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**NON-LOCAL MIGRANTS IN A BORDERING DISTRICT
OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH: ISSUES OF
ASSIMILATION AND CONTENTIONS**

Abstract

This paper discusses about the situation of the migrants in PakkeKessang district of Arunachal Pradesh, inhabited by Nyishi tribe, which is one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. There are many migrants from outside the state that are living in PakkeKessang District. Some of them are staying permanently while others are staying on temporarily basis. At recent times, there has been huge intensification in the influx or bringing of the migrants by the natives. The migrants are mostly engaged as agricultural labourers while some are made to do the household chores. There are second-generation migrants who are born and brought up in the region itself. The migrants that are permanently residing in the region are trying to adapt the way of life of the natives and are found in various degree of assimilation. This study explains the genesis of the migrants into the region and various push and pull factors responsible for such migration. The new trend of migrant influx and the trend of assigning local surname to the migrants is also discussed to underscore the nature of adaptability. It throws light upon the permanency of the migrants and the informal adoption of such migrants by the natives. Finally, this paper reveals the plight of such migrants as well emerging concern of a tribal state in the context of possible demographic imbalance.

Keywords: Migration, Nyishi Tribe, Assimilation, Surname Change, Arunachal Pradesh

Introduction

From the early phase of human evolution, humans have been migrating to different places constantly. The study of human migration is gaining importance day by day because of complexity of human life and fast changing socio-economic conditions. The early phase of man could be studied within the limited aspects because of the restricted mobility of man during that period.

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But the dynamism of society and living conditions has complicated the movement of people (Sinha and Ataullah 1986). Migration is defined as a move from one migration defining area to another, usually crossing administrative boundaries made during a given migration interval and involving a change of residence (UN 1992). The results of Census 2011 reveals the contour of migration in the last decades and according to this census (2011) in India, one can find two types of migration – migration by birth place and Migration by place of last residence. Moreover, it also depicts reasons of migration: work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth, moved with household and any other (Census of India 2011).

Startup (1971) defines social migration as, “any instance of geographical movement of individuals or groups relative to one another, or any instance of the geographical movement of a group, which has consequences for group structure.” These structural changes will involve either the movement of individuals between pre-existing positions, or the creation, abolition, or modification of positions.

Sociologists investigate processes that go beyond the physical crossing of the territorial borders of nation states as such, they look into aspects such as changes in global and local orders of inequality that structure migration, the social construction of boundaries of belonging, and political conflicts linked to different forms of human mobility. The sociology of migration is therefore an open and diverse and characterized by often intense conceptual and methodological debates. (Amelina and Horvath 2017)

Most of the migrants move only a short distance. As per the migration theory of Ravenstein (1885) a shift or displacement of a population affects mostly neighbouring areas and distant places are little affected. After the post-independence, several migrants were brought in from neighbouring country like Nepal as a part of deliberate state policy. The Nepalis were especially brought into Assam by the postcolonial Indian state in the wake of 1962 Indo-china war to build border roads and railways in Arunachal Pradesh (then NEFA) (Hussain 1993) to bring the frontier areas closer to administrative centers.

In general, anthropological theories of the movement of peoples across and within borders are situated in the context of capitalism and globalization, and these global phenomena are seen as the main cause of the surge of ‘new’ immigrants who tend to move back and forth between borders, or to multiple locations (Foner 2003). Anthropologist’s area of migration studies is the study of races, ethnic composition, distribution of different cultural groups and other related features of the population. The migration process brings notable changes in racial segregation and their associated traits. The anthropologist also studies the racial traits of the natives as well as migrants (Sinha and Ataullah 1986).

Migration is one of the initial steps of assimilation. Before the actual assimilation happens, several processes take place initially. The first process

is Acculturation (cultural encounter), which refers to the cultural changes that both sides experience as a result of culturally diverse societies encountering each other in common social environments and situations. This encounter can be in different forms such as colonization, military occupation, migration, and temporary residence (Berry 2013). People migrate to a certain place for several different reasons. One of the most important reasons for migration is economic aspect. In the search for better economic condition and livelihood, people usually migrate to the place where they think can earn for their living but after migrating to an area and staying there for many years may lead to the permanency of the migrants. This permanency of the migrants in a region leads to the acculturation between the migrant population and the host's community. Acculturation includes both changes in the behavioural patterns of individuals and changes in the institutions of the social structure. As a result of acculturation, communities from two different cultural groups living in the same country have an intercultural feature. Both community groups want to live together and protect their own culture at the same time. This can only be achieved through social and cultural integration (Sahin 2010).

In due course some migrants get assimilated into the host's society. Assimilation is said to be the final outcome of the migration. Before achieving successful assimilation, the migrants go through various processes of cultural contacts, conflicts and adaption. The assimilation of migrants is a very complex process involving various stages. 'Successful assimilation of a migrant can be said to represent the final stage of the process' (Coal 1976). The ultimate aim is to 'produce a psychological anchorage in the large community and identify as a member of it' (Banerjee 1981).

Arunachal Pradesh has been witnessing a flow of migrant from the very early time. According to 2011 Indian Census, 63.9 per cent of the total migrant in the state is from other Northeastern States. Only 36.1 percent are from other part of the country. The immigrant frequency (7.4%) is also very low as compared to other Northeastern states (Lusome and Bhagat 2020). There are also reports of indigenous migration in this region (Marchang 2018; Goswami 2007; Kikon and Karlssome 2019). Both Ramya (2017) and Mandal's (2020) contribution help us to understand the internal as well as urban migration issues in an essentially tribal state (Arunachal Pradesh). Such migration issues may help us in understanding the critical identity discourse in Arunachal Pradesh (Chaudhuri 2015).

Arunachal Pradesh, an essentially tribal state, is the largest state in the India's North east in terms of geographical area (about 83,743 km²) with the least population density (total population is 1,382,611 according to Census, 2011). With its vast cultivable land with less manpower, the local tribal people rely on the labour of the neighbouring state especially Assam for cultivation and other skill base work. On the other hand, this gives an opportunity to many job seekers from the neighbouring state Assam and beyond to earn their

living in Arunachal Pradesh. So, this study is an attempt to understand the advent of the migrants and the present scenario of the migrants in PakkeKessang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Population and Method

The study has been conducted for four months during September to December, 2019 in PakkeKessang town, Riloh Village and Passa village of PakkeKessang District which is a newly formed district inhabited by Nyishi tribe. The key issues involved for empirical research were the genesis of the migrants into the region and various push and pull factors responsible for such migration; the new trend of migrant influx and the trend of assigning local surname to the migrants is also discussed to underscore the nature of adaptability; light upon the permanency of the migrants and the informal adoption of such migrants by the natives and finally, the issues concerning the plight of such migrants as well emerging concern of a tribal state in the context of possible demographic imbalance are taken into focus. Majority of the people are depended on wetland paddy cultivation and other agricultural practices. The region is governed by both modern (Panchayati Raj System) and traditional political system (*Gaon Bura* System). Majority of the people follow Christianity and a few follow *Donyi-Poloism*, a reflection of indigenous form of religion.

Nyishi tribe is one of the major and most populous tribe in Arunachal Pradesh. They are basically of mongoloid origin and believed to be migrated from the Tibet. Nyishi are believed to be the descendants of *Abo Tani*, whom they consider as their first ancestor. In Nyishi dialect “*Abo*” means father, so they consider *Tanias* their father. The total population of Nyishi is around 500,000 as per the 2011 census. They are mainly concentrated in districts like East Kameng, Papumpare, Kurungkumey, Lower Subansiri, Upper Subansiri, PakkeKessang, and Kra-dadi. Nyishi society is patriarchal in nature where males hold certain power and privileges as compare to female counterpart. Both monogamous and polygamous marriage is practiced. Good number of publications is available which explains diverse aspects socio-cultural life as well as historicity of the Nyishis (Hina 2012; 2013; Showren 2008).

Figure 1: Map of Arunachal Pradesh showing PakkeKessang District



Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/arunachalpradesh/>

Rilloh village, Passa village and PakkeKessang town have been chosen for the study because there are huge numbers of migrants living in these regions. The trend of informal adoption of the migrants and assigning of local surname to the migrants are largely practice in these regions. The migrants living in these regions are the universes of this study. Samples were selected using purposive and snow balling method of sampling. A total of 158 non-local migrants belonging to different age group of both the sex were interviewed for qualitative information in this study. Of the total migrants interviewed 53% are male and 47% are female. Thirty native key-informants were also interviewed during the study. The researchers have also recorded many case studies of the non-local migrants to understand the hidden meaning of the practice. Since the study is exploratory in nature, semi-structured and open-ended interviews were used. The study has been conducted for nearing six months.

Demographic profile of the migrants

Maximum numbers of migrant males are of the age group 31-45 years (33.34%) followed by below 15 years (30.67%) while for female, highest is among below 15 years (32.53%) and it decreases gradually with age (table 1). The sex ratio is 1106 female per 1000 male. The literacy rate is 34.82 per cent. The main occupation of the migrant is agricultural labourer (65%), followed by daily wager (14%), students (13%) and business (3%). The study found that 72%

of the migrants are staying with the local family while 28% stayed in rented house or makeshift. Maximum migrants are unmarried (52%).

Table 1: Age-wise classification of the migrant population

Age group(in years)	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-15	23	30.67	27	32.53	50	31.64
16-30	11	14.67	23	27.71	34	21.51
31-45	25	33.34	22	26.51	47	29.75
46-60	14	18.67	10	12.05	24	15.19
60 Above	02	2.67	01	1.20	03	1.90
Total	75	100	83	100	158	100

Source: Fieldwork 2019

Genesis of Non-local migrants

PakkeKessang was recently bifurcated from East Kameng District in 2018. When it was under East Kameng District, it was designated as an administrative circle and represent as a main townon which the nearby villages depended upon for buying their daily commodities. PakkeKessang town was first set up as a post in 1966. At that time there were not many people staying there. Most of the people were settled in nearby villages. It was during the early 1970s the first influx of *Non-Arunachalee* migrants took place. Such non-local migrants, who came at that time, were serving as government servants at different levels. As PakkeKessang was a newly opened administrative center for the nearby villages, the need for manpower to run the center grew. The Government started recruiting many people at various levels to run the newly formed administrative center. But most of the people who turned up for the jobs were the migrants from outside the state.

The native people were mostly engaged in agriculture as the main source of sustenance. They were satisfied with what they were doing and were self-sufficient in agriculture practice. So, the majority of the natives were not interested in joining the government jobs. Subsequently, this context allowed the migrants from outside the state to take up the various Government jobs. As a result, many non-local migrants came and joined as ALCs (auxiliary labour corps) in various departments like PWD (Public Works Department) and RWD (Rural Works Department). The CRPF (central reserve police force) jawans were also posted in the area to look after the policing affairs. Since there was no proper road connectivity at that time with the nearby towns, the required supplies used to be dropped by helicopter. The ALCs were made to carry the loads by foot to the destination. They were even made to carry supplies and loads from nearby towns when needed. It took 3 to 4 days to complete the whole journey on foot. The ALCs were the main means of transportation for transporting goods and commodities. The required goods were carried from a

nearby town like Seppa which is 91.4 km away. The non-local migrants were the maximum ones who came to join the service. Then after a few years, the construction of roadways began. During that time, many non-local migrants came in for the construction works. Many Nepali people came to work during that time. After the completion of the work, many stayed back and got absorbed in other works. Since then many are still settled permanently at PakkeKessang. After the roadways were completed the area grew into a town, many native people also started coming to settle there from nearby villages. With the coming of the road came many new development projects in the area.

Now the region has been connected with national highway-13 that connects with other towns. It is 3-4 hours' drive from the state's capital Itanagar. Since the roadways are better now, it has become easier for the migrants to come to the region. The influx of new kinds of migrants has started at recent times. These migrants are the unskilled labourers who came to work as agricultural labourers. Most of them are brought by the native people to engage them in the paddy cultivation. While some came by themselves in search of work but some migrants came with the help of their acquaintances that were already living at PakkeKessang. The migrants are usually brought during the paddy sowing and cultivation seasons. These migrants are seasonal agriculture labourers. The wages are negotiated and set according to the duration of work. The trend of employing the migrants to work in the paddy fields has been going on since few years. Many native people tend to seek such agricultural labourers from the nearby state like Assam. Most of the natives go to Assam and bring the labourers by themselves. Likewise, the more influx of migrants has occurred. Some of the migrants who came to work as agricultural labourers are found to be staying permanently in the region. Most of the migrants who came are economically backward. The trend of bringing agriculture labours has flourish to nearby villages of PakkeKessang too. The practice of bringing migrants to employ them in paddy fields work is still going on.

The migrants of PakkeKessang district can also be classified based on space, time, and volume. They fall under the type of inter-state migration if we see it based on space. Based on time, they are classified under various types like seasonal/periodic migration, permanent migration, semi-permanent migration, temporary migration, and irregular/casual migration. Based on volume, they are classified under large scale types since the rampant influx of migrants is seen in a few years (Sinha and Ataulah 1986).

Reason for migration

Most of the migration studies have emphasized the role of economic factors in migration. Scholars believe that most of the migrations are economically motivated (Kuroda 1972; Thomas 1954; Gulliver 1955). Several social scientists have also emphasized the role of personal factors like desire for personal advancement in migration (Chapin and Feise 1962). There are

certain factors that push the migrants out of their native place and certain factors that attract the migrants to the new destination. The factors which motivate migrations may be called push and pull factors. So, for a migrant to move out of a place both the push and pull factors are equally important. In the context of PakkeKessang district, the migrants who have migrated into it have several reasons and motivational factors that influenced them. The pull factors of a destination include the employment opportunity, presence of friends and close ones, affordable cost of movement, physical appeal of community, physical environment, better amenities, population structure, social facilities, understanding of the place of destination, assistance and support from friends at the place of destination, unavailability of place for migration. The various pull factors that attracted the migrants to PakkeKessang are the availability of more employment opportunities, higher wages, better living conditions, better physical conditions of the place, attitudes of the natives, availability of friends and acquaintances and job transfer by the Government. Similarly, there are several push factors like poverty, indebtedness, social outcaste, unemployment, and natural calamities, etc. which compel people to move out. The migrants that came to PakkeKessang were already suffering from many problems in their original place. The problems were mostly general problems that every economically weaker section faces in their day to day life. Some of the push factors that compelled them to migrate to other places are the problems of indebtedness, landlessness, extreme poverty, low wages and income, less employment opportunities, poor standard of living conditions, over population and the physical conditions of the place. The development of transport and communication has also influenced migrants remarkably. The means of communication and transport help in the flow of migration and increase its rate. This facility also decides the volume and direction of migration (Sinha and Ataulloh 1986).

Culture Encounters

When two different groups of people co-exist in society for a certain period, the process of acculturation occurs. Subsequently, their original culture gets modified and is exposed to changes (Redfield et al. 1936). Herkovits (1958) exhorts that "acculturation has to do with continuous contact and hence implies a more comprehensive interchange between two bodies of tradition". Many migrants that came to PakkeKessang for work began to stay permanently in the region. The new migrant community began to co-exist among the natives for a very long time. Due to the co-existence, acculturation occurred between the two communities. In due course of time, many migrants could understand and speak few local words. They could somehow converse with the natives by speaking broken native dialect. Many natives also learnt the Hindi language from the migrants. For the second-generation migrants, to be specific the migrants, who were born in the region and grew up there, did not face the problem of language as a barrier for communication. They could fluently speak

the local dialect and understand it very well. These second-generation migrants are the children of the first-generation migrants who got settled permanently in the region. Many migrants also got converted into Christians and some became the followers of *Donyi Poloism* which is a form of traditional religion of the natives. The food choices of the migrants who are living with the natives have also changed. They now had to eat what the natives ate. Earlier the migrants used to eat vegetables that were mostly cooked using vegetable oils but now they had to cope up with the boiled green leafy vegetables that are gathered from the jungles. The native has also incorporated the used of oils in the preparation of vegetables. Local liquor called *apong* is also consumed by the migrants in place of commercially available alcohols. The migrants also participate in the local festivals like Nyokum. The festival of the Nyishis is known as *Nyokum Yullo*. It is generally celebrated in the community ground where people show up in traditional attires. Rituals are conducted by the priests called *nyibu* and sacrifice of animals like pigs, *mithuns* (*bos frontalis*) and hens are done. Sports competition such as archery, javelin throw and tug of war are organised. And cultural competitions such as local dances and local songs are conducted too. The natives also equally celebrate the festivals of the migrants. Festivals like Durga-puja, Diwali and Holi etc. are also celebrated by the natives. With regard to the forced acculturation, combined with a position of excessive dominance on the part of one cultural group, it follows that acculturation will be greater in the direction of the dominant group, at least to the extent that acculturation occurs. The dominated group may successfully resist acculturation to an extensive degree (Raymond and Nelson 1974). To get settled in the region the migrants accepted and adapted the native's ways of life in whichever way they could. They followed the new religion and new ways of life as the locals. It is observed that the direction of acculturation is more of a unidirectional rather than both way process. The direction of the acculturation is seen more towards the dominant group. It is a natural phenomenon that the one who is in need is the one who needs to sacrifice and try to adapt to the new condition. The same condition is seen for the migrants who need to survive in the region. In due course of time when the first-generation migrants settle in the region permanently and are cultured enough with varying time then eventually, they are assimilated into the host's society. It is not that hard for the second-generation migrants to get assimilated into the host's society since they grew up in the region.

Types of migrant groups

The migrants that are living in PakkeKessang can be further categorised into various groups. Based on the ethnicity there are four ethnic groups found in the region namely Nepali, Adivasi, Bihari and Bengali. According to the survey conducted, it is observed that 64% of the migrants are Adivasi, 28% of the migrants are Nepali, 5% of the migrants are Bengali and only 3% of the migrants are Bihari.

Based on the degree of assimilation the migrants can be further categorised into three groups. The first group comprises of those migrants who have been staying in the region for many years. This group has maintained its own identity and cultural practices intact. They still celebrate their own festivals and follow their own religion. Under this group come the Nepali people who have been staying in the region for many years. Some of them came during the initial road construction days in late 1970s. They are living in houses made by themselves but the lands belong to the native people. Some are staying in rented rooms owned by the natives. They have tried to maintain their identity to some extent despite co-existing with the locals for many years.

In the second group, it comprises the migrants that come to the region for temporary works. They come for a certain period of days, do their work, and return home. This group mainly consists of agricultural labourers, construction site workers, and hotel workers. They don't have their own houses. They stay in the houses temporarily made for them by the employer. Some of them stay with the native in their houses. Some agricultural labourers come on a seasonal basis. Such seasonal workers come during the sowing season for sowing the paddy fields and after completion of the work they go back to their homes. And again, they come back after few months during the reaping season to reap the ripen paddy crops. After reaping of the crops and all other necessary works completed, they yet again head back to their home back to their native place. The employer pays them in cash when they return to their native places. The amount of wages is usually not fixed. The wages to be paid is negotiated between the employer and the migrant. The construction workers also stay in the region until the work is completed. After the completion of the work they also go back to their villages. The same goes for the workers who work in the hotels as cooks and helpers. They are also given a vacation when needed.

Ram (Male, 42 years) was brought from Harmuty, Assam by his employer. He is staying with his employer who provides him food and shelter. Before coming to Rilloh village he used to work in a Tea garden in his native place, Assam. He is widower with two sons who are at his native place. He works in the paddy field and also does other work for his employer. He sends money to his children at home. It has been 5 months since he came to Rilloh. He is a seasonal agricultural labourer who during the sowing and harvesting seasons.

The third group is the consequent stage of the second group. The temporary migrants who after few years get settled in the region permanently are categorised in this group. Most of them belong to Adivasi ethnic group from Assam. There are many cases of informal adoption of migrants by the local people. There are cases in which the migrants who came to work as agricultural labourer stay back in the region permanently with the owners. Some of the migrants were informally adopted during their childhood days

and several of them were born in the region itself through illicit marriage among the migrants. This group of migrants has completely given up going back to their native places and has no further connections too. The native people keep the migrants in their houses to increase the manpower. They are usually made to work in the paddy fields and do household chores. In due course of time, the migrants tend to adapt to the native way of life and get assimilated eventually.

Mamu Tech (Female, 45 years) is a widow living in Riloh for 9 years with her employer. Before coming to Riloh she was working as a daily wagger in the tea garden at Assam. Her native place is at Dibrugarh, Assam. The owner has kept her to work in the paddy fields and to do the household chores. She later married an migrant Adivasi man and have one girl, and one boy. But after her husband died Mamu's and her kids' surname has been changed to Tech by her owner. She has completely given up going to her native place and is permanently living with her owner at Riloh. She follows Christianity as her religion.

Trend of adoption

It is a common sight to see the presence of non-local migrants in most of the households of the natives at PakkeKessang. In recent years, it has become a trend that most of the native people keep migrants in their houses. According to a native, the adoption of the migrants started at the time when some non-local migrants came to work in road constructions. They used to borrow money from the natives to fulfil their daily needs. The migrants, who took cash or kinds as credit and later could not repay their debt to the locals, gave their children so as to clear off their debt. The locals then had no options but to adopt the children and bring them up as their own by giving them their surname.

There are also many cases in which the migrant children are brought from a nearby state like Assam and are adopted legally by the natives. In such cases, there is an agreement paper signed between the biological parents of the child and the foster parents. Some amount of money which is fixed by both the party is given to the biological parents. The child is then taken to the foster parent's place and the foster parents make required documents. Most of the natives refrain from educating such adopted migrant children might be because they fear that the child might run away after growing up. Usually, adopted children are made to do all the household chores. Especially, the girl children are made to wash the utensils, clean the house, and help in cooking. The adopted children follow the lifestyles and culture of their foster parents. Everything of them is native except for their physical appearances.

There is also another trend of informal adoption that is very much prevalent in the region at present. In this practice, the natives informally

adopt the children borne out of illicit relationships of temporary and permanently settled migrant agricultural labourers. There are many such cases where the girl is pregnant and her husband is unknown. In such cases, the native automatically adopts the children. There are also cases in which the husband of the girl runs away and the natives also adopt the children from such cases. In some cases, the husband expires and the girl remains as widow, the natives also adopt children from such cases. The migrants are not in a position to look after themselves and their children. They stay with the natives because their basic needs are fulfilled and their children are taken care of too. In return, they need to sacrifice by lending their physical supports to the natives. Some of the adopted children are given education too. This kind of adoption is informal in nature. There is no proper written agreement made on paper by both the party. The native owners play an authoritative role in this. The migrants usually refer the native employer as *malik* which means owner in the Hindi language. The native owner is responsible for all their basic needs and protection. Since they are not from the region, they need protection from atrocities that can be done by other natives. So, every migrant has an owner who takes care of him or her and protects him or her. The adopted migrant children are sometimes distributed among the relatives of the natives. It is done so when a native owner has many adopted migrants to look after. In order to ease the burden, they give away the adopted migrant children to their relatives. The case of selling the migrants has not been found.

The adopted migrants are not given the right to own property. No migrants own any lands in their names. The inheritance of property rules is only applicable to biological children and close relatives of the natives. The adopted migrant does not enjoy all the benefits like a local. Most of the migrants live with the owners. Some of them are given land temporarily to build their house and plot of land for the cultivation of paddy and other crops. The ownership of the land will always be that of the native people of the region. The adopted (both formal and informal) migrants and the migrants who are settled permanently need to obey their foster parents or owners' orders. The migrants are provided with food, shelter, and other basic needs. Sometimes they are given cash for their expenditure.

In the case of a migrant girl child, the bride price is taken when she grows up and gets married. The owner believes that they have taken the burden to bring up the girl as parents so they have the right to ask for her bride price during her marriage. When the migrant girl gets married to any of the native people then the groom has to pay the bride price. When the migrant girl gets married to a fellow migrant then the owner/employer of that fellow migrant has to pay the bride price on behalf of the migrant guy. The bride price is usually paid in the form of domesticated animals like *mithun* (*bosfrontalis*) cow, pig, and goats. Sometimes a plot of land or some amount of cash is given in the form of bride price.

The migrant boy is recognised as one of the brothers of the clan members in which he is adopted. But he has to obey the orders of his adoptive parents and fellow clan members. He has to work in the paddy fields and do all the necessary work for his adoptive parents. The main reason behind adopting the migrants is to use them as agriculture labourers and various other physical works. Men are made to do the harder works like clearing of jungles for cultivation, carrying of firewood, looking after the *mithuns (bosfrontalis)* and ploughing of land, while women are also engaged in cultivation and all the household chores.

Apang Techī (male, 60 years), a Nyishi of Rilloh village strongly believes in humanity and he thinks that 'adoption will not only give recognition to an unknown person in the society, it will also provide a shelter or place for someone to live their life'. During construction of a road in Seppa, East Kameng district in 1980, labours, workers, and contractors used to buy edible items from his shop. He used to give credit to some of the labours working there. After the completion of the road, one of the labours was not able to return the credit, so he handed over his 1-year-old daughter to Apang in exchange of the credit. So, to increase the manpower and out of pity Apang accepted the child and gave her name as Ani Techī and gave her the freedom to live freely and treated her as his child. At present, she is now 38-year-old and married with one son, and one daughter but unfortunately, her husband, which is also a migrant labourer from Assam ran away. So Apang Techī has adopted the kids and gave his surname to them. The son's name is kept as Sankar Techī who is now helping Apang in the agricultural field. And the daughter is named Yago Techī who is now with Apang's daughter in Seppa and studying in class I.

The economic conditions are bad for most of the adopted migrants in the region. Only a few of them have houses of their own. Most of them stay with the natives in their houses. Some of them stay in the kitchen area and others have small houses built in the vicinity of the owner's houses. The houses built are very poor in conditions; it is mostly made of tins and bamboos. Most of their daily eatables are obtained from the paddy fields and kitchen garden. They don't have available cash to meet their basic needs. There are no ways for them to earn money. Whenever the owner gives them a small amount of cash, they drink alcohol from that. Each time they get ill the owner is there to take care of the expenses. Since the owner is responsible for all the basic needs of the migrants, the migrants need to work for the owner too. They are made to do all kinds of physical works from doing the household chores to working in the paddy fields. Only some countable migrants have modest economic conditions by doing small business. They sell firewood, vegetables from the forests, horticulture products, etc. One of the migrants who is permanently settled has a small shop in the region.

Their economic condition depends on the owner. If the owner is keeping them in good condition and all their basic needs are fulfilled timely then it is good but if the owner is careless and their basic needs are not fulfilled timely then it is bad for them. Some of the migrants are fortunate enough to have good native owner who take good care of them but then again not all are fortunate enough. Very few of them are fortunate enough to do small business and have modest economic conditions. Participation in politics is the same as equal to not participating. The owners of the migrants govern their political participation.

Trend of assigning local surname

The trend of assigning local surname to non-local migrants is also an alarming issue which is very much widespread in the region. It is surprising to see some migrants informing that they belonged to a certain local clan but their physical appearance contradicts the claim. Most of the permanent migrants who are settled in the region are given a local surname by their respective owners/employers. The surname is generally derived from the name of the clan. The people who are in the same clan consider themselves as brothers and sisters. Clan endogamy is not practiced and is considered as a taboo. So, when a migrant is assigned a surname he or she belongs to a certain clan. When a person belongs to a certain clan, he or she has certain privileges of protection. No one can abuse him or her. If anyone abuses, then the clan members take up the issues and imposed fines or penalties against the abusers. So, the migrants accept the surname assigned by their owner in order to avail the privileges. It has also been observed that a certain group of migrants at times claims that they belong to a certain local clan. They claim so, in order to get recognition and privilege in society. Certain privileges such as to get protection and help at times of difficulties are the main reasons of such practice.

As informed by some natives, such practice is done by some migrants in the region. The main reasons of assigning local surname to the migrants are for economic and political benefits. The migrants are engaged in carrying out various physical works and help the owner in whichever way they can. During the election time, they vote in favour of their owner's candidate. So, a native who have a greater number of adopted migrants have a greater number of votes in their side. Due to the large number of voters the owner receives patronage from the candidates in return. So, the natives tend to assign their surname to the migrants that are working under them. Such migrants are those who cannot afford to take care of themselves. They are dependent on the native owner for sustaining their livelihood.

Naming pattern of migrants

A development of naming patterns is also been observed, in this pattern, most of the migrant's names are kept based on their colour of skin. Especially

the ones who have been adopted since childhood are given the local names under this pattern. Since most of the migrants have a dark skin colour. So, in local dialect “*khya*” is the local word for dark. Therefore, the word “*khya*” is placed in the suffix of the name, that is kept for the migrants. In the prefix of the word “*khya*”, generally for males they usually add some masculine sounding words, and for females some feminine sounding words. Subsequently, the names of the males can be *Takhya*, *Pakhya*, *Rakhya*, etc. And for the females, the names can be like *Yakhya*, *Mekhya*, etc. Since the Hindi language is also very much used in the region so some Hindi names for dark skin colour are also used, names like *Kalu* for boys and *Kali* for girls are used. Several other local names are also given to the adopted migrants with different meanings. It is not a fixed pattern of naming but it can be seen that some of them are practicing it.

Assimilation

The permanency of the non-local migrants in the region is believed to be the initial stage, and then follows the adoption (informal) and assigning of local surname. The permanently settled migrants that are living with the natives have adapted the ways of lives of the natives after co-existing for so long. Many of them have learnt to speak the local dialect, changed their original religion and adapted the traditional food habits. The natives also accept them as the part of the area because they know they have nowhere else to go. The permanently settled migrants are on a varying degree of assimilation. Some are already assimilated and some are on the process of assimilation. The migrants who came as a child and the migrants who were born in the region itself are found to be more assimilated than others. There are many migrants who are living in the region since childhood.

Taji Tech (male, 36 years) is living in Rilloh since childhood. It is told that adopted and brought up in the native owner’s house in a native’s way. He was kept to do all the household chores and help his owner. He speaks local dialect very fluently. He follows Donyi Polo as his religion. In traditional Nyishi rituals, there is prayer chanting practice in which the priest chants the prayers and one guy has to assist the priest by repeating the prayers. Not everyone has the calibre and knowledge to do that. But Taji knows how to chant the prayer. During some rituals and in the time of Nyokum (local festival), he even assists the priest in chanting the prayers. He is married to a non-local migrant. They both have two sons and one daughter. Their children are given local names. Their first son is studying in class 8th and second one in class 1. They have their own house which is of a traditional type. But the land belongs to his owner. Taji also owns a small shop at Rilloh and carries out some small business too. He is permanently settled at Rilloh. He tells that he belongs to the Tech clan and the fellow Tech

clan also accepts him as their brother. He also has been given some lands to use as paddy fields by the owner. He has completely assimilated into the local culture and ways of life.

There are factors that influenced the assimilation process. Factors like having a job in the region, permanency of settlement, knowing the native language, following the religion of the natives, having a marriage partner from the region and having a local name has a greater influence on the assimilation process.

Conclusions

It is been observed that there is a symbiotic relationship between the host's community and the migrants that have assimilated or are living permanently in the region. When the word symbiotic is used it means both the party is benefitted in the process of living together. They follow the give and take policies. The migrants work in the paddy fields and do all the physical works for the locals and in return, the locals/Nyishis provide the migrants with basic needs, shelter, and protection. They are in a way interdependent on each other. The migrants require food, shelter, and protection, which they cannot afford it by themselves due to poverty or various other reasons. So, they tend to stay with the native people and rely on them. Due to the vast paddy fields the natives also need manpower to carry out the cultivation works. So, they depend on the migrants and use them in various physical works in return. The prevailing trend of bringing agricultural workers from outside by the natives is one of the main reasons of upsurge of migrants. Many of such migrants get settled in the region permanently and in due course they end up getting assimilated in the host's society. It has been observed that the degree of pull factor is higher than the degree push factor in the case of migrant's influx. Due to the need of huge physical labour to work in the widely scattered paddy fields, the natives tend to bring in large numbers of non-local migrants. It can be alleged that the level of need for migrants is more in the natives than the migrants in need of the natives. Naturally, the contribution of these migrants in the development of local economy and even political-ecology of the district needs acknowledgement. On the other hand, the assimilation of the migrants as well as unique nature of cultural adaptability found among the inhabitants may hamper the demographic scenario of the host's community in the future. The competition for social and economic stability may upsurge in the society. The local administration and civil society, may take a look into the practice of informal adoption that is prevailing in the region. The trend of assigning local surname to the non-local migrants may need rethinking. The local administration may also check the regular influx of migrants in the region. The permanent settlement of the non-local migrants who are not contributing to local economy, may not be encouraged by the locals and administration. The issues of almost bonded labour like situation leading to lack of basic rights

and extreme hardship often such migrants face in a new environment that is prevailing in the district deserves attention from the local administration or the state government as soon as possible as respect for the human rights of migrants is not aspirational or optional, but obligatory for State authorities (Guildetal. 2018). The whole study regarding the plight of the non-local migrants in the context of Arunachal Pradesh can be understood through one of the oldest theories of migration given by Ravenstein (1885).

The administration may check whether the native employers give the migrants the basic facilities and proper wages. This study is a modest attempt to understand the situation of migrants of PakkeKessang District through the lens of Anthropology at current time. The focus of the study was more on qualitative approach so the upcoming researchers can carry forward the study by focusing on quantitative approach too. Moreover, migration of non-locals from neighbouring states is a reality in various other districts of Arunachal Pradesh that demands a comparative study, which may reveal many crucial issues to understand the emerging realities of bordering state of North East India.

Notes

1. All names mentioned in the case study are pseudo name except the surname. Surname is kept original to reflect the changes in surname.
2. By Adivasis, we mean tea labourers who are also tribal migrants from eastern and central India.

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