

An Introspect on Multispecies Ethnographic Imagery of Subsistence and Survival Measures of Ethnic Communities of Northeast India




Authors


ATASHI MAITRA
DR. TILAK THAKURIA

Affiliations


Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of History and Archaeology, NEHU, Tura Campus
Associate Professor, Department of History and Archaeology, NEHU, Tura Campus



The North Cachar Hills of Northeast are profaned with several archaeological landmarks amongst which the Megalithic Stone Jars plays a crucial role in understanding the ancient subsistence pattern of the early foragers.



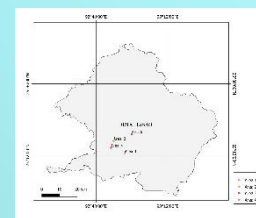
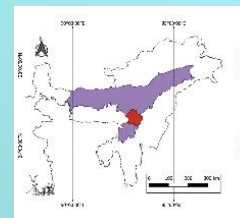
The indigenous communities of Dimas, Biate and Jeme Naga have inferences of foraging subsistence and prey exploitation of the wild and domestic fauna in their near ecological surroundings. Ethnographic study can help to understand human behavioral ecology, to reconstruct past ecological patterns and also to formulate archaeological narratives existing in the areas.



Early inhabitants were migrants from the plains of Brahmaputra, and surveyed the hills for setting up of several villages, with the basic need of subsistence is derived from *jhum* cultivation and domestication of pigs, goats and cattle.



Utilisation of faunal resources are included as dietary produce, medicinal gains and social prestige relation among the ethnic communities.



OBJECTIVE

Multispecies ethnography examines the entangled relations between humans and animals through practices of hunting, husbandry, totemic traditions, and folklore.

- Within this framework, animals are conceptualized simultaneously as biological and supra-biological entities that intersect with nature-culture ontologies.
- Their roles extend beyond subsistence to participation in cultural domains and therapeutic contexts, including Animal-Assisted Activities, thereby underscoring their multifaceted significance in human social worlds.

METHODOLOGY

- Sites were selected on the basis of drawn from the previous study area to gather direct evidence of foraging subsistence existing in the proximal localities
- Intensive ethnographic documentation through Non-probabilistic sampling
- Focussed group interviews and structured questionnaires with Targeting age variant of 30+ to 50+
- Hunting techniques and tools and Oral traditions and zootherapeutic practices used by society.



A host of diverse oral histories have been passed down from generation to generation where animals forms integral part of social customs.

Hoolock gibbons are taken as watchers and protectors of the village. They have specific signals to warn off the villagers if threats are insights.



Bad omens are associated with barking deer, and leopards, and even tigers. The sacrificial meat is generally offered to the spirit of forest deity by the KAMAL (traditional healers).



Duck is used for treatment of nervous disorder. A house is constructed by the stream and male ducks are sacrificed for treatment purposes.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Carcass butchery is a culturally mediated behavior that reflects the technological, social, economic, and ecological factors that influence human diet and food ways

Traditional Hunting have gone down due to establishment of community forest protection and also wildlife conservation acts.

Hunting was primarily undertake for subsistence and safe guarding purposes.

Pig is also used for sacrificial offerings and for the treatment of paralysis attacks. Eye of male chicken are used for performing certain specific ritual related to death.



CONCLUSION

The ritual hunting are done on the basis for vital nutritional needs, economic costs and as Token for showing potential allies the power, and prestige. Sports, Ritual and Trophy are some of the variants.

Decline in faunal resources in the vicinity due to excessive anthropic activities of the indigenous communities

Linear Conservation plans of developing wildlife sanctuary, and national parks to create an indices on faunal valorisation of the areas.

A ecological index of diversity of wild fauna is measured for sustainable usage of the ethnic communities.

Multispecies ethnographers are studying buffer contact zones where human-wildlife conflict and coexistence comes in question

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I thank my supervisor Dr. Tilok Thakuria assisting me with his guidance in the research.
- I am genuinely thankful to the village headman of the areas for allowing me to conducting survey and document the hunting souvenirs.
- I would also like to extend my regards to Mr. Kemprai and Mr. Pranjit Hajong for co-operating with me in the survey.



The demographic diversity of the participants are maximised in more ratio of males than females.