are observed in Assam - especially in the Brahmaputra valley. They are named according to Hindu months when they are celebrated: Kati Bihu, Magh Bihu and Bohag Bihu. Every Bihu starts on the last day (*Sankranti*) of the previous month. For example Kati Bihu (One Day) is celebrated on the last day of Ahin (*Aswina*) month; Magh Bihu, from the last day of Pooch (*Pausha*) and Bohag Bihu, from Chaitra Sankranti, which lasted for seven days. The first day is dedicated to Cow, the most sacred animal in Indian culture and civilisation. Next six days are meant for merriment, get together and what not.

Bohag Bihu is also called Rongali Bihu, a Bihu of merriment and joy. In fact it is spring festival. Flowers bloom in the trees- Polas, Mango, Nahar, Tagar are in bloom. Kapou flowers, a kind of orchid bloom on the branches of the trees. Cuckoos sing melodiously.

Bihu Songs are composed by unknown poets, and are coming through generations. In the Bohag Bihu, Huchari, a kind of offering

Should Shine be Sacked ?

- MV Kamath

When India was partitioned along strictly religious lines, with a large majority totally opposed to it, residual India had no other option, but to call itself 'secular,' to assert its vision of One India One People. It was not so subtle a way of saying that India was opposed to the very principle on which Partition took place. The word 'secular' in the circumstances had a very powerful connotation. Indeed Indians were proud to have it included in the Constitution. Over the years, the word, which once had such powerful vibrations, has lost all its significance and has come to mean the demonisation, denigration and depredation of Hinduism. To be called 'secular' was to receive the highest badge of honour in the pseudo-secular world headed by no less than Jawaharlal Nehru. The more one came to despise Hinduism, the higher one rose in the estimation of 'Macaulay's children,' who ran the show in Delhi, ruled by their intellectual icon, Nehru, who was wary of lending his support to the renovation of much-wrecked Somnath Temple. As the years passed, two things slowly began to change the caste-ridden Hindu scene. One, thanks to recourse to education, the so-called 'lower castes,' along with OBCs and Dalits began to appear steadily in the political skies. Two, and because of their numerical strength, they started exerting power, until today the power equation between the 'upper' and 'lower' castes has changed in favour of the latter, which alone can explain the rise of such characters as Laloo Prasad Yadav in Bihar, Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh, Shibu Soren in Jharkhand and till recently A. Rajan in Tamil Nadu. Power has slipped from the hands of the upper castes, and today they are hard-pressed to accept reality.

In an earlier era, one couldn't have possibly expected a Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to be named the 'Greatest Indian,' as was presented in a poll recently conducted by two TV

channels. That the 'lower castes,' including the OBCs and Dalits, being new to the social scene, have shown a propensity towards amassing wealth, is only too well-known—Mayawati's bank accounts are there for all to evaluate, not to mention her palatial residence, but it was very tactless on the part of Ashis Nandy to make a public issue out of it. Discretion is the better part of common sense.

What is not being realised is that a vast change has come over what can only be called a distraught Hindu society, which has still to learn how to come to terms with itself. Much the same is happening in the world of Muslims, which had long remained stagnant, but is now becoming increasingly restive, thanks again to the community's acceptance of higher education and broader growth in the economic sphere.

The Hindu way of self-annihilation is equally crude and detestable. And this is where one feels sick at the behaviour of Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde, who has been mocking Hinduism without realising the damage he is again causing unconsciously, by spitting at an ancient way of life. The fashion in today's 'secular' world — which, incidentally, is 99 per cent Hindu — is to run down Hinduism, Hindutva and their proponent, the RSS, with the likes of Shinde not realising the psychic wounds they have been persistently inflicting on Hindu society. Surely he should have known that there is no such thing as 'Hindu terrorism.'

There never ever has been one down the centuries, when large-scale conversions were being attempted by Islamic and Christian invaders. But there is a growing anger among a segment of Hindu society that is getting increasingly upset at the manner in which it is being slighted by those in power and the sheer weakness and blatant cowardice they are openly exhibiting in handling repeated assaults on the dignity and self-respect of Indians by the ISI and its

acknowledged agents in India. If there ever is Hindu terrorism, one must fiercely charge Shinde for being its unacknowledged sponsor. Shinde, as of now, has insulted Hindus by his casual remarks, but let this be said: casual they may have been, but they reflect a mindset that has long been prevalent among a certain section of Hindu upper class society wishing to demean Hinduism and all that it stands for. It makes them feel very superior.

At the same time, he may have had ulterior reasons to speak contemptuously of Hindu terrorism, considering that the general elections are not far away and the chances of the UPA coming to power are getting remoter by the day. It would be paying to be in the good books of the minorities, especially of Muslims, but Shinde may not know that Congress has lost a lot of Hindu goodwill by his reckless remarks.

What is pathetic is that the Samjhauta Express bombing was the handiwork of the ISI, proof of which has been provided by no less than S. Gurumurthy, in a well-substantiated article in the media. Shinde, in his ignorance, may also not be aware that David Headley was involved in the Samjhauta Express blast. But the main point to be noted is that it is the mindset of men like Shinde that has encouraged Muslim terrorism. Is Shinde aware of another set of characters like Owaisi, who has had the reputation for insulting Hindu gods and goddesses to the applause of thousands of his followers? Has any Hindu terrorist ever laid hands on him? Owaisi has literally got away with murder.

Shinde deserves to be sacked. It is only the sick secularism of the likes of Shinde that has been the cause of intolerance such as Owaisi has been practising.

We have had enough of this bogus secularism. It is only such secularism that encourages people to throw and at Hinduism as was recently prohibited

(Contd. to Page 11)

Encroachment by Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants Threatening Sonitpur Farmers

Tezpur, April 4 - Even though different national organisations of the State, including AASU, ABSU, AJYCP etc. have been raising their voice against the alleged aggression of Bangladeshi nationals in the State which has been posing a serious threat to the very existence of the indigenous people of the region, unabated influx by the Bangladeshi infiltrators is still on here in the char areas of Sonitpur district, which has been causing serious concern among the local farmers in the area. The area falls on the southern part of the National Highway-52 and covers an area of more than 50 km of lush green fields on the bank of the Brahmaputra under Tezpur and Dhekiajuli revenue circles in Sonitpur district.

The chapori areas have been playing a crucial role in economic growth among the farmers of the district. However, these farmers including the open dairy farm owners have been facing a number of problems over the years as the suspected Bangladeshi nationals have been encroaching their farming lands.

In protest against the ongoing aggression of Bangladeshi infiltrators, hundreds of local farmers (indigenous farmers) led by a local dairy farm owner's body Posu Swartha Sangranksyan Samitee (PSSS) recently held a meeting at Puthimari under Bihaguri Development block in Barchala LAC of Sonitpur district. The farmers expressed strong resentment over the issue and urged all concerned to extend their helping hand to check the problems thereby saving their lands from the alleged encroachment of illegal settlers. More importantly, people of about 50 villages of Barchala LAC in Sonitpur district had been carrying out various agricultural activities including dairy farming in the area for many years and exported their produce to various parts of the State to find out a better livelihood.

However, with changing times, people of these villages moved away to urban area particularly to Tezpur

town leaving the verdant farming lands unused taking advantage of which the illegal Bangladeshis started settling down in the char areas. Expressing grievance over the alleged negligence towards the burning issues by the authority concerned, Kabul Sarmah, adviser of PSSS said that farmers living in the islands in the area including Majbali, Jokholagora, Kochmora, Sardar tapu, Rani tapu, Batuli, Muslim chapori, Tintikia tapu, No.1 & 2 korioni jaroni, Thengbhanag etc., have been passing sleepless nights during the past as the miscreants led by suspected Bangladeshi nationals have been carrying out various unlawful activities in the area. "As these are nothing, but a part of politically motivated act for the fulfillment of vested interest of some political workers, the suspected Bangladeshis dare to move in the area openly and encroach the lands of the indigenous people," Sarma rued and added that some local people with vested interests sell the land to the illegal settlers at high rates while some others sell thatched huts. "Without stopping such activities, we cannot check the problem. Now we have decided to occupy the land at Koroioni Tapu for agricultural works at any cost", Kabul Sarma maintained.

The chapori areas once used by the local farmers to produce high quantity of vegetables are now a days being captured by the illegal settlers creating hurdles for the indigenous people. "More than 20 buffaloes and two boats of my farm have gone missing", said one Ajjur Rahman of Borchala area. Referring to the twin problems of erosion and encroachment at Burha Chapori, the PSSS activists alleged that the cattle farms of the local people at Burha Chapori have been set ablaze by the Forest Department officials to force their evacuation. But the tin roof and deep tubewell established by illegal settlers under government patronage is visibly seen. "Also, the river police harass the local people very frequently, the frequent anti-social activities in the char areas by the illegal settler have worsened the situation, We have urged the administration to check the movement of these doubtful citizens in the area, but no result has been achieved till date," they lamented.

These farmers are of the opinion that until the Government's positive approach towards the issue of Bangladeshi aggression in the greater area is initiated, it can never be checked permanently.

(The Assam Tribune 5.04.2013)

First Woman from Meghalaya to be Elected Member of the Rajya Sabha

Wansuk Syiem of the Congress Thursday scripted history by becoming the first woman from Meghalaya to be elected member of the Rajya Sabha.

Syiem was elected unopposed as Rajya Sabha member from Meghalaya as she was the lone candidate to file her nomination," Meghalaya state assembly secretary H. Mylliemngap, who was also the returning officer for the Rajya Sabha by-election, told IANS.

Syiem had resigned as member of the National Commission for Women to contest the election.

The opposition Meghalaya People's Front, including the United Democratic Party, National People's Party and two Independents, did not field any candidate for the by-poll after two of the aspirants pulled out at the last moment.

The by-election for the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Meghalaya was necessitated due to the resignation of sitting member Thomas A. Sangma Feb 4.

Syiem will serve only the remainder of Sangma's term, which is till April 12, 2014.

Customs and Rituals of Sonowal Kacharis

- Dr. Dharmeswar Sonowal

The Sonowal Kacharis are one of the most ancient and major tribal communities of Assam and they also constitute an important ethnic group of the Northeast. At present there are a number of Kachari tribes in Assam, such as the Bodo Kacharis, who are settled in the Kamrup, Barpeta, Dhubri, Goalpara, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts, the Barmans in Cachar district, Mech Kacharis, Rava Kacharis and Lalung Kacharis who are more or less scattered in the plains of Assam in some districts in small groups and the Dimassa Kacharis in the North Cachar Hills and Karbi Along districts. The Sonowal Kacharis and the Thengal Kacharis are settled in Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Golaghat and in Lakhimpur districts in Upper Assam.

The Sonowal Kachari tribe is a part and parcel of the great Bodo race (Kirata) which is a historical truth. The absence of written documented history of the pre-historic era of Assam notwithstanding, the anthropological and literary evidences, customs and traditions bear testimony that they had their origins in the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock, who had settled in Assam far before than the Ahoms came. According to Dr SK Chatterjee and

Matthias Harmannas, they belong to the Indo-Mongoloid (Kirata) group which include the Bodos and their allied tribes.

The physical features of the Sonowal Kacharis are very prominent. They have strong cheek bones, small slit eyes, a slight growth of hair in the body, strong hair in the head and scant beard. In records they have been described as "the original autochthones" of Assam. (Rev. Endless 1881).

The religion of Sonowal Kachari race is distinctly of the type, commonly known as 'animistic' and its underlying principle is characteristically one of shame, fear or dead. They believe that, they are the children of Shiva (Baith or Khiring). According to Kalika Puran they are the (Kirats) disciple of Shiva. They have their traditional gods and goddess.

Sonowals have as many as 14 priests. They are Khiring, Baithow, Gozai, Monai, Joldeota, Swardeo, Kulasamon, Rangh Samon, Phulknowr, Khetor, Pirdia, Burha Deota, Boliababa, Gu-Dangoria and Khin Bhaga Deota. They also worship 33 gods and 9 goddesses. They are Kechaikhati, Bhuruli, Habuki, Numali,

Kumali, Hakladoi, Fakladoi and Tharengdoi. The Sonowal Kacharis do not have representative image of gods and goddesses; they raise some earthen mounds and wooden pots of particular trees to represent their god and goddesses or deities at the time of worship.

Nowadays, Sonowal Kacharis sacrifice pigs, goats, hens and ducks in their religious ceremonies. But during the reign of the Kachari kings, there was even an annual system of human sacrifice.

The Sonowal Kacharis believe in worship of their ancestors. They also worship nature. They consider water as sacred and the Brahmaputra as mother of all rivers. All Kacharis consider themselves as 'sons of the big river' or 'children of the great water'.

Among their gods, the most important is the Baith or Baithow who is pre-eminently the guardian of the family and the family's honour. The Baith is never represented in idol form. The Sonowal Kacharis always consider Baith as Kihiringor Shiva and Burha-Burhi as Shiva-Parvati.

Baith Puja is always celebrate in the bright half of full moon and second Monday of the month after Shivaratri.

Hinduism does not Favour Conversions: RSS Chief

Kochi, April 7, 2013: RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat today said that Hinduism does not favour conversions.

"Hinduism doesn't accept conversions. Hindus try to reverse conversions," Bhagwat said, inaugurating a Rs 18 crore convention centre of the RSS here, the first of its kind in Kerala.

"Conversions are not necessary. If you have the basic human values, what you wear, what you eat and what you pray all these are immaterial," he said, adding, Hindu society needs to spread this message world over.

All round progress of Hindu society is not for its own sake, but for the betterment of the whole world, he noted.

Former ISRO Chairman, G Madhavan Nair said changes in the education sector was needed as it had become highly commercialised.

Those coming out of colleges are not employable, which needs to be changed, he said, adding, there is need for imparting value-based education.

Nair also stressed the need for promoting entrepreneurship rather than going for jobs in government or

multi-national companies.

The air-conditioned convention centre, built in 75,000 square feet area with state-of-the-art auditorium to accommodate 1500 persons, has been dedicated to the memory of K Bhaskar Rao, who spent his entire life for Kerala's Hindu renaissance.

VHP leader Ashok Singhal was among those present.

(http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-07/news/38346356_1_hindu-society-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat-conversions)

Drug Abuse: the Problem of Young Generation

Guwahati, April 5 - The problem of alcohol and drug abuse is of high importance nowadays. Drug abuse is one of the banes of modern society. Alcohol abuse is itself very harmful for a human organism, especially for a young one as it destroys brain cells and other organs. The consequences of alcoholic intoxication, as well as of drug usage, are far more ruinous for both the abuser and his environment. Under the influence of drugs, young people experience new feelings and are ready to go into the deep end. It has hit all regions and all sections of our society. It is found in rural and urban areas, among poor and the rich, among the men and women. But it is most overwhelmingly practiced by young generation both boys and girls in hostels in almost all educational and technical institution. It is especially acute among young people and this horrifies most of all.

There are certain problems of the adolescence and early stages of adulthood in the modern society. They include drug abuse, tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption and homosexual activities. They are more aggressive and uncontrolled. The majority of rapes and sexual violence happen under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Generally, people think that drug is a habit-forming substance taken to relieve pain or produce sleep. But actually, drug is a substance or mixture of substances used as medicine. Any drug when used for non-medical purpose is said to be drug abused or misused. Certain such drugs give a pleasurable effect which are quite harmful after a certain period to the body mechanism. Frequent use of these drugs would lead to death, mental disorders and social crimes.

Drug abuse, also called substance abuse or chemical abuse, is a disorder that is characterised by a destructive pattern of using a substance that leads to significant problems or distress. The term drug abuse does not exclude dependency, but is otherwise used in a similar manner in non-medical contexts. The term has a huge range

of definitions related to taking a psycho-active drug or performance enhancing drug for a non-therapeutic or non-medical effect. On the other hand, drug addiction is a disease that is characterised by a destructive pattern of drug abuse that leads to significant problems involving tolerance to or withdrawal from the substance, as well as other problems use of the substance can cause to the sufferer.

There are different categories of drugs which have abused potentials. These are (1) hallucinogens such as LSD, hashish, ganja and bhang. They are psychologically addictive and lead to insecurity and fear anxiety complexes; (2) sedatives or depressants relax the central nervous system, induce sleep and provide a calming effect. Tranquillizers and barbiturates fall into this category; (3) narcotics, like sedatives, produce a depressant effect on the central nervous system. They produce feelings of pleasure, strength and superiority, reduce hunger, lessen inhibitions and increase suggestibility; (4) stimulants activate the central nervous and relieve tension, treat mild depression, induce insomnia, increase alertness, counter fatigue and expressive drowsiness and lessen aggressive inhibitors.

The major reason of this abuse is the psychological instability of teenagers. Young people begin to drink at about 13 year of age when their psychology is unstable and their main aim is to assert themselves. Drug and alcohol help them to feel free and independent and to do the things that are forbidden for them. Usually being controlled by their parents, they long to break all the rules and bans. Most of the present generations take drug to overcome their emotional instability. They use these as solution to their depression or frustration. Whereas, the teenagers smoke, drink or use drugs to prove themselves as 'hero' or so-called modern people. Some others use drugs or smoke out of the curiosity of tasting new things. But they forget that drugs can only destroy their lives, it cannot solve any problem.

There are also some injections which induce intense drowsiness. If a drug addict is unable to get the required drug at the proper time, he or she would be ready to get it at any cost. A lot of money is involved in the trade on drugs. For instance, one kg of heroin is valued at Rs.1 core in the international market; that is why the drug Mafia is so active. This takes place through drug Mafia who has further links with formidable terrorists and smugglers. And in the process, many young men and women in our own country too fall victims to this diabolical habit. The young does not realise the harm, caused by the abuse.

On the other hand, marijuana and hashish can be traced for back into the history of drug usage. Cannabis was apparently known in ancient China and was listed in the herbal compendiums of the Chinese emperor Shen Nung, written about 2737 BC. The specific effects of marijuana vary greatly, depending on the quality and dosage of the drug, the personality and mood of the user and the user's past experience with the drug. An interesting parallel may be drawn between contemporary studies of the effects of marijuana and an extensive study initiated by the British Govt. in 1893. The House of Commons, in response to a member's motion, appointed the Indian Hemp Drug Commission to investigate effects of such drugs including marijuana. The Commission's report was divided into three categories, indicative of the areas in which hemp drugs were popularly believed to have harmful effects. Those three categories were health, sanity and crime. The extent to which these findings are applicable to the question of legalising marijuana in our own society is speculative, since there is no way of comparing the quality of drugs used, the populations involved and other relevant variables.

Many psycho-active drugs, especially alcohol and tranquillizers, have constructive personal and social uses. However, most of these mind

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Preserving Culture through Community Media

Guwahati, March 31 — The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of UNESCO maintains that culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

It is important to point out that our culture is our identity in the global community of nations and thus for maintaining this identity it is highly necessary that we preserved and closely monitored its growth and development ' the evolution over the years. Languages specially have a highly important place in this regard because a surviving language is a history of that community or the group of people. If that language dies, more or less the cultural legacy of that community also dies a natural death.

It needs to be mentioned here that the roots of India's literary tradition go back to the rich tribal or 'Adivasi' literature of the country. However, of the numerous languages in India only a limited number of languages are recognized by the Constitution. But there are more than 80 other languages for each of which there are more than 10,000 speakers.

Besides, ours is one of the unique nations in the world with a culture that is deeply rooted in the pluralistic ethos of age-old history providing creative expression, value sustenance and belief patterns to thousands of communities, which constitute the contemporary Indian society. The role of culture lies not only in encouraging self-expressions and exploration on the part of individuals and communities, but also in developing creativity as a social force. Cultural activities also provide livelihood to significant section of population and contribute to the GDP of the nation.

Also, with easy and convenient availability of modern day communication tools and media we are faced with a constant fear that our culture and heritage are being

overwhelmingly influenced by dominant global cultures and are at a loss what to do to prevent such an aggressive development. This issue once again reiterates the importance of the knowledge of traditional medicines, preventive measures etc. practised by our forefathers - irrespective of whether in a tribal / ethnic society or in others - and the need to revive those for application in today's time. Yet, we must not look at all of our culture and heritage just as revenue-generating objects. We should also look at them as a rich 'past of our civilization and think of ways and means for popularizing them among the societies all over the globe.

Preservation is a highly significant aspect that needs to be seriously explored today as it is high time we implemented necessary and adequate steps for preserving our cultural heritage for the future generations. Preservation serves several important objectives. It helps in proper documentation of our cultural heritage and nuances including folk lore / tribal literature and lifestyle prevalent at this point. In some societies, where there may be more than one versions of the same culture, efforts must be taken for documenting all of those versions so that nothing is left for chance. This is because the different nuances and aspects of any culture and heritage in any society and also in folk / tribal literature may vary from place to place like the different dialects of the same language.

This also reflects the oft-repeated saying that we should think global and act local. That is - all major popular folk tradition / cultures in any country more or less have some localized elements inserted into them for giving them a local hue for enhancing their appeals to the local community.

Secondly these documentation processes help us in making comparisons about the changing trends and versions of our culture at different points of time in future. For example, a certain cultural aspect that is prevalent today is documented in the audio-visual format for future reference. After may

be a decade or so, when there may be an interest in reviewing them as well as comparing them with the then prevailing versions, it would be a great help in understanding the differences, trends, fusions, etc. which have been incorporated into them over the years.

Then it is a tricky question when it comes to practice in reality - who would shoulder the responsibility of preserving our invaluable cultural heritage including tribal / folk literature / folklore among others. This is because whenever any attempt at such documentation is tried whether in audio-visual or print format - the community might become suspicious about the intention of the persons or bodies involved in it.

The Community Media is one highly viable option in this regard as it is a media of the people, by the people and for the people, established and run by the very community in which it functions in any society. Among other things culture is a resource for economic and social development. When poor communities preserve and develop their cultural assets, they are also generating new economic opportunities. Recognizing the rich cultural heritage of the ethnic groups of the country the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs adopted a National Policy on Tribals which has taken relevant steps for preservation and development of various aspects of the tribal peoples' culture. This includes traditional wisdom of these communities and also preserving and documenting tribal languages. This is because education in the mother tongue at the primary level needs be encouraged. Books and other publications in tribal languages will also be promoted.

Overall, the policy seeks to preserve and promote such traditional knowledge and wisdom and document it, establish a centre to train tribal youth in areas of traditional wisdom, disseminate such aspects through models and exhibits at appropriate places, transfer such knowledge to non-tribal areas and to take care of the issue of intellectual property rights of the Scheduled Tribe.

(Contd. to Page 17)

Universal Brotherhood Crucial to World Peace

Guwahati, April 7 — Governor JB Patnaik today stressed the need for spreading the message of universal brotherhood and peaceful coexistence in a strife-torn world.

Inaugurating the Viswa Bhatrittabodh Samaroh of ISKCON at the Rabindra Bhawan, Patnaik said that learned pandits had cultivated this idea of international brotherhood, both theoretically and in practice.

“ISKCON, the organisation of International Krishna Consciousness, is bringing the people of the world under one umbrella of devotion to Lord Krishna. One who understands his inalienable relationship to God really realises universal brotherhood,” he said, adding that the Vedas, Yajnas, Yoga and Kriyas or activities in pursuit of knowledge or penance and all other religious practices were not different from Krishna and all of them were meant to realise him.

Pointing out that a true devotee of Lord Krishna does not desire anything such as the possession of a kingdom or of enormous wealth or of a beautiful damsel or even Moksha or absolute

deliverance from the cycle of births and deaths, Patnaik said that once a person had got absolute and total devotion to Mukunda or Krishna, “Goddess Laxmi of the empire of Moksha lies at your feet.”

Patnaik said that since her long past India’s living faith has been ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ - the world is one family and let noble light come from all directions.

“This was what India believed and practised long long ago before the globalisation of the present. During the last sixty years, there has been a steady and significant progress for realisation of this dream. Excepting some local wars, war on a global scale is a thing of the past. The United Nations and its various organisations have by and large been functioning as a cementing force among the nations,” Patnaik said.

Patnaik said that while people-to-people exchange in cultural and economic spheres was taking place on a large scale, there was still an arms race among nations and local conflict among communities.

“Although friendship is openly proclaimed, deep suspicion rules the roost. Real peace will come when there are no local or regional wars and the countries live as friendly neighbours. Terrorism is the greatest threat to peace and terrorists do not respect international boundaries”. Patnaik said.

The Governor also dwelt on the growing disparity between the rich and the poor in many countries, and said that millions of people were languishing in abject poverty, ignorance and indignity. Political empowerments, economic empowerment, educational empowerment, empowerment of women are all very good programmes, but there is no change in the mindset of many people against women. There is large-scale prevalence of violence and indignity against women and children.

“There is one remedy, i.e., the empowerment, which is most needed today is spiritual empowerment. It must start with every individual. Every man should practise what he preaches,” he said. (*The Assam Tribune 08.04.2013*)

Encroachers Pose Threat to Bhaitbari Site

- Ajit Patowary

Guwahati, March 30: Former Director General of the National Museum and chairman of the Indian Art History Congress Prof Robin Dev Choudhury has expressed serious concern over the failure of the authorities to take proper steps for preservation of the Bhaitbari archaeological site in East Garo Hills district of Meghalaya.

He suggested handing over the entire site to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for total excavation and preservation, considering the vastness of the site and the cost and technical expertise involved in the work.

Talking to this correspondent, Choudhury regretted the fact that due to the failure of the authorities to preserve the site, it is facing serious

threats from the illegal migrants. The site will soon be destroyed by these illegal migrants, if immediate measures are not taken for its conservation, said Prof Choudhury.

The site located on the Phulbari-Tura Road, came to prominence when three structures were excavated by the archaeologists of the ASI there in 1991. These structures included a Buddhist stupa, a brick temple and an octagonal temple. The brick temple revealed a number of terracotta plaques of various gods and goddesses. These plaques were veneered in the brick temple vaults as ornamentation.

There are many raised mounds concealing structural remains and they need to be excavated in view of probing the past of the area in particular and

that of the NE region in general, said Prof Choudhury.

The entire site is enclosed by ramparts and a brick wall. However, these enclosures have been damaged by the encroachers to expand their settlements. A section of the encroachers have now been occupying some of the structures of the historical site, alleged Prof Choudhury.

The site comprises a vast area and it includes the ruins of temples and old tanks, fortifications suggesting the location of a civilized settlement, which may be dated back to 9th-10th century AD or prior to that period. The Buddhist stupa found at the site may emerge to be much older, said Prof Choudhury.

(*The Assam Tribune 30-03-2013*)



Seng Khasi : Surviving Western Onslaught with Cultural Distinction



Shillong, April 14: Seng Khasi is a Religious Socio Cultural organization of the indigenous Khasi belonging to the Niam Khasi / Khasi Religion. Its aim is to protect, preserve and promote the customs and tradition of the Khasi populace because for the Khasi, religion and culture are but two faces of the same coin, which also distinguishes them as a race different from any other race in the world.

It was established on November 23, 1899, by 16 prominent and patriotic leaders of the Khasi society under the leadership of "U Babu Jeebon Roy", till date the day is celebrated every year as 'Seng Kut Snem'. The origin of the Seng Khasi started from the emergence of the British colonial rule in the Khasi, Jaintia hills and the attempts of the religious conversions by Christian missionaries among the Khasi-Pnars.

The influence of political, religious groups and cultural impact upon the people of the land of Ri Hynniewtrep had caused much concern to the intellectuals and leaders of the Khasi community. It was at this juncture that visionaries like U Babu Jeebon Roy of the clan prompted to form the Seng Khasi organization. This religious organization was able to initially unite the people in bringing about an awareness of the traditional usages in the social sphere, under the age-old tenet of Tip briew Tip blei' (self realization and God conscious), Tipkur tipkha (to know the matrilineal and patrilineal lineage) and Kamai ia Ka Hok (to earn righteousness). These basic spiritual and moral principles have helped strengthen the Seng Khasi movement along the passage of time.

The Seng Khasi has been able to revolutionize many festival which were earlier confined two villages. In the early centuries "Shad Suk Mynesim", the dance of the joyous heart and soul, was called Shad Phur and was banned by the British saying that no festivals were allowed to be celebrated which involved usage of weapons.

However, over the last 102 years during 1910-2012, Shad Phur has been raised into Shad Suk Mynsiem in a common platform as a spring festival, evident of its growing attraction and participation of people today. Shad Suk Mynsiem is organized during the spring time when the nature rejuvenates itself and mankind is filled with the hope of a rich harvest. Thanks are given to God Almighty for the blessings he has showered in the year gone by and prayers are offered for a good year ahead.

The Seng Khasi's foremost task during the early 1900s was to preserve this traditional dance which began to dwindle due to the oppression of the colonial rulers. In 1910, the Seng Khasi leaders decided to shift the venue from Mawkhar where Shad Suk Mynsiem used to be held, due to congestion. Hence the dance was shifted to the present location at Lympung Weiking. It was on April 14 and 15, 1911 that the first Shad Suk Mynsiem was held at the spacious Weiking ground.

The ancient ethics of the Khasi have therefore been acknowledged and rediscovered by those who do not profess the indigenous religion.

Dr. (Rev. Fr.) Barnes L Mawrie, SDB, who holds a doctorate in Catechetic from the Salesian Pontifical University (Rome), in his book titled 'Introduction to Khasi Ethics' has observed - "it is something very strange that the Khasi religion is based on righteousness. Ka Hok. They believe that salvation is personal. This indeed is a great religion in it self."

Ironically, while some Christian scholars have helped revive the indigenous culture, there also exist fractions in the society who consider people following the traditional religion as 'belonging to the dark ages'.

This has brought about a sort of discrimination and division in the Khasi society. With some factions in the society failing to accept others identity and respecting it, this perhaps seems

to be a major reason for the belief that the Khasis are diminishing in numbers, since some are even against those marrying a person from a different belief even if he / she is a Khasi.

A reason that Seng Khasi has survived despite a lot of criticism is the innate and growing sense of ownership of the Sang Khasi organisation today and its contribution to the Khasi language and literature, in which many present authors have written books on the various angles and views of the Khasi faith especially in its relation to the cultural heritage of the people.

Awareness has therefore been created for people to respect and uphold their traditions while adapting to the winds of change of the present including pursuing higher education and participation in wider economic and welfare activities.

However, there is no doubt that Shad Suk Mynsiem will last in its richness and glamour for all times to come and Seng Khasi would withstand with courage and dedication against all undermining forces.

(Meghalaya Times 15.04.2013)

B'desh to get 268.4 acres land from Assam

Guwahati, April 2: State Revenue Minister Prithivi Majhi, while replying to a question asked in the House on Tuesday by Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) MLA Keshab Mahanta, said that according to the land swap deal signed between India and Bangladesh, 268.4 acres of land in Assam will be given away to Bangladesh. Of this, 193.85 acres will be given from Boroibari in Dhubri district and 74.55 acres from Madanpur in Karimganj district.

(The Sentinel 03.04.2013)

Lessons from Sualkuchi

Only the other day, Sualkuchi, the silk town of Assam, took on the appearance of a war zone for almost a week because wholesale traders of silk garments had started importing Banarasi silk items and started selling them as items manufactured at Sualkuchi. Tension started in Sualkuchi, about 35 kilometres from Guwahati, on March 29 and continued for the next few days with protesters forcibly collecting Banarasi silk items from shops and setting them on fire right in front of police personnel. According to the protesters, a section of wholesalers and flooded the local shops with Banarasi silk items resulting in local weavers and traders fast losing the market. For two days, things took an ugly turn and curfew had to be imposed on the silk town, with the army carrying out a flag march. The State capital, that had done very little to protect and promote the handloom industry in the State, reacted predictably with its ritual of ordering a magisterial inquiry into the incidents.

As we all know, Sualkuchi has remained the silk town of Assam about a couple of centuries. It is hardly surprising that a State like Assam should have a silk town. What is surprising is that the handloom industry connected with silk yarn of four different kinds should now be concentrated in just one town. What a lot of people outside the State do not know or do not care to remember is that traditionally every Assamese household, whether in the towns or in the villages, used to have a loom where the women wove all the cloth they needed for themselves and for their homes. In fact, there was a time not in the very distant past, when an Assamese maiden would have had a hard time finding a husband if she did not know how to weave. As a schoolboy, I remember my father's elder sister who wove virtually everything that was needed in the household: bed sheets, curtains and other household items in addition to

what the womenfolk wore. This tradition seems to have disappeared very fast in the urban areas of the State but continues in our villages. As such, it is difficult to think of the State as having only one town engaged in the production and weaving of silk—eri, muga, mulberry and oak tussore. Eri is a thick and tough variety of silk suitable for shawls and stoles and is remarkably durable. I still remember a very large eri shawl at home that was about 100 years old! Assam also has the famous muga, the golden coloured silk that is not produced anywhere else except in the Northeast of India. A kilo of muga yarn costs anything between Rs 9,000 and Rs 10,000. The other two varieties of silk are also produced elsewhere in the country.

Despite the fact that weaving as a household occupation has been on the decline in Assam, the State nevertheless has a handloom industry that is not to be sneezed at. All over the State, there are about 2.3 million people engaged directly in handloom activities on about 1.3 million looms. The State has more than one 1.3 million weavers of whom 1.1 million are women. However, of the total number of 1.3 million looms in the State only about 350,000 are engaged in commercial production while the remaining are used mainly for household and personal requirements. The total production of silk in Assam was around 2,100 tonnes during 2011–12. Of this, eri accounted for 1,976 tonnes, muga for 115 tonnes and mulberry for 18 tonnes. This is way below the production of silk in Karnataka (7,800 tonnes) and in Andhra Pradesh (6,019 tonnes). Even so, the contribution of the Northeast to the country's silk production at the end of the 11th Plan was about 15 per cent. One can well imagine what the production of silk in the Northeast would have been like had our manufacturers and weavers received a little more guidance, support and protection from the State government.

When it comes to setting up

industries in the Northeast, the Centre has got into the predictable habit of advising us to go for cottage industries rather than large-scale mechanized industries. The Centre has repeatedly done this despite its experience that handicrafts and handloom products have no way of competing with machine-made products either in terms of quality and finish or in terms of price. Unless our cottage industries are constantly bolstered with new technology and methods of cutting costs, the products of such enterprises will continue to take a beating at the marketplaces in respect of quality, finish and prices. This is not to suggest that there is no room any more for well crafted handloom products or artefacts exquisitely created by master craftsmen in small cottage industry settings. Quite obviously, there is. There must be something unique about the designs and colours produced by the Sualkuchi weavers. Otherwise, why should the weavers of Banaras be so keen to copy them on what they produce? Actually, this is a form of piracy as well, but no one can do very much about graphic designs being copied, and no one is even trying.

In a situation like this, where the conflict is made out to be between traditionalism and plagiarism, help has to come in different ways. The first requirement is for the aggrieved to help themselves before others can help them. The prime requirement here is to accept the fact that craftsmen cannot go on insisting that the archaic technology that goes with their craft and the artefacts they produce is part of the tradition and cannot be changed. This is an unacceptable position. The correct stand is to accept the artefact and the design as part of the tradition and to adapt them to the latest technology available in order to make a better finished product in less time and lower cost. The most obvious example is the Assamese xarai. The traditional xarai made in Sarthebari and elsewhere in Assam is a crude object with a lumpy middle actually

filled with earth—something that has no business to co-exist with a metal artefact of that kind. The finished product is crude and uneven, and the beautiful lid of the xarai often does not even fit the xarai properly. Quite obviously, the crudeness and the poor finish are not part of the required tradition. Our tradition does not stipulate that the xarai has to be crudely finished or that someone has to struggle in order either to put the lid on properly or to take it off. No one is going to find fault if the xarai is much better finished on a machine and looks shinier and more elegant. In fact, the xarai made in Moradabad is much better finished and far shinier than the one made in Sarthebari.

But it is not our traditional xarai and looks very different. The cover does not have half the beauty and grace of the traditional one. Whenever I have been presented xarais made in Moradabad at any felicitation programme, I have generally left them behind in my unwillingness to accept such a parody of one of our traditional artefacts. Even so, I have always been saddened by the inability of our xarai manufacturers to put modern technology to use in producing far better finished and better-looking xarais than they have been doing for decades. No one is going to blame them for a better finished product made on machines.

The weavers of Sualkuchi should not compromise on their craft, their designs and their colours, but if power looms will step up production and reduce prices without altering the traditional product in the least, there is every reason to make the technological change. And this is where the elected government of the weavers of Sualkuchi must step in to help them with expert guidance, knowhow and finance. It is not enough for the State government to be holding meaningless seminars or to be making tall promises about what they will do in the future for the manufacturers and weavers (dwelling in the future has become a pet pastime of the government) that are unlikely to be honoured. Instead, the government should make a list of deserving manufacturers who would like to make the change to power looms and enable them to do so by arranging for the finance in the form of soft loans and by ensuring that Sualkuchi has no power failures to keep power looms idle. There should also be urgent steps to augment the production of silk yarn within the State since the Sualkuchi weavers are not happy about importing yarn from Mysore. However, until this becomes a reality, there may have to be an intermediate phase of having to import silk yarn from elsewhere. Meanwhile, the best weavers of Sualkuchi must continue to produce their most exotic designs even on garments other than the traditional mekhelaa—saadar for export at the prices that they can fetch in international markets. They should not be striving to sell just handloom products; they should also aspire to sell exquisite objects of art that can and must match the best silk garments made anywhere in the world. These must be packaged in a way to match the very special goods being offered. Our weavers must make the transition from being just weavers to being craftsmen and craftswomen who have artefacts to offer to even the most discerning buyers in the world.

(<http://www.sentinelassam.com> 07.04.2013)

Meghalaya Cave System Extended by 387 Kms

- Raju Das

Shillong, April 4 – With the discovery of new caves, Meghalaya's cave system has been extended to 387 kms – one of the longest cave system in the Indian subcontinent – after conclusion of an international expedition of speleologists from around the globe.

So far 1,350 caves have been identified in Meghalaya, mostly in the limestone-rich Jaintia Hills district. 850 of these caves have been explored totally or partially, said Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA) secretary Brian D Kharpran Daly.

The International Caving Expedition was the 21st of its kind and was dubbed "Caving in the abode of the clouds" and spanned over a period of 18 days from February 4.

An eighteen member team from UK, Ireland, Switzerland, Austria, Romania, Germany and India took part in the expedition, which also included three biologists and researcher from Lady Keene College.

Brian said in the Larket Area in Jaintia Hills district, Krem Khung cave system was extended from 5,065 metre to 7,349 metre, making it India's 8th longest cave. One of the characteristic of this cave is large-sized fallen boulders.

Krem Labit Kseh in the Kopili Valley, on the other hand, was extended from 5,910 metre to 6,802 metre. The cave has fine river passages. This is one of the very few caves in India that has several rare gypsum formations, resembling flowers. It is India's 10th longest cave.

The third longest cave in the sub continent, Krem Diengjem, has been extended from 21,250 metre long system to 21,359 metre and is almost close to India's second longest cave, Krem Kotsati- Umlawan also found in the area.

Meanwhile, Brian said: "there are a lot of caves which remains to be discovered and explored. These caves provide us tremendous input on the ecology of the place, past history, besides providing opportunity for the locals and the Government to promote tourism."

(*The Assam Tribune* 5.04.2013)

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Should Shine be Sacked ?

when Cyias Thomas, Member, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions damned 'saffronisation' as "nothing but intellectual terrorism". If he had any complain to make against any text book, should he not have discussed the matter with thoughtful people before making obnoxious remarks about "saffronisation"?

(<http://www.sentinelassam.com> 30.03.2013)

The Need to Make Northeast Absolutely Free of Conflicts

- Dr Athiquel H Laskar

Northeast India can easily be defined as the location of the longest lasting and earliest insurgency in the country. All the states in the region are plagued by terrorist and insurgent violence. Though several peace initiatives have been taken by the government over the years, multi-track diplomacy and peace activities of Non-government organizations are still at an initial stage without any visible sign of improvement.

Much of the problem plaguing the people of the northeast owes its origin to the ethnic conflicts prevalent in the region. Conflicts among the several religious and linguistic ethnic groups are primarily centred round issues of economic deprivation, local power, educational opportunities and so on. The tribal people hold a long-nurtured grouse for being deprived and exploited by the outsiders or non-tribals. These, coupled with other reasons, has given rise to a number of insurgent groups in the northeast, which continuously threaten the peace and harmony of the region. Contrary to popular belief, the roots of the problem are not ideological but political, economic and emotional.

The eternal conflict between the 'hills' and 'plains' people: The disparity between the two groups of people populating the northeast – the 'hills' and the 'plains' people – has always been a prominent feature of the lives of Northeast inhabitants. The indigenous tribes living in the region are representative of the consecutive waves of migrants from East as well as West. The British policy of importing huge numbers of plantation workers, cultivators and administrators from different parts of India can be held responsible for complicating the cultural mosaic. Added to that, their policies of segregating tribal populations into different reservations known as 'excluded', 'backward' or 'non-regulated' areas succeeded in systematically undermining the historical 'connectedness' thereby deepening the fissures between non-tribal and tribal populations and

excluding the regions from the processes of democratization and modernization.

Naturally, widespread conflict now marks the northeast which continues to grapple with problems initiated by several military outfits as well as political uncertainties. An intricate collusive agreement also exists between terrorist groups and legitimate power elites in almost all the northeast states affected by terrorism.

Prospects for peace for the northeast: The peace prospects in Northeast India are still uncertain. Some of the most potent threats to present as well as future peace have been created by continuous demographic destabilization. Moreover, the crisis of governance also poses as a significant obstacle in the path to establishing peace in the region once and for all. Corruption levels in northeast state governments are alarmingly high and the quality of governance is awful to say the least.

One way in which the ongoing ethnic conflicts can be resolved or, at least, pacified is by integrating the northeast people into the Indian nation. National, humanistic and strategic considerations alike call for promotion and cultivation of peace, contentment, tranquillity and orderly progress in this important and vulnerable region known for being the route of invasions by foreigners from the east throughout history. There are numerous impediments in integrating this border with the rest of the country but the greatest of them all is the general lack of knowledge and ignorance about the area as well as the people who inhabit this region. It is this outdated knowledge and gross ignorance about the inhabitants of the northeast that can be held responsible for majority of the mismanagement, administrative bungling and successive wrong decision made by policy makers in Delhi as well as spot executioners.

Steps that can be taken to resolve conflicts, ethnic or otherwise, permanently: It has often been

proposed that political violence that exists in the northeast can be cured by creating infrastructure resources, generating employment and increasing developmental activities and expenditure. However, grants, special allocations and huge subsidies that were supposed to contain insurgency and ensure prosperity for the region have only managed in worsening the problem. This is because leakage of resources has been rampant, which has even cast a shadow on the state agencies' ability to execute projects of development in conflict-ridden areas effectively. Thus, proper steps have to be taken to ensure grants and subsidies and used appropriately to improve the condition of the region.

Migration has to be contained and regulated. Identity cards need to be issued by the government along with work permits in order to put an end to illegal migration and its associated dangers. The movement of populations ought to be checked or controlled in the region by fencing off the Bangladesh border at least partially. So long as people continue to cross borders illegally and in huge numbers, a fruitful resolution of the conflict cannot be expected.

Since Northeast India shares a major percentage of its borders with other countries, it can act as a bridge to a most vibrant neighbourhood. Trade with adjoining countries can be opened up with a view to improving the financial condition of the region. This can go a long way in establishing peace and harmony in the northeast.

Restoration needs to be done of a lot of things. To start with, alienated lands can be restored to tribal populations. This may not obliterate all the grouses or grudges held by the tribal sect altogether but will certainly be successful in conveying the message that the government is not oblivious of their grievances and is taking some constructive steps to better their situation.

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Demography by Design

It is indeed difficult to find a parallel anywhere in the world where an elected government in a democratic country has consistently encouraged illegal immigration to the extent that the people of the State are reduced to a minority. In any other civilized country such an initiative would be regarded as treason and the perpetrators of such crimes as traitors of their country.

It is hardly surprising that the recent statement of Assam MLA Sirajuddin Ajmal that by 2016 AIUDF would come to power in Dispur and that Badrauddin Ajmal, president of the party, would become the Chief Minister of Assam, should have evoked consternation, anger and fear among the people of Assam. This is largely because, over the years, the people of Assam have ably demonstrated how adept they are burying their heads in the sand whenever they are confronted with unpalatable truths. The Assam unit of the BJP is naturally angry about the statement and has characterized it as a formal declaration of war against Assam by the illegal migrants from Bangladesh now living in the State, and has cautioned Sirajuddin Ajmal from making such statements on the floor of the House in future. At the same time, the BJP has accepted the reality that the Hindus are a minority in the north-eastern States including Assam, and that the Centre would do well to keep this in mind. After all, Bangladeshis already constitute the majority in 10 out of the 29 districts of Assam and this orchestrated demographic change is likely affect many more districts of the State in the near future. As such, the warning by the BJP to the AIUDF and the brave statement that this will not be allowed to happen may perhaps be no more than a bit of wishful thinking since the BJP is unlikely to be able to change the demography of the State.

Regardless of the plural societies of the north-eastern States, Assam was strikingly different in being a predominantly Hindu majority State despite its plural character. There is no denying that immigration to Assam

from former East Bengal had started well before Independence. But even after Independence, the Congress continued to encourage such immigration from East Pakistan mainly in order to build up a strong vote bank for the party in clear violation of the provisions of Article 326 of our Constitution. It should be obvious to anyone that even in those days the Congress was seeking ways of remaining in power perpetually without performance.

Things might have continued surreptitiously in this fashion had it not been for the discovery by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) in 1979 of the large-scale inclusion of the names of Bangladeshis in our electoral rolls during a Lok Sabha by-election of Mangaldoi constituency. It was the confirmation of what had long been suspected—that our electoral rolls were full of the names of foreign nationals—that prompted the AASU to launch a six-year-long movement for the detection, disfranchisement and deportation of foreign nationals living in Assam illegally. It was at this point that the Congress decided to intensify both its pretence that the alleged illegal migrants were Indian nationals and its initiatives to continue encouraging such illegal immigration so that the processes of detection, disfranchisement and deportation would one day become virtually impossible. It is indeed difficult to find a parallel anywhere in the world where an elected government in a democratic country has consistently encouraged illegal immigration to the extent that the people of the State are reduced to a minority. In any other civilized country such an initiative would be regarded as treason and the perpetrators of such crimes as traitors of their country. That this illegal immigration from former East Bengal and East Pakistan was actually encouraged by our own politicians should be evident from the fact that the population of Assam increased from 3.29 million in 1901 to 14.625 million in 1971. This represents an increase of 343.77 per cent in a 70-

year period during which the population of India had increased by only 150 per cent. It is also significant that Assam's population that doubled in the 40 years between 1901 and 1941 (when it was 6.694 million) more than doubled in the 30 years between 1941 and 1971. Much of this was a population increase by design—a demographic change that was cleverly and diabolically orchestrated. (The Sentinel 5.04.2013)

Had the successive Congress governments of Assam merely confined their activities to increasing illegal migration from present Bangladesh, the demographic changes in Assam might not have spelt disaster. After all, even in 1985 the newly-formed AGP was able to come to power with a comfortable majority. This should be proof enough of the fact that had the AGP sincerely carried out its promise to detect, disfranchise and deport illegal migrants from Bangladesh, the present demographic scenario of Assam would have been very different. But once the AGP was in power it chose to forget all promises on the basis of which it had secured such an overwhelming mandate from the people. This was about the time when the Congress launched its strategy of also breaking up the greater Assamese society by encouraging separatist ethnic aspirations among smaller ethnic groups that had by and large adopted the Assamese language and culture. This process, initiated by the late Hiteswar Saikia, has been intensified during the three terms of Tarun Gogoi as Chief Minister. Along with this, large-scale conversion to Christianity has reduced the number of Hindus among the smaller ethnic groups.

The Indian polity has given a special place to the minorities ever since Independence. State Human Rights Commissions all over the country have shown great respect for the human rights of minorities. The Assamese, reduced to a minority in their home State due to the mischief

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Truck Drags Girl with Rope

Imphal, March 29: Angry villagers on Thursday managed to force a fleeing driver to halt the truck at Yairipok in Thoubal district while escaping after dragging a girl for a long distance through a rope. Though the festival of colour and its many evil practices have been done away within Imphal and surrounding areas, young girls in the rural areas continue to stop the vehicles to demand money. They use ropes to block the road. In this particular case some girls at Yairipok Ningthou Manai were stretching out the rope to stop the vehicles. However, one truck driver decided to bull through without stopping and paying money to the girls. While speeding away the truck dragged one girl who managed to clutch at the rope. She sustained some scratching injuries. The truck driver willfully injured the girl and the people chased the trucks in two wheelers. They overtook the truck. However, the driver managed to escape. The people who chased the truck found cartons of cough syrups and pain killers which are prescription

drugs stocked inside the truck. The escaping driver who is suspected to be a Muslim drug trafficker is yet to be accounted. The angry people burned the drugs there. However, as a result of the arrival of the police the truck could not be torched. In fact police had to resort to blank fire for some time to disperse the unruly crowd.

This incident shows that the drug traffickers in Manipur are undeterred by the resent seizures and arrests. It is on record that not a single drug trafficker has been punished for the crime. Rather people gain the indelible impression that the culprits are let off the hook once the dust settles down and people forget the incidents. One Army Colonel was one of the drug offenders arrested with a huge quantity. Besides a son of a former minister and now Congress MLA was arrested in this connection. It was expected that the MLA would tender resignation owing moral responsibility. However, he merely said that his estranged son has been staying away and that he was

not involved in the drug business. In Manipur it has never happened that any elected representatives had resigned owing morality. The number of drug abusers in Manipur is legion. Many sections including one former insurgent turned MLA said that it is a policy of a long term counter insurgency to flood Manipur with drugs. Today it appears that every third or fourth youth is hooked to drug. Heroin and other narcotics drugs are costly. So the drug addicts consume prescriptions drugs and alcohol most of the times. They buy heroin and others only when they no longer tolerate the urge for drugs. In Manipur even common stationery items like glue, whiteners are not sold since these are also abused by the drug addicts.

In view of the heavy demand of the drugs and drug substitutes, a considerable number of dubious persons are earning huge profit. It is widely suspected that children and other close associates of the powerful elements are behind the thriving drug business. (*The Sentinel 30.03.2013*)

Indians are Creative, Says Sunita Williams

April 2, 2013: Calling Indians creative and innovative, US astronaut Sunita Williams Tuesday said that an international space programme was the "right way to go".

"What I see when I come to India is that there are a lot of creative and innovative people who are ready and willing to jump ahead and be entrepreneurial and add to any programme out there," Williams said at a media conference at the Science City auditorium in Kolkata Tuesday.

"I have had a real honour and privilege to be a part of a space programme that is not only US but also international. That is the right way to have a space programme, international, because it is our planet, not one country. I see myself as citizen of the universe and I think we are all lucky," Williams added.

Williams, 47, who holds the world

record for the most spacewalk time — 50 hours 40 minutes — by a female astronaut, is in India on a week-long trip.

"The international space programme is alive and kicking and is wanting more and more people," said the US-born Williams, whose father is from Mehsana in Gujarat.

"Once we leave our atmosphere, we have to seriously think about being protected from radiation. Even just going to the moon... there is increase in radiation," said Williams, who also holds the record for the longest spaceflight time by a female astronaut — 322 days in space on two missions.

"There are a lot of things that we have to understand and another thing the people have to like each other quite a bit... learn to interact with each other. We also get to learn about leadership and powership," added Williams.



She stressed the need to think about smarter ways to do things in order to sustain India's growing population.

"There are a lot of people in India. What that means is that there are great minds, great ideas, creative, people thinking about green energy. I have seen it in the newspapers," she said.

(<http://www.dnaindia.com>)

AASU, ABSU Demand Use of Assamese, Bodo Languages

Guwahati, April 7 – The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), in a joint resolution, have demanded that all government correspondence and signboards and hoardings, etc., must use Bodo, Assamese and English languages in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD) area.

"We have noticed with concern the serious lapses on the part of the government machinery vis-à-vis use of mother tongues in official correspondences and signboards, etc., in BTAD area. This has also caused misunderstanding among the masses as the authorities concerned did not take rectifying measures. We demand that the authorities ensure the use of Bodo, Assamese and English

languages from now onwards," the AASU and the ABSU said in a statement.

The two student bodies had a meeting over the issue at Tamulpur today.

The AASU and the ABSU also took strong exception to the recent move of the State Government to introduce English-medium government schools, and demanded that the move be rescinded at the earliest.

"The Government has done precious little over the decades to improve the infrastructure and teaching standards in the government-run vernacular schools. It is for the Government to ensure that the government-run vernacular schools prosper," the statement said.

The two student bodies also called for provincialization of all Assamese and Bodo medium schools that had been given permission to open or those that had been recognized by the Government.

The AASU and the ABSU also expressed concern over the disturbing developments at Goreswar College and other adjoining areas, and urged the people to exercise restraint and maintain peace.

"The people of Assam have a history of peaceful coexistence, and we appeal to all to act in the best traditions of bonhomie and amity," the statement said.

(<http://www.assamtribune.com>
8.04.2013)

Thousands throng Bodo festival

Dibrugarh, March 29 – The five-day Fifth International Bodo Festival and Third Sonowal Kachari Cultural Festival at Mancotta entered the second day today.

A larger crowd attended the festival today who witnessed the grand unfurling of the Bodo National festival committee (BNFC) flag by Biswajit Daimary, president of BNFC and Rajya Sabha MP from Kokrajhar.

Smriti tarpan was offered by Tankeshwar Sonowal, general secretary of the event's organizing committee and Deputy Chief Executive Member of Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council (SKAC) who paid tribute to the personalities with noteworthy contribution to the

development of indigenous and tribal society, culture and politics, etc.

A two-hour long cultural procession, taken out from Old Government Boy's High School ground to the festival venue, was flagged off by Labour and Employment Minister Prithibi Majhi. The procession was led by Rajya Sabha MP and office-bearers of BNFC and Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council (SKAC).

Majhi, while addressing the gathering during the flagging off ceremony, said culture safeguards the identity of ethnic communities and each one ought to work towards preservation and development of respective culture, language and tradition.

Bodo-Kachari ethnic groups comprising Bodo, Kacha, Hajongs, Rabhas, Garo, Thengal, Deori, Rajbongshi, Sarania, Sonowal, Moran, Mech, Barman, Dimasa, etc, besides Nepali, tea garden working communities and other ethnic groups participated in the procession in their traditional attires. Around 24,000 people took part in the procession. They also carried along with them their traditional tools and implements of agricultural, fishing, music and warfare. The procession culminated at the main jamboree hall and later cultural shows followed.

(*The Assam Tribune* 30.03.2013)

Assamese 'Gamosa' Enters Guinness

New delhi, April 9, 2013: The Assamese 'gamosa' on Monday etched its name in the Guinness Book with weavers from the state creating a 1.5 km long motif depicting the traditional towel.

An initiative of Assam Police constable Abhijeet Baruah, himself a multiple record holder, the effort

was endorsed by officials of the Guinness Records at the lawns of India Gate here as the longest handmade towel.

"Our aim was to let the world know the significance of our gamosa. So this gamosa (1.5 km long and 26 inches wide) was woven in Assam containing a complete

overview of our state, our culture and society," Baruah told PTI.

The gamosa had images of Assam's luminaries like Bhupen Hazarika, Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Rabha.

The earlier record was a 101 mt long sheet of silk woven by an Indonesian trio in 2010.

Sharing Housework 'Key to Good Marriage'

Apr 11, 2013: *Husbands and wives are happier when they share household and child-raising responsibilities, a University of Missouri researcher has found.*

However, sharing responsibilities doesn't necessarily mean couples divide chores equally, said Adam Galovan, a doctoral student in the MU Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

"Sharing can mean something different to every couple," Galovan said. "It could be taking turns changing diapers or one parent watching the children while the other prepares dinner. Doing things together and having mutual, agreed-upon divisions of labor benefitted both spouses."

"The more wives perceived that husbands were engaged in routine family work tasks, the better the relationships were for both partners," Galovan said. "Wives in our study viewed father involvement and participation in household chores as related. Doing household chores and being engaged with the children seem to be important ways for husbands to connect with their wives, and that connection is related to better couple relationships."

The bonds between fathers and their children also contributed to couples' marital satisfaction, Galovan said.

"When wives felt their husbands were close to their children, both

spouses reported better marriages," said Galovan. "The father-child bond was particularly important for wives."

Couples should realize that transitioning into parenthood requires an adjustment period, and it is normal for husbands and wives to feel stressed, Galovan said. To counteract the stress, he recommends that parents make each other a priority.

"Find ways to connect throughout the day, even if it's just doing dishes together or watching a movie," Galovan said.

"These simple connections in daily life seem to enhance couples' marital satisfaction and improve the quality of their relationships," he added.

(The Assam Tribune 11.04.2013)

First Apatani Language Newspaper Launched

Itanagar, April 8: Supung Puyu—the first local fortnightly in Apatani language was launched by local MLA cum Parliamentary Secretary for Land Management Padi Richo and Lower Subansiri DC Taru Talo on Sunday in a function held at Abotani Hall, Hapoli.

Appreciating the publisher cum Editor of the newspaper Yachang Tacho, Chief Guest Richo said that the Supung Puyu would serve as an important platform to improve the

Apatani language as well as a medium of learning. He further added that with the publication of the newspaper, the dying language of Apatani would find a platform to revive itself.

Attending the function as the Guest of Honour, Lower Subansiri DC Taru Talo said that the newspaper would benefit the society.

While talking about its importance and the role towards improvement of

Apatani language, he suggested the publisher to make it an effective learning medium and try and it as a weekly publication in due course of time.

"I was longing to bring out a journal or a newspaper so as to make it a medium of learning as well as a platform for improving language," said Yachang Tacho.

(The Sentinel 09.04.2013)

Sameer Tanti Gets Assam Valley Literary Award

Guwahati, March 30: Noted Assamese poet Sameer Tanti has won the 23rd Assam Valley Literary Award.

Speaking at the award ceremony here last evening, Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, said literature has a major role in nation-building and "strengthening the bonds of amity".

"Assam has a rich heritage in language and literature and the State has contributed significantly to the Indian literary tradition. In our State, from the days of Srimanta Sankardeva to the present, art and literature has played a major role in

nation-building and unifying the society," he said.

Gogoi called upon the tea industry to open more schools for the children of tea labourers so that such sections are not deprived of quality education.

"The tea industry needs to do more for the uplift of tea labourers who are among the major deprived groups," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, noted litterateur Pratibha Ray said literature is the only true unifying force in the society.

"Neither politics nor religion is the

main unifying force. It is literature which unites the people," she said.

She said that even though literature in India comes in different languages, there is a close relation between works of writers belonging to various States.

Tanti said the growing disparity among sections of the society is a major cause for concern as it leads to discontent and strife.

"There is an urgent need to bridge the gap in order to ensure that society can prosper and progress," Tanti said.

*(<http://www.thehindu.com>
businessline.com)*

(Contd. from Page 06)

Drug Abuse: the Problem...

altering drugs also have potentially harmful effects, particularly if they are abused. This is true if large segments of the population simply ignore such controls, as has been the case with marijuana.

There always remains the danger that in turning to drugs to escape from unpleasant reality, to resolve problems, and to find euphoria, humankind will be entering a false paradise. Some measure of psychic distress seems an inevitable condition of human existence. At the present time, psycho-active drugs can perhaps best be viewed as two-edged swords that can help us cope with stress and possibly enhance our experience, or can literally wreck our lives.

In a nutshell, it can be said that these narcotic drugs are neither a solution to any problem nor a step towards a healthy life. It should be avoided by everyone who wants to lead a healthy, happy and placid life. It's our responsibility to take necessary steps by avoiding such habits to lead a long and healthy life.

(The Assam Tribune 06.04.2013)

(Contd. from Page 07)

Preserving Culture through...

There is, however, no legal or institutional framework to safeguard their intellectual property rights. This is sought to be done by making arrangements to protect their intellectual property rights and curtailing the rights of corporate and other agencies to access and exploit their resource base.

These endeavours would go a long in delivering the desired goals and thereby help us in keeping our cultural heritage robust and healthy for the future after many decades when future generations might want to know what our culture looked like. Our country with thousand of years heritage and civilization should also be, reflected in its preservation and development of the cultural flow in the days to come. This is so because culture is an ever-growing dynamic entity which would be dead if it stopped growing at any moment of time. Our culture and heritage should be enriched by healthy and meaningful inputs from others from time to time and thereby be able to deliver a synthesized cultural entity for the future generations.

(The Assam Tribune 01.04.2013)

(Contd. from Page 12)

The Need to Make Northeast...

The underground economy of terrorism has to be disrupted from the root itself. It cannot be denied that there are several over-ground entities such as the bureaucracy, business organizations and political parties which are involved in conspiracies with terrorists. This pact needs to be challenged and then destroyed to restore peace and tranquillity and achieve conflict resolution in the region.

Above all, a culture of peace ought to be actively promoted, that dismisses and disapproves of political violence as a means to resolve political grievances or problems.

If these steps are taken and implemented properly, it can actually contribute to a peaceful resolution of conflicts and disagreements, thereby making northeast a much better place to live in. (www.conantoinstitute.org.in)

(The Sentinel 07.04.2013)

(Contd. from Page 13)

Demography by...

of their own elected leaders, must now assert and secure their minority rights better than minority groups have been able to do anywhere else in India. The perpetrators of this demographic mischief—our politicians—will be nowhere around when the real crunch of having a Bangladeshi chief minister comes. They will all be hiding in their homes in other parts of India bought long ago in anticipation of this dreaded day. And even if the UPA government manages to return to power after 2014 by some miracle, it will have no reason to help the people of Assam after the Congress decided to have an alliance with the AIUDF. Hence the Assamese minority in Assam can hope to survive only if it can manage to turn the tables on the emerging majority by asserting and wresting minority rights with greater conviction, vehemence and courage than seen anywhere else in India. (The Sentinel 6.04.2013)

Nilachal Hill, a Haven for Medicinal Plants

GUWAHATI, April 3 – Many medicinal plants are found in the North Eastern States especially in Assam. Around 115 medicinal plants are found in Nilachal Hill alone. But nobody has initiated moves to protect and collect these rare medicinal plants said the Head of the Botany department of Cotton College Dr Purnima Devi.

Nilachal Educational Welfare Society (NEWS) under the auspices of Assam Science Society organised a day-long exhibition on medicinal plants namely 'Sanjibani' on March 29 at Nilachal Jatiya Vidyalaya, Kamakhya Gate here, where around 80 different species of medicinal plants were displayed.

Dr Purnima Devi, senior research worker on medicinal plants, inaugurated the exhibition. She also delivered a speech while displaying different medicinal plants with the help of projector and said about their medicinal values. She asked the students to come forward for protecting these rare medicinal plants and play a major role in creating awareness among the people. The students of Nilachal Jatiya Vidyalaya, teachers, guardians, local people, invited guest etc. were present in that exhibition where Vedailata Kalmow, Tulsi, Brahami, Manimuni, Neem, etc. were displayed.

बेमानी है हिंदू धर्म की अन्य धर्मों से तुलना

-विजेंद्र कुमार

स्वयंभू इस्लामिक धर्मगुरु जाकिर नाईक पिछले कई वर्षों से अन्य धर्मावलंबियों को शास्त्रार्थ की चुनौती दे रहे थे कि यदि कोई उसे गलत साबित कर दे तो वे इस्लाम छोड़ देंगे। इस बहाने वे अन्य धर्मों का सरेआम मजाक उड़ा रहे थे। खुद को सबसे बड़ा विद्वान स्वयंभू मुस्लिम धर्मगुरु मानने वाले जाकिर नाईक बहुत दिनों से अपने मत को ही अंतिम सत्य मानकर खुद को महान साबित करने पर तुले थे।

जैसा होना था वैसा ही हुआ और खुद को हिंदू या यूं कहिए सनातन धर्म के ज्ञाता समझने वाले एक अज्ञात से धर्मगुरु रामपाल जी महाराज ने जाकिर नाईक की चुनौती को स्वीकार करते हुए उन्हें धर्मचर्चा अर्थात् शास्त्रार्थ के लिए सादर निमंत्रण भेजा दिया और तारीख भी तय कर दी गई व इसका लगातार विज्ञापन दिया गया। वही हुआ जिसकी आशंका थी अर्थात् जाकर नाईक जी को धर्मचर्चा में नहीं आना था और नहीं आए और न ही भविष्य में कभी आने का कोई संकेत ही दिया। खैर यह तो होना ही था और ऐसा होने से हिंदू धर्म की पताका कोई ओर ऊंची होकर फहराने नहीं लगी जैसा विवेकानंद के शिकागो प्रवास के दौरान हुआ था। मेरा तो यही मानना है कि रामपाल जी महाराज को जाकिर नाईक की चुनौती को चुनौती मानना ही नहीं चाहिए था और इसे उपेक्षित कर देना चाहिए था क्योंकि नाईक को चुप कराने के लिए कोई भी ऐरा-गैरा चुनौती स्वीकार कर लेता तो भी यही परिणाम रहना था जो रामपाल जी महाराज के चुनौती स्वीकार करने से रहा है।

हिंदू धर्म और अन्य धर्मों में तुलना असंभव:

दरअसल तुलना वहां की जाती है जब दो विचारों या धर्मों में लगभग समानता हो अर्थात् जिनमें समान तत्वों की अधिकता हो और असमान तत्वों की न्यूनता। बिल्कुल समरूप अथवा बिल्कुल विपरीत तत्वों की तुलना नहीं की जा सकती। इस आधार पर हिंदू धर्म की इस्लाम तो क्या ईसाई, पारसी या फिर दुनिया के किसी भी धर्म से तुलना नहीं की जा सकती जिसका जन्म भारत से बाहर हुआ है। आइए जानें कि हिंदू और गैरहिंदू धर्मों में मुख्य-मुख्य आधारभूत अंतर क्या है जो इनकी तुलना करने में आड़े आ रहे हैं-

(१) सत्य निरपेक्ष है या सापेक्ष: हिंदू धर्म में सत्य को निरपेक्ष माना गया है अर्थात् सत्य इसलिए सत्य नहीं कि वह किसी आप्त पुरुष या ईश्वर द्वारा कथित है अपितु वह अपने आप में सत्य है इसलिए आप्त पुरुष ने सत्य को कथित किया है। यदि कोई आप्त पुरुष सत्य को असत्य करार दे दे तो भी सत्य, सत्य ही रहेगा न कि वह असत्य हो जाएगा। इसके विपरीत इस्लाम, ईसाई या अन्य गैर हिंदू धर्म में सत्य को सापेक्ष माना गया है। इन धर्मावलंबियों के अनुसार सत्य इसलिए सत्य है कि उक्त कथन उनके श्रद्धेय मोहम्मद, ईसा मसीह या उनके आप्त पुरुष द्वारा कथित है न कि सत्य अपने आप में सत्य है।

(२) अहिंसा परमो धर्म: अहिंसा या दया हिंदू धर्म का मूल है तभी तो कहा गया है- जहां दया तहां धर्म है.....। इसलिए हिंदू ऐसे धर्म की कल्पना नहीं कर सकता जिसमें हिंसा का जरा-सा भी समावेश

किया गया हो। बाइबल पढ़ते हुए कोई हिंदू जब यह लिखा हुआ पाता है कि ईसा मसीह ने एक रोटी और एक सूखी मछली से सभी अनुयायियों का पेट भर दिया तो वो समझ नहीं पाता कि यह कैसा ईश्वर का पुत्र है जिसे पेट भरने के लिए मछली को मारना या खाना पड़ा? इससे अच्छा तो वो भूखा रह लेता। एक हिंदू कुछ इसी प्रकार की धारणा इस्लाम या अन्य उन सभी धर्मों के प्रति रखता है जो अहिंसा का समर्थन निरपेक्ष रूप से नहीं करते। हिंदू और अन्य धर्मों में यह दूसरा मुख्य अंतर है। हिंदू जीव मात्र के लिए दया और कल्याण की भावना रखता है जबकि अन्य धर्म ऐसा नहीं सोचते।

(३) आत्मा की एकता और अमरता:- हिंदू न केवल आत्मा को अजर-अमर मानता है अपितु सभी आत्माओं की एकता में भी विश्वास करता है अर्थात् वो मानता है कि सभी जिवों में एक जैसी आत्मा निवास करती है। इसके विपरीत अन्य धर्म यह मानते हैं कि ईश्वर ही आत्माओं को पैदा करता है और वही नष्ट भी करता है। ईसाई धर्म तो पशुओं में आत्मा के अस्तित्व को नकारते हुए केवल मनुष्यों में ही इसके अस्तित्व को स्वीकारता है। यही कारण है कि वो इसे उपभोग की वस्तु मानता है जिसे मनुष्यों के उपभोग के लिए ईश्वर ने सृजित किया है। इसके विपरीत एक हिंदू को भोजन या अन्न को जूठा छोड़ने में भी हिंसा नजर आती है कि इस व्यर्थ किए गए अन्न से किसी अन्य की भूख मिटाई जा सकती थी।

(४) हिंदू खुला, जबकि अन्य सभी बंद धर्म है:- हिंदू व अन्य धर्मों में यह अंतर सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है। जब कोई भी

नया विचार (या धर्म) पनपता है तो उस वक्त वह सर्वथा उपयुक्त और सत्य प्रतीत होता है, लेकिन कालांतर में उसमें कमियां दृष्टिगोचर होने लगती हैं। ऐसे में इस पूर्ववर्ती विचारधारा के विपरीत दूसरी विचारधारा पनपती है। आगे चल कर इन दोनों विचारधाराओं को समन्वित करने वाली तीसरी विचारधारा का विकास होता है। इस प्रकार से यह किसी विचार या धर्म के विकास के लिए निरंतर चलने वाली प्रक्रिया है। हिंदू धर्म की विशेषता यही है कि यह धर्म किसी एक व्यक्ति द्वारा प्रतिपादित सिद्धांत मात्र न होकर अनेकानेक व्यक्तियों के विचारों का सामूहिक प्रतिफल है जो हजारों सालों में परिमार्जित हुआ है। इस प्रकार से हिंदू धर्म एक खुला धर्म है जो विचार से नहीं

अपितु विवेक से विकसित हुआ है। इसके विपरीत अन्य धर्म चाहे वह इस्लाम हो चाहे ईसाई या कोई अन्य, सभी बंद धर्म हैं जो एक व्यक्ति मात्र के विचारों पर आधारित हैं और जो यह मानकर चलते हैं कि समय अपरिवर्तित रहता है और व्यक्ति का विवेक भी। इन धर्मों में विचारों के विकास का कोई महत्व नहीं है। यही कारण है कि इन धर्मों में विशेष आग्रह अथवा वैचारिक कट्टरता पाई जाती है। ईसाई धर्म में जो थोड़ी-बहुत उदारता पाई जाती है उसका हेतु प्रोटेस्टेंट विचारधारा का विकास है। बेशक हिंदू प्रोटेस्टेंट विचारधारा का विकास है। बेशक हिंदू धर्म भी उतना ही कट्टर होता जितना ईसाई या इस्लाम धर्म है यदि इसमें विभिन्न विचारधाराओं का समावेश न हुआ होता।

इसलिए मेरा मानना है कि हिंदू धर्म की अन्य धर्मों से कोई तुलना नहीं की जा सकती। क्या सागर की तुलना किसी तालाब से की जा सकती है या बरगद की तुलना कैकटस से की जा सकती है? इसलिए मेरा मानना है कि रामपाल जी महाराज को जाकिर नाईक की चुनौती को केवल और केवल चुप कराने के लिए स्वीकार करने की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं थी। इस्लाम में इतना अंतरद्वंद्व है उसे तो कोई भी ऐरा गैरा यहां तक कि नास्तिक हिंदू भी चुप करवा सकता था। कारण यह नहीं कि हिंदू धर्म अन्य धर्मों से उत्तम है अपितु कारण यह है कि हिंदू धर्म अन्य धर्मों से अधिक विकसित और परिमार्जित है।

(पूर्वोदय - 7.4.2013)

मिजौरम के सेरछीप नगर में स्वधर्मी युवाओं का सम्मेलन

-Ramthanga Khawlhing

(ज्ञातव्य: निम्नलिखित मिजौ शब्द हिन्दी भाषा के शब्दों से दूर-दूर तक भी सम्बन्ध नहीं है, जैसा लिखा गया है, वैसा ही प्रस्तुत किया जाए, परिवर्तन न किया जाए।)

मिजौ स्वधर्म संगठन 'नुन्ना लल-हनम्' के युवा संगठन 'लल-हनम् वौ:बीक ठालाई' के तत्वावधान में दिनांक ५-७ अप्रैल को मिजौरम के सेरछीप नगर में संयुक्त युवा सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया गया। इस सम्मेलन में अन्य दो संगठन 'लल-छूंगकुआ यूनिटी' तथा 'मिजौ कौ:हन' के युवाओं ने भी भाग लिया। सम्मेलन में लगभग ३०० स्त्री-पुरुष उपस्थित रहें।

उक्त संगठन 'लल-छूंगकुआ यूनिटी' तथा 'मिजौ कौ:हन' के युवाओं ने विषय रखा कि 'मिजौ समाज को ईसाइयत के आधार बाईबल की गुलामी से छुड़ाने की

आवश्यकता है, इसीलिए बाईबल की असलियत को जानकर अपने भाईयों को विदेशियों की चाल से मुक्ति दिलाना है।' यद्यपि ऐसा कहते हैं तथापि वे बाईबल को एक मापदण्ड के रूप में प्रयोग करते हैं और भारतीय धार्मिक पुस्तकों के ज्ञान से अनभिज्ञ हैं, स्वयं को ईसाई न मानते हुए भी यहूदियों की कपोल-कल्पित कथाओं का उदाहरण लेकर अपना विचार व्यक्त करते हैं, इसीलिए उन्हें सनातन धर्म के ज्ञान देने की आवश्यकता है।

जब कि 'नुन्ना लल-हनम्' के युवाओं ने कहा कि 'हमारे स्व-धर्म पूर्वजों के दिव्य ज्ञान पर आधारित है, अर्थात् सनातन धर्म है। हमारे समाज को स्वधर्म में वापस आने का समय आ गया है। बाईबल तो उन पाश्चात्य लोगों की पुस्तक है जो यहां से जो चुके हैं, इसलिए उनके पास वापस

भेजना चाहिए और अपने स्वधर्म की पुस्तकों का अध्ययन करना चाहिए ताकि हम अपनी संस्कृति, भाषा तथा स्वधर्म की रक्षा कर सकेंगे।

सम्मेलन के दौरान आस-पास के तीर्थ स्थलों का दर्शन किया गया, उन तीर्थों का नाम निम्नलिखित है:-

१. चोंगचिल्ह-ई पूक
२. तुइरिहिआउ
३. वानतोंगखो:थ्ला



एक चोंगचिल्ह-ई पूक नाम की गुफा है, इसे गुफा के चोंगचिल्ह-ई नाम की एक कल्पना के नाम की न बंदकत करनीय करनी की।
स्थान: देनजोप, जिल: मेरान, मिजौरम।

द्रौपदी सत्यभामा संवाद

कौरवों के साथ जुआ खेलकर पराजित हुए पाण्डव शर्त के अनुसार बारह वर्ष के वनवास में गये। जब वे काम्यकवन में रहते थे तब द्वारिका से श्रीकृष्ण और उनकी रानी सत्यभामा उनको भेंट करने के लिये पहुंचे। पाण्डव और श्रीकृष्ण अन्य ब्राह्मणों के साथ धर्मचर्चा कर रहे थे तब द्रौपदी और सत्यभामा अलग बैठकर वार्तालाप करने लगीं। महाभारत के वनपर्व में स्थित यह वार्तालाप यहां उसी रूप में दिया गया है।

वैशम्पायनजी कहते हैं- जनमेजय! जब माहात्मा पाण्डव तथा ब्राह्मणलोग आसपास बैठकर धर्मचर्चा कर रहे थे, उसी समय द्रौपदी और सत्यभामा भी एक ओर जाकर एक ही साथ सुखपूर्वक बैठीं और अत्यन्त प्रसन्नतापूर्वक परस्पर हास्य-विनोद करने लगीं। राजेन्द्र! दोनों ने एक दूसरी को बहुत दिनों बाद देखा था, इसलिये परस्पर प्रिय लगनेवाली बातें करती हुई वहां सुखपूर्वक बैठी रहीं।

कुरुकुल और यदुकुल से सम्बन्ध रखनेवाली अनेक विचित्र बातें उनकी चर्चा के विषय थे। भगवान् श्रीकृष्ण की प्यारी पटरानी सत्राजितकुमारी सुन्दरी सत्यभामा ने एकान्त में द्रौपदी से इस प्रकार पूछा- 'शुभे! द्रुपदकुमारी! किस बर्ताव से तुम हृष्ट-पुष्ट अङ्गोवाले तथा लोकपालों के समान वीर पाण्डवों के हृदय पर अधिकार रखती हो? किस प्रकार तुम्हारे वश में रहते हुए वे कभी तुम पर कुपित नहीं होते।

प्रियदर्शने! क्या कारण है कि पाण्डव सदा तुम्हारे अधीन रहते हैं और सबके सब तुम्हारे मुँह की ओर देखते रहते हैं? इसका यथार्थ रहस्य मुझे बताओ।

पाञ्चालकुमारी कृष्णे! आज मुझे भी कोई ऐसा व्रत, तप, स्नान, मन्त्र, औषध, विद्या-शक्ति, मूल-शक्ति (जड़ी-बूटी का

प्रभाव), जप, होम या दवा बताओं, जो यश और सौभाग्य की वृद्धि करनेवाला हो तथा जिससे श्यामसुन्दर सदा मेरे अधीन रहें।'।

ऐसा कहकर यशस्विनी सत्यभामा चुप हो गयी। तब पतिपरायणा महाभागा द्रौपदी ने उसे इस प्रकार उत्तर दिया।

'सत्ये! तुम मुझ से जिसके विषय में पूछ रही हो, वह साध्वी स्त्रियों का नहीं, दुराचारिणी और कुलटा स्त्रियों का आचरण है! जिस मार्ग का दुराचारिणी स्त्रियों ने अवलम्बन किया है, उसके विषय में हमलोग कोई चर्चा कैसे कर सकती हैं?'

इस प्रकार का प्रश्न अथवा स्वामी के स्नेह में सन्देह करना तुम्हारे जैसी साध्वी स्त्री के लिये कदापि उचित नहीं है, चूँकि तुम बुद्धिमती होने के साथ ही श्यामसुन्दर की प्रियतमा पटरानी हो।

जब पति को यह मालूम हो जाय कि उसकी पत्नी उसे वश में करने के लिये किसी मन्त्र-तन्त्र अथवा जड़ी-बूटी का प्रयोग कर रही है, तो वह उससे उसी प्रकार उद्विग्न हो उठता है, जैसे अपने घर में हुए सर्प से लोग शाङ्कित रहते हैं।

उद्विग्न को शान्ति कैसी? और अशान्त को सुख कहाँ? अतः मन्त्र-तन्त्र करने से पति अपनी पत्नी के वश में कदापि नहीं हो सकता।

इसके सिवा, ऐसे अवसरों पर धोखे से शत्रुओं द्वारा भेजी हुई ओषधियों को खिलाकर कितनी ही स्त्रियां अपने पतियों को अत्यन्त भयंकर रोगों का शिकार बना देती हैं। किसीको मारने की इच्छावाले मनुष्य उसकी स्त्री के हाथ में यह प्रचार करते हुए विष दे देते हैं कि 'यह पति को वष में करनेवाली जड़ी-बूटी है।'

उनके दिये हुए चूर्ण ऐसे होते हैं कि

उन्हें पति यदि जिह्वा अथवा त्वचा से भी स्पर्श कर ले, तो वे निःसंदेह उसी क्षण उसके प्राण ले लें।

कितनी ही स्त्रियों ने अपने पतियों को (वश में करने की आशा से हानिकारक दवाएं खिलाकर) जलोदर और कोढ़ का रोगी, असमय में ही वृद्ध, नपुंसक, अंधा, गूंगा और बहरा बना दिया है।

इस प्रकार पापियों का अनुसरण करने वाली वे पापिनी स्त्रियां अपने पतियों को अनेक प्रकार की विपत्तियों में डाल देती हैं। अतः साध्वी स्त्री को चाहिये कि वह कभी किसी प्रकार भी पति का अप्रिय न करे।

यशस्विनी सत्यभामे! मैं स्वयं माहात्मा पाण्डवों के साथ जैसा बर्ताव करती हूँ, वह सब सच-सच सुनाती हूँ, सुनो।

मैं अहंकार और काम-क्रोध को छोड़कर सदा पूरी सावधानी के साथ सब पाण्डवों की और उनकी अन्यान्य स्त्रियों की भी सेवा करती हूँ।

अपनी इच्छाओं का दमन करके मन को अपने आपमें ही समेटे हुए केवल सेवा की इच्छा से ही अपने पतियों का मन रखती हूँ। अहंकार और अभिमान को अपने पास नहीं फटकने देती।

कभी मेरे मुखसे कोई बुरी बात न निकल जाय, इसकी आशाझू से सदा सावधान रहती हूँ। असभ्य की भाँति कहीं खड़ी नहीं होती। निर्लज्ज की तरह सब ओर दृष्टि नहीं डालती। बुरी जगह पर नहीं बैठती। दूराचार से बचती हूँ तथा चलने-फिरने में भी असभ्यता न हो जाय इसके लिये सतत सावधान रहती हूँ।

कुन्तीदेवी के पांचों पुत्र ही मेरे पति हैं। वे सूर्य और अग्नि के समान तेजस्वी, चन्द्रमा के समान आह्लाद प्रदान करनेवाले,

महारथी, दृष्टिमात्र से ही शत्रुओं को मारने की शक्ति रखनेवाले तथा भयंकर बल-पराक्रम एवं प्रताप से युक्त हैं। मैं सदा उन्हीं की सेवा में लगी रहती हूँ।

देवता, मनुष्य, गन्धर्व, युवक, बड़ी सजधजवाला धनवान् अथवा परम सुन्दर कैसा ही पुरुष क्यों न हो, मेरा मन पाण्डवों के सिवा और कहीं नहीं जाता।

पतियों और उनके सेवकों को भोजन कराये बिना मैं कभी भोजन नहीं करती, उन्हें नहलाये बिना मैं कभी नहाती नहीं हूँ तथा पतिदेव जबतक शयन न करें, तब तक मैं सोती भी नहीं हूँ।

खेत से, वन से अथवा गाँव से जब कभी मेरे पति घर पधारते हैं, उस समय मैं खड़ी होकर उनका अभिनन्दन करती हूँ तथा आसन और जल अर्पण करके उनके स्वागत-सत्कार में लग जाती हूँ।

मैं घर के बर्तनों को माँज-धोकर साफ रखती हूँ। शुद्ध एवं स्वादिष्ट रसोई तैयार करके सबको ठीक समय पर भोजन कराती हूँ।

मन और इन्द्रियों को संयम में रखकर घर में गुप्तरूप से अनाज का संचय रखती हूँ और घर को झाड़-बुहार, लीप-पोतकर सदा स्वच्छ एवं पवित्र बनाये रखती हूँ।

मैं कोई ऐसी बात मुँहसे नहीं निकालती, जिससे किसी का तिरस्कार होता हो। दुष्ट स्त्रियों के सम्पर्क से सदा दूर रहती हूँ। आलस्य को कभी पास नहीं आने देती और सदा पतियों के अनुकूल बर्ताव करती हूँ।

पति के किये हुए परिहास के सिवा अन्य समय में मैं नहीं हँसा करती, दरवाजेपर बारबार नहीं खड़ी होती, जहां कूड़े-करकट फेंके जाते हों, ऐसे गंदे स्थानों में देरतक नहीं ठहरती और बगीचों में भी बहुत देरतक अकेली नहीं घूमती हूँ।

नीच पुरुषों से बात नहीं करती, मनमें असंतोष को स्थान नहीं देती और परायी

चर्चा से दूर रहती हूँ। न अधिक हँसती हूँ और न अधिक क्रोध करती हूँ। क्रोध का अवसर ही नहीं आने देती। सदा सत्य बोलती और पतियों की सेवा में लगी रहती हूँ।

पतिदेव के बिना किसी भी स्थान में अकेली रहना मुझे बिल्कुल पसंद नहीं है। मेरे स्वामी जब कभी कुटुम्ब के कार्य से परदेश चले जाते हैं, उन दिनों मैं फूलों का शृङ्गार नहीं धारण करती, अङ्गराग नहीं लगाती और निरन्तर ब्रह्मचर्यव्रत का पालन करती हूँ।

मेरे पतिदेव जिस चीज को नहीं खाते, नहीं पीते अथवा नहीं सेवन करते, वह सब मैं भी त्याग देती हूँ।

सुन्दरी! शास्त्रों में स्त्रियों के लिये जिन कर्तव्यों का उपदेश किया गया है, उन सब का मैं नियमपूर्वक पालन करती हूँ। अपने अङ्गों को वस्त्राभूषणों से विभूषित रखकर पूरी सावधानी के साथ मैं पति के प्रिय एवं हित-साधन में संलग्न रहती हूँ। मेरी सास ने अपने परिवार के लोगों के साथ बर्ताव में लाने योग्य जो धर्म पहले मुझे बताया थे, उन सबका मैं निरन्तर आलस्यरहित होकर पालन करती हूँ।

मैं दिन-रात आलस्य त्यागकर भिक्षा-दान बलिवैश्वदेव, श्राद्ध, पर्वकालोचित स्थालीपाकयज्ञ, मान्य पुरुषों का आदर-सत्कार, विनय, नियम तथा अन्य जो-जो धर्म मुझे ज्ञात हैं, उन सबका सब प्रकार से उद्यत होकर पालन करती हूँ।

मेरे पति बड़े ही सज्जन और मृदुल स्वभाव के हैं। सत्यवादी तथा सत्यधर्म का निरन्तन पालन करनेवाले हैं, तथापि क्रोध में भरे हुए विषैले सर्पों से जिस प्रकार लोग डरते हैं, उसी प्रकार मैं अपने पतियों से डरती हुई उनकी सेवा करती हूँ।

मैं यह मानती हूँ कि पति के आश्रय में रहना ही स्त्रियों का सनातन धर्म है। पति ही उनका देवता है और पति ही उनकी

गति है। पति के सिवा नारी का दूसरा कोई सहारा नहीं है, ऐसे पतिदेवता का भला कौन स्त्री अप्रिय करेगी ?

पतियों के शयन करने से पहले मैं कभी शयन नहीं करती, उनसे पहले भोजन नहीं करती, उनकी इच्छा के विरुद्ध कोई आभूषण नहीं पहनती, अपनी सास की कभी निन्दा नहीं करती और अपने-आपको सदा नियन्त्रण में रखती हूँ।

सौभाग्यशालिनी सत्यभामे! मैं सावधानी से सर्वदा सबेरे उठकर समुचित सेवा के लिये सन्नद्ध रहती हूँ। गुरुजनों की सेवा-शुश्रूषा से ही मेरे पति मेरे अनुकूल रहते हैं।

मैं वीरजननी सत्यवादिनी आर्या कुन्तीदेवी की भोजन, वस्त्र और जल आदि से सदा स्वयं सेवा करती रहती हूँ।

वस्त्र, आभूषण और भोजन आदि में मैं कभी सास की अपेक्षा अपने लिये कोई विशेषता नहीं रखती। मेरी सास कुन्तीदेवी पृथ्वी के समान क्षमाशील हैं। मैं कभी उनकी निन्दा नहीं करती।

पहले महाराज युधिष्ठिर के महल में प्रतिदिन आठ हजार ब्राह्मण सोने की थालियों में भोजन किया करते थे। महाराज युधिष्ठिर के यहां अट्ठासी हजार ऐसे स्नातक गृहस्थ थे, जिनका वे भरण-पोषण करते थे। उनमें से प्रत्येक की सेवा में तीस-तीस दासियां रहती थी।

इनके सिवा दूसरे दस हजार और उध्वरता यति उनके यहां रहते थे, जिनके लिये सुन्दर ढंग से तैयार किया हुआ अन्न सोने की थालियों में परोसकर पहुँचाया जाता था।

मैं उन सब देववादी ब्राह्मणों को अग्रहार (बलिवैश्वदेव के अन्त में अतिथि को दिये जानेवाले प्रथम अन्न) का अर्पण करके भोजन, वस्त्र और जल के द्वारा उनकी यथायोग्य पूजा करती थी।

कुन्तीनन्दन महात्मा युधिष्ठिर के एक

लाख दासियाँ थीं, जो हाथों में शंख की चूड़ियाँ, भुजाओं में बाजूबंद और कण्ठ में सुवर्ण के हार पहनकर बड़ी सजधज के साथ रहती थी।

उनकी मालाएं तथा आभूषण बहुमूल्य थे, अङ्गकान्ति बड़ी सुन्दर थी। वे चन्दनमिश्रित जल से स्नान करती और चन्दन का ही अङ्गराग लगाती थीं, मणि तथा सुवर्ण के गहने पहना करती थी। नृत्य और गीत की कला में उनका कौशल देखने ही योग्य था।

उन सबके नाम, रूप तथा भोजन-आच्छादन आदि सभी बातों की मुझे जानकारी रहती थी। किसने क्या काम किया और क्या नहीं किया यह बात भी मुझसे छिपी नहीं रहती थी।

बुद्धिमान् कुन्तीनन्दन युधिष्ठिर की पूर्वोक्त एक लाख दासियाँ हाथों में (भोजन से भरी हुई थाली लिये दिन-रात अतिथियों को भोजन कराती रहती थी।)

जिन दिनों महाराज युधिष्ठिर इन्द्रप्रस्थ में रहकर इस पृथ्वी का पालन करते थे, उस समय प्रत्येक यात्रा में उनके साथ एक लाख घोड़े और एक लाख हाथी चलते थे। मैं ही उनकी गणना करती, आवश्यक वस्तुएँ देती और उनकी आवश्यकताएँ सुनती थी।

अन्तःपुर के नौकरों के तथा ग्वालों और गड़रियों से लेकर समस्त सेवकों के सभी कार्यों की देखभाल मैं ही करती थी और किसने क्या काम किया अथवा कौन काम अधूरा रह गया- इन सब बातों की जानकारी भी रखती थी।

कल्याणी एवं यशस्विनी सत्यभामे! महाराज तथा अन्य पाण्डवों को जो कुछ आय, व्यय और बचत होती थी, उस सबका हिसाब मैं अकेली ही रखती और जानती थी।

वरानने! भरतश्रेष्ठ पाण्डव कुटुम्ब का सारा भार मुझपर ही रखकर उपासना में

लगे रहते और तदनुसार चेष्टा करते थे।

मुझपर जो भार रक्खा गया था, उसे दुष्ट स्वभाव के स्त्री-पुरुष नहीं उठा सकते थे। परंतु मैं सब प्रकार का सुख-भोग छोड़कर रात-दिन उस दुर्वह भार को वहन करने की चेष्टा किया करती थी।

मेरे धर्मात्मा पतियों का भरा-पूरा खजाना वरूण के भण्डार और परिपूर्ण महासागर के समान अक्षय एवं अगम्य था। केवल मैं ही उसके विषय की ठीक जानकारी रखती थी।

रात हो या दिन, मैं सदा भूख-प्यास के कष्ट सहन करके निरन्तर कुरुकुलरत्न पाण्डवों की आराधना में लगी रहती थी। इससे मेरे लिये दिन और रात समान हो गये थे।

सत्ये! मैं प्रतिदिन सबसे पहले उठती और सबसे पीछे सोती थी। यह पतिभक्ति और सेवा ही मेरा वशीकरण मन्त्र है।

पति को वश में करने का यही सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण उपाय मैं जानती हूँ। दुराचारिणी स्त्रियाँ जिन उपायों का अवलम्बन करती हैं, उन्हें न तो मैं करती हूँ और न चाहती ही हूँ।

वैशम्पायनजी कहते हैं- जनमेजय! द्रौपदी की ये धर्मयुक्त बातें सुनकर सत्यभामा ने उस धर्मपरायण पाञ्चाली का समादर करते हुए कहा- 'पाञ्चालराजकुमारी! याज्ञसेनी! मैं तुम्हारी शरण में आयी हूँ, (मैंने जो अनुचित प्रश्न किया है), उसके लिये मुझे क्षमा कर दो। सखियों में परस्पर स्वेच्छापूर्वक ऐसी हास-परिहास की बातें हो जाया करती हैं।'

द्रौपदी बोली - सखी! मैं स्वामी के मन का आकर्षण करने के लिये तुम्हें एक ऐसा मार्ग बता रही हूँ, जिसमें भ्रम अथवा छल-कपट के लिये तनिक भी स्थान नहीं है। यदि तुम यथावतरूप से इसी पथपर चलती रहोगी, तो स्वामी के चित्त को अपनी सौतों

से हटाकर अपनी ओर अवश्य खींच सकोगी।

सत्ये! स्त्रियों के लिये देवताओंसहित सम्पूर्ण लोकों में पति के समान दूसरा कोई देवता नहीं है। पति के प्रसाद से नारी की सम्पूर्ण कामनाएं पूर्ण हो सकती हैं और यदि पति ही कुपित हो जाय तो वह नारी की सभी आशाओं को नष्ट कर सकता है।

सेवा द्वारा प्रसन्न किये हुए पति से स्त्रियों को (उत्तम) संतान, भाँति-भाँति के भोग, शय्या, आसन, सुन्दर दिखायी देनेवाले वस्त्र, माला, सुगन्धित पदार्थ, स्वर्गलोक तथा महान् यश की प्राप्ति होती है।

सखी! इस जगत में कभी सुख के द्वारा सुख नहीं मिलता। पतिव्रता स्त्री दुःख उठाकर ही सुख पाती है। तुम सौहार्द, प्रेम, सुन्दर वेश-भूषा- धारण, सुन्दर आसन-समर्पण, मनोहर पुष्पमाला, उदारता, सुगन्धित द्रव्य एवं व्यवहारकुशलता से श्यामसुन्दर की निरन्तर आराधना करती रहो। उनके साथ ऐसा वर्ताव करो, जिससे वे यह समझकर 'कि सत्यभामा को मैं ही अधिक प्रिय हूँ' तुम्हें ही हृदय से लगाया करें।

जब महल के द्वार पर पधारे हुए प्राणवल्लभ का स्वर सुनायी पड़े, तब तुम उठकर घर के आंगन में आ जाओ और उनकी प्रतीक्षा में खड़ी रहो। जब देखो कि वे भी भीतर आ गये, तब तुरत आसन और पाद्य के द्वारा उनका यथावत् पूजन करो।

सत्ये! यदि श्यामसुन्दर किसी कार्य के लिये दासी को भेजते हों, तो तुम्हें स्वयं उठकर वह सब काम कर लेना चाहिये, जिससे श्रीकृष्ण को तुम्हारे इस सेवा-भाव का अनुभव हो जाय कि सत्यभामा सम्पूर्ण हृदय से मेरी सेवा करती है।

तुम्हारे पति तुम्हारे निकट जो भी बात कहें, वह छिपाने योग्य न हो, तो भी तुम्हें उसे गुप्त ही रखना चाहिये। अन्यथा तुम्हारे मुखसे उस बात को सुनकर यदि कोई सौत

उसे श्यामसुन्दर के सामने कह दे, तो इससे उनके मनमें तुम्हारी ओर से विरक्ति हो सकती है।

पतिदेव के जो प्रिय अनुरक्त एवं हितैषी सुहृद हों, उन्हें तरह-तरह के उपायों से खिलाओ-पिलाओ तथा जो उनके शत्रु, उपेक्षणीय और अहितकारक हों अथवा जो उनसे छल-कपट करने के लिये उद्यत रहते हो, उनसे सदा दूर रहो।

दूसरे पुरुषों के समीप घमंड और प्रमाद

का परित्याग करके मौन रहकर अपने मनोभाव को प्रकट न होने दो। कुमार प्रद्युम्न और साम्ब यद्यपि तुम्हारे पुत्र हैं, तथापि तुम्हें एकान्त में कभी उनके पास भी नहीं बैठना चाहिये।

अत्यन्त ऊँचे कुल में उत्पन्न और पापचार से दूर रहने वाली सती स्त्रियों के साथ ही तुम्हें सखीभाव स्थापित करना चाहिये। जो अत्यन्त क्रोधी, नशेमें चूर रहनेवाली, अधिक खानेवाली, चोरी की

लत रखनेवाली, दुष्ट और चञ्चल स्वभाव की स्त्रियाँ हों, उन्हें दूर से ही त्याग देना चाहिये।

तुम बहुमूल्य हार, आभूषण और अङ्गराग धारण करके पवित्र सुगन्धित वस्त्रुओं से सुवासित हो अपने प्राणवल्लभ श्यामसुन्दर श्रीकृष्ण की आराधना करो। इससे तुम्हारे यश और सौभाग्य की वृद्धि होगी। तुम्हारे मनोरथ की सिद्धि तथा शत्रुओं का नाश होगा।

बांग्लादेशी खदेड़ो आंदोलन जून से, काजीरंगा से शुरुआत

घुसपैठ को राज्य का सबसे ज्वलंत मुद्दा बताते हुए संघर्ष विरामी अल्फा की २८वीं बटालियन के नेतृत्व में पूर्वोदय के कई उग्रवादी गुट जून के पहले सप्ताह से बांग्लादेशी खदेड़ो अभियान की शुरुआत करेंगे। आंदोलन की शुरुआत काजीरंगा नेशनल पार्क से होगी। तिनसुकिया जिले के काकोपथार स्थित २८वीं बटालियन के डिजिगनेटेड शिविर में आयोजित एक बैठक में पहुंचे पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों के कुछ संघर्ष विरामी गुट ने संयुक्त रूप से यह निर्णय लिया है।

बांग्लादेशी खदेड़ों अभियान की शुरुआत काजीरंगा नेशनल पार्क के पास के शुरु करने की बात खुद उग्रवादी गुटों के नेताओं ने कही है। दरअसल ऐसे आरोप उठते रहे हैं कि विश्व प्रसिद्ध वन्यजीव अभयारण्य काजीरंगा के आसपास सरकारी जमीन पर सैकड़ों की संख्या में संदिग्ध लोगों ने अवैध कब्जा कर रखा है। आसु समेत राज्य के विभिन्न संगठन बीच-बीच में इस मुद्दे पर सरकार के खिलाफ अपना विरोध जताते रहे हैं। जबकि वन विभाग का साफ कहना है कि काजीरंगा नेशनल पार्क की जमीन के भीतर किसी तरह का कोई अवैध कब्जा नहीं है। अगर बाहर

किसी ने सरकारी जमीन पर अवैध कब्जा कर रखा है तो यह देखना राजस्व विभाग की जिम्मेवारी है।

सामने आ रही ऐसी सरकारी बातों पर अपनी प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करते हुए अल्फा की २८वीं बटालियन के नेता जितेन दत्त ने कहा कि बांग्लादेशी मुद्दे को लेकर यहां की सरकार को जो सख्त कदम उठाने चाहिए थे वैसा नहीं किया गया। लिहाजा अब उनके संघर्ष विरामी कैडर पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों के अन्य वार्ता समर्थक गुटों के साथ मिलकर घुसपैठियों के खिलाफ राज्य में जोरदार आंदोलन शुरू करेगा। बांग्लादेशी खदेड़ो आंदोलन से जुड़ी कार्य सूची के संदर्भ में श्री दत्त ने कहा कि जून के प्रथम सप्ताह से काजीरंगा नेशनल पार्क के पास से जनसभा बुलाकर आंदोलन की शुरुआत की जाएगी। अल्फा नेता की मानें तो अवैध कब्जा जमाए बैठे संदिग्ध नागरिक काजीरंगा के पास से गुजरने वाले सभी लोगों को साफ नजर आते हैं पर सबने चुप्पी साथ रखी है। लोगों को साथ लेकर इस मुद्दे पर विरोध की एक बुलंद आवाज नई दिल्ली सरकार तक पहुंचानी है।

बटालियन के अन्य शीर्ष नेता प्रबाल

नेउग ने कहा कि जिस कदर घुसपैठ बढ़ रही है, इससे यहां के मूल निवासियों पर मंडरा रहा खतरा साफ नजर आ रहा है। अब समय आ गया है समस्या को खत्म करने का। पूर्व डीएचडी अध्यक्ष दिलीप नुनीसा का कहना है कि बढ़ती घुसपैठ से यहां के मूल निवासी, भूमिपुत्रों के समक्ष जमीन और आर्थिक जीविका का बड़ा सवाल खड़ा हो गया है। घुसपैठ के खिलाफ जोरदार तरीके से आंदोलन छेड़ने की जरूरत है। घुसपैठ पर रोक के साथ वार्ता समर्थक अल्फा नेताओं ने अन्य राज्यों से आ रहे प्रवासियों के भी इनर लाइन परमिट व्यवस्था करने की सरकार से मांग की है। पूछने पर जितेन दत्त ने कहा कि वर्षों से रह रहे अन्य राज्यों के लोगों के प्रति उनकी कोई शिकायत नहीं है लेकिन बाहर से आने वाले नए लोगों को इनर लाइन परमिट से ही यहां आने की अनुमति होनी चाहिए। बरुवा के समर्थन के बाद जोश में आई अल्फा की २८वीं बटालियन अपने इस आंदोलन को प्रभावी बनाने के लिए बाहरी राज्यों के कुछ ताकतवर नागरिकों, संगठनों से भी मदद मांग रही हैं।

(पूर्वोदय - 10.4.2013)

विवाह व्यवस्था क्या चरमरा रही है ?

—डा. श्यामसुंदर हरलालका

परिवार व्यवस्था समाज व्यवस्था का एक अभिन्न अंग है जिसे धर्म रीति-रिवाजों के साथ जोड़ा गया है। विभिन्न संप्रदायों की भाषा, रीति-रिवाज, प्रथा, लोक गीत, खान-पान, बोलचाल, वेषभूषा, नृत्य न जीवन शैली में बहुत अंतर है। तदनुसार जन्म-मरण, विवाह संस्कारों में भी कुछ भेद दिखाई देता है। मैं यहां मारवाड़ी समाज की विवाह व्यवस्था के बारे में कुछ सवाल खड़ा कर रहा हूं जो हमारा विचाराणीय विषय होगा। वरना आनेवाली पीढ़ी भ्रमित होगी, दिशाहीन होगी तथा अंधकारमय दाम्पत्य जीवन की ओर अग्रसारित होगी।

गत एक शतक से विवाह व्यवस्था के रूप में हमने देखा है कि जिस घर में कन्या का जन्म होता है और जब वह यौवन की दहलीज पर कदम रखती है तो मां-बाप की धड़कनें बढ़ने लगती हैं, रातों की नींद उड़ जाती है, उठते-बैठते कन्या के लिए सुयोग्य वर व सुयोग्य परिवार की तलाश में ही उनका विशेष ध्यान रहता है। एक सुयोग्य वर के घर दर्जनों कन्या के पिता नाक रगड़ते हैं तब वर के पिता का दिमाग आसमान पर रहता है और दहेज की मांग बढ़ती जाती है। वर को सुंदर, सुशील, शिक्षित, आधुनिक, घर के कामकाज में दक्ष, सहधर्मिणी की आवश्यकता होती है और पिता को दहेज की। इन दोनों मांगों के बीच कन्या की नुमाइश और वर के रिश्तेदारों की खुशामदी उच्च शिखर पर रहती है। समय ने करवट ली, शिक्षा के प्रसार से स्त्री शक्ति का उदय हुआ। उच्च शिक्षा ने स्त्री शक्ति को धनोपार्जन के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया, उनकी दिशा बदली, नजारे बदल गए। पुरुष प्रधान क्षेत्र में सेंध लगी, स्त्री शक्ति को अपने अंदर विश्वास जगा, मनोबल ऊंचा हुआ, पुरुषों के बराबरी का अधिकार की मांग हुई। विवाह जैसे पवित्र बंधन में उनकी मर्जी को तबज्जो दिया गया और वे एक निर्णायक भूमिका में आ गईं। अध्ययनरत या जीविकोपार्जन काल में अपने पसंद के जीवन साथी चुनने का अधिकार का प्रयोग होने लगा और मां-बाप सिर्फ मूक आशीर्वाद देने की भूमिका निभाने की मजबूरी दर्शाने लगे।

मारवाड़ी समाज के युवक-युवतियां खुले

नील गगन के नीचे अपनी उड़ान भरने के लिए तत्परता दिखाने लगे। डेटिंग रोमांस की दौड़ में कूद पड़े जिसमें पीछे छूट गया पारिवारिक बंधन, गौत्र की सीमाएं और धन की दीवार। आमतौर पर जैन, ओसवाल, अग्रवाल, माहेश्वरी आदि युवाओं ने बंधन तोड़कर एक-दूसरे को गले लगाया, जिसे परिवार और समाज ने स्वीकृति दे दी। कारण इनमें खानपान, भाषा, रीति-रिवाज, धार्मिक विचारों में बहुत समानता है और लड़की उस परिवार में अति सहज रूप से दूध में शक्कर की तरह घुल मिल जाती है इसलिए इस तरह के विवाहों की सफलता में कोई शंका नहीं है।

अब प्रश्न यह है कि युवाओं को क्या अपने लिए जीवन साथी चुनने के लिए प्रेरित करना चाहिए या अभिभावकों को भी अपनी भूमिका निभानी चाहिए। एक जमाना था जब सभी गांव और शहर में कुछ समाजसेवी इस दिशा में भ्राम्यमान संस्था की तरह नई जोड़ियों को मूर्तरूप देने की सेवा करते जो आज हमें दिखाई नहीं देती। अब स्थिति में परिवर्तन आ गया है। घर-घर में वर के पिता अपने रिश्तेदारों से कन्या की खोज के लिए अनुरोध करते हैं। लेखक के पास आज भी अधिकतर वर के वायोडाटा उपलब्ध हैं लेकिन कन्याओं के नहीं। यह एक बड़े प्रस्ताव लेकर जाते हैं तो उनका वर प्रधान मानसिकता कहीं न कहीं आड़े आती है। नगदी रूपए मांगने की प्रथा में यद्यपि कमी आई है मगर शादी कितने सितारोंवाली होगी इस पर जरूर वर के पिता का संकेत होता है जो हो सकता है कन्या पक्षवालों के लिए अनुकूल न हो। सोच में अभी भी परिवर्तन की आवश्यकता है। दिखावा और आडंबर जो हमारी सामाजिक हैसियत तय करने का मानदंड बनता जा रहा है उससे जब तक हम अलग नहीं होंगे तब तक हमें अभिभावक की भूमिका अदा करने के योग्य होना नामुमकिन नहीं तो कठिन जरूर होगा। एक तरफ सुंदर, शिक्षित, योग्य कन्या भी चाहिए दूसरी ओर कन्या के पिता को आर्थिक दंड के भरोसे हम समाज में अपनी हैसियत का डंका बजाना चाहते हैं। उन्हें अगर

अपने रुतबे का इतना ही ख्याल है तो वे स्वयं शादी का संपूर्ण व्यय का भार अपने ऊपर लें और कन्या पक्ष को आश्वस्त कर दें कि वे अपनी क्षमता के अनुसार ही व्यय करें। लेखक को इस तरह की कई शादियों को अंजाम देने का श्रेय है जिसमें कन्या पक्ष को किसी भी अतिरिक्त आर्थिक बोझ के नीचे नहीं दबना पड़ा। आज वे परिवार बहुत प्रसन्न हैं और लेखक के चिंतन से प्रभावित हैं जिसकी भूरि-भूरि प्रशंसा करते हैं। मैं वर पक्षवालों से आह्वान करता हूं कि वे कन्या पक्ष की हैसियत को नजरअंदाज करें वरना उनके लड़कों की उम्र कन्या के इंतजार में बढ़ती जाएगी फिर कोई तलाकशुदा लड़की भी नसीब नहीं होगी और विजातीय किसी लड़की का हाथ थमाकर वह स्वयं विवाह पंजीकरण कार्यालय में आपको आशीर्वाद देने हेतु निमंत्रण देगा।

दीवारों की लेखनी से तेजी से बदलते हुए समय का संकेत हमें मिल रहा है। दुनिया स्त्री जाति को उनके सभी अधिकारों से लैस करना चाहती है, जिनकी वजह से पुरुष प्रधानता ही न रहे। कन्या भ्रूण हत्या की रोकथाम मानवता के कलंक को मिटाने के लिए जितना जरूरी है उतना ही जरूरी है स्त्री-पुरुष के अनुपात की समानता बनाए रखने की। यह प्रकृति का नियम है, उल्लंघन विनाश का सूचक। आनेवाली पीढ़ी के भविष्य की रूपरेखा हमें तय करनी होगी, वरना मानवता के हम हत्यारा कहलाएंगे। बदलते समय की रफ्तार को पहचानना होगा। महिला सशक्तिकरण कानून और अधिकारों को देखते हुए हमें पुरुष प्रधानता की मानसिकता से उबरना होगा वरना अहम का टकराव, विभाजन, बिखराव को आमंत्रित करेगा, जिससे आनेवाली संतति का भविष्य अंधकारमय जीवन की ओर बढ़ेगा और समाज कमजोर होगा, अपराध जगत आकर्षण का केंद्र बिंदु बनेगा। यह संपूर्ण पवित्र विवाह व्यवस्था पर एक बड़ा प्रश्न चिन्ह खड़ा करेगा।

(पूर्वोदय- ४.४.२०१३)



Devotees from different part of the World taking part in rally under banner of Bisea Bhatraboth Samarth (Universal Brotherhood Convention), Harinaam Sankirtan organized by ISKCON Guwahati Initiative on 8th April 2013 in Guwahati, Assam.



यह कुआ 'फ़ियारा तुई' नाम से प्रसिद्ध है जो मिज़ोरम के पूर्व की ओर, फ़ारकोन ग्राम के पास स्थित है। पूर्वकाल में एक बार भयंकर अकाल पड़ा था, लोग जल के अभाव में प्यास से छटपटा रहे थे; उसी समय 'फ़ियारा' नामके महापुरुष ने इस कुए को पकट किया।



पूर्वकाल में 'ठासियामा' नाम के महापुरुष हो गए हैं, उनकी पालतू मादा मिथुन ने इस टिले की चोटी पर अपने बच्चे का जन्म दिया। कालान्तर में यह चोटी मिज़ी लोगों का श्रद्धा-स्थल बन गयी।