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Publication Trends in North-Eastern Indian Multi-Disciplinary Journal: A Content Analysis of Man and Society

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Introduction:

Journals are an important platform for the communication and exchange of ideas and form the backbone of research activities (Walia & Kaur, 2012). The purpose, interests and values of a given discipline can be ascertained through periodic analysis of scholarly journals (Buboltz Jr., Deemer & Hoffman, 2010). Across various disciplines, journals have been studied with a view to gain holistic overview of scholarship trends and also specific insight on various areas such as the major recurrent themes being published, types of research methods used, the profiles of institutions, the profiles of authors and so on. This includes comparative studies (eg. Walia & Kaur, 2012) as well as studies conducted with a view to understand research trends in a specific field (eg. Bozkurt et.al., 2015). Extending this line of inquiry, the present study examines scholarship trends in articles on the Northeastern states through an investigation of a journal published in the region with the objective to focus on the region.

Review of Literature on Journal Studies:

Journals are often good indicators of the progression of various disciplines. Their importance in the body of academic works is undoubtedly widely accepted by academics and researchers around the world. Buttlar (1991) citing Budd (1988) asserts that the importance of journals is also attached to their currency, ability to address a variety of issues and disseminate results and findings of research widely. Holsapple, Johnson, Manakyan and Tanner (1993) have argued that it is important to periodically take stock of the channels available for communicating scholarly discourse and research. There are many benefits to studying journal content. The first is that such studies may help potential authors keep track of changes in content and methodology, hence, giving direction to future publications (Jordaan, Wiese, Amade & Clercq, 2013).

Phelan, Ferreira and Salvador (2002) also note that these studies may be beneficial for the journals themselves, revealing new opportunities such as areas relevant for special editions. Apart from detailing current trends, they also highlight gaps in areas of research and hence, also highlight possible avenues for research in the future (Bush & Grant 1994; Tahamtan et. al., 2014). A wide variety of studies published in various journals have been examined. For instance Alias, Razak, elHadad, Kunjambu and Muniandy (2013) specifically analysed the studies of YouTube in selected journals while Majhi, Jal and Maharana (2016) analysed journal articles on Wiki in the Science Direct database. On the other hand, Tuomaala, Järvelin, and Vakkari (2014) conducted a study of a broader scope to trace the evolution of Library and Social Science. Yet others have studied journals with a view to inform research and practice such as Wahesh, Likis-Werle and Moro (2017) who studied the addiction topics published in counseling journals. More recently, journal analysis has also been used to examine the quality of UGC indexed journals. Patwardhan, Nagarkar, Gadre, Lakhotia, Katoch and Moher (2018) analysed 1336 journals randomly from the in the university source component of “UGC-approved list” and found that 34.5% of the journals studied were disqualified due to essential information being incorrect or unavailable while 52.3% of the journals were found furnishing false information. Overall, the study found that new regulations to curtail malpractices in journal publishing in India are required. In this manner, journal studies can also give direction to policy and help regulate certain aspects, especially in different academic fields.

A review of literature makes it evident that the study of journal content is an important area of research in the field of Library and Information Sciences. Such studies have time and again revealed current trends in various fields of scholarship as well as the gaps that remain to be filled in research. For indepth analysis of journal articles through

various parameters, the review has revealed that content analysis is widely used. Rahul S. (2013) observes that content analysis is a viable and widely used method of research in social sciences. For the purposes of this study too, the authors chose to use content analysis, which has been defined by Berelsen (1952) as, "...a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."

Purpose of the study:

Located in the eastern-most region of India, the Northeast consists of the seven sister states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura, and the Himalayan state of Sikkim, often called the brother state. In the present climate, where there is a palpable push towards meaningful education, an examination of scholarly journal articles on the Northeast could be helpful in understanding current trends in scholarly publications from the region. Started in the year 2004, *Man and Society: A Journal of North-East Studies* is published bi-annually by ICSSR (North Eastern Regional Centre). The journal is broad in its scope and publishes articles across various disciplines pertaining to the social, political, economic, anthropology and security related issues of North-East India. The journal has had contributions from authors of different institutional, academic and professional backgrounds that make it a truly multi-disciplinary journal with focus on a wide range of issues relevant to the Northeast.

A review of the literature revealed that no such study has been conducted before on this particular journal. The review also highlighted a general lack of journal studies in publications of Northeast India and this paper seeks to be a step towards bridging that gap. The articles published in the journal will be analysed with special interest on the

themes used to study the Northeast, the types of research methodologies employed and the institutional and geographical affiliations of the authors with a broad view to understand the current status of research articles published on the Northeast, and a specific goal of highlighting research trends in the journal.

Methodology:

All issues of the journal, "Man and Society" published from 2004-2017 were selected for this study. Research articles published in journals were taken as units of analysis, leaving out other content such as book reviews and editorials. A total of 167 articles were analysed using descriptive statistics. Coding was done based on a coding scheme developed specifically for the study by the authors. The research methods employed within the articles were coded into three categories i.e. qualitative, quantitative and mixed using Kothari's (2004) definition "Quantitative research is based on the quantitative measurements of some characteristics. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantities. Qualitative research on the other hand is concerned with qualitative phenomenon i.e. phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind" (p. 3). It is inferred from the same definition that "mixed" method demonstrates characteristics of both types of research. Since the study is the first of its kind in examining themes used to study the Northeast, the coding scheme and categories were developed on an emergent basis. A total of 33 different themes were identified and the articles analysed were coded accordingly.

Findings and Analysis:

A total of 20 journals copies and 167 articles were analysed in this study. The findings are presented thematically.

Overview of authorship:

The following table gives us an overview of the number of authors writing each paper. Highest numbers of the articles were written by single authors with a few written by two authors or more.

Number of authors	Frequency	Percentage
single author	143	86.14
two authors	21	12.65
three authors	2	1.20
Total	166	100.00

Table 1: Frequency distribution of number of authors

Distribution of Type of Research:

The study analysed a total of 166 articles, excluding book reviews. It was found that a clear majority of the articles used qualitative research methods (84.94%) while a few used quantitative methods (6.63%) and mixed methods (8.43%).

Distribution of Type of Articles: Type of Research	Frequency	Percentage
Qualitative	141	84.94
Quantitative	11	6.63
Mixed	14	8.43
Total	166	100

Table 2: Distribution of Research Methods Employed

Profiles of Authors:

There were a total of 191 authors although the total number of articles was 166. This is because some of the articles had up to three authors. The authors were categorized according to their teaching and research positions. Those who do not necessarily come under the categories of teachers or researchers were coded as “Others”. It was found that the highest number of authors were Assistant Professors (26.70%).

Professional Position of Authors	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant Professor	51	26.7
Others	36	18.85
Researcher/Research Fellow	34	17.8
Associate Professor	30	15.71
Professor	29	15.18
Unspecified	11	5.76
Total	191	100.00

Table3: Distribution of Author Designations

Of the 166 articles, 141 were written by single authors while 23 articles had 2 authors, and 2 articles had 3 authors. First authorship was the highest among Assistant Professors (25.13%), followed by authors who fall in the category of “Others” (15.18%) closely followed by both Associate Professors and Professors (14.66%).

Professional Position of Authors	Authors			TOTAL
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
Assistant Professor	48 (25.13)	2 (1.05)	1 (0.52)	51 (26.70)
Others	29 (15.18)	6 (3.14)	1 (0.52)	36 (18.85)
Researcher/Research Fellow	25 (13.09)	9 (4.71)	0 (0)	34 (17.80)
Associate Professor	28 (14.66)	2 (1.05)	0 (0)	30 (15.71)
Professor	28 (14.66)	1 (0.52)	0 (0)	29 (15.18)
Unspecified	8 (4.18)	3 (1.57)	0 (0)	11 (5.76)
Total	166 (86.91)	23 (12.04)	2 (1.047)	191 (100.00)

Table 4: Frequency (with Percentage) Distribution of First, Second and Third Authors.

Of the total of 191 authors, 12.04% were second authors of who the highest numbers were Researchers/Research fellows (4.71%).

Institutional profile of contributing authors:

The articles were coded for the type of institution that contributing authors were affiliated to. A total of 79 institutions were identified which shows that there is a good variation both in number and types of contributing institutions. These were further categorized as Universities, Colleges, Research Institutions, Others and Unspecified. It was found that of the 191 authors, maximum contributions came from authors who are affiliated to Universities (64.92%), followed by authors from colleges (14.66%).

Type of the affiliating institute	Authors			TOTAL
	1st	2nd	3rd	
University	105 (54.97)	18 (9.42)	1 (0.52)	124 (64.92)
College	26 (13.61)	2 (1.05)	0 (0)	28 (14.66)
Others	23 (12.04)	2 (1.05)	2 (0.52)	26 (13.61)
Research Institution	9 (4.71)	1 (0.52)	0 (0)	10 (5.24)
Unspecified	3 (1.57)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (1.57)
Total	166 (86.91)	23 (12.04)	2 (1.05)	191 (100)

Table 5: Frequency (with Percentage) Distribution of Types of Institutions of Contributing Authors

124 of the contributing authors were affiliated to various universities, 28 were affiliated to colleges while 26 of the authors were affiliated to other types of institutions.

Location of Institutions	Authors			TOTAL
	1st	2 nd	3rd	
Northeast India	101 (52.88)	18 (9.42)	0 (0)	119 (62.30)

Other Parts of India	49 (25.65)	4 (2.09)	1 (0.52)	54 (28.27)
Abroad/Foreign	11 (5.76)	1 (0.52)	1 (0.52)	13 (6.81)
Unspecified	5 (2.62)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (2.62)
Total	166 (86.91)	23 (12.04)	2 (1.05)	191 (100)

Table 6: Frequency (with percentage) Distribution of Location of Institutions of Authors

The study found that the highest numbers of authors belong to institutions located in the Northeast (62.30%). This was followed by authors from institutions of other parts of the country (28.27%) with a small percentage of the authors belonging to institutions located abroad (6.81). This shows that majority of the contribution to the journal is coming from Northeastern institutions.

Rank	Name of the affiliating institute/s	No of Authors			TOTAL
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	
1	North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)	34 (17.8)	5 (2.62)	0 (0)	39 (20.42)
2	Tezpur University	7 (3.66)	2 (1.05)	0 (0)	9 (4.71)
	Jawaharlal Nehru University	8 (4.19)	1 (0.52)	0 (0)	9 (4.71)
3	Assam University	7 (3.66)	1 (0.52)	0 (0)	8 (4.19)
4	Manipur University	6 (3.14)	1 (0.52)	0 (0)	7 (3.66)
5	Tripura University	3 (1.57)	3 (1.57)	0 (0)	6 (3.14)

Table 7: The top five contributing institutions in terms of number of authors.

Rank	Name of the affiliating institute/s	No. of articles contributed with percentage
1	North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)	34 (20.5)
2	Jawaharlal Nehru University	8 (4.8)
3	Assam university	7 (4.2)
	Tezpur University	
4	Manipur University	6 (3.6)
5	Unspecified	4 (2.4)

Table 8: The top five contributing institutions in terms of number of articles.

For this particular criterion, in instances wherein there were two or more authors, the institution of the first author was considered as the contributing institution.

Geographical Demarcation of Articles:

This particular section is concerned with the areas that are covered by the research articles geographically. The geographical areas covered by the articles were broadly classified into 8 different categories.

Geographical Demarcation Of The Research	Frequency	Percentage
Northeast Indian States	109	65.66
National	19	11.45
International	15	9.04
Unspecified	10	6.02
Northeast and International	5	3.01
Northeast and National or other Indian State/s	4	2.41
Northeast and International and other Indian State/s	3	1.81
Other Indian States	1	0.60
Total	166	100.00

Table 9: Distribution of Geographic Demarcations of Articles

The articles were coded as Northeast in cases where the research was concerned with one or more of the Northeastern states (65.66%). Similarly articles were coded as National (11.45%) and International (9.04%) depending on the research area covered. In few cases, articles included both Northeast and International (3.01%) while 2.41% covered Northeast in conjunction with National or Other Indian States. The

combinations of research areas found are quite interesting. It is worth noting that the most of the research published in the journal concentrate on the Northeast.

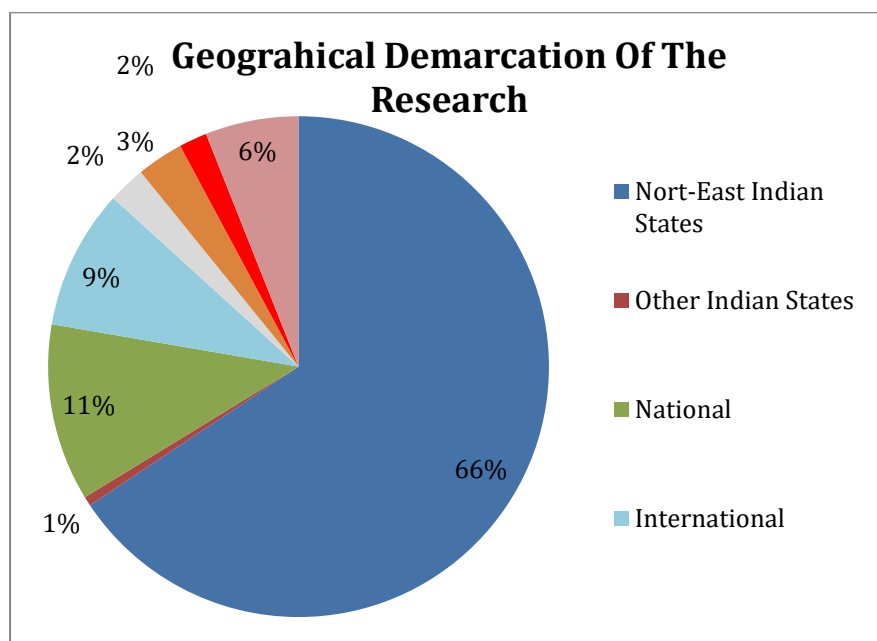


Figure 1 : Distribution of the geographic demarcation of research articles

State/Union Territory Of The Research	Frequency	Percentage
Not Specific	90	54.22
Assam	20	12.05
Manipur	19	11.45
Meghalaya	14	8.43
Nagaland	7	4.22
More than one State/UT	5	3.01
Tripura	4	2.41
Mizoram	3	1.81
Arunachal Pradesh		
West Bengal	1	0.6
Total	166	100.00

Table 10: Frequency Distribution with Percentage of State-wise Coverage of Research Areas.

As evident in the above table, most of the articles did not pick a specific state/union territory. Many articles were found to cover multiple states within the Northeast, India (national) and also foreign countries. Among the state-specific articles however, it was found that Assam had the highest number of articles (12.05%) followed by Manipur

(11.45%) and Meghalaya (8.43%). It may be noted that no articles concentrating on solely on the state of Sikkim were found.

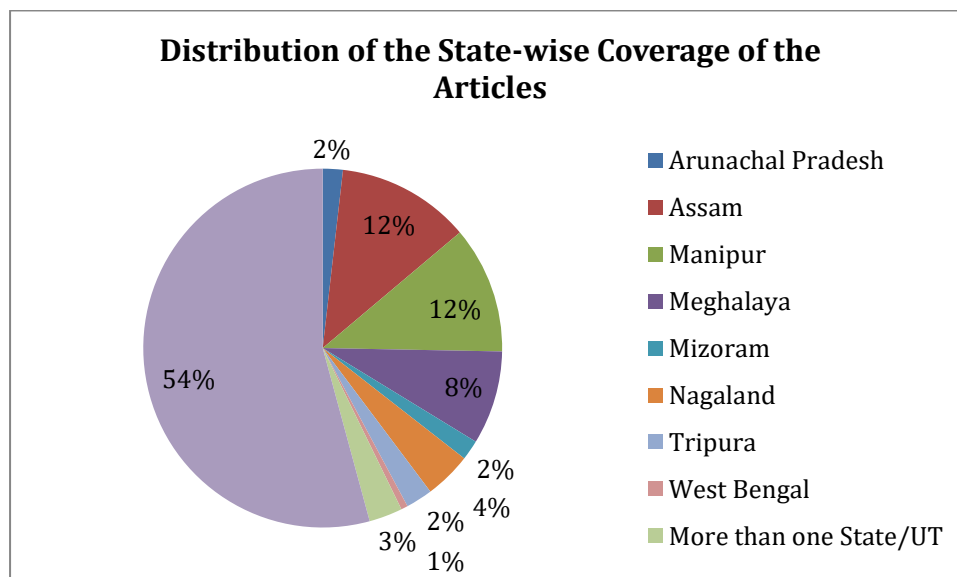


Figure 2: Distribution of the State-wise Coverage of the Articles

Theme Coverage in the Articles:

A total of 31 themes were identified in the journal articles. Each article or paper was assigned to only one category depending on the overall emphasis and perceived intent of the article. Sub-themes, if any, were not considered.

Themes in Journal Articles	Frequency	Percentage
Sex/Gender/Women	26	15.66
Development	12	7.23
International relations	11	6.63
Nation/ nationalism	11	6.63
Society/Social Institutions/Social Structure/Social practices	10	6.02
Govt. Policies/Projects	10	6.02
Culture-Folklore/Literature/Art/History/Language/Music/Cultural Festivals	9	5.42
Identity/Race/Ethnicity	9	5.42
Administration/Governance	8	4.82
Politics	7	4.22
Cultivation/Agriculture	5	3.01
Environment/Conservation	5	3.01

Religion	4	2.41
Education/Research	4	2.41
Health/Healthcare	4	2.41
Migration/Diaspora	4	2.41
Insurgency/militancy	3	1.81
Ethnic Conflicts	3	1.81
Employment/Livelihood/Occupation	3	1.81
Peace-bulding/Dialogue/Conflict Resolution	3	1.81
Displacement	2	1.2
Globalization	2	1.2
Adolescents/Youth	2	1.2
Caste	2	1.2
Substance abuse	1	0.6
Trade	1	0.6
Human Rights/NGOs	1	0.6
Economy	1	0.6
Community	1	0.6
Law/Legal issues	1	0.6
Tourism	1	0.6
Total	166	100.00

Table 11: Overall theme-wise distribution of the articles.

As seen in the following table, the theme “Sex/Gender/Women” the most commonly used theme with 26 articles, followed by the theme” Development” used in 12 articles.

Top 5 Themes	Frequency	Rank
Sex/Gender/Women	26	1
Development	12	2
International relations	11	3
Nation/ nationalism	11	
Society/Social Institutions/Social Structure/Social practices	10	4
Govt. Policies/Projects	10	
Identity/Race/Ethnicity	9	5
Culture-Folklore/Literature/Art/History/Language/Music/Cultural Festivals	9	

Table 12 : Top five overall themes.

The researchers also examined the themes used specifically to analyse the Northeastern states.

Rank	Themes	Frequency
1	Sex/Gender/Women	18
2	Development	9
	Society/Social Institutions/Social Structure/Social practices	9
3	Identity/Race/Ethnicity	7
4	Culture-Folklore/Literature/Art/History/ Language/Music/Cultural Festivals	6
	Politics	6
	Administration/Governance	6
5	Environment/Conservation	5

Table 13: Top five themes in research articles on Northeast states.

Of the 109 articles that study the Northeastern states, it was found that majority of the articles concentrate on Sex, Gender and Women (16.51%). In terms of articles that concentrated on specific Northeastern states, Sex/Gender/Women was the most researched theme for Assam with 4 (20%) of the total 20 articles. The second highest number of articles on a specific Northeastern state was from the state of Manipur with 19 articles out of which the both themes Sex/Gender/Women and Society/Social Practices/Social Institutions were used by 3 articles each.

Of the 19 articles that fell under the geographic demarcation of National, it was also found that highest number of articles were on the theme of Sex/Gender/Women (21.05%) followed by Nation/Nationalism (15.79%).

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Sex/Gender/Women	4	21.05
Nation/ nationalism	3	15.79
Administration/Governance	2	10.53
Caste	2	10.53
Govt. Policies/Projects	2	10.53

Displacement	1	5.26
Development	1	5.26
Culture-Folklore/Literature/Art/History/Language/ Music/Cultural Festivals	1	5.26
Politics	1	5.26
Religion	1	5.26
Peace-bulding/Dialogue/Conflict Resolution	1	5.26
Total	19	100.00

Table 14: Thematic distribution of Articles Covering National Area

In all, 15 articles were found under the geographic demarcation of International. Of these a majority (66.67%) were on the theme International Relations.

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
International relations	10	66.67
Sex/Gender/Women	1	6.67
Cultivation/Agriculture	1	6.67
Identity/Race/Ethnicity	1	6.67
Nation/ nationalism	1	6.67
Ethnic Conflicts	1	6.67
Total	15	100.00

Table 15: Thematic distribution of Articles Covering International Area

Conclusion:

The study reveals that the journal *Man and Society* is one that covers a variety of themes and topics and stays focused mainly on the Northeastern states. It gives a good indication of Social Science research direction and focus in the region. Most of the research articles are written are qualitative. Most articles are also by single authors, which may indicate a lack of interdisciplinary and collaborative research papers. The types of authors who contribute to the journal are varied, and the findings indicate that younger Assistant Professors are the ones driving research. It is also interesting to note that Universities have the highest contribution in terms of research articles and that all

of the top 5 contributing institutions are located in the Northeast, barring one. Research is focused mostly on the Northeastern region and the multiple issues that it grapples with, however, the study has found a none or negligible research output from and about states such as Sikkim, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. It is also quite interesting that of the articles focused on the Northeast, the top themes were on Women/Gender, Development and Social institutions and practices. Overall, the findings are a good indication of research focus in the Social Sciences in the Northeastern region.

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