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*Inductive Bible Study:
Contextual Appropriation in Northeast India*

Abstract

M. Sashi Jamir examines the application of Inductive Bible Study to the tribal communities of Northeast India. This postcolonial situation has some positives such as a context with a higher degree of education, but it has also led to a prominence of Western philosophy over traditional ways of understanding, which need to be reclaimed. The reality that larger national forces in India often overshadow tribal communities also poses potential problems that prevent the local theological voice from being heard.

Keywords: Inductive Bible Study, tribal theology, Northeast India, contextualization, tribals

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Introduction: *Back to “The Source”*

The goal of this paper is to assess whether Inductive Bible Study (IBS)¹ can invigorate a post-colonial Christian context. To this end, I will identify briefly some issues within the Northeast India context followed by my assessment of IBS and its contextual appropriation.

Context

Northeast India formerly consisted of seven states, but with the induction of Sikkim, today it has eight.² It is bordered in the north by Bhutan, Tibet, and China; in the east and southeast by Myanmar; and in the west and southwest by Bangladesh. It is connected to mainland India by a narrow strip of land in West Bengal. It is a nation within a nation. Demographically, Northeast India can be divided broadly into “tribal” and “non-tribal” peoples.³ A majority of the tribals are Christians whereas the non-tribals are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, or Buddhist.⁴

Christianity came to Northeast India via the British colonizers and missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The missionaries were chiefly from the American Baptist and Welsh Presbyterian missions. Although the impact of Christianity amongst the tribals varies from one state to another, one common negative impact, despite some positive signs, is the presence of modernistic philosophy, the intellectual basis of the missionaries.⁵ In other words, the tribals were not only converted to Christianity but were also converted to modernistic philosophy—a philosophy that imprinted on the minds of the tribals that their culture was archaic and needed to evolve like that of Western civilizations. A. Wati Longchar asserts,

Christian missions, no matter which denomination or society, all considered themselves “superior” and consistently maintained an exclusive attitude towards indigenous religion and cultures. They came with a strong view to conquer the “other world” by Christian faith. Conversion was understood in terms of replacement of the old ways of life, which include rejection of traditional cultures and value system. Today many people have forgotten and have been uprooted from their traditional value system.⁶

This mentality by the missionaries caused many tribal Christians to move away from their ancestral culture and yet remain far behind their surrogate culture. The major consequence of such an impact has been the creation of an identity crisis and a shallow theology⁷ among the tribal converts. This is vividly described by K. Thanauva, who avers that one of the characteristics of Northeast tribals is an identity crisis.⁸

This vulnerable plight of the Northeast tribals has been intensified by two more factors: first, since India got her freedom from the British the

Northeast region of India has been engaged in multiple armed conflicts (an endogenous factor).⁹ Second, the inevitable expansion of the phenomenon of globalization and neo-liberalism has penetrated this part of India (an exogenous factor).¹⁰ As a result of such complex clashes of geo-socio-political, economic and religious worldviews, the tribals in this part of India appear to vacillate according to which way the wind is blowing.

Tribal Theology

In response to this situation, there has been an effort among tribal scholars to articulate contextual theology. Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam has been one of the main centers of “tribal theology,” and Wati Longchar has contributed immensely toward its progress.¹¹ He has argued elaborately for a more comprehensive tribal theology.¹² He avers that tribal theology is a type of liberation theology because it aspires to liberate the oppressed tribals from the dominant culture. He claims that land is the most fundamental feature for the tribals. In fact, land has a sacred identity amongst the tribals. Thus, he proposes a tribal theology under the theme of land. Longchar critiques modernization for ushering in ecological disorders, which have directly impacted the main source of survival for the tribals. For Longchar, this modernization that impairs ecology is the tool of the dominant cultures to exploit land and conversely, the tribal people.¹³

Thus, he argues that tribal theology should be able to liberate land occupied by the oppressors. In order to support his theology of land, Longchar narrates three tribal mythical stories that explain the interconnectedness of a Supreme Being, land, and humans.¹⁴ He continues that in the tribal worldview, it is the land through which god and humans are connected. Without land even god does not exist. God manifests himself in trees, stones, sand, water, and other natural resources. He concludes that this tribal understanding of land would enhance the Christian notion of biblical salvation, a holistic salvation. For him, the notion of Christian salvation has been reduced to personal enterprise. Incorporating a tribal worldview into Christian interpretation would foster liberation to land, which ultimately would bring liberation to the tribals.

Longchar should be lauded for taking the initiative in expounding a tribal theology because his motive of revitalizing Scripture for the indigenous tribal people is an appropriate way forward. The tribal theology movement is one of the products of the significant epistemological shift in recent times popularly known as postmodernism. Some offshoots of postmodern hermeneutics are feminism, post colonialism, and post-structuralism. Postmodernism has set the platform for the voiceless to be proactive in recognizing the legitimacy of their own culture and perspectives. The obsession of modernism with rationalism and absolutism has largely inflicted prejudices against minority voices such as females and communities with traditions and

worldviews other than modernism. The postmodern criticisms in general and the postcolonial, feminist, and tribal studies in particular have to be considered. They have exposed some important aspects in doing theology that have been left unattended or taken lightly, namely, the importance of context. Theology has to be contextual and praxis-oriented. A right theology should be able to invigorate the community of God.

If one is not critically cognizant in tribal theology, there is a tendency to romanticize the past at the expense of sound biblical theology. Two points need mention here: first, any critical contextual hermeneutic should be realistic in its outlook. In other words, cultures do evolve and many cultures, moreover, have evolved and are evolving toward hybrid cultures. In such hybrid cultures idealizing past traditions or worldview is anachronistic. This does not mean that past traditions have to be dispelled but that the hybrid cultures have to be acknowledged. Second, one has to be mindful that there is a strong *tendenz* in postmodern hermeneutics to treat the context as the *norma normans* (the norming norm) and the Scripture as the *norma normata* (the normed norm). This is a grievous danger.¹⁵ Scripture ought to be the starting context for any theology; moreover, contextualization happens only when both the biblical horizon and one's own contextual horizon interact with each other. In other words, tribal theology cannot be right theology by only emphasizing the indigenous context.

Bible Colleges in North East India

Another related issue is the state of seminaries in this region of India. This concern is specifically related to a fairly small town in Nagaland, Dimapur, where seminaries are rapidly mushrooming. For instance Dimapur is home to more than 30 Bible colleges.¹⁶ Yet, the impact of these colleges in the churches is rather disheartening. This is indicated by the tendency among common believers to treat the Bible as if it has fallen straight from heaven or to treat the Bible in a superstitious manner.¹⁷ Indeed, a dichotomy exists between the Bible colleges and the common believers there. This bifurcation is due to an inadequate knowledge and skill on the part of the students to interpret the Bible properly, which in turn reflects on the status of the colleges.

K. Lama in his brief study on the seminaries of Northeast India asked seminarians, "What subjects did you really miss in your seminary training?" The response he received from the seminarians was unanimous—a lack of comprehensive knowledge of the Bible.¹⁸ Another question that Lama directed to the lay people was, "What do they expect the seminary teachers to train future pastors?" To this question he received two dominant answers—"teach them to be relevant in preaching, and teach them how to expound the Word of God."¹⁹ Lama comments,

Being relevant to the contemporary issue is important. However, unlike any secular school of fine arts, Seminaries are primarily a Bible school where the importance of Biblical studies gives the reason for its existence. Our response to the contemporary issues must emerge from our strong foundation in the scripture. The Seminary must find a way to keep this emphasis without any compromise.²⁰

Lama's brief survey on theological studies in Northeast India clearly suggests the lack of proper biblical studies. It is imperative to shift the focus of theological studies to its primary source—the Bible.

If the hermeneutic of the scholarly debate is in danger of falling into extreme postmodern relativism and un-critical prejudices against anything Western, the danger amongst common believers is to fall into syncretism and pseudo-prophetism. S. Iralu avers, "The church [today] not only counters heretical teachings, but also fights against falsehood manifesting itself through wrong ideologies and damaging teachings that distort the true gospel. Like never before, the church in North East India is under attack from different quarters; these forces are from without and within the church."²¹ These problems stem from an improper or misguided handling of the Bible.

The imperative need among Christians from Northeast India is a contextual theology that is biblically centered, one that will also enable them to weave their own cultural identity in light of the Scriptures.

Inductive Bible Study

Before embarking on the appropriation of IBS in Northeast India, I would like to highlight briefly some of the features of the method. Initially, IBS was termed "English Bible" because of its emphasis on the study of the Bible in the vernacular. IBS began its movement in the late 19th century. The reason for its birth was the frustration of its founders—William Rainey Harper and Wilbert Webster White—with higher critical issues in which the biblical scholars were involved.²² Since then IBS has evolved as a Bible study tool. The first mark of the evolution of IBS was seen in the publication of Traina's *Methodical Bible Study* (1952).²³ Traina related IBS to mainstream exegesis and to biblical theology. The current book by Bauer and Traina provides further explanations and clarifications of IBS in the light of the present climate of the study of biblical hermeneutics. For instance, the present book considers the authorial intention as not necessarily the only intention of the biblical text.²⁴ Furthermore, the theoretical foundation of the book, as found in pages 13-71, is timely and compelling. In fact, the articulation of the framework of the philosophy of induction sets this book apart from the renowned books on Old and New Testament exegesis by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart.²⁵

For Bauer and Traina, the term “inductive” is synonymous with evidence.²⁶ Thus, as an interpreter of the biblical text, one must pursue the hard factual evidences of the text. However, the philosophy of induction is best embodied in the concept of critical realism.²⁷ Critical realism means both the subjective experiences of the interpreter as well as the objective evidences are considered important in interpreting the biblical text.²⁸ The inductive spirit as opposed to the deductive method is open-ended, un-dogmatic, provisional, and tentative in the understanding of the meaning of the text. It is open to any method that would enable one to provide evidences that illuminate the text.²⁹ It emphasizes the dialogical method of Bible study.³⁰ Another feature of IBS is its direct study of the Bible.³¹ That is, in IBS, one is required to study the text firsthand before referring to secondary resources.

With its aim to interpret the text for the congregation, IBS focuses on the final form of the text.³² It also holds that in order to have sound Bible interpretation one needs to have right methodology. In addition, the method of IBS begins with observation, followed by interpretation, evaluation, appropriation, and correlation.

Observation is the first and critical phase of IBS. Observation can be done in a book or even at the level of short paragraphs. The observation level of the interpreter may vary according to the level of education of the observer and also the context. It should also be noted that IBS began in a Western context. Thus, IBS engages literary analysis such as genre, structure, and other literary techniques when observing the content of the text.³³ The interpretation phase is also known as the answering stage. In other words, in this phase, the interpreters are involved in “answering questions they have raised in the observation phase.”³⁴ By engaging in answers to the questions that stem from the observation of the text, an interpreter can actually protect himself or herself from eisegesis. One concludes the interpretation phase by drawing inferences from the evidence. This leads to the evaluation and appropriation phases. Once the inferences are drawn from the evidence, the interpreter enters into the evaluation phase. In the evaluation phase, an interpreter is concerned with the general questions of how the Bible as an ancient source can still be instructive to the present situation. It also deals with the issue of ethics. For instance, it touches on the understanding of “situation-bound teaching” and “principle-based character of biblical ethics.”³⁵ In this section, Bauer and Traina provide excellent and sound principles of doing biblical ethics and theology. Only after this evaluation is one to work on the application of the biblical message to the contemporary situation. Finally, correlation deals with the broader issue of biblical theology.

Bauer and Traina have explicitly mentioned that the method they explained in the book is presented in its ideal form.³⁶ By this, they mean that one can adapt these principles and procedures according to one’s own ability or the

ability of the congregation. This suggests that the dynamic of the relationship between the facilitator and the congregation is “top-down.” Thus, much is dependent upon the effectiveness of the facilitator to improvise and make this method efficient. The facilitator must be thoroughly familiar with the method, as well as genuinely converted to an inductive attitude or spirit, which is essentially reflected in the biblical Jesus’ model of servant leadership. This book is comprehensive and can be used as an exegetical handbook for seminarians and anyone who aspires to authentic Bible study.

Appropriation of IBS in Northeast India

With its emphasis on the concept of induction, IBS has struck a middle ground between the worldviews of modernism and post-modernism. This middle ground approach is embodied in the hermeneutic of critical realism—a hermeneutic that acknowledges the evidential and objective study of the text, which also provides space for the subjective experience of its readers. This hermeneutic must be the larger framework within which any kind of contextual biblical theology should maneuver. As noted above, the intention of tribal theology to construct a contextual theology is a correct one. However, one who utilizes a tribal hermeneutic (or any postmodern hermeneutic) should be mindful that not all Western hermeneutics are guided by a modernistic philosophy and are thus oppressive and chauvinistic. A hermeneutic that stems from the West can be liberating in character. The inductive approach at its core is Bible-centered and yet it is at once accommodative, empathetic, and objective in its hermeneutical outlook.

I believe strongly that this book, *Inductive Bible Study*, has the potential to guide and nurture Northeast India’s theological seminaries in particular and the churches in general. In fact, this book can be utilized in creating a curriculum for biblical courses.³⁷ Examining for instance, how one does biblical theology or biblical ethics and, of course, how one conducts a proper Bible study. This book will also help one to determine the importance and the limitations of the critical study of Scripture. There is no doubt that the technique of literary analysis of the Scriptures as employed by IBS is Western in nature. However, the reality is that in most of these tribal regions in Northeast India education is done in an English medium, studying modern science, arts, and literature.³⁸ Of course, the quality of education is worrisome. Nonetheless, for students of this region, such literary analysis is not a foreign concept at all.³⁹ My point is that if literary techniques can be utilized in understanding the Bible, why not exploit them?⁴⁰ This book can provide the impetus in keeping the Bible as the focus and the source of any theological enterprise. All these benefits will in turn produce capable and effective pastors to nurture tribal believers.

It is said that theology was created in Germany, was popularized in America, and was executed in Asia. However, with IBS’s emphasis on a firsthand

approach to the Bible (p. 50-52), it will enable Christians in Northeast India to develop authentic, indigenous, and biblically centered theologies of their own. However, the question arises how interpreters can interpret the Bible without having knowledge about the Bible? Or, would it not be more dangerous to let someone interpret the Bible without any prior or proper knowledge of Scripture? Although a valid concern, I think the direct approach is very much in line with inductive thinking, which promotes dialogue and curiosity. Moreover, the provisional nature of interpretation is the hallmark of IBS. In other words, one's initial observation is open to further investigation. Everybody has presuppositions and the ability to make inferential conclusions and it is right to let these features interact with the text with openness rather than in a deductive—dogmatic—sense. In the Northeast region of India the success of the implementation of IBS will depend, to a certain degree, on the facilitator. In other words, the facilitator must use common sense. For instance, one begins with reading the text, followed by observation and perhaps providing some historical background of the text when necessary. At the end, the significant aspect of the process is whether the inductive spirit is nurtured or not.

The inductive spirit encapsulated in words such as “undogmatic,” “radical openness,” “dialogue,” is liberating (p. 18-19). The fact that the inductive process invites any effective method to determine the meaning of a text opens avenues for the tribals to utilize some of their existing positive cultural traits such as their oral traditions, narrative style of communication, shame-honor society, kinship relationships, and their agricultural rural life settings—traits similar to those of the Israelites in Scripture—to inform them in their observations of the Bible. In doing this, a vista is opened for Christians in Northeast India to nurture and revitalize their traditional culture and, thus, shape their identity in light of the gospel. IBS can then be termed a “liberating hermeneutic.”

Conclusion

The purpose of this essay was to analyze whether IBS can contextually be appropriated in Northeast India. In the process, I highlighted some features of Northeast Indian Christianity namely, tribal theology and the mushrooming of seminaries in this region. I argued that IBS could invigorate the seminaries and their theological construction in particular, the church, and its congregation in general.

Endnotes

¹ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

² Sikkim was inducted into the states of Northeast India in 2002. The names of the states of northeast India are as follows: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura.

³ According to the 2001 census, Northeast India constitutes 39 million people, which is about 3.8 percent of the total population of the country. Except for Assam, the rest of the area is hilly. This hilly terrain is overwhelmingly populated with tribals. For instance, Mizoram is 94.5 percent tribal. Northeast India has about four hundred tribes with diverse socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds and speaks hundreds of different languages and dialects. It should be mentioned that the word “tribe” is a rather derogatory word in India, which is ironic because it is upheld by the Indian constitution. See also Limatula Longkumer, “Keynote Address: Folk Stories and Traditions: Sources for Doing Indigenous Theology” in *Christ and Culture: Christ through Culture* (Ballina: National Council of Churches in Australia, 2009), 63-72.

⁴ According to the 1991 census in Northeast India, Christians comprise 13.64% of the total population.

⁵ Paul G. Hiebert calls this period from 1800-1950 a period of “non-contextualization.” The Western missionaries did not find any reason to contextualize the gospel. Instead, they expected the native converts to evolve into the Western culture, which was the highest existing culture. See Hiebert, “Critical Contextualization,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (July 1987): 104-12.

⁶ Wati Longchar, “Keynote Address: The Uniqueness of Indigenous Spirituality,” in *Christ and Culture: Christ through Culture* (Ballina: National Council of Churches in Australia, 2009), 32-39.

⁷ Hiebert and his daughter Meneses have pointed out accurately that the result of noncontextual proselytization is that the native culture goes underground. As such, it provides a healthy platform where syncretism can flourish seamlessly and produce split-level Christians. Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 167. The reason for such an impact is because the missionaries’ Christian message does not simply touch the deepest level of the tribal culture. T. K. Oommen avers that culture can be divided into three dimensions—cognitive, conative, and normative. Cognitive and normative aspects deal with thinking and judgment respectively, whereas conative is associated with outward expressions such as eating, dressing, worshipping, etc. In line with Oommen’s analysis of culture, it is fair to say that the missionaries’ message touched the conative aspect of culture but not necessarily the cognitive and the normative aspects. T. K. Oommen, “Culture Change among the tribes of Northeast India” in *Christianity and Change in Northeast India* (ed., T.B. Subba, Joseph Puthenpurakal, and Shaji Joseph Puykunnel; New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2006), 3-14.

⁸ K. Thanzaava, “Tribal Theological Trends in North East India,” in *Tribal Theology: A Reader* (ed., Shimreingam Shimray; Tribal Study Series No. 12; Tribal Study Center: Eastern Theological College, 2003), 40-51. See also L. Pohngap’s response to S. Karotemprel, who argues that the tribal’s worldview and identity

were affected for better or worse. Pohsngap, "A Response to Sebastian Karotempel: The Impact of Christianity on the Tribes of Northeast India," in *Impact of Christianity on North East India* (ed., J. Puthenpurakal; Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications, 1996), 49-60.

⁹The agenda of these armed conflicts varies from demand of complete self-determination (as in the case of the Nagas) to separate statehood within India. Some of the prominent militant organizations include NSCN-IM and K (National Socialist Council of Nagalim—Isak-Muivah and Khaplang factions), ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom), BLT (Bodo Liberation Tigers), NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland), HNLC (Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council), ANVC (A-chik National Volunteers Council), NLFT (National Liberation Front of Tripura), ATTIF (All Tripura Tiger Force), BNCT (Borok National Council of Tripura), KNF (Kuki National Front), KNA (Kuki National Army), PULF (People's United Liberation Front), MPLF (Manipur People's Liberation Front), and IPRA (Indigenous People's Revolutionary Alliance).

¹⁰ See Kailash C. Baral ed., "Globalization and Tribes of Northeast India," *Indian Folklife: A Quarterly Newsletter* from National Folklore Support Centre, July 2006, serial no. 22.

¹¹ Besides Longchar, some of the other contributors include K. Thanzauva, Renty Keitzer, and most of the professors of Eastern Theological College. Here are a few resources on tribal theology: Wati Longchar and Larry E. Davis eds., *Doing Theology with Tribal Resources: Context and Perspective* (Jorhat, India: Tribal Study Centre, Eastern Theological College, 1999); A Wati Longchar, *An Emerging Asian Theology: Tribal Theology, Issue, Method and Perspective* (Tribal Study Series no. 8; Jorhat: Barkataki & Company, 2000). Shimreingam Shimray ed., *Tribal Theology: A Reader* (Tribal Study Series no. 12; Jorhat: ETC, 2003).

¹² Longchar, *An Emerging Asian Theology*.

¹³ See Longchar, "Keynote Address," 38-9.

¹⁴ Ibid., 69-71. Yangkahao Vashum also endorses the use of myth in constructing a tribal theology. See Vashum, "Sources for Studying Tribal Theological" in *Tribal Theology: A Reader* (ed., Shimreingam Shimray; Tribal Study Series no. 12; Jorhat: ETC, 2003). However, unlike, Wati and Vashum's understanding of myth, John N. Oswalt has a different—philosophical and comprehensive—understanding of myth. See Oswalt, *The Bible among the Myths: Unique Revelation or just Ancient Literature?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

¹⁵ For instance, the postcolonial interpretation is shaped by the prejudices inflicted by the colonizers. These prejudices are translated into an ideological lens through which Scripture is analyzed. Thus, postcolonial criticism becomes an ideological criticism. For basic understanding of post colonial hermeneutics, see R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Sanyu Iralu, "The Relevance of Theological Education for the Churches in NE India," *BN* 61 vol. 3 (2012): 29-31.

¹⁷ See also Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 35-38.

¹⁸ Lama is the General Secretary of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India. He oversees about seven thousand Baptist churches in Northeast India.

He also has a Ph.D. in Old Testament from Trinity Divinity School. See Lama, “Re-Envisioning Seminary-Church Relationship: A Response from the Baptist Churches in NE India,” *BN* 61 vol.3 (2012): 18-28. Takatemjen also voices the need for Bible-centered seminaries in Northeast India in his book *Studies on Theology and Naga Culture* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1998), 139.

¹⁹ Lama, “Re-Envisioning Seminary-Church Relationship,” 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

²¹ S. Iralu, “The Relevance of Theological Education,” 30.

²² Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 1.

²³ Traina, *Methodical Bible Study: A New Approach to Hermeneutics* (New York: Ganis & Harris, 1952).

²⁴ See the essay of David Bauer, “Inductive Biblical Study: History, Character, and Prospects in a Global Environment” (paper presented at the annual interdisciplinary colloquium of Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., 12 October 2012), 1-34.

²⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Louisville: Westminster, 2002); Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Louisville: Westminster, 2009).

²⁶ Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32-34.

²⁸ Bauer and Traina call this a transjective study. *Ibid.*, 28-37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁰ See the video of Traina’s lecture on IBS posted in the website: www.inductivebiblicalstudy.com.

³¹ Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 50-52.

³² Inductive Bible Study’s emphasis on the final form parallels Brevard Childs’ canonical approach. However, one needs to be cautious while emphasizing the final form, especially for Old Testament books. Childs has the inclination to neglect the significance of the diachronic study of the Old Testament books. Old Testament books such as those that make up the Pentateuch are an amalgamation of important documents or traditions. The crucial point is that before the final form took shape such individual documents or traditions might have significance for a given community and, moreover, such documents or traditions do reflect the historical situation of the ancient community prior to the community addressed by the final form of the Old Testament. Childs does not take this aspect seriously in his understanding of the canonical approach. For more discussion on synchronic approach and diachronic approach, see Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 268. However, to be fair, IBS does provide scope to utilize insights from higher critical analysis.

³³ Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 75-176.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 315-16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁷ M.Q. Castillo wrote his Th.M. thesis on the topic Inductive Bible Study and Its Place in the Curriculum of Ebenezer Bible College (Th.M. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 1972).

³⁸ The literacy rate of Northeast India (68.5%) is, in fact, higher than the national literacy rate (64.8%) according to the 2001 census.

³⁹ I did my B.A. in English literature from Nagaland University. I remember vividly dealing with the literary criticism of Matthew Arnold and T. S. Elliot.

⁴⁰ This point also has an implication for tribal theology. Western education has made inroads into the minds of many tribal Christians both young and old. In other words, culture is evolving and taking on a hybrid form. This factor has to be considered and monitored while articulating tribal theology.

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