



**Indian Council of Social Science Research
North Eastern Regional Centre
Shillong**

Organises

**Two-Day National Seminar
On**

**“Placemaking and Cityscaping of
Shillong through Narrative and
Cultural Representations”**

**Date: 15th - 16th February 2024
Venue: ICSSR-NERC Conference Hall.**

Patron: Prof. Baghirathi Panda

Coordinator: Dr. Arzuman Ara
Co-coordinator: Dr. Bathsheba Pyngrope

Programme Schedule

Day 1:

Date: 15th Feb 2024

Time

Item

8.30- 9.30 AM

: Registration

9.30-10.10 AM

: Inaugural Programme

Chair - Prof. Bhagirathi Panda

Welcome Speech

: Dr. Bathsheba Pyngrope

Felicitation of the Guests & Dignitaries :

Introduction to the Theme of the Seminar: Dr. Arzuman Ara

Inaugural Address by the Chief Guest : Shri Dhruva Hazarika

Topic: Shillong in the Literary Consciousness of a Writer

Address by the Director

: Prof. Bhagirathi Panda

Vote of Thanks

: Amenla Changkija

10.10- 10.30 AM

: High Tea

10.30-11 AM:

Chair: Prof. Bhagirathi Panda

Key-Note Speech : Prof. Kailash C. Baral

Topic:Space and Place: Re-imagining the Colonial City with Reference to Shillong

11 AM- 11.30 AM

Session- 1 Plenary

Chair: Prof. J. Prodhani

Speaker Prof. Sajal Nag

Topic: Cherrapunji to Shillong: Trajectory of a Colonial Capital

11 AM- 11.30 AM

Session- 2

Chairperson: Prof. D R L Nonglait

Theme: Placemaking Shillong: Folklores, Myths and Colonial Narratives

Speakers

: Prof. Jyotirmoy Prodhani & Dr. Preetinicha Barman:

History in the Clouds: Revisiting the Summer Palaces of Shillong

: Prof. Tejmala Gurung Nag:

The Gorkhas and the Making of Shillong in Colonial Assam

: Dr. Bhaskar Gogoi:

People at Play: Sports in Shillong during the Colonial Times

: Mr. Gin Muan Thang:

Colonial Hill Station: A Home Away from Home

: Mr. Elnathan W. Lyngkhohi:

Placemaking of Shillong through Oral Narratives

1.30-2PM

Lunch Break

2-3.30 PM:

Session- 3:

Chairperson: Dr. Alankar Kaushik

Theme: Placemaking Shillong in Multiple Discourses-1

Speakers

: Prof. Usharanjan Bhattacharjee: Shillong in Tagore's Imagination
: Dr. Binayak Dutta: Partition of 1947 and Re-making of Post-colonial

Shillong

: Prof. Dwijen Sharma: Shillong in Assamese Narratives
: Mr. Rameez Gazi: Architectural Landscaping of Shillong: Assam
Type Structures – An enduring piece of Architecture post the Great
Earthquake of 1897
: Dr. Parvin Sultana: Peripheries and Precarities: Situating the Myriad
Routes in Janice Pariat's *Everything the Life Touches* (Online)

3.30-4.30 PM:

Session- 4 (Special Session)

Speaker

: Prof. Esther Syiem: **Shillong in Mindscapes and Landscapes**
: Mr. Ahmed Hussain: **Shillong in Photography**

4:00 pm: Tea

Day-2

Date: 16th Feb 2024

10 am-11 pm

Session- 5

Chair: Prof. Dwijen Sharma

Theme: Placemaking Shillong in Literary Representations

Speakers:

: Dr. Arzuman Ara: Shillong in Ankush Saikia's The Girl from
Nongrim Hills
: Mr. Auswin W. Japang: Shillong Musing: Unravelling the Past and its
Cityscapes through Shillong Times
: Dr. Surajit Sen: Shillong in Dhruba Hazarika's Bowstring Winter
: Ms. Kabyasri Bharadwai: Representation of Shillong in Insta/poetry
: Dr. Basil N. Darlong Diengdoh: Many Ways of belonging: Shillong
and its Literary Representations in Select Narratives

11-12 pm

Session- 6

Chair: Prof. Ravindra K. Vemula

Theme: Visual cultures and Media Narratives

Speakers

Dr. Alankar Kaushik: Reimagining the city of Shillong
through Project CHIME: A Study of Documentary Videos Produced
by the Community Children Reporters of Mawlai
Dr. Rupa Sonowal: Culture, Identity and Geography of Shillong in
Select Films (Online)
Saba Anish: Visualising Shillong: A Nostalgic Ride through Select
Songs of Bhupen Hazarika (Online)

12 -1.30 pm

Session- 7

Chair: Prof. Sukalpa Bhattacharjee

Theme: Shillong in Multiple Discourses- II

Speakers

Mr. Sujit Mohanty: Shillong in Popular Cultures: Melodious Reminiscence of Shillong and Unveiling the Socio-cultural Tapestry through Bhupen Hazarika's "Shillongor Monalisa"
Ms. Santidora Nongpluh & Dr. Sudip Mangang: Placemaking Shillong as a Gendered Space
Deepesh Chauhan & I Amenla Changkija: Visual Signage and Cityscape of Shillong: A Reading
Dr. I. Amenla Changkija: Placemaking: A Narrative of Markets in Smit and Barabazaar

1.30- 2.30. Lunch Break

2.30-4 pm

Valedictory Session

Chairperson: Prof. Bhagirathi Panda, Director, ICSSR Shillong Campus

Welcome Address : Dr. Alankar Kaushik

Felicitation of Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika

Valedictory Note : Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika

Topic: Making Places, Safe Spaces: The Unique Challenges of Equality

Report and Feedback : Bidya and Aman

Vote of Thanks : Dr. Arzuman Ara

Certificate Distribution

4 pm: High Tea

Contacts:

Dr. Arzuman Ara. Ph. 7085086371

Dr. Bathsheba Pyngrope, Ph.9485191717

Rapporteurs

Ms. Kabyasri Bharadwaj

Mr. Aman Verma

Mr. Adarsh Kumar

Mr. Bidya Bhushan Nayak

Mr. Sreeraj B.

Concept Note

Placemaking is a concept of designing and planning as well as management of a place for human habitat. Localism and urbanism are also some terms associated with placemaking. The local geography plays an integral part in placemaking a place, in the construction of a “placeness”. The concept of placemaking is adopted in the study of literature and art forms in studying the representation of a place in them which gives a unique identity to the place. Such studies focus on how a place is “imagined” and represented that marks placemaking as a process, as perception and as a philosophy of placeness. A place from such perspective is not limited to see the place in its materiality, but a place of multiple signifiers of society, culture, identity, politics and so on. Nonetheless, New Materialism would see the place a constantly forming and reforming “livingness” and human and non-human relationships. This envisages that human beings relate and form multiple ways to forge a connection with a place that makes them “see”, imagine and re-imagine the place other than its materiality. A place, thus, becomes “embodied, affective, and relational” space.

Orhan Pamuk’s famous book *Istanbul* is a citylore that explores the eponymous city through a personal narrative. William Chapman Sharpe’s *New York Nokturne* is a book that explores the representation of New York in literature, painting and photography. Jeffrey Hou’s edited volume *Transcultural Cities/Border-Crossing and Placemaking* sets to explore the cities as culture-scapes from the viewpoints of multiple disciplines. Exisle Publishing house has brought out a series of books on *City in Literature*. And CUP has published *The Cambridge Companion to City in Literature*. Such studies shift a focus to study a place from mere “where” and “what” to “how” and “why” – to express it linguistically.

The city of Shillong has been an important place in the region of Northeast India. It’s growth from a humble hamlet to a capital city is intertwined with history of this region. In its placemaking, we come across a variety of narratives. Folktales, historical documents, travelogues, novels, poetry, documentaries and recent social media posts have contributed in making an image of Shillong in the public psyche. The folktales of U Shyllong and Sohpetbneng represents a kind of imagination which may offer a contrast to the colonial architectural landscaping. Tagore has written a novel *Shesher Kabita* based on Shillong as well as essays on the beauty of Shillong. Joseph Dalton Hooker has written about his exploration in the “khasia” hills. The romantic photos of travel literatures on Shillong may be again contrasted with the narratives of Ankush Saikia who represents the crime-scape of the city. The winter environment of Shillong and its gambling tradition of *teer* find a place of action in Dhruva Hazarika’s *A Bowstring Winter*. In the recent years, Anjum Hasan, Daisy Hasan, Janice Pariat, Kynpham S. Nongkynrih, Esther Syeim etc. have written a number of fictions and poems on Shillong. Words and phrases like pines, pears, clouds, cold weather, rain, mist, cherry-flowers, *teer, kwai*, Assam-type house,

“Scotland of the East”, “five seasons in a day in Shillong” etc. occur in abundance in the representation of Shillong giving it an image of unique placeness.

This seminar would focus particularly on the concept of “placemaking” with reference to Shillong as a space for human habitat and how it is imagined and represented in different narratives. As Shillong is an important place in the history and today’s socio-political scenario, studying the place in terms of its placemaking in arts and literature will open up new perspectives and enrich our understanding of the place.

Sub-Themes:

The seminar would primarily focus on presentations on the following themes/ subthemes, though not restricted to them:

- a. Placemaking Representation of Shillong in Historical and colonial narratives
- b. Placemaking Representation of Shillong in mythical and folklores
- c. Placemaking Representation of Shillong Visual Media cultures (photography, films, other visual arts)
- d. Placemaking Representation of Shillong in tourism literature and cultures.
- e. Placemaking Representation of Shillong in journalistic narratives
- f. Placemaking Representation of Shillong in English writings
- g. Placemaking Representation of Shillong in bhasha literatures (Assamese, Bangla, Garo, Khasi etc.)
- h. Partition of 1947 and Shillong
- i. Indo-China War and Shillong
- j. Liberation War of Bangladesh 1971 and Shillong
- k. Shillong in Performative art forms
- l. Gendering placeness of Shillong
- m. Architectural iconoscape of Shillong
- n. Social Welfare and placemaking Shillong
- o. Issues of Children of Shillong
- p. Preservation of cultures of Shillong.

Copyright: ICSSR-NEC will have the copyright for all the presentations.

Publication: The papers will be published in an edited book form.

Disclaimer: The authors/presenters will be responsible for their comments, findings and analysis. ICSSR-NEC or the coordinator will not be legally held responsible for any anomalies made by the presenters/authors.

Abstracts

Space and Place: Reimagining the Colonial City with Reference to Shillong

Prof. Kailash C Baral

Hyderabad

The colonial project was not just about political control; it was a tapestry of spatial manipulation and ideological inscription. Colonial cities became testaments to the

colonizer's desire for order and control. There were two types of cities; one set with grand Govt buildings, imposing churches, and wide avenues served as symbols of colonial power and dominance over the native landscape; another set known as frontier cities where military formations alongside administrative buildings were stamped onto the landscape, symbolizing the subjugation and the imposition of a new order. Both set of cities had segregated spaces for white residence including that of high officials and others; fortified cantonments housing European troops, while indigenous populations were relegated to overcrowded, and unplanned peripheries. A set of new vocabulary came into circulation such as civil lines, cantonment and Governor's house etc. Ports and railway lines facilitated the efficient movement of raw materials and finished goods, enriching the colonizers at the expense of local populations.

Historically, Shillong started as a typical colonial frontier city, with an administrative unit and a military cantonment. Other aspects of the city like a mixed population, commercial zone, transport points etc became adds on as the city evolved to become the capital of undivided Assam. The city cannot be described in black and white as a binary of the colonised and the coloniser but in shades of gray. The rich culture of the Khasi people remained inextricably intertwined with the city's identity. Shillong's significant Christian community and their educational institutions have left an indelible mark on the city's social and cultural landscape. Its diverse population, hailing from various ethnicities and backgrounds, contributes to its unique cosmopolitan character. Today, Shillong grapples with the legacies of its colonial past. It is a city caught in a postcolonial flux, struggling to reconcile a multitude of voices, claims and counter claims amidst anxieties and shimmering tensions.

This paper attempts to untangle intricate workings of the colonial concept of space and place. It uses Shillong as a case study to explore how colonial urbanism shaped cities and continues to influence them even in the postcolonial era. By understanding these spatial legacies, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of our present and, perhaps, pave the way for a more inclusive and better future.

Cherrapunji to Shillong: Trajectory of a Colonial Capital

Prof. Sajal Nag

Royal Global University, Guwahati

Placemaking of Shillong is integrally connected with colonial history. This paper would present the colonial trajectories in placemaking Shillong.

History in the Clouds: Revisiting the Summer Palaces of Shillong

Prof. Jyotirmoy Prodhani & Dr. Preetinicha Barman

NEHU

Summer palaces are invariably abodes of luxury as well as sojourns of self-discovery. This concept of summer palaces is nonetheless true in case the summer palaces of India.

Summer palaces, popularly called *Hawa Mahals*, may be constructed within the city premises or it may be in some faraway region with relatively cooler atmosphere. The later types, specially built for the sake of climatic variations are seasonal retreats.

The city of Shillong hosts a number of such summer palaces, once used by the royal families of regions outside Meghalaya. The paper takes up six among them, viz. Tripura Castle, Mayurbhanj Palace, Bijni house, Sidli house, Manipur house and Koer House. Situated over nine acres of alpine land, in the Cleave Colony of Shillong, Tripura Castle belongs to the Manikya dynasty of Tripura. The palace shows a blend architecture, based on traditional and colonial designs. Historically, the palace had witnessed the signing of Tripura Merger Treaty, in 1949, signed between India and Tripura, the then a sovereign state. Mayurbhanj Palace at Jingkieng, Nongthymmai, was the summer palace of the Mayurbhanj state, belonging to the Bhanj dynasty. This two storied building has a mixed architecture which is a harmonious blend of Colonial Architecture and International Architecture, with stone base, RCC structure, brick walls and tin roof gives. It had served as the campus of two consequent institutions, North Eastern Hills University (from 1973 to 2005) and Indian Institute of Management, Shillong (since 2007). At present, National Law University, Meghalaya, has taken over the building as its campus. This palace is now owned by the Government of Meghalaya.

Bijni Complex and Sidli Complex, once the summer houses of the Koch Rajbangshi kings of Bijni and Sidli respectively, are situated at Laitumkhrah, Shillong. Both the Bijni royals and Sidli royals are descendants of Bir Chilarai or Sukladhwaj, the younger brother and commander-in-chief of King Naranarayana. Situated on the Bhagyakul Road, Laitumkhrah, Bijni house was constructed by Raja Bhupendra Narayan Bhup. At present it is owned by North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, which has rented out a substantial part of it to National Institute of Technology, Meghalaya. There is a very prominent Assam type house at its middle, consisting of a number of rooms with ekra walls, half-timbering front portico, slopping roofs and pillared porches. Sidli House was purchased by the queen of Sidli, Rani Manjula Devi, the consort of Sidli king, Raja Ajit Narayan Dev. This was the House that had once hosted Kabi Rabindranath Tagore. However, the campus was sold following the demise of the Rani to some private owners. At present the campus is divided into three private properties, while the original house no longer exists in sight.

Located at Redlands, Laitumkhrah, Shillong, Manipur Rajbari was owned by the royal family of Manipur. It was here that King Bodhachandra had signed Manipur Merger Agreement with the Government of India, in September 1949. The architectural glory of the palace is marked by two domelike structures with conical tops. Similar to Tripura Castle Palace, this Palace too, reflects English cottage architecture. At present it belongs to the Government of Manipur which had purchased it from the Government of Meghalaya, on August 12, 2021.

Situated at Lachumiere, Shillong Koer House, reflects a huge landmark, now divided into three campuses. The house was owned by Mrinalini Devi, the Rani of Panga. This plot

bears a two-storied bungalow with the typical ekra walls, wooden pillars and tin roofs. The Koers are the descendants of King Narasimha of Koch Dynasty. King Narasimha was the eldest son of the 15th Century Koch King Biswasingha.

Though belonging to diverse dynasties, the history of these houses reflects a common urge. All these are built as retreats in the so called 'Abode of Clouds'. On the formation of the Assam Commissionerate Province in 1874, Shillong became of the capital of Assam province. Shillong had gained a different character altogether for its geography and lifestyle which exuded finer English ambience than any other city during that period. It became a power centre by virtue of being the capital of one of the biggest territories of British India. Shillong also became a hub modern education in Eastern India. That must have been the reason which attracted the royals to build houses in this capital city.

The concerned palaces reflect a life-style so dominant during the colonial era. However, these royal houses had never become ethnocentric abodes. Respect to the local culture was the hallmark that all of the palace royals had reflected. These palaces had added much importance to Shillong developing its city-scape and eventually contributing to its livingness.

The Gorkhas and the Making of Shillong in Colonial Assam

Prof. Tejimala Gurung Nag

NEHU

Many migrant communities have contributed in making Shillong what it is. This paper will focus on the migrant community of Gorkhas and their contribution in placemaking Shillong.

People at Play: Sports in Shillong during the Colonial Times

Dr. Bhaskar Gogoi

Madhab Choudhury College, Barpeta, Assam

Along with breathtaking sceneries, vibrant music and it's cosmopolitan nature, the city of Shillong has also captured the imagination of many as a hub for sports. Early modern England has verily been the 'games-master' of the world. 19th century England gave the world not only railroads, electricity and the theory of evolution but also various modern sports and games like cricket, football, rugby, tennis etc. Men have raced and punched each other since the invention of the fire, but most modern games (with exceptions like basketball have been the products of English ingenuity). Moreover, the rules and ethos of these sports (e.g. cricket) fully embodied the self-image of the Victorian elite and it's aspirations to set moral standards for the rest of humanity.

For the white Englishman in an alien and hostile climate like India, books and sports provided the twin consolation by which he came to terms with his environment. While in India, it has been recorded that Thomas Babington Macaulay sought refuge in Plutarch's

Lives while a generation later Winston Churchill made the works of Macaulay his companion while facing the hot summer in southern India. However, their more philistine colleagues, meanwhile, escaped the alienness of this land through sport.

Thus, mass sport is a sphere of activity that expresses, in concentrated form, the values, prejudices, divisions and unifying symbols of a society. The importance of sport to the modern world is manifest in the pervasive use of sporting metaphors in popular discourse. However, unfortunately, the study of sport, in its cultural and historical context, is an underdeveloped and marginalized area of interest. My paper is an attempt to use this ignored and marginalized arena of sports and games, to illuminate the historical centre itself. It tries to locate the scenario of sports and games in Shillong during the colonial times to evaluate certain questions of how various domestic games of Meghalaya like *Rab Moo Khrab*, *Wa. Pong Sika* (Pushing Bamboo Pole), *Mawpoin* came to be replaced by its more colonial successors. In this attempt, the paper will also try to contextualize how football in Shillong became a more popular mass sport beating the trend of cricket as the clear favourite.

Colonial Hill Station: A Home Away from Home

Mr. Gin Muan Thang

EFLU

Away from the harsh temperatures, perched among the hill tops, hill stations became a place for rest and often hold great importance in the colonial power structure of the British Raj in India. Like many other hill stations, Shillong became a place of sanctuary and subsequently transformed itself into an administrative centre of the Northeast during colonial India. Through colonial constructs; places, people, and landscape have to be reimagined in *likeness* to their homeland while negotiating the complexities of representing and differentiating themselves from the place which they adopted as their abode. The paper looks at Shillong from select colonial narratives and explores how these representations and imaginations of the land, people and the *contact of cultures* have created its own space and own narrative in making Shillong as we know today. Undoubtedly, Shillong as a metropolis can trace its roots in the historical context of colonial interventions which witnessed movements of people and objects that contributed hugely in the assimilation, mutation, or in the interweaving of cultures, memories and society. Monuments, urban culture, and its own projection as a 'tribal' city are closely intertwined with colonial footprints and nostalgia. Many of the present social, economic, political and cultural aspirations of the city has resonance and implications stemming from colonial interventions. These sentiments are also reflected in many of the northeastern states in postcolonial India. It is imperative, therefore, to look at Shillong as a colonial city where it places itself as a political and cultural centre of colonial India.

Keywords: Memory and Culture, Colonialism.

Placemaking of Shillong through Oral Narratives

Mr. Elnathan W. Lyngkhoi

Research Scholar, NEHU

Placemaking in Shillong involves creating environments that foster community, identity, and belonging through both physical and relational dynamics. Oral folk narratives play a crucial role in understanding the conceptual relationship of indigenous people to Shillong's spaces, capturing their essence through narrative and symbolism. This approach recognizes that places are more than physical; they encompass cultural, social, and historical significance, particularly evident among the Khasi community, where material and spiritual realms intertwine. Places are perceived holistically, involving embodied, affective, and relational engagement. Thus, placemaking is a comprehensive approach that considers both tangible and intangible elements, emphasizing the importance of lived experiences and subjective perceptions in shaping the richness and complexity of a place.

Shillong in Tagore's Imagination

Prof. Usharanjan Bhattacharjee

Rabindranath Tagore, the national poet found Shillong a recluse from his busy zamindari life. He visited Shillong and wrote about it in many places. His novel *Shesher Kabita* has Shillong as its background. His dance-drama *Raktakarabi* was first performed in Shillong. This presentation will focus on Shillong in the literary consciousness and representation of Tagore.

Partition of 1947 and Re-making of Post-colonial Shillong

Dr. Binayak Dutta

Partition of India had an impact on Northeast India which was unprecedented and yet which had remained neglected in academic discourses till recent times. The balkanization of the northeast region of colonial India came with its own ramifications on indigenous community spaces as well as shared metropolitan spaces. One such space was Shillong which was not spared from the debilitating impact on partition. As a capital town of colonial Assam and composite province of Assam, it came to be affected by partition in more ways than one. The migration of people from across the border not only impacted the demographics of the capital town but also cast its impact on the minds of the local people who were on the threshold of new politics with the establishment of the district council under the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution. The establishment of refugee colony within the capital town also had its impact on the society and socialization in the capital town.

This paper seeks to engage with the process of place making and the transformation of the space, i.e. Shillong as a result of partition and the concomitant fallout of the process.

Key words: partition, Khasi, refugees, colony, politics.

Shillong in Assamese Narratives

Prof. Dwijen Sharma

As Shillong was a capital of Assam, a host of noted Assamese intellectuals have stayed and Shillong and wrote about it. This paper will focus on place-making Shillong in select Assamese literature.

Architectural Landscaping of Shillong: Assam Type Structures – An enduring piece of Architecture post the Great Earthquake of 1897

Mr. Rameez Gazi

The 1897 Shillong Plateau–Assam earthquake, one of the largest in modern history, caused significant damage in Northeastern India. The event, with a magnitude of 8.7 on the Richter Scale, resulted in a loss of approximately 6000 lives. Professor Omori and his colleagues T. Nakamura and Dr. Koyama’s contributions significantly influenced the development of earthquake-resistant “Assam Type” construction, a braced timber frame with lightweight “Ikra” infill. Commonly known as the Assam-type houses today, these iconic structures have stood the test since 1897, defining the Architectural character of Shillong and the Northeast region. After a long haul of over a century, these iconic structures are gradually disappearing from the cityscape. This paper attempts to document the existence of this earthquake-resistant, climate-responsive and energy-efficient masterpiece as these Assam-type structures eventually become a part of Shillong’s history.

Keywords: Assam type, Ikra infill, stack-effect, box-action

Placemaking A Narrative of Markets in Smit and Barabazaar

Dr. I. Amenla Changkija

EFLU, Shillong

Every place has a story to tell — one of uniqueness in matters of daily chores and world view. The beauty and appreciation for placemaking lies in understanding of different complex cultures as accepted norms for sustenance of life. It leaves one awestruck when one’s eye of interest delves into and scrutinizes the happenings that convey so much of the customs and habits of the place. One such remarkable location of placemaking can be seen in Smit, a suburb in Shillong. It is located only 16 kms away from the main town yet a visit to the place on a market day presents a conglomerate of cultural hues and tasks that contribute to the enriching value of Shillong being Shillong thereby establishing its distinctive ‘placeness’. Oblivious to the other worlds, the market day which runs on an eight day rotation presents bustling activities which are as mesmerising yet oddly intriguing but suitably organised to their way of life and practices. The market place is a hub that

fulfils so much of their material and social needs and most importantly is an indicator of cultural preservation.

As such, the market day at Smit is one of the important centres from which placemaking of Shillong perpetuates. Hence the paper aims at a narrative of observations relating to communication, set-ups and people among others.

Keywords: suburb; market place; communication; culture; preservation

Shillong in Mindscapes and Landscapes

Prof. Esther Syiem

Shillong in Photography

Mr. Ahmed Hussain

Shillong in Ankush Saikia's *The Girl from Nongrim Hills*

Dr. Arzuman Ara

EFLU, Shillong

Detective stories often depend on place-making for the events to take place in a certain background. Ankush Saikia takes Shillong as the background of his novel *The Girl from Nongrim Hills* where he depicts the darker side of the city. In doing so, he evokes the history and socio-cultural life of the people in Shillong. There are a lot of descriptions of the places in making the actions of the narrative. Thus, the place of Shillong, appears a different place than what its popular image is – a popular scenic tourist place. In depicting the darker anti-social life of Shillong, the city turns into a centre of multi-ethnicity and of multi-national associations.

Peripheries and Precarities: Situating the Myriad Routes in Janice Pariat's *Everything the Life Touches*

Dr. Parvin Sultana

P B College, Gauripur, Assam

Shillong has been shifted from its periphery to a vibrant literary centre-stage with authors weaving stories around this beautiful hill station with a colonial legacy. But even this shift has not done away with the precarity of the space – stability be it political, economic or social can at times be elusive. Pariat's work *Everything the Light Touches* traces the myriad routes that the historic city traversed across centuries with its own inherent struggles. This paper will undertake a reading of Pariat's latest work with an aim to understand the precarity of "livingness" in the periphery sustained through ages and reiterated by a neo-colonial exploitative political mechanism in a city like Shillong. The paper would explore how Shillong has changed over time, how it is seen as a periphery to places like Delhi while the city remains as the core centre of the state of Meghalaya currently with reference to Pariat's *Everything the Light Touches*.

It will further situate Pariat's work in the larger politics of ecological exploitation that overshadows a region with fragile environmental balance.

Keywords: periphery, landscape transformation, ecology, exploitation, Janice Pariat

**Shillong Musing: Unravelling the Past and its Cityscapes through the Novel,
*Shillong Times – A Story of Friendship and Fear***

Auswyn Winter Japang
St. Anthony's College, Shillong, India

This paper delves into a concise exploration of events within the novel *Shillong Times – A Story of Friendship and Fear*, focusing on the transformative impact on Shillong during the 1980s. Through this narrative lens, this paper examines the concept of 'placemaking' within the context of Shillong, a city rich in historical narratives and contemporary socio-political significance. The characters in the novel serve as key conduits for understanding how Shillong is imagined, represented, and transformed into a multifaceted space for human habitation. The first aspect of this paper focuses on the concept of 'placemaking' itself, examining how Shillong has been conceptualised as a unique space for human dwelling. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the paper draws on folkloric, cultural, and literary perspectives to analyse the shaping of Shillong as a place, exploring its physical structures, cultural practices, and societal dynamics. The second dimension of the study delves into Shillong's representation in literature, particularly Nilanjan Choudhury's *Shillong Times*. The creative portrayal of the city in literary works becomes a lens to unravel the complexities of its history and evolution. Literary and artistic expressions contribute diverse narratives that construct Shillong's identity, providing insights into how the city is perceived by both inhabitants and external observers. The final element of this paper focuses specifically on how the novel contributes to the narrative of Shillong's history and evolution. Characters and plot dynamics are analysed to reveal the author's unique perspective, offering a literary lens through which to view Shillong. In conclusion, this paper aims to enrich our understanding of Shillong by exploring placemaking through the lens of literature, specifically in *Shillong Times*. This paper, thus contributes to a nuanced comprehension of the city's past, present, and future, providing a unique perspective on its socio-cultural landscape within the concise framework of this analysis.

Keywords: Shillong, Placemaking, 1980s Shillong

Shillong in Dhruba Hazarika's *Bowstring Winter*

Dr. Surajit Sen
ICFAI-University, Shillong

The way a place leaves its imprints through its values, perceptions, memories, and traditions on a landscape gives a 'sense of place' within the cultural geographic space (Lew, 2017:

449). Literature always, in more than a way, leaves indelible impressions of place/s in the way it is described by the writer – some of which may be fictional, others realistic. It is through literature that a reader gets to visit un/known places and experience the beauty of its sites, sights and sounds. In doing so, it is not just the character/s or speaker-persona in the work of literature who forge a relationship with the place, but the reader too builds a relationship with the place and its people (characters). Dhruba Hazarika's second novel, *A Bowstring Winter* set in the Shillong of 1970's is one such work of literature where the concept of "creating quality places" (Wycoff, 2014: 2) suggestive of how a building, or a location or a space creates a strong 'sense of place' can be thoroughly felt. The characters in Hazarika's *A Bowstring Winter* find a quality place in a city restaurant where in the words of Wycoff "people care about and want to be in" (2014: 2). Reminiscing his days in Shillong, Hazarika creates a Shillong in a literary sense citing names of places in Shillong as they are in reality as he weaves through the plot of his novel. Interestingly, it is not just places, but food, music, gambling, tradition and culture go on to enunciate the city of Shillong from the point of view of 'sense of place' and 'quality place'. Thus, the present paper tries to placemake the various sites of Shillong as mentioned in the novel of Dhruba Hazarika from Moore's analogy of homemaking (2020) and Wycoff's description of the types of placemaking (2014).

Key words: sense of place, quality places, homemaking, placemaking, standard placemaking, strategic placemaking, tactical placemaking, creative placemaking

Representation of Shillong in Insta/poetry

Ms. Kabyasri Bharadwai

Research Scholar, EFLU, Shillong

Hudson (1995) in his book 'An Introduction of Literature', says that "Literature is the vital record of what men have seen in life, what they experienced, what they have thought and felt about those aspect of it which have the most immediate and

the medium of language." (1965)

This paper highlights the representation of Shillong in English Writings, especially Instapoetry. The representation of Shillong in literature brings the attention of people to the beauty of the place. The representation of North-east, including Shillong, is inadequate in Indian literature. But, the popularity of Instapoetry helps in widening the general notion that people have towards the city of Shillong. Instapoetry has been acting as a catalyst in the rise of the reading culture among the youth in the world, including India. Ali Erarslan in his article 'Instagram as an

for autonomous and social learning in the daily lives of the learners." (2019)

The Instapoems selected for this paper includes a poem by Sarah Huda, Iwri-tetoo, shreyoshi, & pages such as the visual poets, yellow flower poetry and Lolo doodles 84. The topics in these poems ranges from describing the beauty of Shillong to understanding the effect Shillong has on the people who visit this magnificent place. This form of poetry witnesses a greater audience which leads to a bigger representation. Hannah Salsbery in her study titled “Reshaping the Canon: How Insta-Poets Are Creating a New Literary Space for Readers Using Social Media” points out that “...Instagram could be incredibly useful in a classroom, allowing students to explore their own interests and the world of poetry, simultaneously.

Reimagining the city of Shillong through Project CHIME: A Study of Documentary Videos Produced by the Community Children Reporters of Mawlai

Dr. Alankar Kaushik

EFLU, Shillong

Placemaking is centred on the core objective of establishing a meaningful and significant environment, closely tied to the cultivation of community and identity. It involves a hands-on approach that prioritises community-based participation to enhance neighbourhoods, cities, and regions. In professional planning, successful placemaking strategies encompass elements like thoughtful design, active community engagement, accessible transportation, and spaces conducive to social interactions. The key insight from the evolution of cities is that effective places cannot be rigidly designed from the top-down; instead, they naturally evolve over time. Therefore, placemaking should be perceived as an ongoing, dynamic process rather than a one-time effort (Monocle 2020)*. With more than half of the global population residing in urban areas, the journey towards sustainable development traverses cities worldwide. As the United Nations strives to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the pivotal role of culture in urban renewal and innovation cannot be overlooked. This paper utilises documentary video evidence from a series of participatory video created and curated by economically disadvantaged children from Mawlai, Shillong, as part of the CHIME project. The research aims to re-envision Shillong, exploring inclusive and human-centred development. The series of videos, produced during the reporting and storytelling process on Shillong by the community children reporters, delve into stories of poverty, deprivation, traffic challenges, pollution, and other socio-economic issues often overlooked when portraying Shillong solely as a tourist destination.

Keywords : Placemaking, Shillong, Project CHIME, Participatory

*”Tall Stories 193: Placemaking, the Urbanist - Radio.” *Monocle*, 10 Feb. 2020, monocle.com/radio/shows/the-urbanist/tall-stories-193/.

Culture, Identity and Geography of Shillong in Select Films

Dr. Rupa Sonowal

Department of Mass Communication and Journalism

School of Media Studies

Central University of Karnataka

Cinematic narratives created with the aid of technology serve as insights into human society and existence. The entire situation that prevailed in the region has caught the attention of the film fraternity in the region. One such kind of film which is produced in Meghalaya is *Ri – Homeland of Uncertainty*. The region’s collective identity and divergence are fictitiously portrayed in the film. The director constructs and mediates an image of the nation, identity, and breath-taking scenery that has drawn in viewers by utilizing a variety of narrative techniques. The tense situation in the film has a persuasive experience that reflects upon one’s identity which is rooted to its land’s history. *Ri* is able to mirror the various struggles and the issues that the Khasi society had faced. The political and administrative framework, as well as customs and traditions rooted in ethnic tradition, are evaluated in light of mainstream India. Beside, “*Ri*” could captivate viewers with its backdrop of Bangladesh’s hilly trails, river water, boats, monsoon, and heat to create a sense of belonging. For an aesthetically pleasing setting of the Khasi ethnic community, even the residence and its interior have received the attention in the film.

Keywords: Film, Identity, Custom, Tradition, Society

Visualising Shillong: A Nostalgic Ride through Select Songs of Bhupen Hazarika

Dr. Saba Anish

J. B. College (Autonomous), Jorhat, Assam

Images of nostalgia and romanticism abound the narratives from North East vis-a-vis the representation of Shillong. Being the erstwhile capital of Assam, the city has a special appeal in the minds and hearts of the Assamese populace in particular. Shillong is often the backdrop and setting of many literary productions from Assam, either in English or Assamese. Generations of Assamese writers have projected Shillong in their works not only as a place, but as a living, pulsating entity. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, the bard from Assam, popularly known as *Sudhakantha*, has penned a few immortal numbers capturing the variegated beauty of the place. He has had a long association with Meghalaya and has often mentioned the Khasi tribe while talking about the greater unity of hills and plains in North East. This paper will be an attempt to visit Shillong through the words and images of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika in his selected Assamese songs. His lyrics, painting Shillong in its various hues is an attempt to reiterate the beauty and bounty of this place. Some of his evergreen songs like *Shillongore Godbuli* and *Shillongore Monalisa Lyngdoh* touches not only

the geographical features, but subtly juxtaposes it with the political and historical dynamics of the place. In numbers like *Monalisa Lyngdoh* and *Liyeng Makao*, Shillong is personified and likened to a Khasi woman. The use of words and images like colourful bazaars, small streams, sherati flute, drizzle, Shillong peak, Laban, Nongpoh, guitar etc. captivate the mesmerizing aura of the city, thereby romanticizing its quintessential markers. The paper will thus reflect on some of Bhupen Hazarika's popular numbers that sketch the place markers of the city thereby constructing an essence of Shillong in terms of placeness in the Assamese mindscape.

Key words: nostalgia, romanticism, geographical and political dynamics, Assamese mindscape, songs.

Exploring Shillong: Unveiling Social Dynamics and Cultural Tapestry through a Journalistic Lens

Mr. Deepak Singh

This research article adopts a journalistic perspective to delve into the intricate social fabric and cultural nuances of Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya in North-East India. Despite the prevailing focus on globalization in South Asian urban scholarship, Shillong's unique character deserves attention, particularly concerning its people and their diverse cultural expressions.

The paper initiates a thorough investigation into the historical development and contemporary life of Shillong, challenging the perception of the city as a mere cosmopolitan haven. Through a comprehensive critical analysis of historical archives, this study aims to present a holistic view of Shillong's social landscape.

An emphasis is placed on understanding the challenges and fragilities in Shillong's cosmopolitan identity. Contrary to common assumptions, deep-seated social and cultural divisions have influenced the city's social geography from its inception.

Many Ways of belonging: Shillong and its Literary: Representations in Select Narratives

Dr. Basil N. Darlong Diengdoh

The paper delves into the intricate tapestry of narratives that have woven the identity of Shillong, a city marked by colonial legacies, indigenous mythologies, and evolving cultural dynamics. Through an exploration of the city's history and contemporary landscape as represented in literary narratives, the paper aims to uncover the complexities of belonging, memory, and community in this diverse urban space. From the colonial spatial politics that shaped its confines to the indigenous oral traditions that challenge fragmented collective memories, Shillong emerges as a site of contestations and connections. The

paper examines the interplay between nostalgia, displacement, and resilience in the many city narratives that co-exist, highlighting the tensions between inclusion and vulnerability for its longstanding residents. By engaging with literary representations and critical perspectives, the paper aims to offer insights into the shifting forms of urban identity and the negotiation of place-based experiences.

Keywords: Shillong, narratives and representation, urban identity, cultural dynamics.

Shillong in Popular Cultures: Melodious Reminiscence of Shillong and Unveiling the Socio-cultural Tapestry through Bhupen Hazarika's "Shillongor Monalisa"

Mr. Sujit Mohanty
NIFT, Shillong

Bhupen Hazarika (1926-2011) was a renowned personality hailing from the Indian state of Assam. Hazarika, renowned for his multifaceted talent as a lyricist, musician, singer, poet, and filmmaker, has made a lasting impact on the cultural sphere. The songs he creates, mainly in Assamese but translated and performed in several Indian languages, demonstrate themes of harmonious coexistence, impartial fairness, and understanding.

"*Shillongorey Monalisa Lyngdoh*" is a vibrant and symbolic love ballad that depicts a romance story between an Assamese, non-tribal Hindu young man and a Khasi, tribal Christian young woman. Written in 1972 during a time of state division and difficulties, the story of the couple's love, which confronts separation, symbolises a larger political split - the formation of Meghalaya from the former "Undivided Assam."

This research adds to the ongoing discussion on the spatial dynamics of nation-state by examining the lyrics of the song. It explores the complex connections between national-state borders, movements demanding autonomy, and the cultural impact that extends beyond these limits, with Shillong serving as the focal point.

Placemaking and Tourist Landmarks of Shillong: A Geo-semiotic Reading of Select Spots

Sreeraj B. & Arzuman Ara
EFLU, Shillong

A city is known by its landmarks that give a unique identity of placeness to a city. For example, Paris is known as the city of Eifel Towers, London is known for the Big Ben; in India, Delhi is known for the India Gate, Hyderabad is known for Charminar while Agra is known for the Taj Mahal. Shillong as a place is also identified with certain landmarks,

such as, Umiam lake, Ward's Lake, Catholic Church at Donbosco square, Donbosco Museum, Police Bazar, Shillong Peak, Elephant Falls etc. Each of these landmarks have unique history and placeness. Some are man-made, like the Church and Museum while some are natural, like the Shillong peak and Elephant Falls. With tourist foot-falls, now, almost all the places have acquired commercial color and they symbolize a polyphonic space where culture, tradition and modernity melt in making a placeness for Shillong as a city. From their physical existence, these landmarks have achieved symbolic representations in travel brochures, journals, blogs and so on.

This presentation is a qualitative study based on a geo-semiotic reading of the landmarks of Shillong.

Keywords: Placemaking, Shillong, Geo-semiotic, landmarks

Placemaking Shillong as a Gendered Space

Santidora Nongpluh, Assistant Professor, JMC Department, EFLU Regional campus
Shillong and Research Scholar, HSS Department, NIT Meghalaya Shillong
Dr. Paonam Sudeep Mangang, Associate Professor and Head, Department of
Humanities and Social Sciences, NIT Meghalaya Shillong

Shillong, as the seat of administration for the then undivided Assam and, subsequently as the capital of the newly-formed state of Meghalaya in 1972, has been home to several indigenous communities and identities. Its pan-Indian population has been growing at a swift pace, bringing changes in terms of infrastructural, demographic and socio-cultural developments. It is a rapidly expanding city, undergoing evolution from a mere 'summer capital' for the British to the little megalopolis it is today. As with urbanization elsewhere, Shillong also faces problems of pollution, congestion, rise of crime, poverty and sporadic and unplanned expansion.

Shillong, for long has been romanticized as the 'Scotland of the East', 'the rock capital of India' and the place 'where women rule the roost'. It has been captured in literature, photographs, music and anecdotes that reflect this utopian ideal of feminine power. Although one cannot deny the position of women in this matrilineal society and women do fare better than in many places across the globe, yet there have been numerous cases of abuse, neglect and abandonment both in the domestic and social spheres.

In the 2000s, there were several cases of violence against women. The chilling murder of a domestic worker and that of a woman in Mawpdang village, a few kilometres away from Shillong, were extreme cases but, on the other hand, they also add to the question of where is a woman in this conglomerate. In January this year, the Indian Institute of Public Health conducted a survey on the local popular marketplace, Iewduh, which reported that 23% of women face UTIs due to absence of sanitary toilets.

Gender is an essential issue in placemaking. How the cityscape carves a place for marginalized communities, including women determines how inclusive it is. The paper is an attempt to observe the gendered space through street art and street culture in Shillong.

Keywords: gender, street art, street culture, urbanization

Visual Signage and Cityscape of Shillong: A Reading

Deepesh Chauhan & I Amenla Changkija

In the diverse cityscape of Shillong, visual signage serves as a crucial representation and promoter of its rich cultural tapestry. This study aims to explore and analyze the linguistic patterns within the signs, shedding light on the multilingual communicative practices prevalent in urban Shillong. The study will focus on Police Bazaar, encompassing a comprehensive investigation of linguistic orthographic signs, including monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual representations in Hindi, English, and the regional language Khasi.

The data collection will involve 100 photographs capturing both stationary signs and mobile signs. The study will categorize the linguistic landscape based on various criteria, such as the number of languages, top-down versus bottom-up signs, monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs, as well as other classifications like multimodal, mixed, and hybrid signs. This study holds significance in establishing “linguistic landscaping” as a valuable tool for understanding the linguistic and social dynamics of multicultural and multilingual societies.

By examining the trends of multilingualism in the city, the study aims to demonstrate the validity and utility of linguistic landscape analysis. Additionally, it aspires to delve into the social dynamics of multilingualism and multiculturalism, confirming the multilingual reality in the public sphere, distinguishing between dominant and non-dominant languages.

Key words: Linguistic Landscape, visual signs, multilingualism and multiculturalism

Making Places, Safe Spaces: The Unique Challenges of Equality

Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika

Contact of Presenters

Sl no.	Name and Institution	Phone	Email
1	Prof. Bhagirathi Panda, NEHU, Shillong		
2	Sri Dhruba Hazarika, Creative Writer hazarika.dhruba1@gmail.com		9435118173
3	Prof. K. C. Baral, EFLU, Hyderabad mail2baral@gmail.com		9436117351
4	Prof. J Prodhani NEHU, Shillong rajaprodhani@gmail.com	8787346290	

5	Prof. DRL Nonglait NEHU, Shillong rockyernonglait@yahoo.in	9863114578
6	Prof. Sajal Nag, Royal Global University, Guwahati sajalnag09@gmail.com	9435175378
7	Prof. Esther Syiem NEHU, Shillong esthersyiem17@yahoo.co.in	9436336158
8	Prof. Tejimala Gurung Nag, NEHU, Shillong <u>tejimalag@rediffmail.com</u>	6009845531
9	Dr. Bhaskar Gogoi, M.C. College, Barpeta, Assam iambhaskargogoi@gmail.com	8812879452
10	Mr. Gin Muan Thang, EFL University, Shillong mtkullai@gmail.com	8131073964
11	Dr. Preetinicha Barman, NEHU, Shillong preetinichabarman@gmail.com	9706391644
12	Prof. Usharanjan Bhattacharjee (in absentia) Retired Professor, Gauhati University sarmahnayanjyoti@gmail.com	9435540813
13	Dr. Binayak Dutta, NEHU, Shillong binayakdutta18@gmail.com	9436765471
14	Ms. Santidora Nongpluh snongpluh@efluniversity.ac.in	8974035870
15	Prof. Dwijen Sharma, NEHU, Tura dwijensharma@gmail.com	8414075571
16	Dr. Basil N. Darlong Diengdoh basildarlongdiengdoh@gmail.com	7005155236
17	Mr. Ahmed Hussain, Shillong	9436111821
18	Dr. Arzuman Ara, EFL University, Shillong mailarzuman@gmail.com	7085086371
19	Dr. Parvin Sultana (online), P. B. College, Gauripur, Assam 8011903623 parvin.jnu@gmail.com	
20	Mr. Auswin W. Japang, St. Anthony's College, Shillong auswyn@anthonys.ac.in	9366352657
21	Dr. Surajit Sen, ICAFI University, Meghalaya, Shillong surajitsen@iumeghalaya.edu.in	8787585151
22	Ms. Kabyasri Bharadwaj, Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong 9101055279 kabyasrib@gmail.com	
23	Mr. Elnathan, Research Scholar, NEHU, Shillong	7005946075
24	Prof. Ravindra K Vemula, EFL University, Shillong ravi@efluniversity.ac.in	9485106205

- 25 Dr. Alankar Kaushik, EFL University, Shillong 9612951275
 akaushik@efluniversity.ac.in
- 26 Dr. Rupa Sonowal (Online) 8638193747
- 27 Dr. Saba Anish (Online), J. B. College, Jorhat, Assam 7002914026
 sabaanish2017@gmail.com
- 28 Mr. Deepak Singh, Research Scholar, NEHU, Shillong 8974080156
 deepjyala@gmail.com
- 29 Mr. Sujit K. Mohanty, NEFT, Shillong 9178375535
 sujit.mohanty@nift.ac.in
- 30 Mr. Rameez Gazi, NEHU, Shillong 9485192393
 rameez.gazi@gmail.com
- 31 Dr. I.Amenla Changkija 8794217956
 amenlachangkija@efluniversity.ac.in
- 32 Mr. Sreeraj B. Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong
 8921546576 sreerajb34@gmail.com
- 33 Prof. Sanjay Hazarika 9958836412 Sanjoyha@gmail.com
- 34 Dr. Bathsheba Pyngrope, ICSSR, NEC, Shillong 9485191717
- 35 Mr. Aman Verma, Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong
 8126754600 aman96260@gmail.com
- 36 Mr. Adarsh Kumar, Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong
 7271080499 adarshakashgupta@gmail.com
- 37 Mr. Bidya Bhushan Nayak, Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong
 9090512965 veerbidya.4@gmail.com
- 38 Mr. Deepesh Chauhan, Research Scholar, EFL University, Shillong
 deepeshc162@gmail.com