

LEPCHAS CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES AND CONSERVATION APPROACH: AN INSIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CASE STUDIES ON BIOSPHERES RESERVES IN INDIA

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Article History

Received : 16 September 2020

Revised : 23 September 2020

Accepted : 12 October 2020

Published : 31 December 2020

Key words

Belief System, Biosphere Reserve,
Cosmology, Ecological Domain,
Religion, Worldview.

ABSTRACT

The cultural connotation of ecological parameters is one important dimension to evaluate the ethos of the people inhabiting in particular ecological niche. Where the conservation approach is a guiding mechanism to protect the pristine biodiversity, there is a need to analyse people-orientation towards this objective. This principle is relevant in the context of the evaluation of religious doctrine and worldview of the communities inhabiting in the “Biosphere Reserves” in India. On the basis of this theoretical proposition this article is based on emphasizing three major aspects viz. (a) society and ecological domain; (b) people’s understanding of non-human entity *i.e.* flora, fauna, nature, cosmology, and space (broadly the universe); (c) beliefs associated with the supernatural domain and conservation ethos. The present article intends to look towards the concepts of the people on two focal points empirical or real issues as well imagination or belief system belong to abstract level juxtaposed in supernatural domains. This study reveals that the socio-religious doctrines as well as worldview of the communities deeply embedded within the conservation ethos particularly in respect of the protection of flora, fauna and natural objects in a specific ecosystem. Thus, this is an attempt to understand the cultural context of the communities due to the hegemony of the conservation attitude of the administration.

INTRODUCTION

The anthropological orientation on the concept of national conservation approach by “Biosphere Reserve” is to be observed in respect of socio-cultural attributes of the people residing in these demarcated reserved areas. Throughout the world the conservation of pristine biodiversity is the prime agenda to combat global warming, greenhouse gases, pollution which are major concerns of the entire humanity. The objective of the “Biosphere Reserve” reveals certain conditions in respect of core and buffer zones from an administrative point of view; particularly a precondition has imposed in respect of core zone where a total ban on human intervention is demanded. On contrary, another school of thought strongly pleaded with the theory of integral co-existence of human population and forest.

The quotation of Prof. Amartya Sen is supposed to be relevant in the context of the theme of the article. He suggests “an active cultivation of peace with an understanding of the underlying causes of conflict to move away from polarising nationalistic or ideological identities that often end in bloodshed” (‘HITAVADA’, Nagpur, dated 14th June 2006; front page). The argument is that the conservation approach sometimes displaced the people. In India, 65% of the forest cover is situated in 187 tribal-dominated districts. Out of 50 dense forest cover districts, 49 are tribal-dominated. Indian Parliament passed the bill “The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2006” has addressed the debate on “forest land right”. The understanding of the entire situation needs a logistic outlook with the interpretative cultural ethos of the forest-dwelling people. The history of the displacement of the indigenous people in India is a common phenomenon due to the conservation of biodiversity and various mega projects. From 1950 to 1990 near about 2 core 13 lakhs indigenous people are displaced due to the above reasons. (Source: an article written by Goutam Roy in ‘ANADABAZAR PATRIKA’, Kolkata, dated 14th June 2006; fourth page).

According to Adhikary (1984:5), there are two approaches for studying hunters and gatherers. The first one is “Formal Structural Approach” which emphasis on ideal aspects of society, social system or activity which is thought to be contributing to the maintenance of ‘Social Structure’ exemplified by Radcliff Brown, 1948. The second one is “Ecological Approach” which emphasis on adaptation of the subsistence technology with the environmental ecology and the ongoing social system

exemplified by Steward, 1955. These two principal approaches have the limitation to project a comprehensive dimension. In both the approaches, the society is conceived of 'structural-functional entity with interaction to ecology'. Whereas, little or no attention is given to the ideas and sentiments of the people towards their society.

After evaluating the points of the above discussion, it can be determined that the socio-cultural attributes of the people residing inside a "Biosphere Reserve" is regulated in two ways. The first one is the traditional beliefs and perceptions and secondly, the present circumstances and phenomena which may compel them to react differently in a changed regulated administrative setting. Thus, this article attempts to interpret the emic view of the people residing within the studied "Biosphere Reserves" in India in respect of traditional conservation ethos.

The whole write up is based on eight studied "Biosphere Reserves" in India from 2005 to 2016 under two projects "Cultural Dimension of Tourism" and "Man and Environment" undertaken by the Anthropological Survey of India. The study area in some cases were core zones and buffer zones in the rest others. Table 1 has given a detailed description of the study area and communities studied. Under that backdrop, it is informed that in all cases the attributes or components are almost similar. The present article is based on six parameters viz. environment and supernatural deities and spirits; sacred groves; environment and life cycle rituals; environment and the classificatory world; natural objects and supernatural domain and finally nature and dream.

SUPERNATURAL ATTRIBUTES

At the onset, the discourse will start with the topic of environment and supernatural powers. Almost all communities inhabited inside the core or buffer zones in various studied "Biosphere Reserves" are closely connected with many deities and spirits, which are controlling various domains of the environment. The communities strongly believe that any kind of disturbance in their abode may result in a disaster. In this connection, Table 2 on Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve and Similipal Biosphere Reserve shows that most of the deities are controlling forests, many animals that are pivotal in respect of particular ecosystem. Some of the gods and goddesses are controlling natural phenomena like rainfall, thunder etc. Few deities are representing either sun, sky, earth etc. Similarly, the deities of the communities inhabited in Nokrek, Dibru-

Table 1: Studied Biosphere Reserves in India

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of Biosphere Reserves and Year of Recognition</i>	<i>Studied Area</i>	<i>Studied Communities</i>
1.	Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve (1999)	Core Zone	Gond & Mawasi
2.	Similipal Biosphere Reserve (1994)	Buffer Zone	Ho, Kharia, Bathudi, Bhumij, Munda, Santal, Mahali, Makdiya/Birhor, Goud, Kudmi Mahato, Lohar/Bindhani, Teli, Kaibarta, Sadgop (Gobora Caste)
3.	Achanakmar- Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve (2005)	Core Zone	Baiga
4.	Nokrek (1988)	Buffer Zone	Garo
5.	Manas Biosphere Reserve (1989)	Buffer Zone	Bodo, Rabha, Nepali, Ranbansi/Ranbanshi, Sutradhar, Santal/Adibasi
6.	Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve (1997)	Core & Buffer Zones	Mishing, Kachari Sonowal, Matak, Moran, Adivasi (Santal, Munda, Oraon, Kharia), Nepali, Bangali
7.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve (1998)	Buffer Zone	Memba, Adi Ashing, Adi Gallong, Idu Mishmi
8.	Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve (2009)	Buffer Zone	Bodh

Source: Fieldwork

Saikhowa and Cold Desert Biosphere Reserves are either creator of the universe or supreme authorities of sun, moon, stars and water.

Thus, there are two sets of deities that are emerging if critically examined all deities across all studied “Biosphere Reserves”. Some deities are controlling the diversified domain of nature whereas, other deities are the creators of nature. In case of “Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve”, the communities Adi and Idu Mishmi believe in spirits who either equivalent to gods or goddesses as well as sometimes the spirits are of composite in nature in terms of gods and human beings. The

Table 2: Environment and Deities/Spirits

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of Biosphere Reserves Communities</i>	<i>Studied</i>	<i>Name of the God/ Goddess/ Spirit</i>	<i>Domain</i>
1.	Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve	Gond	<i>Bari Mata or Bari Devi</i>	Forest
2.			<i>Chotti Mata or Chhoti Devi</i>	Forest
3.			<i>Kherapati Bai</i>	Forest
4.			<i>Saj Ka Ped</i>	Tree deity
5.			<i>Hanuman Dada or Bajrangbali</i>	Monkey god
6.			<i>Bagh Deo</i>	Tiger god
7.			<i>Nag Deo</i>	Snake god
8.		Mawasi	<i>Siddha Baba or Sidhmaraj</i>	Deity on water body
9.			<i>Dongar Deo</i>	Hill god
10.			<i>Bajrang Dada</i>	Monkey god
11.			<i>Balkhan Deo</i>	Forest deity
12.			<i>Balkunwar Deo</i>	Forest deity
13.			<i>Badin Deo</i>	Forest deity
14.			<i>Keminte Devi</i>	Forest deity
15.			<i>Mailee Devi</i>	Forest deity
16.			Similipal Biosphere Reserve	Kol/Ho, Munda, Santal/ Majhi
17.		Kol/Ho	<i>Basuki Thakurani</i>	Earth goddess
18.			<i>Buru Bonga</i>	Forest deity for communal hunting
19.			<i>Buddhipat</i>	Goddess of rainfall
20.			<i>Nagira</i>	Control water
21.			<i>Pabar Bonga</i>	Mountain god
22.			<i>Baktu Bonga</i>	Thunder
23.			<i>Chandu Bonga</i>	Moon goddess
24.			<i>Baktu Bonga</i>	Thunder

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25.		Kharia	<i>Pat Devata</i>	Hill deity
26.			<i>Baram</i>	Hill deity
27.			<i>Bhagut</i>	Tiger deity
28.			<i>Surji Devi</i>	Sun goddess
29.			<i>Manasa/ Chbata</i>	Snake goddess
30.	Nokrek Biosphere Reserve	Garo	<i>Tatara-Rabuga</i>	Creator of world
31.			<i>Sunsime</i>	Moon
32.			<i>Wachikerita</i> or <i>Salgurna</i>	Rain god
33.			<i>Goera</i>	Thunder
34.	Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve	Mishing	<i>Donyi</i>	Sun
35.			<i>Polo</i>	Moon
36.			<i>Karsang</i>	Star
37.			<i>Kartang</i>	Star
38.			<i>Takar</i>	Star
39.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve	Adi	<i>Melo</i>	This spirit is controlling the sky
40.			<i>Lingen Sobo</i> (Neither men nor ordinary gods and spirits; some kind of composites of all three)	This spirit is controlling plants, animals, metals
41.			<i>Pedong Nane</i>	Creator of rain and snow of the high hills
42.			<i>Doni</i> (Son of <i>Pedong Nane</i>)	This spirit is controlling the sun
43.			<i>Polo</i> (Son of <i>Pedong Nane</i>)	This spirit is controlling the moon
44.			<i>Agam</i> (Spirit)	In charge of <i>Mithun</i> (a kind of wild buffalo)
45.			<i>Eg Agam</i> (Spirit)	In charge of pigs
46.			<i>DoyingBote, Doying Angong</i> and <i>Doying Aro</i> (Spirits)	Father of the sky, rain and guardian of the northern snow ranges.

47.			<i>Ute and Poro</i> (Spirits)	The controlling spirits of wild beasts and reptiles.
48.			<i>Shud-Kin-Kede</i> (Spirit)	A female spirit who is the teacher of earth
49.		Idu Mishmi	<i>Abruli</i> (Female)	Lightening spirit
50.			<i>Arru-Sudu</i> (Male)	This spirit is known as controller of wind
51.			<i>Beika</i> (Male)	A snake spirit, who lives in water
52.			<i>Brerru</i> (Male)	The Idu name for thunder is <i>Brerru</i> . <i>Berru</i> is considered a spirit who throws thunderbolts when he gets angry
53.			<i>Errasur</i> (Male)	An evil spirit who lives in the sky. He is the owner of the fire
54.	Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve	Bodh	<i>Churgma</i>	Water God

Source: Fieldwork

spirits are controlling a large canvas of the environment *i.e.* plants, animals, hills, water bodies and the universe also. The table elaborately described the domain of the spirits.

The sacred groves are found in three Biosphere Reserves viz. “Similipal Biosphere Reserve” in eastern India; “Nokrek Biosphere Reserve” and “Manas Biosphere Reserve” in northeast India. In case of “Similipal Biosphere Reserve”, the communities worship *Jabira* or sacred grove as *Gram Devi* or village deity at March when the flowers are blossoming. In the case of “Nokrek Biosphere Reserve”, this sacred grove is locally called *Asong Kusi*. The trees and grass inside the grove are also considered as sacred. Apart from that, few trees are considered as ancestors’ trees called *Asangdam*. The Garo do not harm any tree or plant in few places in the forest

that are treated as the sacred place called *Akingrak*. Similarly, in the case of “Manas Biosphere Reserve”, the communities Rabha and Sutradhar believe in sacred groves. *Gao Raja Puja (Baidam)* is traditionally a cultural symbol of the Rabha Community. The *Baidam* is constituted by nineteen small cottages that are considered as the abode of various deities. *Rajjor* is the sacred grove of Sutradhar community. The deities are represented either in the form of a replica of cottages or bamboo-made symbolic structures.

ATTRIBUTES LINKED WITH LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

Few trees, bamboos and grass are directly linked with the life cycle rituals in the case of the Gond, Mawasi communities of “Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve” and Baiga of “Achanakmar- Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve”. It is observed that in both cases, the trees like *Sal, Amm, Sagun, Marwa, Sarai* and *Sajan* are playing important role in customary life cycle rituals of these communities. Table 3 is illustrating community-wise specific usage of the biotic components in life cycle rituals in particular “Biosphere Reserve” in detail. The Santal/Adibasi used the various parts of *Sal, Neem, Amm, Kala, Kanthal* trees in case of life cycle rituals. The Bodo community of “Manas Biosphere Reserve” used the bamboo splits to cut the umbilical cord. The banana leaf is used a sacred object used in marriage rituals. They used to give the water through a particular tree leaf by left hand into the mouth of the dead body. The Idu Mishmi of “Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve” used branches of few trees as well roots for various customary practices in respect of life cycle rituals.

CLASSIFICATORY WORLD

The study reveals that both biotic and non-biotic objects in the environment are classified in accordance with the perception of the communities living in a particular ecosystem. This cognitive approach is applied to understand the close affinity towards the environment of the communities inhabited in various “Biosphere Reserves” in India. Table 4 elaborates this conceptual model in detail.

In each Biosphere Reserve, the ecosystem is specific and the communities inhabited in each Biosphere Reserve classify the biotic and abiotic objects in accordance with need and usage. The Mawasi community of “Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve” classify the mango trees into seven categories, while the Mishing community

Table 3: Environment and Life Cycle Rituals

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of Biosphere Reserves</i>	<i>Studied Communities</i>	<i>Name of the Associated Trees/ Bamboo/ Grass</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve	Gond	<i>Am, Jamun, Gunga, Mahua</i>	To prepare <i>Mandap</i> or arena for marriage ritual
2.			<i>Khakra, Kem</i>	To make central pole where actual marriage function takes place
3.		Mawasi	<i>Sal</i>	To make central pole and nine other pillars in regard to marriage ritual
4.			<i>Am, Jam</i>	To make roof of <i>Marowa</i> or arena for marriage function
5.			<i>Chinda/ bar</i>	To make head dress of groom
6.			Bamboo	To make structure of <i>Thatri</i> or bier to carry dead body
7.			<i>Kusum</i> creeper	To tie the bamboo strips of <i>Thatri</i>
8.			<i>Charo</i> wild grass	Spread on <i>Thatri</i> or bier
9.			Bamboo	To prepare <i>Jang</i> or idol of the dead person in regard to one death ritual <i>Gatha</i>
10.			<i>Sagun</i> (Teak) wood	To make wooden memorial board for <i>Gatha</i>
11.	Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve	Baiga	<i>Marwa, Sarai, Sajjan and Char</i>	To make central pole where actual marriage function takes place.
12.			<i>Sal</i>	This tree prepares <i>Mandap</i> (special arena) in where marriage function is solemnized.
13.			Bamboo stripes and <i>Biju/ Khamar</i> trees	To make <i>Katri</i> or the bier of the dead body.

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14.			<i>Molain Rasmi Bela</i> and <i>Mabul Chal</i> and white coloured grass	The barks are used to tie the bamboo strips of <i>Katri</i> and white coloured grass is used to spread on <i>Katri</i> or bier.
15.	Manas Biosphere Reserve	Bodo	<i>Sijan</i> (Euphorbia spenden)	This is a sacred tree at the shrine of <i>Kberai Puja</i> (<i>Bathon</i>).
16.			<i>Tulsai</i>	These are the sacred objects.
17.			<i>Bijuli</i> bamboo (three pieces)	
18.			<i>Kush</i> / <i>Khungkebla</i> (eighteen pairs)	
19.			<i>Makbna</i> / <i>Lakbna</i> (eighteen pairs)	
20.			<i>Jati</i> bamboo (four pieces)	
21.			<i>Duburi</i> grass (nine pieces)	
22.			Banana	Both leaves and fruits are used in rituals.
23.			<i>Dhuna</i>	A Kind of resin is used as a sacred object.
24.			<i>Guphur Aowa</i> <i>Khumdung</i>	White rayon is used as a sacred object.
25.			Cane (one stick)	This is a sacred object.
26.			<i>Gamari</i>	A sacred object is made.
27.			Bamboo split	Cutting of the umbilical cord after birth.
28.			Banana leaf	This is a sacred object used at the time of marriage.
29.			<i>Fakri</i> tree leaf	They used to give the water through <i>Fakri</i> tree leaf by the left hand to the mouth of a dead body.

30.	Santal/ Adibasi	<i>Neem/Sal</i> leaf	Rice cooked with <i>Neem</i> or <i>Sal</i> leaf and served to all after birth of a child on the same day or after three days.
31.		<i>Neem/Kanthal</i> leaf (jackfruit)	The leaves of the two trees are required for the name-giving ceremony.
32.		<i>Amm</i> (mango) branches with leaf	They insert the mango branches between two banana plates at the time of marriage.
33.		<i>Kala</i> (banana) leaf	-Do-
34.		<i>Bell</i> leaf	This leaf is used at the time of marriage.
35.		<i>Sal/Amm</i> branches with leaf	Mango branches are required at the time of <i>Vandan</i> ceremony after 15 days of death. They insert these branches.
36.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve	Idu Mishmi <i>Apento</i> and <i>Athapa</i>	The branch of these trees are required on 9th day in case of a son and 7th day in case of daughter after birth. At the time of ritual father will collect the braches of these trees.
37.		<i>Anita</i>	The root of this tree is required after purification by the priest or <i>Igu</i> by uttering incantation at the time of marriage ritual.

Source: Fieldwork

of “Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve” categorizes cows and buffaloes into several divisions in accordance with reproductive age and milk production. At the same time, they classify the clouds also. The Adi Ashing and Adi Gallong of Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve classify the rat into various categories in accordance with preference and availability. The rat is the most important food material for these

Table 4: Environment and Classificatory World

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of Biosphere Reserves</i>	<i>Studied Communities</i>	<i>Local Name of theFlora/Fauna/ Natural Object</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve	Mawasi	<i>NaryeLamm</i>	Mango	Classified mango into seven categories without any gradation.
2.			<i>Bugda Amm</i>		
3.			<i>Fuppa Amm</i>		
4.			<i>Mirchi Amm</i>		
5.			<i>Gayel Amm</i>		
6.			<i>Peyag Amm</i>		
7.			<i>Musur Amm</i>		
8.	Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve	Mishing	<i>Aao Garu</i>	Cow (irrespective of sex)	Just after birth (consume milk)
9.			<i>Bakna Garu</i>	Cow (irrespective of sex)	Too young (no milk is given)
10.			<i>Damra Garu</i>	Male cow	Young
11.			<i>Bam Tarang Garu</i>	Male cow	Attaining reproductive age
12.			<i>Seori Garu</i>	Female cow	Young
13.			<i>Gai Garu</i>	Female cow	Attaining reproductive age
14.			<i>Aao Menjak</i>	Buffalo (irrespective of sex)	Just after birth (consume milk)
15.			<i>Bakna Menjak</i>	Buffalo (irrespective of sex)	Too young (no milk is given)
16.			<i>Gera Menjak</i>	Male buffalo	Young
17.			<i>Jactum Menjak</i>	Male buffalo	Attaining reproductive age
18.			<i>Seori Menjak</i>	Female buffalo	Young

19.		<i>Gai Menjak</i>	Female buffalo	Attaining reproductive age	
20.		<i>Ekbo Gauri</i> (pig)	Male	Young age	
21.		<i>Egra Gauri</i> (pig)	Male	Attaining reproductive age	
22.		<i>Chbenti Gauri</i> (pig)	Female	Young age	
23.		<i>Era Gauri</i> (pig)	Female	Attaining reproductive age	
24.		<i>Mukang</i>	Cloud	Cloud is divided into five categories viz. <i>Enarag, Lubogda, Lonong Genamda, Lobeng Randbanu, Kan Mukang</i> (rain god for paddy cultivation)	
25.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve	Adi Ashing	<i>Bunka</i>	Rat/ <i>Kuburg</i>	Harmful for agriculture; less available; with less hairs; first preference as food item. Maximum availability; with fewer hairs; second preference as a food item. Maximum availability; with fewer hairs; third preference as a food item. Maximum availability; with fewer hairs; third preference as a food item. Maximum availability; with fewer hairs; third preference as a food item. Maximum availability; with fewer hairs; mouse variety. Taboo is that not harmful towards agricultural products; non-eatable.

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26.			<i>Boin</i>		
27.			<i>Kutir</i>		
28.			<i>Gunko</i>		
29.			<i>Kajak</i>		
30.			<i>Kacheng</i>		
31.			<i>Kirti</i>		
32.			<i>Take</i>	Rat/ <i>Kuburg</i>	Maximum availability; with hairs; first preference as a food item.
33.			<i>Libo</i>		Maximum availability; with hairs; second preference as food item.
34.			<i>Rankiang</i>		Maximum availability; with hairs; third preference as a food item.
35.			<i>Tari</i>		Maximum availability; with hairs; third preference as a food item.
36.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve	Adi Gallong	<i>Take</i>	Rat/ <i>Kafu</i>	Less available; first preference as a food item.
37.			<i>Keli</i>		Less available; second preference as food item.
38.			<i>Keko</i>		Less available; third preference as a food item.
39.			<i>Koche</i>		Maximum availability; fourth preference as a food item.
40.			<i>Komonkafu</i>		Maximum availability; fifth preference as a food item.
41.		Memba	<i>Kotokepa</i>	Rat	Less available; small; first preference as a food item.

42.			<i>Tejak</i>		Less availability; big; second preference as a food item.
43.			<i>Faɕpa</i>		Maximum availability; small; third preference as a food item.
44.			<i>Takliba</i>		Less availability; big; fourth preference as a food item.
45.			<i>Jumpi</i>		Less availability; big; fifth preference as a food item.
46.			<i>Gosa Faɕpa</i>		Maximum availability; small; sixth preference as a food item.
47.		Idu Mishmi	<i>Asogo</i>	Rat	Less available; big; first preference as a food item.
48.			<i>Kambo</i>		Less availability; small; second preference as a food item.
49.			<i>Apichi</i>		Less availability; big; third preference as a food item.
50.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve	Adi Ashing	<i>Polong</i>	Ridge	The hill is categorized in accordance with height. The river is also classified. In case of Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve ice is categorized according to hardness.
51.			<i>Adi</i>	Hill	
52.			<i>Dite</i>	Big mountain	
53.			<i>Amera Khojong</i>	Small tributary	
54.			<i>Korong</i>	Big river	

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55.	Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve	Bodh	<i>Kan</i>	Glacier Ice	
56.			<i>Tar/Khere</i>	Hard Ice	
57.			<i>Kha</i>	Snow	
58.			<i>Ranthonpo</i>	Big Mountain	Mountain is classified according to height.
59.			<i>Merang Dachawo</i>	Medium Height Mountain	
60.			<i>Merang Chukun</i>	Small Height Mountain	
61.			<i>Yakaya</i>	Types of Grazing Land	Full of Grass
62.			<i>Thotatak</i>		Near Roadside
63.			<i>Tomtongue</i>		Near Riverside
64.			<i>Ripe</i>		Near crisscross roads
65.			<i>Zamargan</i>		Above the mountain
66.			<i>Chaksagan</i>		Near mountain road
67.			<i>Chutuk</i>		Downwards Riverside

Source: Fieldwork

communities. Less hair in all cases is considered as most preferred. The table clearly indicating how Adi Ashing classifies the rat as a food item in accordance with the relationship with agricultural products. The Memba, Idu Mishmi communities of “Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve” also classifies the rat into various categories in accordance with preference and availability. The rat is the most important food material for these communities. Simultaneously, the Adi Ashing community divide hill and river also. In the case of the “Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve”, the Bodh community classifies ice, mountain and grazing land, which are directly related to their livelihood practices. Natural objects particularly trees are in most cases are considered as sacred or inauspicious. The Gond of “Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve” considered many trees as both auspicious or inauspicious. The Kol/Ho community of Similipal Biosphere Reserve believes that a particular cactus tree is the abode of

Shiv god. Simultaneously, in the case of “Manas Biosphere Reserve,” the Bodo community considered *Bathou* as chief god and landmark of Bodo culture. In front of each Bodo house, there is a courtyard. The shrine of *Bathou* is represented by one cactus tree called *Sajau*. Ten bamboo strips encircle the *Sajau* tree. Few other natural objects like grass, cane, shrub, and bamboo are used as sacred objects at the time of *Bathou* worship.

ATTRIBUTES OF DREAMS

It is observed that the dream and nature is connected in two cases. The Adi community of “Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve” and Bodh community of “Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve” narrated few dreams, which may be connected with nature. The analysis of the Adi dreams indicates that most subject matters are either linked with nature or daily life experiences. In respect of subject matters related to nature are indicating that bad incidences or phenomena resemble bad results. On contrary, the incidences related to life experiences are showing opposite results *i.e.* good things are reciprocated bad and vice versa in the majority of cases of dreams. In the case of Bodh community, the good dream is called *Milam Janpo* and the bad dream is called *Milam Nanpa*. Dreams are connected with nature. Table 5 is describing the context of dreams in respect of natural phenomena.

CONCLUSION

The four attributes are analysed and a typical cognitive orientation on nature and natural resources has emerged as a whole. These attributes are not universal in all cases. Each “Biosphere Reserve” is unique and thus the attributes are different. So, each attribute is analysed and obviously, few commonness’s appeared. Finally, it is emerged that those attributes are getting prominence which are directly linked with conservation ethos. The supernatural powers *i.e.* gods, goddesses and spirits are occupying the domains, which are important for the entire ecosystem, particularly the natural resource bases. The deities or spirits are also controlling animals, plants and natural objects. Many communities in few “Biosphere Reserves” strongly believe in sacred groves. The sacred groves are symbolically representing the strong association and bondage of the communities on trees, grass etc. linking with supernatural powers. The close affinity towards flora is represented by the association of various floral parts with customary practices in connection with life cycle rituals

Table 5: Nature and Dream

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of Biosphere Reserves</i>	<i>Studied Communities</i>	<i>Context of the Dream</i>	<i>Good or Bad</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve	Adi	If any person dreams of eating jackfruit or banana or constructing a bridge or fighting another man, he will succeed in killing an animal.	Good	The analysis of the dreams indicates that most of subject matters are either linked with nature or daily life experiences. In respect of subject matters related to nature are indicating that bad incidences or phenomena have resembled with bad results. On contrary, the incidences related to life experiences are showing opposite results <i>i.e.</i> good things are reciprocated bad and vice versa in the majority of cases of dreams.
2.			If one dreams of being bitten by a snake or dog or bee, one will suffer illness.	Bad	
3.			If a man dreams of a house being dismantled or of being wrapped in white blanket or being chased and killed in a battle, he will die either by drowning or in slip of leg during walking through a hill road.	Bad	

4.	Dreaming of a snake coming near but not biting, or the sun and moon together means future illness and death.	Bad
5.	The dream of a fish being caught in the trap indicates that there will be plenty of food.	Good
6.	Snowfall indicates that the house will be burnt.	Bad
7.	On the other hand, the dream of burning the house indicates that the sky will be clear and the sun will shine.	Good
8.	If one dreams of heavy rain and everything covered with water, one will not be present beside a dying relation.	Bad
9.	If a man dreams of a landslide denotes that that person will die in war or by falling from a tree.	Bad

10.	If one dreams of an animal being killed and of shouting, someone in the village will be badly injured with a deep cut.	Bad
11.	The dream of a wild cat catching a fowl or a vulture being shot indicates that a thief will be found out.	Good
12.	A bridge being washed away by a river indicates that the <i>Kebang</i> will be unsuccessful.	Bad
13.	While the dream of a bridge remaining intact despite heavy rain means that the <i>Kebang</i> will be successful.	Good
14.	The dream of stones being thrown away from a roadside indicates that <i>Mithun</i> and pigs of a man will die.	Bad
15.	The dream of a tooth being extracted means <i>Mithun</i> and pigs of a man will die.	Bad

16.			If one dreams of weeding with bamboo or a fencing is made, one will possess many fowls and <i>Mithun</i> .	Good	
17.	Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve	Bodh	If one dreams sunrise, clean sky, full of flowers and grasses, honeybee.	Good	The good dream is called Milam <i>Janpo</i> ; the bad dream is called Milam <i>Nanpa</i> . The dreams are connected with nature.
18.			If one dreams of night, red flower, <i>Changbuluk</i> disease of the tree due to an insect call <i>Changdamg Bu</i> .	Bad	

Source: Field Work and Banerjee, GouriSankar. 1975; Adis of Arunachal

of many communities inhabited across the “Biosphere Reserves”. By analyzing a wide range of classification of various biotic and inanimate objects are indicating their affiliation towards the entire ecosystem. The classificatory world is more concentrated with those biotic or abiotic factors which are playing significant role in their livelihood. The belief system of the communities inhabited within various “Biosphere Reserves” is another indicator for their close proximity towards nature. In this regard, the relation between dreams and nature is explained. Thus, in nutshell, it may be concluded that socio-religious attributes in the forms of supernatural domain and worldview of the communities inhabited within various “Biosphere Reserves” echoing their strong determination towards conservation. The pristine biodiversity cannot be protected without appraisal of these cultural connotations.

Acknowledgment

I acknowledge the Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata for giving the scope to conduct the fieldwork in eight “Biosphere Reserves” in India under the national project ‘Man and Environment’. I gratefully acknowledge the immense help

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and cooperation received from the people of the villages of these “Biosphere Reserves”. The present article is the revised version of the paper presented in the National seminar “Biosphere Reserves and Protected Areas in India: Man-Nature Interface “on 9th & 10th March 2017” held in Anthropological Survey of India, Eastern Regional Centre, Kolkata.

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To cite this article:

Arup Ray. Lepchas Cultural Attributes and Conservation Approach: An Insight of Anthropological Perspective on Case Studies on Biospheres Reserves in India. *Man, Environment and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2020, pp. 105-126