A Study on the Influence of Mass Media on the Culture and Tradition of Singpho Tribe in Tinsukia district of Assam, India

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Abstract
This paper endeavors to examine the influence of mass media on the Culture and Tradition of Singpho Tribe in Tinsukia district of Assam. In the last 50 years the media influence has grown exponentially with the advance of technology, first there was the telegraph, then the radio, the newspaper, magazines, television and now the internet. We live in a society that depends on information and communication to keep moving in the right direction and do our daily activities like work, entertainment, health care, education, personal relationships, traveling and anything else that we have to do.

The Singpho are a hilly tribe of Mongoloid origin. Though their site of preoccupation is not known, the story goes that their abode was in the hills Singra-Boom in Tibet and from there formed several groups. Out of these groups, one went to China, one to Burma (now Myanmar), and the rest came over to India and settled in the hilly region. They have their own tradition and culture like other tribes. As culture is defined as the beliefs, values, or other frameworks of reference by which we make sense of our experiences. It also concerns how we communicate these values and ideas. Mass media are centrally involved in the production of modern culture. Media production, media texts and media reception are like a series of interlinked circuits. What is produced is influenced by cultural values; how the texts are formed and represented is influenced in the same way and the readings of the texts are also subject to both abstract and particular cultural viewpoints.

It was found that watching more television has changed their mindset in some cases like previously they used to give the traditional names to their children’s but today it was not followed any more today they also allow their children’s to marry in some other communities. Thus it can be said that the new media has broaden the outlook of the Singpho people in the region of Ketetong.

This paper seeks to explain and understand the cultural influences of mass media on the Culture and Tradition of Singpho Tribe in Tinsukia district of Assam.

Keywords: Mass Media, Society, Culture, Tradition, Community, Modernization

Introduction
It’s a system of shared meaning and beliefs held by organizational members that determines, in large degree, how they act. It represents a common perception held by the organization’s members. Just as tribal cultures have rules and taboos that dictate how members will act toward each other and outsiders, organizations have cultures that govern how its members should behave. In every organization, there are systems or patterns of values, symbols, rituals, myths, and practices that have evolved over time. These shared values determine to a large degree what employees see and how they respond to their world. When confronted with problems or work issues, the organizational culture – the way we do things around here- influences what employees can do and how they conceptualize, define, analyze, and resolve issues.

Intellectuals and thinkers of the world have defined and analyzed "culture" in their own way. Prof. Edward Burnett Tylor, a famous 19th century English anthropologist, gave one of the first clear definitions of culture in the West. He defined culture as a complex collection of "knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".

Matthew Arnold said, culture means "contact with the best which has been thought and said in the world" he considered culture as a "study of perfection".

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru described culture as the outcome and basis of training, establishment and development of physical and mental potentials.

According to Sri Rajgopalacharya, culture is the collective expression of the thoughts, speeches and deeds of the learned, talented or creative members of a society or a nation.

But the word "culture" nowadays is used in so many peripheral contexts that its original meaning has been submerged. For example, we have a "popular culture", by which is meant the collective human intellectual achievements. There is a "consumerist culture", which is taken by some as a determinant of the status of a person along with his educational success and/or financial strength. To be an integral part of this culture, one has to have a higher spending power, which yields a greater availability of materialistic pleasures and facilities. We also hear of an "emerging culture", which reflects the attitudes and the behavioral characteristics of a particular
social group. An emerging drug or pub culture among the youngsters of today is an example. Modern colleges and universities take pride in their "competitive culture" that helps to bring out the best in students and aid their intellectual development. However, none of these descriptions highlight the essential features of the true meaning of "culture".

A modern definition of culture is given by anthropologist William A. Haviland in Cultural Anthropology as follows: "Culture is a set of rules or standards that, when acted upon by the members of a society, produce behavior that falls within a range of variance the members consider proper and acceptable." In other words, culture does not refer to the behavior that is observed but to values and beliefs which generate behavior. Some modern definitions of culture tend to be inclusive of the "emerging culture" of society. For instance, in Culture and Modernity, Roop Rekha Verma defines culture as "a system of the patterns and the modes of expectations, expressions, values, institutionalization and enjoyment habits of people in general." Note the inclusion of the term "enjoyment habits"

Culture and Tradition

A tradition is a story or a custom that is memorized and passed down from generation to generation, originally without the need for a writing system. Tools to aid this process include poetic devices such as rhyme and alliteration. The stories thus preserved are also referred to as tradition, or as part of an oral tradition. For example, it is now a tradition to have a Christmas tree to celebrate Christmas.

Although traditions are often presumed to be ancient, unalterable, and deeply important, they are often much less "natural" than is often presumed. Many traditions have been deliberately invented for one reason or another, often to highlight or enhance the importance of a certain institution. Traditions are also frequently changed to suit the needs of the day, and the changes quickly become accepted as a part of the ancient tradition. A famous book on the subject is, The Invention of Tradition, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger. Some examples include "the invention of tradition" in African and other colonial holdings by the occupying forces. Requiring legitimacy, the colonial power would often "invent" a "tradition" which they could use to legitimize their own position. For example, a certain succession to chieftdom might be recognized by a colonial power as traditional in order to favor their own favorite candidates for the job. Often these inventions were based in some form of tradition, but were grossly exaggerated, distorted, or biased toward a particular interpretation.

Other traditions that have been altered through the years include various religious celebrations, for example Christmas. The actual date of Jesus' birth does not coincide with December 25 as in the Western Church. This was a convenient day for it to be held on so as to capitalize on the popularity of traditional solstice celebrations. In the Roman Catholic Church, traditionalism is the doctrine that tradition holds equal authority to holy scripture. In the Orthodox Church, scripture itself is considered a part of the larger tradition. These are often condemned as heretical by Protestant churches.

Mass Media and Society

The communication media are the different technological processes that facilitate communication between (and are in the "middle" of) the sender of a message and the receiver of that message. The mass media include newspapers, magazines, radio, and films, CDs, internet, etc. The media communicate information to a large, sometimes global, audience. Near-constant exposure to media is a fundamental part of contemporary life but it is TV that draws our attention the most as one of the primary socializing agent of today's society. Media literally mediate our relationship with social institutions. We base most of our knowledge on government news accounts, not experience. We are dependent on the media for what we know and how we relate to the world of politics because of the media-politics connection. We read or watch political debates followed by instant analysis and commentary by "experts." Politicians rely on media to communicate their message. Similar dynamics are present in other mediated events such as televised sports and televangelism. Media is part of our routine relations with family and friends. They define our interaction with other people on a daily basis as a diversion, sources of conflict, or a unifying force. Media have an impact on society not only through the content of the message but also through the process. Media play many different roles for the audiences, it is a source of entertainment and information while for media workers, and media is an industry that offers jobs- and therefore income, prestige and professional identity-. For the owners, the media is a source of profit and a source of political power. For society at larger, the media can be a way to transmit information and values (socialization). Therefore depending on whose perspective and which role we focus on we might see a different media picture.

Influence of Mass Media on society

In the last sixty years the media influence has grown exponentially with the advance of technology, first there was the telegraph, then the radio, the newspaper, magazines, television and now the internet. We live in a society that depends on information and communication to keep moving in the right direction and do our daily activities like work, entertainment, health care, education, personal relationships, traveling and anything else that we have to do. A common person in the city usually
wakes up checks the TV news or newspaper, goes to work, makes a few phone calls, eats with their family when possible and makes his decisions based on the information that he has either from their co-workers, news, TV, friends, family, financial reports, etc. What we need to be aware is that most of our decisions, beliefs and values are based on what we know for a fact, our assumptions and our own experience. In our work we usually know what we have to do base on our experience and studies, however on our daily lives we rely on the media to get the current news and facts about what is important and what we should be aware of. We have put our trust on the media as an authority to give us news, entertainment and education. However, the influence of mass media on our kids, teenagers and society is so big that we should know how it really works.

There are both positives and negatives of one single given notion. The media, known as the fourth pillar of democracy, has a huge impact on the society. The effects are of course, positive as well as negative. It is up to the people to decide which effect they want to bask in. Media is such a powerful tool that it literally governs the direction of our society today. It is the propeller as well as the direction provider of the society. Opinions can change overnight and celebrities can become infamous with just one wave by the media. Read how media affects the society today by reading its effects.

**The Positive Influence**

Information on the latest happenings reaches people in just a matter of minutes. The vision of media reaches even the remotest corners of the country and makes sure that everyone is aware of what is going on in the country. The easy and swift availability of any given information makes media one of the most reliable sources for forming public opinion. It bridges the gap between the leaders and the masses by becoming their channel of communication.

It brings into open the innumerable achievements that are going on in the country. Media gives ordinary people the power to reach out to the society as a whole. It can make heroes out of ordinary men. The media acts as a deterrent on corrupt practices and keeps a check on the working of the government. Media has significantly promoted social causes like literacy, health management, anti-dowry practices, discouraging female feticide, AIDS awareness, etc.

**The Negative Influence**

Media can adversely affect the thinking capability of individuals and instill negative or destructive thinking patterns in the society as a whole. As already said before, media has the power to form and alter opinions. This means media can portray an ordinary thing so negatively that it may force people to think or act in quite the opposite way. Media glorifies violence and contains graphic descriptions or images. When viewed by the vulnerable portion of the society, i.e., the children, it can have grave effects on their upcoming and thinking patterns.

The media can sometimes go out of the way in advertising or glorifying certain issues. Usually, a bad or detrimental message is packaged in a glorious way and is made accessible to the public. Movies that depict filthy rich thieves who don’t bat an eyelid before killing someone or extorting someone and the getting away with it, sure give entertainment to people. At the same time, it encourages them to act in a way that promises adventure and thrill in life. This way, media glorifies the bad aspects of people and encourages them to act in forbidden ways.

**Influence of Mass Media on Culture**

Our cultural experiences are affected by the development of systems of mass communication. We all inhabit particular situations and things like our surroundings, family, friends; school, work, neighborhood and so on shape our individual identities. In media-speak we refer to this aspect of our cultural identity as our situated culture. In other words, the small-scale communications and interactions we have on a day-to-day basis with the place we live in and the people around us. This kind of culture is primarily an oral one - it is passed on and formed largely by intimate word-of-mouth communication. Since the mid 19th century, we have come to live not only in a situated culture, but in a culture of mediation. The press, film and cinema, television and radio and more recently, the Internet, have developed to supply larger scale means of public communication. So now our situated culture exists within a much wider mediated world. The introduction of the term ‘global village’ in the 1960's illustrates how much our world has changed and the change is due almost entirely to the development of mass communications. Culture can be defined as the beliefs, values, or other frameworks of reference by which we make sense of our experiences. It also concerns how we communicate these values and ideas. Mass media are centrally involved in the production of modern culture. Media production, media texts and media reception are like a series of interlinked circuits. What is produced is influenced by cultural values; how the texts are formed and represented is influenced in the same way and the readings of the texts are also subject to both abstract and particular cultural viewpoints.

**Historical Background of Singphos**

The Singpho are a hilly tribe of Mongoloid origin. Though their site of preoccupation is not known, the story goes that their abode was in the hills Singra-Boom in Tibet and from there formed several groups. Out of
these groups, one went to China, one to Burma (now Myanmar), and the rest came over to India and settled in the hilly region. It is to be noted that the Singpho in China are also known as Singpho. The Singpho have no written history of their own. As such their life history more or less depend upon legends. As the saying goes, their settlement in Burma was in the Hookang valley extended up to Patkai Hills. Due to the atrocities by the Burmese upon them or blooming of Bamboo flowers and subsequent famine, the Singpho entered into the eastern part of India, presently known as Dihing Patkai region. During the first three decades in the 19th century, the continuous invasion of the Mann’s particularly in the conflict of the Sadiya Saikhowa battle most of the Singpho returned to their original home land Burma and few of them stayed back in the Patkai-foot hills.

After Indian Independence, the geographical location of the Singpho got divided and as a result a section of Singpho settled in the Lohit and Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh and the rest stayed in the foot hills of the Patkai range, the region covering Bisagaon, Inthem, Ketetong, Khatanpani, Kotha, Ulup, Hassaek village, etc, in the Margherita Sub Division under Tinisukia District.

The Singpho of Upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh are divided into four groups, locally known as Numhpuk Hkawng, Diyun Hkawng, Tieng Hkawng and Turung Hkawng. Hkawng is a term meaning ‘area’ and each of these groups is named after a local river. Numhpuk is a Singpho term incorporating the word for a woman, num. The Turung are also known as the Tai Turung, and some of the older Turung people say that their ancestors were Tai speakers (speaking Tairong). The Singpho Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh resides in the bank of Siang and Noa Dihing and spreading to a as far as the southeastern part including the land of the Kampti. The Tribal group is said to be sub group of the Burmese Tribal named Kambu. The Singpho Tribe are segregated into quite a number of clans each under a leader locally known as Gam. The principal Gams are the Bessa, Duffa, Luttao, Lutora, Tesari, Mirip, Lophae, Lutong and Magrong. The Singpho are also separated into four classes known as Shangai, Myung, Lubrung and Mirip. Their numerous clan have their own leaders and they live in the houses on site. These special type of houses of Singpho are known as Chang ghar, generally built near a river. They are scattered in village like Ketetong, ulup, Dibang, Panga, Munghon, Bisa, Pangsun, Hasak, Namo, Inghem, Katha and Kumsai. Their language is known as the Singpho dialect of Jinpo language.

Singpho Tribe are also very good looking. They have got a strong physique just like any athlete their hair quiet long, even the Singpho male tie them in top knot. In addition, women embellish their hair with beautiful silver chain. Tattooing is also in vogue amongst the married females. Exquisite tattoos are drawn on the legs covering ankles, keens etc. Man does not prefer to wear jewelries only the female folk deck up in conventional neckpieces, earring and finger rings of their own conventional designs. They carried a sword locally popular as “Sheathed Dao”. The sword that the leader carries has been engrafted with tiger claws.

**Dress of the Singphos**

The Singpho made shields from buffalo hide, many of them can be as long as four feet. They also have helmets are made from either buffalo hide or rattan-work, and vanished black and decorated with the boar's tusks. Most men tie their hair in a large knot on the crown of the head. The women dress their hair gathered into a broad knot on the crown of the head, fastening it by silver bodkins, chains and tassels, which is similar to the architecture of the modern skyscraper. The maidens tie their tresses into a roll and keep it tied just above the nape.

The Singpho uses the Burmese pasto as an undergarment, which is woven from coloured cloth or silk in check pattern. A coloured cotton jacket is worn over the upper portion. Many chiefs adopted the Shan or Burmese costumes. The Singpho women wear a cloth similar to the Assamese mekhela that is tied at the breast, which reaches to little below the knee. The men occasionally wear small earrings, although the women wear large pieces of amber earstuds on their ears. The men lightly tattooed their limbs, arm and shoulders. At the same time, the married women also tattooed their legs from the ankle to the knee in broad parallel bands which consist of eight bars in alternate black and white. However, the unmarried women are not permitted to tattoo at all.

**Marriage System Among The Singphos**

The Principal feature of the marital organization of the Singpho is the clan exogamy that is no person may marry in his or her own clan. The study of the Singpho marriages indicates that each clan normally prefers to confine its marital alliances to certain clans only. Marriage or marrying of one’s own mother’s brother’s daughter is admissible. Thus it happens that once an individual has married a girl from a certain clan, it becomes customary for his successors to obtain their wives from the natal lineage of his wife.

**Religion, Faith & Belief of the Singphos**

Singpho Tribe follow occupational practices and lifestyle, quite dissimilar from the other tribe of Indian subcontinent. The pious Singpho Tribes feted festivals in great jubilation especially the religious festivals are greatly popular amongst the Singpho Tribes. In the month of
April, the Songkon festival is celebrated in memorial of Gautama Buddha. The most important spirits to whom they offer sacrifice are the Mu Nat (the spirit above), Ga Nat (spirit below), and the household Nat or Penate. If a man is injured in fighting, Palan Nat is invoked and in case of bleeding, Shama Nat is invoked. For a woman in childbirth, Chisan Nat is invoked. The God of the sky is Ningshie Nat whose propitiation brings rain or sunshine. The spirits are appeased by sacrificing fowls, pigs and dogs. Buffaloes are sacrificed before undertaking any expedition. According to their mythology they enjoyed immortality and unsullied happiness in the land of their origin; fall from grace resulted from the original sin of having bathed in forbidden water. On coming down to the plains, they have become mortal, and fallen from their pristine belief in one Supreme Being. The Singpho bear the faith that after the creation of the Sun and the Moon by Mathun Mathai (the Creator of this Universe) the earth bloomed up flowers and fruits became a pasture ground for all creatures.

Food Habits of the Singphos
Singpho Tribes are very fond of meat. Almost all the Singphos want to devour meat in large quantity. Rice is the staple food which is steamed in bamboo sticks. A special type of beer that has been prepared from rice is a conventional drink and it becomes a part of their conventions and practices. The Singpho also depended on yams and other edible tubers as their staple food. The singpho food is also very organic and eco-friendly. Instead of using fiber plates or glass plates they use banana leaves to serve their food this is their traditional way of having the food.

Lifestyle of the Singphos
Unlike most hill-people, shifting cultivation (Jhum) is not as widely practised, although tea is widely planted. The Singpho produce their tea by plucking the tender leaves and drying them in the sun and exposing to the night dew for three days and nights. The leaves are then placed in the hollow tube of a bamboo, and the cylinder will be exposed to the smoke of the fire. In this way, their tea can be kept for years without losing its flavour. The Singpho were the first to discover the process of tea cultivation in India. They taught the process to the British, who then grew the Indian tea trade exponentially without giving the Singpho community their due credit. This has left a degree of resentment amongst the community, which until today sustains itself on tea farming (each household within the community maintains a plot of land for this). Today, the Singpho community in India is on the verge of extinction, with only ~25,000 remaining inhabitants. Company, Robert Bruce came to know about the existence of tea in Assam from Singpho King Bisa Gam. The Singphos have known and drunk tea long before the Englishmen discovered it. Robert Alexander Bruce, who is credited with discovery of tea, was given a concoction of Liquor by the Singpho chief Bishagam. He developed immense curiosity for the potential of the liquor and began working for it and thus was discovered tea. As the story goes, on refusal to pay royalty the followers of the Bishagam chopped off the tea bushes cultivated by the British & it was later discovered that after chopping of the hedges, tea leaves was better in their quality.

Dance and Music of the Singphos
Singpho Manau Dance Festival is the biggest cultural festival of the ethnic people. They celebrate it every year. This year it was celebrated on 14 February 2010. Kachins in Burma and the Singpho tribe in India belong to the same ethnic community. They began celebrating the biggest cultural festival since 1985 in India. Last year was the silver jubilee of the cultural events. Manau dance is the most important cultural heritage for holding on to the beauty and value of the tradition of Singpho. It includes a lot of our cultural symbol for them. About the situation of the tribe in the two countries, the Singpho in India can express their identity by celebrating the Manau festival without any disturbance and restrictions from the authorities. There is a big difference in Kachin State in Burma where people are under the control of the Burmese military regime where they lack cultural, religious, political and economic freedom.

The Opium Problem And The Singphos
The consumption of opium was a traditional practice among the Singpho, and it can be witnessed that the opium has severely harmed the fertility among the tribesmen. According to the 1950 census, the population of the Singpho tribe has fallen from 50,000 to less than 10,000 in recent years. With the free trade of opium between India and Burma since the signing of the bilateral trade in 1995, extreme abuse of opium have been reported since of 1997, especially in the villages of Pangsun and Kunnsai. A case of selling off their properties for the sake of buying opium was widespread in recent years. Many of these addicts consumed opium by smoking wooden and bamboo pots known as Doba, although injection of needles is also used. Most of these addicts take twenty grams, or even higher amounts of opiums. According to one villages, opium used by the Singpho is supplied by members of the Tangsa tribe living just across the Burmese border. The Indian government had also responded to the problem. Of late, they have established laws of jail terms and rehabilitation centers for opium addicts. The Singpho National Council also has plans to set up posts to restrict of the opium inflow into India.
This tribe is not only suffering from the problem of opium consumptions but this tribe is also marked as an endangered language in Assam. It was a visitor from faraway England who had learnt about tea from the Singpho tribe and introduced the beverage to the world. Centuries later, an Australian linguist has arrived in Singpho country in the interior areas of Margherita sub-division of Assam’s Tinsukia district for documenting the tribe’s language, identified as one of the endangered tongues of the world. Linguist Stephen Morey disclosed that the Singpho language has become an endangered one primarily because of the tribe’s small population. Morey is conducting the study under the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme run by a London-based non-governmental organisation that works with La Trobe University in research programmes. Morey is associated with La Trobe University in Australia.

The Singpho National Council the highest decision-making body of the tribe in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh sought help from the global community in preserving its language and culture after realising that the tribe’s population was not increasing on a par with global trends. Of the 56,000 odd Singphos living across the globe mainly in China’s Yunan province, Myanmar, some Southeast Asian countries only around 5,000 are in Assam. Assisted by Palash Nath, a research scholar from Gauhati University. Morey was also scheduled to visit some contiguous areas in adjoining Arunachal Pradesh, but could not do so since he was denied permission on security grounds. Morey also pointed out that the language of the Singphos who are Buddhists was facing a cultural onslaught.

Efforts were also made to save the language and the culture of the Singpho Tribe. The Minister of power, industries and trade Pradyut Bordoloi inaugurated an ecotemple at Inthang village under Ketotang Gaon Panchayat in his home constituency Margherita on November 10, 2008. The lodge has been constructed by singpho community eco-tourism society with a financial aid of Rs10 lakhs from DS group. The lodge constructed in the model of a typical Singpho house using bamboo, timber, took leaf in midst of the serene green natural environment is expected to specially attract tourists from all over the country and abroad. It may be mentioned that steps has been taken to develop the villages of the indigenous tribe of the sub-division like shingpho, Tangsa, Tai-fakhe, kham-tang etc. Due to the increase in the number of tourists in the region from the around the country and foreign countries like America, Canada, England, etc the prospect of tourism has increased. It may also be mentioned that the project was due to the initiative of the local MLA cum Minister Pradyut Bordoloi.

Dehing Patkai Festival is held every year at Chow Lung Sukatha Samanay Khetra, Lekhapani, in Margherita sub-division in order to promote tourism in the region showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the indigenous community. Manjela Singpho president of the eco-tourism lodge development committee is expecting that the eco lodge which consists of ten rooms is going to generate direct and indirect employment opportunity for the unemployed youth of the region besides it will enable the visitors to experience traditional shingpho village and villagers in traditional tribal change-ghar. It may be mentioned that in the wake of the phenomenal escalation of the tourism industry it become essential to develop the tourism industry in Tinsukia district which is endowed with resources in abundance.

The region also flaunts a prosperous medley of diverse culture and colourful tribes with extra ordinary characteristics. It is therefore crucial to create amenities and expand professionalism in order to exploit the utmost feasibility of this industry.

Rationale of the Study
Singpho Tribe is one of the oldest tribe in India but in due course of time this tribe has also undergone certain changes. Is modernization is the main factor behind these changes? And how have these changes occur. The Singpho Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh inhabit in the district of Lohit, Changlang, the Kachin State of Burma and in the Tinsukia district of Assam. Comprising a population size of 7,200 in India, they live in 13 villages. This Tribe is also famous for its cane and bamboo crafts which is practiced throughout the State at the household level. I want to do this research to know the communication pattern of this tribe and also to understand and to get information of what participants do to create the culture in which they live, and how the culture develops over time and is there any changes in there culture? And also to know the enduring tradition of Singpho Tribe.

Scope of the Study
The Singpho Tribe is one of the oldest tribe in India which is very rich in its culture and tradition. Since the term tradition and culture is very broad and comprehensive this research would primarily focus on aspects related to communication pattern, media exposure and their lifestyle.
Review Of Literature

The book, Myths and Beliefs on Creation of Universe among the Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh by B. B. Pandey and D. K. Duarah deals with the myths and beliefs of the different tribes found in the different places of Arunachal. The author also mentioned about the Singpho tribe giving emphasis to the handicraft and tea making process.

P. Thankappan Nair in his book, Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh deals with the descriptive details of the different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. It includes their culture, tradition, beliefs, lifestyle, origin etc.

The book by B k Barua titled Tribes of North East also deals with the descriptive details of the different tribes of North-East. It includes their culture, tradition, beliefs, lifestyle, and origin. The books talk about 232 recognized tribes of North-East including Singpho tribes.

Article published by the Folk Culture Research centre of North East India discuses about the life style of Singpho Tribe. Northeast India is an ideal rendezvous of exquisite tribal culture, people, customs, life style and history of mutual co-existence. Historically being a tribal land, Assam is no exception. In the context of today’s globalization modern world and resultant religious and cultural conversion, these communities and their indigenous culture undergo massive transformations and some of them are on the verge of extinction. Singpho tribe lives in the hilly Changlong and Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh and Tinsukia District of Assam. They migrated from Kachin, a region of upper Burma. They have similarities with other tribes like Jingpaw, Chingpaw, Theinbow, Kakheng-kachin, Ye Jan etc. Their language Singpho is in fact, the lingua franca among the Kachins tribal group like Zi, Lisaw, Maru, Lashi and Nungs. Moreover, Singpho language shares similarity with Tibetan languages as well. A tribe almost entirely depending on agriculture, tea plantation is their traditional agricultural activity. They professionally cultivate rice, rubber, Soya etc. Due to constant warfare, they live mostly on hillside, however, now they are living in plain as well. Baka (mans wear), Bukang (women wear), Bathang (women wear) are the dresses of the Singpho Tribe. The Singpho made shields are almost identical. They are the dresses of the Singpho Tribe. Shapawng Yawng Manu is similar to the architecture of the modern skyscraper. The maidens tie their tresses into a roll and keep it tied fastening it by silver bodkins, chains and tassels, which hair gathered into a broad knot on the crown of the head. The women dress their hair gathered into a broad knot on the crown of the head, fastening it by silver bodkins, chains and tassels, which is similar to the architecture of the modern skyscraper. The maidens tie their tresses into a roll and keep it tied just above the nape. The Singpho uses the Burmese Pas-to as an undergarment, which is woven from colored cloth silk in check pattern. A colored cotton jacket is worn over the upper portion. The Chiefs tend to wear Shan or Burmese dresses. The Singpho women wear a cloth similar to the Assamese mekhela that is tied at the breast, which reaches to little below the knee.

A night with the Singphos the article by Alok Sharma gives a detailed outline about the lifestyle of Singpho people in the region of Ketetong and it also discussed about its recent development in this region. The Singpho were the first to discover the process of tea cultivation in India. They taught the process to the British, who then grew the Indian tea trade exponentially without giving the Singpho community their due credit. This has left a degree of resentment amongst the community, which until today sustains itself on tea farming. Each household within the community maintains a plot of land for this.

Singpho – Dress: Encyclopedia II discusses about the dress of the Singpho Tribe. The Singpho made shields from buffalo hide, many of them can be as long as four feet. They also have helmets are made from either buffalo hide or rattan-work, and vanished black and decorated with the boar's tusks. Most men tie their hair in a large knot on the crown of the head. The women dress their hair gathered into a broad knot on the crown of the head, fastening it by silver bodkins, chains and tassels, which Singhpho Tribes. In the month of April, the Songkon festival is celebrated in memorial of Gautama Buddha.

In his article Amazing Arunachal Pradesh, Amir Siddiqui writes about the art and craft of Singpho Tribe. The illustrious artistic and geometrical patterns of designs in various traditional wears are the creation of the Singpho tribe. Alike them the Tangsas acclaimed applauds by preparing spun-dyed fabrics producing handbags, skirts, lungis (loin cloths). The women of both the aforementioned tribes are famed for their proficiency in creative colors combination for weaving traditional apparel’s. The basic contours of designs of all the weaving tribes are almost identical.

Conceptual Framework

To conduct the research the researcher has undertaken the theory uses and gratification as its conceptual framework in order to answer its two research question that how mass media influences the Singpho Tribe in the
research design
visits, observation, and in-depth interview using inter-
ethnographic methods for collecting data using field
tradition of Singpho Tribe this research would apply
since the research is basically to study
and survey method is used to collect the data. Ethnogra-
phy is a qualitative research method that is used by anth-
thropologists to describe a culture. Culture has many de-
nitions but usually consists of origins, values, roles, and
material items associated with a particular group of
people. Ethnographic research, therefore, attempts to
fully describe a variety of aspects and norms of a cultural
group to enhance understanding of the people being stu-
died. Ethnographic research is similar to other qualitative
research methods because the researcher becomes part of
the cultural scene and, therefore, is deemed an instru-
ment of research. Researchers must go into the field to
observe and interview people from the culture of inter-
est. Ethnography is the cyclic nature of data collection
and analysis. Data collection is often done through partic-
ipant observation, interviews, questionnaires, etc. Data
collection is often done through participant observation,
interviews, questionnaires, etc.

Survey method is a non-experimental, descriptive re-
search method which is useful when a researcher wants
to collect data on phenomena that cannot be directly ob-
served. Surveys are used extensively in library and in-
formation science to assess attitudes and characteristics
of a wide range of subjects, from the quality of user-
system interfaces to library user reading habits. Data are
usually collected through the use of questionnaires, al-
though sometimes researchers directly interview sub-
jects. Surveys can use qualitative (e.g. open-ended ques-
tions) or quantitative (e.g. use forced-choice ques-
tions) measures. There are two basic types of surveys:
cross-sectional surveys and longitudinal surveys.

population: Singpho Tribe in the region of Ketetong in
Tinsukia District, Assam. However, the researcher
would apply purposive sample to observe and interview
the respondents.

sample size: The region of Ketetong comprises of 80
families of Singpho Tribe out of which researcher has
covered 50 families as respondents through simple ran-
don sampling method. The sample size consists of 50
samples out of which 24% are female and 76% are male.
The sample size is also divided into different age groups
and head occupation.

sampling technique: The data have been collected
through simple random sampling. A simple random
sample is a subset of individuals (a sample) chosen from
a larger set (a population). Each individual is chosen ran-
domly and entirely by chance, such that each individ-
ual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage
during the sampling process, and each subset of individ-
uals has the same probability of being chosen for the
sample as any other subset of individuals.

data collection: For this research data were collected through observation
and interviews.
The primary data was collected through distributing questionnaires, interview, observation and schedule. The secondary data was collected from the journals, books and articles that has already published.

Data Analysis And Interpretation

It was also found from the survey that 40% of the people been to primary school, whereas 26.7% of people were not been to school and 17.8% of people been to High School and 15.6% people were graduate.

It was also found from the survey that in the Ketetong region that 15.5% of people earn 1000 – 5000Rs monthly where as 51.1% of people earn above 5000Rs monthly and 33.3% earn above 10,000 monthly.

It was found from the survey that out of 50 samples, 100% of the respondent in the region of Ketetong follow Buddhism as their religion. It was also found that 46.6% of the people practice agriculture as their occupation where as 22.2% of the people is small businessman.

It was found that out of 50 respondents 100% of them listen to news bulletin whereas 67.85% of people listen to folk music and 10.71% of people listen to film music respectively in the region of Ketetong. The above question also follow with another question that how many hour you spend listening radio programme in a day. It was found from the survey that 67.85% of people spend 2-4 hours a day to listen news bulletin and other radio programme whereas 32.14% of people spend 4-6 hours a day to listen radio programme in the area of ketetong. Therefore it was found that majority of the Singpho people listen to radio news and they listen for 2-4 hours a day.

When the respondents were asked, do they TV sets at their home it was found that out of 50 respondent 91.12% of people said that they have T.V at their home and 8.08% of Singpho people said that they don’t have T.V at their home. Therefore it was found that majority of Singpho people have T.V set at home.

If they have TV sets, is there a DTH connection available? In response to this question, it was found that out of 50 respondent 57.80% of Singpho people have DTH connections at their home whereas 42.20% of people said that they don’t have DTH connection at their home. Therefore it was found that majority of people have DTH connections at their home. The question also follows with another question that do you have Cable connections at your home and it was found from the survey that 100% of people don’t have cable connection at their home.

What are the categories of programme, they watch on TV ? In response to this question, it was found that out of 50 respondent 100% of people watch news channel on T.V, 70.30% of people watch Entertainment channel like Sony, Zee T.V, Star T.V etc. Whereas 36.58% of people watch sports channel and 12.19% of people watch others channels like Discovery, Animals Planet etc. Therefore it was found that most of the Singpho people watch news channel in the T.V in order to get latest news.

Do they purchase newspaper? In reply to this question, it was found from the survey out of 50 samples the entire respondent that is 100% of the people read newspaper but out of this 50 sample only 40% of the people buy the newspaper whereas 60% of the people don’t buy newspaper as it was shown in fig 6. Therefore it can be said that most of the people in the region of Ketetong do not purchase the newspaper. The question also follows another question that if you don’t purchase the newspaper then where you read the newspaper. The answer of this question is shown in the fig- 7

In response to the question, where do they read newspaper? only 51.85% of the people read newspaper near market place whereas 44.4% of people read newspaper in their neighbor’s house and 7.4% of people read newspaper in some other places like near paper stall etc. Therefore it was found that most of the Singpho people do not buy newspaper and they mostly read the newspaper near the market place

How often do they read newspaper? In response to this question, 82.2% of the respondents read the newspaper sometimes whereas 17.7% of people read the newspaper regularly and 2.2% of people never read the newspaper. Therefore it was found that most of the people in the region of Ketetong sometimes read the newspaper. The question also follows with another question that which newspaper they mostly read out of 50 respondent 100% of people said that read regional newspaper like Janmabhumi, Prati Din and Amar Asom.

When it was asked, what do they like to read in the newspaper? 33.3% of the respondents like to read national news, 100% of people read regional news, 22.2% of people read employment news, 100% of people like to read sports news, 44.4% of people like to read editorial and rest 22.2% of people read other news like entertainment news etc. Therefore it was found that most of the people in the region of Ketetong liked to read regional and sports news.

Do they have access to the mobile phones? It was found that most of them have access to mobile phones. 95.56% have access to the mobile phones while the rest 4.4% don’t have mobile phones. The new media in terms of mobile phone has reached in a good number to the tribe.
The question also follow with another question that how much they spend every month on mobile phone. It was found that 60.46% expend 300-700 rupees per month on mobile phones while the rest 34.8% expend 800-1200 rupees and 9.30% expend 1300-1700 rupees/month respectively.

Do they access internet? It was found from the survey that in the region of Ketetong the people do not have internet facilities therefore to access internet they go to the Margerita town. The question also follow another question that do they access to internet it was found that 35.6% have access to internet whereas 40% do not have access to internet and 24.4% of people access to internet sometimes.

How often they access to internet? It was found that most of the Singphos of Ketetong region has access to the internet. In answer to the question regarding access to the internet it was seen that 11.1% of the people access to internet on the regular basis whereas 55.5% of the people rarely access to internet and remaining 33.3% of the people have never accessed to internet.

When it was asked, if they are aware about Sarva Siksha Aviyan 78% of the respondents replied they are aware about the aviyan whereas 32% replied they are not aware about the aviyan.

How come you know about Sarva Siksha Aviyan? It was found that the people came to know about the different govt. schemes through different sources. In a question regarding the Sarva Sikshya Aviyan it was found that 11.1% came to know from the newspaper 11.1% of people come to know about it through television 8.8% came to know through radio 17.8% come to know about it through Neighbors/relative and the majority of the people came to know about it through different source like panchayat.

Summary of Findings
A research was done to study the Impact of Mass Media on the culture and tradition of Singpho Tribe in the region of Ketetong in Tinsukia district. While doing the research a survey, interview, observation and schedule was also conducted to know the Impact of Mass Media on the culture and tradition of Singpho Tribe in the region of Ketetong. The survey and other observation have come out with some important findings. It was found from the observation that the Singpho people of Ketetong region are very less in their population there are total 80 families in the Ketetong area (source goan panchayat). It was found from the observation that in the due course of time the Tribe has undergone certain changes.

To know the Impact of Mass Media on the culture and tradition of Singpho Tribe a survey was also conducted and it came out with some important findings. It was found from the survey that 46.6% of the people in the region of Ketetong are agriculturist. Their main source of bread and butter is farming. Whereas 22.2% of the people are small businessmen and 22.2% of the people is serviceman. It was also found from the survey that most of the people earn between 5000 – 10,000Rs as their monthly household income. The researcher also found that in all most all the Singpho houses they have T.V set and 57.8% of people have DTH connection at their home although the Ketetong region is considered as a rural area but after this survey it was found that the Singphos are quite well versed with the new technologies and they are quite familiar with the recent developments. Although the economic statuses of the Singphos are not very good but still most of the Singpho people have mobile phone at their home. They have at least 3 to 4 mobile phones at their home. On the mobile phone most of them spend 300 – 500Rs monthly. Therefore the Singpho people are quite well access to the mobile phone in their area. While talking to the Singphos of Ketetong region it was also found that mobile phone has now become as a part of their day to day life. Although the area is quite access to the T.V, DTH facilities, Mobile phone accessibility but the most important new media Internet is not yet accessible to the Ketetong region. The students and the some of the servicemen in order to use internet for their work still to go to the Margerita town which 1 hour away from the Ketetong region. It was found that the use of Internet is not very often in the area. In the region of Ketetong almost all the people read the newspaper but it was found that only 40% of the people buy the newspaper. When asked this question to one of the Singpho he said that since they have T.V set at their home therefore it was not required to buy the newspaper because they found the news in the television only. Most of the people in the Ketetong region are mainly like to read or watch regional news only. Although they also follow the other news but majorities of
them are concerned with the regional news only. The researcher also found that the Singpho people are quite well aware about the recent schemes launched by the government of Assam. They come to know about these various schemes through newspaper, television and radio. But most of them come to know about these various schemes through the Goan Panchayat. Thus after this research it can be said that Mass Media has a great impact on the Singpho people of Ketetong region.

References


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