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Resource Sharing Between the Boundary Area of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam

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ABSTRACT: Resource extension is a natural process. Different regions of the world have access to different renewable and non-renewable natural resources such as forest resources, fertile soil, river water, etc. Often such resources are spread to a large space that can be shared by different communities of a particular region. The present paper is an attempt to unearth the sharing of resources between Seajuli which is a tea estate of North Lakhimpur, Assam located adjacent to the Kakoi Administrative Circle of Papum Pare District, Arunachal Pradesh. From time immemorial the people from both regions are living in harmony despite different socioeconomic backgrounds. The present dwellers of the study area are Apatani, Nyishi, Adivasi, Nepali, Bengali, and Assamese are few in number.

In the above-mentioned study area, the people living on either side of the boundary are different in terms of ethnicity, religion, and language. However, they have been staying together peacefully for about several decades, and today they live like a single community sharing natural resources and culture ultimately leading to the path of cultural assimilation which is often undisguisable both in the administrative boundary. Resources sharing is mostly found in the use of rivers, forest raw materials, grazing fields, and other civic amenities such as schools, health services, etc. The geographical profile of Seajuli River is that it is one of the tributaries of the Brahmaputra River flowing from the hill to the plain of Assam passing through two culturally different societies. The river is used by both the plains and the hills for fishing, collection of driftwood for firewood, sand, shingle, and boulders for constructional purposes. Plain people collect minor forest products from Arunachal Pradesh. The foothill being greener, the cattle from Assam are allowed to cross the state boundary for grazing in the morning and driven back in the evening. People of Arunachal Pradesh sell surplus agricultural products in the local mandi located in Assam, especially in the weekly markets. They buy all the readymade items from Assam. Children of Assam also study in the school in Arunachal Pradesh. Same way, some children of Arunachal Pradesh also go to Assam school. For medical and health care purposes, the people of Arunachal Pradesh go to the Assam dispensary. Thus, the Inner Line Permit (ILP) does not strictly apply in these areas because the survivals of both communities depend on peaceful co-existence.

Key Words: Resources, Sharing, Seajuli, Kakoi, foothills, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

Resource sharing is the combination of two words i.e. 'resources' and 'sharing' the focal points of study whose understanding is very important. In the simplest term, 'resources' may be defined as all material and immaterial things which are the fundamental needs of human survival. "A resource has been defined as any means of attaining given ends. A resource satisfies human wants. Water, air, sunshine, land, soil, forest, wildlife, fishes, minerals, and power are resources all useful to man" (Husain, 1994). And 'sharing' means the use of those resources commonly used by different groups of people as common property. Some resources may be ubiquitously present and some are confined to certain localities which need judicious sharing. The winds, water, rains, and atmosphere currents do not recognize political frontiers. The earth's environment is the common property of all humanities and creation as stated by Dr. Z. Pallo Jordan (as cited by Mutuso Dhliwayo). On the other hand, road, transport, institution, agriculture, horticulture, well water, etc. are man-made resources. It may be constructed by the government, local administration, or voluntarily by all dwellers to accomplish their common interests.

The problem of sharing certain scarce resources like rivers, forest, mineral, territories, etc. have been as old as human being, even animals also fight related to sharing of resources, especially for food. Eyal Benvenisti says that the Management of the ecosystem consists of a constant, almost daily balancing of myriads of demands on relatively fragile and scarce shared resources. (Eyal Benvenisti, 2002). Different nations do not wish to share even sea and air space. This problem is seen at the levels, between individuals, families, villages, district wise, state level, etc. For example, the boundary dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh is an every-year problem though both are states in the same nation. Most of the resource areas are created by the government, not by human beings. But they covet and fight for each such resource. There have been long pending issues related to sharing of the Kaveri (also called Cauvery) River by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Sharing of the Brahmaputra River between India and China is also a core of discontent.

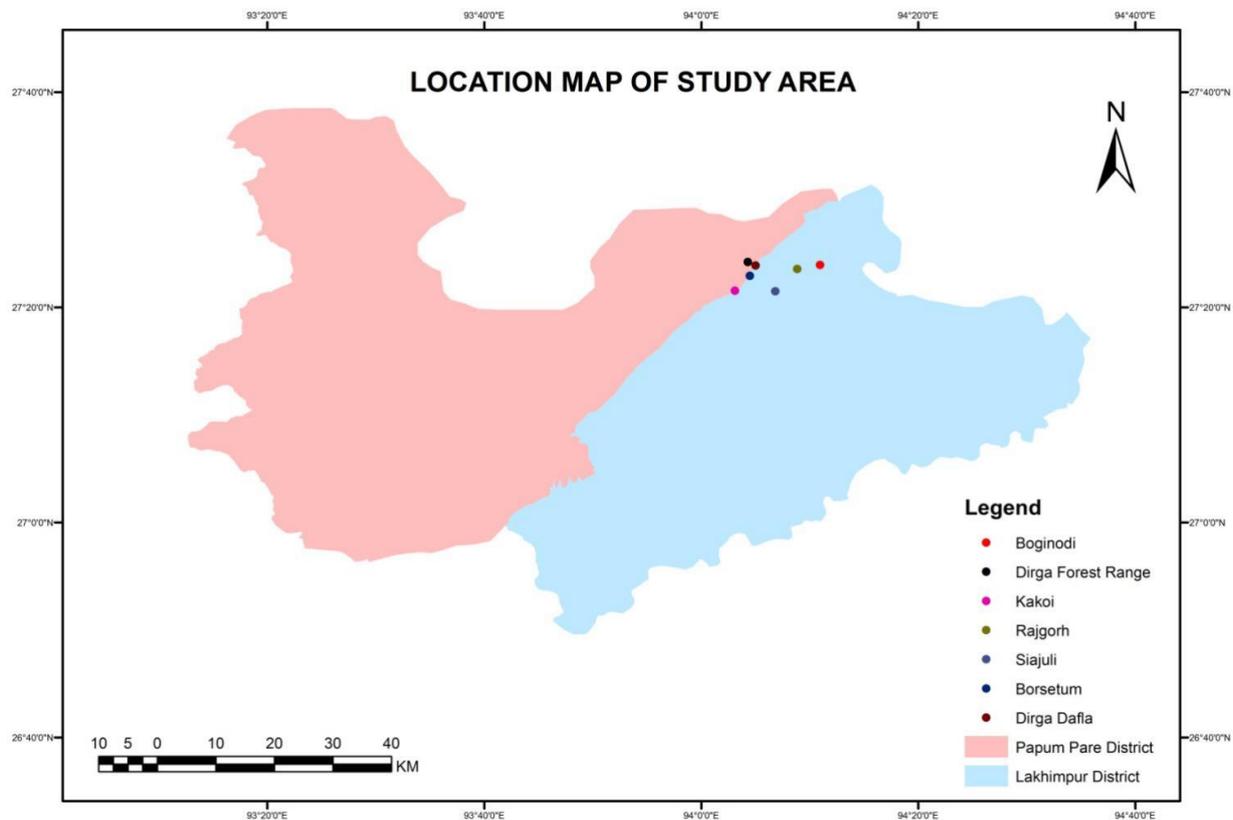
But it is not true in all cases. There are also instances where different groups of society share certain natural resources for common benefit. Today information technologies are shared across the nation. In the present era of globalization, no country can develop fully without the support of other countries. There may be political differences but economically we are dependent on each other. For example, India and China, Pakistan and India depend on many resources. The resources thus shared should be used judiciously. "The challenge of management of transboundary resources, namely natural resources shared by more than one, in an efficient, sustainable, and equitable way" (Eyal Benvenisti, 2002). Sharing of resources may bring various impacts on the relations and security of two adjacent areas. For the peaceful coexistence between the two border areas both mutual understanding and cooperation are very important. "One indicator of peace may be the level of cooperation that exists between two countries or positive peace" (Amanda.M.Roberts)

THE STUDY AREA

Location: Sharing of resources is mostly seen in the adjacent areas of the state boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The study area Seajuli and Kakoi Circle lie approximately between 27°21'41" N to 94°06'16" E and 27°21'32.9"N to 94°03'11.5"E. Thus, the study area covers a part of Seajuli Gram Panchayat which comes under Kadam Tehsil of Lakhimpur District, Assam. Seajuli Gram Panchayat consists of seventeen villages. However, the whole villages have not been covered except the villages which have a common boundary with Arunachal Pradesh have been taken for study. The villages which come under the study area are Seajuli Grant 234/232, Seajuli Grant 170/173, Seajuli Patta No.1, Seajuli Patta No.2, Seajuli Patta No.6, and Seajuli Gram Panchayat. As of the 2011 census total population in the study area is 1190. The total geographical area is 363 hectares.

On the other side, in Arunachal Pradesh, the study area covers the part of Kakoi Circle which comes under Papum Pare District. There are 9 villages under Kakoi Circle, but the study area covers only those villages which lie close to the border areas of Assam. These are Kakoi-I, Kakoi-II, Kakoi-III, Borsetum, Dirgha Dafla and Boginadi. As per the 2011 census, the total population of the Kakoi circle was 1,121.

The Study Area of Seajuli and Kakoi of North Lakhimpur and Arunachal Pradesh.



Map of Seajuli and Kakoi Sources: ArcGIS 10.3

Physiography:

- Topography:** The study area on the Arunachal side falls under the Siwalik belt of the Himalayas, the youngest range with a narrow strip of flat land on the foothill. The sudden rise of the hills from Brahmaputra Plains, and heavy rainfall caused landslides and soil erosion.
- Drainage:** The Kakoi River which is given the name of the place is the main river. The source of Kakoi River is from the Siwalik range of the lower Himalayas. The Kakoi River and the Seajuli River are one of the tributaries of the Brahmaputra which flows from the hill to the plain of Assam. The area has poor drainage during dry winter but it improves in the post-rainy season.

Climate: The climate of the study area is quite moderate and pleasing almost throughout the year, except from June to September experiencing a humid climate. The areas experience abundant rainfall throughout the year with an annual average rainfall of 200cm. The heavy rains sometimes lead even the small rivers to swell and become uncrossable rendering many farmers helpless.

Soil: The land is plain on the side of Assam, gently ascending into hill toward Arunachal Pradesh which is characterized by cultivable agricultural land, horticulture, grazing grounds, streams, and river besides forest cover. The soil type is very fine and alluvium.

Vegetation: The natural vegetation found on the foothill side is covered by forest. Sal, teak, toko leaves, cane, bamboo, etc. are available. On the other side, in the hilly area mostly herbs, shrubs, and trees are found. No patches of dense forest are found.

People: The local inhabitants of Kakoi Circle are Nyishi, Apatani, and Adi who migrated long back in the 1950s from Kurung Kume, Papum Pare, Nyapin, Sangram, Seijusa, Mengio, and Raga in search of livelihood and cultivable land. On the other side of Seajuli the inhabitants are Adivasi, Nepali, Mising, Sonowal (Assamese S.T), and Apatanis who also have migrated from other parts of Assam to work.

Occupation: The study area is predominantly agrarian in nature. Cultivation of paddy, horticulture, and domestication of animal rearing are the main occupations of the people of the study area. Some of them are engaged in government jobs.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

- This paper provides how different communities of hills and plains share many resources jointly for the benefit of all groups.
- The study highlights a vivid picture of the resources available in the study area.
- The study also provides scope for sustainable utilization of resources and harmonious sharing.

OBJECTIVES.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the resources available in the study areas.
2. To study the relationship of the inhabitants of the study area.
3. To study how resources are exchanged among the people.
4. To study the cultural assimilation taking place in the study area.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

- The study is based on an empirical method of observation.
- The primary data was collected through open end interviews with the inhabitants of both areas.
- Secondary data were collected through literature reviews, journals, and statistical handbooks.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a) Sharing of Geographical Territory.

Sharing of Geographical Territory is a distinguishing feature of this area. Cultivable alluvial plain areas of Assam are shared with Nyishi and Apatani by acquiring the land patta system. They freely cultivate any measure of allotted land of Govt. of Assam by paying annual land revenue. On the other hand, hilly territories and foothill of Arunachal are shared with Adivasi, Nepali, Bengali, Mishing, and Sonowal who are aborigines of Assam for grazing their domestic animals.

b) Sharing of Forest Resources.

Sharing of forest resources is also common for both communities. Individuals from Assam, having no forest cover enter into foothills of Arunachal to collect products such as firewood, fruits, and wild leaf for thatch, rope, cane, and bamboo for furniture and house constructions, and to fence agricultural fields.

c) Sharing of River Resources.

River resources are also seen shared among them. Fishing and collection of driftwood for fuel, sand, shingle, and boulders for construction purposes are been shared by them. The water originates from upper streams and rivulets are used for irrigation of agriculture fields. The same water running down the plains of Assam are utilized for irrigation purpose. Water is taped from streams and rivulets which are utilized for domestic utilities like drinking, washing cloth, cleaning the house, and animal husbandry without disturbing the carrying capacity of nature. Further sand, gravel, pebbles, and fish available in the rivers are also used freely as per their requirements. Water is considered one of the most important resources for the people living along the borders of both the sides of Assam and Arunachal for their well-being and economic growth.

d) Sharing of Grazing Land.

Grazing land is shared by the dwellers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The foothill being greener, the cattle from Assam are allowed to cross the state boundary for grazing in the morning and driven back in the evening. Fodders for animals are also being collected from the foothill side.

e) Sharing of Agricultural Products.

The day-to-day life of these people is dependent on agriculture. People of the hills sell surplus agriculture products in the local mandi located in Assam, especially in the weekly market. The weekly markets are set up every Sunday at Seajuli and Koilamari, Assam; every Monday at Kakoi, Arunachal Pradesh; and every Saturday at Rajgarh and Cinnatolia, Assam. From the Arunachal side, individuals trade their surplus argo-horti products like rice, maize, chilly, gingers, pumpkin, millets, arums, cucumber, sweet potatoes, tapioca, banana, pineapples, and oranges. On the other side, individuals from Assam trade their products at the same weekly market. Domestic animals such as piglets, poultry, and cattle and their meat are also sold at the market. Fish and its finished products are also sold at weekly markets.

f) Sharing of Social and Cultural Amenities.

All the communities participate in each other's local festivals and social gatherings. Schools, general ground, and health care facilities are also shared. From time to time they organize joint games and sports activities to foster friendship. Public utilities and infrastructure created on both the sides of Arunachal and Assam sides like roads, transport, school, medical, community hall, general ground, bus stands, water supply, and water tanks are also shared by all communities. Road and transport are used by all communities for pedestal, trade, conveyance, and other activities. School and Anganwadi Centre on both sides accommodate students from all communities of the zone of study. Health care facilities are rendered to all communities irrespective of origin and place.

g) Cultural Assimilation.

Due to close contact with each other for long period, they live like a single community sharing natural resources and culture. In the zone of interaction, many cultures have assimilated mostly in dressing patterns, food habits, marriage, language, and housing patterns. Languages are shared by all communities. Nyishi man speaking Nepali, Adivasi, and Apatani and vice-versa are the common features of the study areas. Festivals like Nyokum, Christmas, Dushera, etc., and community feasts like marriages, social parties, etc. are also freely participated by all. Inter communities marriage has been taking place for a long. Apatani of Dirga Dafla wearing Assamese 'gamusha' eating betel nuts, and using a bicycle for going to schools and markets is a very common phenomenon. Further, human resources, particularly the labor force from both Arunachal and Assam, are engaged in the tea estate, agriculture, and horticulture activities on both sides of the area.

SUGGESTION

Sharing of resources should be *equitable and reasonable* in nature, for the mutual benefits of all communities along the boundaries of hills and plains. Both sides should have the obligation not to cause significant harm to each other. Mutual understanding and Cooperation are always essential for better coexistence. Morality, ethic, and values of mutual co-existence and the message of peaceful living, the principle of tranquility and harmonious living must necessarily be passed down to the younger generation by the communities and government at large for posterity.

The Government should take preventive measures to check the overuse of resources. The distribution of resources should be directly proportional to the basic need of all the communities not in proportion to human wants. It must be further recognized by the government and local bodies to have continuous sharing of resources without wastage and mismanagement in near future.

CONCLUSION

The study area reveals that the inhabitants of this area migrated from different districts of Arunachal and Assam not only in search of livelihood but also in search of land for settlement, cultivation, and other economic purposes. Both the people of hills and plains practices settled cultivation and other subsidiary modes of livelihood. Sharing of resources by the people in the study area has played a significant role in bringing changes to their socioeconomic life. With the close contact and interaction with the people of Assam, the socio-culture aspects such as their food habits, dress, marriage, language, etc are changing. As a result, of their regular contact with each other, they freely move from one's state to other for education, health care, and business purposes.

In the study area, the sharing of all available resources is under compulsion for mutual and peaceful co-existence by all settlers. They are not only managing resources for posterity but also preserving them for the future generation. There is complete peace and tranquility in sharing those resources. There is no official report of violence, mischief, and misunderstanding over the issues of sharing resources by these communities. Dhliwayo states that if these shared resources are not adequately managed, there is a risk of regional conflicts and disagreements that could result in the loss of the environment that cuts beyond national lines. On the other side, if these shared resources are handled well, they can be a catalyst for cooperation and prosperity across the entire region. To date sharing of resources is being done peacefully and harmoniously.

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