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# INTERVIEWS:

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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July 2019

Volume 6; Number 1



SAINT CLARET COLLEGE, ZIRO  
(NAAC-accredited with Grade 'A')



## INTERVIEWS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

is a peer-reviewed international journal of Saint Claret College, Ziro (India), devoted to providing a platform for reflection, critique, and dialogue for ideas in social sciences that are interdisciplinary in character.

The ideas and opinions expressed in the articles/reviews are of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of Saint Claret College, Ziro.

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## CONTENTS

<b>Editorial</b> .....	5
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### **Journal Policies & Guidelines**

<i>InterViews'</i> Publication & Management Policy .....	9
<i>InterViews'</i> Ethics Policy .....	13
<i>InterViews'</i> Instructions for Authors .....	17
<i>InterViews'</i> Template for the Declaration by Authors.....	25
<i>InterViews'</i> Peer Review Policy .....	27
<i>InterViews'</i> Guidelines for Peer Reviewers.....	30
<i>InterViews'</i> Template for Peer Review Report.....	33
<i>InterViews'</i> Invitation for Peer Reviewers .....	36

### **Articles**

Narratives About Forgiveness Across Indian Middle Aged and Older Adults <i>Sabana Mitra &amp; Dinya Bablani</i> .....	39
Christian Symbolization and its Impact on Indian Cultures <i>Antony Joseph Kannanayakkal &amp; Shaji Joseph Puykunnel</i> .....	64
Urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh: Prospects and Challenges <i>Vicky Saroh &amp; R. P. Sharma</i> .....	85
Perception and Dimensions of Health Care Practices in the <i>Desia Kandha</i> Tribal Community of South Odisha <i>Paramananda Naik</i> .....	98

## Book Reviews

Higher Education in the 21st Century: Global Challenge and National Response <i>Reviewed by Alphonsa Diana Haokip</i> .....	107
The Toda Landscape: Explorations in Cultural Ecology <i>Reviewed by Malay Kumar Rana</i> .....	113

## Index of Articles 2014-2018

Index of Articles 2014-2018: <i>Issue-wise [sequentially]</i> .....	117
Index of Articles 2014-2018: <i>Author-wise [alphabetically]</i> .....	121

## EDITORIAL

*InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* has completed five years of its existence (2014-2018) and, with the current issue (the sixth volume), is entering a new phase of life. A new phase has its own challenges, hopes, and goals. Hence, in this issue of *InterViews* you will see a leap in the evolution of this journal. One of the key salient features we are proud to present is an elaborate set of policy directives *InterViews* is committing itself to. We have also reconstituted the advisory and editorial boards, reflecting a true international mix of scholars who would be advising and working with the journal to take it to greater heights. You will find that, starting from this issue, every article will have its own DOI (Digital Object Identifier), via our association with Crossref, providing readers with a persistent identifier or handle to access the metadata of any given article (or full text of select articles) published in *InterViews*. We have also launched a stand-alone website for the journal—[www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)—where you will find all required details regarding policies, subscription, submission of manuscripts, as well as access to select articles from various past issues of the journal.

The first section of this issue gives you all the policies that have been painstakingly developed through research, consultation, discussion, and deliberation. They have been vetted and approved by the advisory and editorial boards and are presented here for the scholarly community of readers. *InterViews* remains committed to honoring these policies, which include: publication and management policy, ethics policy, instructions to authors, peer review policy, guidelines for peer reviewers, template for peer review, and the criteria for inclusion in the roster of peer reviewers. The journal had been following many of these policies in the past years; but they have been revised, upgraded, codified, and formally adopted now.

The second section presents four articles and two book reviews. The first article by S. Mitra and D. Bablani provides a window into what goes on in the hearts of India's middle aged and older adults when it comes to dealing with forgiving their significant others. In a world that is dangerously growing

violent and intolerant, the relevance and significance of forgiveness cannot be emphasized more. We hope this well-researched article will inspire you to reflect more about the role of forgiveness in human relationships.

The second article is an exploration into the impact of Christian symbolization on Indian cultures, by A. J. Kannanayakkal and S. J. Puykunnel. Human beings are symbolic animals, and they influence and are influenced by symbolizations of one another. As religion-based intolerance grows in many regions of the world, this article may help us realize how much similar we are to one another despite our seeming differences, and how our lives are intertwined. Such realization may help us reach out and embrace one another as our own brothers and sisters.

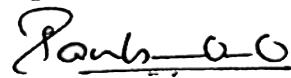
The next two articles are brief explorations into some tribal regions of India. V. Saroh and R. P. Sharma explore the prospects and the challenges of urbanization in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. P. Naik explores the perceptions and dimensions of traditional and modern health care practices in the *Desia Kandha* tribal community of South Odisha in India. What is common to both articles is the inevitable change resulting from the interaction of modernity with traditional tribal life.

The two book reviews deal with very different books. A. D. Haokip reviews a book on the current challenges in the higher educational sector and how nations respond to them. M. K. Rana reviews a classic book on the cultural ecology of the *Todas* of South India.

The final section is an indexing of the articles published in the first phase of *InterViews*, i.e., from 2014 to 2018. The indexing is given in two modes: first, it is given sequentially and then, alphabetically. This should enable you to locate the articles of your interest. Some select articles from every issue are made available on the journal website. For those interested, back volumes are available for purchase.

We also take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported, accompanied, and worked with us in the last five years of the journal. We look forward to your continued support and blessings.

Ziro  
July 2019

  
Paulson V. Veliyannoor  
Executive Editor

**JOURNAL POLICIES  
&  
GUIDELINES**



## ***INTERVIEWS'* PUBLICATION & MANAGEMENT POLICY**

1. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* [hereinafter referred to as “the Journal” or *InterViews*] is owned by Saint Claret College, Ziro – 791 120, Arunachal Pradesh, India. Saint Claret College, Ziro is an undergraduate school permanently affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimukh (Arunachal Pradesh); is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex body of higher education in India; and is accredited with Grade “A” by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bengaluru, India.
2. The journal was initially launched in 2014, and has had a history of unbroken, on-time sequence of publication. Since 2015, the Journal has been part-funded by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Delhi.
3. The periodicity of publication is one issue per year, to be released every July.
4. *InterViews* welcomes scholarly and original manuscripts that explore interdisciplinary ideas in social sciences. The Journal publishes empirical, theoretical, clinical, and historical articles, short notes, review articles, translations of original articles, conference proceedings, and book and film reviews that facilitate constructive reflection, critique, and dialogue in the service of contributing to knowledge that graduates to wisdom.
5. *InterViews* is international in scope, and articles related to any theme under social sciences are welcome. However, it actively encourages and specially welcomes research focused on the Northeast region of India, as part of the commitment of Saint Claret College, Ziro, towards furthering the quality of life in the tribal belt of Northeast India.

6. *InterViews* follows the APA Manual of Style (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) for its articles, as published by the American Psychological Association. However, a couple of modifications to the APA Style have been adopted by *InterViews* in preparation of the manuscripts. The prospective authors may access the APA-SCCZ Style Checklist from the website, [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)
7. Submissions are accepted round the year. As a general policy, the deadline for submission of manuscripts for publication in a given year will be March 1 of the same year.
8. Every submission will be subject to plagiarism-check and double-blind review by peers.
9. Authors will be notified of the decision on acceptance for publication within three months from the date of submission of the manuscript.
10. Once an article is accepted for publication by *InterViews*, the copyright of the article belongs to the respective author(s), with the first right of publication belonging to *InterViews*. An author, who wishes to republish the article in any form later, shall acknowledge its having been published previously in *InterViews* with complete citation of its publication details. The author shall also intimate the Editor of *InterViews* in writing of the republication of the article in any form.
11. *InterViews* does not charge any fees from the authors for publication, nor does it offer any financial remuneration to invited authors for the articles. Authors whose articles, short notes, and review articles are published in the *InterViews* shall receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which their article appears and a standalone pdf softcopy extract of their article. The authors of book or film reviews shall receive only a standalone pdf softcopy extract of their review.
12. *InterViews* is guided by its own publication policy and ethics policy; and has in place guidelines for reviewers and prospective authors. It also subscribes to the detailed ethical parameters advocated by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and strives to adopt, to the extent feasible in its given context, the best practices recommended by COPE. The COPE resources can be accessed at: <https://publicationethics.org>

13. Any dispute arising out of or in connection with the publication will be settled within the exclusive jurisdiction of the court in Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.
14. *InterViews* has the following Management Bodies: Chief Editor, Executive Editor, Managing Editor, Review Editor, Advisory Board, and Editorial Board.
15. The Principal of Saint Claret College, Ziro (hereinafter referred to as SCCZ), is the *ex-officio* Chief Editor [CE] of the Journal and holds the legal rights and duties related to the Journal. The Administrator of SCCZ is the *ex-officio* Managing Editor (ME).
16. The Executive Editor [EE] is appointed by the Chief Editor in consultation with the Governing Council of SCCZ, for a term of five years, renewable every five years. The Executive Editor is responsible for the day to day responsibilities associated with the reception, peer review, editorial decisions, and acceptance decision of the manuscripts submitted as well as the timely publication of the journal.
17. The Review Editor [RE] is appointed by the Chief Editor in consultation with the Management Council of SCCZ, for a term of five years, renewable for another term. The Review Editor is responsible for book and film reviews. The Review Editor identifies and assigns a reviewer who has the goodness of fit to review the books and films received for review or review articles. He / She is also responsible for inviting and editing book and film reviews as well as review articles.
18. The Advisory Board (AB) consists of ten (10) outstanding scholars from various disciplines under Social Sciences or field of publication, drawn from regional, national, and international institutes of higher education and research. The AB is invited to review every issue of the Journal and suggest ideas for improving the quality of the Journal. The AB is consulted on policy matters before the policies are adopted/ updated for the Journal. The AB is formally requested once a year to contribute their written observations on the journal issue(s) of the year and suggest ideas for further improvement. The AB members are also invited to make the Journal known within their circle of influence and encourage contribution from outstanding researchers worldwide. The AB members may be called upon to be part of a Higher Appeals

Committee to examine and advice on any complaint or appeal related to editorial decisions or publication.

19. The Editorial Board (EB) consists of ten (10) committed scholars from various disciplines under social sciences or field of publication, drawn from regional, national, and international institutes of higher education and research. Of the ten members, a maximum of three members may be chosen from within the SCCZ faculty. The EB is expected to make the Journal known among their circle of influence as well as invite scholarly contributions to the Journal from outstanding researchers. Whereas the EB members from within SCCZ are primarily responsible for the editing of the manuscripts accepted for publication, the other EB members are consulted on the suitability, content relevance, and if required, peer review of a submitted manuscript. The EB is consulted on policy matters before the policies are adopted/updated for the Journal. The EB members may be called upon to be part of an Appeals Committee to examine and advice on any complaint or appeal related to editorial decisions or publication. The EB is formally requested once a year to contribute their written observations on the journal issue(s) of the year and suggest ideas for further improvement.
20. Both the AB and the EB are constituted for a period of five (5) years, on completion of which, they could be extended for another five years on mutual consent or could be reconstituted with 30-40% of the members being newly inducted.
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## *INTERVIEWS'* ETHICS POLICY

1. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* [hereinafter referred to as “the Journal” or *InterViews*] is owned by Saint Claret College, Ziro – 791 120, Arunachal Pradesh, India. *InterViews* is a double-blind peer-reviewed, international, interdisciplinary journal in social sciences, with one issue per year dated July, as the periodicity of publication.
2. *InterViews* is committed to honouring the ethical imperatives of research publication and hence, has a sound ethics policy in place, discussed, reviewed, and approved by the Advisory and Editorial Boards, and thereby adopted by the Management Council of Saint Claret College, Ziro.
3. The ethical policies are reviewed and updated regularly as the scope and nature of research and publication advance.
4. In order to ensure ethical imperatives of research publication, *InterViews* consults the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) regulations and flowcharts. Every ethical policy as applicable to research and publication in the field of social sciences has been drafted in consultation with COPE regulations and recommendations, adapted to the contextual realities and limitations of Saint Claret College, Ziro. Wherever necessary, references and links are provided to COPE flowcharts and regulations so that every stakeholder in the publication of *InterViews* is informed of and trained in the ethical demands and procedural protocols. The COPE resources can be accessed at: <https://publicationethics.org>

### **A. Publication & Management Policy**

5. *InterViews* has a well-articulated and streamlined **Publication and Journal Management Policy**. It is available as the first document in

this section on Policies. It can also be downloaded from the section on *Downloads* at [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)

## **B. Submission Guidelines for Authors**

6. *InterViews* welcomes scholarly and original manuscripts that explore interdisciplinary ideas in social sciences. The Journal publishes empirical, theoretical, clinical, and historical articles, short notes, review articles, and book and film reviews that facilitate constructive reflection, critique, and dialogue in the service of contributing to knowledge that graduates to wisdom. English translation of scholarly and relevant articles previously published in another language is acceptable. Previously unpublished extended versions of social science conference proceedings are acceptable as well.
7. *InterViews* is international in scope, and articles related to any theme under social sciences are welcome. However, it actively encourages and specially welcomes research focused on the Northeast region of India, as part of the commitment of Saint Claret College, Ziro, towards furthering the quality of life in the tribal belt of Northeast India.
8. *InterViews* has a well-articulated and streamlined Submission Guidelines for authors. It can be accessed in this issue as well as downloaded from the section on *Downloads* at [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)

## **C. Conduct and Presentation of Research**

9. *InterViews* accepts a research paper only if it has been conducted following the universally accepted standards of research.
10. *InterViews* requires the authors to ensure and acknowledge that the research was conducted following the sound ethical policies and procedures, especially honouring the DNH (Do No Harm) principle.
11. The research must be presented with transparency, responsibility, and accountability.
12. *InterViews* has a well-articulated, streamlined, and detailed **Research & Presentation Guidelines** for authors, included as Section B of the document containing guidelines for authors. It can be accessed in this issue as well as downloaded from the section on *Downloads* at [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)

#### **D. Authorship, Contributorship, & Conflict of Interest**

13. *InterViews* takes seriously ethical imperatives concerning authorship, contributorship, and issues of conflict of interest. Please see the detailed policy directives regarding these areas in Section C of the document/section dealing with guidelines for authors, which can be accessed in this issue as well as downloaded from the section on *Downloads* at [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)

#### **E. Peer Review Policy and Process**

14. *InterViews* follows double-blind peer review policy.
15. Every full-length paper submitted is subject to plagiarism-check. On successfully clearing the check, the paper is sent for peer review.
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17. The Review policy and procedural details of the double-blind peer review process adopted by *InterViews* can be accessed in this issue. The document may be downloaded from the section on *Downloads* at [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com)
18. Instructions to the Peer Reviewers can be accessed in this issue. The document is available for download from the section on *Downloads* at the journal website mentioned above.

#### **F. Allegations of Misconduct**

19. Research and publication misconduct includes, among other things, the following: plagiarism, citation and/or reference manipulation, data falsification, data fabrication, violation of DNH (Do No Harm), ethical non-compliance, simultaneous submission, conflict of interest–related issues not revealed and accounted for, guest /gift /ghost authorships, etc.

20. Plagiarism is normally checked by the use of a recognized software. If the test fails, the manuscript is rejected. If some plagiarism is noted after the paper has been accepted, the Editor will bring it to the attention of the authors and ask them to rectify the error in ways free of plagiarism. If the author refuses to comply, the manuscript will be rejected.
21. For any misconduct identified, the procedural formalities as recommended in the specific flowcharts provided by COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) will be consulted in order to arrive at a viable solution in the given context and within its limitations.
22. In all matters, respect for the dignity of the persons involved and the levels of confidentiality required by the matter will be honoured.

### **G. Complaints and Appeals**

23. The editorial decision on the matters related to the publication of an article is final.
24. However, in case of any complaint or appeal against the editorial decision that, in the fair assessment by the in-house editorial team, has merit and needs a review, will be referred to an Appeals Committee of 3 members from the Editorial Board, chosen by the Chief Editor. The decision by the Appeals Committee will be binding.
25. If the Appeals Committee cannot resolve the issue, the Chief Editor will refer the matter to a 3-member Higher Appeals Committee chosen from the Advisory Board, whose decision will be the final word.
26. The Appeals Committee as well as the Higher Appeals Committee are free to seek advice and consultation from experts from outside the Boards.
27. In all such matters, the procedural formalities as recommended in the specific flowcharts provided by COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) will be consulted in order to arrive at a viable solution in the given context and within its limitations.
28. In all matters, respect for the dignity of the persons involved and the levels of confidentiality required by the matter will be honoured.

## *INTERVIEWS*' INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

### A. Instructions Regarding Submission

1. **Submission:** Manuscript submissions and general correspondence should be via e-mail only to the Executive Editor at **interviews.scc@gmail.com**. The manuscript shall be submitted in *.doc* or *.docx* file. Authors should preserve a copy of the manuscript to guard against loss. They must provide complete contact information on a separate page—author's name, designation, address, mobile number, e-mail ID, fax number (if any), institutional affiliation, and a brief bio-note.

*InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* welcomes scholarly and original manuscripts that explore interdisciplinary ideas in social sciences. The Journal invites empirical, theoretical, clinical, and historical articles, short notes, review articles, and book and film reviews that facilitate constructive reflection, critique, and dialogue in the service of contributing to knowledge that graduates to wisdom. English translation of scholarly and relevant articles previously published in another language is acceptable. Previously unpublished extended versions of social science conference proceedings are acceptable as well. A full-length article, inclusive of reference listing and all appendices, shall not be longer than 25 pages (A4 size, double-spaced except for the Style specifications mentioned in No. 4 below). A short note as well as a review article could be of 7-10 pages. Book/film review must be of 2,000 words or less. The Journal is international in scope and every submission will be subject to double-blind review by peers. Authors will be notified of decision on acceptance for publication **within three months** from the date of submission of the manuscript.

2. **No Simultaneous Submission** of the same article to multiple journals at the same time is permitted as per our policy. We solicit only those

articles that are original, unpublished, and not submitted elsewhere while it is being considered by *InterViews*.

3. Submissions are accepted round the year. As a general policy, the deadline for submission of manuscripts for publication in a given year will be **March 1** of the same year.
4. **Style Requirements:** *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* follows the APA Manual of Style (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) with a few adaptations. Those interested in submitting articles to *InterViews* must make sure that their article complies with the APA Style along with the SCCZ adaptations mentioned below:
  - a. The block quotes shall be single-spaced.
  - b. Each reference under the section “References” shall be single-spaced. However, skip a line between references.
  - c. Since gender-neutral language is difficult to apply to writing and gender-inclusive use such as “he or she,” “him or her,” etc., is not reader-friendly, the authors shall adopt the pronouns that match *their own gender* to denote a human being in general. Thus, a female author shall use the pronoun “she” and its derivatives to refer to a generic human being, and a male author shall use “he” and its derivatives. In case of more than one author, the first author’s gender shall be preferred.

Authors may download a Style Checklist from the journal website, [www.interviewsjournal.com](http://www.interviewsjournal.com). The Checklist is meant to help authors verify if their article complies with the APA Style requirements with SCCZ adaptations. However, please note that the Checklist is not exhaustive of every APA Style requirement. Nor does everything mentioned in the Checklist apply to every kind of article. Authors are directed to the APA Manual (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) for comprehensive information on the writing style.

5. **Book and Film Reviews:** Correspondence regarding a book/film of potential interest to the journal as well as books/films for review shall be sent to the Review Editor, *InterViews*, Saint Claret College, Post Box 22, Ziro—791 120, Arunachal Pradesh, India. One may also choose

to send the PDF copy of the book or the online link of the film to be reviewed via email.

6. **Declaration of Authenticity:** The author must submit, along with the submission of manuscript, a Declaration of Authenticity wherein the author provides an undertaking as to the originality of the research and article, exclusive authorship, and ethical compliance in research and writing. In case of multiple authors, ideally all of them shall sign the Declaration. However, if it is physically difficult to procure the signature of every author due to valid reasons such as geographical distance, it is enough that the primary author signs the Declaration on behalf of all authors, having shared the content of the Declaration with them and obtained their permission, and having mentioned their names, designations, and institutional affiliations in the Declaration. The secondary authors who are unable to sign the Declaration physically shall communicate their acceptance of the terms of Declaration by email to the Executive Editor. The Template of the Declaration can be downloaded from the journal website.
7. **Plagiarism Check:** Every submission will be subject to plagiarism check failing which, the submission will be rejected. On passing the check, all full length articles will be forwarded for double-blind peer review.
8. **Double-blind Peer Review:** All articles, except brief book and film reviews, are subject to double-blind peer review. Neither the reviewer nor the author(s) will be made aware of the identity of the other. Book and film reviews will follow open review by the Review Editor of the Journal. The decisions made based on peer review will be final and binding. The detailed parameters on which a submission is reviewed can be accessed in this issue as well as downloaded from the journal website.
9. **Notification of Decision:** Authors will be notified of the decision on acceptance for publication within three months from the date of submission of the manuscript.
10. **Permissions:** On acceptance of the manuscript, it is the responsibility of the authors to obtain and submit to the Executive Editor all necessary

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13. *InterViews* is guided by its own **comprehensive ethics policy, publication & management policies**, review policy, and guidelines for reviewers, which can be accessed on the journal website as well as in this issue. *InterViews* also subscribes to the detailed ethical parameters advocated by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and strives to adopt, to the extent feasible, the best practices recommended by COPE. Links to COPE resources and flowcharts can be accessed at: <https://publicationethics.org>
14. **Any dispute arising** out of or in connection with the publication will be settled within the exclusive jurisdiction of the court in Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.

## **B. Instructions Regarding Research and Publication**

15. The article submitted should be original and contribute significantly to advance and enrich the existing fund of knowledge in the field of social sciences.

16. The research that forms the core of the article should have been conducted following sound methodology and scientific rigor as well as the ethical demands of research with special care for fulfilling the specific research standards and ethical directives adopted by the respective professional social science research associations of the institution or country where the research was conducted. Such compliance must be so attested to, by means of the Declaration of Authenticity.
17. Research involving human beings and/or animals should have fulfilled “Do No Harm” (DNI) principle. The same should be reported and acknowledged in the Declaration of Authenticity.
18. The authors must present the methodology in clear, unambiguous, and complete manner so that any other scholar interested in following the methodology to replicate the research should be able to do so understanding and following the methodology in toto.
19. The researchers should have used methods of data analysis and presentation, which are appropriate and adequate to analyze the data and report the results.
20. All findings shall be presented with honesty and fidelity to truth. Authors shall not engage in any fabrication, falsification, or inappropriate data manipulation. No modification that may misrepresent data shall be done to images except for the sole purpose of providing adequate clarity. Authors must address and mention the limitations and delimitations of their study.
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39. The authors shall respond to the suggestions and directives of the peer review report promptly and within the mutually agreed upon time frame.
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41. The authors shall inform the Editor promptly if they discover any error in the manuscript submitted, accepted, or published. They shall cooperate and comply with the editorial policies regarding the mode of issuing corrections or retractions.
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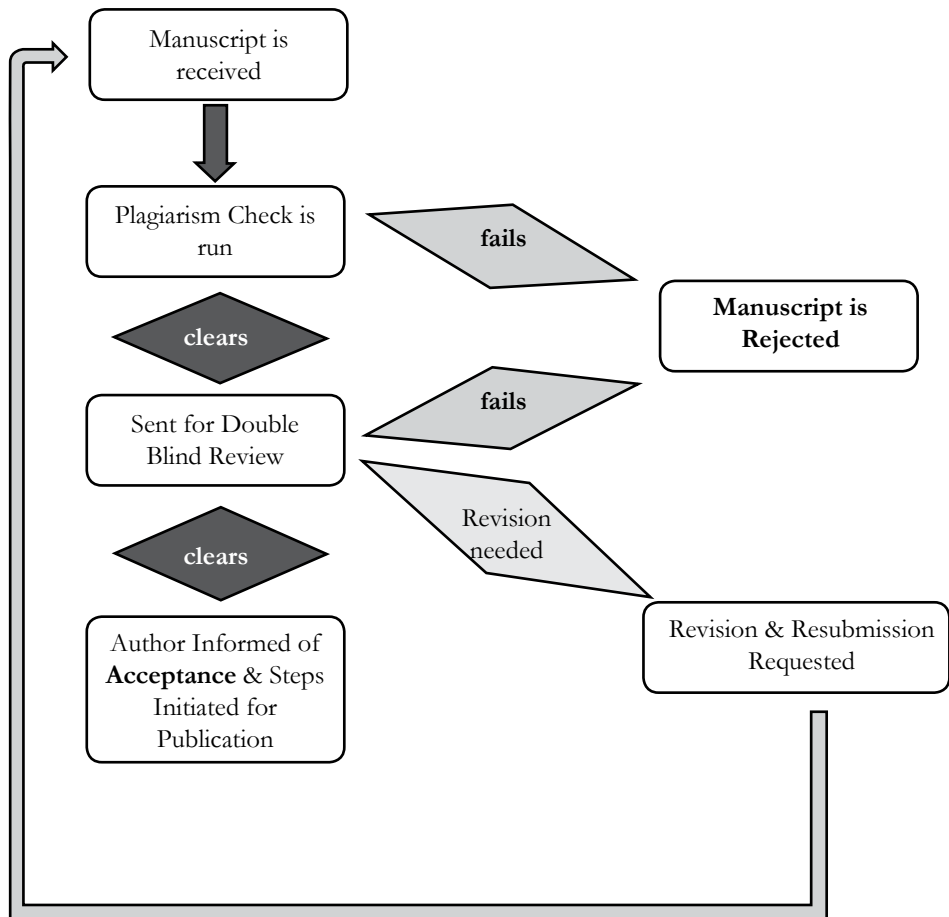
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8. The peer review process is completed within 3 months of receiving the manuscript.
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1. Respond within a reasonable time-frame (preferably within 7 days) as to your availability for doing the review.
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5. Declare any potential conflict of interest with the author (whose identity may be guessed even when identification details have been removed from the article) or with any matter discussed in the article, which might compromise your objectivity. Inform the Editor of the same and go by his decision.
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15. Ensure that the language of the review is objective, professional, and free of any derogatory comments or unfounded accusations.

16. Be specific in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript, and wherever possible, support your claims with evidence.
17. Prepare the report (following the template) with three different sections: the primary section, addressing the author wherein the reviewer will present his or her assessment; and a second section (if required) addressed to the Editor and marked as confidential. The third section will be the final recommendation by the reviewer. The first section, addressed to the author, will be passed on to the author for the purpose of supporting the decision of the Editor informing the author of any one of the three decisions: manuscript is accepted as is/ revision and resubmission are required / is rejected.
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**Title of the Article:**

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**Date of Submission of Review Report:**

### **SECTION A**

(This Section will be shared with the Author)

- Please score the article on the given parameters,  
as per the rubrics:**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Unacceptable (Below Standards)</i>	<i>Acceptable/Good (Meets Standards)</i>	<i>Excellent (Exceeds Standards)</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
<b>Introduction</b> (Max. Score 5)	No clear communication of topic. No description of subtopics. Thesis statement missing. (score 1-2)	Coveys topic and key research questions. Mentions subtopics. Thesis statement present. (score 3-4)	Strong introduction of topic, key questions, subtopics, thesis statement. Engages the reader. (score 5)	
<b>Literature Review (LR)</b> (Max. Score 15)	Poor quantity and quality of LR. Not integrated or relevant to topic. (score 1-5)	Adequate number and quality. LR is cohesive and integrated to topic. (score 6-10)	Excellent number, quality, & sequence of LR. There is flow, good funneling. (score 11-15)	
<b>Methodology &amp; Quality of Research</b> (Max. Score 15)	Poor and inadequate Methodology, applied poorly. Poor quality (score 1-5)	Adequate and appropriate methodology, applied correctly. Good quality. (score 6-10)	Very good choice of methodology, correct application and analysis. Excellent quality of research (score 11-15)	

<b>Category</b>	<b>Unacceptable (Below Standards)</b>	<b>Acceptable/Good (Meets Standards)</b>	<b>Excellent (Exceeds Standards)</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
<b>Support of Thesis &amp; Analysis</b> (Max. Score 15)	Poor Analysis; Few /insignificant/ unsubstantiated sources supporting thesis (score 1-5)	Proper analysis & application; adequate, significant, wellchosen sources. Evidence-based (score 6-10)	Excellent analysis & application; good number and use of evidence-based sources to support & argue (score 11-15)	
<b>Conclusion</b> (Max. Score 5)	Inadequate or no summary of thesis & findings, impact, limitations (score 1-2)	Adequate summary of thesis, findings, impact, limitations (score 3-4)	Exemplary summary of thesis, findings, impact, limitations. Proposals for further research (score 5)	
<b>Research Ethics</b> (Max. Score 15)	No/ inadequate evidence of ethical compliance; evidence of ethical violation (score 0-5)	Ethical issues anticipated and addressed. No evidence of ethical violation (score 6-10)	Exemplary anticipation and implementation of ethical demands. No violation (score 11-15)	
<b>Language &amp; Grammar</b> (Max. Score 10)	Poor language; Grammatical/ spelling/punctuation errors. Readability is poor (score 1-4)	Generally good language: grammar, spelling, punctuation. Readable (score 5-8)	Free of grammatical, spelling, punctuation errors. Excellent vocabulary, short sentences, readability. (score 9-10)	
<b>APA Style*</b> (Max. Score 10)	Errors in APA style. Word Choice informal. Citations not APA formatted. (score 1-4)	APA compliant, with very few errors. Scholarly style. Citations proper (score 5-8)	Completely APA formatted. Scholarly style. Smooth flow of writing. Citations proper. (score 9-10)	
<b>Citations &amp; References</b> (Max. Score 10)	Inadequate, incorrect, incomplete citations/ References. Non-functional links. (score 1-4)	Adequate and complete citations/ References. Links proper. (score 5-8)	Appropriate & adequate citations. References complete. (score 9-10)	

*\*If you (Reviewer) are not familiar with the APA Style conventions, you may leave this section blank. The in-house editors will then review the manuscript for the APA compliance.*

## 2. Specific Strengths of the Paper:

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(Confidential. Will not be shared with the Author)

*If you would like to inform the editor confidentially any additional observation on the article or related matters, you may do so in the space given below:*

**SECTION C:****RECOMMENDATION**

**I recommend that the article may be:**(check [✓] the appropriate choice)

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Place check mark [✓]</i>
1.	<i>Accepted for publication as is</i>	
2.	<i>Accepted for further review/ publication on re-submission by the author after having adequately addressed the errors and weaknesses specified above.</i>	
3.	<i>Rejected.</i>	

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Signature (Name) of the Reviewer

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**ARTICLES**  
**&**  
**BOOK REVIEWS**



## NARRATIVES ABOUT FORGIVENESS ACROSS INDIAN MIDDLE AGED AND OLDER ADULTS

Sahana Mitra<sup>1</sup> & Divya Bablani<sup>2</sup>

Forgiveness begins as a thought process that helps us to be content with ourselves, our interactions with others, and the circumstances of our lives. Narrative thematic analysis was conducted with 39 Indian men and women across middle age (40-65 years) and old age (65 years and above) on their perception and pattern of forgiveness. The analysis revealed a strong influence of gender on forgiveness, with reflections over self- and other- forgiveness that change with age. Men and women across both age groups shared their willingness and ability to forgive and the reasoning involved therein. Examining the deficits in literature on gendered aspect of forgiveness across middle aged and adults in old age, the study also highlights implications for further research and counselling.

*Keywords:* midlife, old age, self-forgiveness, other-forgiveness, gender, culture

Forgiveness occurs when a person lets go of emotionally backed judgments, grievances, attack thoughts and beliefs toward themselves and others. This helps them perceive the goodness, worth, magnificence, innocence, love, and peace in both themselves and the other person simultaneously (Toussaint & Friedman, 2009). This positive individual trait, largely studied in the western countries, reverberates in positive psychology as an intentional and voluntary process that involves a change in emotion and attitude regarding an offender (Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989). With the focus mainly on the lay conceptualizations of forgiveness and its benefits for the individual/s directly involved in the transgression (i.e., victim and perpetrator, or married couple) (DiDonato, McIlwee, & Carlucci, 2015; Mellor, Fung, & Binti Mamat, 2012), research work in the west and non-western context has been

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deficit on the gendered notion of forgiveness. In fact, few studies which investigated forgiveness in non-western samples (Sandage & Williamson, 2005) have focused on the adolescents (Pareek, Mathur, & Mangnani, 2016), college students (Suchday, Friedberg, & Almeida, 2006; Tripathi & Mullet, 2010), and role of religion in forgiveness (Duggi & Kamble, 2014; Toussaint, Kamble, Marschall, & Duggi, 2015). Especially in the Indian scenario, where population is both multi-faith (consists of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, and practitioners of tribal religions) and multi-lingual, different religious doctrines resonate forgiveness. For example, in *Bhagwad Gita*,<sup>3</sup> a central tenet is forgiveness (*kshama* in Sanskrit), which has been defined as an unaffected condition of mind of a person even while being reviled or chastised; it implies lack of emotional upset or impassivity and tolerance (*Titiksha*) under difficult circumstances (Kodandaramayya, 2004; Temoshok & Chandra, 2000). Similar qualities are praised in Buddhism in the form of striving for a state of non-anger (*akerodah*). In Islam, forgiveness finds expression in three terms mentioned in Qur'an: *'afw* (pardon, to excuse an offence); *safhn* (to turn away from sin or misdeed); *ghafara* (to cover, to forgive, and to remit), and in Christianity, words such as *eleao* (show mercy) and *ephiemi* (release, discharge, or put away) denote similar meaning (Pargament & Rye, 1998). In all the religions, it is more important for people to choose behaviours like giving up and letting go rather than controlling and holding on, in order to feel fully alive, competent, and creative – a concept similar to *sreyas* in the *Bhagwad Gita*, where *tusti*, contentment, is more important than *tripti*, pleasure and *sukha*, happiness. Even if most faiths encourage forgiveness, the exact circumstances under which forgiveness must be granted can vary from one person to the other (Mullet & Azar, 2009).

Researchers have also pointed towards the cultural differences (Hui & Chau, 2009; Kadiangandu, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 2001) in forgiveness patterns among those who belong to collectivistic and individualistic cultures. In the collectivistic culture such as India, motivation to forgive is triggered by the aim to maintain group harmony, conform to the social norms, and adjust rather than confront the person or the situation. This aspect, according to Hook, Worthington Jr., and Utsey (2009) was termed as *collectivistic forgiveness*, “where a decision to forgive is (a) motivated primarily by social harmony

<sup>3</sup> The dating of Hindu scriptures, as of pre-medieval South Asian history, is generally uncertain and controversial. A conventional consensus would put the final forms of the *Upanishads* and *Bhagwad Gita* at around 400 to 200 BCE. See translation and commentary by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1972), Manila: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

and (b) occurs within a context that values reconciliation and relational repair” (p. 325). The influence of culture and religion on forgiveness cannot be avoided but the individual experience and the lay understandings of forgiveness (Younger, Piferi, Jobe, & Lawler, 2004) among older age groups and across genders maybe quite different from theoretical conceptualizations (Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Whereas only few studies have actually examined the correlates of forgiveness, including gender, the present study aims to bring forth the processes involved in forgiveness across middle and old age as well as between genders in an Indian context through the analysis of narratives shared by both age groups.

## Theoretical Perspectives on Forgiveness

### The Kinds of Forgiveness

Different theoretical views on forgiveness overlap in the same way as the teachings in religious doctrines. The classic evolutionary view assumes the role of forgiveness as linked to increasing the survival chances of the larger group (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998; Komorita, Hilty, & Parks, 1991), whereas the grudge theory (Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1999) conceptualizes forgiveness in both intrapsychic and interpersonal process (Misztal, 2011). In contemporary times, two theories of forgiveness dominate the research. First, the multi-level model by McCullough (2000) where forgiveness is seen as providing an alternative to maladaptive psychological responses such as rumination and suppression (McCullough, Bono, & Root, 2007; McCullough & Witvliet, 2002). Second, the three dimensional model of dispositional forgiveness by Thompson et al. (2005) where forgiveness is seen as freeing from a negative attachment to the source that has transgressed against a person. The source of transgression can be *oneself* (that is, releasing resentment-shame, guilt, or regret towards oneself for the perceived transgression or wrongdoing) (DeShea & Wahkinney, 2003), *another person* (marital infidelity and betrayal in relationships), or *a situation* (natural disasters, road accidents, examination related suicides) viewed as out of one’s control. The present study utilizes the second model in order to understand forgiveness towards self and others.

Research has also shown that both lowered self- and other-forgiveness has given rise to different styles of functioning. An ‘intrapunitive’ style was associated with lack of self-forgiveness, where the person often sees himself

or herself as damaged, unworthy of acceptance, and internalize blame, and an 'extra punitive' style represented lower other-forgiveness constituting of revenge, holding grudges, and blaming others for apparent transgressions (Maltby, Macaskill, & Day, 2001). In many instances, 'unilateral forgiveness'<sup>4</sup> where a victim forgives an unrepentant perpetrator (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000) has facilitated the other kinds of forgiveness to unfold. According to Worthington and Scherer (2004), decisional forgiveness might happen based on one's beliefs about future interactions with a transgressor and it may go hand-in-hand or diverge in interesting ways with emotional forgiveness, which is rooted in a subset of negative emotions. Although views on the exact nature of forgiveness vary, the consensus is that it is beneficial to people (McCullough, 2000). Each kind of forgiveness has its own pertinent role in influencing the journey of individuals over time, contributing to their emotional, physical, and mental health.

### **Across Ages**

Aging is a universal experience for humans with diversity in meaning and interpretation (Prakash, 2003). The capacity to react constructively when faced with interpersonal conflicts might be associated with successful aging (Bono & McCullough, 2004; Mullet & Girard, 2000). In the present study, the theoretical underpinnings for age range of middle and old aged participants are based on Erikson's (1968) psychosocial stage theory. Middle adulthood (40-65 years), the seventh psychosocial stage amongst the eight lifespan stages, is a time of competition between the demands of work and family (Havighurst, 1972). The complexity of multiple roles and relationships become dominant (Antonucci, Akiyama, & Merline, 2001) and inability to manage both effectively can give rise to lack of resolve for the issue of 'stagnation versus generativity' resulting in feelings of regret and a sense of purposelessness in adults. During this time, forgiveness tends to get associated with one of the most common fallacies, which is pity, in relation to a spouse or children. It happens on the grounds of duty or sympathy or appeal to duty, where behaviour is based on 'I must do this,' 'I should feel that,' and 'they should do this' (Sternberg & Jordon, 2005). In a Hong Kong based study, 71 middle and older men and women of different socioeconomic levels talked about younger generations and the society (Cheng, Chan, & Chan, 2008). Many

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<sup>4</sup> This includes 'trend forgiveness,' 'temporary forgiveness' (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003), decisional and emotional forgiveness.

commented on how their attempts to help were often brushed aside or even criticized by their own offspring who were accustomed to different lifestyles and ways of doing things. To avoid conflict and to preserve harmony, they withdrew to more passive and minor generative roles.

The final psychosocial stage of ‘ego integrity verses despair’ related to identity of old people (65 and above), who go through the developmental task of retrospection. This process starts around 60 years and abate around 70 or 80 years (Butler, 1963), where the life lived is reintegrated and analyzed either through regret or fulfillment. People face their own mortality as the end of life nears, resulting in higher ‘pro-social’ interpersonal orientation - to maintain a core network of close, emotionally satisfying relationships (Van Lange et al., 1997). This was well supported with Carstensen’s (1991) socio-emotional selectivity theory, which highlights that the salience of social goals changes as one age due the perception of time as closed ended. A French study on 18-90 years adults where people in the older category tend to forgive more readily (Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, & Girard, 1998) also confirmed these theoretical assertions.

## **Across Gender**

Western studies in the past have found that women forgive more than men as it is their expected mode of behaviour (Harris, 2002; Mellor, Fung, & Binti Mamat, 2012; Miller, Worthington, & McDaniel, 2008) but such gender differences may also be attributed to the differences in socialization. Women are usually socialized to place more emphasis on emotions (e.g., expressive) and relationships (e.g., nurturing) (Bakan, 1966; Taylor et al., 2000) resulting in identity becoming closely tied to social roles and commitments during midlife. In an Indian collectivistic culture, for a married woman, the concept of *Jodi* (as a couple) is of prime importance within a matrimony, which is still considered a sacred institution connecting not just two individuals but two families (Sandilya & Shahnawaz, 2014). This societal concept is believed to be the reason behind why many women, despite their economic independence, choose to suffer in a bad marriage (Kakar & Kakar, 2007) and why forgiveness becomes the key to sustain their relationship. On the contrary, for men, who are socialized to emphasize agency, action, and problem solving (Baron-Cohen, 2002), thoughts of forgiveness or empathy may represent a major perspective shift, one in which attention is transferred from agency and justice

concerns to relational concerns (Toussaint & Webb, 2005). Therefore, until about 40, men and women have concentrated on obligations to family and society, and have developed those aspects to personality that helped them reach external goals. It is only around late midlife, they both seek a 'union of opposites' by expressing their previously 'disowned aspects' and shift their preoccupation to their inner, spiritual selves (Jung, 1933). For example, men at this age show interiority (Neugarten, 1977) and tend to become more nurturing and expressive and less obsessed with personal achievement (Vaillant, 2000). Eventually, both begin to display higher levels of identity certainty, power, and a leveling off of generativity in their 60s (Miner-Rubino, Winter, & Stewart, 2004). Gilligan's (1982) approach to morality is yet another theoretical possibility, which the present study utilizes to examine the male and female notions of morality and their association with forgiveness.

### **Shaping Forgiveness: Influencing Factors**

Earlier, in 1988, Fridja's twelve laws of emotions facilitated the understanding between predominance of certain emotions and the resultant forgiveness. The present study utilizes two of these laws namely, *law of concern*, where a close relationship with a person or an event aids in forgiveness; and *law of comparative feeling*, where intensity of emotion depends on the relationship between an event and some frame of reference against which the event is evaluated. In line with Fridja's laws, studies have shown that closeness, commitment, and satisfaction *as relationship qualities* enable the couples to forgive offenses of their partner more quickly (McCullough, 2000; Sandilya & Shah Nawaz, 2014). In 1997, McCullough and his colleagues included the factors such as *proximal* (the way the victims think and feel about the offender and the offense, for example, attributions, ruminative thoughts, and empathetic concerns) and *distal* (e.g., the relationship qualities of intimacy, closeness, satisfaction, and commitment) as determinants of forgiveness. Other variables that gained equal impetus around early 20<sup>th</sup> century were *careworthiness* (when the victim perceives that the transgressor is an appropriate target for moral concern), *expected value* (when a victim anticipates that the relationship will have future utility), and concern for *safety* (transgressors seem safe when they seem unwilling or unable to harm their victims again) (Eaton & Struthers, 2006; Knutson & Wimmer, 2006; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). In addition, both the warmth-based virtues such as compassion, empathy, and altruism (Berry & Worthington, 2001), which complement the conscientiousness based

virtues (e.g., responsibility, honesty, duty, and accountability) were assigned higher value in forgiveness studies. For example, Brose, Rye, Lutz-Zois, & Ross (2005) found that people high on warmth based virtues tend to feel more positively toward transgressors and are more likely to forgive.

A further review of literature has revealed *cognitive and emotional processes* such as rumination, suppression, or empathy, being related to person's ability to forgive (Worthington, 2005). On other occasions, *situational factors* such as apology (Berry & Worthington, 2001) may be held as a basic requirement for forgiveness (Mullet & Azar, 2009). Finally, a discussion on influencing factors would be incomplete without a reference to time. 'Time is a great healer' is a statement spoken and heard much too frequently. People will perceive themselves to make relatively large strides in forgiveness early in the process (Wixted, 2004; Wohl & McGrath, 2007) but still can take a long time to forgive completely (North, 1998). The phase of life, age, and gender of the person can play a pertinent role in forgiveness process.

## Methodology

### The Research Questions

The motivation to conduct this study came from the first author's difficulty to forgive self and others at a certain period in her life's journey. Hence, the research questions were largely exploratory and descriptive in nature (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and sought to understand the story behind forgiveness process in men and women of different age groups. They were:

- (a) How is forgiveness of self and other perceived across Indian men and women?
- (b) What are the similarities and the differences in forgiveness patterns of middle and old aged adults?

These questions were explored under an interpretivist paradigm which attempts neither to uncover a single truth from the experiential accounts of participants nor tries to achieve external verification of the analysis (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the design for the study enabled interactive researcher-participant dialogue to develop, which was achieved through enabling participants to share their experiences in their own way and at their own pace. Furthermore, an internally consistent and meaningful qualitative research is

built on three philosophical assumptions, namely ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Creswell, 2003; Drisko, 1997). The ontological assumption was one of constructivism, where experientially diverse realities were taken into account as constructed by the participants themselves, who experienced, processed, and labeled the reality of their forgiveness process as they lived it day to day (Schwandt, 2000). Aligning with this ontological consideration is an epistemological position that aims to understand participants' lived experiences through the person-in-context (van Manen, 1997). An empathic stance was taken by the first author<sup>5</sup> during the in-depth interviews with the participants. This is similar to empathic understanding under interpretative paradigm. Therefore, the role of the first author as a researcher was similar to that of a *person-centered counselor*, who, in order to understand the experiential world of the participants, listened to their experiences empathically and neither judged nor questioned the external validity of what was shared (Willig, 2012). Lastly, the methodology utilized in the study was descriptive narrative approach (Polkinghorne, 1988) that seeks to describe the individual narratives of particular life episodes and the function that particular life episodes serve in the plot of individual's life (Budziszewska & Dryll, 2013; Sandelowski, 1991). Hence, retrospective oral narrative accounts (Pólya, Kis, Naszódi, & László, 2007) of the participants were considered, which helped us to focus on the “organisational scheme expressed in story form” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 13). This choice of methodology was based on the belief that individuals live their lives in storied narratives where “narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative” (Bruner, 1987, p. 12; László, 2008).

## Participants

Convenience sampling was used in the study. With 19 adults in middle age (8 females and 11 males) and 20 adults in old age (11 females and 9 males), 39 adults were studied. Though two age groups of this sample were based on divisions used in lifespan development literature by Erikson (1968) — middle adulthood (40-65 years) and old age (65 years plus) — the participants in the older adulthood were under the age of 80 years. The sample included graduate adults belonging to any community and religious faith and from middle socio-economic status from the union territory of New Delhi. The basic information pertaining to composition of the family, work, lifestyle,

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<sup>5</sup> The first author collected the data and completed the analysis, which was rechecked by the second author. This process aided in establishing inter-rater reliability.

and other socio-demographic questions of age, place of stay (Hornberger, Zabriskie, & Freeman, 2010), were also covered through the demographic sheet. The data was collected with the help of home visits as well as contacting different yoga and walking groups within the demographic. Participants were not compensated for their time.

A semi-structured interview schedule comprising three questions was prepared and pilot tested. The interview allowed the participants to reflect deeply on their own forgiveness process and these retrospective accounts were grouped under several sub-plots with the help of narrative analysis (see section on analysis). During the process of interviews, a technique called creative interviewing was used. Here, researcher communicated her own feelings and thoughts that assured the participants that they can, in turn, share the same (Douglas, 1985). This technique facilitated mutual disclosure between the researcher and the participants for deeper reflections and sharing on the part of the participants. For example, one of the female middle-aged participants was hesitant to share her story and gave more abstract perspective than the specific circumstances related to forgiving process. Then I [first author] responded, *“You know many times, I myself find it hard to forgive some people who I share a close relationship with me...I don’t know what I am supposed to do.”* This sharing from my side helped the participant to begin sharing the specificities of her story and she responded, *“...exactly same I feel and then I need to come up with the ways to forgive because one cannot leave these relationships, they are meaningful to me. I have come up with my own philosophy of forgiveness.”* This creative interviewing became the part of reflexivity<sup>6</sup> and guided the research process.

Informed consent, confidentiality, and dealing with vulnerability of the participants and sensitive interview topics were an integral part of the ethical approval process (Palmer, forthcoming). In this process, it was recognized that participants might feel vulnerable during the interview process, and anxious while sharing their conflicting emotions over betrayal and forgiveness. Hence, steps were taken to provide participants with a support structure by sharing the area of inquiry of the research beforehand with the participants, and to ask non-probing questions during the interview process that would allow them to share what they feel they want to share.

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<sup>6</sup> Self-awareness of the relationship between the researcher, the researched, and the context (Mann, 2016)

## Analysis

Each interview was recorded and transcribed by the first author. The transcripts (conventionally referred to as ‘protocols’) were reviewed by the second author by listening to the recorded interviews and simultaneously checking for errors or missing information. This added to inter-rater reliability and enhanced the descriptive validity too. Among the many models available for conducting narrative analysis (Riessman, 2003), narrative thematic analysis was chosen for this study. This kind of analysis focuses “on the content of a text, ‘what’ is said more than ‘how’ it is said” (Riessman, 2003, p. 2). In analyzing the stories of the participants, the ideas of Polkinghorne (1988) and Mishler (1986) were followed. The steps are detailed below and the table showing the core stories (Table 1) is provided for the reader’s reference.

- (a) As the transcripts were read, re-read, and analysed for several weeks, various sub-plots were identified. These sub-plots, according to Polkinghorne (1988), can be developed by the researcher’s own course of action by looking into how a plot weaves different events together including the *treatment of characters* (narrator’s egocentric perspective only vs. the perspective of other people as well—a de-centered one) and *the setting*, the most important of which is story time (awareness of change, reaching into the past and future) (Habermas & De Silveira, 2008; Pennebaker, Mehl, & Niederhoffer, 2002).
- (b) In these sub-plots (as part of emplotment process: see Emden, 1998), we looked for the ways participants sorted their life events to create differently formed narratives, for example, a story once told as tolerating a relationship became the story of forgiveness in another telling. These various sub-plots garnered from the interviews pointed towards the core stories shared by the participants, which highlighted the core-themes in the process of analyses. The core-themes that were chosen were common to all the participants’ plots.
- (c) The core stories were categorized under three main themes (Table 1) and for the purpose of categorization, abbreviations for the following terms were used: self-forgiveness as SF and other-forgiveness as OF.

**Table 1.**

*Showing the three main themes and their sub-themes based on the narrative thematic analysis.*

MAIN THEMES (or Core Stories)	GENDER	SUB-THEMES (or Sub-plots)	
	AGE	Middle Age	Old Age
Self-forgiveness (SF) & Other-forgiveness (OF)	Women	Tolerance (OF) Care (OF) High on guilt (SF)	Commitment (SF) Concern (OF)
	Men	Regret & self-blame (SF) Letting go difficult (SF) Justice perspective (OF) High involvement in family Compensation	Pity (OF) Time as limited (OF) Self as limited Tolerance (OF)
Forgiveness as foolishness	Women	Unilateral forgiveness (OF) Tolerance Apology not significant (OF)	Reflection Balance of self and others (SF & OF)
	Men	Decisional forgiveness (OF) Higher reliance on self (SF)	Decentered view Belief in higher power (SF & OF)
Forgiveness as coping and healing	Women	Distal factors Commitment	Empathy
	Men	Proximal factors Timing of transgression	Less rumination Forgive and forget Empathy

These themes will be discussed in the following section presenting diverse reasoning given by adults when they choose to forgive or compromise with a situation without forgiveness.

### **Perception of Self- and Other-Forgiveness Across Gender and Ages**

Men and women in middle adulthood saw forgiveness as a way to be in the relationship, adjust and tolerate small things – a way of life similar to Titiksha (tolerance or forbearance) as preached in Bhagwad Gīta and Buddhism. Tolerance while representing an egocentric narrative (Habermas & De Silveira, 2008) was a significant sub-theme in the narratives of females. The relational factors such as commitment, closeness, and concern (McCullough, 2000) became the basis of tolerating a relationship, which they valued. This increased the likelihood of middle aged females to forgive others or the situations easily, for example, one of whom who reported, *“I do feel hurt sometimes by what my husband or my grown up children say but staying together means adjusting to each other and letting go simultaneously.”* In the same line, another female participant shared, *“forgiving the close ones becomes important as there is no way out, and you’ve to be with them.”* This thought process of linking care component with forgiveness also parallels Fridja’s (1988) law of concern and Gilligan’s (1982) second level of moral reasoning, that is, the conventional stage where blaming others could be a threat to their relationship. Given the fact that in collectivistic culture such as India, women are entrusted with ‘responsibility orientation’ (Gilligan, 1982), they tend to compromise in order to maintain peace and harmony in relationships (Hook et al., 2009). For example, a middle aged woman shared, *“be good to others, it’s your duty”* and in same line, another woman reflected, *“once you care for a person, anger disappears after a while.”* Most of the women in this age group found themselves in excessive rumination about an event or relationship resulting in feeling guilty. This whole cultural socialization on giving more importance to others’ desires resulted in low self- forgiveness responses. As one of them stated, *“only if I had been at home and not at my sister’s place when he had that argument with my son, things would not have gone that far. This happened because of me.”* Another one shared, *“I should not have brought up that issue at that time. Probably he was not in a good mood and he got very angry...screamed at me due to which I got hurt.”* This depicted an intra-punitive style of functioning (Maltby et al., 2001), which helped them to safeguard relationships by compromising, holding themselves responsible for various things they confront in life, and balancing out things with respect to others.

Middle aged men's narratives, on the other hand, depicted much lower self- and other-forgiveness. This can be explained as until 40, those aspects of personality have been concentrated that has helped men reach external goals. At midlife, the focus turns towards their inner selves and they seek, what Jung (1933) called 'union of opposites,' where previously disowned parts of personality such as nurturance for children and care for spouse are expressed, for example, *"I wanted to do really well in my job, now I'm at such top position which I earned with my hard work but yes I missed out on many things at my family front."* As they tend to blame themselves for not being there so much for their children's upbringing (e.g., *"one does what one thinks is right but I took many things for granted and I don't feel right about it"*), it results in disappointments and then a planning to be more involved in relationships and family matters (e.g., *"I like to help my wife to pick up groceries or my children in the decisions related to career and jobs but I don't think so they need my help....they have a life of their own just like I did"*). As greater reflection and introspection with stocktaking of roles and relationships becomes the essence for men at midlife (Jung, 1933), men begin to invest more in relationships. In this process of dealing with grown up children who have a mind, life, and priorities of their own, and a spouse who is more deeply involved with her children by this time, men tend to get hurt repeatedly (e.g., *"It's hurting when children start arguing with you a lot"*), and have greater difficulty letting go of hurt (e.g., *"Times are such...children these days are more independent and self-focused. They don't want to listen to anybody. I don't know what will happen to future generations"*). This makes them less forgiving towards the other. With a justice orientation (Gilligan, 1982) in their reasoning behind dealing with relationships, for example, *"be cautious when forgive"; "once done bad, square it up there and then,"* an extra-punitive style (Maltby et al., 2001) becomes a dominant way to see forgiveness. As a result, others are blamed (e.g., *"Well, you see, you can't disown your family if they hurt you"*) and one tends to hold grudges which leads to frustration, anger, disappointment, and hurt feelings owing to unmet expectations (e.g., *"maybe one day they will change"*). The realities of their relationships and disappointments with self, make them difficult to forgive amidst the socialization of childhood, which has taught them to be tough rather than to be tolerant (e.g. *"You must forgive, no matter what"*). Therefore, for middle aged men and women, forgiveness happens when there is no other choice, which largely falls within the domain of identified motivation – where one has to act due to the necessity even if one does not enjoy it (see Deci & Ryan, 2000). This made forgiveness difficult to practice for both men and women at midlife and to free oneself of negativity.

In old age, higher numbers of forgiveness responses were witnessed towards self and others and these were defined as freedom from anger and movement towards contentment (Kumar, 2006). There were gender differences in the reasoning behind forgiveness where the narratives of women reflected being less critical and more accepting of themselves, greater expression of their thoughts and feelings, such as, “*I have done my duty and did it very well to take care of others, now I have to do certain things for myself and I am very vocal about it.*” Only when women enter the stage of post-conventional morality, according to Gilligan (1982), around late midlife or old age, they begin to realize the compromises they have made and try to find a balance to express their desires. As a result, higher self- and other-forgiveness was observed in older women with greater rationalization and justification for their feelings of being hurt – “*if there are some people that hurt you, there are some other people also who always give you happiness.*” This becomes easier for them as through the process of child-rearing and negotiating discrepant situations, their identity and intimacy develop together (Erikson, 1968) enabling them to maintain meaningful relationships. For example, “*I’ve been a wife and a mother and I’ve balanced my role well enough*”; “*there is a time when we have to let go our children and believe in decisions they’ve made.*” Forgiveness in old age for both men and women was defined a deliberate attempt with justification for each situation or person. Furthermore, aspects such as closeness, value of relationship with acceptance of one’s life (whether good or bad), made both old men and women forgive either because of pity (Sternberg & Jordan, 2005) or due to the perception of time as limited (as one is nearing end of life) (Abramowitz, 1992; Cartensen, 1991). Analysis pointed out to numbers of emotion-focused coping responses too (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) ranging from keeping themselves “*busy with grandchildren*” or “*praying*” to distracting oneself by “*joining old members’ club*” and “*going for walks.*” The present-oriented goals and emotional aspirations became predominant, which helped them perform generativity related tasks (Erikson, 1968) such as “*taking care of grandchildren*” and “*helping in household chores.*” Though many of them also reported “*unhappiness or disappointments*” with the way their children behaved with them or neglected them, and that they “*still feel hurt too*”; there was an acceptance of this reality, and “*still a willingness and desire to forgive.*” Therefore, irrespective of gender, “*an apology*” or “*acknowledgement of wrong-doing*” by the transgressor helped reduce negativity and made forgiveness easier.

Forgiveness, across ages and gender, was described as a way to live life and to maintain those relationships, which were need-based and significant. The process of forgiving oneself, another, or a situation was strongly associated by participants with how one's relationship or a situation, the past experiences, and attitudes, were perceived coupled with the present-oriented demands of work and family.

### **Is Forgiveness Foolishness?**

A general consensus was observed in middle and old aged participants about forgiveness bordering on foolishness if it is repeated for the same person or situation. During middle adulthood, the narratives of men showed a greater difficulty forgiving and they admitted that forgiveness happened only due to the idea of interacting with the perpetrator in future at workplace or in community. This was more in line with decisional forgiveness (Worthington & Scherer, 2004), which helped men to get the work done while tolerating the transgressor. Women's narratives, on the other hand, showed either one of the two different kinds of reasoning. One group of women defined themselves as "emotional fools" by not seeking an apology. This made them very high on unilateral forgiveness (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000) where they hoped that things would change for the better. As one of the female participants shared, "*I forgive everyone without taking much time. What else can I do? If ultimately there's no other option, why waste time.*" Other group of women saw forgiveness itself as foolishness if it was done out of pity or in the absence of proper reasoning/justification or an apology; for example, one of them shared, "*saying that you forgive someone because you pity him or because you think he can't do any better, are not reasons enough to forgive.*" Women in both groups agreed that only when one has accepted oneself, the others, and the reality of their relationships (abusive or compassionate), the disappointments transform into forgiving oneself and others/situations. Research suggests that in many ways, women self-deceive themselves, and develop the tendency to use their hopes, needs, and desires to construct the way they see the world (Triandis, 2009), and hence, forgive eventually. Hence, forgiveness, for men and women at midlife, was an inevitable thing which happened with greater difficulty. There was remarkable shift in worldview at old age, a greater decentration in view was evident where both of them saw forgiveness as a way of life, and did not equate with foolishness. Forgiveness was valued as a virtue in old age. As a male participant stated, "*forgiveness is essential for smooth sailing,*" while another

female participant added, “*it is a virtue to forgive.*” For them, irrespective of their religious faith, life itself happened in the context of a higher power, which is fair and knows the purpose in everything.

### **The Intensity of Forgiveness and its Relation to Coping and Healing**

Concern and care for another person as distal factors (McCullough et al., 1997) form the basis and intensity of forgiveness, which further gets strengthened with commitment to that relationship (spouse, children, or friends). This adds to the process of coping in middle aged men and women, who saw forgiveness as “*a means to be in a relationship one values*” but also “*to be cautious and maintain distance as forgiveness doesn’t equate to taking the other person back.*” Certain proximal factors such as “*less rumination,*” “*belief in forgive and forget*” also played an essential role in coping with the situation, but empathy for the transgressor (Eaton & Struthers, 2006) was the most significant aspect in forgiveness process. As a middle aged man reported, “*I tend to place myself in another person’s situation and then I feel less hurt and also that I might have reacted as he did.*” Middle aged adults believed that to cope with stressful situations/people in life, forgiveness was important. On the other hand, during old age, aspects such as care worthiness (e.g., “*forgiveness depends on the kind of relation I share with other person, and it is easier for family members*”), expected value (e.g., “*I need to forgive my closed ones, I need their support*”), and safety (e.g., “*I live with my children, what’s the point in remaining angry with them*”) were strongly associated with the healing aspect of forgiveness (Knutson & Wimmer, 2006). Forgiveness was defined as “*a virtue to be practiced*”; as “*a medicine that heals you,*” and as “*an act that reduces the bitterness.*”

Moreover, the intensity of forgiveness also depended on timing of the transgression for both men and women across ages. For example, an old man stated, “*If I’m going through a bad phase in life and the other person knowing so cheats me or harms me, then it’s very difficult to forgive him/her.*” Also, there was a greater belief that if forgiveness can happen in one situation and towards one person then it can be generalized to other situations and persons as well. This reasoning equates with Fridja’s (1988) law of comparative feeling, where most participants compared forgiveness to a standard which they had achieved in the past so it was easier to achieve in future as well. For example, a middle-aged man reported, “*Forgiveness means forget otherwise one is still full of pride and ego*”; and in the same line, an old woman shared, “*I give my best, then I’m not*

responsible if the other person is still not ok.” With all these aspects intensifying the forgiveness process, some warmth based virtues such as compassion and altruism (e.g., “ultimately one has to forgive”; “other person is there in your destiny to teach you something”) (Berry, Worthington, Parrott, & O’Connor, 2001) also played a crucial role.

In addition, coping and healing which came through forgiveness were significantly related to the ‘aspect of time’ where greater lapse of time facilitated the reduction of negativity towards the transgressed person / situation. With the time factor playing its part, narratives of forgiveness across age and gender also included the faith in forgiving due to the belief in different religious scriptures which facilitated the attitude that “there is a higher power” due to which “justice and fairness will be done to all in due course of time” and “there is no point in holding on to the negative feelings as even God doesn’t want so.” Especially, in old age, forgiveness was found equivalent to intrinsic motivation (see Deci & Ryan, 2000), for example, as reflected by an old man, “one cannot live life with anger, how far can I be angry at this stage of my life...forgiveness answers all.” While forgiveness was linked to the spiritual, psychological, and physical wellbeing (similar to *sreyas* in Bhagwad Gīta) (Hunter, 2007), it was also believed to “give true peace of mind otherwise there is constant struggle with oneself” and be “the only way a life could be lived.” As different factors contributed towards forgiveness, it also depended on the person’s ability and capacity to forgive under different circumstances and for various people who came across in one’s life.

## Discussion

“Anger makes you smaller, while forgiveness makes you grow beyond what you were” - a quote by Cherie Carter Scott (1999) reflects very simply the scope and profundity of the phenomenon called forgiveness in human life. While hurt and forgiveness are regular features of human experience, there is no single definition of forgiveness (Jeffress, 2001). However, the predominant narrative across both ages and gender was the belief of the participants that forgiveness reduces anger and negativity caused by the transgressor. Yet, it was perceived differently when an analysis was made for self- and other-forgiveness where females depicted greater guilt and less self-forgiveness in comparison to males in middle age. On the contrary, a greater number of female narratives in old age highlighted self-forgiveness in comparison to old aged males. Still, forgiveness can be a problem for many

people simply because they are not clear about what forgiveness actually is. All too often, forgiveness narratives get confused with reconciliation, the larger process of which forgiveness is but one part. The study provides different reasoning on forgiveness amidst the theoretically rich perspectives drawn from the fields of gender, morality, and psychosocial development. These perspectives guide the narrative thematic analysis especially to understand various themes related to compromise, tolerance, and care and its relation to forgiveness as well as when forgiveness is equated with foolishness. Hence, narrative thematic analysis facilitated to explore the intention of how and why forgiveness happens and thereby, allowing to communicate the meanings to the reader from the perspective of the participants. These meanings further clarified that forgiveness, as a process progressing with age and with evolving roles and relationships in one's life, contributed to the differences in narratives of males and females across ages. Moreover, the themes analyzed have implications for research and counselling, as discussed below.

### **For Research**

The study is limited in the domain of small sample size and the results can be viewed as the stories of selected group in a given time and location. Hence, large scale studies can be designed including people from different socio-economic status and professions to examine the forgiveness patterns. In addition, the sample of the study had too narrow geographic range—that is, taken from a single location, Delhi, to achieve rich data and depth in the study. Therefore, an inter-state analysis or a comparison of rural-urban middle and old aged population could be considered to make the results more generalizable. Additionally, future research can also focus on role of childhood experiences in forgiveness patterns; and personality traits and its relationship to forgiveness.

### **For Counselling**

The study has laid the groundwork to look into the cultural and the gendered aspects of reasoning behind forgiveness. This can further facilitate to design therapeutic work with the two age groups by helping them to work through their feelings and reconcile with self and others (Hong & Jacinto, 2012). Additionally, to make individuals aware of development of self-empathy is an essential component (Kurtz & Ketchum, 1993), which will help them understand that certain situations in life are beyond their control and they did

everything what was in their capacity. Hong & Jacinto (2012) have suggested the use of journal methods such as the experience inventory, unsent letter, and artwork to create awareness about client's feelings, thoughts, and reflections about the relationship with the person chosen to be forgiven or in forgiving the self. These practices would help to deepen emotional process and find a connection between past and future. Furthermore, group and community interventions can assist people in midlife and older age group to overcome the sense of guilt in their close and distant relationships, be more accepting towards themselves and in turn accept the changing others and situations as they arise in one's life.

### **Conclusion**

Forgiveness takes different forms and meanings for different people and matures with each stage of life. The study is embedded in a non-western socio-cultural context of urban India. The differences seen in the narratives of middle and old aged men and women not only reflect differences in how one is socialized but also how one accepts oneself over a period of time. The study has filled a significant gap in literature by presenting gendered perspective on forgiveness. It has set the stage for further research in the area as well as in the related fields. It has also offered recommendations for the guided therapy work that can enhance the process of forgiveness among middle aged and older adults.

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## CHRISTIAN SYMBOLIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN CULTURES

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In the Indian history, Christian symbolization has wielded considerable influence and effected changes in the religious belief systems, political thought, and social systems. The Christian faith continues to challenge and transform Indian cultures, religious thought, and religious affiliations. This paper is an attempt to delineate the influence and the impact of Christian symbolization on the cultures of India. Along with a brief historical overview of Indian Christianity, we explain the concept of symbolization, hermeneutics of symbolization from a Christian perspective, and the process of Christian symbolization carried out especially by Indian Christians and Indian Hindus. Finally we delineate the influences of Christian symbolization on Indian cultures and describe its contribution to the Indian polity.

*Keywords:* Christian symbolization, Indian Christianity, hermeneutics of symbolization, symbolized transformation, socio-cultural influence, ethos transformation

Symbols speak. They make meaning. Human communication depends on them. Symbols as elements of communication exist in a culture. Symbols can be said to live wherever culture is found. In a way, symbols can be even said to create culture; they transform it; they reshape it. Meanwhile, culture in turn creates symbols. When new meanings are found, new symbols are articulated. New realities and meanings are discovered, understood, accepted,

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and communicated using transformed symbols or new ones. Symbols in themselves are transforming. Thus, there is a bidirectional dynamism between symbols and cultures.

What happened and what happens in the cultures of the Indian subcontinent is no different. Cultures and different religious symbolisms shared common dynamism, and effected profound influence in shaping the Indian society. Christian symbolization is one of these processes that keep shaping various aspects of the Indian cultures, society, polity, and ethos.

The concept of one Indian Culture is problematized by scholars and cultural activists. An Indian culture does not exist inasmuch as we can say a language called 'Indian' does not exist. We can speak of 'cultures' of the Indian sub-continent and only in the plural. Jyoti Sahi, along with Michael Amaladoss, questions whether we can speak of a single 'Indian culture.' Sahi contends that "we have to be aware of the whole dynamics of cross-cultural processes which exist within our own Indian Cultural reality" (1987, p. 133). The awareness of the variety of cultural assortment in this subcontinent is a recent one, because cultures have begun to meet and mingle in higher frequency in the recent decades. So we speak of *the cultures* of the Indian peninsula.

Cultures do not just coexist. They intermarry and interpenetrate. This is because each culture finds meaning in the elements of the other. Human being searches for meaning. If one finds a new meaning, the meaning and its meaningfulness are accepted even if it is found to belong to another culture. As mentioned earlier, meanings are expressed through symbols. Symbolization—whether at the personal level, social level, or at the conscious or subconscious or collective conscious level—is an all pervading reality of the meaning-seeking human life.

We witness to similar dynamics of symbolization when Christianity, as a new set of principles, a way of life, a belief system, and a religion, appeared in India. In this paper, we argue that Christianity has had its say in the reshaping of cultures in India. We explore the extent to which Christian symbolization brought new meaning and set the tenor of life for both the believers and the non-believers alike. We begin by discussing various aspects of symbolization, especially with regard to Christian symbolization, in the Indian context. This will help in explaining the ways in which Christian symbolization had

its influence on Indian cultures and understand the same by specifying the contribution of Christian symbols and symbolization in the cultural, societal, and religious spheres of India.

## **Symbolization**

The process of symbol formation can be called symbolization. Here, we are referring to symbols in a broad sense, accommodating conventions, material symbols, linguistic symbols, myths, rites, and legends. Symbolization is inherent to any group of human beings bound by common bonds of religious beliefs and culture. For the present study we can define symbolization as follows: Symbolization is the process of formulation of conventions, symbols, myths, rites, and legends, meant for an interchange of reinterpretable substantive information in the realm of conscious human existence. Interchange implies give-and-take, a mutual understanding, appreciation, acceptance, and esteem for what another holds to be valuable and true. This interchange is taken to exist among individuals of communities, and between individual communities from a larger perspective.

Information is reinterpretable inasmuch as symbolization is a continuous process where information processed varies over factors of time, place, character, and modes of approach while preserving relevance and unity of information. Information is substantive in that what we care about is important because it comes to us as something presented to our senses and perception as real and existent and only a symbolism can continue its existence in our mind and being.

Symbols are meant for making meaning. But symbols do not merely make meaning but they can also be said to contain the realities that they point to. They are not mere signs. As Paul Tillich states, “every symbol points beyond itself to a reality for which it stands,” and “symbols, although they are not the same as that which they symbolize, participate in its meaning and power” (1964, p. 54). Symbolization or symbol-making would be the process in which a symbol is attributed meaning and power of truth or reality. Thus, symbolization can make the potent symbols to represent an experience of the truth.

From a metaphysical perspective, symbols are ontological referentials.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> We call it “ontological referential,” because symbolization as a process both supersedes the particular symbols themselves and the particular processes of enculturation of faith elements, and has to be viewed as belonging to every human culture. It is this very reason that makes us capable as the authors of this article to visualize what is happening in every symbol formation and to speak from a common perspective.

Symbolization in every culture must be viewed thus. This metaphysical perspective as it occurs in a culture holds good also for the symbolization of the Christian faith, and the eventual evolution of a Christian culture. Further, we need to speak of 'Christian cultures' in plural, because, every faith encounter by any culture produces its own style of expressions and symbols.

By Christian symbolization we do not refer to the material symbols used in Christianity though they are parts and products of the process. In a metaphysical sense, symbolization pervades all areas of the existence of Christianity as a religion. It is manifest in the action and being of the Christian Church but is a hidden working principle directing its existence.

From a broader perspective again, symbolization has to be understood not as a formulation of symbols meant for mere communication of unrelated ideas. A Jungian interpretation of symbols may state them to have been evolved or be symbolized from archetypes and may also refer to the preconscious and the instinctual (Jung, 1968). A similar *post factum* visualization of realities and interpretation may be said to belong to the world of dreams and the unconscious. The scope of this paper does not permit us to delve more into such an understanding of symbolization from its psychological or its spiritual dimensions.

Therefore in this paper, symbols are understood not merely as material symbols, but include all those which have the ability to point to the truth and its realities while making them available for meaningful experience. The category of symbols thus includes material symbols, linguistic and thought symbols, myths, rites, and legends.

### **Symbolization in the Indian Context**

In the Indian context both the religious and the cultural cannot be separated into water-tight compartments. Cultural expressions and symbols are intertwined with religions and often possess religious significance. This fact might be universally true as well. Yet in the multi-cultural Indian context, each culture is invariably related to a particular belief system. Each of these cultures and religions mutually contribute to the formation and the evolution of symbols.

A religious symbol taken out of its cultural context loses its original relevance and vice versa. In the Indian context for example, the *Sūryanamakāra*

(saluting the sun) may remain a mere *āsana* (a bodily posture) meant for physical exercise and may not signify any salutation of a creator god or the sun god to a non-believer. A rich man depositing a few kilograms of gold in a temple *hundial* (offering box) may not seem meaningful to an Indian socialist. The ceremony of the Sacred Thread with seven strands will make sense to the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, and the Vaishyas, but not to others. Throwing ashes of the dead into the Ganges may purify the souls of the deceased for a Hindu believer, but not so for an ecologist. So everyone can be said to own the validity of symbolization which cannot be deprived of by another's disbelief.

One of the symbolization processes is the formation of literature around the faith expressions. *The Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Purānās* which date back to many centuries, are examples of the literature that carry within them the reality of the sacred. Whether written or oral, they carry within them sacred symbolisms. Kenneth Burke affirms this truth by saying, "any verbal act, is to be considered as a 'symbolic action' " (1974, p. 8). But many a time these sacred symbolisms were lived out and were only orally passed on but never had written records. Now those cultures with only oral traditions have begun to record their myths, legends, and religious rites and the literature keeps growing. These can be called the linguistic symbolizations of faith experiences and are linguistic faith expressions.

Inasmuch as cultures contain symbolizations, language forms an important part of that culture. Languages are formed within a culture, but they themselves later shape culture. As Tillich rightly says, "the form of religion is culture. This is especially obvious in the language used by religion" (1964, p. 47). Thus, we can understand the reason why much of Indian classical literature until recent times had been religious in nature. The numerous languages spoken in India have shaped cultures and religious beliefs.<sup>4</sup>

When a person tries to express one's faith or a truth one has encountered, that person ends up using similes, metaphors, allegories, imageries, analogies, and other figures of speech. Though human language itself is limited, it enables a person to express a particular experience in a limited way. The use

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<sup>4</sup> The 2011 Census of India has identified more than 19,569 mother tongues spoken of which 1,369 are rationalized mother tongues and 1,474 are treated as 'unclassified.' The total number of languages recognized is 121 each with more than 10,000 speakers. About 96 percent of the population speaks the 22 scheduled languages. Cf. Office of the Registrar General, India, Census of India, 2011, p. 4.

of linguistic devices aids symbolization and it represents to another human being or to another group the information about the person's experience or encounter. Symbolization can draw the other into a similar experience or enable one to further articulate or refine the expressions, and help codify the experience into a commonly acceptable idiom. This trend is often observed in the narration of mythical stories. "Myth itself is a ritual act that is uttered, an oral event taking place within the milieu of a living society" (Dhavamony, 1973, p. 178). Myth may later give rise to rituals or in many cases an existing ritual may also be accounted for by the creation of a myth (p. 176).

Apart from linguistic symbolizations, symbolizations do occur in worship and ritual, art, architecture, dress codes, food habits, personal behaviour, personal activities, community activities, societal stratifications and interactions, political perceptions, astrology, powers of nature, superstitious behaviour, and magic. For example, in the area of worship there is "the cultic re-presentation of religious experience" which is "central to the life of the religious group" (Dhavamony, 1973, p. 158). These symbolizations may be identified separately but they need to be understood and interpreted as belonging to a single whole.

### **The Hermeneutics of Symbolization**

A proper hermeneutics of the process of symbolization is essential to progress in the understanding of cultures and religions. This can also facilitate dialogue and interactions among cultures and religions. Yet, it will only be wise on the part of the hermeneut to be wary of applying principles of one's own tradition, whether cultural or religious, to that of another. For any hermeneut it will never remain a futile exercise to understand the process of symbolization in a culture or a religion. We try to enrich ourselves by understanding the past by basing in our present a degree of awareness (see Panikkar, 1979, p. 9). Similarly, when a Christian involves oneself in such an effort, that person draws from the riches of the symbolizing past of one's own traditions as well as that of another. While strengthening oneself in the symbolizing tradition, the person's effort will bring about openness towards another tradition, deepen the meaning of one's own belief system, and increase the possibility of the ways of sharing the religious experience.

When we state that human life is meaningful, we mean we are in a continuous process of making meaning of our lives, interpreting our

existence, and our actions. Panikkar speaks of interpretation, which is “inbuilt in Man’s very nature” (1979, p.10). A Christian religious experience prompts the Christian believer to interpret one’s life and that of others in the light of one’s own experience of revelation. The experience of revelation takes place amidst human experience of fallenness, suffering, and pain; in short, amid human problems and in the search for causalities and meanings. But explaining human problems cannot be monopolized by any religion or philosophy (Panikkar, 1979). Every religion thus develops its own myths to understand the realities of human existence.

Christianity has its own symbols and their interpretations. Certain meaning is made in a Christian context or, in other words, amidst a Christian culture. As Tillich states, “Christian symbols are not absurdities, unacceptable for the questioning mind of our period, but that they point to that which alone is of ultimate concern, the ground and meaning of our existence and of existence generally” (1964, p. 50).

Then symbolizations must necessarily be identified and interpretations must be carried out *in loco*. A symbol removed from its original time and place demotes itself into a mere sign. When a Christian or for that matter anyone who is a believer in one particular faith tradition attempts to interpret the symbolization of another, that person will end up dislodging the meaning embedded in the original symbolization. This is because symbolization does not belong to the experience of that person who interprets and is factually far removed from that person’s actual context.

Does it then mean that interpreting or understanding symbolization of another is an impossibility? It need not be so. For example, language is a possibility of expression but with limitedness. When a language does express something, it simultaneously fails to express other things. Yet we do not refrain from employing language. The door that closes is also the possibility of openness: symbolization, though limiting, becomes a mode of making present the truths of belief to a non-believer or to a potential believer.

Symbolization is substantive because, it firmly bases itself in a reality considered important to a community. Therefore, when interpreting the symbolization of a community it should be remembered that, symbolization occurs not merely within a human person but in a community and in its existential context. Consequently, interpretation of symbolization of another

becomes an immersion into that symbolizing community thus implying give-and-take, mutual understanding, appreciation, acceptance, and esteem for what another holds to be valuable and true.

Revelation and religious experience can be said to belong to every human being and every human group on this planet, but in varied ways. And every revelation and religious experience results in the symbolization of that experience and from it are articulated symbols, myths, rites, and legends.

### **Christian Hermeneutics**

A Christian who actively encounters persons of other faiths and their belief systems employs hermeneutics. The process entails not merely an interpretation of another's belief system and symbolization but simultaneously an interpretation of one's own faith and revelation too. This is a kind of intrapersonal dialogue which can be presumed to precede an interreligious dialogue.

In the Indian context, history does not witness to Christians employing hermeneutics actively in a multi-religious context until colonization began. We can only conjecture infrequent and accidental theological or interreligious encounters to have occurred before the Europeans came. Christianity itself seems to have merely 'existed' in South India from the time of its entry two thousand years ago. But in contrast, today we find numerous active hermeneutic engagements culminating in interreligious dialogue.

In the recent times, Christianity has been looked upon as a religion foreign to India even though it shares geographical proximity with its origins. This could be so because, while the nascent Christianity contained Asian perspectives and Semitic culture and thought, it had its reincarnation and re-inculturation in the western world. After flourishing in the West with its western garb, Christianity had a 'pseudo-second coming' to India during the European conquests. But this pseudo-second coming blatantly contrasted with its earlier coming. It lacked the commingling of faith tradition with native culture the way it had occurred two thousand years ago. The western Christianity now nourished judgemental attitudes of condemnation for the natives with their religion and culture. It exhibited cultural imperialism. Of course, the primary aim of those who came to India was trade, and not dialogue or ecumenism, and certainly not a sincere hermeneutics of native symbolization of Indian cultures and religions.

But there were exceptions. Among those who came from the West were indeed some who desired to share their experience of the transcendence and the divinity which they had experienced in Jesus Christ. They were not determined by their cultural ascendancy or feelings of superiority. After their arrival they began to engage themselves in a process of re-symbolization. This meant re-interpretation of their religious experience in the light of the new context of the other religious groups and of re-visualizing existing symbols. Thus, they attempted to adapt existing symbolisms and tried to re-articulate them with newer meanings.

Some remarkable personages who engaged themselves in these new efforts were some Jesuits such as Thomas Stevens (1549-1619), Roberto de Nobili (1579-1656), Jean Venance Bouchet (1655-1732), Constantine Beschi (1680-1747), Jean Calmette (1692-1740), and G. L. Coeurdoux (1691-1777) (Clooney, 2010). Clooney portrays their effort and writes, “[They] all studied Hinduism in relative depth and wrote articulately about it, increasingly with an eye toward similarities and differences from Christianity” (pp. 27-28). They attempted to adopt the native symbolizations of the existing religions. The motive in brief was to present the Gospel to the natives in the natives’ own symbolic language. This involved re-symbolization or re-interpretation of existing symbolisms to suit the Gospel presentation. It was not only a critiquing or an apologetic process but was for them a learning process as well.

### **Hindu Symbolization by Indian Christians**

In the early centuries, the manner in which Christian faith met the natives in India to a great extent determined how the message was received. The earliest reception of the Christian faith was from St. Thomas, an apostle of Jesus Christ. There are no recorded historical accounts of how it was preached except for some oral traditions which point to the existence of some Christian communities on the Malabar Coast and on its east. Some folk songs like *Ramban Pattu*, *Veeradiyan Pattu*, and *Margam Kalippattu*, which narrated the evangelical activities of St. Thomas, witness to the presence of Christian communities that had preserved their faith.

The western missionaries on their arrival found such Christian communities already present in India. They found them to be different from them and even heretical. St. Francis Xavier, for example, found the native Christian

communities poorly instructed in their faith. But they were glad to accept his instructions (Coleridge, 1881). Urged on by the missionary, they began a process of re-symbolization of their faith. They accepted the latinized trend of prayers, worship, and liturgy (though in their native tongues), while also distancing themselves from local deities. There then occurred an East-West marriage of symbolization and it was syncretic.

The Jesuit missionaries from the West had tried to promote indigenization until their society was suppressed. Meanwhile the native Catholics had not continued the trend of inculturation or symbolization according to their contextual milieu. Kenneth Ingham observes that “conversions to Christianity were proportionately few, but the influence of missionaries upon social conditions was outstanding” (1956, p. 1).

It was only the converts to the Christian faith in the last two centuries—neither those of the traditional St. Thomas Christians nor the catholic neophytes—who plunged themselves into symbolization of their new faith in the light of philosophies and cosmogonies of Indian origin. These later converts did not reject or ignore their continued existence in a milieu of varied Hindu philosophies and faith.

Sara Grant speaks of the spirituality of a person engaged in the *diakonia* of total immersion in the Hindu milieu. That person’s spirituality

will consist in the reactions in his consciousness and in his whole way of living to his experience of the confluence in his own person of the mystery of Christ with the mystery enshrined in the Hindu cultural and spiritual tradition in and through which he seeks to live his Gospel commitment. (Grant, 1987, p. 70)

It was this sort of commitment – arising out of the confluence of the mystery of Christ in their persons with the mystery enshrined in the cultural and spiritual traditions of India – that made the native evangelical Christian converts embark on reformation. They themselves were stirred up by the western evangelical and baptist missionaries such as William Carey and Alexander Duff (Ingham, 1956).

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907), baptized as an Anglican who later became a Catholic, understood that for Christianity to take roots in India it needed to be indigenized using Hindu categories. He believed and counted

on Śankara's *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy to re-symbolize and indigenize the Christian faith. As Clooney observes, “even after baptism that his Christian identity was still that of an Indian devoted to his own culture and zealous for the freedom and renewal of his country” (1999, pp. 41-42). He thus called himself a Hindu-Christian. His re-symbolization included holistic freedom, not merely his own inner freedom but that of his people too. His biographer Animananda describes him as the “first man in our political history to suggest complete independence for India” (Sebastian, 2008, p. 51). Another Indian Christian who with his Christian ideals similarly devoted himself to the nationalist independent movement was Vengal Chakkarai.<sup>5</sup>

There were also other ventures undertaken by Indian Christians in making alive the Hindu philosophies and symbolisms to ‘reincarnate’ the Christian message. For example, along with Henry H. Presler, R. C. Das initiated the movement to form the Christian Society for the Study of Hinduism. The Indian Christian theologian Aiyadurai Jesudasen Appasamy was part of this society. But as Hivner says, “[Aiyadurai] did not promote Christ as the fulfilment of all aspects of Hinduism” (2010, p. 206).

### **Christian Symbolization by Indian Hindus**

In contrast to the above section we shall examine briefly the attitudes and approaches of some prominent Hindu reformers who came into contact with Christianity: the way the religion of Christianity appeared or appealed to them.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, known as the founder of the Universal Religion, was a multifaceted personality. His activities in social, political, and religious fields manifest his all-embracing understanding of reality and its interpretation (Rushbrook, 1999). He was a reformer par excellence especially in the field of religion. He abhorred idolatry, superstition, and nameless ritualism and believed that Vedanta could abolish all these. He desired to revive “the unidolatrous Hindu monotheism of old” (Rushbrook, 1999, p. 496). His re-symbolization of religious truths did not stop with Hinduism. He discovered that the beauty of the truth he was seeking was present also in Christianity, in that he even tried translating the four Gospels. But re-symbolization and his vocalizing the Gospels resulted in controversies with Christian missionaries.

<sup>5</sup> An elaborate listing and study on Indian Christian theologians can be found in the book *Christian Theologies from an Indian Perspective* by Sunand Sumithra (2002).

This was because, he attempted to strip Christian belief system of its dogmas and miracles and he compiled the essential teachings of Jesus as, 'The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness.' Besides, his endeavour also smacked of unitarianism.

Ram Mohan Roy's ideal of worship of the One-without-a-second resulted in the formation of Brahma Samaj movement (Rushbrook, 1999). *The Hindus' Encyclopaedia of Hinduism* speaks of Brahma Samaj as a movement which was "largely inspired by Christianity" (Farquhar, 2000, p. 386). But in this movement too we can witness a transformation, a transformation that was symbolized in the Samaj. Ram Mohan Roy's immediate follower Debendra Nath Tagore believed that "India had no need of Christ" (p. 387). However later, Keshab Chandra Sen inspired Debendra and the Samaj movement, "to follow the example of Christian Philanthropy [*sic*] and gathered money and food for the famine stricken" (p. 389).

### **Christian Symbolization and Transformation**

If God reveals, and if only God can reveal the Supreme Truth, it means all that a human being can do is hermeneutics of that revelation in space and time. Hermeneutics requires symbolization. But symbolizations are not uniform because perceptions differ, understandings differ, and basically human beings differ and their groupings differ, and the resultant cultures differ.

If the Jesus of history is the Christ of faith for the believers, then the Christ of faith has transcended the Jesus of history and culture. Jesus of history contained within him a reality and represented that reality. He was and is a "real symbol" (Olson, 2009, p. 278) for a believer. When he is the symbolization of the Transcendent Redeeming Reality he becomes available for believers of all times and places as the Christ of faith.

What is revealed to a person or to a group is that which becomes immanent. Thus, that which is Transcendent, reveals; but, that which is revealed as immanent is that which is transformed and that which transforms. This is true in a Christian context because immanent transcendence is not an idle idol, but that which actively transforms.

Transformation implies acquiring a new way of existence both in form and nature. Thus, whenever and wherever the Truth of Jesus Christ was revealed

and accepted, we witness transformation taking place. Transformation is painful, because it requires change in structure, form, and nature.

Proto-symbolization occurs in the salvation history of the Christians when Jesus empties himself (Philippians 2:7) to become the ‘Word-made-flesh’ (John 1:14). Emptying is transformation, and as we have said, it is a painful process and for Jesus it was taking the human form. The ‘Word,’ the Symbol of the Father, was the message to the human race. Jesus says, “He who sees me sees him who sent me” (John 12:45, *Revised Standard Version*).

Symbolization of the message of God in the person of Jesus occurs within a human culture and history. What Luke narrates in his gospel about the birth of Jesus can be taken as an allegory. The new-born baby Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes (Luke 2:7). Swaddling clothes do not inspire aesthetics. The baby just needs to be wrapped. A culture usually does not design a specific style of clothing for a new-born baby, much less concentrate on the aesthetics. Rather the focus is on the recreation of the protective conditions of the womb. Thus, we can say the cultural Hebraic garb of Jesus is a later addition to the message and is of secondary importance. Similarly, the stripping of the historical Jesus at his crucifixion is symbolic. That too was a painful process, but he had to be stripped, and be emptied of that cultural garb. He was beaten so much that he had “no stately form nor splendour” (Isaiah 53:2). His own body had to be stripped of that human life to put on that divine life. Finally we find that at the resurrection Jesus is transformed and becomes transforming.

Christian symbolization can be said to possess a special pattern: a regular recognizable pattern according to which the Christian faith is accepted. The Christian faith, while it is being accepted, expects a self-emptying *not on the part of the recipient or culture that receives it, but on the part of the person or culture that communicates*. The recipient maintains the pattern of re-incarnated symbolization. In this sense, the process of symbolization and the symbolic patterns and actions belong wholly to the recipient. If there be some acceptance or accommodation of certain symbolisms of the communicator, they have to be understood as having been accommodated only inasmuch as the recipient has symbolized it for oneself.<sup>6</sup> This is a pattern which can be

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<sup>6</sup> In this sense, in the symbolized liturgical adaptations of Christians, we cannot speak of a ‘latinized’ liturgy or a ‘hinduized’ liturgy. There can only be a ‘re-incarnated’ and ‘re-symbolized’ liturgy appropriated and wholly owned by the recipient.

understood to have taken place through the centuries in different places. Any other pattern would have resulted in poor acceptance or rejection, or if it was forced upon, it would have resulted in cultural aggression.

However, for the recipient, the primary encounter of the message, the re-symbolization and acceptance are parts of a painful process of transformation. This is because the core value system and working principles of belief and practice may be questioned and transformation expected.

### **Christian Symbolization as a Challenge to the Indian Cultural Milieu**

Besides the glories of the past, the goodness of the present, and the beauty of variety, certain negative characteristics mark and mar Indian cultures. In the words of Somen Das,

India continues to be a tradition-bound and caste-ridden culture. We remain prisoners of the past and victims of socialization and internalisation of our religio-cultural norms, customs, and inhibitions. It is a divisive culture based on caste, community and religion. The Indian culture continues to be characterised by elitism, hierarchy and submission. (1987, p. 9)

Besides these, as Das observes, obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition, and fatalism are yet to be gotten rid of. These negative characteristics are exhibited in one way or another by many of the cultures in the subcontinent. But the current situation is only a product of the past. Thus, we need to keep in mind the historical factors too.

In the Indian context when the native religions encountered the Christian faith, the native faiths were challenged. It was not just because the new faith was a competitor foraying into the stable, secure, and structured communities, but the new faith can be said to have prompted the discomfort of introspection. Transformation was not to be from the outside but became a felt necessity from the inside. This is what we witness to in our Indian history and the comparative confrontations and conflict of interests which had taken place when Christianity met other religions.

Encountering a reality or truth is not a jugglery of the concepts in the mind, rather a tangible symbolization which inspires re-symbolization and a change of course of life. The Indian cultural milieu, where such symbolizations and re-symbolizations took place or continue to take place, varies according

to the religious, geographical, political, social, and economic contexts. We can delineate various areas of encounters and their types according to the influences and the changes that the new Christian belief system brought about and classify them accordingly. But these divisions are not strictly separate from one another; they often overlap.

Further, the Indian cultural milieu with its inseparable religious systems of belief can also be broadly classified into religions with highly pronounced philosophical foundations and those with less pronounced philosophical foundations. The former are exemplified by the so-called high religions grouped under the banner of Hinduism, including Jainism and Buddhism. The dynamics of encounter between these religions and Christianity is different from that of encounter with the lesser known native and tribal religions.

Keeping in mind the above dynamics of encounter and the openness of each religious culture towards Christianity, we can understand the way Christian symbolization influenced the cultures of the Indian subcontinent as well as the degree of such influence. Broadly, we can see the influence to have taken place in the areas of religious belief systems, political thought and social systems, and in the attitudes of people.

### ***Influence in the Religious Belief Systems***

Cultures and belief systems of a group influence those of another in a process of give and take. Primarily Christianity's symbolization itself was marked by native cultural and religious influences. We can only conjecture that having been confined to South India in the early centuries, the native tongues determined the linguistic symbolization of the Christian faith. This must also have been the trend for the liturgical practices and the way of life which were not different from those of other faiths. After the fourth century, liturgical symbolizations reflected Chaldean influence whereas social symbolizations like that of marriage covenants remained native (Pulikkan, 2010). As Pulikkan observes, "we do not have many evidences of the early liturgical period .... Especially after the Synod of Diamper in 1599, a number of ancient liturgical books and manuscripts were burned, after being alleged of heresy" (2010, p. 69). Though in the colonial period western cultural affiliations to symbolization was expected, the catholic church represented by the *Propaganda Fide* seems to have been more open to inculturizing attitudes. For example, a 1659 directive of Propaganda Fide reads thus: "Do not in any

case attempt to persuade those peoples to change their rites, customs and ways, provided they are not very manifestly contrary to religion and morals” (as quoted in Pulikkan, 2010, p. 70).

But in this essay we shall not further deal with how the other belief systems of the Indian subcontinent influenced the Christian faith in its symbolization of faith, though we may need to consider the mutual influence. Rather, our task here is to understand how the other religious belief systems were affected when they encountered Christianity and how the course of their symbolization was redefined. The influences of Christianity in the early centuries on native religions are difficult to state for want of evidences; but that of recorded history we are able to analyse.

If Christianity before the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 CE could be treated as a native religion, then we first need to understand the influence of the western Christianity on its religious bearings on this native Christianity. Syrian Christianity and Nestorianism existed side by side before the Portuguese came. From the fourth century onwards there were visitors and settlers from West Asia and Persia (Augustine, 1999). The declining faith of the native Christians was strengthened by Thomas of Cana, and by the bishops who were brought from Syria to shepherd them.

From the time of the missionaries who came from the West to India, the native religions including that of native Christianity began to be influenced in their respective belief systems. Nestorianism was subdued to a great extent or done away with completely by the new conquerors. The European clergy were, as Augustine observes, “bent on reducing the local Christians to subjection on the plea of uniformity in church discipline and worship” (1999, p. 82). The latinization process received its official approval in the Synod of Diamper in 1599 (Augustine, 1999).

The motivation of early western missionaries was more of proselytising than a true proclamation of the Gospel. This need not necessarily mean that the missionaries themselves lacked in their genuineness though it could be said that their political and cultural affiliations affected their projects. Several of them such as De Nobili and Beschi attempted inculturation and dialogue. Their efforts did bring about changes to the religious attitudes of the Brahmins and other Hindus. Though the missionaries were considered *parangis* belonging to a meat-eating low caste, later the validity of Christian

perspectives began to bring into the natives openness to a ‘foreign’ faith. For the Hindus, Christianity became another ‘dialogue-able’ faith.

Later, when the freedom movement was taking shape in India, the frequent contacts with Christianity and its adherents changed the perception of the natives about Christianity. Christian tenets appealed to the natives of the Indian subcontinent in varying degrees. It varied from voluntarily embracing the Christian faith expressing it in their own cultural terms, through just accepting the value system and hybridizing it into a new belief system and causing syncretism, to initiating reform movements prompted by the religious values of Christianity. Among the tribal religions many of them seemed to have taken the view of the ‘fulfilment’ theory and by an analogical understanding accepted the Christian experience of faith without much complicated philosophical discussions. The missionary movements in the Northeast India bear witness to such wide acceptance of the Christian faith.

In the Indian subcontinent, which was not yet a single nation called India until 1947, various movements with religious fervour of different sorts evolved when the native intellectuals encountered the Christian faith. The symbolization process was new and unique. D’ Silva speaks of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya who desired a Christian interpretation of Hindu texts. D’ Silva remarks that “for Upadhyaya[*sic*], Christ revealed himself through Hindu religion and culture” (1985, p. 190). The Hindu identity was not to be replaced and the physical and mental constitution was to remain the same. The symbolization of their *weltanschauung* was that of a Hindu-Catholic. Similarly Sadhu Sunder Singh, A. J. Appasamy, Vengal Chakkarai, and Pandipeddi Chenchiah were Christocentric and adopted a theology of *bhakti-mārga* (D’ Silva, 1985).

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was influenced by what Christianity symbolized to him. He became the founder of the Universal Religion and desired to incorporate the religious truth embedded in Christianity. He thus wanted a Hinduism which was un-idolatrous and which at the same time was monotheistic (Williams, 1999). Similarly, religious missionary movements such as the Ramakrishna Mission were inspired by Christian symbolization and its missionary call to go and proclaim.

There were also several Hindu painters who were influenced by the themes symbolized by the Christian faith and revelation. Nandalal Bose of

Santiniketan, Jamini Roy, A. M. Davierwalla, K. C. S. Panikar, S. Paramasivam, Satish Gujral, Arup Das, A. N. Narayanan, and several others re-symbolized literally on their painting canvas the Christian religious sentiments that influenced them (D' Silva, 1985).

Today the Christian faith symbolizes not merely a system of worship but healing as well. Spiritual healing sessions in charismatic retreats are also attended by non-believers. Many non-Christians make pilgrimages to the shrines of Blessed Mary at Velankanni and Bandel, to the shrines of St. Antony, and experience physical healing besides receiving other consolations. Thus, pilgrim centres and Christian churches of worship for many believers of other faiths symbolize peace and well-being.

The Ashram movements symbolize for the native believers the possibility of accepting and living the Christian faith without much foreignness, as a faith that can be appropriated and re-symbolized and to be lived as a way of seeking both individual and community salvation. Sara Grant documents the Ashram tradition and the recent adaptation of this tradition by Christians (1987).

### ***Influences in the Political Thought and Social Systems***

Demographically, Christians form a tiny percentage of the total population in the Indian subcontinent. This has been the fact even when the western powers ruled India. But the influence Christianity exerted in the political arena and in reshaping the social systems is remarkable. However, the recognition of the contribution of the Christian community is sometimes blocked or deliberately played down by narrow-minded nationalism, which wants to maintain an unjust political and social structure.

The Christian community's influence on the rest of the cultures and communities in the subcontinent arises not only from its faith experience and life, but in the force of the Christian ethic (D' Silva, 1985): "It was the Christian ethical spirit, encouraged undoubtedly by support from the enlightened section of the non-Christian world, that placed on the statute book of India measures of social reform of far-reaching import" (p. 49).

It was this ethical spirit that helped suppress the custom of *sati*—an act in which a widow would immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

Such ethical spirit similarly helped reform the Indian penal code, abolish legal slavery, and helped permit widow-remarriage and several other social evils (D' Silva, 1985).

Thus, Christianity itself became the symbolization of reform, and a causal agent for the birth of several emancipating social movements. The initiatives and the works of the Christian missionaries made Christianity a symbol and hope of the downtrodden, the marginalized, and the enslaved. The prevalent stratified and oppressive caste system was challenged. Equality and brotherhood symbolized by Christianity went beyond seeking salvation only for oneself.

Other trends such as service to one's fellow beings are reflected in the Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swami Vivekananda (D' Silva, 1985). Christian mission work today has been in a way imitated widely, and there is so much of good done through similar trusts and charities belonging to other religions.

The Christian 'convent education' symbolism underscores the need for character formation even while promoting formal education. Such formation of character embedded with Christian values of love, forgiveness, and honesty has far-reaching consequences and has determined the shaping of India's civil order and social fabric.

Christian organizations symbolize good leadership and structured order. They exemplify reliability and sustainability. The Indian legal system, patterned on the western and British laws, which themselves were in turn influenced by the Christian culture, has emulated Christian principles and values.

### **Conclusion**

Christian symbolization belongs to the communities believing in Christ. It is an important part of the faith-experience of the community. It is a transforming process both within and without. Christian symbolization continues to explicate good will, practical wisdom, and virtue in a culture into which the Christian faith is born. Anyone with an open heart will be able to appreciate Christianity because one understands that Christianity as a religion had promoted and continues to promote the positive ethos of a society and sets the tenor for the progress of a society and the transformation of culture.

Christian symbolization has had its influence on the cultures of India in varying degrees at different periods of its history. It has reshaped and transformed them. Christian symbolization in the Indian subcontinent had not only affected and changed the Church's internal way of life but also had influenced and changed like leaven the whole dough of many Indian cultures and religions.

Further, Christian symbolization has brought about deep changes in perceptions of life and penetrated into the capillaries of the Indian social and political eco-system, rejuvenating and bringing meaning to age-old rich traditions. This process continues even today due to the active participation of committed Christians in the Indian polity.

Therefore, rather than merely remaining as an inert religion in the Indian subcontinent, Christianity today has become a symbol of equality, peace, emancipation, and transformation. It has influenced to a great extent the fabric of other belief systems and cultures. Though Christianity has remained a minority religion through the centuries, it has spoken out its values and priorities loud and clear. It has presented its own faith tradition as an opportunity for change within a context of the plurality of cultures and religions. Thus, in its journey through history, Indian Christianity can be said to have been a great agent of transformation. This is because Christian symbolization has pervaded and continues to pervade the Indian ethos and cultures.

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## URBANIZATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Vicky Saroh<sup>1</sup> & R. P. Sharma<sup>2</sup>

Urbanization is regarded as one of the most important indicators of economic development and social transformation of any given region. It generally refers to a process by which a section of people adopts urban life. The process of urbanization is said to begin with the movement of people from agricultural communities to large non-agricultural industrial communities. The percentage of urban population to the total population is considered an index of the degree of urbanization. Economic, social, and demographic factors significantly affect the degree of urbanization. In India, the urbanization process started during the first half of the 20th century. Urbanization arrived late in case of the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh. The index of urbanization was only 3.69 percent in 1971, and it gradually rose to 22.94 percent in 2011. Presently, there are 27 towns in the State. The highest urban population is in Itanagar, i.e., 59,490 whereas Hawaii records the lowest—982. The present paper is an attempt to document the challenges or factors affecting the growth of urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh as well as its prospects. The causes of low index of urbanization in the State are also examined and some recommendations to ensure optimal development are made. The study is conceptual in nature, substantiated by available official records and personal observation of the area concerned.

*Keywords:* Arunachal Pradesh, urbanization, economic activities, agriculture, population

Urbanization is a process of population transformation from rural areas to urban areas (Singh, 2017). It refers to a process by which a section of people adopts urban life. Others have the opinion that the process of urbanization

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is involved with the movement of people from agricultural communities to other large non-agricultural industrial communities. In fact, urbanization is regarded as one of the most important indicators of economic development and social transformation of any given region. According to Trewartha, urbanization is a cyclical process through which the nations pass as they evolve from agrarian to industrial societies (as cited in Qazi & Qazi, 2010). The percentage of urban population to the total population is considered an index of the degree of urbanization. Economic, social and demographic factors very much affect the degree of urbanization.

In India, the urbanization process started during the first half of the 20th century and, marked by increased urban based economic activities, concentrated around cities. However, it arrived late in case of Arunachal Pradesh. Being one of the frontier states of northeast region of India, Arunachal Pradesh is yet to establish a remarkable benchmark in the context of urbanization despite consistent efforts from the state government since attainment of statehood status. Due to its rugged topography and dense forest, this region remained isolated for a long period from the other parts of India (Sharma, 2008). Sharma further mentions that it is only after independence of India, more specifically after attainment of statehood in 1987, the state of Arunachal Pradesh entered the path of development. As per the available records, the degree of urbanization was only 3.69 percent in the year 1971, which gradually rose to 22.94 percent in 2011. Presently, there are 27 towns in the State. Itanagar (the state capital) has the maximum urban population—59,490. The town of Hawai has the lowest—only 982.

The present paper is an analysis of the existing challenges and future prospects of urbanization in the hilly state of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Brief Review of Literature**

Urbanization is a process by which people, instead of living in predominantly dispersed agricultural villages, start living in towns and cities dominated by industries and service sector (Pautunthang, 2018). Pautunthang has extensively studied the level of urbanization and growth and concentration of urban population in North East India. Rajkhowa (2016), studying the trends in urbanization in the North East India and its economic implications in the region, concludes that there were acute challenges of employment, land, and basic amenities in the towns and cities. An in-depth picture on

trends of urbanization in the state of Arunachal Pradesh has been investigated by Sharma (2008), chronicling the salient features and consequences of urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh as well as providing recommendations to solve problems related to urbanization and to improve the urban situation in Arunachal Pradesh.

Singh (2017) has analyzed the concept of urbanization and highlighted the process and trends of urbanization in the whole of India. Shaw (2017) discusses pertinent issues related to the urbanization transition in India, focusing on the idea of humane urbanism in the context of Indian cities and discussing the possibilities and the limitations of achieving humane urbanism under the existing political and economic framework.

### **Significance of the Study**

Urbanization has been one of the major challenging issues in the hilly state of Arunachal Pradesh since its inception. The successive government mechanisms have undertaken many projects to help towards urbanization. The present study was undertaken to further understand the various factors having significant impact on urbanization of the State. It may assist policy makers and strategists to explore the reasons for the low degree of urbanization in the State and to respond to the challenges.

### **Major Objectives**

The major objectives of the study are the following:

- a) To identify the factors affecting the growth of urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh
- b) To find out the reasons for low index of urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh
- c) To identify the various challenges of urban centers.

### **Method**

The present study is theoretical in nature. Both primary and secondary data have been used, supported by the first-hand knowledge of the researchers in the area concerned. The opinions and suggestions put forward by the officials of the governmental agencies through personal discussions comprise the

primary data. Information extracted from office records, bulletins, articles, journals, and books form the secondary data. The data so obtained have been analyzed and conclusions were arrived at within the framework of the stated objectives.

### **Urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh – An Overview**

Urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh is almost a new concept in comparison to other northeastern states of India, for Arunachal had been severely reeling under numerous socio-economic deficiencies. The reasons for such deficiencies are plenty including social, economic, political, technological, and topographical. Demographic factor is yet another pivotal element negatively influencing the pace of urbanization process in the State.

It is noteworthy to mention that the method of classification of urban centers is done on the basis of the criteria adopted during census operation. The criteria for urban centers during 2001 census were:

1. All the places which have municipality corporation, cantonment board, or notified town area committee (known as statutory town), and
2. All the other places which satisfy the following criteria (known as census town):
  - a. The place having a minimum population of 5,000.
  - b. Seventy five percent of the male working population engaged in the activities other than agriculture.
  - c. Population density of at least 400 persons per sq.km.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the classifications of urban centers, especially the census towns, are basically carried out as per the norm of the minimum population size. At present, there are 27 urban centers in the hilly state (Statistical Abstract, 2014). The highest urban population is recorded in Itanagar—59,490. Hawaii, the present headquarters of Anjaw district, has recorded the lowest urban population—982. The Itanagar municipality is the first urban civic body of Arunachal Pradesh which came into force in 2013. Another civic body was introduced at Pasighat, the district headquarters of East Siang district, in the same year. Moreover, both the municipal towns have been recently included in the Smart City project under ‘Smart City

Mission' launched by the Government of India. This is a great achievement for the tribal state in the field of urbanization. The following table provides the details of the towns of Arunachal Pradesh and their respective categories as per the 2011 population census

**Table 1**

*Showing number of towns in Arunachal Pradesh and their population size as per 2011 population census*

Sl. No.	Population Size of the Town	No. of Towns	Categories of Towns	Name of Towns
1	1,00,000 and Above	-	Class I	Nil
2	50,000 to 99,999	01	Class II	Itanagar
3	20,000 to 49,999	03	Class III	Aalo, Naharlagun, Pasighat
4	10,000 to 19,999	07	Class IV	Daporijo, Namsai, Roing, Seppa, Tawang, Tezu, Ziro
5	5,000 to 9,999	07	Class V	Bomdila, Changlang, Deomali, Jairampur, Khonsa, Miao, Yingkiong
6	Less than 5,000	09	Class VI	Anini, Basar, Boleng, Dirang, Hawaii, Koloriang, Longding, Rupa, Sagalee

*Source: Population Census 2011*

It can be observed from the above table that the State does not yet have Class I town where population size must be 100,000 and above. Moreover, it has got only one town under Class II category having population between 50,000-99,999. It can further be observed that there are three towns under Class III category, and seven towns each under Class IV and V categories. The maximum number of towns falls under Class VI category having a total population of less than 5,000. Hence, it is evident that the population factor plays a very important role in the making of urbanization.

Moreover, the decadal growth rate and the degree of urban population of the state are also not very satisfactory. As per the available records, the degree of urbanization was only 3.69 percent in the year 1971 which gradually rose to 22.94 percent in 2011. Table 2 provides the details of the population growth rate in Arunachal Pradesh:

**Table 2**

*Showing urban population, decadal growth rate, degree of urbanization and number of towns in Arunachal Pradesh for the last five decades*

Census Year	Urban Population	Decadal Growth (in %)	Degree of Urbanization (in %)	Number of Towns
1971	17,288	-	3.69	NA
1981	41,428	139.63	6.55	NA
1991	1,10,628	167.03	12.79	10
2001	2,27,881	105.98	20.75	21
2011	3,17,369	39.26	22.94	27

*Source: Population Census of various years*

Table 2 reveals the trend of degree of urbanization and the decadal growth rate of urban population in Arunachal Pradesh for the past five decades, i.e., from 1971 to 2011. It can be observed that decadal growth rates have been quite high (above 100 percent) for three consecutive decades from 1981 to 2001, the highest being 167.03 percent during the census year 1991. However, there has been a steep decline of decadal growth rate in the census year 2011. This extreme dip in the growth rate is significant and hence, must be researched into, but is not within the scope of this paper.

However, the trend of degree of urbanization is found to be positively increasing in every passing census year. The most commonly used method of measuring the degree of urbanization is the percentage distribution. The percentage of urban population to the total population is considered an index of the degree of urbanization. Table 2 shows the increasing degree of urban population, i.e., from 3.69 percent during 1971 to 22.94 percent in 2011 which can be considered a positive incidence though not very impressive as the national figure of the same is 31.16 percent as per 2011 census.

The reasons for having low degree of urban population can be attributed to many factors. However, no written official records with regards to the causes of low degree of urban population were found during the course of the present study. Since no research documentation exists to analyze the causal or contributing factors, we have held interviews and discussions with the officials and people concerned to arrive at the possible factors contributing to such low rate of urbanization. They are discussed below.

### **Causes of Low Degree of Urban Population**

#### **Low Decadal Growth Rate in Urban Population**

The family welfare planning is extensively executed in the state and the tribal societies, especially the learned sections of the people, too have enthusiastically adopted the project. Those already residing in the urban centers knew the economic burden of having excess members in a family. This has reduced the decadal birth rate in the urban centers thereby affecting the natural growth of urban population of the State. Table 1 has clearly revealed the fact of decreasing decadal growth rate of urban population.

#### **Lack of Employment Avenues**

One of the reasons for migration from rural areas to urban towns is the search for employment. Degree of urbanization is significantly affected by the availability of job opportunities. Unfortunately, the State is facing acute job crisis since there is negligible number of private players in its economy. On the other hand, urban job creation is generally more difficult and costlier (Rajkhowa, 2016). As of now, the government sector is solely absorbing the highest percentage of job seekers, the rate of which is declining periodically due to low job creation. This drawback has its negative effect on the degree of urbanization of the State.

#### **Industrial Backwardness**

The near-total absence of industrial units in the State is yet another reason causing low degree of urbanization. The contribution of the manufacturing sector to the economy is negligible and this proves the scant existence of industrial activities in Arunachal Pradesh (Chakrabarti, 2009). Chakrabarti further notes that economy, outside agricultural sector, is virtually run by the government alone and this may be considered a major deterrent towards

achieving a self-sustaining economy. Had there been a few units of industry or factory of any genre, the rural youth would have migrated commensurately into the urban centers in search of job. The potentials remain unexploited thereby directly having a bearing on the degree of urbanization in the State.

### **Slow Pace of Infrastructural Development**

The current pace of infrastructural development of the State is extremely slow. Many institutes (education, health, sport, etc.), commercial centers, and other structures are yet to have optimal infrastructure, which would open up employment as well as residential possibilities for people seeking to move to urban areas. Such delay in construction inhibits the inflow of people from rural areas, negatively affecting the degree of urbanization.

### **Agro-based Occupational Activity of the Rural Masses**

The primary occupation of the indigenous people of the State is agriculture. As per the 2011 census, 77.06 percent of populations live in villages, solely relying upon agriculture for their very sustenance. According to Chakrabarti (2009), the contribution of the primary sector has fallen but the people relying on it have not fallen neither in percentage nor in absolute terms. On the other hand, there are no effective mechanisms (pull factors) in the hands of the state government to shift the occupational interest of the rural masses from agriculture to non-agriculture sectors. In such backdrop, it would be difficult from the part of the state government to alter the mindset of the rural population who consider agriculture as essential. Consequently, it lessens the scope of migration of rural population to the urban centers.

### **Prospects of Urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh**

Since urbanization results from the process of centralization of preference in a particular place, it will enable people to get access to all the preferences which include better communication, transportation, medication, education, and other facilities (Boro, 2014). According to Sharma (2009), “urbanization is one of the key factors responsible for improving demographic characteristics, art, culture and human values of the society” (pp.216-217). Sharma further mentions that the level of urbanization is closely linked with the level of development, for towns and cities have always acted as the center of innovations, and scientific, technical, and industrial development.

The State can realize effective process of urbanization by adopting various means to exploit the available resources since the State is endowed with varied natural resources, rich flora and fauna, and picturesque landscape which has a capability to completely change the picture of the State if utilized judiciously. In this context, there lies the scope of establishing varied industrial units in different locations subject to availability and accessibility of raw materials. For example, an agro-based industry at a place where agricultural production is very large, a mineral-based industry where raw materials for the same are in plenty are viable options. In the same manner, a forest-based industry can also be established by the state government in order to tap forest resources since a major portion of the State's area is under forest coverage. According to the development profile published by the Department of Planning, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh (2008), "forest has traditionally been the primary source of livelihood in Arunachal Pradesh. It is one of the 'Hotspots' of biodiversity in the world because of the abundance of the varied flora and fauna including medicinal and aromatic plants" (p.10). However, utmost care must be taken while utilizing these or else draining of forest resources will invite numerous natural disasters. Prior to the Supreme Court of India's order of banning timber factories across the nation, there was a factory known as *Nocte Timber Corporation* (now defunct) at Deomali, Tirap district. Such factory should be revamped in order to utilize the forest resources which lie abundant in the State. Thus, the problems of unemployment could be solved up to a considerable extent. Also, such a development will bring good rapport to urbanization in the eyes of common people, for it will boost the State's overall economy.

Tourism sector is another major area which can boost the pace of urbanization as well as of the economy. This sector has already been declared as an industry by the state government. The State has huge potential in offering ecotourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism, provided tourism infrastructure is properly developed for the convenience of the tourists. It will ensure inflow of money into the State's exchequer besides providing employment opportunities.

Water resource is yet another underexplored front of the State. There are hundreds of streams and rivers which have a capability to generate approximately 50,000 megawatts of electricity. However, the potential has not yet been harnessed owing to numerous social and environmental issues.

Once it is cleared, it can generate employment as well as facilitate optimal urbanization.

Besides all the above discussed underlying opportunities, opening of higher educational institutions such as medical colleges, engineering colleges, veterinary colleges, law colleges, games and sports academies, schools of drama, and state universities are but some of the areas that will certainly enable rural to urban migration. Arunachal Pradesh is still lagging far behind in these sectors in comparison with other northeastern states. There are a few other areas carrying equal prospects to boost the process of urbanization such as marketing, finance and urban housing, which need to be dealt cautiously by the state administration. Inclusion of these in the developmental master plan of the State will facilitate the pace of urbanization.

### **Challenges of Urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh**

In fact, the pace of growth of urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh is not encouraging, owing to numerous factors enumerated below.

#### **Demographic Factor**

Demographic or population factor is one of the major concerns for the State with regard to socio-economic and political development. No doubt people used to migrate from rural areas to towns in search of better socio-economic life. However, the effect of such movement is insufficient and hardly augments the overall population of the urban areas.

#### **Unfavourable Geo-Physical Terrain**

A city can be built over a rocky mountain provided the geo-physical features are favourable. But in the case of Arunachal Pradesh, building and construction activities require extraordinary expenses owing to unfavorable geo-physical factors such as loose and sandy type of soil, recurrence of ridges and steep slopes across the mountainous regions, high vulnerability to natural calamities such as landslides and floods. Moreover, the State is situated in seismic zone V which is considered high earthquake prone zone. Hence, establishing urban centers and building infrastructure in such terrains are indeed herculean tasks.

## **Inadequate Educational Institutions**

Education is one of the most pivotal aspects of any society or region. It is the backbone of the society. The degree of urbanization of a given region is greatly affected by the number of educational institutions it has. A large number of people, especially the youth, migrate to metropolitan cities to pursue their higher education. Such movement not only increases the degree of urban population of the region but also broadens the scope of economy. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, higher education is still in a nascent stage. There is a need for more higher educational institutions in various fields such as medicine, engineering, sports, defence, art and culture, law, science and technology, management and statistics to provide educational opportunities and employability to the young minds. The recent policy to introduce one each medical college, law college, and defence academy (*Sainik* school) in the State is a welcome move, but is no match for the great need of the State in the area of education.

## **Transportation and Communication**

The transportation and communication services in the State are still very poor due to absence of all-weather type road connectivity. In addition, the State is insufficiently connected with all three modes of transportation such as road, air, and water. With regards to railway service, since 2014, Naharlagun is the only town with railway connectivity, while towns such as Tawang, Roing, and Pasighat are in the line of getting the connectivity soon. Of late, a civil airport has also been opened at Pasighat town which is operating weekly. Besides, the national government project for the Trans-Arunachal Highway is yet to be completed. Therefore, absence of proper transportation and communication facility is one of the most serious hindrances to urbanization.

## **Absence of Adequate Power Supply**

Without adequate supply of electricity, no business or industrial unit can operate smoothly. In spite of the great hydroelectric potential of Arunachal Pradesh, it has been underutilized. The State is considered as the 'future powerhouse' of the country, having an overall capacity of 50,000 MW. However, the realization of power from the respective river sources is still a distant dream for both the state and central governments. The absence of adequate power supply also restricts the process and pace of urbanization.

### **Absence of Adequate Civic Bodies**

As of now, there is an acute shortage of civic bodies in the various urban centers excluding the two towns Itanagar and Pasighat. A strong civic body is the need of the hour in order to urbanize the existing urban centers of the State in all required areas. Such development, when realized, will definitely augment the growth of urbanization in the State.

### **Lack of Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities**

Almost all the urban centers of the State face shortage of potable water though the State is endowed with many rivers and streams. The problems of drinking water are more severe in those urban centers situated on the hilltops and plateaus. Due to altitudinal problem, drawing water from the ground is found to be very difficult.

On the other hand, the availability of sanitation facilities is far from desirable. Disposal of garbage is extensively carried out without care for people's hygiene. The state government has not yet come out with a scientific waste management mechanism. They are simply disposed off by throwing them into nearby rivers or vacant areas thereby polluting the environment. *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, the sanitation campaign launched by the Government of India to commemorate the birthday of Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, is still in nascent stage; but when implemented on a full scale, it is likely to improve the sanitation standards.

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion, we may conclude that urbanization is still an incomplete chapter for the State of Arunachal Pradesh. Being one of the frontier states and situated in strategic locations sharing international boundaries with the Republic of China, Myanmar, and Bhutan, it is an imperative for this land-locked State to have a sound economy to withstand natural or human made challenges. This feat can only be achieved by establishing new urban centers and augmenting the existing towns. Merely establishing new administrative centers or expanding of existing ones will not hold much water in respect of functional urbanization. In fact, the government agencies need to study the matter comprehensively and work out a master plan envisaging best possible results. Arunachal Pradesh is a diverse state both in terms of people and land. The state administration, therefore,

should not adopt the one-size-fits-all policy, instead, should prepare separate action plan document for every different belt or region so that the process of urbanization goes smooth and uninterrupted leading to a balanced regional development in the long run. Simultaneously, the state administration needs to identify the various existing problems and constraints of urban centers in order to facilitate their further development, equipping them with modern amenities so that they could attract more people from the rural areas. This must also be done without doing damage to the needs of the rural areas as well as protecting the agricultural sector. Urbanization in Arunachal Pradesh is not an eco-catastrophe as environmentalists usually consider; rather it is a means to open and broaden the economic gateway of the State in an optimally beneficial manner for the entire people of the State.

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## PERCEPTION AND DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH CARE PRACTICES IN THE *DESIA KANDHA* TRIBAL COMMUNITY OF SOUTH ODISHA

Paramananda Naik<sup>1</sup>

The perception of health and health care practices among the tribal groups of India is primarily derived from their own indigenous knowledge and tradition. The concept of health and disease is organically linked to their customs, traditions, and ecology. The objective of this study is to understand the perception and dimensions of health care practices and health care beliefs among the *Desia Kandha* tribe, the most populous tribal group of Odisha in Surada Block of Ganjam District, Odisha, India. To the *Desia Kandhas*, health means absence of ailments, physical wellbeing, and ability to work and play. They define illness as the presence of ailments, infection, and weakness followed by physical discomfort. The most common diseases include malaria, chickenpox, measles, and jaundice, which are believed to occur due to various reasons such as breach of taboo, lack of proper nutrition, poor sanitation, and presence of evil spirits. In addition to improvements through infrastructural provisions from the Government of India, education has made people aware of modern health care and modern medicines, as a result of which the degree of application of traditional health care practices has been decreasing in recent years; though accessibility to modern medical treatment is limited. In order to achieve the much-aspired health for all, ethno-medical understanding of various health cultures is essential. It is necessary to document the beliefs and treatment patterns, utilization of modern medical care, and associated problems among the tribals, as well as their perception of health and illness, which are quite distinct from those of the nontribal populations.

*Keywords:* *Desia Kandhas*, health, indigenous people, culture, tribals

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The tribal population of India counts about 67.8 million which constitute 8.6% of the total Indian population. As per 2011 census, out of 705 scheduled tribes in India, 75 of them are considered Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). In Odisha, out of 62 tribal communities, 13 of them are PVTGs. With a high concentration (nearly 40% of Odisha's total population) of scheduled tribe (22.85%) and scheduled caste (17.13%) population, the state of Odisha occupies an important anthropological place in the country (Census of India, 2011).

Health is a pre-requisite for human development and is essentially concerned with the wellbeing of all. The holistic concept of 'health culture' provides a valuable framework for anthropologists in the field of health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 1948), health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Contemporary approaches in anthropology study relationships between culture and the social structure, people's beliefs about causes, course, cure, and prevention of diseases, and their health behaviour. Every society views health from the perspective of its own culture and responds to them according to the understanding, knowledge, value, attitudes, and beliefs of the people comprising it (Mehta, 1992). The review of the existing published anthropological literature throws significant insights into the key issues and concerns that have been addressed around tribal health, illness, and medicine in Odisha. The health status of the tribal people – which is generally reported to be in poor condition - is influenced by a combination of biological, cultural, and environmental factors (Mahapatra, 1994). Tribals are one of the most exploited and deprived sections of the Indian society; their health status is in need of special attention. The tribal community lags behind the national average on several vital public health indicators. Studies on tribal health provide an evolutionary perspective assuming that the traditional knowledge systems of the tribals would merge with modern systems as they participate effectively in development processes. The incidence of both communicable and non-communicable diseases however, varies according to habitat, occupation, literacy, and socio-economic conditions of each sub-group e.g., the *Kondhs* (Bulliyya, Naik, & Mallick, 2006). Despite the available literature, studies relating to tribal health, concept of disease, and health practices are rather scanty; specific studies with reference to the different facets of tribal life are practically non-existent.

In tribal societies, the supernatural theory of illness provides an important basis for explanation related to the state of health and illness (Chaudhuri, 1986). Health concept is perceived in their own cultural system with less awareness of the modern health care and health sources. For this reason, the National Health Policy of 1983 accords high priority to extending organized services to those residing in the tribal, hilly, and backward areas as well as to the detection and treatment of endemic diseases affecting the tribals (Mishra, 2012). Study on health culture of tribal communities belonging to the poorest strata of society is highly desirable and essential in order to determine their access to different health services available. The common beliefs, customs, traditions, values, and practices connected with health and diseases have been closely associated with the treatment of diseases (Balgir, 2001). Generally, the health status of any community is influenced by the interplay of health consciousness of the people, socio-cultural, demographic, economic, educational, and political factors. In India, the health status of most tribal populations is still identified as 'poor' due to isolation, remoteness, and being largely untouched by developmental processes. Though primary health care amenities are established, they are insufficient to achieve health equity of the tribals. Most public health conditions - prioritized on the global health agenda - share key social determinants of exposure to risk factors, disease vulnerability, access to care, and the social consequences of diseases. Transformation of health systems through policy reforms is required to eradicate the causes of diseases by addressing the complex needs of people. Anthropologically speaking, among most tribal groups, beliefs, customs, and practices associated to health and diseases are also related to the treatment of diseases. It is necessary to develop a holistic view of all the cultural dimensions of the health of a community (Basu, 2000).

### Study Area

Ganjam district, the most populous district in Odisha, India, was officially formed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1936. It is situated in the southern part of the state of Odisha. According to the 2011 census, the population of this district is 3,529,031 of which male and female are 1,779,218 and 1,749,813 respectively. The sex ratio is 983 females per 1000 males. The average literacy rate of the district is 71.09%. The *Kandhas* is numerically the most populous tribe (16.27%) of the State (Census of India, 2011).

## Method

A qualitative study was carried out in Ambakona village of Gazalbadi Gram Panchayat of Surada block in Ganjam district, rural tribal region of south Odisha in India. The present study explores the concept of public health, and perception and dimensions of health care practices among the *Desia Kandhas* of Odisha. Random sampling and purposive sampling were employed for selecting the participants. Ninety-three households and 373 respondents were included in the study. Different key tools and techniques such as interview and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used for the purpose of data collection. Empirical data were collected from health workers and other respondents.

## Results and Discussion

The concept of health refers to a sub-culture within a totality of population. It encompasses a vast complex of knowledge, beliefs, techniques, roles, norms, values, ideology, attitude, customs, rituals, and symbols which are related to health and diseases. This would mean that the socio-cultural aspects of health and disease, diagnosis and treatment methods, healers and cures, and their recruitment are interrelated. This 'health culture' forms one of the two dimensions of medical anthropology, viz., (i) 'anthropology in medicine' which emphasizes the contribution of anthropological knowledge to the diagnosis and treatment of disease; and (ii) 'anthropology of medicine' which concerns itself with anthropological study of the medical profession. Hence, an anthropological study of health-culture contributes to the understanding of the etiology, theory of diseases, diagnosis, treatment of diseases, and the place medicine occupies in the lives of people. Health is a multi-dimensional concept that is usually measured in terms of absence of disease, physical pain, disability; or psychological well-being and satisfactory social functioning. Health status denotes the state of health of any individual/population with respect to time and space. Health and illness related perceptions therefore, influence individual's decision making on health and these perceptions may be applied for maintaining and improving health and wellbeing of populations.

The present study deals with the health situation and treatment of different diseases among the *Desia Kandha* tribe of Ambakona village, in different situations. The concept and perception of health and illness of the participants are almost similar. For them, 'health' means absence of ailments,

physical wellbeing, and ability to work and play. Most of the participants defined 'illness' as presence of ailments/infections/weakness followed by physical discomfort. According to them, a person is considered 'healthy' if that person is free of tension, eats properly, is active, and has a happy life. The most common examples of diseases prevailing in the village of Ambakona include malaria, chickenpox, measles, jaundice, cold, cough, and fever. The *Kandhas* believe in occurrence of diseases due to various reasons such as breach of taboo, lack of proper nutrition, poor sanitation, and the presence of evil spirits in their surroundings. Evil spirits are feared for bringing diseases, death, or destruction to the lives of the people. Since most *Kandhas* live fairly close to nature, many of them are affected with diseases due to malnutrition, lack of safe drinking water, poor hygiene and environmental sanitation, and poverty.

### **Traditional Treatment of Diseases**

Health behaviour of any community is developed from the tradition of the society, which is influenced by the socio-economic condition, education, and adaptation to new environment. Health behaviour here includes knowledge, perception, and attitude of the people in times of health crises. The concept of health and disease vary from culture to culture. Every culture, irrespective of its simplicity and complexity, has its own beliefs and practices and laid out customs concerning health and diseases. Every tribe has its own group of sacred priests, traditional healers or medicine men.

The medicine men of Ambakona village diagnose the diseases using different types of formulae such as observing the behavior of the patients, colour of the eyes and face, and temperature indicators. They diagnose some diseases through examination of the veins of the wrist and neck. Given below is a listing of diseases, their symptoms and signs the medicine men look for, as well as the treatments they resort to.

#### **1. Fever**

Symptom: There is rise in body temperature, headache, and vomiting.

Sign: Gloomy looks and rise of temperature.

Treatment: Boiled water and *Gangasiuli* leaf mixed with black pepper are taken by the patient.

## 2. Cold

Symptom: Irritable and restless; difficulty in breathing (due to blocked nose). Patients breathe through mouth.

Sign: Mild temperature

Treatment: Juice of *Basanga* with honey is taken by the patient early morning.

## 3. Malaria

Symptom: Shivering and headache. After shivering the person sweats and fever comes down. This repeats daily or on alternate days.

Sign: Malaria fever normally occurs on alternate days.

Treatment: The patient takes 7 *Gangasiuli* leaves, 7 pieces of black pepper, and 10gm of honey. The patient takes it twice a day (early morning and evening).

## 4. Headache

Symptom: Feeling of heaviness of the head, irritation.

Sign: The patient looks ill and has mild temperature.

Treatment: Four drops of *Bhrungaraj* juice into the nostrils.

## 5. Jaundice

Symptom: Body becomes weak and turns yellow, loss of appetite.

Sign: Yellowness of skin

Treatment: Patient takes a paste of the *Bari amala*, *Manjuati* root mixed with milk and *mishri* for 7 days (early morning in empty stomach).

## 6. Chickenpox

Symptom: Fever, severe body pain

Sign: Within a day or two spots appear on the whole body.

Treatment: The skin of *Pipulia*, *Juani*, *Gurchina* is grinded with milk and developed into a paste and applied to the patient on the fifth day. Turmeric, oil, neem leaves are boiled together and the juice is administered orally.

## 7. Sickle cell

Symptom: Tiredness and no appetite.

Sign: Absent minded and weak

Treatment: The paste of *Chachina*, both root and skin of *Keruban* and *Titikidi* leaf with 21 black pepper seeds are taken by the patient. Nonvegetarian diet is restricted during the course of this medicine.

## Shifting Pattern in Disease Treatments

Education makes people aware of modern health care and medicines. This phenomenon is being witnessed within tribal communities as well. According to the norms of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), as the population density in the scheduled tribe areas increases, improvement in infrastructural provisions must be realized on a priority basis by setting up of *anganwadis* (a type of rural child care centers), sub-centers, primary health centers (PHCs), and community health centers (CHCs) in just relation to the actual needs and accessibility of the areas. The NRHM is a flagship scheme launched by the Government of India in 2005 with an approach relating to determinants of good health viz., nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, and safe drinking water. Formerly, modern health care system seemed to occupy only a secondary place among the *Desia Kandhas*. However, in recent years, the frequency of the application of traditional health care practices has been decreasing due to less dependency on nature and its produces. Nevertheless, accessibility to modern medical treatment is still below satisfactory levels since the socio-economic conditions of the educated population continue to be poor.

## Conclusion

The health status of tribals in India is very poor and is significantly affected by poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, absence of safe drinking water, poor sanitation, and poor living conditions. Health is a crucial component for the survival of an individual or community. Health status of any community

not only depends upon the bio-medical phenomenon, but also on different social, cultural, and behavioural aspects of health. Every community follows some health behaviors to maintain good health and prevent illness. Among the *Desia Kandhas*, the absence of ailments, ability to work and play, and being active are the major components of their perception of being healthy. The present study reveals that there is a definite concept of health, disease, and treatment in the tribal village where the study was undertaken. There are justifiable reasons for how and why the people use both traditional and modern systems, either separately or simultaneously, for dealing with health issues. To conclude, in order to achieve the much-aspired health for all, ethno-medical understanding of various health cultures is needed. It is essential to study and document the beliefs and treatment patterns, utilization of modern medical care, associated problems among the tribes, and their perception of health and illness which may be distinct from those of the nontribal population. Further, it is essential to understand the beliefs, practices, and world view of the tribals in order to formulate appropriate development and health care policies, particularly understanding the existing body of knowledge available in the context of health, diseases, and treatment. Modern medicine must begin from and complement the existing traditional practices of the tribal society rather than replacing them.

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*Naik, P.*

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## BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *Higher Education in the 21st Century:  
Global Challenge and National Response*

Philip G. Altbach and Patti McGill Peterson (Editors)  
New York: Institute of International Education, 2015.  
106 pp. ISBN: 087206-252-X. Price: \$11.33.

Reviewed by Alphonsa Diana Haokip<sup>1</sup>

This book is an outcome of the symposium titled *Global Challenge and National Response*, held in December 1998, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. It was convened by Dr. Patti McGill Peterson, the then Executive Director of the Council on International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), which is affiliated to the Institute of International Education (IIE), New York. The papers presented at the symposium appeared in this book form after a gap of 17 years. This edited book on higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century consists of nine essays. It emphasises the challenges of affording higher education due to mounting numbers of students around the globe.

In the chapter *Global Challenge and National Response: Notes for an International Dialogue on Higher Education*, Philip and Davis opine that higher education has profoundly changed. The involved stakeholders in the academic enterprise should have come with current modifications and changes. It is observed that there is enrolment dilemma in higher educational institutes in many countries due to the increase of number of students. This concern must lead to the international dialogue on how to cope with the issue. Such a dialogue can foster the higher educational institutes with a global perspective through various ideas from experts, academia, researchers, etc., and even through collaborative research works. Moreover, policy makers, public administrators, and other stake holders should be linked for their opinions on the contemporary challenges of higher education. We live in a modern world

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where higher educational system is valued globally. The structures of the educational system are shifting from elite to mass through global accessibility. It demands that the policy makers and beneficiaries of the higher education system must devise ways and means to offset the cost of education in view of the public good in the long run.

Min Weifang, the author of *Global Challenges and the Chinese Response*, discloses that the system of higher education in China has a long tradition dating back to three thousand years. It was called *Taixue*, meaning ‘highest institution of learning.’ Nevertheless, the modern system of Chinese higher education is the result of learning from interaction with the West. Just as the world goes through a seismic shift in higher educational scenario, Chinese higher education too is facing several challenges. The overspecialized and departmentalized higher education was backed by the logic that it was vital to change the rigid central planning system of governance and administration. This is an incredible task, covering a series of reforms, which consist of breaking the departmental boundaries between different government agencies that segmented the higher education system. This entails reorientation and revision of the government policy towards higher educational institutes about their status of getting more autonomy. The rapid growth of economy and the advancement of science and technology have resulted in the increase of individual income and higher standard of living, which has also increased the push for higher educational opportunities. Thus, the Chinese system in higher education has expanded very quickly since the last few decades, with its own newer challenges.

The importance of international dialogue on higher education is discussed in the chapter, *The Transformation of an Imperial Colony into an Advanced Nation: India in Comparative Perspective* by Suma Chitnis. She calls for an inter-country sharing of experience and knowledge in the field of higher education. In India, modern education system was initiated by the British in 1857, with the purpose of introducing the Indian elite into their (broadly European) culture. This was also a kind of agenda to colonize the country culturally, by forming a cadre of educated Indians to serve the British government in different areas such as law, medicine, education, and military. The exchange and sharing of knowledge with other countries may bring the hub of educated manpower (youth) through transnational competitions and partnerships.

This development may find a way to link the importance of higher education in being an advanced nation.

In *Higher Education in Africa: Challenges and Strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, George S. Eshiwani discusses the challenges and strategies of the higher educational system that are facing most of the African countries. Most of the emerging African universities were modelled after British or French (or European) universities. University was viewed as a vehicle for training high-level manpower (educated youth) for the new nations. It was a search for universal knowledge to respond to the real problems, needs, and aspirations of these new nations. The universities in Africa are seen as the driving force behind economic development through the rapid expansion in student enrolment regardless of declining financial provisions. Similarly, the number of professional faculties and departments in all universities is also increasing accordingly. Furthermore, the demand of African students to pursue higher education abroad mainly in the UK, the US, and India is increasing. This expansion in enrolment has enabled university education to shift from the elite to the masses, making African universities more accessible. However, it is unfortunate that women have not benefited proportionately from the dramatic expansion of higher education and the challenge lies in ensuring the participation of women in higher education both as students and professionals.

Nasima Buddha in *South Africa: Future Prospects* highlights the major transformation in higher educational system of South Africa after a new Higher Education Act was promulgated in 1997. This Act was set in motion with the termination of the apartheid system. Overhaul of the higher education system was needed to amend the past inequalities and develop a common platform for the needs of everyone in the society. This is to be achieved in the midst of fiscal austerity and a funding environment that places greater emphasis on accountability for the expenditure of public funds, market principles, and effectiveness. The funding of higher education is also based on sharing of costs between private beneficiaries and the State. There are some private higher educational institutes in South Africa offering programs largely through franchise agreements with local and international universities. Still, these programs are largely limited to the fields such as business administration and communication and information technology.

Simon Schwartzman in his article *Latin America: National Responses to World Challenges in Higher Education* observes that many higher educational institutes appeared in Latin America in 1960s, but not as purposeful projects of governments and university administrators. They emerged primarily due to the large scale socio-economic and cultural changes. There is a long tradition of student politics in Latin America and an indifferent attitude of universities towards scientific scholarship and technical expertise. The new public higher educational institutions focus on training lawyers, engineers, military officers, and medical doctors. There are challenges regarding the financing and institutional reforms in the field of higher education. One of the major reasons for the slow pace of development in higher educational sector is the political interference and lack of good will. However, the higher educational institutes in Latin America have become aware of the need for bold reforms and are working towards renewal of the sector.

Akimasa Mitsuta's essay on *Universal Problems and National Realities: Japan in Comparative Perspective* points out that academic institutions have common curricular elements and a common language of instruction with a view to responding to global interests. Japan still resists the internationalization of English and the compulsion to give it a central place in education. The most crucial issue for Japan is internationalization of higher education. It is a concern for Japan that if the international universities are inclined to promote education and research with English as the medium, would Japanese institutions of higher education attract scholars from other countries?

In his chapter, *Current Issues and Future Priorities for European Higher Education Systems*, Barbara Spornout lines the major current issues of higher education in the selected countries of Europe. She also presents future priorities from organizational viewpoint. The colleges and universities in Europe are confronted with three major challenges: expansion, diversification, and massification. The expansion refers to the large increases in student numbers in most European countries in response to the public policies providing education to a large portion of the population under the banner 'education for all.' The issue of funding in higher education has always been a major trigger for restructuring a better system of higher education in Europe as well. However, funding strategies in higher education have changed. Internationalization of higher education is a major focus as well, as it involves the imperative for equal access and diversity in European institutions.

Peter Darvas narrates a number of global issues comprising privatization, access, equity, and accountability in the chapter titled *A Regional Perspective: Central and Eastern Europe*. He observes that the transformation of higher education was achieved within a relatively short period, and this has been closely attached with broader socio-economic changes in Europe. The public and the politicians have given greater focus to the higher educational system in the last decade. A well-articulated strategic plan for higher education could lead to the creation of well-trained man power, which would fulfil the needs of emerging industries and services. The increasing demand for higher education can be realized through initiating new and innovative programs (including country-based innovation), international assistance, and program development. All of these interrelated issues represent various aspects of a systemic change in higher education in which new stakeholders emerge and old ones undergo a radical change.

What can India learn from these developments and challenges in the international scenario? In India, the system of higher education has a gorgeous legacy which began several millennia ago with such renowned ancient universities such as Taxila (6<sup>th</sup> century BCE; located in modern-day Punjab in Pakistan) and Nalanda (5<sup>th</sup> century BCE; in modern-day Bihar). However, Indian universities are still struggling to grab a place amongst the top 100 or top 200 universities in the world. At present, Indian higher education is gravely affected by political interference, ideologies, excessive supply of money without accountability, inadequate and insufficient investment in human resource and infrastructure. Never the less, we can still hope that India will be one of the leading educational hubs in the near future as the higher education sector has witnessed a rapid growth and diversification through increase in the number of universities, introduction of measures for greater transparency and accountability, institutionalization of quality assurance and accreditation processes, etc. The enrolment of students in higher education in India is also the world's third largest, next to China and the United States. According to the report *Higher Education in India: Vision 2030*, India aims to be not just the best higher educational hub in the world, but the best *for* the world, delivering social, economic, and intellectual values par excellence. To materialize the dreams and goals envisioned for 2030, a transformative and innovative approach would be necessary at all levels of higher education:

*Haokip, A. D.*

starting from curricula and pedagogy to the use of technology to partnerships, governance, and funding. The analysis and insights offered by this excellent book *Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* will be a great help for the stakeholders in Indian higher education as they plan ahead with the Vision 2030 in mind.

## BOOK REVIEW

A Review of *The Toda Landscape: Explorations in Cultural Ecology*

Tarun Chhabra

New Delhi: Orient Blackswan Private Ltd., 2015.

618 pp. ISBN 978-81-250-6160-1. Price: ₹ 2500

Reviewed by Malay Kumar Rana<sup>1</sup>

*The Toda Landscape: Explorations in Cultural Ecology* is a remarkable contribution to *Toda* studies with its focal theme being their cultural ecology. The book reflects an enduring fondness of the author for the *Todas* since the nineties and his passion for the preservation of *Toda* culture and traditions.

The *Todas* are a small ethnic group that belongs to the Dravidian stock, and they live in the *Nilgiri* mountains of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Their unique cultural traditions have attracted the attention of many anthropologists and linguists. However, the study by Tarun Chhabra is unique in that he was never a professionally trained academic, but a fulltime practising surgeon who developed a deep affection for the *Todas* and a keen interest in their life and culture. His views, therefore, emerge from a perspective that is not unduly cluttered or fashioned by existing anthropological theories and formulae; rather, he looks at them with freshness of sight and openness and offers us a refreshing perspective on their cultural ecology.

Chhabra's book is volume 79 in the Harvard Oriental Series, edited by Michael Witzel. Across thirteen chapters, the present volume primarily puts emphasis on the important aspects of the *Toda* cultural heritage that are barely touched by previous writers. He touches upon fascinating aspects such as the sacred geography of the *Todas* (chapter 8), some sacred institutions such as the conical temple at Konawsh reported to have been associated to distinct rituals (chapter 7), the *Toda* ethno-botany (chapters 11-13), etc. Chapter 10 is dedicated to the routes that the departed *Toda* spirits follow in the after world.

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The author also explores the sacred waters (chapter 9), *Toda* relationship with honey (chapter 6), the intricacies of their traditional attire and embroidery motifs (chapter 4), seasonal migration of families with buffaloes (chapter 5), the role of priests, priestly assistants, and the *Toda* dairy-temple institutions (chapter 7).

The book provides six appendices. The first two deal with the unique relationship of *Todas* with their surrounding flora and fauna. Appendix 3 contains the lists of *Toda* landscape and almanac terms. The prayers for seven important hamlets are highlighted in appendix 4 while appendix 5 discusses their food habits and lists some of their traditional festive foods. Appendix 6 presents terminology specific to their buffaloes.

In addition to the text, the book is enriched with accompanying supplements such as photographic documentations, maps, tables, figures, and charts. Thus, the book provides an in-depth exploration of the *Todas* and represents a major breakthrough in *Toda* studies. With its focus on the *Toda* cultural ecology, the book not only provides fresh insights on the *Todas*, but also meticulously reproduces in the original *Toda* language as well as with its English translation many chants that were even missed by the great *Toda* textual scholar professor Murray Emeneau. All in all, the book is an anthropological treasure not only for academicians and policy makers, but for any general reader and lover of human civilization.

**INDEX OF ARTICLES  
(2014-2018)**



## INDEX OF ARTICLES 2014-2018 Issue-wise [sequentially]

### Volume 1(1): 2014

- Buchoul, S. (2014). Heredotus, the first orientalist? *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 7-29
- Rao, D. Y. (2014). IWE and the politics of canon construction: Reading popular genres as sub-alterns. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 30-43
- Gritti, M. P. (2014). Dostoyevsky between Pareyson and Girard: Freedom, desire, and religious experience. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 44-63
- Joseph, K. S., & Pereira, M. (2014). Sociological considerations on socio-cultural dynamics in the alcohol use behaviours of college students. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 64-80
- James, S. (2014). A critical analysis of the coverage of India's northeast in the national print media. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 81-93
- Koul, U. (2014). Gender and environment. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 94-111
- Dowerah, V. (2014). Women movements in Arunachal Pradesh: A feminist perspective. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 112-120
- Amung, R. (2014). Participation of women in panchayati raj system and empowerment: An experience across cultures. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 121-127
- Jijo, K. P. (2014). The tell-tale brain: A neuroscientist's quest for what makes us human [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 128-130
- George, S. (2014). Closing the engagement gap: How great companies unlock employee potential for superior results [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 131-134
- Joseph, B. (2014). Press & social responsibility: A content analysis of newspapers in northeast India [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 135-139

## **Volume 2(1): 2015**

- Chenni, R. (2015). Re-reading Achebe after post-colonialism. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 7-12
- Rassendren, E. (2015). "Give us free": Notes on the writings of Achebe and Mandela. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 13-25
- Dumouchel, P. (2015). Comparative multiculturalism and justice: A methodological suggestion. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 26-38
- Das, H. P., & Parhi, A. R. (2015). Rekindling innocence: Environmental justice in children's ecofiction. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 39-55
- Rani, R., Ghosh, P., & Vasulu, T. S. (2015). NE-I db: An online portal of bio-social data bank of north-east populations. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 56-64
- Vokendro, H. (2015). Dimensions of tribal women education in Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 65-78
- Mene, T. (2015). Women in the face of globalization: Observations on the Idu Mishmi society of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 79-89
- Riba, M. (2015). Mythological significance of the Mopin festival of Galos of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 90-94
- Chinir, P. R. (2015). Festivals of Moyon tribe of Manipur. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 95-112
- Jose, K. (2015). Perspectives on north east India: Tradition and modernity in Arunachal Pradesh [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 113-115
- Syiem, S. R. (2015). Education in Arunachal Pradesh since 1947 [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 116-120
- Vail, A. (2015). Breast cancer: A soul journey [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 121-123

## **Volume 3(1): 2016**

- Michael, J. K., & de Guzman, A. B. (2016). A grounded theory study of the decision-making process among spiritually-led educational leaders in India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 7-33
- Kabi, R., & Pereira, M. (2016). Life after detention: The voice of young offenders in the juvenile justice system. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 34-52

- Mendoza, A., & Sungoh, S. M. (2016). Music in their ears: Popular genres among the secondary school students of Guwahati. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 53-68
- Bai, T. (2016). Pottery making among the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh, India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 69-84
- Kharshandi, I. (2016). Street trading in the hill state of Meghalaya: A review of literature. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 85-94
- Goswami, A. L., & Pudussery, P. (2016). Constructing gender: image of women in northeast India media. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 95-105
- Sekar, I. (2016). Rural planning and development [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 106-109
- Jose, K. (2016). Ethnicity in north east India [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 110-112

## **Volume 4(1): 2017**

- Pandimakil, P. G. (2017). Religious conflicts in post-independence India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 7-29
- Veliyanoor, P. V. (2017). Quest for individuation: Analysis of Deepa Mehta's *Water* through Jungian therapeutic lens. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 30-48
- Vaditya, V. (2017). Globalisation and higher education in India: The paradigm shift. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 49-68
- Das, K. (2017). Status of agricultural land use in north east India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 69-75
- Morrissey, M. B. Q. (2017). Phenomenology and the law as rebellion: An autoethnographic account. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 76-81
- Wertz, F. J. (2017). A case of spirituality without belief. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 82-88
- Ramya, T. (2017). Beads of Arunachal Pradesh: Emerging cultural context [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 89-92
- Thennadiyil, T. (2017). Small teaching: Everyday lessons from the science of learning [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 93-95

**Volume 5(1): 2018**

- Bhanja, A. K. (2018). Delivery potential and structural appropriateness: Performance of panchayati raj institutions. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 7-20
- Habung, T. (2018). Cultural zones and environmental influence in the context of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 21-30
- Bangsia, W. (2018). Sustainable development of water resources: A case study of Tarat river basin, Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 31-41
- Tabang, N. (2018). Indigenous knowledge of handicrafts among the Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 42-52
- Deka, G. (2018). Impact of rural tourism on livelihood and rural development: A case study of Reiek village, Mizoram. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 53-64
- Lindner, E. G. (2018). Honor, humiliation, and terror: An explosive mix – and how we can defuse it with dignity: A summary [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 65-73
- Nattuvathuckal, B. (2018). Join the club: How peer pressure can transform the world [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 74-80
- Ramya, T. (2018). Family and clan in north east India: Reflections by Christian scholars [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 81-85
- Torres Pérez, F. (2018). The post [Film review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 86-90

## INDEX OF ARTICLES 2014-2018 Author-wise [alphabetically]

- Amung, R. (2014). Participation of women in panchayati raj system and empowerment: An experience across cultures. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 121-127.
- Bai, T. (2016). Pottery making among the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh, India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 69-84
- Bangsia, W. (2018). Sustainable development of water resources: A case study of Tarat river basin, Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 31-41
- Bhanja, A. K. (2018). Delivery potential and structural appropriateness: Performance of panchayati raj institutions. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 7-20
- Buchoul, S. (2014). Heredotus, the first orientalist? *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 7-29.
- Chenni, R. (2015). Re-reading Achebe after post-colonialism. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 7-12
- Chinir, P. R. (2015). Festivals of Moyon tribe of Manipur. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 95-112
- Das, H. P., & Parhi, A. R. (2015). Rekindling innocence: Environmental justice in children's ecofiction. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 39-55
- Das, K. (2017). Status of agricultural land use in north east India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 69-75
- Deka, G. (2018). Impact of rural tourism on livelihood and rural development: A case study of Reiek village, Mizoram. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 53-64
- Dowerah, V. (2014). Women movements in Arunachal Pradesh: A feminist perspective. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 112-120
- Dumouchel, P. (2015). Comparative multiculturalism and justice: A methodological suggestion. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 26-38

- George, S. (2014). Closing the engagement gap: How great companies unlock employee potential for superior results [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 131-134
- Goswami, A. L., & Pudussery, P. (2016). Constructing gender: image of women in northeast India media. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 95-105
- Gritti, M. P. (2014). Dostoyevsky between Pareyson and Girard: Freedom, desire, and religious experience. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 44-63
- Habung, T. (2018). Cultural zones and environmental influence in the context of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 21-30
- James, S. (2014). A critical analysis of the coverage of India's northeast in the national print media. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 81-93
- Jijo, K. P. (2014). The tell-tale brain: A neuroscientist's quest for what makes us human [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 128-130
- Jose, K. (2015). Perspectives on north east India: Tradition and modernity in Arunachal Pradesh [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 113-115
- Jose, K. (2016). Ethnicity in north east India [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 110-112
- Joseph, B. (2014). Press & social responsibility: A content analysis of newspapers in northeast India [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 135-139
- Joseph, K. S., & Pereira, M. (2014). Sociological considerations on socio-cultural dynamics in the alcohol use behaviours of college students. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 64-80
- Kabi, R., & Pereira, M. (2016). Life after detention: The voice of young offenders in the juvenile justice system. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 34-52
- Kharshandi, I. (2016). Street trading in the hill state of Meghalaya: A review of literature. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 85-94
- Koul, U. (2014). Gender and environment. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 94-111
- Lindner, E. G. (2018). Honor, humiliation, and terror: An explosive mix – and how we can defuse it with dignity: A summary [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 65-73
- Mendoz, A., & Sungoh, S. M. (2016). Music in their ears: Popular genres among the secondary school students of Guwahati. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 53-68

- Mene, T. (2015). Women in the face of globalization: Observations on the Idu Mishmi society of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 79-89
- Michael, J. K., & de Guzman, A. B. (2016). A grounded theory study of the decision-making process among spiritually-led educational leaders in India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 7-33
- Morrissey, M. B. Q. (2017). Phenomenology and the law as rebellion: An autoethnographic account. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 76-81
- Nattuvathuckal, B. (2018). Join the club: How peer pressure can transform the world [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 74-80
- Pandimakil, P. G. (2017). Religious conflicts in post-independence India. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 7-29
- Ramya, T. (2017). Beads of Arunachal Pradesh: Emerging cultural context [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 89-92
- Ramya, T. (2018). Family and clan in north east India: Reflections by Christian scholars [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 81-85
- Rani, R., Ghosh, P., & Vasulu, T. S. (2015). NE-I db: An online portal of bio-social data bank of north-east populations. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 56-64
- Rao, D. Y. (2014). IWE and the politics of canon construction: Reading popular genres as sub-alterns. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 1(1), 30-43
- Rassendren, E. (2015). "Give us free": Notes on the writings of Achebe and Mandela. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 13-25
- Riba, M. (2015). Mythological significance of the Mopin festival of Galos of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 90-94
- Sekar, I. (2016). Rural planning and development [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 3(1), 106-109
- Syiem, S. R. (2015). Education in Arunachal Pradesh since 1947 [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 116-120
- Tabang, N. (2018). Indigenous knowledge of handicrafts among the Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 42-52
- Thennadiyil, T. (2017). Small teaching: Everyday lessons from the science of learning [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 93-95
- Torres Pérez, F. (2018). The post [Film review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 5(1), 86-90

- Vaditya, V. (2017). Globalisation and higher education in India: The paradigm shift. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 49-68
- Vail, A. (2015). Breast cancer: A soul journey [Book review]. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 121-123
- Veliyannoor, P. V. (2017). Quest for individuation: Analysis of Deepa Mehta's *Water* through Jungian therapeutic lens. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 30-48
- Vokendro, H. (2015). Dimensions of tribal women education in Arunachal Pradesh. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 2(1), 65-78
- Wertz, F. J. (2017). A case of spirituality without belief. *InterViews: An Interdisciplinary Journal in Social Sciences* 4(1), 82-88

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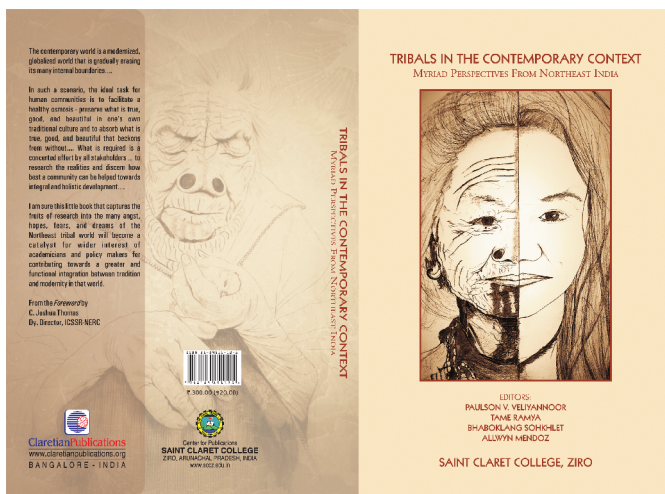


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