MIZORAM UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
A Refereed Bi-annual Journal
ISSN(P): 2395-7352
eISSN: 2581-6780
Vol. X, Issue 1 (June 2024) http://www.mzuhssjournal.in/

Tripuriness Endangered? Identity Politics and the Aesthetics of Indigeneity in Post-Globalization Kokborok Cinema

Prajapita Debroy*

Abstract

This article locates contemporary Kokborok films in the vast array of Tripuri cinema and deconstructs their visual aesthetics to substantiate the articulation, examination, and contestation around filmic representations of Indigenous aesthetics and identity in Kokborok films. It argues if the visual representation of native cultures of Tripura in contemporary films offers a realist depiction and examines inferences from Indigenous filmmakers' visual choices about agency, representation, identity, and cultural expression that help viewers acquire and construct meanings around Indigenous cultures of Northeast India. The rise of Indigenous media representation and advocacy is linked to the global transformation and restructuring of social and institutional relationships that impact the production and dissemination of culture. Employing a structuralist framework to analyse contemporary Kokborok film productions as primary texts, the paper examines practices, themes, and strategies in Kokborok film narratives to contend that Indigenous tradition and media practice are not uniform but rather represent a space where different perspectives and voices compete, shaped by internal cultural and gender politics.

Keywords*: Indigenous Cinema, Indigenous Aesthetics, Kokborok Films, Tripuri Cinema.*

(Re)Positioning Indigenous Kokborok Films in Tripuri Cinema[1] Culture

In Northeast India, a region plagued by the nation-state's paranoia about its diversity and geographic liminality, Indigenous[2] media makers are intervening to challenge the dominant narratives about their cultural loyalties and political allegiances. As Sanjib Baruah argued, "extreme diversity is not the cause of Northeast India's conflicts" (Baruah, 2007, p. 22), but rather the languages of this region have long intermingled and cross-pollinated, fostering interconnected worldviews and shared political imaginaries. These Indigenous

*M.A., Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Tripura University, Suryamaninagar - 799 002, Agartala, Tripura, India. Email: dprajapita@gmail.com

producers are staking claims as "native citizen[s] of a multi-visionary world" (Miri, 2005, quoted in Baruah, 2007, p. 22) through the development of culturally diverse artistic works. This stands true of the Indigenous communities in Tripura, that have been engaged in leveraging a myriad of new visual media and film and video technologies since as recent as the late 1980s. Their turn to screen media represents a means to "talk back" to structures of power that have long subjugated them as India's subaltern citizens (Barma, 2024). Although the symbolic representations of cultural motifs and fiction with cultural overtones, entrenched in beliefs about Indigenous identity, are expressed in and implicitly shaped by Indigenous films, the Indigenous cinematic currents, despite their low budget, locally-produced small-scale screen media, proffer counter-hegemonic representations that can compete with, while emulating the monolithic cultural production of Bollywood, which constructs a utopian Indian culture in the national imaginary, through a template of tropes, symbols, and narratives, driven by the desire to forge a "cultural future" that resonates with their aspirations for self-determination and political sovereignty.

Indigenous media productions in Tripura, emanating from the region's diverse cultural mosaic, undoubtedly exhibit a rich heterogeneity that mirrors the very multiplicity of Indigenous life itself. From grassroots, community-driven video initiatives to regionally focused television and radio programming tailored for Indigenous communities in remote settlements as well as urban pockets, from thought-provoking documentaries to independent auteur features helmed by Indigenous artists such as Ruhi Debbarma's critically acclaimed 'Langmani Haduk' in 1993 – the array is vast, resisting facile categorization. These cultural artifacts, by their very nature, are imbued with aesthetic complexities, as profound as transcending multiple boundaries in their production, dissemination, and reception. Collaborative synergies are a frequent sight, wherein Indigenous producers join forces with non-Indigenous media professionals, be they local advertisers serving remote locales or the technical staff at national television or radio stations. Moreover, the works themselves often embody a hybrid ethos, seamlessly interweaving traditional ritual knowledge and performative expressions with cutting-edge, Bollywood-style visual aesthetics (Ginsburg, 1993), which may be inextricably linked to the global transformation and restructuring of social and institutional relationships that impact the production and dissemination of culture (Wilson & Stewart, 2008).

Tripura, an erstwhile Indigenously-dominated princely state, epitomizes the conspicuous diversity characterizing Northeast India. Lauded for its cultural pluralism, it is home to nineteen Indigenous communities amidst a substantial non-Indigenous Bengali-speaking majority, constituting a major 70 percent of the population (Barma, 2024; Debroy, 2023), who, in waves of millions, migrated to the state from the neighbouring Bangladesh, during Indian Independence of 1947 and the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 (Barma & Debroy, 2022; Barma, 2024; Ghoshal, 2012). While non-Indigenous Bengalis exert hegemony over the state, it is worth noting that the Indigenous communities of Tripura have witnessed a burgeoning cinematic culture in their historically marginalized Kokborok language over recent decades (Barma, 2022; Barma, 2024; Debroy, 2023). These communities, gradually reduced to numbers, are linguistically and culturally specific niche audiences. The production

of media specifically aimed towards these populations was previously constrained, if not entirely prohibited, by economies of scale. In addition, Indigenous peoples and small-scale local media producers in Tripura, like elsewhere, had to fight for access to any production facilities (Barma, 2024). The latter at most appeared in ethnographic documentaries or films that highlighted their cultural peculiarity/ indigeneity as their subject or object, as in Tripura's first film made in Kokborok, *Longtharai* (Bhattacharya, 1986) (Barma & Debroy, 2022). However, sweeping technological advancements and digitization of production, exhibition and circulation have bailed the once-sophisticated process of filmmaking out of challenges. Films are now made of Indigenous people, by Indigenous people and for Indigenous people (Barma, 2022; Debroy, 2023). But this comes not without a cost. Several ethnographic studies focused on identifying physical attributes and cultural traits of 'local' societies such as attires, celebrations, kinship, and community-specific beliefs and rituals. It is hence, important to investigate how these ideas are expressed in contemporary visualizations of indigeneity and nation in Kokborok cine-narratives because current conceptualizations of so-called tribal groups and their positioning as Indigenous people still bear the marks of these early attempts at social categorization.

Despite their democratic creative agency now, Indigenous peoples continually experience marginalization and exclusion, which leaves a negative impact on their political standing and economic well-being, as colonial ethnographic discourses constructed reifying "tribal" identity tropes, portraying these communities as "primitive" (Dirks 2001). However, rising access to digital media increasingly enables indigenous mediamakers to challenge such stereotypes and assert cultural sovereignty through self-representational practices. The burgeoning Kokborok cinema exemplifies indigenous populations producing themselves (Ginsburg, 2016) through decolonizing audiovisual articulations amidst complex identity politics of marginalization and self-determination. This implies that liberated Indigenous filmmakers perceive Indigenous groups in cinema from a mainstream cultural and sociolinguistic standpoint (Debroy, 2023). Consequently, ancestral rituals are reduced to staged performances, and images of cultural artefacts or natives dressed in folkloric tribal garb are propagated as icons of indigeneity while gender roles, interpersonal interactions, and political networks continue to be shaped by cultural traditions and customary practices, which are constantly open to interpretation.

As Deger (2006) notes, Indigenous arts have long been subject to the pressures of appropriation, misinterpretation, and devaluation by the dominant society, yet, Indigenous media makers face a "Faustian contract",[3] navigating the tensions between asserting self-determination and engaging with mainstream institutions and technologies (Barma, 2022; Matta, 2016). Despite their rich history, cultural heritage and oratures, very little is known or documented about these developments, which all the more fuels the need to investigate how ideas of indigeneity and identity are visually expressed in Kokborok films, contending that current conceptualizations of so-called tribal groups and their positioning as Indigenous people still bear the marks of colonial attempts at social categorization. While acknowledging indigeneity and culture as fluid identity markers, this study argues for seriously considering these most contemporary indigenous self-representational forms and their creators, given

their critical theoretical-empirical significance for debates across fields engaging the politics and poetics of representation in indigenous media (Ginsburg 1994, 2018). This paper thus, lays the groundwork for explaining how histrionic tendencies play a significant role in the representation of an imagined Indigenous 'other' in contemporary Kokborok films. Through a textual analysis of select contemporary Kokborok films, it probes pivotal questions concerning the role of visually representing native cultures in contemporary Kokborok film practices of Tripuri cinema - in negotiating indigenous identities, challenging stereotypical depictions, while appealing to mass sensibilities. As the paper discusses further, contemporary cinematic practices burgeoning in these regions highlight struggles against forced cultural-linguistic amalgamation amid globalization (Appadurai, 1996). They exemplify "the culturally pragmatic ways" (Ginsburg, 1994) diverse populations strategically mobilize media technologies in performatively (re)producing themselves through decolonizing self-inscriptions contesting hegemonic narratives and asserting sovereign self-determinations.

Aesthetic Play of Indigeneity in Contemporary Kokborok Films

Indigenous aesthetics, encompass a variety of viewpoints, "influences, ideologies, cosmologies, and connections to place and community that often reference oral histories, traditions, language, and spirituality" (Rangel, 2012). Historically, Indigenous art and material culture have served as inspirations for dominant art forms and subjects of anthropological study, collection, and consumption. Although Barma (2022) identified the indigenous aesthetics in the (Kokborok film practices of) Tripuri cinema as *Tripuriness*[4], upholds and respects the cultural originality of Indigenous artists, tribal sovereignty, and Indigenous ways of being (p. 11). However, Indigenous scholarship is sparingly included in ethnographic accounts of Indigenous art and culture of Tripura that are written from a non-Indigenous or mainstream viewpoint, for an Indigenous audience, which eventually leads to appropriation and exploitation of Indigenous cultures as well as the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge. Justice (2018) argued that given the persistent attacks on Indigenous familial networks and ties, Indigenous peoples have always used their imagination to resist, combat, and undo the effects of colonisation. Settler colonial populations have always attempted to seize control over lands by assaulting the ties of kinship that have bound Indigenous peoples to those territories, as well as the creative ability that supports those ties. Hence, the taproot of Indigenous aesthetics is their stories, families, lands, artists, ceremonies, and language (p. 86). Indigenous aesthetics are tied to a strong sense of 'place' that results from the connection between the spiritual and the natural world (Leuthold, 1998). The survival of Indigenous cultures is therefore of utmost importance. How can an expressive Indigenous culture contribute to its survival if Kokborok films are not reflective of the same?

Since the 2010s, Kokborok films continue to be inspired by a standard Bollywood action-comedy and romance template wherein the male protagonist resorts to violence to settle disputes with the antagonist while the female characters are reduced to a "damsel in distress" typecast, who must await the male protagonist to save her against all odds. Elaborate sequences as such are interspersed with musical numbers that portray the trials and tribulations of their union or a potential item song and dance sequence (Barma, 2022, p. 8).

Far removed from a realist depiction of a minimalist Tripuri[5] society, contemporary Kokborok films thrive in narratives that increasingly contextualize adult courtship, love triangles, premarital sex, corruption, sexual assaults, and adultery, to name a few. These outside occurrences and social commentaries are exaggerated in the guise of a dramatized, thrilling, or comedic film that would appeal to the masses who have grown up attuned to popular Bollywood films and music. The cinematic visuals are replete with unjustified objectification of both men and women who are made to play into 'the masochistic and all-powerful man' trope or 'the beautiful and helpless woman'- the staple of a contemporary Kokborok film. Indeed, films frequently tout their representation of women as a selling point with a variety of song and dance routines, clichéd imagery and raunchy costumes. Gendered roles and performances in a patriarchal setup in the cinematic space reflect a contrasting picture of the Tripuri society in which women have long struggled with construing a social identity and a post-globalisation era posed no astounding change. Regardless, Indigenous Tripuri women have contributed significantly to other socio-economic activities and livelihood practises, at par with and occasionally even outperforming their male counterparts. The journey begins at home, where they work as responsible homemakers, and continue to perform labour-intensive agricultural and industrial work yet they seldom prove topical for weaving Kokborok narratives.

A selection of contemporary Kokborok films from 2010-2023 including *Nwng Bai* (Reang, 2010)*, Imang 2* (Debbarma, 2017), *Yapri* (Debbarma, 2019) and *Imang 3* (Debbarma, 2021), *Sikla Jora* (Reang, 2021) and *Busulwng* (Reang, 2021) exhibits an exoticization[2] of Indigenous culture and communities in the representation. The soaring need for Indigenous filmmakers to assert an identity, attain recognition and be positioned parallel to Bollywood justifies their preoccupation with imitating Bollywood modalities of filmmaking (Debroy, 2023). Besides repeating or avoiding rhetorical and visual tactics to signify difference, films have the potential to adumbrate or reconfigure beliefs about the native "Other" (Shohat & Stam, 2014). Moreover, Kokborok is seemingly divorced from its purest form and obliterated from their cinematic consciousness, which is reflected in these films' increasing rejection of culturally-specific costumes, traditions, dialects, and lifestyles and simultaneous adoption of Western sartorial styles, consumption habits and way of life, which are considered analogous to modernising their primitive selves. Such transformations are evident, especially when a marginalized province is abruptly confronted with challenges as profound as the hybridization of the 'local' and the 'global', thus prompting a steady erosion of what was once considered an authentic indigeneity (Appadurai, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999). While such assertions of cultural authenticity are considered problematic because they frequently include an essentialist cultural viewpoint in which certain fixed acts are iconised as truly Indigenous and others are eliminated as hybridised or tainted. The danger of neglecting the concept that cultures may develop and change as their circumstances change follows from this. At the same time, many subservient civilizations' attempts to defend their sustained and legitimate existence as they unavoidably hybridise are influenced by diverse social and cultural developments that may heavily rely on the usage of signifiers of authenticity.

Since they choose to develop in the shadow of the Bollywood economy and Hindi cine stars, modern-day Kokborok films continue to lack content-driven plots and authenticity (Barma, 2022. p. 26). As mainstream Hindi film conventions and narrative strategies in Kokborok films and videos continue to charm audiences, they plagiarize elements or themes from popular Hindi films, translate them into a Tripuri context and incorporate visual elements that assert their Tripuri indigeneity. The narratives tend to be quite effortlessly understandable and predictable; frequently, they are remakes of other Hindi films with minor alterations. Simply put, when it comes to casting, the director gives the actors a short, informal summary of the film's plot. Even the dialogue in contemporary Kokborok films is neither analytical nor contemplative, with the added use of local slapstick humour (Barma & Debroy, 2022). The protagonists' personalities in contemporary Kokborok films are inflated and polarised that fit into a number of clearly defined clichés. The audience can accordingly identify the 'hero', the 'heroine', the 'villain', and the 'idiot' instantaneously, so actors inevitably personify these stock characters, to the point where they become imagined manifestations of those traits. The narrative content of these films is mostly stripped off of originality and instead, stems from the reassuring feeling of expected narrative development—less of a plot and more of an unfolding of a standard series of events, which frequently results in a conspicuous rejection of realism.

One of *Yapri*'s (Debbarma, 2019) final scenes reveals a notable usage of idiomatic allusion concerning a blatantly sexual conduct meted out to the women (as passive receivers of denigration) wearing *Risha* and *rignai*[6] at the antagonist's disposal, as he indulges in a body massage and alcohol. He offers the duo to also serve his accomplice (sexually, as suggestive of the innuendo). This, once again highlights the inappropriate adoption of Indigenous customs, practises, ideas or misrepresentation of traditional clothing, thus, subordinating Tripuri women to that of mere exchangeable commodities (sexual or literal) (Barma, 2022). Similarly, *Sikla Jora* (Reang, 2021), *Busulwng* (Reang, 2021), *Nwng Bai* (Reang, 2010)*, Imang* (Debbarma, 2016)*, Imang 2* (Debbarma, 2017) and *Imang 3* (Debbarma, 2021) are rampant with shots where the mechanical eye of the camera replicating the human vision, tilts from the bottom to the top, abruptly zooms in, objectifying parts a woman's body and adding to an inconsequential glorification of a woman's projectile beauty. Such attempts reflect the auteur/director's artistic vision. Together, these elements contribute to the fetishisation[5] of Indigenous women, which makes an unadulterated representation of real women impossible on screen.

From a structuralist perspective, male characters in Kokborok films play three kinds of roles- the hero, the villain and those who move alongside the narrative. The role of the woman here is that of a mere catalyst of social mobility, which allows agency to these three roles, otherwise, serving no primary function of her own. Hence, it is only when the woman is cast as a damsel in distress, that these three roles gain meaning and the man can act as either the hero, the villain or the mute spectator. Regardless, women are still portrayed or represented using the archaic tropes of femininity. *Bollywoodisation*[7] of Tripuri films has commodified women to serve as spectacles for a film to be commercially successful (Barma & Debroy, 2022, p. 35). They are portrayed as archetypes and one-dimensional characters in roles such

as courtesan, lover, widow, daughter, wife, and daughter-in-law. Simply put, women in Kokborok films cannot exist independent of on-screen heroes who lack individual characteristics, substance, or temperament. They serve as the male characters' antithesis to emphasise their flaws. On the contrary, Tripuri women are rather empowered in real life; they are not damsels in distress (Ghosh & Chowdhury, 2011). Kokborok films, in this manner, paint very bleak pictures of both men and women. Men are often cast as predators of innocent women whereas, in reality, Tripuri men lead a simple life in the countryside. They are humble and rooted in their culture and traditions. Tripuri men in real life are not an embodiment of violence. A highly pronounced masochism in an exaggerated performance of masculinity in contemporary Kokborok films fail to offer a realistic depiction of real-life Tripuri men. They are thus emblematic of both the demigod and the devil. Such distorted portrayals as these gradually result in a massive rape culture taking shape in most of the urban and rural hinterlands of the state, because of the profound impact that films have on youth and popular culture (Barma & Debroy, 2022, pp. 60-61). Yet, there remain a few exceptions. Apart from Joseph Pulinthanath's *Mathia* (2004) and *Yarwng* (2008), films such as *Chethuang* (Kalai, 2014), *Mari* (Reang, 2015) and *Kwtham Kothoma* (S. Kalai, 2018) predominantly explore questions of identity, Indigenous representation, lifestyles, customs and traditions and are deeply ingrained in tribal culture using markers of indigeneity such as oral traditions or folk tales, jhum cultivation, folk dances, rituals and ceremonies. They emphasise the significance of accurately portraying the complex and diverse nature of Indigenous cultures and languages as opposed to flattening or idealising them. These films are notable not only for their use of Indigenous languages but also for portraying Indigenous people as characters whose concerns and traditions are presented in a complex fashion, without hesitating to criticise outmoded customary laws and practices such as witch-hunting, incest relationships, child marriage, while addressing grievous issues and tumultuous history surrounding land encroachment, marginalisation and large-scale land displacement.

The creation and consumption of Kokborok films and videos indicate a changing Indigenous audiovisual landscape, leading to two key revelations of modern audiovisual civilizations. First, the production of Indigenous narratives offers a pristine cultural cartography. The everyday lived realities of the members of Indigenous groups have been affected by, and continue to be shaped by, state or nation-state policies on the management and administration of their internally colonised Indigenous peoples. Assimilation and development ideologies commonly permeate academic and governmental programmes and are frequently mirrored in the establishment and support of mass media outlets in a nation-state. Similar to how mainstream civilizations' idealised or clichéd images dominate popular culture and discourse, Indigenous media frequently have to identify themselves and their work in opposition to these representations. Such discourses are frequently found embedded in narratives of evolution and progress, in which Indigenous peoples and places are portrayed as "simple", "primitive", or "backward" (Wilson & Stewart, 2008, p. 21).

Because contemporary Kokborok films encompass recognizable, recurring themes and visual cues that inform the audience and illustrate an identity consistently divorced from the aesthetics of indigeneity but appealing to a rather mainstream consciousness, Kokborok films

are faced with the struggle of producing high-quality authentic accounts of Indigenous cultures in Tripura. Nonetheless, these films draw in a wide range of viewers due to the cinematic use of overbearing socio-cultural events that forge a socio-cultural verisimilitude (Kyung, 2005, pp. 144-149), in which the audiences identify with and accept films as if they were authentic accounts of a shared cultural past and reality. Although Indigenous narratives have reclaimed control of problematic Indigenous representation through the participation of Indigenous producers, directors, and writers in the creative process, there is simultaneously an exponential departure in contemporary Indigenous films from an authentic visual representation of indigeneity in contemporary Kokborok films. In brief, the contemporary Kokborok film enterprise offers an articulation of indigenised mainstream Hindi film modalities posing questions about the inconsistencies and complexities in the articulation and a threat to the retention of the Indigenous identity of Kokborok films.

Conclusion

Indigenous artists contend that the many allusions to history in Indigenous films go beyond a romanticisation of the 'good old days' before acculturation. Traditional accounts and artistic representations of history aid in the upkeep or revitalization of Indigenous communities. They are shaped by their perception of the past and nothing better than films can reinforce this perception while preserving the past for posterity. Stated otherwise, aesthetic practices that define the Tripuri indigeneity may be intact, but when represented in Kokborok films, they appear far removed from reality, allowing misrepresentation of the culture and people of the community. Kokborok films as such are of partial help in understanding or even locating Tripuri Indigenous culture. The Indigenous aesthetics of Tripuri culture and the reality of Tripuri men besides women are deliberately broken, trampled, and toyed with. Such disturbingly incorrect portrayals are the product of the *Bollywoodisation* of Tripuri cinema; which contribute to breaking away from the aesthetics of indigeneity at a spectacularly higher level.

Indigenous media production efforts are nevertheless, typically small-scale, low-budget, and localized, making them politically and economically precarious. Outside of sporadic festivals or specialized circles, their significance goes therefore frequently unnoticed but the advent of digital technologies and interactive media among Indigenous artists and Indigenous communities highlights the significance of new media for the preservation and dissemination of Indigenous knowledge. Contemporary Kokborok films illustrate the need for a dynamic interaction between digital technology and conventional means of knowing and remembering, demonstrating that new media serve as more than just storage systems for Indigenous knowledge. By illustrating the crucial ways in which Indigenous producers connect and reconstruct identity via digital technologies and new media, frequently in a contentious partnership with government, academic, and/or commercial interests, Kokborok films struggle to maintain creative and editorial control to ensure representation of their culture. Ginsburg (1991) referred to this as the "Faustian contract" facing Indigenous media. While Indigenous filmmakers are discovering novel approaches to employ film and video to further their goals, demands and access to new forms of Indigenous identity expression and assertion through media, the proliferation of communications technology poses a threat of

becoming the ultimate blow to culture, language, images, intergenerational relationships, and traditional knowledge. These revelations serve as a further reminder of the significance of Indigenous poetics and aesthetics in articulating and organising unique cultural ideals, logic, and knowledge through films as cultural texts (p. 96).

Hence, the overarching query posed – whether marginalized communities can wield media to articulate cultural-political agendas or inevitably become compromised by its hegemonizing force – continues to pervade scholarship on the cross-cultural dissemination of media (Ginsburg, 1991). The case of an 'endangered Tripuriness', in particular, invites alarms over such developments, with Indigenous media scholars perceiving new media practices as deleterious to cultural distinctiveness. While enabling privileged circulation of indigenous aesthetic traditions and performative identity (re)articulations, their production simultaneously risks reifying essentialized tropes catering to cosmopolitan consumptive desires for the authentic as these expressive works tread a delicate balance - selectively assimilating mainstream Bollywood aesthetics while subversively asserting indigeneity, staking claims to contemporary socio-cultural "presence".

Notes

[1]While "indigenous" can refer to social groups native to a region, we employ it strictly interchangeable with "First Peoples" - denoting the original inhabitants of areas later colonized by settler states. Constituting an estimated 9% of India's population, these communities strive to sustain their identities, cultural claims and land rights, persisting as internal colonies within the encompassing nation-state.

[2]As modestly outlined by Barma (2022) in his seminal work, Tripuri cinema is produced in Tripura, a state in the Northeastern region of India, in a multitude of languages including Bengali and Kokborok.

[3]See Ginsburg (1991), for a more detailed analysis of this concept.

[4]*Tripuriness* can be understood as a signifier of the state, condition, or quality of being Tripuri or belonging to Tripura. For more information, see Barma (2022).

[5]Barma illustrated the term 'Tripuri' as not merely a conformation to the generic signifier of community identity or the spoken language but rather, as primarily a referent of "what that belongs to or is of or relating to Tripura, its inhabitants, language or culture". See Barma, 2022.

[6]*Risha* and *rignai* are Indigenous garments worn by females of the Indigenous communities of Tripura. Usually made of homespun cotton, *risha* covers the chest while *rignai* covers the lower half of the female body.

[7]*Bollywoodisation* is an informal term brought into common use by Ashish Rajadhyaksha to refer to the process of regional cinema adapting and replicating Bollywood filmmaking modalities, its industrial as well as creative practices to an extent where it gradually moves toward a loss of its self-identity.

****

References

Appadurai, A. (1996). Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization. University of Minnesota Press.

Barma, A. D. (2022). *Reading contemporary Kokborok and Bengali films and music videos in Tripura: History, technology, and infrastructure* [Master's thesis]. Jadavpur University.

Barma, A. D. & Debroy, P. (2022). *Cinema as art and popular culture in Tripura: An Introduction*. Tribal Research and Cultural Institute.

Barma, A. D. (2024). Talking back through peripheral visions and negotiating identity: Kokborok and Bengali films and music videos in Tripura. *Journal of Film and Video*, *76*(2).

Bhattacharya, D. (Director). (1986). *Longtharai* [Film]. North Eastern Films.

Debbarma, M. (Director). (2015). *Imang* [Film]. Shine Film Production.

Debbarma, M. (Director). (2017). *Imang 2* [Film]. Shine Film Production.

Debbarma, M. (Director). (2021). *Imang 3* [Film]. Shine Film Production.

Debbarma, M. (Director). (2019). *Yapri* [Film].

Debroy, P. (2023). *Is Tripuriness endangered? Reading the diffused substance of Tripuri Indigeneity and hybridity in contemporary Kokborok films against Bollywood in a post-globalization era* [Master's thesis]. Tripura University.

Deger, J. (2006). *Shimmering screens: Making media in an Aboriginal community*. University of Minnesota Press.

Dirks, N. B. (2001). *Castes of mind: Colonialism and the making of modern India*. Princeton University Press.

Ghoshal, A. (2012). Changing mentality of the Bengalee refugees: The story of Tripura (1946–1981). *Refugee Watch*, pp. 18–34.

Ginsburg, F. (1991). Indigenous media: Faustian contract or global village? *Cultural Anthropology*, *6*(1), 92-112. https://www.jstor.org/stable/656496

Ginsburg, F. (1994). Embedded Aesthetics: Creating a Discursive Space for Indigenous Media. *Cultural Anthropology*, *9*(3), 365-382.

Ginsburg, F. (2002). Screen memories: Resignifying the traditional in Indigenous media. In F. Ginsburg, L. Abu-Lughod & B. Larkin (Eds.), *Media worlds: Anthropology on new terrain* (pp. 39-57). University of California Press.

Ginsburg, F. (1995). The parallax effect: The impact of Aboriginal media on ethnographic film, *Visual Anthropology Review*, *11*(2), 64-76.

Ginsburg, F. (2016). Indigenous media from U-Matic to YouTube: Media sovereignty in the digital age, *Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *6*(3), 581–599.

Hearne, J. (2021). Introduction: Indigenous performance networks: Media, community, activism, *JCMS*, *60*(2), 157–162.

Johnson, J. (n.d.) Shared places: Tribal cultures and histories. *Isem,101*(42).

Justice, D.H. (2018). *Why Indigenous literatures matter*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Kalai, K. (2014). (Director). *Chethuang* [Film]. Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council.

Kalai, S. (2018). (Director). *Kwtham Kothoma* [Film]. Tribal Research & Cultural Institute.

Kyung, K.S. (2005). *Globalization, film, and authenticity: The renaissance of Korean national cinema* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Essex.

Leuthold, S. (1998). *Indigenous aesthetics: Native art, media and identity*. University of Texas Press.

Matta, M. (2016). Multilingualism and Indigenous cinema in Northeast India: The case of Kokborok language films. In T. Mamula & L. Patti (Eds.), *The multilingual screen: New reflections on cinema and linguistic difference* (pp. 335–50). Bloomsbury.

Mukherjee, M. (2016). Toward a new frame for regional films: Manbhum videos and the other side of (Indian) cinema. *Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies*, *7*(1), 58–79. https://doi.org/10.1177/0974927616635939

Pulinthanath, J. (Director). (2004). *Mathia* [Film]. Sampari Pictures.

Pulinthanath, J. (Director). (2008). *Yarwng* [Film]. Sampari Pictures.

Rangel, J. P. (2012). Indigenous perspectives on contemporary native art, Indigenous aesthetics and representation [Doctoral dissertation]. University of New Mexico. https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_llss_etds/3

Reang, S. (Director). (2015). *Mari* [Film]. Borok Films.

Reang, S. (Director). (2021). *Sikla Jora* [Film]. SJ Film.

Reang, S. (Director). (2021). *Busulwng* [Film]. Hamchanai Studio & Stephen Debbarma Film.

Reang, S. (Director). (2010). *Nwng Bai* [Film].

Schleiter, M., & de Maaker, E. (2020). *Media, indigeneity and nation in South Asia*. Routledge.

Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and culture*. University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, P. & Stewart, M. (2008). Indigeneity and Indigenous media on the global stage. In P. Wilson & M. Stewart (Eds.), *Global Indigenous media: Cultures, poetics and politics* (pp. 1-55). Duke University Press.

Wolf, R. & Heidemann, F. (2014). Guest editors' introduction: Indigeneity, performance, and the state in South Asia and beyond. *Asian Ethnology*. 73(1-2), 1-18.