

The NEHU Journal

R KHONGSDIER
B T LANGSTIEH &
B M REDDY
K S NAGARAJA
KETSHUKIETUO
DZÜVICHÜ
ISABELLA LALL
S N SINGH
SUKALPA
BHATTACHARJEE

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The NEHU Journal

Editor : T B Subba

Associate Editor : Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih

Assistant Editor : Bedarius Shylla

Production Assistants : Surajit Dutta & Binod Rynjah

Layout and Design : Shongdor Diengdoh

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All correspondence related to the journal may be addressed to the Editor, NEHU Publications, Bijni Complex, Shillong-793003 at tbsubba@sancharnet.in.

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Editorial

With January 2004 issue *The NEHU Journal* enters the second year of its publication. During 2003, the year of its birth, we at the editorial office were successful in obtaining the ISSN for the journal, getting the editorial board approved by the Governing Body of the University Publications, and starting the process of

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every issue. We have one citation referee. We the first referee had not been fair to an author, but from the next issue we intend to have two referees. We are also doing book reviews, to at least two referees. Honestly, this might not always be possible, for we still need to solicit articles from friends and acquaintances, but we shall at least try and get back to the contributors for various clarifications, if and when necessary.

We begin this year with a regret about not being able to utilise the services of our very able copy editor, but are happy to announce that we have now an assistant editor who is on a full-time job related to the journal. With his editorial assistance, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, the Associate Editor, and I, hope to be able to pay some attention to the promotion of the journal both within and outside North-East India, which we realise is as important as raising its standard.

As we wish you all a very happy 2004, we would like to request you to kindly send your valuable articles, review essays, book reviews and academic papers for possible publication in the journal. We would also like to inform you that though we have revised our subscription rates, they are still much lower than the actual expenses involved in the publication. We shall be ever grateful if you consider patronising the journal not only by contributing to it academically but also financially by subscribing to it.

NEHU

T B Subba
Editor

Editorial

With January 2004 issue *The NEHU Journal* enters the second year of its publication. During 2003, the year of its birth, we at the editorial office were successful in obtaining the ISSN for the journal, getting the editorial board approved by the Governing Body of the University Publications, and starting the process of vetting every manuscript at least by one outstation referee. We sent a manuscript to a second referee only when we thought that the first referee had not been fair to an author, but from the next issue we intend to send the manuscript, including book reviews, to at least two referees. Honestly, this might not always be possible, for we still need to solicit articles from friends and acquaintances, but we shall at least try and get back to the contributors for various clarifications, if and when necessary.

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Need for Counselling: A Study on Degree Students of Shillong

ISABELLA LALL

Degree students are at a stage of life which is crucial. It is a stage when the surge of life is at its peak. These years are also the most difficult years, beset with all kinds of vagaries and ambivalences. Some youths at this stage of their lives are excessively egoistic yet capable of self sacrifice and devotion; they oscillate between complete submission to one leader and complete disregard for any kind of authority; at times they are inconsiderate to others and at other times extremely sensitive about themselves; they may throw themselves with full enthusiasm into community life and at the same time have a deep longing for solitude. Some youths are unable to understand their own selves; some have support system in their parents and relatives, and some do not have such support. Counselling services provide a good support system to all those who do not have anyone to turn to when confronted with problems. The need for counselling emerges strong in their lives and their teething problems.

Problems at this stage may be related to what is known as 'identity diffusion', which refers to a situation when a person's social role and his perceptions are easily swayed by the opinion of others. They may also be peer-related disorders, when a youth may be persuaded to undergo dangerous activities to seek acceptance by the peer group such as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, smoking and sex. These may cause tremendous emotional and physical stress in those who experience these for the first time.

In academics too youths encounter various problems. Choice of subjects based on grades and aptitude; study habits and skills;

academic load; coping with the institution, etc. are some of the problems. Special efforts are needed for first generation learners whose parents may never have gone to a school, college or university. The first generation learners may suffer from many academic problems because of deficiencies in their own homes, background, and inability of the parents to assist them.

Why Counselling?

Counselling is a purposeful interpersonal communication between two or more persons in which feelings, thoughts and attitudes are explored, expressed and shared through a process of self-clarification for the purpose of resolving issues/problems and arriving at self-directed decisions. This is done through a process of self-clarification with the purpose of arriving at a self-directed and relevant decision. Counselling encompasses individualisation, i.e., giving respect to individual differences, a non-judgemental attitude, maintaining confidentiality, keeping the right of the clientele to self-determination, etc. It is not an authoritative direction, or making decisions for themselves. It is assistance/help made available by professionals to individuals belonging to any age group to help direct their own lives, develop their own point of view, make their own decisions and carry their own burden. It enables individuals to understand themselves better so that they are aware of their own weaknesses and strengths. Professional counsellors enable individuals to be aware of their hidden potentials, to tap unused strength, to develop their own creativity and spontaneity so that they can relate better to their own life goals, reach mature self-determination, and live as responsible members of society.

In the field of education we find a large number of students at the threshold of college or university in compelling and constrained situations due to their own selves. They are shy, gullible, fearful and unskilled in managing their own affairs. Basically they lack self-knowledge, which hampers creation of realistic goals and plans. They also lack focus and meaningful direction. Occasionally they lose their sense of direction in the confusing labyrinths of adolescence and do

not know how to conduct themselves. They have to grapple with complex situations while living in hostels, sharing rooms or other facilities, participating in extra-curricular activities, etc. Literature on Indian students documents widespread feeling of dissatisfaction with college and university life. Adequate professional counselling can also facilitate transition from education to work.

Regarding student counselling in particular it has three-fold functions, namely, adjustmental functions, orientational functions and developmental functions. Counselling done by professional counsellors render guidance to students so that they are better adjusted to educational setting, home, community life and later professionally. Often counsellors hold orientation programmes for new students in collaboration with faculty members and administrators of institutions they are associated with. This is done to familiarise the new students to the institution and its system, what the institution expects from them and what students expect from the institution they have joined. Thus orientational functions performed by the counsellors contribute to resolving adjustment problems of students to a large extent. Counsellors aim at effecting a change when the first symptoms of problems start surfacing, thereby avoiding accumulation of these problems, which may block an individual's growth. Thus, counselling assists development of individuals.

The world is changing fast. As a result human life is getting more and more complex. Thus problems in personal, academic, familial, social and professional lives are increasing. Therefore, counselling should assume centre stage shouldering responsibility for individuals in all aspects.

Universe of Study and Sampling

The universe of present study comprised three colleges, namely, St. Mary's, St. Edmund's and St. Anthony's having enrolment of 1233, 819 and 1832 students respectively for the year 2001-2002. The study is based on random sampling from the three

colleges. A total of 249 questionnaires comprising 17 questions on "Students' Perspective on Need for Counselling in their Academic and Personal Life" were administered to the students. The number of questionnaires per college was 83. In the three colleges taken together the responses are skewed more towards the females than males. This could be because St. Mary's college is an exclusively girls' college and the other two colleges are co-educational. The enrolment of the three-year degree courses of 2001-2002 also indicates higher female enrolment. Thus it justifies the skewed tendency towards the females.

Instruments Used

The author developed a questionnaire and pre-tested it for its reliability and validity on 50 respondents chosen at random from among the three colleges under study using appropriate statistical techniques. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.78. Finally, a total of 250 questionnaires were administered in the three colleges and 249 questionnaires were received back.

Profile of Respondents

Female respondents were 146 comprising 58.63%, while 100 respondents were male, and 3 persons (1.20%) did not disclose their gender. Regarding their marital status, 238 persons (95.58%) were unmarried, 6 persons (2.41%) were married and 5 persons (2.01%) did not disclose their marital status. About religion, 183 persons (73.49%) were Christians, 43 persons (17.27%) were Hindus, 10 persons (4.02%) were Muslims, 9 persons (3.61%) belonged to the 'other' category, and 4 persons (1.61%) did not disclose their religion.

Regarding their caste background, 195 persons (78.31%) were Scheduled Tribes, 43 persons (17.27%) were from the general category, 6 persons (2.41%) were Scheduled Castes, 1 person (0.40%) belonged to the Other Backward Category, and 4 persons did not disclose their caste identity.

Regarding family income, 120 persons (48.19%) stated having a family income between Rs10,000 - Rs.20,000 per month, 86 persons (34.54%) stated their family income to be less than Rs.10,000 per month, 39 persons (15.66%) stated their family income to be more than Rs.20,000 per month, and 4 persons (1.61%) did not respond to this query.

The Data

Regarding the question on whether or not they understand what counselling means, 217 (87.15%) indicated that they understood what it meant, 22 (8.84%) stated they did not understand what it meant, and 10 (4.02%) did not respond to this query at all, which is likely due to ignorance about it, although it could not be confirmed.

Regarding the source of their information on counselling, 66 (26.51%) stated that they came to know about it from their family members, 58 (23.29%) knew about it because their friends had been counselled, 54 (21.69%) did not get their information from any of the options enumerated in the questionnaire, 37 (14.86%) stated that their source of information was literature on counselling, 27 (10.84%) stated that their source of information was counselling cells of their institutions, and 7 (2.81%) did not respond to this query.

Regarding the query as to whom the students will approach for help/consultation in case of any problem in the college, 94 of them (37.75%) said they would approach their friends for help, 53 (21.29%) said that they would approach faculty members, 49 (19.68%) mentioned that they would approach their own family members, 42 (16.87%) indicated that they would approach a counsellor for help, 8 (3.21%) indicated that they would not approach any person mentioned in the options and 3 (1.20%) did not respond to this query.

To the query as to whom the students would turn to regarding study related problems 72 (28.92%) indicated that they would turn to friends, 66 (26.51%) would turn to family members, 51 (20.48%)

would turn to counsellors, 36 (14.46%) would turn to faculty members, 19 (7.63%) stated that they would not turn to any of the persons mentioned in the options, and 5 (2.01%) did not respond to this query.

In case of emotional strain due to heavy academic load and consequent problems 94 (37.75%) students would share this problem with friends, 93 (37.35%) would share this problem with family members, 30 (12.05%) would share this problem with counsellors, 18 (7.23%) would share this problem with faculty members, 9 (3.61%) would not share this problem with any of the persons mentioned in the options, and 5 of them (2.01%) did not respond to this query.

In case of failure in examination and consequent feeling of inferiority complex 121 (48.59%) indicated that they would consult family members, 53 (21.29%) would consult a counsellor, 47 (18.88%) would consult friends, 16 (6.43%) would not consult any of the persons mentioned in the options, 9 (3.61%) would consult faculty members, and 3 (1.20%) did not respond to this query.

To the query with whom would the students discuss the problem of not being able to come up academically to their parent's expectation, 104 respondents (41.77%) answered that they would discuss this problem with friends, 57 (22.89%) answered that they would discuss this problem with family members, 54 (21.69%) stated that they would discuss with a counsellor, 20 (8.03%) would not discuss this problem with any of the persons mentioned in the options, 11 (4.42%) would discuss this problem with faculty members, and 3 (1.20%) did not respond to this query.

In case of emotional set back and consequent feeling of rejection accompanied with the lack of concentration in studies, 126 (50.60%) would discuss the problem with friends, 53 (21.29%) would discuss with counsellor, 32 (12.85%) would discuss with family members, 28 (11.24%) would not discuss this problem with any of the persons mentioned in the options, 6 (2.41%) did not respond to this query, and 4 (1.61%) would discuss this problem

with faculty members.

In case of indulgence in pre-marital sex and the consequent feeling of guilt and anxiety, 79 respondents (31.73%) would share the problem with counsellor, 67 (26.91%) would share with friends, 52 (20.88%) would share with family members, 40 (16.06%) would not share this problem with any person mentioned in the options, 10 (4.02%) did not respond to this query, and 1 (0.40%) would share this problem with faculty members.

In case of addiction to alcohol/drugs/tobacco and wanting to quit the habit, 93 respondents (37.35%) replied that they would consult counsellors, 60 (24.10%) of them would consult friends, 49 (13.65%) would not consult any of the persons mentioned in the options, 10 (4.02%) did not respond to this query, and 3 respondents (1.20%) would consult faculty members.

Conclusion

Thus, a counsellor stands as the first choice of students only with regard to two out of eight problems they might face. In case of five problems, counsellors are actually the third choice of the respondents. And regarding one problem, counsellors rank as the second choice. Thus we find that though 87.15% respondents indicated that they knew what counselling meant in case of problems the bulk of students would prefer to consult their friends and their second choice is family. The fact that counsellors are professionally trained does not give the students much confidence in resolving their problems.

Due to rapid changes in the world we live, human life has become more and more complex. This applies to the lives of degree students as well. Therefore it is suggested that counselling services are made available in all academic institutions. Such centres should also be effective and provide quality counselling to the students who need their expertise. Counselling services need to be manned by versatile, competent, professional and committed persons. Their

main strategy should be to reach those students who are at a vulnerable age and give them the much needed assistance and support. They need to work closely with faculty members, administrators as well as the students. Strategies need to be worked out to draw the students to counsellors when various problems beset them.

Counselling should, however, not be viewed as a panacea for all ills that may challenge the students. It is a support system for those students who do not know who to share their problems with and how to benefit from the same. Counsellors' agenda should be humanisation and personalisation of college environment, consultation, assistance to students regarding choice of subjects, career counselling, crisis management, establishment of self-help group programmes on campus, co-operation with other campus units and professional organisation. All this will certainly improve college or university atmosphere and help the students to face the challenges in their lives much more successfully.

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APPENDICES

Table 1. Sex of the Respondents

Sex	No. of Persons	Percentage
Female	146	58.63
Male	100	40.16
Not Mentioned	3	1.20

Table 2. Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	No. of Persons	Percentage
Unmarried	238	95.58
Married	6	2.41
Did not disclose marital status	5	2.01

Table 3. Religion of the Respondents

Religion	No. of Persons	Percentage
Christian	183	73.49
Hindus	43	17.27
Muslims	10	4.02
Other	9	3.61
Did not respond	4	1.61

Table 4. Caste of the Respondents

Caste	No. of Persons	Percentage
ST	195	78.31
General	43	17.27
SC	6	2.41
OBC	1	0.40
Did not respond	4	1.61

Table 5. Family Income of the Respondents

Family Income (Per Month)	No. of Persons	Percentage
Between Rs.10, 000 to Rs. 20,000	120	48.19
Less than Rs.10,000	86	34.54
More than Rs. 20,000	39	15.66
Did not respond	4	1.61

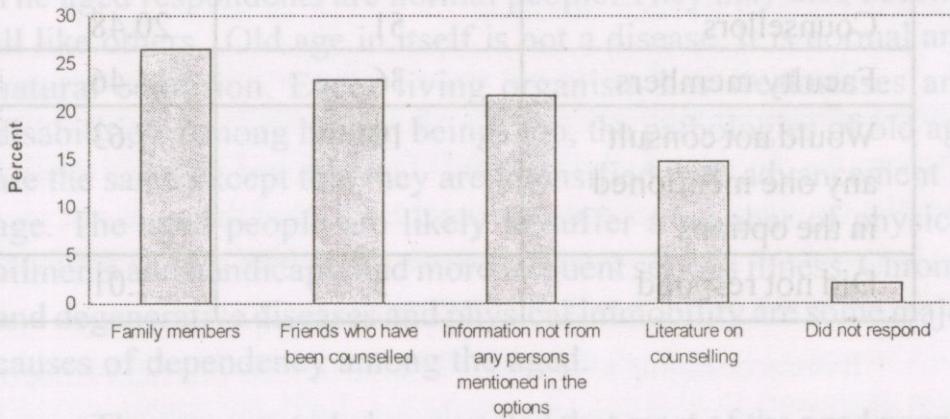
Table 6. Understanding of Counselling

Understanding of Counselling	No. of Persons	Percentage
Having understanding of counselling	217	87.15
Not having understanding of counselling	22	8.84
Did not respond	10	4.02

Table 7. Source of Information Regarding Counselling.

Category of people and source	No. of persons	Percentage
Family members	66	26.51
Friends who have been counselled	58	23.29
Information not from any persons mentioned in the options	54	21.69
Literature on counselling	37	14.86
Did not respond	7	2.08

Source of Information Regarding Counselling



Sources of Information

The present study has revealed that most of the aged people suffer from one or a combination of ailments. Many of them either regard themselves to be in excellent condition or are indifferent to their health despite their suffering from illness. When asked about their physical ailments or handicaps common in old age it was reported by many that they often consider such problems to be

Table 8. Whom the Students will Approach for Help in Case of Problem in College

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Friends	94	37.75
Faculty members	53	21.29
Family members	49	19.68
Counsellors	42	16.87
Would not approach any one mentioned in the options	8	3.21
Did not respond	3	1.20

Table 9. Study Related Problem

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Friends	72	28.92
Family members	66	26.51
Counsellors	51	20.48
Faculty members	36	14.46
Would not consult any one mentioned in the options	19	7.63
Did not respond	5	2.01

Having understanding of counselling 87.15

Not having understanding of counselling 8.84

Did not respond 10 4.02

Table 10. In Case of Emotional Strain Due to Heavy Academic Load

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Friends	94	37.75
Family members	93	37.35
Would not share the problem with any one mentioned in the options	9	3.61
Did not respond	5	2.01

Table 14. Pre-marital Sex, Consequent Feeling of Guilt

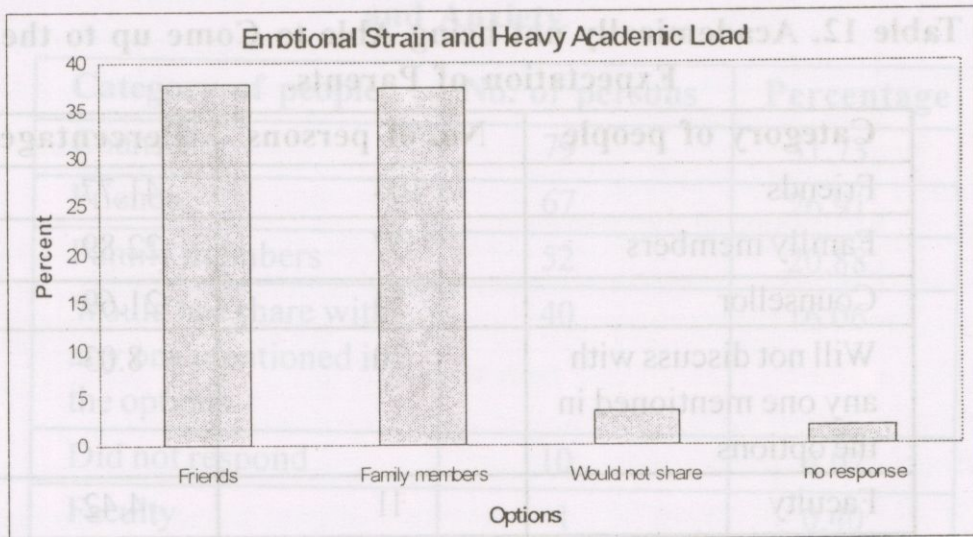


Table 11. Failure in Examination and the Feeling of Inferiority Complex

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Family members	121	48.59
Counsellors	53	21.29
Friends	47	18.88
Will not consult any one mentioned in the options	16	6.43
Faculty	9	3.61
Did not respond	3	1.20

Table 12. Academically not being Able to Come up to the Expectation of Parents.

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Friends	104	41.77
Family members	57	22.89
Counsellor	54	21.69
Will not discuss with any one mentioned in the options	20	8.03
Faculty	11	4.42
Did not respond	3	1.20

Table. 13 Emotional Set Back and Consequent Feeling of Rejection.

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Friends	126	50.60
Counsellor	53	21.29
Family members	32	12.85
Would not discuss with any one mentioned in the options	28	11.24
Did not respond	6	2.41
Faculty	4	1.61

Table. 14. Pre-marital Sex, Consequent Feeling of Guilt and Anxiety.

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Counsellor	79	31.73
Friends	67	26.91
Family members	52	20.88
Would not share with any one mentioned in the options.	40	16.06
Did not respond	10	4.02
Faculty	1	0.40

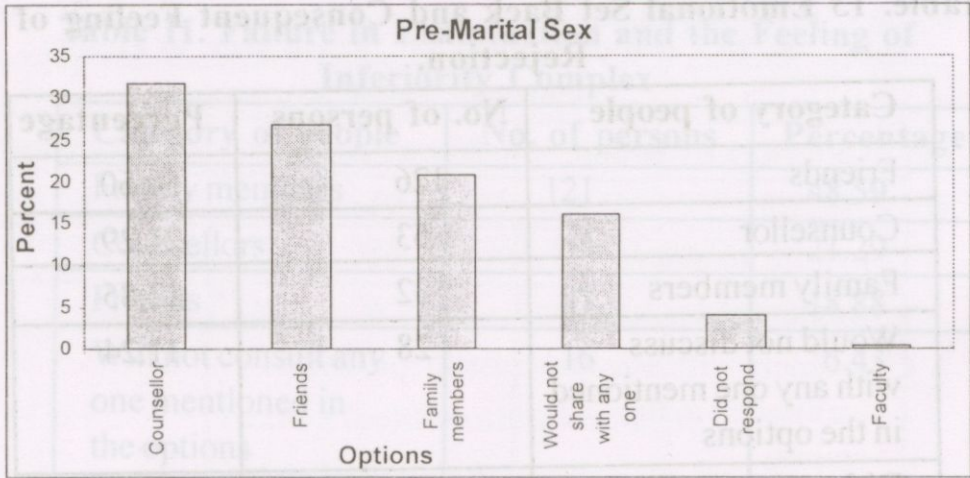
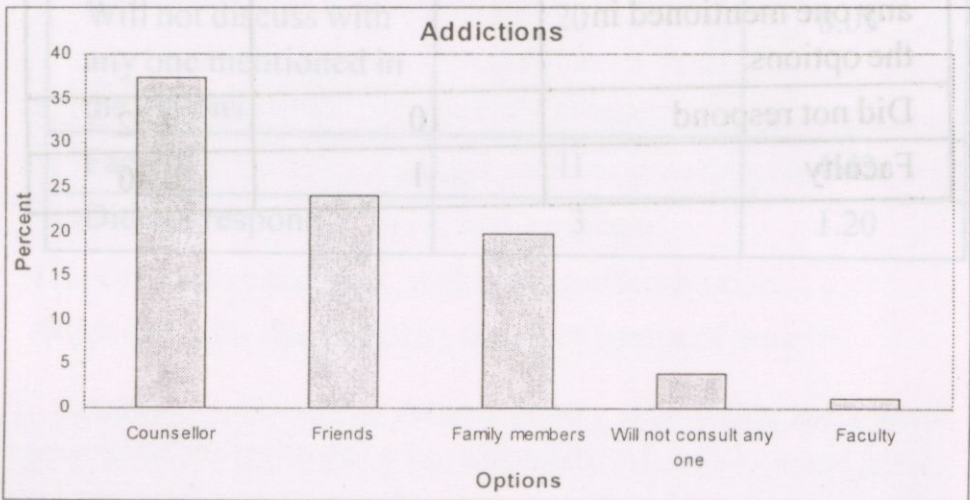


Table.15 Addiction to Alcohol/Smoking/Drugs/Tobacco and Wanting to Quit the Habit.

Category of people	No. of persons	Percentage
Counsellor	93	37.35
Friends	60	24.10
Family members	49	19.68
Will not consult any one mentioned in the options	10	4.02
Faculty	3	1.20



Book Review

Elizabeth Dell (ed), *Burma: Frontier Photographs: 1918-1935*, James Henry Green Collection, Merrel Publishers Ltd, London, 2000.

The British presence in the Brahmaputra valley loomed large from 1825. This thinly populated, little exposed, and highly forested region was destined to be the pioneer tea plantation of the empire. The tea industry attracted numerous fortune seekers, influential industrialists and even some British bureaucrats preferred planting tea bushes to serving the empire. These potential tea-growing areas were also the play fields for the various tribes in search of slaves and trophies of human skulls. These tribal raids in the later British tea growing territories led to numerous pacification expeditions to the hills resulting in carving out of the various hill districts as loosely administered 'excluded areas'. That is how Garo Hills, Mikir Hills, Naga Hills and Lushai Hills districts were created in the province of Assam by the turn of the nineteenth century. Through the same process the northern triangle of Upper Burma, soon to be known as Kachin Hills, were carved out as a distinct administrative arrangement in 1895 in the northernmost part of the British Indian Empire. The book under review refers to the region, its resident Singphos of classical British ethnography (now Jingphaw) and their past heritage.

James Henry Green (1893-1975) was a soldier of the British Indian Empire in its waning period. He joined the Burma Rifles as its recruitment officer and worked up to 1935 in the 'Excluded Areas' Kachin Hills, northern Burma. He left Rangoon (now Yangon) in 1937 for Singapore to take up the post of military intelligence officer. After the fall of Singapore in 1942 during the World War II, he returned to London, where he remained for the next ten years in the British Foreign Office. He was a photographer

par excellence, who used classical ethnographic technique as a tool for military intelligence and recruitment. In course of his nearly twenty years of stay in the Kachin Hills, he took numerous photographs, collected ethnographic exhibits, and wrote his tour diaries containing priceless data on the lives of the people and events of the region. The James Henry Charitable Trust placed 1600 photographs, 200 textile exhibits and diaries with the Royal Pavilion, Library and Museum, Brighton, England for up keep and research. *The Burma: Frontier Photographs: 1918-1935* is based on photographs and accompanying texts, spread in five chapters and contributed by four scholars. These chapters are lavishly illustrated with appropriate photographs from Green's collection. The book contains 230 photographs of different sizes, a priceless collection of photographic album running into 90 pages. Biographic note on J H Green, bibliography and index at the end enhance the utility of the book for the readers.

Elizabeth Dell in her 'Introduction' to the book, titled "Mapping Burma: the James Henry Green Collection of Photographs", found that the photographs formed a part of a particular unequal transaction between peoples, and stand as a record of those transactions and points of contacts. They also have a life and meaning beyond intentions, skill, luck and vision of the photographer and as archival evidence they are witness to an era, events and institutions long gone by (p.9). As a recruiting officer with the Burma Rifles he travelled to remote northern hills previously unmapped by Europeans. His fascination with the people of the region aroused a life long interest culminating in a fellowship of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1928, and a diploma in Anthropology from Cambridge University in 1934 on "The Tribes of Upper Burma North of 24 degree N and Their Classification". He studied the nuances of the customs, beliefs, languages and physical attributes that distinguished neighbouring groups and recorded these according to the anthropological practices prevalent in those days.

On the basis of Green's archives of notes, diaries, speeches, publications and photographs, the volume under review records his role as military intelligence officer and an amateur anthropologist, his observations on peoples and collection of artifacts—specially textiles. Green's photographs should be seen in the line of photography as a tool of descriptive ethnography and as a part of the colonial anthropological heritage since 1860s, which began with E T Dalton's *Descriptive Ethnography of Bengal*. This ethnographic collection of strong visual record of Kachin State also highlights the tension between the past and present of Kachin people engaged in negotiating the place of these records within the contemporary construction of their national identity. Burma proper was administered as a province of India and frontier areas were identified as 'excluded areas'. Even in 1935 the residents of this region had not heard of Burma or Burmans, leave alone of India. Green was aware that many of the ethnological problems were baffling, but thought that "a study of physical anthropology, technology and mythology will solve a good many of them" (p.15). Physical attributes were clearly of importance in recruiting 'types' for military as well as for racial classification of the people, a pet project of the colonial days. He advocated a general knowledge of the culture of people to be of greater importance to the administrators than that of the language.

The strongest part of Green's photographic collection is the portraiture, though there is little in his diaries or route notes that refers directly to the process of capturing images of people. The images of people show Green's interest in physical types, their costumes and their evolution. He was clearly a product of his time and of beliefs and motivations of the empire. His Anthropology, like his photography, was in harness to his official role in military surveillance and control. However, the images collected in the book can point to an understanding of modern construction of identity, nationhood and unity as they are analysed, incorporated, rejected or used as evidence in contemporary Burma. After all, Green's is

part of a tradition of ethnographical documentation through photography, which stretches back to mid nineteenth century. That was the time bulky camera was considered indispensable documentary tool for the benefit of colonial ethnography and useful to the administration.

It goes without saying that publication of the *Peoples of India* between 1868 and 1875 containing 500 photographs of racial, ethnic and caste types was part of an ideology to tabulate, synthesize and ultimately control the culture of India in the aftermath of the mutiny of 1857-58. In spite of the individual photographers' skill to overcome the limitations imposed by the cumbersome camera, the photographs were invariably unsatisfactory: "the people always seemed nervous, their expressions were invariably stupid or stolid and they posed very unwillingly". By 1920s the camera was improved to the extent that its intimidating size was reduced; its portability was increased and its intrusive features were minimized. But by then science of ethnography itself had changed and thus postures and intimacy of camera began to be questioned.

David Odo notes that Green's images attest to the unprecedented access he had to his subjects. Perhaps he was the first European to encounter many of the people he had photographed and studied. Through out the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries photography was largely considered a simple recording, truth revealing, mechanism. Photography played a major role in Salvage Ethnography of the period and much of Green's work can be located within this tradition. Heavily influenced by existing anthropological paradigm of race and evolutionism many of his images are of the homogenizing and dehumanizing 'physical type'. "This is evident from large number of images in which body functions as an object of study. His photograph of two Naga men is one the more extreme examples of this position (No. 0625). Two men are posed in naked and are shown in full length... it nevertheless reduces its human subjects to mere physical specimen...the men's facial expressions attest to their distress at the time they were photographed. They

are pictured without clothing. The subjects are located in 'nature', employing none of the signs such as material artifacts or built environments, typically used to provide information about cultural context. Rather, it is absence of clothing that here serves as cultural marker, for Nagas were stereotyped as 'lazy', preferring to go naked than weave cloth... We learn virtually nothing of the conditions of their lives from this photograph, rather it is informative of the photographer's intentions and ideology and unequal power relation that enabled Green to create it" (pp. 43-45).

For David Odo, Green's photography suffers from two qualities: dehumanising physical types and images of exceptional intimacy and sympathy. Through these photographs of physical typing not only could the subjects of dying races be studied, but they could also be preserved. For him authority also provided a way to salvage the subjects' culture, which was highly paternalistic. Green did not work within Malinowskian model: rather he favoured close-ups and portraits, posed his subjects and tended to eliminate context from his images. By 1920s, the view that photography afforded an objective window to reality that had largely been discredited. These changes contributed to a decline in the anthropological use of photography, as new anthropology was interested in culture, now constructed, and not as visible.

Mandy Sadan's two chapters on 'Contemporary Context' and 'Documentary Record of Contact' raise the issue of the relevance of colonial anthropology to ethnic groups and nationalities on the one hand, and negotiating a relationship with the animistic heritage by contemporary Christian nationalities such as Kachin, Naga and Mizo on the other. She began her research on a selection of Green's archives in Rangoon in 1996. Kachin State emerged as a political entity after the Burmese independence in 1948 and Kachin identity is itself largely political in origin. However, it was the British who initiated the process in 1895 through the Kachin Hill Regulation, an Act labeling hill tribal villages as 'Kachin' for the use of administration. It is also a fact that Kachin soldiers were mainly

drawn from Jingphaw (Singpho) community besides Lisus and others. In this way, the term 'Kachin' was artificially created, like the word 'Nagas' some two decades before that and an ethno-political composition of six parts such as Jingphaw, Lisu, Maru, Nung-Rawang, Zaiwa and Lacid was imposed on northern Burma.

The world of Green's photographs, taken 75 years back, is not only difficult, but also discomfiting and contemporary Christian Kachin nationalists would like to dissociate themselves from their animist past. For many Kachin Christians, their animist cultural context displayed through these photographs can be immensely disturbing. The Kachin theologians frequently cite the oppressive burden of animist rituals as the main reason for their rapid conversion to the Christianity. Against the Burmese attempt to make Buddhism the official State religion, Christianity was drafted as the symbol of Kachin nationalist resistance against the Rangoon regime. Kachin missionaries emphasised on the superiority of Christianity to animism. However, there is a deep-rooted insecurity about how the animist relates to the Christian present and whether such photographs should ever be considered more than simply a record of a degenerate culture. To advance the worth of Green's photographs exposes danger of undermining the foundations of unity expressed through the symbol of Christian faith. Modern Kachin nationalist discourse demands a level of 'standardization' of ethno-cultural uniformity and a level of quality in cultural practices and symbols free from potential ridicule from others. Odo rightly identifies ambivalent interpretations of Green's photographs of the animist past and its role for future (p. 61).

The commonest social and economic opportunities that existed for ambitious Kachin youth in recent years were to enter theological college to train as pastors or priests or to enter K (aching) I (ndependent) A (rmy) as officers. For these young and articulate leaders Kachin identity is a current obsession. In this context, Green's archive seems to offer little towards enabling evidence to them. There are very few Kachins who still believe in animism and

still fewer who practise it. Choosing this as an area of study is to illuminate a world that no longer exists, and few mourn its disappearance. It can also be a potential bone of contention between the past and the present. Green's collection presents a heritage, which is difficult to disown and embarrassing to own up by the contemporary Kachin people.

Green chose to remain a career soldier in preference to a career in anthropology. Green's work in Kachin hills was mainly oriented to military related survey or recruitment or to provide slave-release campaign of the civil administration. The British identified the pre-eminent Kachin socio-political structure as prop to their need in the form of Jingphaw hereditary chiefs - *Duwa*. However, it was not always clear whom to delegate local power as the *Duwa*, because of conflicting over-lap of institution of hereditary chiefs and hereditary headmen. The case of *Duwa Htingna Khuma* (p. 74) is an illustration. The British administration would opt for the enhancement of powers of those chiefs and headmen, who could demonstrate willingness to be co-operative. The District Commissioner would stand as *Duwa Kaba* (great /big chief) to the then Kachin power structure with Union Jack flying atop. Was it not reminiscent of the Red Indians terming the President of USA as the big father/ chief? Here also the administration gets embroiled in the chiefs' demands for communal dues from the Christian villages for animistic festivals as it happened in the Naga Hills District.

Impact of slave-release should have been one the most rewarding exercises for historians and anthropologists with a view to understand the modern Kachin social formations. But for obvious reasons, it is one of the most impenetrable areas of study (p.85) Green's photographs may be seen as one of the personal response to the British encounter to the Kachin primitive world. It was the pattern of Kachin relation building that enabled Green to be intimate and sympathetic to the people. As a result, he developed a uniquely rich heritage of records that is still relevant for a proper understanding

of the lives and vanishing world of the northern Burmese frontiers. A similar situation may be noted from Kachin's western neighbouring Naga Hills, where one finds M/S J H Hutton, J P Mills, Charles Pawse, and Furer Haimendorf empathising with the Naga cause. Green's collection presents a highly romanticising image of tribal life from a distant frontier in to a typical Kipilinsque style of paternalistic approach to simple societies. Inadvertently, the Empire through its omission and commission laid the foundation of nationality formation among the distinct ethnic groups such as Kachins, Nagas and Mizos. In the final analysis, Green clicked his camera for the cause of the Empire, but inadvertently, he contributed to the preservation of the Kachin heritage and priceless source of data for the 'science of man'.

Prof. A C Sinha,

Department of Sociology, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

Temsula Ao, *The Ao-Naga Oral Tradition*, Bhasha Publications, Baroda, 2003, 185 pp, Rs 125/-.

Temsula Ao's study is an attempt to understand the culture of the Ao tribe of Nagaland in North-East India through their oral tradition. The book is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Ao civilization as oral tradition, textiles and artefacts. Chapter 2 discusses the indigenous Ao society. In Chapter 3 the "authentic" Ao belief system is presented. Chapter 4 forms the main part of the book and presents some Ao myths and tales. In Chapter 5 a large number of tales are given under various headings such as "Transformation tales", "Some animal tales", "Some tales of the Supernatural", "Some other tales", and "Some heroine-oriented tales". Chapter 6 provides some linguistic details on the

Ao language and a few paragraphs on Ao time reckoning, numbers and weights and measures. In the concluding chapter (Chapter 7) a few words are devoted to changes in contemporary Ao society.

The study is based on the author's personal knowledge and experience as an Ao, her frequent field trips to the Ao area and a writing-up phase at the University of Minnesota. It is a thorough and serious study of oral tradition of a small scale but dynamic culture. The book has an important documentary value as it gives a large number of Ao narratives. Being an Ao herself and a Professor of English at NEHU, the author deserves all praise for her sincere effort to gain insight into her own culture. Not being trained as an anthropologist the result of her work is a well-written historical document for which the Aos have to be grateful. It will be of interest to all those interested in Ao culture as well as to linguists and anthropologists.

My perspective in reviewing this work is that of an anthropologist. For me the importance of this work lies in bringing together cultural data and narratives of the Ao tribe by a native speaker. The collection of texts shows a high degree of variation, often subtle, which makes oral tradition so rich, so beautiful, and so relevant for both modern Aos with an interest in their own culture and contemporary anthropologists. The study is a rich source of data, but its analytical framework is weak. For example, the data on society, civilisation and belief system are presented without a connection with those of the stories. The structure of the book, by and large, follows that of the early scholar-administrators such as Hutton and Mills. A truly integrated analysis would have helped in mapping out the original Ao mentality.

In her attempt to grasp the totality of the Ao culture and to make it understandable to contemporary readership, the author imposes two sets of classifications on the data that seems to me arbitrary. The oral tradition is divided into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. This division presented in the first chapter does not serve

any purpose, not even in the rest of this book. Another division relates to worship and sacrifice. These are classified as “regular” and “irregular”. This division also does not add to our understanding. The intention might have been to demonstrate historical developments or the dynamics of the Ao culture. On page 29 Ao society is called ‘loosely’ democratic in its structure. This is, however, contradicted by the description of the Village Council (*Putu Menden*) as being a legislative, executive and judiciary power all in one institution (p.34) as well as by the existence of patrons and slaves (p.59). The “highly egalitarian society” (p.29) is thus not so egalitarian having slaves and a strict hierarchy of three high and many lower ranking clans.

While a beginning of an integrated approach to culture and narratives is made on page 15ff about names and narratives, such an approach is missing in the presentation of all other myths, legends and tales. In most cases the author’s comments do not go beyond a kind of functionalistic comment: the myth is told to justify a particular practice or custom (for example on pages 54 and 56). This is rather surprising for the Select Bibliography mentions the works of Claude Levi-Strauss, Brenda Beck, Stuart Blackburn and A.K. Ramanujan who all have analysed oral traditions with a structural rather than a functional approach.

This is a pity for the author shows great sensitivity while commenting on some myths. Commenting on the belief system, for example, she remarks, “their belief about tiger-souls is more akin to the concept of a person having more than one soul” (p.66). Indeed, the Ao concept of personhood needs to be studied on the basis of their narratives. The Ao view on another important cultural aspect – mortality – lies between the lines of the narratives entitled “A girl who was Loved by a Tree-Spirit” (p.122) and “Revenge for a Father’s Death”(p.135).

This book lies at the junction of two traditions. The old tradition of scholar-administrators is followed in its structure and

descriptive nature. At the same time it falls under a recent tradition of anthropological activities by other than anthropologists. The author frankly states in the Acknowledgement (p.iii) that she is "yet only a tentative amateur". As such she displays an emotional involvement. Striving for objectivity she leans on her training and experience in literary criticism. The lack of anthropological knowledge, for instance, appears in the use of the term patriarchal instead of patrilineal; distinguishing clans as major and minor is not incorrect, but it is a more common anthropological convention to describe their ranking in terms of high/low social and/or ritual status; the observation that the family is the first social unit in any culture (p.43); the absence of information on dates and methods of data collection and the years in which the field trips were undertaken.

Notwithstanding these critical comments, I wish to recommend this book to all anthropologists. I sincerely hope that Professor Temsula Ao will continue her journeys into Ao culture while making them anthropologically stronger so that her desire to "understand the intricate interweaving of the oral tradition with the culture" can be truly fulfilled.

Dr. S.N. Singh is Reader, Department of English, NEHU, Shillong.

Prof. Jan Brouwer,
Department of Anthropology, NEHU, Shillong

Dr. B. M. Reddy is Professor, Anthropology & Human Genetics
Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

Contributors

Dr. Romendro Khongsdier is Reader, Department of Anthropology, NEHU, Shillong.

Mrs. Banrida Langstieh is Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, NEHU, Shillong.

Dr. K.S.Nagaraja is Reader, Department of Linguistics, Deccan College, Pune.

Ketshukietuo Dzuvichu is a research student at the Department of Anthropology, NEHU, Shillong.

Mrs. Isabella Lall is Selection Grade Lecturer at the Centre for Supporting Learning Systems, NEHU, Shillong.

Dr. S.N. Singh is Reader, Department of English, NEHU, Shillong.

Dr. Sukalpa Bhattacharjee is Lecturer, Department of English, NEHU, Shillong.

Dr.B. M. Reddy is Professor, Anthropology & Human Genetics Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

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