

"MOTHER & CHILD RELATIONSHIP IN A KHASI SOCIETY":

A STUDY IN SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

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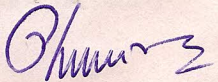
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Miss Ila Das has satisfactorily completed all the course requirements in the Master of Philosophy programme in Anthropology.

1. System of Theory and Data Processing
2. Bio-Cultural Evolution
3. Historical Methodology
4. Philosophy of Social Science.

She is permitted to submit her M.Phil Dissertation to the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

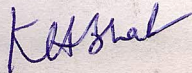

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This is to Certify that the Thesis entitled "Mother and Child Relationship in Khasi Society : A Study on Socialization Process among the Khasi" submitted by Miss Ila Das for the award of the Master of Philosophy in Anthropology (Social) is based on the field work conducted by her under my supervision. The Thesis, or any part thereof, has not been previously submitted for any other degree to the best of my knowledge.

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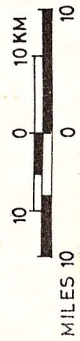
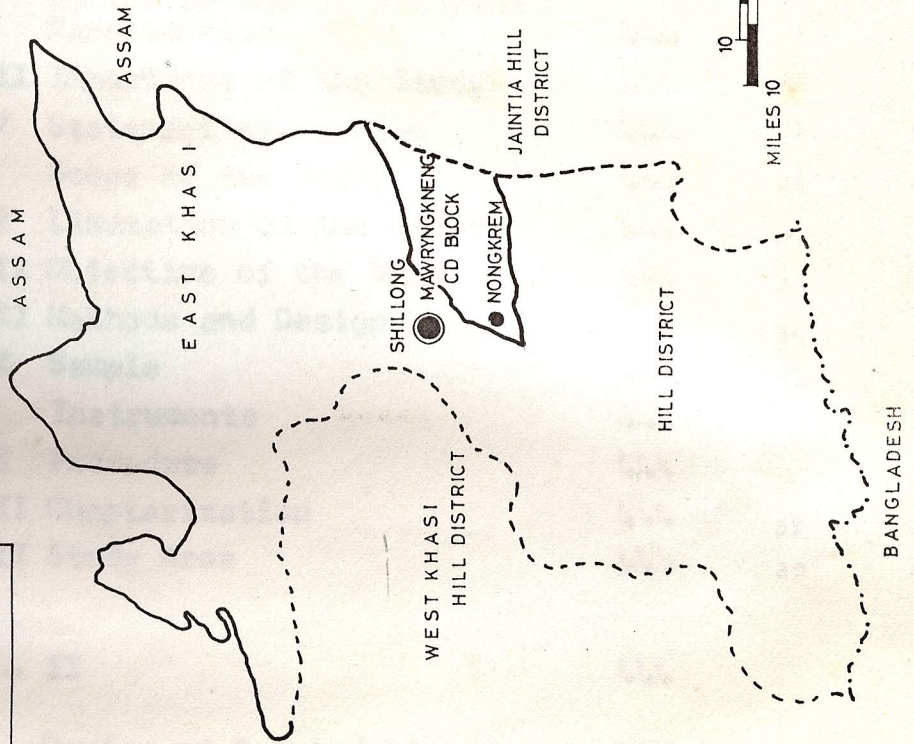
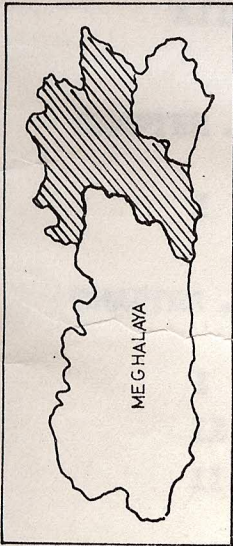
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STUDY AREA

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>	
Acknowledgement	i - iv	
Map		
CHAPTER - I	1	40
I Introduction	1	11
II Contributions of Anthropology to the method of studying Parent-Child	11	25
III Importance of the Study	25	27
IV Statement of Problem	27	28
V Scope of the Study	28	32
VI Limitation of the Study	32	33
VII Objective of the Study	33	34
VIII Methods and Design	34	-
IX Sample	34	-
X Instruments	-	-
XI Procedure	-	-
XII Chapterization	38	-
XIII Study Area	39	40
CHAPTER - II	40	
I Review of Related Literature	40	68
CHAPTER - III - The Khasi	67	90
I Origin of the name Khasi	67	70
II Descent and Residence	70	76
III Parent-Child Relationship in the Khasi matriliney	76	80
IV Khasi- Family Organisation	80	81
V Family Organisation of the Matrilineal System	81	85
VI Inheritance	85	88
VII Problems of Matriliney	88	96

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER - IV - Mother-Child Relationship among the Khasis	... 27 125
Results-	
I Perceived Maternal Affection by Khasi Children	... 97
II Perceived Maternal Discipline by Khasi Children	... 99
III Perceived Maternal Aggression by Khasi Children	... 101
IV Perceived Maternal Status by Khasi Children	... 103
V Perceived Maternal Responsibility Behaviour by Khasi Children	... 106
VI Perceived Maternal Inter-action by Khasi Children	... 108
VII Discussion of Findings of Research..	111
VII Mother-Child Relationship as Perceived by Khasi Mothers	... 111

CHAPTER - V

I Summary and Conclusion	... 126 136
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BIBLIOGRAPHY	... 137 143
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APPENDICE

I Mother-Child Relation Questionnaire.	
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CHAPTER - I

1.1. Introduction

Socialization may be broadly defined as the inculcation of the skills and attitudes necessary for playing given social roles. In this light it has unquestionable theoretical relevance for social Anthropology. Roles and role systems are central to the Anthropological field of study however one chooses to approach it, and they can scarcely be conceived of as existing or functioning without some provisions for socialization thus defined.

Socialization is more than the training of children and the immature. Immaturity is in any case a relative term. There are cultures where it is normal for a person to remain marginal to all the major social systems upto the age of thirty or forty. But even where that is not the case, certain roles are normally recruited from among people who are grown up already (senior kinship roles for example, and many functionally specific roles in ritual, judicial, political etc., system). Further, social mobility and/or major social changes, such as ongoing urbanization or industrialization,

involve the resocialization of people of all ages. By and large, then, it is rare for individuals not to have to confront actual or potential new roles in adult life, which would require from them the acquisition of new role-playing skills and attitudes.

To-day, of course, many parts of the world are undergoing a socialization crisis, owing to the scope and momentum of social change. In developing countries more and more children go to school, in developed countries formal education takes longer and longer, but there is much painful uncertainty about the roles for which the young are being or ought to be prepared, and about how the task should be divided between family, school, and peer groups. Resocialization of adults appears equally problematic. In regard to the study of developing countries especially, socialization would seem as much a key theme to-day as political structure was in the past generation. (Philip, 1970).

Meaning of Social Development

Social development means acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectations. It has been

defined by child as the "process by which an individual, born with potentialities of enormously wide range, is led to develop, is led to develop actual behaviour which is confined within a much narrower range- The range of what is customary and acceptable for him according to the standards of his group".

Becoming socialized involves certain processes which, although they are separate and distinct, are so closely interrelated that failure in any one of them will lower the person's level of socialization.

The first process is the development of behaviour approved by the social group. As every social group has its own standard of what is proper, the child must know what that is and model his own behaviour along the approved lines.

The second process in socialization is the playing of approved social roles- the patterns of customary behaviour defined and expected by members of the social groups. Every social group has its own recognised patterns of behaviour for members of the two sexes as well as for different areas

of life. There are for example prescribed roles for parents and children and for teachers and pupils.

The third process is the development of social attitudes so that the person likes people and social activities. He is a friendly person whose behaviour reflects his favourable attitudes toward people.

Relatively few people either children or adults totally succeed in all of these processes. Most however, wish to win social approval and therefore they conform to group expectations. They do so by learning to use fronts to cover up thoughts and feelings that might be considered unacceptable. They learn not to look bored, even though they may be bored; not to talk about tabooed subjects in the presence of those who disapprove; and not to look pleased when some they dislike is hurt.

Social Expectations

What the social group expects of the child is defined in terms of developmental tasks, on learning experiences that have been found to be appropriate for different age levels. Before he enters school for instance

the child is expected to relate emotionally by showing affection for, and interest in his parents and siblings and other people, he is expected to distinguish right from wrong in simple situations and act according to the socially approved pattern in these situations. During his elementary school years, the child is expected to learn to get along with his age mates, to play an appropriate sex role, and to conform to more complex standards of right and wrong.

Essentials of Socialization

What the child's attitudes toward people and social experiences will be and how well he will get along with other people will depend largely on his learning experiences during the early formative years, whether he will learn to conform to social expectations or not will depend on several factors.

Ample opportunities for socializing are essential because a child cannot learn to live socially with others if he spends most of his time alone. Each year, he needs more opportunities to be not only with children of his own age and level of development but also with adults of different ages and backgrounds. Too much social participation however

may be harmful if it deprives the child of opportunities to develop inner resources which will enable him to be happy when circumstances forced him to be alone.

The child will learn to be social only if he is motivated to do so. Motivation largely depends on how much satisfaction the child derives from social activities. If he enjoys his contacts with people he will want to repeat them; if he does not, he will tend to shun social situations. If he is anxious to be accepted by others, his motivation will be great, if he does not care about acceptance or feels that there is little or no chance of being accepted, his motivation will be low. Social deprivation of short duration tends to increase the child's motivation to win the attention and affection of others. Prolonged social deprivation makes the child afraid to try to establish social contacts.

An effective method of learning under guidance is essential. By trial and error the child learns some of the behaviour patterns necessary for good social adjustment. He also learns by role practice, that is, by imitating a person he identifies with. He will learn more quickly and the

end result will be better, however, if he is taught by a person who can guide and direct his learning and choose his associates so that he will have good models to imitate.

Should all these factors be favourable, the chances are that the child will develop into a social person. Should any of them be unfavourable, the chances are that he will be less social than other children of his age or will become unsocial or even anti-social.

Importance of Early Social experiences

Since social or unsocial patterns of behaviour are established during the formative childhood years early social experience largely determine what sort of adult a child will become. Pre-dominantly happy experiences encourage the child to seek more such experience and to become a social person. Too many unhappy experiences are likely to lead to unwholesome attitudes towards all social experiences and toward people in general. They encourage the child to become unsocial or anti-social.

Early social experiences may be with family members

or with people outside the home. As a general rule, experiences in the home are more important during the pre-school years while experiences with outsiders become more important after the child enters school. Each year, as the desire for status in the group grows, attitudes and behaviour are increasingly influenced by pressures from the members of the group.

Family influences

No one member of the family or one specific aspect of family life is responsible for socializing the child. If the overall home environment favours the development of good social attitudes, chances are that the child will become a social person.

The social behaviour and attitudes of a child reflect the treatment he receives in the home. A child who feels that he is rejected by his parents or siblings may assume an attitude of martyrdom outside the home and carry it even into adult life. Such a child may turn into himself and become an introvert. By contrast, acceptant loving parents encourage extroversion in the child.

Parental expectations motivate the child's efforts to be social acceptable. As a child grows older, for example he learns that he must overcome his aggressiveness and anti-social behaviour if he wishes to win parental approval. He is expected to be courteous and polite in his relationships with all adults.

In the early years of life the most important influence on the child's social behaviour and attitudes is likely to be the child-rearing methods used by his parents. The child who is brought up in a democratic home makes the best social adjustments. He is active and socially outgoing. One who is indulged, on the other hand, becomes inactive and withdrawn. The child who is subjected to authoritarian child-rearing methods is quiet and non-resistant, and his curiosity and originality are restricted by parental pressures.

In sum, the home is the 'seat of learning' for social skills. Only when children have satisfactory social relationships with members of their family can they fully enjoy social relationships with people outside the home, develop healthy

attitudes towards people and learn to function successfully in the peer group.

Outside Influences

Early social experiences outside the home supplement home experiences and are important determinants of the child's social attitudes and behaviour patterns. If his relationship with peers and outside adults are pleasant, he will enjoy social contacts and want to repeat. If they are unpleasant or frightening, he will fall back on the companionship of family members.

Influence of the Social Group

At all ages people are influenced by the social group with which they have constant association and with which they want to be identified. This influence is greatest during childhood and the early part of adolescence, the time of greatest psychological plasticity. The pattern of influence in childhood is predictable though it varies somewhat from child to child and even in the same child at different ages. This pattern is so universal that it is possible to predict which members of the social group will

have the greatest influence on the child at a given age.

Pattern of Influence

During the pre-school years, the family is the most influential socializing agency. From seven years of age on, group pressures are more important than they were when the child was younger on than they will be when he grows up.

When the child enters school, teachers begin to exert an influence over his socialization though peer influence is usually greater than either teacher's influence or family influence.

The strong influence of the peer group during the later part of childhood comes partly from the child's desire to be acceptable to; and accepted by, the group and partly from the fact that he spends more time with the peer group.

However, inspite of this predictable pattern, the influence of the social group varies (Hurlock. E.B., 1974).

1.2. Contributions of Anthropology to the Methods of studying Parent-Child

(The contributions of Anthropology to the study of

child-rearing may be divided into three categories- conceptual, methodological and substantive. On the conceptual side, the field of anthropology has contributed the concept and analysis of culture. On the methodological side anthropologists have developed the ethnographic interview and participant observation. On the substantive sides major contribution of anthropology has been to report a range of variation in many child rearing practices that goes far beyond any found within Western European society and thus provides a framework for defining cultural variables that are not bound to a single society. (Whiting & Whiting, 1970).

Parents greatly influence the attitudes, behaviour and character of their children through the types of stimulation they provide and the examples of behaviour they display. Furthermore, the parents must be able to supply not only the material requirements but also the psychological needs of the child. Out of the biological needs, the most important aspect of child rearing is the psychological needs like affection, security, recognition, responsibility and others which requires parents competency in providing the psychological wants. But regarding this psychological aspects, the needs of providing them vary from society to society or

from one culture to another, it depends on the social system which they have inherited whether Patriarchal, Matriarchal, Bilateral family etc., because the cultural influences and the traditional child-rearing methods play a dominant role in the relationship of parents with their children. Ralph Linton (1973) states "the individuals personality is shaped by culture, what he actually means is that it is shaped by the experiences which he derives from his interaction with parents, siblings and the environment". Hence, the parent-child relationship is so important that it shapes and moulds the character and personality of a child. The home is thus responsible for the development of human beings of a superior quality. If the home fails or mismanages this aspect, we do not know what products will it create, perhaps it may be harmful to the society. So a family philosophy is so vital and significant as it gives meaning to the lives, thoughts and experiences acquired by the members. It conditions the quality of a child through a daily interaction with all the members of the family.

The Cultural Anthropologists view of child development places greater emphasis on environmental

influences. They believe that the child is a function of a specific socio-cultural forces. They assert that the values and institutions of each culture produce a distinct personality type. A member of the specific culture. Each need is modified to some extent by the culture.

The culture of any society is a changing stream in which cultural continuities and discontinuities are occurring constantly. The point of emphasis here is that the child is the focal point of this recurring relationship between the cultures of the successive generations. Turning to cultural continuity we see that the child is the carrier and connecting link between the cultures of the succeeding generations. Kirk Patrick (1963) has already emphasised this point in these words "There has always been some awareness that important social continuities depend upon the parent-child relationship".

The work of Cultural Anthropologist in the past several decades has shown that many forms of behaviour do in fact differ considerably from one culture or society to another. Margaret Mead (1935) a leading Anthropologist has

shown quite convincingly many male-female differences in behaviour which we tend to think of as universal and an inheritant part of male and female nature are actually determined through the social learning process and differ widely from one culture to another. Mead examined the role behaviour associated with (and expected from) males and females in three primitive societies. The Arapesh, the Tehambuli and the Mundugumon. In the former she found that both male and females are expected to behave in a relatively passive manner similar to our expectations for the female role. Among the Mudugumon, both males and females act in a dominant, aggressive manner we expect of males in "our" (Western) society. Among the Tehambuli, our male female role differentiation is reversed, that is the female is expected to act in a dominant aggressive manner while the male is relatively passive and compassionate.

The patterned ways of behaving, thinking and feeling which we call culture, also influences a child's development by the time he can talk. The influence of culture on child development is seen most clearly in studies of primitive

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societies that have different child care practises. In some societies affection for children pre-dominates; in others children experience indifference and in yet others "anxiety provoking" treatment. In one tribe, the baby is a play thing, passed around from one person to another. This sort of teasing tends to develop withdrawn and detached personalities. In another tribe, children are treated affectionately by the adults, who feel responsible for all the children and exercise a certain affectionate control over them (Strang 1959).

In three communities in the South Western U.S. differences in authority patterns have been shown to have an interesting effect. In one group of Mormon origin the father is clearly in authority. In a second group of immigrants from Texas, matters of importance are discussed between father and mother and thus authority can be said to be shared. In the third group, the Zuni Indians, the authority in the household is vested on the grandmother. When pre-adolescent children in these groups were asked, "If a magic man could change you into a mother, father, a brother or a sister which would you choose to be?" Most children chose to be a relative of the

same sex as themselves. Several Mormon girls, however, choose to be a brother and several Zuni boys choose to be a sister. No cross-sex choices were made by the Texan children. Thus the authority structure of the household seems to influence sex preference (Whiting & Whiting 1970).

Studies of three primitive cultures in New-Guinea show striking personality contrasts. The mountain dwelling Arapesh tend to emphasize quite gentle, submissive, cooperative personalities. Among members of another New-Guinea tribe, one finds almost the direct opposite. The ideal of the Mundugumon, a river dwelling people, is violent aggressiveness. "Both men and women approximated to a personality type that we in our culture would find only in an undisciplined and very violent male". Both sexes are expected to be violent, competitive, aggressively sexed, jealous and ready to see and avenge insult, delighting in display in action, in fighting. And still a third culture, that of the Tehambuli tribe the sex roles are reversed as compared to those found in America. Women of this tribe are the dominant personalities. Men play a less responsible roles and are the emotionally dependent partners. Such seal

property as men actually own is received from woman in return for languishing looks and soft words.

Psychologists have been engaged in multifarious problems of parent-child relationship for the past half a century but soon recognised complexities of such problems and led to development of theories, sophistication of research strategies, and refinement of measuring instruments. However these efforts were not satisfactorily fruitful.

The past several years witnessed a rather sharp decline in number of studies on parent-child relationship. The situation in India remained still worse. Parmeswaran (1972), surveyed 120 studies on developmental psychology in ICSSR publication and found that only three of them related to parent-child relations. He aptly remarks that "parent-child relationship which has been extensively investigated in the U.S.A. has received little attention from Indian research workers (Tiwari 1979).

Adler, according to Verman (1982) emphasised that

man is motivated primarily by social urges. This is due to the fact that every culture emphasises its specific values which act as a motivating force and determine the behaviour of an individual. Culture influences the basic personality patterns, feelings towards parents, peer groups and opposite sex. Studies here show that some persons are broader in outlook because social environment is powerful, pervasive and dominating force which changes the character of the biological basic needs and emotions.)

Psychologist, Educators and Sociologist all agree that family is the most significant single influence on the development of the child. The family is the major environmental influence and remains throughout life the most pervasive of all influences. It is in the family that the child learns the basic norms of the society, he either learns to trust people or to be fearful and uncertain of others. It is in the home that the child first experiences the meaning of love. It is here that he comes to experience the give and take of family life. It is within the family that he imbibes the sentiment of loyalty to the group; thus, through the relationship with the mother, brother and sister etc. the

child learns of the effective aspects of life.

(According to Erickson (1960), these earliest interaction between a mother and her infant lay the ground work for the child's development of a sense of trust or distrust in the world. Rewarding and gratifying experience with his mother lead the infant to trust her and others. In contrast, a mother who is not dependable, does not minister to the child's need satisfactorily, produce a sense of distrust of her which later becomes a generalisation of the world.)

(The family through the parents serves the child and society best when it provides an atmosphere of acceptance, when the child receives love and encouragement. The child should have an opportunity to take on responsibilities and make choices at an early stage in life (Naik 1978).)

The basic needs of the child are affection, a feeling of security and recognition. The baby ordinarily receives considerable attention and affection from his mother or a person in charge of his care. The importance of this has been stressed recently in connection with charge concerning child

during early infancy. The child needs to see the same face often so that he may not frustrate by having to adjust to many different people. The home provides for his needs and a child becomes attached to a person responsible for providing for his needs. There is ~~some~~ evidence that the younger a child is when deprived of the sense of security and affection, the more serious will be the effect of his personality. Affection during the first, second and third year of life is most important.

The development of a well adjusted personality is not a result of accidents but rather of forces and conscience that are favourable for personality development. If a child is encouraged to participate in social activities where mutual interests are respected, if he is fortunate in being reared in a home where the parents are well adjusted, if he is given a responsible amount of guided liberty rather than authoritarian control he will probably develop desirable personality traits. But if his life is circumscribed with limited activities and superficial satisfaction, he will be able to respond to a well balance programme of living when he reaches maturity. The roots of most inferiority feelings

are laid in the insecurities of childhood. The growth of personality begins in the cradling practices of the home. The child may be truthfully said to be a part of everything he has experienced. The attitudes of parents, the values and pattern of the home, his class membership, composition of his play mates, the nature of community, the quality of the school he attends and his own constitutional make-up are factors that operate in an interrelated manner in affecting the growing personality (Garrison 1960).

Way and Adler (1936) report that the variation in adjustment in different aspects of life shown by a child will contribute much by the type of family. These studies show the importance of family in affecting the adjustment of individuals. Better adjustment in all levels of life is possible, if the child's family climate is satisfactory.

(Parents are assured to function as a model for the child's adjustment of life, particularly in home. If the parents are not well adjusted they will give the child a poor model to immitate and this is likely to lead to most mal-adjustment similar to that of his parents (Phillips 1951).)

The family occupies the first and the most significant place for the development of the child. In time it may be said that for a child home is the most safest and secure place. In home situation, he needs security and love from parents. He needs harmonious relationship and a well balanced attitude on the part of the parents (Verman 1982).

Family is regarded as the primary group of social interaction and hence, is important in understanding child development. Therefore, if the family ties are one sided, it may affect the growth and development of that particular child.

According to Emerson affection is probably the most important human emotion. We all want to be loved and respected by others. Children too want to be loved and respected by others, especially by their parents and teachers. Affection develops in a child a feeling of being wanted. Children who are not loved and respected by their parents and teachers suffer from a sense of insecurity (Brar 1981).

One of the greatest assets of home is the affection which children experience, when a child is loved for what he

is, he is developing a confidence that he is significant and worthy and he can trust friendly world. If on the other hand, he is without this affection he is likely to develop hostile and pessimistic view of the world and even towards himself. Child development literature stresses affection as being of prime importance (Garrison 1975).

Rearing children is an age old behaviour in all societies in the World. However the manner in which they are brought up differ from culture, society to society, family to family and even person to person in the same family. Psychologically, child rearing practises are not only the procedure of supplying the materials and basic needs of the child but it is continuous flow of interaction between the growing child and the careing adult. The child rearing practises which are very important in bringing-up children are mainly determined by the traditions existing in the particular society (Pathak 1979).

Home factor studies in some of the past researches on the personal and social development of adolescents have revealed considerable evidence that satisfaction related

to the basic needs for belongingness, security, affection and status met during the early life is important (Garrison 1975).

The family is the most universal institution of human society. Its universality arises out of a capacity to serve the fundamental human needs of reproduction, child protection, socialisation of the young and economic functions. The family is a human product of nature (Weinburg and Dhabat 1965).

Families exist everywhere and have existed throughout human existence on this planet. Everyone belongs to at least one family, and virtually everyone lives in one or more family groups. The family is the cradle of human groups. Family experience is necessary to turn a new born infant - a less than human puking, bawling brat with visceral urges - into a full human being with value and standards and the ability to live harmoniously with other people (Leslie White 1967).

Importance of the Study

The process of bringing up of the children however can never be alike all over the World. Ours being a country

of diverse types of people, religions, castes and communities child-rearing practices also differ from one place to another and even within the communities.

The early years of human life are very crucial for the development of the child particularly for the overall personality development. The health and mental make-up of a child is influenced to a large extent by the way the child is brought up. Brown (1957), opines that the biggest business in the World which overweighs all other values in the World is the business of rearing children.

Home and the family, more particularly the parents are the immediate environment that influence the development of the child to a large extent. According to Erickson the earliest interaction between a mother and her infant lay the ground work for the child's development of trust or distrust. Moreover, the parent-child relationship is of vital importance in forming a well round personality in a child.

The present study is therefore an attempt to analyse and describe the inter-relationship between the mother and

child in Khasi society ranging from the infant to the childhood stages (i.e. upto the onset of puberty) and above all the vital role played by the mother in her relationship with her child. Therefore, after observing the facts mentioned above, one could see the vital role played by parents in relationship with their children. It is undoubtedly that the parent-child relationship is so significant in to-day's World.

The Statement of Problem

(The Khasis (4,56,674 as per 1971 Census) are one of the most important tribes of the North-East. The Khasi speak a dialect that belongs to Mon-Khmer branch of the Austric family. It is believed that before coming up to the hills, these people lived for sometimes in the plains. Most of the ethnologist and linguists are also prove to accept that the Khasis were one of the oldest races in N.E. India who established Kingdoms North and East of their present habitation before they come up the hills. The tradition indicates that the ancient Khasi travelled from their ancient homes and came in search of metals, good soil line, limestones and rock traps. Finally they found such potential resources in the hills.

(The Khasi society following the matrilineal system) has evolved certain unique features of culture and tradition of its own which is quite different from other tribal societies in India. (Their social system with its emphasis on matrilineal family structure has built in mechanism to favour girls with property rights and family responsibility. Under such conditions, there can be differences between sons and daughters in relation to their perceptions of family as a primary group of interaction.) It is also likely that parents will handle the daily requirements of sons and daughters differently because of the built in bias in the Khasi social system in favour of daughters.

Scope of the Study

According to Erickson the earliest interaction between a mother and her infant lay the ground work for the child's development of Trust or distrust. Moreover, the parent child relationship is of vital importance in forming a well round personality in a child.

In the early years of life the most important influence on the child's social behaviour and attitudes is

likely to be the child-rearing methods used by his parents. The home is the 'seat of learning' for social skills. Only when children have satisfactory social relationship with members of their family can they fully enjoy social relationships with people outside the home, develop healthy attitudes toward people, and learn to function successfully in the peer group (Hurlock 1972).

A peculiar social characteristic among the Khasi is the matrilineal system in which woman inherits the family and landed property whereas with regard to succession to chieftainship the matrilineal laws of succession apply. Hence the logic of the system is such that the mother-child relationship is relatively different from other tribal societies of India. In the course of the study attempts will be made to analyse and bring out the vivid role played by the mother in the upbringing of her children.

It is well known that the Khasi in general and those of the tribes inhabiting in Shillong in particular have, for a not/ⁱⁿconsiderable period, been exposed to the influence of the Western civilization and intensive missionary activities.

These contacts, apart from what has come in the wake of the changed situation since Independence have made an impact on the traditional society of the Khasi particularly on their socio-cultural life. This study is therefore an endeavour to comprehend the actual relationship and socialization process at home. The role of parents, especially that of a mother in shaping the personality of the child. The study will further deal with a comparative analysis of the upbringing and various process of child rearing in Khasi families.

The study will also attempt to describe the role of the mother in a Khasi society particularly in fostering the overall personality development and the health and mental make-up of a child. In this background the importance of mother in a Khasi society will be seen and in this context the problem of mother and child interaction will be taken up, i.e. how a woman manages her family and her role in shaping the personality of the child.

In the course of the study attempts will also be made to study and deal into various aspects relating to child rearing rituals and initiation ceremonies and observe the extent

as to how much of equal emphasis is given to a male and a female child, and also to the extent to which the Khasi have found it expedient to retain their traditional system and practices with regard to the different stages in child rearing processes, though they have been living in contact with the outside world for the last 150 years or so. These contacts have impinged on the traditional system and new patterns have emerged out of the adjustments between extraneous elements and the indigenous forms. An attempt will be made, so that all the above mentioned aspects may be seen in the correct perspective.

In various studies in the past no distinction was made between training of boys and girls in the various cultures studied. However, one large scale investigation (Barry, Baron and Child 1957) using the Yale cross - cultural survey files to compare the child rearing practices in several societies, found that boys received more achievement training in most of these cultures while girls were given more obedience and responsibility training. This finding is congruent with those of several investigations of child rearing within the U.S. such as that by Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957).

Hence, societies differ tremendously in the structure of the family and the characteristic orientations of parents towards their children and such variations have direct consequences for the shaping of the individual. Family organisation in different societies show a wide range of variation. For example, in some societies families are patrilineal, the male line of descent determining the clan membership and often the residence, wealth and social structure of the family. In other societies families are matrilineal, the family 'position' being related to the female line of descent. In still others, families are bilateral the lines of descent of both parents and contributing to the family's clan membership and status (McGrath 1964).

Therefore, the present study was an attempt to investigate the mother-child relationship amongst the Khasi and the factors examined were affection, discipline, status, aggression, responsibility, behaviour and inter-action as accorded and perceived by Khasi mothers towards her children.

Limitation of the Study

The study was confined to a sample of 25 families. The sample of study was confined to a village (Nongkrem)

in the outskirts of Shillong. The village was chosen as it has high concentration of Khasi population, educated as well as non-educated and all levels of socio-economic income groups of families and it was felt necessary that representative life-style of the Khasi would be reflected clearly in such a place. The Questionnaire used in the study were administered to only those families with children in the age group of 1-14 years from each selected household, mothers were approached to record their perceptions toward their mother-child relationship.

Objective of the Study

The past several years witnessed a rather sharp decline in number of studies on parent-child relationship. The situation in India in general and particularly in North-East India remained still worse. This kind of study on parent-child relationship which has been remarkably developed and extensively investigated in U.S.A. and other Western countries, has received little attention from Indian research workers.

Therefore, the present study aimed at -

(1) To study the quality of mother-child relationship as related to affection, aggression, discipline, status, responsibility, behaviour and interaction in Khasi (a tribal matrilineal society) as perceived by mothers.

(2) To find out the relevance of mother-child relationship in the Khasi society to the different aspects of adjustment of their children.

Methodology

The findings of the present study are based on a sample of 25 mothers. The sample for the study was generated from different localities of Nongkrem. The sample data consisted of mothers having children of pre-school age and school going children.

The Questionnaire used in the study were administered only to those selected families with both sons and daughters in the age group of 1-14 years. From each selected household the mother was approached to record their perception and inter-action towards their children.

Sample

Family was used as the unit of study. From each

selected family the mother was approached to record her perceptions in respect of different aspects of the mother-child relationship. The selection of the locality to be included in the sample survey was made only after considering the following factors -

(i) Localities in the outskirts of Shillong with concentration of Khasi families alone was selected to identify the sample of Khasi families as it was felt that representative life style of the Khasi society would be reflected in such places.

(ii) From each selected family children ranging within the age group of 1 - 14 years were included.

(iii) All levels of socio-economic status were represented in the sample.

(iv) Only those families which had both male and female children alone were included for research.

The Mother-Child Relation Questionnaire (PCRQ)

The perceptions of mothers were tested by a modified version (adaption of) the Clark's parent-child relation Questionnaire (Tiwari 1980) was used (Warjri 1987). The original Questionnaire consisted of 60 questions on 8 variables and was intended to illicit information from father, mother and children seperately, in respect of each ones reaction towards the other. It was felt that such a

procedure would be too cumbersome to use in the present study. Hence, it was decided to depend for information regarding mother-child relationship on the perceptions of mothers interviews from each family. Modifications were also made in the number of variables to be studied to know the quality of the mother-child relationship.

After the modifications there were altogether 47 items and six variables were retained. Hence, the six major dimensions of the mother-child relation Questionnaire were affection, discipline, aggression, status, responsibility and interaction.

Scoring

The replies to specific questions (PCRQ) under perception of mothers pertaining to mother-child relationship fell into two categories viz., 'yes' and 'no'. In scoring the responses, the replies furnished were carefully examined and scaled them as one point for 'yes' and zero point for 'no' for positive items. Again it was in the reverse order in respect of certain negative questions for which one point were given to 'no' and zero point to 'yes'. This

scheme resulted in a dimension-wise total score for each respondent.

Procedure

After the selection of the locality and the finalisation of the tools, data collection was started. The Headman of the selected locality was first approached and his help was sought in contacting the families. In all cases, the Headman provided a man to accompany the investigator to visit the different khasi families in the capacity of a interpreter. To start with, full explanation had to be given to the families about the purpose of the study.

The Investigator approached every house with the Questionnaire in hand. The next step was the distribution of the Questionnaire to the mother of each family. The mother had to read the instruction in the front page before the answer were given. Mothers were requested to express their responses honestly and freely. As soon as the answers were furnished the investigator collected the Questionnaire.

General Anthropological methods of observation and indepth interviews of mother through open-ended Questionnaire

and personal interviews of mothers were used.

Chapter Scheme

The Chapter scheme for the present study is as follows:

Chapter one discusses the problem, objectives, importance, scope, limitation, data and methodology etc. of the study.

Chapter two discusses review of related literature and parent-child relationship in the matrilineal societies eiz. the Trobriard, the Navajo, the Nayar, Ashanti, the Truk and the Garos.

Chapter three discusses the origin of the Khasis their descent and residence parent-child relationship in the Khasi matriliney, Khasi family organisation, Family organisation of Matrilineal system, inheritance and finally problem of Matriliney.

The fourth chapter of the study deals with result and discussion on the major findings of the study.

The fifth and final chapter pertains to summary and conclusions of the study.

Introduction to Study Area -

Nongkrem is located in the eastern most corner of the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. The name Nongkrem has a particular significance. 'Nong' means village and 'krem' meaning caves. Nongkrem therefore means village of caves.

The village lies at a distance of about 13 kms. from Shillong. In contrast to usual tribal villages, Nongkrem is a fairly large village having a total population of about 1899 individuals living in 350 households. The entire village is divided into localities. Each locality is headed by a village headman or by the 'Gaonbura'. The localities together form a village council headed by the 'Sardar'. In discharging his duties the Sardar is assisted by a Secretary and by the Headmen of the different localities. The most striking feature of the village is that it is directly administered by the 'syiem' a Khasi royal authority.

Nongkrem with a typical hilly landscape lying to the South of Shillong but with a higher altitude is a traditional Khasi village that has been existing for many

hundreds of years now. Where we find combination of both Christian and non-Christian families. (Agriculture is the main occupation of the people, a number of small cottage industries like blacksmithy, basket making, broom-stick making, hollow block making, carpentry, tailoring and furniture making can be found in some parts of the village. Whereas people occupying the semi-urban part of the village are largely engaged in various trade and commercial activities like, retail sale operation of essential goods and commodities, tea shops and vegetable selling etc. There is quite a high rate of literacy and education among the people, and economically too people of the area are quite well established. However, at present there is a shift of occupation from agriculture to salaried employment and moreover establishment of neo-local residence, education and possession of salaried jobs is making dependence on agriculture less.

These contemporary factors seem to have made quite an impact, on the dwellers of the village, with regard to their traditional modes of living, occupation, education and religion.