

Editorial
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ON MEDIA IN THE ‘OTHER INDIA’

by

**Charvak,
Guest Editor, Summer and Winter Joint Issue, 2015**

Surely it was a call for justice – academic as well as applied – a call for greater social justice, for which the theme 'Media and the North East' was chosen for the current issue of the Global Media Journal, Indian Edition. The choice was indeed a significant and strategic one and it is expected that an analytical understanding on North East India would hopefully emerge from this exercise and the dynamics of the region would be understood through a prism of media studies.

For a couple of unavoidable reasons, we were rendered late in bringing out the issue, for which the Guest Editor takes the full responsibility. We have tried to accommodate representative papers from across the region and also across the spread of the theme that would explain the often-overlapping complexities of the region, its politics, economy and its media. The multi-layered problems of understanding media and its role in addressing social situations were key objectives that this issue has tried to unfold.

Many tribal societies of North East still have their traditional communication intact by and large despite the boom of commercial media. Our first article of Dr.Raghavendra Mishra & K. Newme of Assam University showcase one such sample – Zeme Naga Traditional Folk Media and social communication.

The second article - ‘Print Comes to North East India’, written by this guest editor, tried to situate the advent of print media in North East – a portion of the print media history of our country which has fallen out of our traditional media history books of India. The placing in of the textual history continues with the third article by Dr.C. Lalmuansangkimi, from IIMC, Aizwal, which is a reflection on the emergence of Print and Electronic Media in Mizoram – one of the important and distinguishable states of North East.

Any discourse on North East cannot escape few important facets of North East – indigenous identities, partition, migration, and conflict. ‘From Fractures To Frames: Conflict Reporting in Newspapers of Assam’ by Dr.JoyaChakraborty, Anjuman Borah &MuktikamHazarika of Tezpur University touches upon this relatively recent (i.e. Post-Independence) phenomenon of conflict and media. DebrajDebandCharvak analyse mediatisation of ethnic stereotypesin framing migration by regional print media of Tripura – a very important North East Indian state for more than one reason.

Insurgency and issues of Human Rights go hand in hand. Armed Forces Special Power Act 1958 which was enacted for North East has always one big issue of debate. Issues related to media coverage of violence and human rights violations related to AFSPA is the theme of the next paper which tries to analyze a selected sample of newspaper coverage, chosen from Internet news archive, in a contestable, yet interesting beginning.

Women journalists are few in the North East. But we have not forgotten them- engendering media participation has been discussed in another article byour media research group of Tezpur University. Dipanwita Roy from Kolkata has critically reviewed the case of opportunities of social media for Development Communication in North - East India. Sunil Kalai from Tripura University has discussed issues related to visual grammar and human rights in his article in a North East context.

The article section ends with two contributions from Assam University again, by Dr. Ayesha Tahera Rashid and Dr. S.M. AlfaridHussain on social media. Whereas the first one is a socio-psychological study, the second one is an attempt of validating certain theoretical premises on the behavior of Facebook Users of North East in presenting their ‘self’ using the data related to university students of Assam.

We are happy to start our Commentary section with an article of Dr.SubirBhaumik – the famous former BBC journalist who had really made it large from the small state of Tripura. His commentary ‘Reporting the Conflict: India's Northeast’ is based on his own experience of reporting with many anecdotes with high learning value. The next Commentary is by JoydeepBiswas, who has touched upon ‘Regional Nationalism in Assam Print Media’, a rather significant article that will hopefully help to understand the very concept of sub nationalist tendencies, identity issues and the historic support of the local and regional print media organisations operating from Assam. The article was chosen to offer the readers a

critical account of media behaviour that has served sub national identities over the cause of ideal state apparatus as is generally presumed to be the case. Satraajit Palchoudhury, a relatively young journalist of present generation has written the third commentary on alienation of seven sisters – a theme which is hard to be old and the flowering on which is harder to be exhausted.

The Students' Research section has got three contributions. The first among these is a scrutiny of the role of Media in the Peace Processes of Nagaland - by Sayantani Roy and Tanmoy Das from West Bengal. The second Students' Research is a comparative analysis of 24x7 National News Channel and Bengali News Channel's coverage on North-East India -- by Priyam Basu Thakur & Sangita De again from West Bengal. The third one is a take on 'Digital Photography' and Anthropological Documentation in the context of Northeast India - by Piyashi Dutta from Tezpur University.

We are also very happy for our Book Review section of this issue, where we have got one author of to review the other. Our Book Review Editor has chosen 'Strangers of the Mist: Tales of War and Peace from India's Northeast' by veteran journalist and scholar Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika as the first book to be reviewed. The book has come to be regarded as one of the few books cardinaly important to understand rebel movements in India's North East, their politics and how the population of the region share this contested political space.

The book has been reviewed by Rajeev Bhattacharyya – the journalist who had trekked and met the Chiefs of the rebel groups few years back in one of the most daring journalistic expeditions. Rajeev Bhattacharyya's review is surely to attract attention of the concerned scholars and readers in this area. The reviewer has made a threadbare analysis of Prof Hazarika's book and its well-known strengths in explaining the North East region and its conflicts. He has also pointed out few lapses in its information. Michael Mushahary has conducted the second book review. He has reviewed 'Rendezvous with Rebels: Journey to Meet India's Most Wanted Men' by Rajeev Bhattacharyya, who was the incidental reviewer of the first book. The reviewer has been found to have done an excellent job in pointing out the true advantages of the book; while suggesting some area where the book could have been more informative and further useful.

Our issue comes to an end with a document 118 year old document: 'A Short Account of the Rise and Progress of Journalism in the Assam Valley', written in 1897 by an Indian for the

British administration.

We sincerely hope that this effort of offering a set of fresh and critical works on different media and their functions in a multi layered, multi ethnic region will find justice in instilling new thoughts and queries among the readers. We hope that this effort will bring the readers closer to North East India, its people and its media.

Following attached text was the Call for Paper hosted for the issue:

Call for Papers

Announcement for the GLOBAL MEDIA JOURNAL – Indian Edition Sponsored by the University of Calcutta

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SUMMER ISSUE/JUNE 2015
Volume: 6/ Number: 1
Theme: Media and Northeast India

Deadline for submission: 31 May, 2015

The northeast Indian mediascape is entrapped with a large number of factors overtly and covertly influencing the way media coverage is done and ensuing perceptions are generated on the region and its people.

The region's media organizations are found entrapped amidst a number of political, security, military and administrative barricades and region-specific policy decisions. The situation resulted in a variety of contrasting interpretations, often bordering on describing the northeast Indian media as playground for generating stereotypes and under-reporting development.

National large media organizations contributed to the situation by creating and maintaining a great information deficit. This inadequate media representation arguably led to extremely contested understanding of the region in the rest of the country and beyond. Quantum of media content on the northeast region was fairly unbalanced; majority of them was decided by size of location specific readership and ethno-political and identity issues.

The regional media was cited in a number of national and international research studies to have exhibited serious gender gap in its coverage. Under-representation of women in the region's media industry, save some known faces who have managed to sustain through prolonged struggle against the state and many non-state forces, was also found to be one of the major areas of concern. Studies found that proliferation of media organizations in the country and the NE didn't necessarily result in higher degree of media coverage in the region. Location and proximity have often dealt heavy blow on prioritization of news content. While ownership patterns of large media organizations dramatically changed in the national arena during the recent past, ownership of most mass media organizations in the NE India is still largely in infancy.

54 years after Gavin Young's report, the NE region is still trapped in the veil of selective silence to the rest of the world. The mainstream private media in the country engaged marginally in the region. This disengagement arguably led to denial of voice of the masses in many respects, which otherwise gave rise to identity conflict issues, often in violent forms. The public media outlets were mostly found busy upholding the Ideal State Apparatus rather than trying to understand the true spirit of the region and its people. With its tribes, their problems of under-development, varieties of conflicts, the contested form of media representation of the NE India has resulted in over reporting of conflict and under reporting of the region according to many experts as well. The role of news media didn't rise beyond reportage based on parameters of violence and security alone.

There is a strong need to re-understand the lacuna in coverage patterns, priorities, understanding ownership access and influence, role of revenue, information flow, flak and a number of other factors in comprehending the framework of reporting in the NE region.

The aim of this issue of the journal is to look into diverse perspectives on the discourse.

Contributions might address, but not limited to, such topics as:

- Indian media and representation of northeast India;
- Indian media and conflict reporting from northeast India;
- Media organizations of NE India and coverage of development;
- NE Indian media and the psychological image of being Northeast;
- On Indian media and gender reporting from NE;
- On ownership and media coverage of northeast India;
- Corporate control and media coverage of northeast India;

- Indian media and creation of stereotypes on NE India;
- Democratization of media and coverage of NE India;
- On 'worldviews' of the marginal and NE media organizations.

Please see 'Submission Guidelines' at

http://www.caluniv.ac.in/global-media-journal/submission_guideline.html

All submissions should be accompanied by the following information which should be presented on the front page only:

- Article title,
- Author name/s,
- Current position/affiliation,
- Brief biography (approximately 50 words),
- Email and mail addresses,
- A brief abstract (approximately 200 words)
- Five to ten keywords reflecting the contents of paper,
- Word count (excluding notes)
- The URL for author/s' personal web page
- A brief statement that clearly indicates the article/review etc is not submitted simultaneously for consideration to any other publication.

Word Limit:

For Articles: Approximately 7000 words, excluding notes.

Students' Research: Approximately 7000 words, excluding notes.

Commentaries: Between 2500 and 3500 words.

Book Reviews: Approximately 1500 words.

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Book Review submissions and queries should be directed to **Prof. BuroshivaDasgupta,**

Book Review Editor, Email: buroshiva.dasgupta@gmail.com

All papers must be submitted via electronic attachment to:

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Email: globalmediajournal@caluniv.ac.in,

You may also contact:

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