

## Nationalism and Ethnic Consciousness in the Select Poems of Monalisa Changkija

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### Abstract

Though Northeast India is distinct from the mainland India as a home of diverse tribal communities and their variegated life-styles, cultures, languages, food-habits and religions, “the nuances of the regional and local histories of Northeast India are of no interest to the political formations associated with Hindu majoritarianism” (Baruah 49). Considering the lack of devotion for the Indian nation in Northeasterners and naming them as the “Mongolian fringe” (Caroe), the national mainstream becomes a force to teach them the Indian value system and to impose it over their ethnic distinctiveness. Under the threat of nationalism – “an inclusive and liberating force” that “broke down the various localisms of region, dialect, custom and clan ...” (Smith 1) the Northeasterners are now facing tremendous challenges to protect their ethnic identity. In this context, this paper attempts to examine how Monalisa Changkija as an Ao-Naga poet, through her poems from *Weapon of Words on Pages of Pain* (1993) and *Monsoon Mourning* (2007), explores the crisis of the Naga communities under the assimilative compulsion with mainstream and their ethnic consciousness to voice against this state-sponsored force. Changkija’s search for “strength / in the sweet assurances / of strangers” from alien lands or her experience of how their “dreams” become “the nightmare now” makes the readers conscious to realize the threat to their localism and customs. At the same time, her voice to “stop this endless nightmare”, her command to not waste time advising them “guidelines / on how to conduct” their life and “to attain total integration / into the country’s mainstream” reveal their ethnic consciousness as well as a strong question over the so called concern of the nation towards Northeasterners.

**Keywords:** assimilation, ethnicity, nation and nationalism, Northeast India, tribals

“We are different, we cannot conform to the ‘mainstream’ but we are not the villains, so why not accept us as we are and facilitate our different-ness to enrich the country’s uniqueness?” (Changkija, “Northeast Outside the Newspaper Pages” 135)

Monalisa Changkija writes that since the coming of the British and the Missionaries into their land, they have been asked to prefer and follow the ‘mainstream’ ways of life and thinking – “what and how to think, how to conduct our lives, what to believe and what to embrace as the only truth, the only salvation and the only deliverance” (135). They have

also been taught the way to become free and liberated politically, economically and socially from their ancestral beliefs. But as Changkija asserts, all these forces or compulsions cannot become successful to erase their memories or consciousness of their past life, belief, their conduct or tradition from their psyche. If one likes to do justice with the Northeast, the uniqueness of this land should be appreciated with respect to their culture, their traditions and their entire value-system in their day to day life.

James Scott opines in his book, *Seeing Like a State*, that the state cannot control diversity and because of this the state has always an effort to impose a simplified and uniform comprehensible grid or regime on society what is termed as “state simplifications.”<sup>1</sup> Developing the idea of Zomia<sup>2</sup> society in his book, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, Scott talks about the “self-governing” people who prefer to live with the dream of being outside the state’s authority or interference (3). In this perspective, Scott has used the phrase, “nonstate spaces” (13) what Sanjib Baruah thought appropriate to present the present turmoil political situation of Northeast India. In the name of development, “a form of neo-colonial control” (McDuaie-Ra 32), the state attempts the policy of rapid integration of the northeasterners with the value-system of mainstream nationalism. Scott’s challenge to the discourse of the hegemonic nation-state is a challenge of every tribal northeasterner to protect their ethnic identity, their ancestral values and their soil, from being governed by the mainstream ideals.

Nationalism as defined by Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* is “essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population” (57). He also opines, “It is the establishment of an anonymous impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves” (57). In the tribal societies, this idea of nationalism has no sense or meaning as they do not believe in state-sponsored majoritarian culture as superior to their tribal culture or values. Gellner describes nationalism as an inseparable part of modernization to transform this society into an industrial society.<sup>3</sup>

Max Weber’s definition of a nation as “a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own” or, as “a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own” (176) supports the assertion of the ethnic groups for their autonomy or their own state to save their ethnic identity as Weber describes them as “a species of *Stande* (status group) based on the belief in common descent” (Smith 13-14). Durkheim giving importance to the revival of ethnic consciousness and denying the idea of nationalism as an all pervasive omnipotent power, opines that the “mechanical causes and impulsive forces, such as affinity of blood, attachment to the same soil, ancestral worship, community of habits, etc.” unify the tribal or ethnic communities to become vocal to save their traditional way of life (278). Though to different theorists there is little difference between ethnic communities and nations, Smith writes that “To assimilate ethnicity with nationality begs the question; to equate it with culture, an equally contested, ambiguous and multistranded concept, does little to advance our understanding.” (45). In consideration with Eriksen’s view of nationalism and ethnicity, Smith further adds, “To assume that a localized collection of people who speak similar dialects, observe the same customs and worship in the same liturgy, form an ethnic

community and should therefore spawn a nationalism, if nationalism is to be regarded as 'strong', is to miss out vital stages of ethno-genesis, and bypass the search for factors that turn a loose ethnic category into an ethnic association and thence into an ethnic community ..." (45). He says that "Ethno-history is no sweetshop in which nationalists may 'pick and mix' ..." (45). So the sense of nationalism as "an inclusive and liberating force" that "broke down the various localisms of region, dialect, custom and clan, and helped to create large and powerful nation-states, with centralized markets and systems of administration, taxation and education" (Smith 1) is a threat to the tribal or ethnic groups, to their ethnicity and distinct traditional culture.

Though Northeast India is distinct from the mainland India as a home of diverse tribal communities and their variegated life-styles, cultures, languages, food-habits and religions, "the nuances of the regional and local histories of Northeast India are of no interest to the political formations associated with Hindu majoritarianism" (Baruah 49). Northeast India, "imagined as an internal other", is a home of about 272 tribal communities and sub-communities. In the contemporary popular culture of India, the Northeast is portrayed as "a place of danger located outside the affective boundaries of the nation" (13). When a government thinks of a policy like "Northeast policy", then that makes the gap between the mainstream nation and the Northeast obvious. A policy cannot be taken for the related persons or family members or friends, rather the people for whom a policy is taken become the object of that policy.<sup>4</sup> Military force which is an unavoidable interference in the everyday life of northeasterners, always tends to establish the emotional and psychological misunderstanding between this region and the mainland India. In the name of development, the tribal communities of this region have been forced to accept the mainland way of life and culture forgetting their ethnic root and values. Most of the tribal groups of Northeast India, specifically those of Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland are Christians. They think Christianity as "our" religion, not as foreign. Phizo in 1951 announces that "We do not take Christianity as foreign religion any more than we consider the light of the sun as foreign origin from outer world." But this is not easily merged with "resurgent Hindu cultural nationalist ideas" as "Hindu nationalism's majoritarian thrust equates India with Hinduism ... Certain extreme strands tend to define modern Hinduism as the religion of the Indian nation" (Baruah 15-16). As a consequence of this, the mainland India has a tendency to spread majoritarian religion and culture among the tribals of the Northeast India. Thinking that the northeasterners being the "Mongolian fringe" (Caroe), have "a lack of proper respect for the nation", the nation-state prefers to instill in their mind the idea of mainstream nationalism.

Among different tribal groups of Northeast India, the Nagas were the first to announce them independent as a nation. The project of nation-building by the Indian government in the Northeast was also first challenged by the demand of the Nagas for autonomy to protect their distinct way of life (Sarmah 167). Being influenced by their nationalist consciousness to safeguard the future of the Nagas, a memorandum signed by twenty Nagas from six different Naga tribal communities not to include the Naga Hills in reformation of the new state with Assam or Manipur was submitted to the Simon Commission on 10th January 1929 (Chasie). The formation of the Naga Hills district Tribal Council in April 1945 and its upgradation into the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946 bringing together the members from different Naga tribal communities became successful to raise the consciousness among the Nagas to assert their identity and

autonomy. Even through the publication of a monthly newspaper named *Naga Nation*, the NNC was determined to establish their independent state. In July 1947 under the leadership of Phizo, a Naga team had met Gandhi in Delhi in demand of a separate Nagaland. On 14<sup>th</sup> August, returning from Delhi, the Nagas headed by Phizo declared their own independence (Barpujari 316).

Thus, from the very beginning, the Nagas have been found proud and satisfied with their distinct traditional way of life. For a long time, the Nagas, “proud and independent as many hill races” (Furer 6) were untouched by outsiders or the culture of others. In the opinion of John Thomas, the Nagas called themselves a nation as they did not prefer to be “dragged into a system of socio-religious hierarchy that structures the Indian caste society ... They did not want to have anything to do with such a society and wanted to be defined as a ‘nation’ in their own right” (194-95). Phizo long ago as the president of NNC in 1951 had spoken in favour of the Naga nationhood remarking that “We are a democratic people, and as such, we have been struggling for a Separate Sovereign State of Nagaland in a democratic way ... India wanted to dump her excess population in Nagaland ... it threatens our very existence ... our culture, our civilization, our institutions, our nation ...”. He affirmed “The Nagas have nothing to do with India. And the Indians have nothing to do with Nagaland.” The thought of nationhood in the mind of the Nagas from the beginning had been strong. Their ethnic consciousness – consciousness of their distinct identity, culture, religion and language become the backbone of their strength to confront face to face with the force of the nation-states to assimilate them with mainstream nationalism or value-system.

Monalisa Changkija as an Ao-Naga poet, through her poems in *Weapon of Words on Pages of Pain* (1993) and *Monsoon Mourning* (2007), explores the crisis of the Naga communities under the assimilative compulsion with mainstream and their ethnic consciousness to voice against this state-sponsored force. She had started her career as a journalist in 1985 with the journal, *Nagaland Times*. Today she is well-known as the founding editor of the *Nagaland Page*, a daily newspaper which is concerned to focus on different issues related to the state of Nagaland. Her columns and articles like “The State Affairs”, “Of Roses and Thorns”, “State is a reality and sovereignty is a myth” etc. show her active role as a socialist to portray the crisis of her land and as a strong voice against the hegemonic practices of the nation-state to control their society by imposing the value system of the mainland India. She tends to reveal the Naga consciousness of their root and ethnicity and Naga resistance to the state-power what Foucault termed as “technologies of the self”<sup>5</sup> against the controlling forces, “technologies of power.”<sup>6</sup> Foucault opines, “Where there is power, there is resistance ...” (*The History of Sexuality* 95).

The contemporary poets of the region like Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire, Mamang Dai, Yumlam Tana are found active to represent the distinctiveness of the culture and beliefs of their ethnic communities. Their poems become their voice to uphold their ethnic identity, their self-determination. As a part of this movement through poetry, Monalisa Changkija, in her trilogy of the poems, “Of A People Unanswered I”, “Of A People Unanswered II” and “Of A People Unanswered III”, displays the transformation of her land in the present situation under the influence of different state-sponsored forces what Temsula Ao also marks in her poem, “My Hills”: “The sounds and sights / Have altered / In my hills” (1-3). In the first poem of this trilogy, Changkija unfolds the hypocrisy of

the nation-state to bring the people of their communities close to the mainstream culture and value-system in the name of their upliftment. She shares her experiences how their “rice fields / turn into factories and mills”, their “green hills” are now transformed into “barren brown” land (“Of A People Unanswered I” 1-4). She laments seeing how their “rivers have dried”, “once sparkling fish / lie dead on sandy banks” and feels helpless as she any more cannot smell the Pines or hear “the Tragopan and the Hornbill” (5-9). But she is vocal to expose the discrepancy of the nation-state bringing forth the failure of the state to understand their actual necessity:

You tell me we are advancing rapidly

...

and never fail to mention  
that you brought  
progress to our tribes.

But I wonder why you remain silent  
When we say we are hungry. (10-16)

Her second poem from the trilogy is a revelation of the naked truth behind the idea of assimilation of the nation-state. “Brushing aside all arguments”, all the points and urges of the people and leaders of Northeast India, specifically those of Nagaland for their autonomous statehood, the government of India had made them “a part of the Nation” without any understanding of their uniqueness, their life and culture, their ethnic root and values (1-2). The tribal life which is distinct from the life of mainland is not recognized; rather their existence is acknowledged in “hyperbole and rhetoric / with reference to the ‘Special Status’” (4-5). Changkija describes this as a conscious policy to preserve and promote them as a ‘Category’ for ‘anthropological studies / within shaven hills and rare orchids / in pursuance of your “tryst with destiny”<sup>7</sup> (6-10). The tribals of this region have become a mere ‘Category’, “a market” for “bourgeoisie” (11-13). She raises question for the strategy of the government ‘to attain “total integration / into the country’s mainstream” of the tribal communities of this region forgetting their tribal values and root (17-18). She also expresses her contempt, her protest against “half a handful of jobs and reservations” in the name of “national governance” (19-22). Foucault opines, “there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives” (*The History of Sexuality* 95). Either in the name of upliftment or development or modernization or in the process of instilling in the mind of the present generation of this region what is nationalism or nation, the government using the “technologies of domination” has planned for an exclusive policy for the region keeping in mind the hidden aims and objectives of the nation to keep them silent or voiceless about their crisis or actual necessity. Though the people of this region have been spending their life with bitter experiences of their everyday life under the threat of different internal as well as external forces and because of the gradual decay of the serenity and purity of their intimate nature and natural resources, they are very much conscious about their ethnic root and ancestral values. The tribal communities instead of surrendering to the bait of the nation to become the followers of the mainstream nationalism, are found mentally prepared and courageous to establish autonomy – the state of their own as Max Weber stated that a nation to a ‘community of sentiment’ is a state of their own. To expose the emptiness of the governmental projects for the advancement of their tribes, Changkija asks the nation why it remains silent when they are asking for their actual necessity to live freely with their own traditional values and culture.

In her third poem of the trilogy, Changkija as a representative figure of her land emphatically asks the authority not to waste their time “laying down diktats / and guidelines / on how to conduct” their life “on matters personal and political” (1-5). Any instruction or order related to the idea of mainstream nationalism or value system of the nation cannot be entertained in their tribal society as they believe in and feel proud for their community and ethnic identity as Easterine Kire writes that “Nagas are people whose culture is rooted in the village. A Naga can lose his Naganess once he loses touch with his people in the villages...” (Kire 288). Ao also asserts, “A Naga who is banished from his ancestral village for political, social or criminal offences is like a person without a country. There is no greater humiliation for a Naga than this fate” (*Writing Orality*). Changkija with courage condemns the use of power to dominate the people of her region, to compel them to be devoted to the majoritarian culture and values:

You may not know  
for you do not know  
beyond the AK-47  
and so you survive,  
prosper in darkness. (6-10)

Changkija unfolds how the government instead of knowing their actual urges, remaining in ‘darkness’ about their interests and benefits tends to impose what the nation thinks right for them forcefully. The state-power has no concern for the human value and emotion of the tribal communities of the region; rather the nation treats them as machines without any will or feeling of their own. But Changkija asserts their rights as human beings and states “But I am more / than a mere machine / or a mass of molecules” (11-13).

In her another poem, “Not Be Dead”, Changkija warns the hegemonic forces that even if her body “is riddled / with bullets”, she will not yield or become silent (1-5) and like her conviction, every voice of the land cannot also be “defeated and silenced” (6-7). Any state-sponsored violence or incident to keep them mute makes obvious “the capitulation / of those who / cannot think / beyond the AK-47” (8-13). The pervasive rage of the authority to use AK-47 also indicates “the impact” of their voice of protest against the majoritarian point of view (14-18). Tribals of this region cannot think of living like the dead being influenced by the idea of mainstream nationalism or majoritarian value system, separating themselves from their past, from their land and their ancestral values. Xaxa thinks the connection between the tribes, their land and culture as something more than a mere materialistic one:

The bonds between the earth and the tribes are not only material but also moral and ritualistic. Land is valuable to the tribes not only because it provides them the means of survival and livelihood but also because it was bequeathed to them by their ancestors. Hence, it is morally binding on the tribes to preserve the land and hand it over to their descendants ... they seek to maintain a good relationship with their ancestors and the earth, on which their survival and livelihood depends. (107)

In her poem, “One of These Decades”, Changkija rejuvenates her memory of those lost glorious decades when their “forefathers” gathered around “the fire / on moonlit nights” to celebrate their life as they dreamt (1-4). But now that reality becomes a dream to this generation as the “strangers traversed across” their “strong and secure hills” and kept

them “chained to be tamed” to keep them in what way the nation wants (5-8). Temsula Ao also writes that “the strange intruders / Began scripting a new history” (“Blood of Other Days” 39-40). Changkija can understand how they “fall prey / to the lure of riches and glory” and in this way they become trapped into the “slavery” to the mainstream life and culture (12-16). This unfortunate and unexpected gap between the present generation of her region and their forefathers transforms their land, as Changkija mentions, into “a battlefield / of conflicting dreams and designs / drowning our songs in the din of gunfire” (21-23). This detachment, this uprootedness has changed their “destiny” what as a tribal of this region she cannot even imagine, rather she calls it “nightmare” (24). As a Naga, Changkija is well aware of their “unique history,” a phrase used by former prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003 (Baruah 110). Vajpayee had said, “Nagaland has a unique history. We are sensitive to this historical fact” (110). Baruah writes on this statement: “He probably meant it as a subtle acknowledgment of the fact – important to Naga nationalists – that Naga protest against incorporation into India began before India’s independence” (110). He also adds, the Naga leaders at present ‘like to say that they are not asking for someone else’s land but only for the integration of areas where “the Nagas have been living since time immemorial”’ (125). As an active socialist and journalist, Changkija lives with the dream of changing their “destiny” making the present generation of her land aware of and respectful towards their past history:

we will gather around the fire  
on moonlit nights as did our forefathers  
and silence the gunfire with our songs  
loud and clear across our green hills  
in rhythm with all humanity  
to keep our date with destiny. (“One Of These Decades” 27-32)

A sensitive poet, Changkija is restless facing the hypocritical forces of the nation. She is unable to bear the consequences of this conflict between the nation, nationalism and her tribal society. She urges to “stop this endless nightmare / where I read of another shot dead, / another apprehended, another tortured and maimed” (“Stop This Nightmare” 1-3). She begs to the government power to “stop this nightmare” where she will have to take pen for “another child orphaned, / another girl abused, another woman widowed” (4-6). She appeals to stop this “nightmare” wherein the people of her land become the “victims of geography, history and politics” (8-12). She declares that this “nightmare” what breaks their “dreams and humble hopes”, is perpetuated by those who “believe power / flows from the barrel of the gun” (13-18). She even prays to Lord to stop this “nightmare” as she can feel without any doubt that “salvation is out of sight” (19-20). Her prayer may not reach the Lord, but it should make this society conscious of their crisis of survival and their existence as the tribals.

Because of their belief in community, the tribals are always strong-minded to fight against the outsiders and their imposition. They are determined to live with their own traditional way of life and ethnic values with self-esteem and freedom. Fishman opines that “Ethnicity has always been experienced as a kinship phenomenon, a continuity within the self and within those who share an intergenerational link to common ancestors. Ethnicity is partly experienced as being ‘bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, and blood of their blood’...” (84-85). In her poem, “Shoot”, Changkija affirms their stand to the power of the nation: “Go ahead, shoot and blast us to eternity / I give

my word, we will not move / Neither from our stand nor to distract your aim” (1-3). Instead of living a life under the control of the state-power and military force, instead of following “the way” the nation decides or chooses, Changkija prefers to be shot to eternity (7-8). She advises the hegemonic power not to be distracted from their “aim” as they are “only an inconvenience of a few lakh souls” (16). In this way, the nation can claim victory; but Changkija assures, they will “stand firm and not move” from their “dreams of brotherhood”, their belief in community what is the backbone of their ethnic existence (10-11). Changkija says that as the nation-state has “the guns” and is “confident of world opinion” (12-13), the authority can erase their mark from this earth, but she asks whether the causes for doing so can be justified honestly or not:

Shoot, wipe us out from the face of the earth  
You, all of you, who swear by Christ or the Mahatma  
Shoot, don't stop now, pull those triggers  
Shoot surely you have the courage of conviction  
of the rightness of your causes? (20-24)

The people from mainland may not believe in the spoken-words of the northeasterners to express their crisis of everyday life. Changkija states that “From distance things hardly ever resemble reality, / or show the bleeding and moaning ground” (“Cain’s Shoes” 1-2). Living far away from this region, for the government of India sitting in Delhi or for anyone from mainland India “It’s easy, much too easy to opine, aver and assert / what ought to be” (3-4), but this mainland view of the Northeast India or the majoritarian opinion about the savage life of the northeasterners cannot be the ultimate evaluation of the life of this region. Like Changkija, Yumlam Tana also opines that “You know so little about us, / Despite six decades of living together...” (“A Dirge from the North-East” 110-111). So Changkija invites those who are criticizing their region as the region of violence and conflict, to “come join me”, and she affirms that after seeing the reality from the close quarters those critics must cease their “homilies” and “stop taking sides and censure” the people of this region for “doing what must be done” (10-15). She asserts strongly, “Rejection has always evoked retaliation” (28). “Reflecting on the Biblical story of Cain and Abel, as recounted in Genesis chapter 4, the poet alludes to the fact of conflict and warfare that continue to purge society, as people continue to be in Cain’s shoes...” (Sebastian 47). Changkija uses her poetry as a medium to make her “blood brothers” conscious about the harsh truth behind “the sweet assurances / of strangers” from the “alien” lands to their “soil” and about “the stealthy sermons / of false saviours from lands / foreign” to their “ancestors” (“Monsoon Mourning” 1-23).

As a female voice from Nagaland, Changkija is also conscious of the real position of women in this discriminated society. A society, where women are not given equal space and freedom of expression, cannot be an inspiration for the female writers to fight for their ethnic identity. Changkija’s concern in this regard is noteworthy as a good number of her poems reflect her thoughts “on abused and battered women, on domestic violence and on women’s ability to rise above the ‘second class citizenry’” (*Weapons of Words on Pages of Pain* “To whom it may concern ...”). She truly rises above the social hierarchical position of women, assigned by the categorizers, to inspire the women of her region by asserting that “Man’s Inadequacies / and Insecurities / speak in the / Language of Violence” (4). She prefers to walk “alone / through the / passage of time”, instead of living with any person who “sees no / difference between / animals, servants / and



wives” (9). Her voice as a Naga tribal woman is sensible towards both the suffering of the Naga women as well as the injustices done to the Nagas. She through her poetry tries to make her society conscious more about the present crisis related to their ethnic identity and cultural root than male-female dichotomy as she knows well the importance of their unity irrespective of their gender position to restore their lost soil and the ancestral value-system of their communities instead of the value-system of the mainstream nationalism.

Sanjoy Hazarika is right to describe Monalisa Changkija as “an extremely courageous person” to speak out for “her beliefs” (iii). In one interview, Changkija going to analyse the news that “Nagaland is known as a conflict area”, states that “as a Naga, if I have to look at the conflict that we are identified with, that we have, there are two aspects to it very broadly. One is between the Nagas, the groups and the government of India and one is among ourselves” (“Interview with Monalisa Changkija”). The main reason behind this conflict between the tribal groups of this region and the government of India is the force to instill in the mind of the northeasterners the value system and culture of the mainstream nationalism what cannot be cordially welcomed or accepted by this region because they are always feeling happy and proud to live with their traditional values and ethnic identity as “self-governing” people. With her first-hand experience of this mainstream politics to erase their unique history and their distinct culture, Changkija through her courageous poetic voice tries to bring a new morning for her region transforming the present “nightmare” which is a consequence of the “state simplifications” as Scott defines. Her poetry articulates that the tribal people of her region are well aware of the present crisis of their land under the pressure of the mainstream idea of nation and nationalism, and they are also much conscious about their ethnic root and identity to stand strongly against this force of imposition and assimilation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Karlsson, Bengt G. “Evading the State: Ethnicity in Northeast India through the Lens of James Scott.” 325

<sup>2</sup>“Zomia is a new name for virtually all the lands at altitudes above roughly three hundred meters all the way from the Central Highlands of Vietnam to northeastern India and traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China (Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and parts of Sichuan)” (Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed* ix). Willem van Schendel in his paper “Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Southeast Asia from the Fringes” first talked about “Zomia”. Scott has taken this idea to present Zomia as “the largest remaining region of the world whose peoples have not yet been fully incorporated into nation-states” (ix).

<sup>3</sup>Brendan O’Leary in his paper, “Ernest Gellner’s diagnoses of nationalism ...”, going to write a critical overview of Gellner’s theory of nationalism with a close analysis of his three books, *Thought and Change*, *Nations and Nationalism* and *Nationalism*, points out how the thesis of Gellner states that “nationalism is an essential component of modernization, of the transition from agrarian to industrial society – the latter requiring a

state that can produce and be maintained by one common, literate and accessible culture” (46).

<sup>4</sup>Mrinal Miri, a philosopher of the Northeast region talks about the “Northeast policy” and how the northeasterners have been treated as the object of such policy by the nation in his paper, “North-East: A Point of View” in *Dialogue* 3.2 (Oct.-Dec. 2001).

<sup>5</sup>“...technologies of the self ... permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and soul, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault “Technologies of the Self” 18).

<sup>6</sup>“...technologies of power ... determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject ...” (Foucault “Technologies of the Self” 18).

<sup>7</sup>In his speech “Tryst with Destiny”, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the eve of India’s Independence on midnight of August 14, 1947, announced, “Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially ...” (International Relations and Security Network). [www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125396/1154\\_trystnehru.pdf](http://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125396/1154_trystnehru.pdf)

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