

# Indigenous Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya and Environmental Sustainability: A Study

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## Abstract

In the era of modernization and globalization climate changes and environmental degradation are the big threat for all the species of earth and their sustainability. The indigenous ecological knowledge and behaviour of the tribal people towards nature is generally based on sustainability, productivity and optimum balanced utilization of available land and other natural resource. In India the total tribal population is 8.6

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*Index terms*— globalization, modernization, climate changes, ecological culture, khasi tribe, sustainable development.

## 1 Indigenous Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya and Environmental Sustainability: A Study

Dr. Sinchini Kundu Abstract-In the era of modernization and globalization climate changes and environmental degradation are the big threat for all the species of earth and their sustainability. The indigenous ecological knowledge and behaviour of the tribal people towards nature is generally based on sustainability, productivity and optimum balanced utilization of available land and other natural resource. In India the total tribal population is 8.6% of which 89.97% live in rural areas. This subcontinent is the largest tribal populated country where different ethnic groups co-exist in a same territory with their diversified traditional culture. A Major portion of tribal people inhabits in the northeast part of India and Khasi is one of them. They live in different states of India such as in Meghalaya, Assam, and Manipur but the major portion of the total Khasi population is found in north east forest region of Meghalaya. They are the ecological components of this forest ecology. Their intra and interconnection with nature is always symbiotic. But due to the globalization, the influence of modern culture, intermingling and cultural hegemony, most of the tribal cultures are in the way of extinction. Rural people tend to imitate the modern culture without thinking the effects and want to get shifted in urban areas for better facilities and livelihood opportunities.

For sustainable development, ecological behaviour is essential and without ecological culture, ecological behaviour is not possible. Ecological culture is the sets of knowledge, norm and idealism that help to interact with the environment, but cross culture, cultural suicide, culture mixing and acculturation affect the tribal culture. The Khasi people have been struggling to keep their traditional. The ecological culture of khasi tribe, their eco-friendly livelihood and development is very much valuable for sustainability with climate changes and it can be applied in practical life through ecological culture.

Introduction India is one of the colorful countries in the world where around 705 scheduled tribes are notified with their distinct culture and as per census 2011 they constitute 8.6% of the total population. Among them, 89.97% live in rural areas and most of them, live in hilly forest areas. They experience increased vulnerability to changing weather pattern and climate impacts due to loss of traditional subsistence practices. In India there are 75 vulnerable primitive tribal groups (VPTGs), declared by the government and major cause of their vulnerability is the impacts of climate change because of their dependence on and interconnection with the natural environment for their culture, health and livelihoods. Many tribal communities face difficult socioeconomic conditions that may be exacerbated by climate change. Modernization, globalization and environmental changes are constantly

## 7 CONCLUSION

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45 changing human life and their cultures. In this context, we need to value the tribal culture and to study the  
46 ecological culture and ecological behaviour of the khasi tribe for environmental sustainability.

## 47 2 II.

### 48 3 Objectives

49 ? To highlight on the changing scenario of socioeconomic and cultural condition of the tribal people of the study  
50 area. ? To find out the new challenges in the livelihood of the Khasi tribe due to climate change. ? To highlight  
51 on the ecological behaviour of khasi tribe.

52 III.

### 53 4 Hypotheses

54 ? Value based socio-economic and cultural conditions of Khasi tribes become changed. ? Khasi tribes face  
55 challenges due to climate change.

56 ? Khasi tribes have their own Ecological culture.

### 57 5 IV. Khasi Tribe: A Geographical Identity

58 In India broadly the tribal people inhabit within two distinct geographical areas -the Central India and North  
59 Eastern Area. The Khasi tribes are an indigenous ethnic group of north-eastern India. They are mainly found  
60 in Assam, Khasi Jaintia hills in Meghalaya, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, and Jammu and Kashmir. They  
61 are called by the different names such as Khasi Paris, Khuchia, Khashi and Khasa. Most of the Khasi people are  
62 mainly located in the north-eastern part of Meghalaya with around 48% of the total population of Meghalaya. It  
63 is said that the choices were earliest immigrant tribes who came from Myanmar, and settled down in the plains  
64 of east Assam. Location map Of the Khasi tribe and the rainfall and temperature graph of the RI -Bhoi district  
65 are shown below: ECOLOGICAL CONCIIOUSNESS Relationship and linkage between environment and society  
66 in the modern era.

## 67 6 ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS

68 The knowledge of the laws of nature and the integrity of the system of laws.

69 The ecological behavior and techniques that they follow in their livelihood, thousands of years, help to grow  
70 their ecological culture. In the modern world it is necessary to discuss their ecological culture in the context  
71 of environmental degradation and environmental sustainability. Wrapping and taking of food, vegetables in  
72 newspaper is a common practice in India. According to Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI)  
73 the printing ink causes of cancer, severe health problem. Wrapped aluminium foil has more illness causing  
74 bacteria like Staph and Bacillus Cereus which are rapidly growing on open air. The tribal people like choices use  
75 tree leaves to give food in the replacement of unhygienic newspaper or foil paper. Where most of the people are  
76 habituated to throw waste materials here and there, in every small Khasi shop or besides the roads people can  
77 watch their handmade eco-friendly dustbins.

78 Plate 3: Khasi woen are busy to selling Plate 4: Khasi women serve food in a tree leave in out of their foods  
79 in left hand side. eco-friendly, handmade dustbin besides shop.

80 Living Root Bridge in Meghalaya is a simple suspension bridge, constructed trough rubber plant and by using  
81 ecological knowledge. At the age of modernization and Globalization, when people destroy forests to build cultural  
82 landscape and help to increase the temperature of the earth, they produce greenhouse gases. The hanging root  
83 bridge is the symbol of traditional tribal Ecological knowledge, and it is necessary to imply these technologies  
84 more and more in development and constructional field.

85 Plate 5 and 6: The Famous living root bridge in Meghalaya, denotes the ecological technique of khasi tribes.

86 There is a belief among khasi tribes that God had originally distributed the human race in 16 heavenly families.  
87 However, seven out of these 16 families are stuck on earth while the other 9 are stuck in heaven because a heavenly  
88 ladder resting on the sacred forest mountain area (located in the present-day Ri-Bhoi district). They are enabled  
89 people to go freely and frequently to the heaven whenever they pleased until one day they were tricked into  
90 cutting a divine tree which was situated at Lum Diengiei Peak, a grave error which prevented them access to the  
91 heavens forever. They were tricked into cutting a divine tree which was situated on Lum Diengiei Peak, a grave  
92 error which prevented them access to the heavens forever. This mythological story is often seen as a metaphor  
93 of how nature and trees, in particular, are the manifestation of the divine on V.

## 94 7 Conclusion

95 Khasi village areas, living root bridge, and beautiful scenario of Meghalaya attracts tourists, but due to lack of  
96 ecological culture and behaviour forest region and climate are badly affected by their activity. The environment  
97 is also affected by unethical behaviour and development of tourism without following ecological culture. So it  
98 is necessary to aware the tourists as well as modern people of the whole world about indigenous culture and  
99 technologies of different tribes. In this field the engagement and guidance of tribes may create job opportunity

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100 for tribes in Meghalaya as well as a community based activity for developing ecological behaviour make a positive  
101 impact on environmental changes and help to change the behaviour of all people in India. It's also necessary  
102 to protect the Indigenous tribal culture as well as their Ecological technique has to be followed in the modern  
103 construction. The mechanical system of famous living root bridge is must be used in building construction.  
104 It's the duty of the all people to protect and follow the tribal ecological culture for the sustainability of the  
105 environment as well as for the sustainability of Human civilization.

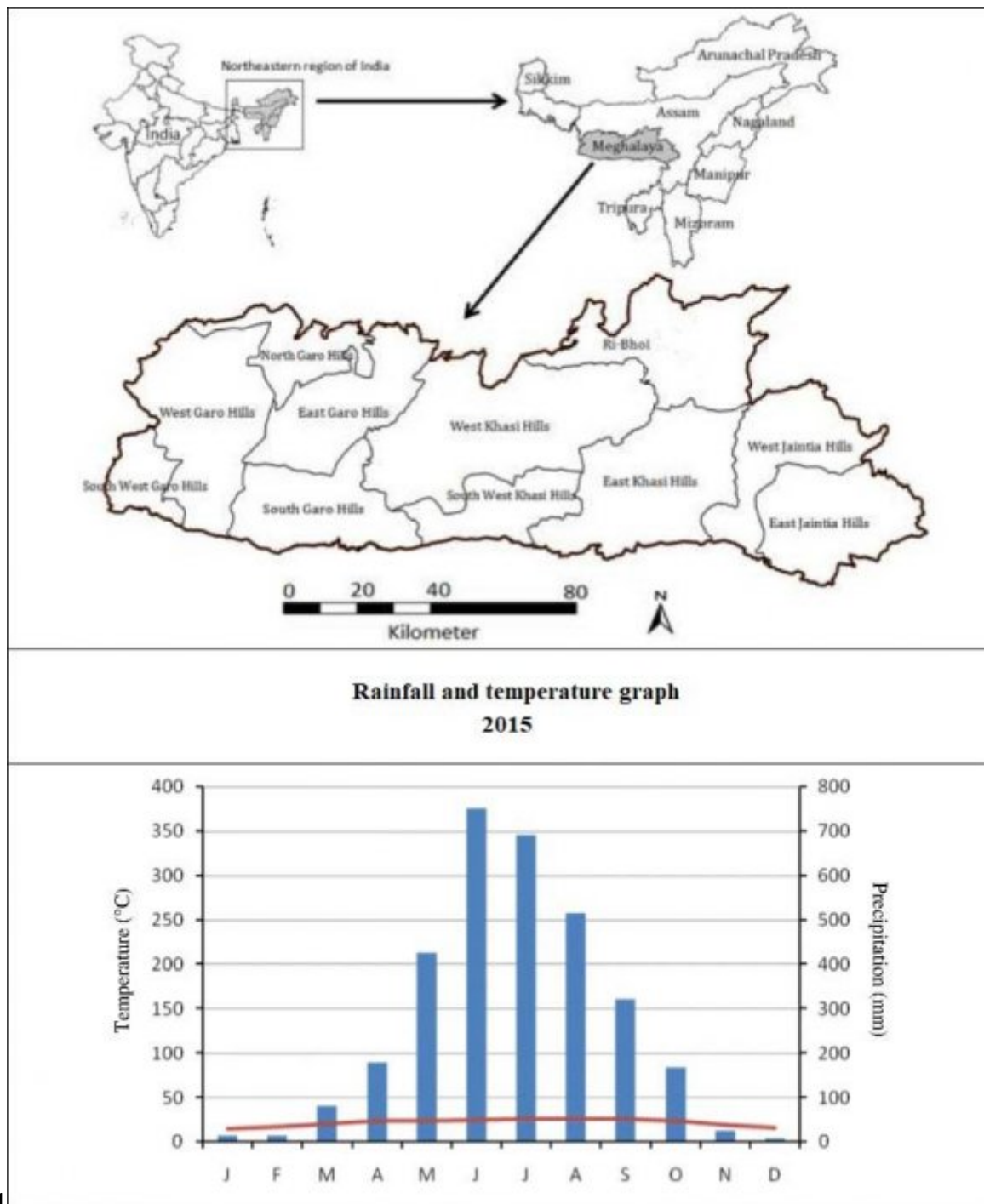


Figure 1: Figure 1



Figure 2:



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