Chapter V

Modern Khasi Riddles

This chapter is in two parts. The first part deals with riddles that have evolved during the colonization of Khasi and Jaintia hills by the British and the second part deals with those riddles that have evolved with the advent of modern technology. In the course of her research, this researcher has also found out that during the last part of the 20th century, there are riddles that have evolved with the coming of modern technology especially those riddles created through mobile phones (Short Message Service) and the internet. These are very popular especially among the educated Khasis, youth and the student community.

Part – I

Historical Riddles

The Acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal in 1765 by the East India Company had ushered in the first contact between the company and the Khasi Hills. When they came into contact with the Khasis, they lost no time in realizing the rich mineral potentialities and other items of trade that Khasi hills could provide (Giri 1998: 34). David Scott, the British political agent in the then North East Frontier was undoubtedly the main architect of the British colonial and imperial dominance over the Khasi and Jaintia states. The Khasi ruler that first came into contact with the British was *U Ram Singh* of Jaintia. In 1824, David Scott managed to convince *Ram Singh* to enter into an agreement with the company on the 10th, March 1824 by which *Ram Singh* acknowledged
allegiance to the company. After this in the same fashion, he approached Tirot Sing Syiem the Chief of Hima Nongkhlaw, the traditional state in Khasi hills and convinced him to enter into agreements with the company and to allow the British to construct a road from Assam to Sylhet through the territory of ka Hima Nongkhlaw. Tirot Sing Syiem gave his consent for the road to go through his territory. But later the British soldiers clashed with the locals and this in turn led to a struggle between the Confederation of the Khasi states and the British. In this war, the British defeated the Khasis and ultimately established their supremacy in these hills. After the defeat of the Khasi chiefs by the British, the latter chose Sohra (Cherrapunjee) as their station from where they administered the hills. With the annexation of the Khasi and Jaintia hills to the British Empire, the hills were swarmed by white men, other people from the plains of India came to work as soldiers and administrators for the colonial masters.

It has been observed that there are plenty of Khasi riddles which do not fall under the traditional category. Rather, these riddles may be put under the category of modern riddles. Historically, many riddles were found to have evolved during the colonization of Khasi and Jaintia Hills by the British. In this category of riddles, the researcher observes that there are descriptive elements which reflect colonial influences in the day to day life of the community. Prior to the coming of the British to these hills, it has been observed that traditional riddles derived mostly from close observation of nature and things around them. With the colonization of Khasi and Jaintia Hills by the British, the local people came into contact with others from other
parts of the world like the white and the black men. It should be noted that before the coming of the British, the Khasis had always lived in isolation in these hills. And the stationing of the British troops at Sohra by David Scott led to the Khasis being exposed to the western culture and modern technology. This in turn led to the evolution of new sets of riddles whose descriptive elements come from observation of the western culture and which showed impact of foreign culture on the Khasi culture as well.

The researcher while going to different villages in Khasi and Jaintia hills has collected riddles in which the descriptive elements refers to white men and even men of African origin. The bearing of the white men’s influences in the daily life of the Khasis is also seen through the creation of many new riddles. Some of the riddle texts will be reproduced and analysed below:

* Ka don kawei ka pung, don arngut ki briew ki ba wan sum, uwei u dei u dkhary kong bad uwei pat u phareng. U tang shu rynkoh u dkhary kong shapoh um, ka um ka lah kong ngain, hynrei tang shu rynkoh u phareng pat, ka um ka lah lieh phar.*

Riddle referent: *Ka sha.*

Translation

There is a pond; two people, the Adivasi and the white man came to bathe in the pond. The moment the Adivasi jumped into the pond, the water turns black, but the moment the white man jumps into the pond the water turns white.

Riddle referent: *Tea.*
In this riddle, the pond refers to the tea kettle where the water is boiled for brewing tea; the Adivasi refers to tea leaves and the white man to milk. It is seen that when tea leaves is added to boiling water, the colour of the water will turn black. But when milk is added to black tea, the colour will turn to off-white. It is to be noted here that the Khasis did not have any concept of tea and never drink milk before the British came to these hills. So we may assume that this riddle was created only after the colonization of Khasi and Jaintia hills by the British.

\[ U \text{ Phareng, u Khasi bad u Dkhar ki iashoh hapoh kawei ka kper haduh ba kin da mih snam, katba u Negro pat u nang peit na shabar ka kper.} \]

Riddle referent: *Bam kwai, tympew, shun bad u duma sla.*

Translation

The white man, the Khasi and the non-tribal are fighting till they are covered in blood inside a fence, while the African is watching from outside.

Riddle referent: Chewing of areca nut, betel leaf, lime and tobacco.

In this riddle the descriptive elements refer to white men and Africans. The white man refers to lime which is white in colour, the *Kwai* (areca nut) to a Khasi and a *Tympew* (betel leaf) to a non-tribal. The Khasis are very fond of chewing areca nuts along with betel leaf and lime. Areca nuts and betel leaves play a very significant role in the life and culture of the Khasis. The Khasis always show their hospitality and welcome guests to their homes by offering
Kwai and Tympew (areca nut and betel leaves) to the visitors to chew. So areca nuts and betel leaves along with lime is a symbol of hospitality and goodwill in Khasi culture. Along with areca nut and betel leaf, there are some people who also chew tobacco leaves by putting the same in the outer part of the gums. Chewing of areca nut along with betel leaf and lime will turn the saliva in the mouth to red in colour. So the act of chewing areca nut and betel leaf along with lime is compared to three persons from different races fighting with one another till they shed blood, the red saliva in the mouth likened to blood and the African who watches the three people fighting inside the fence refers to the tobacco leaf.

Ka don ka wei ka krem bah, tang ki phadar ki shong hangta ki ap ia uwei u mawsiang ba mih ka umpohliew natrai jong u.

Riddle referent: Ka shyntur, ki bniat bad uthylliej.

Translation

There is a big cave, only the Catholic priests live there to guard a big rock from where an everlasting spring originates.

Riddle referent: Mouth, teeth and tongue

This riddle was created after the colonization of Khasi and Jaintia hills by the British. The colonization of these hills opened the door for many Christian missionaries from both the Catholic and Protestant denominations to come and evangelize among the Khasis. The first Catholic missionaries landed in Khasi hills in the year 1890 and started their mission at Lumtyngkong, Laitumkhrah. They belonged to the German Salvatorian Mission. Before that, the Khasis
who lived in isolation have no contact with the Catholics. When they came into contact with them, the people observed that the priest always wear white cassocks. In this riddle the Catholic priests refer to the teeth as they are whitish in colour, the tongue to a rock and the saliva to an everlasting spring that originates from the bottom of the big rock. The Catholic priests in these hills are always addressed as *Phadar*, a corrupted form of the word ‘Father’. This word was readily accepted into the Khasi language and literature.

_ U loit tupia tang shu trei kam. _

Riddle referent: *U khulom._

Translation

He takes out his cap as soon as he starts working.

Riddle referent: The pen.

In this riddle the cover of the pen is compared to a person’s cap. The act of taking out the cover of a pen before writing is compared to a person taking out his cap before doing any work. The Khasis were not literate society before the coming of the British. It was the British who introduced the art of writing and the use of the pen to them.

_ U bam tang shisien bam bad u eit pat lynter baroh shi bnai. _

Riddle referent: *Urifil._

Translation

He eats only once but he can defecate the whole month.

Riddle referent: The refill of a pen.
This riddle falls under modern category. A refill can be used for a long time till the ink is finished. The refill of a pen here is compared to someone who eats only once but can defecate the whole month. This riddle reflects the influence of Western culture in our daily life as a refill of a pen is a very significant item in our everyday life.

_U bam na poh bad u eit pat na jrong._

Riddle referent: _U atosthana._

Translation

He eats from the bottom and defecates from the top.

Riddle referent: The chimney.

Traditional Khasi houses is oval-shape and do not have any chimney. A traditional Khasi house is usually divided into the following compartments; _ka Shyngkup or kyndur, ka Nympei, Kyrdein, Ing Kyndong and Rympei_. In this riddle, the act of lighting the hearth with fire is compared to somebody eating food from his bottom instead of the mouth, and the smoke that escapes outside through the chimney as somebody defecates from the top of his head. This riddle also falls under the oppositional category as well.

_Hapdeng ka don ka pung ba heh bha,_

_Harud pung ki shong ki phareng,_

_La kerkut ia ki da ka khlaw bah._

Riddle referent: _U soh snepkor._

Translation
In the middle there is a lake,

The whites live around the lake

Surrounded by dense jungle.

Riddle referent: The coconut.

The above riddle is an example of a modern riddle. The descriptive element
‘lake’ here refers to the coconut milk, the ‘white men’ to the white and edible
kernel of the coconut and the ‘dense jungle’ to the outer non-edible shell of the
cocoanut.

_U wei u rishot u kyrshan ia khatar tylli ki bim._

Riddle referent: _Ka shatri._

Translation

One pillar which supports twelve beams.

Riddle referent: The umbrella.

This is a modern riddle as the Khasis never used umbrella before they came
into contact with the British. The Khasis use traditional rain shields like _ka
trap_ and _ka knup_ to shelter themselves from the rain and excessive heat of the
sun. These two traditional items now can be found only in the rural areas as
they are used only by farmers when they go to work in their fields. In this
riddle, the long handle of an umbrella that holds and supports the frame of an
umbrella is compared to a pillars and the frame which support the cover cloth
of the umbrella as beams.
In the past, the Khasis never used the umbrella. But after the coming of the British, the umbrellas came to be used by many in imitation of the colonial masters. Today the umbrella has become part and parcel of the Khasi culture. This has been observed by the researcher even in Khasi traditional death ceremonies, where decorated umbrellas are used as one of the accessories and items for the dead person, instead of the traditional rain shields. The umbrella is kept by families as an item to be used by the dead in his/her journey to another world.

In this riddle the guitar which is a musical instrument introduced to us by the British is the answer. When a guitar is played, a person has to use both his hands, one for manipulating the keys and the other for strumming the strings.
So the act of playing a guitar here is compared to physical assault on somebody and the sound of the guitar to someone's cry. Before the coming of the British the Khasis had their own musical instruments like the stringed, wind and membrane instruments. But with the coming of the British, the hills were also invaded by western musical instruments which within no time started replacing the traditional ones. Today, the guitar is the most popular western musical instruments among the young and the old alike.

*Ka iing ba don shibun ki pulit, ha ki pulit la shong tang da ki nong Africa.*

Riddle referent: *U sohprew.*

Translation

A house with many rooms, only the Africans live in these rooms.

Riddle referent: Sponge gourd.

This riddle falls under the modern category as it is believed that it evolved only after the British invaded Khasi and Jaintia hills. It is to be noted here that along with the whites, there were also people from other races like blacks and others who came to these hills especially during the World War I and II periods. In this riddle a house with many rooms refers to the sponge gourd (*Luffa cylindrica*) which has many compartments like cavities inside when it is matured. The Africans here refers to the black seeds of the sponge gourd.

*U phareng shiliang kjat.*

Riddle referent: *U tit lieh.*
A one legged white man.

Riddle referent: The white mushroom.

In this modern riddle, a white man with one leg refers to white mushrooms that can be found in the wild in Khasi and Jaintia hills and that are edible.

_U pharem ba phong tupia rong iong._

Riddle referent: _U kyndok jingpruid._

The white man with a black hat.

Riddle referent: The match-stick.

This is an example of modern riddle where a white man refers to a match-stick and the black hat worn by the white man to the sulphur that covers the head of a match-stick. It should be noted here that in the past, it is mandatory for all Khasi males to wear turbans especially in religious and social ceremonies. But after the coming of the British to these hills, Khasi men took to wearing hats.

_Ka nem ba jaw ummat man ka por._

Riddle referent: _Mombati._

A white woman who shed tears all the time.

Riddle referent: The white candle.
In this modern riddle, the white woman referred to as *mem* which is used to denote a British woman, refers who weeps copiously and the tears to the melting wax that fall off and is collected at the bottom of a candle stand. It is to be noted that when the British came to these hills some of them especially the Protestant Missionaries brought their wives along with them to live here. The sight of the British women who are very fair skin made some Khasis to create riddles like this type which likened them to a white candle.

*I parad iba ritmet ba kyrkeng i Peter*

*I phong ka pattun rong lieh.*

*Ka khumut jong i ka saw*

*Katba nang slem i ieng.*

*Katta I nang lyngkot.*

Riddle referent: *Mombati.*

Translation

Little grandpa Peter

In a white trouser

His nose is red

The longer he stands,

The shorter he grows.

Riddle referent: The candle.

This is a modern riddle because here we see the descriptive elements refer to trousers and English name. It was the British who introduced the trousers to the Khasis. Before coming into contact with the British; the Khasis used loin
clothes and dhoti to cover the lower parts of their bodies. But today no one is using the dhoti or loin clothes any more except in some traditional ceremonial dances. All Khasi males irrespective of their religious affiliation are wearing only pants now. Many men have also no knowledge in using and wearing the dhoti or loin cloth any more. The Khasis are very fond of English names and they even name their children after English words. This is observed as one of the greatest influences of the British culture on the people of these hills. It is also to be noted that this riddle has its source from one English riddle. But in the Khasi riddle, Granny Etticoat is replaced by Grandpa Peter.

*Ka ei ka ta ka ba niad ia ka durkhmat jong ka baroh shi sngi?*

Riddle referent: *Ka baje iing.*

Translation

What is it that wipes its face with two hands all day?

Riddle referent: The clock.

This is a modern riddle as clocks were introduced to us by the colonial masters. In this riddle, the clock is compared to someone having a face, and the two hands that wiped its face refer to the two hands of the clock, the minute and second that indicate the time of the day. Before the coming of the British, the Khasis all over the hills did not have the concept of hours, minutes or seconds. The Khasis in the past, measured the time by gazing at the position of the sun in the sky. According to the scholar’s mother, when they were young (in the 1940s and 1950s) they did not have any watch or clock at home (in the rural area). But in the evening they always knew the time to start
cooking for dinner by looking at one particular flower called *Khleo ro smit* in *War-Jaintia* dialect or *Tiewpor* in Khasi language. This flower is known as Four o’clock flower or the Marvel of Peru in English. This particular flower would bloom only in the late afternoon and during the day the petals would close. *Khleo ro smit* in *War-Jaintia* dialect means the flower that bloom only in the evening and *Tiewpor* in Khasi it means the flower that tells the time.

\[ Ka \ lah \ ban \ mareh, \ tangba \ kam \ lah \ ban \ iaid \]
\[ Ka \ lah \ ban \ rwai \ tangba \ kam \ lah \ ban \ kren. \]

Riddle referent: *Ka baje*.

Translation

She can run but cannot walk
She can sing but cannot talk.

Riddle referent: The clock.

In this modern riddle, the clock is the riddle referent. Here a clock which is compared to some one that has the ability to run and sing but not to walk and talk which is quite contradictory. Usually a child would first know how to walk and talk before he could run or sing. So, this riddle also falls under the oppositional category.

\[ U \ don \ shibun \ ki \ khmat \ tangba \ um \ lah \ ban \ iohi \]
\[ Baroh \ shirynieng \ ka \ sniehnoh \ jong \ u \ ka \ jaing. \]

Riddle referent: *U phan*.

Translation
He has many eyes, but he cannot see
His skin is always dirty.

Riddle referent: Potato.

Potatoes are not indigenous to Khasi and Jaintia hills. They were first brought to these hills and introduced to the Khasis by David Scott, the political agent of the British. David Scott saw that the climatic condition of Khasi Hills was similar to Britain and therefore favourable for potato planting, so he brought them here to the hills and started planting them. David Scott was known as the arch enemy of the Khasi people but at the same time it cannot be denied that he was also a benefactor by introducing potatoes as one of the main crops that sustain the people of these hills.

*Nga khlain bha ha ba nga pyllun*
*Nga lah ban kylla dur*
*Nga lah ban tan ia ka duriaw da ka bor jingkhlain jong nga*
*U briew uba ka kyrteng jong u ka mut Ki kti ba khlain*
*U iuh kjat nyngkong halor jong nga.*

Riddle referent: *U Bnai.*

Translation
I am strongest when I am round
I can change my appearance
I can pull the sea with my tremendous strength
A man with a name like powerful bicep
Was the first one to tread on me.
Riddle referent: The moon.

This riddle can be kept in modern category because it was created only in the early 1970s after Neil Armstrong of America became the first person to walk on the moon. Here the moon is compared to somebody who has mighty strength as he can lift and drop the tides every day. A man with name like ‘powerful biceps’ here refers to Neil Armstrong the first man in the world to walk on the moon on July 20th, 1969.

Nga shah kyndang napoh iing jong nga. La die ia nga ha iew. Uta uba thied ia nga u ot noh ia u tdong jong nga bad loit ia ki sopti sut rusom jong nga. Ynda u pynmysaw ia nga u iam pynban ma u ha syndah jong nga.

Riddle referent: U Piat.

Translation

I was taken out of my home and sold in the market. He that buys me cut my tail and takes out my suit of silk. After hurting me, he weeps besides me.

Riddle referent: The onion.

In this riddle, the home of onion means underground where it is planted. The suit of silk refers to the pinkish layers that cover the flesh of the onion. The Khasi traditional male attires consist of a sleeveless shirt called ka Jymphong and a loin cloth or dhoti. But after the coming of the British, the Khasi
traditional dress was replaced by the western clothes like trousers, collar shirts, blazers, jackets and suits of European patterns.

\[ Ka \ iing \ kaba \ ka \ tnum \ da \ ki \ nar, \ ki \ kynroh \ da \ ki \ iit, \]
\[ Ka \ pluh \ shi \ pluh \ hynrei \ kam \ ju \ hap. \]
Riddle referent: \textit{Ka lynten}.

Translation

A house with iron roof and glass walls,
Always burning but never falls.
Riddle referent: The lantern.

Traditionally, the Khasis used bamboo torches and earthen lamps to light their houses at night. Fats of animals were used as oil to make the lamp burn. But the British brought with them lanterns, candles etc. that immediately appealed to the Khasis of that time. Here, in this riddle the top of the lantern is either made of tin or other metals while the walls are always made of glass. Till today lantern can still be seen in many parts of the hills especially in the rural and remote areas where there is no electricity connection and where electric power is very erratic and often cut off especially in the rainy season. The word \textit{lynten} in Khasi is a corrupted word of lantern in English.

\[ Ngim \ don \ doh, \ lane \ ki \ sner \ lane \ ki \ sniehdoh \ lane \ ki \ shyieng \]
\[ Hynrei \ ngi \ don \ ki \ shympriahkti \ bad \ ki \ 'tikmie. \]
Riddle referent: \textit{Ki jingsopkti}.

Translation

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We have no flesh, nor feathers, nor scales nor bones
Yet we have fingers and thumbs of our own.

Riddle referent: Gloves.

Gloves are another items introduced to us by the western culture. Here in this riddle, the descriptive elements seem to point out to some living beings but when in reality the riddle referent is an item of clothing. Khasi hills are very cold especially during the winter seasons. So when the British came here, they brought and used gloves to prevent their hands from cold. Seeing the British using gloves, the educated Khasis of that time also started using them to warm up their hands. Today gloves are important items among the Khasis especially during the winter and amongst the bikers who have to prevent their hands from the biting cold while riding their two wheelers.

*Ki sim balieh ba khlem sner*

*Ki wan her na Paradise*

*Ki her lyngba ka duriaw bad ryngkew*

*Ki iap pat ha kti jong nga.*

Riddle referent: *Ka ior.*

Translation

Featherless white birds
Flying out of Paradise
Flying over sea and land
Dying in my hands.

Riddle referent: The snow flake.
This is a modern riddle because Paradise is a Christian concept. Before 1841, the Khasis had no idea of the concept of Paradise. But the Christian Missionaries from the West introduced this concept of Paradise to the Khasis through their religious teaching and education. The Khasis did not know about Heaven or Paradise and these concepts never featured in the philosophy of their indigenous religion. They believe that they came down to this earth from above (sky) which is the abode of God, the creator. They also believe that when one dies, if he fulfilled the commands given by God to them while living on earth, he or she will be able to go and eat betel nuts in the courtyard of God (Bam kwai ha dwar U Blei). While those who have not fulfill God’s command will be sent to Ka Myngkoi U Jom a place in the subterranean. It has been observed that similar version of this riddle could be found in English tradition and it was collected by Archer Taylor in his famous book English Riddles from Oral Tradition.

Ka sur jong nga ka ba jem jaijai
I syngkai jong nga iba rit.
Kat shaba nga leit nga hap ban rah ia I saijem jong nga
Lym kumta ngan ym lah ban rwai.

Riddle referent: Ka bela.

Translation

My voice is very tender
My waist is slim
Wherever I go I must take my bow
Or else I cannot sing.
Riddle referent: The violin.

Violin is one of the Western classical musical instruments. When the Khasis were introduced to Western music by the missionaries and others, they were so taken up by the western music and their musical instruments and within no time they started forgetting their own traditional musical instruments. Violin is one of the western musical instruments that the Khasis have accepted as one of their own. This has been observed in many rural places where violins are used in church orchestra especially during church services and weddings. It is to be noted that Khasis are great lovers of Western music and Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya located in East Khasi Hills is globally known as the ‘Rock Capital of India.’ On Sundays churches all over the hills are filled with music and hymns greatly influenced by Italian and Welsh tunes.

*Ngi dei ar ngut shipara ki khun synrap*

*Baroh shi sngi ngi hap kit jingkit ba khia bad ngi shah ban*

*Tang mynmiet, ynda u Kynrad jong ngi u thiah*

*Ngi ioh ban shong thait.*

Riddle referent: *Shijur ki Juti.*

Translation

Two twin brothers we are

All day great burdens we bear and we are pressed

Only at night when our master sleeps

We can take rest.

Riddle referent: A pair of shoes.
Shoes are another necessity introduced to us by the British. In this modern riddle the pair of twins refers to the pair of shoes that a person uses. Shoes are a daily necessity that people of all ages wear. Before the coming of the British, the Khasis never used shoes and they walked barefoot. It has been told to this researcher by her mother and other people from her area that even in the late 1960s and early 1970s people rarely use shoes and slippers except when they come to the city. The Vice-Principal of the school where this researcher works has told her once that the first time she wore slippers while going to school was only when she was in class IX in the early 1970s. In those days slippers and shoes were a luxury and that even those children whose parents could afford to buy slippers and shoes for them also never wore them to schools as they felt out of place if they wore slippers or shoes as almost all others walked barefoot.

_uphong patlun dang khynnah, loit pat ynda lah rangbah._

Riddle referent: _U siej._

Translation

He wears his trousers when he is young, takes them off when he grows up.

Riddle Referent: Bamboo.

This riddle is collected from the Bhoi area of Khasi hills, where the bamboo is given a masculine gender (_U_). In this riddle, the brown cover of the bamboo which covers the tender shoot is referred to as trousers. This is due to the reason that the Khasis usually associated trousers with men.
Ka lah ba ryngkoh bad mareh

Tangba kam don kjat.

Riddle referent: Ka bol.

Translation

It can leap and run
Yet it has no feet.

Riddle referent: The football.

The Khasis are lovers of sports. They have many traditional games and sports. When the British came to these hills, football is one of the games introduced by them to the Khasis. Here in this riddle, the football is compared to some one that can jump and run all around even though it has no feet. Today football game is the most popular in these hills and has over shadowed all the other traditional sports and games. It has been observed that even in the remote parts of the land, the first game that the children learn to play when they start playing football.

Ka lah ban kren namar ka don u thylliej uba eh

Tangba kam lah ban ring mynsiem

Namar ba kam don tor.

Riddle referent: Ka baje iingmane.

Translation

She can speak, for she has a hard tongue
But she cannot breathe, for she has no lungs.

Riddle referent: The church bell.
In this riddle the metal pendulum that produces sound when the bell is rings is compared to a tongue. Church bells can be found all over the hills and the sound that they produce when someone rings them can be heard everywhere especially on Sundays. The ringing of bells are signals to the people especially in the rural areas where most people do not use watches to go and attend church service. The sound produced by church bells of various denominations in these hills has produced numerous jokes.

\[
\text{Nga don ka shyntur kaba heh bad nga shait hylla bha}
\]
\[
\text{Hynrei ngam dei ka lorni}
\]
\[
\text{Tangba ia shait iadon bynta ha ki kam jaboh jong ki briew.}
\]

Riddle referent: \text{Ka mashin pynkhuidd iing.}

Translation

I have a big mouth and I am quite noisy
And I am not a gossipmonger
But I get involved in every dirty business.

Riddle referent: The vacuum cleaner.

This is a modern riddle. The advance of science and technology especially in the last twentieth century led to the invention of many things that gave comfort and luxury to man. Here, the vacuum cleaner is compared to some loud mouthed and noisy woman who loves to gossip and interfere in everybody personal business. Vacuum cleaners are not a common sight in Khasi and Jaintia hills except in some houses in Shillong. When somebody
uses vacuum cleaner for cleaning the rooms, it make so much noise that those who observed the way how vacuum cleaners work create this kind of riddle.

*Nga iong ngain ngain haba nga khuid*

*Bad lieh pat haba nga jaing*

Riddle referent: *Ka black board.*

Translation

I am black when I am clean
And white when dirty

Riddle referent: The black board.

The riddle referent in this riddle is the black board. It is believed that black boards were first introduced to Khasi and Jaintia Hills by Thomas Jones I, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist missionary who had established the first school in Khasi Hills in the year 1842. A black board is always used by teachers for writing the important parts of their teaching in schools. It is still a very important medium in teaching–learning activity. Till today black board are still considered to be one of the main traditional teaching aid in many schools all over the hills.

*Pyrkhat kloi. Ka rel ba pyndonkam da ka lait ka iaid shaphang shathie.*

*Ka lyer ka beh shaphang shatei lam sepngi. Shano ka tdem ba mih na ka rel kan her?*

Riddle referent: *Ka rel ba iaid da ka lait kan ym pynmih tdem.*

Translation

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Think fast. There is an electric train travelling south. The wind blows from north-west in which direction would the smoke from the train be blowing?

Riddle referent: An electric train does not emit smoke.

In this kind of riddle, as the children were asked to answer very fast, many get stumped and could not give the right answer except those who are witty and intelligent. There is no train service in Meghalaya. People from here have to go to Guwahati the nearest station to avail train service. But even though it is so, almost all children can identify trains due to mass media especially electronic media and globalization.

*Haei phin shem ki surok khlem kali, ki khlaw khlem dieng bad ki sor khlem iing?*

Riddle referent: *Ha ka map.*

Translation

Where will you find roads without cars, forests without trees and cities without houses?

Riddle referent: On the map.

Maps are important items as educational and scientific tools and are most useful especially to travelers. There are different types of maps and they are used for different purposes. Maps especially meant for directing and guiding tourists in many places show the connecting roads of a particular country or
places and other important locations to help people find their ways in an unknown place or area.

_Ngam don sur hynrei nga lah ban kren ia phi._

_Nga iathuh lut ha phi ia ki ei ba ki briew ki leh sawdong ka pyrthei_

_Nga don sla tangba ngam dei u dieng_

_Nga don ka ingdong bad ki kopja tangba ngam dei ka briew lane ka jingkhang._

_Nga dei kaei?_

Riddle referent: _Ka kot._

Translation

_I have no voice yet I can speak to you_

_I tell you all things that people all over the world do_

_I have leaves but I am not a tree_

_I have a spine and hinges but I am not a woman or a door_

_What am I?_

Riddle referent: The book.

In this riddle, the book is referred to someone without a voice but who can give us all relevant information about everything happen all over the world. Thomas Jones was the first one to establish schools in Khasi Hills in 1841 at Mawsmai. He prepared school curriculum of studies based on the models imported from the West. He adopted the Cherra or Sohra dialect as a standard Khasi dialect, adopted the Roman orthography for Khasi script and started writing and publishing books for studying in school. With his tireless efforts
some Khasi books came into existence within a few years after he adopted the Roman script for Khasi language. For this Thomas Jones I was known as the Father of the Khasi Alphabets. As books were introduced to us for the first time by the British, so this riddle falls under the modern category.

\[\text{Uta uba shna ia ka um ju iathuh iano iano ruh}\]

\[\text{Uta uba don ia ka ruh um tip}\]

\[\text{Uta pat uba ioh pdiang ia ka um kwah ia ka.}\]

Riddle referent: *Ka pisa thok.*

Translation

Whoever makes it tells no one

Whoever has it knows it not and whoever gets it wants it not.

Riddle referent: Fake currency.

Before Khasi and Jaintia Hills was annexed to the British Empire, the Khasis never used paper money. Prior to that, the Khasi traders who came into contact with the other people from the plains of Assam and the present day Bangladesh might have come across coins used in the kingdoms in the plains of the Indian sub-continent. After independence, India started using its own currency and today fake currency is very much in circulation all over the country. This is done by anti-Indian elements for their own interest and to cripple the economy and security of the country. The North-Eastern part of the country is especially vulnerable to the circulation of fake currency as it shares its boundary with many neighbouring countries and is often used as a transit route for circulation of the same. Even in Shillong, many people have fallen
prey to fake currency and it is alleged that people sometimes received fake currency even from Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) operated in the city. Illegal circulation of fake currency in the state has become the menace, so people are always warned by bank authorities to be alert while receiving money from others especially Rupees five hundred and one thousand notes, as these two fake notes are widely circulated by unscrupulous individuals.

*I ieng shilliang kjat*

*la la u dohnud l buh ha khlieh.*

Riddle referent: *U kubi.*

Translation

It stands on one leg

With its heart on its head.

Riddle referent: The cabbage.

Prior to their contact with the whites, the Khasis mostly lived on wild and semi-wild vegetables which they planted such as pumpkin, cucumber, yam etc. But the coming of the British to the hills brought a drastic change in the food habits of these hill people. The Khasis were introduced to many new vegetables brought by the colonial masters. One such species of vegetables is the cabbage. Today cabbages are grown all over the hills and have become one of the most popular vegetables in every market in these hills. The heart of the cabbage here refers to the inner most layers of the vegetable.

*Haba nga kdew shajrong ka shai kdar.*
When I point up its bright
But when I point down, it’s dark.

The coming of the British to India led to the Khasis being exposed to the electricity. In the year 1921, the British engineers constructed a mini Hydro Electric Project at the stream locally known as Suna Pani near Mawprem locality in Shillong. The construction of the Hydro Electric Project led to the Khasis being exposed to electricity for the first time. To many common people of that time, electricity was one of the great wonder gifted to them by the British. Usually when a switch is on, the room will be flooded with light but when it is switched off the room will be dark.

Soldiers line up with pride
In two rows side by side
One row will decide
Whether they will meet the other row or not.

Riddle referent: The zipper.

Traditionally, the Khasis never used any zipper in their clothes as the designs never call for using buttons or zippers. But when the British landed in the Khasi land, the indigenous people were exposed to western attires and within no time they were so much influenced by it that at presents no Khasi males can be seen without pants or jackets where zipper is an important item in such attires. Today, zippers are seen as accessories in both men and women clothes.

Lah ban thew ia ka, tangba kam don lynter ne pynkiang ne jingjylliew.

Riddle referent: Ka jingshit-jingkhriat.

Translation

It can be measured, but it has no length or breadth or depth.

Riddle referent: Temperature.

In the past, the Khasis did not have any idea regarding the measurement of temperature. But after the year 1833, when the Khasi and Jaintia hills was under the rule of the British, the latter brought many new instruments and equipments to make use of them here. One such instrument is the thermometer for measuring the degree of temperature in these hills. Usually measurement is used to determine the quality of any physical objects. But temperature is not a physical object. So it does not have any length or breadth or depth at all. The clinical thermometer was invented by Thomas Clifford Allbutt in 1866. Most probably, the first person to use the thermometer among the Khasi patients
was Dr. H. Gordon Robert a Welsh missionary and a physician, who founded the Welsh Mission Hospital at Jaiaw, Shillong on 25\textsuperscript{th} March, 1922. It was rechristened as Dr. H. Gordon Robert KJP Assembly Hospital. This hospital is the oldest one in the North-Eastern region of India.

\textit{Nga dei ka umpohliew ka ba ym don ba lah ban dih ianga}

\textit{Nga dei ka nongiarap ia ki nongleit jingleit}

\textit{Kum ka ksiar ki shait wad bad iashoh na ka bynta jongnga.}

Referent: \textit{Ka umphniang kali.}

Translation

I am a fountain from which no one can drink

I used to help the travelers

Like gold I am sought after and fought for.

Riddle referent: Fuel.

In this riddle, the answer is fuel (petrol and diesel). Vehicles were first used in the hills only in the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The first vehicle was brought to Shillong through the Guwahati-Shillong road. But today the roads of Shillong and even in the rural areas are choking with the pollution emitted from the vehicles. Fuel is very important for vehicles as they can not function without it. Many wars have been fought all over the world for control of oil fields and monopoly of oil trade all over the world.

\textit{Artylli ki kali ki hap ban ai pass ha kawei ka surok rit ha kaba tang}

\textit{kawei ka kali ka lah ban iaid lyngba ha ka juh ka por. Baroh arngut ki}
nongniah ki kwah ban iaid shwa ha kajuh ka por. Ha kaba khatduh baroh arngut ki iaid lang ha kajuh ka por. Kumno kata ka lah ban long?

Riddle referent: Baroh ar ngut ki nongniah ki iaid da ka kjat.

Translation

Two vehicles have to pass each other on a very narrow road where only one vehicle can pass at a given time. Both the drivers wanted to be the one to pass first. But none agree as to who would pass first. In the end both passed at the same time...

How is this possible?

Riddle referent: Both the drivers came out of their respective vehicles, and walked on foot.

This is a very tricky riddle. This is a modern riddle because as mentioned above, vehicles are brought to this part of the world by the British in the early part of the twentieth Century.

Part – II

Riddles Evolved through Modern Communication Technology

In this chapter a study has also been carried out on riddles that have evolved with the coming of modern technology especially those created through the internet and short message service (SMS) in the present day. These riddles are considered as genuine items of folklore because they are anonymous, circulated and popular within groups sharing common factors thereby qualifying them as folk group.
It is a general fact that the emergence of electronic technologies has caused important, radical and drastic changes to oral and literary practices. New forms of communication system like the internet and mobile phones have fundamentally changed our everyday life. The use of internet and mobile phones for generating folklore has been observed very closely by folklorists and they have cited instances how traditional narrative structures of certain genres have undergone a dramatic transformation in presenting text and context.

The cold war tension between the Communist Block and the Western Block in the mid twentieth century led to the formulation of the World Wide Web. The launching of the Sputnik by the Soviet Union on October, 4th, 1957 led to the formulation of the advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) by the U.S. Department of Defense. Beginning in 1958, ARPANET served the military and academic researchers as a means of communication and as a common tool for defense operation. E-mail technology was created in 1970. By the 1980s people started interacting online through bulletin boards (discussion groups), MUD (multi-user dungeons) and the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link). WELL is a social network composed of internet users from all parts of the world. Later, it was followed by Internet Relay Chat. The internet in its modern form emerged with the creation of the World Wide Web in the year 1989 by English computer scientist Timothy Berners-Lee. The development of Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) and Web browser technology allowed the internet to expand from an exclusive academic forum into the world wide phenomenon it is today. The internet was open to the
public domain only in the year 1992. In India, internet service for public access was first introduced on August 14th, 1995 by Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL), a public sector company. In Meghalaya internet service was introduced in September, 2001.

In addition to being a telephone, modern mobile phones also support many additional services and accessories such as SMS or text messages, e-mail, internet access, gaming etc. The invention of the first handheld mobile phone by Dr. Martin Cooper in 1973 has brought a fundamental change in our means of communication. This first hand held mobile phone weighed 2 kilograms. From then onwards, researchers have tried in their race to make the most convenient handheld mobile phones. In 1979, NTT in Japan launched the first commercially automated cellular network called the 1G generation. At first it was initially launched only in the metropolitan area of Tokyo But within five years, the NTT network had been expanded to cover the whole population of Japan and became the first nationwide IG network. In the early to mid 1980s many countries followed Japan's footsteps. The first modern network technology on digital 2G (second generation) cellular technology was launched by Radiolinja in 1991 in Finland on the GSM standard, which also marked the introduction of competition in mobile telecoms. In 2001, the first commercial launch of 3G (Third Generation) was again launched in Japan by NTT DoCoMo. The first Subscriber Identity module or SIM card was made in 1991 by Munich Smart card maker Giesecke & Devrient for the Finnish wireless operator Radiolinja.
In India the first mobile telephone service was started on a non-commercial basis on August 15th, 1995 in Delhi. Mobile phones in Meghalay emerged at first as a symbol of status and prestige. But with the passage of time, they have become widespread practical mass products. The demand for telephones was ever increasing. The reforms in telecommunication policies of the country in the 2000s have allowed people from all walks of life to afford phone services. In Meghalaya the first mobile phone services was started in 1998 by Reliance mobile company. Since then the users of mobile phones have been increasing and the mobile phone has become very popular especially among the youth.

Many folklorists have lamented on the future of folkloristics as an academic discipline since the early part of the 20th century. Ben Dan Amos in his famous essay *Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context* asserts: “If the initial assumption of folklore research is based on the disappearance of its subject matter, there is no way to prevent the science from following the same road” (Dan Ben 1982:15). In 2004 in his presidential plenary address to the American society, Alan Dundes was worried about the future of the discipline by contending that the state of folkloristics at the beginning of the twenty-first century is depressingly worrisome (Dundes 2005:385). Such kinds of statements need our scholarly attention. But the fact is that this is not new but a recurring assertion within the academic discipline for quite sometimes. Even Richard Dorson in 1972 had lamented about the future of folkloristics. He said that in a few years, there will be no more folklorists but he himself responded to his own statement by looking somewhere else like in urban areas and media and found out that city and other urban settlements are a good breeding place.
for contemporary folklore which subsequently led to the emergence of urban folklore and modern technology folklore. Speculations on the future of folkloristics have always been there within the academic discipline. Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs have noted that tradition "has been report on the verge of dying for more than three centuries, (yet) ... continues to provide useful means of producing and legitimizing new modernist projects, sets of legislators and schemes of inequality" (Bauman 2003:306). But despite all of the doom and gloom folklore continues to be alive and thriving in the modern world. Toward the middle part of the twentieth century, traditional folklore genres and other new forms have started to emerge through a new medium, the modern communication technology. The internet and mobile phone are very popular contemporary devices of information and communication technology. The internet and SMS through mobile phones is an important part of new narrative culture based on electronic literacy. Mobile phones through short message service and the internet have aided in the rapid transmission of specific types of folklore, especially jokes, riddle jokes and chain letters. Short messaging via mobile phone started characteristically as a youth custom. The emergence and widespread practice of sending messages en masse made SMS and the internet typical vehicles of contemporary folklore. Its peculiarity lies in the fact that most of the folkloric texts are anonymous and collective products.

Modern communication system especially the internet and mobile phone technology has brought a very interesting mode of information exchange by means of SMS and the e-mail which reveals that there is a text which can be
developed and used. It has been found out that there are certain e-mail and SMS texts that constitute folklore genres. SMS and e-mail are new media of folklore and for this reason the use of the methods of folkloristics for their study may yield relevant result. The most common genres that can be found in the internet and SMS texts are urban legends, jokes, proverbs, wise sayings, reduced chain letters, riddles etc. Riddles evolved through the internet and SMS have been used and studied in this chapter.

The researcher has observed that riddle jokes are a very popular genre among the Khasi youth and the student community. Internet and SMS riddles typically use pun and double entendre for humorous effect rather than to puzzle. Another characteristic of these riddles is that most of circulated riddles are found to fall under the purported obscene riddles. Riddles created through internet and SMS will be put under three categories. 1) Riddle jokes 2) Purported obscene riddles 3) Real obscene riddle

**Riddle jokes**

A woman shot her husband, and then she holds him for over five minutes under water. Finally she hangs him. But five minutes later, they went out together and enjoyed a wonderful dinner together. How could this happen?

Riddle referent: The woman is a photographer.

The first part of the descriptive elements in the above riddle seems to suggest that the woman was a murderer who killed her husband mercilessly. But
actually, the woman being a photographer, shot the picture of her husband, developed it and then hung it up to dry.

What is a girl friend?

Riddle referent: Addition of problem, subtraction of money and division of friends.

This is a riddle joke where the males ridicule the females. This riddle serves as a satiric commentary on the nature and general behaviour of girls. Here the girl is seen as a burden instead of good partner to a man. She is also depicted as an opportunist and a spendthrift and the cause of a man’s alienation from his friends.

What is the difference between the woman and a magnet?

Riddle referent: Magnets have a positive side.

This riddle jokes shows the comparison between the magnet and the woman where the magnets are seen as more favorable than women. Here the women are shown as someone wicked and cruel who have no positive qualities but only negative ones where as magnets have positive as well as negative sides. These kinds of riddles are aimed to ridicule women and to make them look stupid.

How dogs and women are alike?

Riddle referent: Neither believes that silence is golden.
Neither can balance a checkbook
Both put too much value on kissing

This riddle is a male-oriented joke to ridicule the female population by putting them in the same category with dogs. Women are always considered by men to be too talkative, annoying, irritating, gossipy, and who do not know when to shut up even for their own good. Women are also portrayed in this riddle as spendthrifts who do not know how to run their family’s finances. Lastly women are also shown to be very stupid as they put too much value on kissing. To them a kiss from their husbands or lovers is a demonstration of love and affection. But to men it may mean different things. According to this riddle joke, women also think that kissing can solve all fights and differences that might crop up among couples.

Why love is like a glass?
Riddle referent: If you break it, it is hard to fix and even if you managed to fix it, it will never be the same.

In this riddle joke, the creator shows the similarity between a glass and love. Love means loving and promising someone to be a good and faithful partner. But if one breaks his/her promises and becomes unfaithful, then his/her love life will not be the same anymore. Most couples split or lost their love because of not fulfilling the above reasons. Sometimes even though if the couple reconciles, their love would not be truly completed as the scars of hurt and betrayal would never be erased completely from the heart of someone who had
been hurt by the other. In the same way if a glass is broken, it would be very
difficult to fix it and make it whole again. Sometimes even if we managed to
fix it, cracks could always be seen on its surface.

Why is love like a rose?

Riddle referent: Because both blossom and then die slowly.

This is another riddle about love where it is compared to a rose. Rose is
always regarded as the monarch of all flowers and a red rose is considered by
lovers all over the world as a symbol of love. Natural roses are very beautiful
to look at and always attract the eyes of people young and old alike. As
mentioned above rose is always associated with love. But this kind of riddle
joke is created by those who ridicule this kind of feeling and ridicule that love
is associated with a rose because like roses, love is not lasting. At the
beginning it will bloom and the lovers be passionate but the flame of love will
die out slowly just like a wilting rose.

What is the hardest thing to do?

Riddle referent: Watching someone you love, loves somebody else.

This riddle talks about the pain and sorrow one has to undergo when he/she
loves someone but the person being loved does not reciprocate the love. In
such cases, the lover becomes the victim especially if that person happens to
love someone else. In such a situation it becomes very painful and sad for that
person to see with his/her own eyes that the person he/she loves give her heart to another person.

Why is a mobile like women?

Riddle referent: They talk nonstop, cost a fortune, disturbs when you are busy, when you need them urgently they have no service.

This is another riddle where women are likened to a modern communication device. In this riddle women are portrayed as talkative, gossiping types who are very expensive to take care of. A woman is also shown in a very bad light here whose mission is only to create trouble and disturb men and who has no value to him.

Why are women like computer?

Riddle referent: Because no one really understands them, all your mistakes are stored in their memories and you will find yourself spending all your money on accessories for them.

In this riddle joke, women are likened to computers. Here, men alleged women as people who are very difficult to understand their moods and feelings. Women are also branded as unforgiving creatures who never fail to remind men of their mistakes whenever opportunities arise. They also accused women of being spendthrift whom their men have to waste all their money on.
buying trivial things for them. This riddles also shows women only as decorated or trophy wives.

Why do girls get married and go to a stranger’s home?

Riddle referent: Because they are blessed angels of the Almighty. After filling their home with colours of happiness they go away to colour other homes.

This riddle is believed to have been created by females themselves as it glorifies the girls’ virtues. In the Khasi culture, the birth of a girl is considered to be a blessing in the family. This is because the Khasis are a matrilineal society where women are held in high esteem and considered equal with their male counterparts. Women are also considered to be the pride of the family and clan as they are supposed to be the ones who will increase the numbers of the clan as their children take their mothers’ surname. According to Khasi culture a husband has to come and stay in his mother-in-law’s home. But today because of the influence of the Western culture and education many women went to live with their husbands after marriage instead of following the age-old tradition. That is why in the above riddle, girls are shown as those who will bring life and happiness not only to their parents’ home but even in their husband’s.

Why did God create you before me?

Riddle referent: Because he wanted to make a rough sketch before making a masterpiece.
This is a very popular riddle jokes among the youngsters especially teenagers. The youngsters always like to irritate and tease their friends about their appearance. A person who usually sends this message considers himself/herself to be better looking than the receiver.

How to keep an idiot entertained?

Riddle referent: Press down …

How to keep an idiot entertained?

Riddle referent: Press up …

In this riddle joke, when the receivers receive it through SMS on their mobile phones, the first thing that most of the receivers do is to scroll down as they are curious to read the whole message. But only upon reading the whole message they realize that the joke was directed at them.

Why do not men often show their feelings?

Riddle referent: Because they do not have any.

The above riddle joke is probably created by females in response to many riddle jokes created at their expense. Here men are shown as those who do not have any emotion or feelings. According to the riddles, because of their lack of feelings and emotions, men are always very insensitive and behave like animals.

Why men are like computers?
Riddle referent: They are useless unless you turn them on.

They have lots of data but are still clueless

As soon as you pick one, a better model comes to the market.

This riddle referent is created as a result of verbal fights and duels between young boys and girls. Here men are portrayed as worthless fellows and inefficient who become useful to women only for physical relationship. They are portrayed as stupid who do not understand women intention at all even though they have been given enough chances. In this riddles the girls also said that as soon as they accept some men’s proposal they will meet some one else who is better looking and have better prospective.

Why men are like toilet?

Riddle referent: Because they are always out of order, they stink, the nice one are always engaged and they consume large amount of liquids.

In the above riddle jokes women make fun of men by comparing to a toilet. Here the men are alleged to be unorganized, lazy etc who do not care for their physical hygiene and well being. And the few who happen to be good, efficient and desirable are always either married or are in a relationship with some other girls. It has also been observed that in Shillong and in other parts of Khasi and Jaintia hills, men are very fond of drinking alcohol which make the girls/women compare them to toilets which require large amounts of water to flush and clean them.
Why bachelors are like used cars?

Riddle referent: They are easy to find, cheap and unreliable.

In the above riddle, bachelors are ridiculed as people whom girl should not trust. Here, bachelors are said to be very easy to meet since there are plenty of unmarried men everywhere. The reason that there are many bachelors is that they are not husband material and unreliable. As such no woman wants to marry them.

Have you ever stood on one leg for an important work? Guess when?

Riddle referent: After bath, you stood on one leg to put on your underwear.

It is a common task for everybody to put on fresh underwear after bath. But many do not realize that they usually have to stand on one leg to put on their underwear.

How does a Sardarji teach his children the spelling of assassination?

Riddle referent: An ass behind another ass, behind that I and behind me the whole nation.

It has been observed by people all over the country that Sardarjis have always been made fun of and ridiculed by others. Many jokes have been created and even circulated through writing and modern communication system at the expense of this community. Sardarjis are always portrayed as stupid, inept,
and foolish. Sardarjis are originally from Punjab, but they can also be found all over the country. Even in Shillong many Sardarji families can be found to have settled here. There is even one locality known as Punjabi colony in Shillong. Those who have observed and have read about the jokes aimed at the socially inappropriate traits of this community create this riddle about the Sardarjis of Shillong.

As a boy, Sardarji went to school every day with his dog. But later they had to separate and Sardar went to school alone. Why?

Riddle referent: Because the dog graduated.

There are many reasons behind the Sadarjis jokes. Many people from other communities like to create jokes about this community. In the above riddle joke, the Sardar boy is shown as dull, unintelligent, that even his dog is more intelligent than him. But it should also be noted that the Sardarjis are very brilliant and rich, hard working and successful in their business and enterprises. Because of this many people from other communities are jealous of them. So people always tried to undermine the Sardarjis by making them look stupid and dumb through the joke they create about them.

Why did the Sardarji professor asked the plumber to come to his college?

Riddle referent: Because he wanted to check where the question paper is leaking.
This is yet another riddle joke about Sardarji teachers. Here, the Sardarjis are portrayed as very stupid who would call the plumber instead of a criminal investigator to look into the crime.

What frustrated the Sardarji when his wife delivered twins?

Riddle referent: He wonders who the father of the second child is.

Numerous jokes about Sardarjis can be found everywhere, like in books, newspapers, magazines, and today even through modern communication technology like in the internet and the mobile phones. In this riddle joke the Sardarjis were again portrayed as stupid men who cannot think logically that a woman can deliver twins.

What is Heaven and Hell on this earth?

Riddle referent: Heaven is when you have a German car, American salary, Chinese food and Indian wife. Hell is when your car is Chinese, food is German, wife is American and salary Indian.

German cars are always considered to be the best in the world. They hardly give any trouble to their owners. Compared to Indian currency, the rate of American dollar is much higher. Chinese food is very tasty and cheap and easy to prepare compared to continental dishes. Indian wife are considered to be good in housekeeping and in taking care of their family. On the other hand,
Chinese car are cheap but unreliable, one or the other parts always get broken and are not lasting. German food is very expensive. An American wife is always considered to be expensive as she always wants the best facilities, comfort and luxury being born and brought up in a developed country. To have such a wife with an Indian salary is like hell because one cannot afford to give her all the comfort and luxury in life.

Chocolaty and crunchy outside …

Creamy and whitish inside …

Guess what is it?

Riddle referent: Cockroach.

The above riddle seems to refer to some delicious eatables when in reality it talks about some pests. Cockroaches are creatures that can be found everywhere and that can live on anything. The colour of the cockroach is similar to chocolates. Its body is a bit hard and crunchy. The inside of the cockroach is creamy and soft. That is why those who saw the similarity in the colour of the cockroach and the chocolate created this riddle.

What is the height of globalization?

Riddle referent: The death of Princess Diana.

The death of Princess Diana is joked by some as the height of globalization because Lady Diana was an English princess whose boyfriend was an Egyptian. According to the story, they crashed in a French tunnel, driving a
German car with a Dutch engine, driven by a Belgian who was high on Scottish whisky, followed closely by Italian paparazzi on Japanese motor cycles, treated by an American doctor, using Brazilian medicines. So according to those who create this riddle the death of Princess Diana is the height Globalization.

When Graham Bell invented the telephone, what was the first thing that he found?

Riddle referent: He had two miscalls from Rajnikant.

Rajnikant is an Indian film actor, media personality, and cultural icon. He made his debut as an actor in the National Film Award-winning motion picture *Apoorva Raagangal* (1975). He is one of the finest Indian actors and the Super Star from the South. He is the highest paid actor in Asia after Jackie Chan. He acted in Tamil, Telegu, Hindi, and English movies as well. His fans especially in the South India idolized him so much and are crazy about his movies. His mannerisms and stylized delivery of dialogue in films contribute to his mass popularity and appeal. Many also cite reasons for Rajinikanth's popularity as coming from his larger-than-life super-hero appearance in many films, supported by gravity-defying stunts and charismatic expressions, all while attempting to maintain modesty in real-life. Some of his fans even floated a political party in his name which Rajnikant later asked them to dissolve. It is said that in the South his fans are always ready even to die for him. This in turn led to the creation and circulation of many jokes about Rajnikant and his super power. After the release of his movie *Robot* in October 2010, Rajnikant
jokes replace the Santa jokes in popularity everywhere in India. Even in Shillong riddle jokes about Rajnikant are very much in circulation. It is said that eight of ten jokes are based on Rajnikant. In the above riddle, it is joked that even the telephone actually was not invented by Graham Bell but by Rajnikant. This is a satiric comment on the super star status of Rajnikant who is known as the King of cinema in the Southern States of India.

Why did the earthquake occur?

Riddle referent: Because Rajnikant was charging his mobile.

The fame and sway that Rajnikant has over his fan is so great that in their eyes he can never do anything wrong. To them he is an extraordinary man with super power. On 2011 especially during the month of September and October many tremors occurred in Shillong and other parts of the North-Eastern India. It has been joked the tremors were due to the reasons that Rajnikant was charging his mobile and kept it on vibration mode while doing so.

I need you....

I love you....

I can’t go anywhere without you...

Riddle referent: My lovely shoes.

Shoes are a necessity in today’s world as nobody can go out his house without them. These day people in the urban as well as in the rural areas wear shoes for comfort not for style anymore. Here in this riddle, shoes are referred to as someone’s beloved whose lover totally depends on him/her for everything.
Why do Muslims hate pigs?

Riddle referent: Because pigs produce more babies than Muslims.

This riddle joke is aimed to ridicule the Muslim population. Traditionally Muslims do not eat pork as their religion prohibits them to do so. But those anti-Muslims groups created this riddle to make fun of their religious belief. It is said that Muslims never eat pork as they consider pork meat to be unclean. This belief that pork is unclean is derived from biblical story where it is recorded in Matthew Chapter eight verses twenty-eight to thirty-four, when Jesus commanded the evil spirits which resided inside two men to go away and leave those two, the evil spirits came out and entered into the bodies of a herd of swine. The evil spirits inside the swine made them to commit suicide by jumping off the cliff into the sea. Muslims are the biggest population in the world and their religion allow them to have many wives. Many people make fun of their increasing population. The Muslims are alleged of breeding like animals and numerous jokes about them have been generated by the anti-Muslim groups.

Who rules India now?

Riddle referent: India now ruled by...

*Amma* in the South,

*Didi* in the East,

*Behenji* in the north,

*Aunty* in the capital,
India is known as one country where gender bias is very much present in all spheres of life. According to many people this gender bias is evident even in the political system as well. But today it has been observed that women are trying to make their marks everywhere especially in the political arena. India these days witnesses many changes in the politics for some women have become heavyweight politicians and even leaders of their political parties. This can be seen in recent times where many states are ruled by women politicians. Amma in this riddle joke refers to Jayalalitha the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu whose party gained landslide victory in the recently concluded election in the state. Didi refers to Mamta Banerjee the leader of Trinamul congress in West Bengal. Mamta Banerjee’s party was the one who wrested power from the Communist party who ruled the state of West Bengal for about thirty-four years in the last election. Mayawati, the present Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh is always addressed as Behenji by everybody. Sheila Dixshit, the chief Minister of Delhi is always referred to as aunty because of her old age. Sonia Gandhi is always sarcastically referred to as Madam by her rivals and the media as well. She is the leader of the Congress party and the chair person of United Progressive Alliance (UPA). But many of her rivals used to ridicule her by accusing her to be the one who calls all the shots in the government and that the Prime Minister is just a puppet in her hands. Even in many families now women become sole bread earners for their family and
have to shoulder all the responsibilities at home. Those who see these changing trends in politics, create this riddle to make fun at women empowerment in general and women politicians in particular.

What is the difference between a beautiful and a horror night?

Riddle referent: Beautiful night is when you sleep and hug your teddy bear and horror night is when it hugs you back.

This riddle joke is created to make fun of those people who always like teddy bears. These kinds of people always hug their teddy bears while going to sleep. Teddy bears are always considered as children’s toys, but it has been observed that many grown up especially young women are still keeping teddy bears in their bed rooms. A woman still keeping teddy bear and hugging it to sleep is considered as being childish and immature.

What do fat woman do in summer?

Riddle referent: They stink.

The above riddle seems to suggest as if fat women do something interesting or disgusting during summer. But it has been observed that fat people perspire more during hot season than thin ones. Fat people because of their excess sweating, their bodies produce strong odour which if they do not take bath regularly, will stink of sweat due to bacteria. But this riddle targeted only fat women even though there are many fat men as well whose bodies always stink because of their unhygienic habits.
Why is marriage like a bath?

Riddle referent: Once you get used to it isn’t hot anymore.

In the above riddle, marriage is likened to the hot bath. When one use hot water for bathing, at first the water will be very hot but after sometimes, it will become cool. In the same way when somebody gets married, at first the couple will be so passionate and hot for each other. But as the time passes by, the passion also seems to evaporate and become cool.

Why is marriage like a cage?

Riddle referent: Because one sees the birds outside desperate to get in and those inside desperate to get out.

In this riddle joke marriage is compared to a cage where birds are kept and marriage couples to birds. It has been observed by many that people who have attained marriageable age are always eager and want to get marriage very fast. But after marriage, when the passion startd wearing off, especially if a person happened to have a wrong spouse, many people want to end their marriage and enjoy their single status again.

Why money does not grow on trees?

Riddle referent: The reason that money does not grow on trees is that banks own all the branches.

Banks like trees have branches. Banks always have their branches everywhere to help people to have easy access to them. Branches of different banks are
opened up mainly for money transaction. But only leaves can be found on the branches of trees.

What do you call a wife who is hot, sweet, intelligent, understanding, caring, never get jealous and a great cook?

Riddle referent: An Illusion.

The above riddle is created to ridicule women. It is believed that no woman can have all the qualities mentioned above as no one is perfect. Women are always projected by men as annoying, quarrelsome, dumb, irritating, jealous types etc. So it is said that a person who possesses all the qualities mentioned above cannot be a woman but just an illusion created by man for his own fantasy.

What is the similarity between students during exams and Amir Khan in Ghajini?

Riddle referent: Both suffer from short term memory loss and wrote answers on their bodies.

It has been observed by many teachers that those students who always study for their exams only at the eleventh hour tend to forget many important parts of their answers during exams. They always complained that their minds became blank and could not recall what they have learned. Some of these students even resort to many unfair means. One of the most common ways of cheating is that students usually write important gist of the answer they expect
to be asked during exams on their body especially on their palms, arms and thighs. In the Hindi movie *Ghajini*, Amir Khan, the main lead of the movie also suffered from amnesia as he was struck on the head by his assailants. To remember the important events that occur during this period of his life, Amir Khan also wrote whatever he remembers on his body. He tattooed the name of the persons who killed his girlfriend etc so that he could remember what had happened to him while suffering from short term memory loss.

What did the students in Bangalore, Delhi and Shillong say after coming out of exam halls?

Riddle referent: Bangalore students - Good.

Delhi students - Okay.

Shillong students - The chick sitting in front of me is so hot.

In this riddle jokes, the students in Shillong are portrayed as stupid and fickle minded who even while writing for their answers during their exams were not serious enough. While the students in Bangalore and Delhi are portrayed as serious, studious and intelligent, the students in Shillong are ridiculed as stupid and vain here because instead of concentrating on writing their answers during exams, they waste their precious time by admiring and ogling at girls sitting near them in the examination halls.

What is Obama’s latest nightmare?

Riddle referent: Osama Bin Laden’s body seen floating near the Statue of Liberty, singing ... *Saat Samundar paar mein tere*
After Osama Bin Laden the most feared terrorist in the world was killed by the U.S. Elite Forces on May 2nd, 2011 at his hiding place at Abbottabad in Pakistan, many people all over the world especially in the United States of America shouted and danced in joy. It is said that his body was buried at sea. Many jokes about him have been created and circulated everywhere by anti-Al-Qaida groups. Even in Khasi and Jaintia hills also numerous riddle jokes about the death of Bin Laden had been circulated among the people. But one exception is the above riddle where the anonymous creator of this joke was poking fun at Barak Obama, the President of the U.S.A. In this riddle joke, Obama was ridiculed as having a nightmare seeing the corpse of Bin Laden floating around the water near the Statue of Liberty in New York singing the song *Saat Samundar paar mein tere peeche peeche agaya.* (Seven oceans I cross and followed you to reach here). This song is taken from the famous Hindi Movie *Vishwatma* that was released in the year 1992.

What is the similarity and difference between love and rain?

Riddle referent: Love and Rain are similar as both give us happiness. But the basic difference is that rain wets our body while love wets our eyes.

Rain is considered by many young people as romantic. This kind of feeling has also been observed even in Hindi and Khasi Movies where the couples in
movies are seen singing and dancing happily in the rain. In the same way love also makes people happy and filled them with joy. But according to the creator(s) of this riddle, when rain comes and if we have no shelter to protect us from it, our body and clothes will be fully wet. On the other hand love sometimes makes a person cries especially if they received so much happiness from their loved ones.

What is a mixed feeling?

Riddle referent: When you see your mother-in-law backing off a cliff in your new car.

Mother-in-laws are always considered by everybody to be scheming, interfering and intimidating. They always like to intervene in their children’s personal affairs, even though they are not welcome to do so. They are also sometimes called monster-in-laws because of the authority and fear they yield and cause on their son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws as well. Even in cinema in Bollywood, Hollywood as well as in the Khasi films there are many movies that portrayed mothers-in-laws as fearsome, manipulating and intimidating persons. One such movie is *The Monster-in-law*, an English movie directed by Robert Luketic in 2005. The above riddle-joke aims to ridicule mother-in-law who are scary and intimidating and who like to poke their noses into everybody’s affairs.

What is the reason behind the bulk SMS ban?
Riddle referent: The reason behind the bulk SMS ban is to stop Kalmadi Jokes.

When India hosted the Common Wealth Games (CWG) which held from 2\textsuperscript{nd} to 30\textsuperscript{th} October, 2010 at Delhi, the chairman of the Organizing committee of the Common Wealth Games, Suresh Kalmadi, an MP from Pune Constituency may have set a record of sorts not only for allegation of frauds and corruption but being the butt of many jokes. These jokes were spreading like wild fire across India and especially here in Shillong through the internet and SMS. A few days before the passing of the historical verdict on Ayodhya dispute on September 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2010, the government of India banned the sending of bulk SMS all over the country to prevent any instigating messages that could lead to communal clashes that may arise out of the Verdict. But this ban on bulk SMS has given rise to many humorous dig at Kalmadi and his groups in Shillong for their alleged involvement in various scams related to the Commonwealth Games.

How many contractors are required to a light bulb in a Delhi Common Wealth Games stadium?

Riddle referent: One million, one to change the bulb, and the rest nine lakhs ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine (999,999) to hold the ceiling.

This is another riddle joke relating to the Common Wealth Games, 2010 held in Delhi. In the above riddle jokes, contractors in Delhi are shown as stupid.
and dumb. But the real reason for creating this joke was because just a few days before the opening ceremony of the common Wealth Games, the false ceiling in the area where VIPs are meant to seat caved in due to negligence and poor quality of work done by the contractors who were awarded contracts to construct the stadium.

Why did terrorists set to skip the CWG 2010?

Riddle referent: Terrorists set to skip CWG 2010 citing unlivable conditions and fear for their safety.

During the Common Wealth Games 2010 in Delhi, Intelligence agencies in India had warned the Government about the possible attacks during the Mega Games by Islamic terrorists. For this reason India had to deploy heavy security for the safety of all participants and officials who came from different parts of the erstwhile British Empire. Many countries like England, Australia, New Zealand and others had threatened to pull out of the Games just two weeks before the commencement of the Game due security problems and due to the dirty and unhygienic conditions of the Game village where the participants are supposed to stay. Even snakes were said to have been found in the bedrooms of one participant and the quality of the furniture were also alleged to be very poor that one participant was injured because his bed broke while he was sleeping. Because of many disasters due to the poor quality of work in many structures and facilities, the person(s) who created this riddle, sarcastically joke that even the terrorists who were likely to attack during the Game dare
not come and do so due poor living conditions and due to fear for their own safety.

Why did Prince Charles convince the Queen to come to Delhi for the opening ceremony?

Riddle referent: Prince Charles actively convinced the Queen to come to Delhi because this may be his last chance to become the King.

This riddle joke aims to poke fun at Prince Charles of Wales, the first in line to the throne of England. During the opening ceremony of the Common Wealth Games, Queen Elizabeth was supposed to inaugurate the Game. But she could not come to India due to ill health. So she sent her eldest son, Prince Charles to represent her instead. Around that time, Delhi was hit by dengue disease. So it is joked by many that Prince Charles tried to convince his mother to come to India, as he thought that if she get sick with dengue, she might never recover from it and ultimately dies. In such a case he would be able to succeed her to the throne. People are also making fun of Prince Charles that he is tired of waiting for his mother to die so that he could become the King of England.

What should the next edition of CWG be called?

Riddle referent: The next edition of the CWG will be called KWG or Kalmadi Wealth Games

The organization of the Common Wealth Games 2010 in India has led to embarrassment on the part of the Government and the Congress party.
Kalmadi and his fellow organizers have been accused of corruption and fraud to the tune of hundred crores of rupees. Kalmadi and his aides were arrested by the investigating agencies for their parts on corruption that left the Government with red face. Many of Kalmadi’s rivals and enemies created and circulated many jokes about him; one is the above in which they said that the next edition of the Common Wealth Games should be called Kamaldi Wealth Games was circulated all around Khasi and Jaintia hills. They said that Kamaldi and his accomplices have been able to make themselves wealthy by misusing the money meant for the Games.

What is the difference between the Meghalaya Government and the Mafia?

Riddle referent: At least the Mafia is doing organized crimes.

In this riddle, anti-congress people are making fun of the Meghalaya United Alliance in the state. The Government comprises of the Indian National Congress party, its ally, the United Democratic Party and some independent MLAs. The present government led by the Congress party is besieged by many scams and allegations of corruption against the ministers and their alleged links to many coal mafia and militant groups especially in Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. This accusation against the Government has led to the creation and circulation of such riddle jokes all over the hills where the state Government is compared to the Mafia organization and they joked that the Mafia is a more organized group than the Government.
What are three things a woman can do that a man can’t?

Riddle referent: Have a baby, have her periods and get laid when she is dead.

The physiology of man is very different from that of woman. This riddle joke is a kind of satire on men. Women are perceived as a life giver, and created to satisfy the needs of men. The riddle referent in the above riddle also reflects on how a woman’s role is perceived in the society. The acknowledgment of a woman being an equal partner to man is made only in the substandard role such as only giving birth to a baby. It has also been observed that there were instances reported about women who were raped even after they had been murdered.

Which is the longest toilet in the world?

Riddle referent: Indian Railway Tracks.

The railways tracks in India are joked to be longest toilet in the world. Anybody travelling by train has to relieve himself/herself inside the train’s toilet through a commode which releases the human excretion on the railway tracts itself. Due to this reason, the railway tracts all over the country are very dirty and smell of urine and human excretion. Even railway stations are not free from this. That is why people who have observed the unhygienic condition of the railways tracts said that the railway tract is the longest toilet in the world since we can use it from Kanya Kumari in the southern tip of India to Jammu and Kashmir in the northern most part of India.
Tell me is it going in?
Yeah... is it hurt?
Oh... yeah... ouch!! It hurts
Ok I will put it slowly now...
Still hurts?
Yeah... yeah... it’s painful.
Then I’ll try another one.
Guess what is it?

Riddle referent: Try the other shoe now.

In the above riddle joke the descriptive elements seems to refer to something risqué. But the riddle referent is a person trying on shoes but which is a little smaller in size before buying. It has been observed that in Shillong the sales persons are always very courteous. They always help the customers when they try on new shoes by putting the shoes on the feet of the customers.

What is the height of competition?

Riddle referent: A guy peeing beside a waterfall.

The guy peeing beside the waterfall is said to be the height of competition. This is because a man always has to stand while peeing and when a man pees while standing, it looks like a miniature waterfall. Those who saw this similarity create this riddle to poke fun at men.

What is the difference between a Demand Draft and a Cheque?
Riddle referent: Demand Draft is like a wife who is being trusted but Cheque is like girlfriend which can bounce at any time.

Demand Draft is one of the most reliable modes of money transfer. The cheque however cannot be fully trusted as it can be misused and sometimes even bounce. Wife like a Demand Draft can be fully trusted by her husband. He always takes her for granted. But a man cannot trust his girlfriend fully like he trusts his wife and she cannot be taken for granted. A wife being married to her husband does not have the liberty to just walk away from him any time she wants. But a girlfriend can leave him high and dry any time she wishes when she did not want to continue the relationship anymore.

Who are the biggest guns in most corporations?

Riddle referent: Those who have never been fired.

In almost all corporations, those employees who are good, efficient and hard working always climb the ladder of success fast and steadily. But many whom the bosses considered being lazy and not up to the mark always got fired and their services terminated. So those who used to get fired from their jobs are compared to smaller guns but those who always remain in their jobs and get promotion are compared to big guns.

What are calories?
Riddle referent: Calories are those little bastards which get into our wardrobes at night and sew our clothes tighter.

In today's world physical appearance is given utmost importance and the size zero figures are idolized especially among girls. Being fat is considered unappealing and repulsive by both men and women. Excessive intake of calories leads to the fattening of the body. This is the reason why many girls who are conscious of their appearance resort to unhealthy dieting and other methods which are not good for them. Bastards as we know are not accepted in the society. People always tend to look down upon them. In this riddle, calories are compared to bastards as many girls never want to eat food that is rich in calories as they are afraid to gain weight. This trend of consuming less calories food or nothing at all leads to malnutrition and other diseases like anorexia or bulimia.

Which state in India has the largest English speaking population?

Riddle referent: Day time ... Kerala

Night time after two pegs ... Meghalaya.

This is an ethnic riddle joke which makes fun of the two communities in India. Kerala is a state where Malayalees are the original settlers of the state and the Khasis live in Meghalaya. Kerala has the highest literacy rate in the country. But it has been observed that the natives even though literate many cannot speak English. In Meghalaya, English is the official language of the state and the medium of instruction in schools. English is also the link language
between the different communities living in the state. Like any other ethnic community in the North East India, Khasi men are very fond of liquor. At night after drinking alcohol every drunkard started showing off his knowledge of English language by talking in broken English. Those who have observed this incident created this riddle to ridicule both the communities.

If you have three apples and four oranges in one hand and four apples and three oranges in the other hand, what would you have?

Riddle referent: Very big hands.

This is a very tricky riddle parody. Because it seems to talk about what a person holds in his hands. But the answer is very much unexpected. In the above riddle, the descriptive elements seem to refer to the fruits held in one’s hand. But the actual answer is that if a person can hold these many apples and oranges in each hand, then the person would be having very big hands.

Why there are no Raymond’s show rooms in Pakistan?

Riddle referent: Because there is no complete man!!!!

This riddle joke is targeting the Pakistani male population. Raymond Company manufactures and sells men clothing especially fabric for suits. The company often markets its brand through advertisements where a man wearing Raymond brand suit is referred to as a complete man. Raymond the complete man is the theme of the company to market its brand. It is said that the Raymond Company does not have any showrooms or outlets in Pakistan to
sell its brand. So Pakistani men have been ridiculed and become the butt of
many jokes about being incomplete men. Indians are creating this kind of
riddle which explains that as there is no complete man in Pakistan, so
Raymond Company could not open its store there. Unlike in India where you
can find complete men everywhere wearing Raymond suits.

**Purported Obscene riddles**

Many riddles circulated through Short Message Service by people are found to
fall under a special subtype called the purported obscene riddles. In this
category, the descriptive element(s) suggests something risqué, usually having
sexual connotation, but the answer is quite innocent and tame.

When skin meets skin

Hair meets hair

And balls disappear?

Riddle referent: It’s when you blink your eyes.

This is a very popular riddle among the Khasi youth. The description in the
riddle seems to suggest something very risqué and to have sexual connotation,
but in fact the answer is very innocent. When we blink our eyes, our eye
lashes and the skin that cover our eyes come into contact and the eyeballs are
not seen.

I am 7 inches long; I have hair at my base.

When I move in and out of the hole, white fluids come out.
Who am I?

Riddle referent: The Toothbrush.

The above riddle falls under the purported obscene riddle category. Here in this riddle the descriptive elements seem to refer to the private part of a male. But in fact, it refers to a toiletry item, a toothbrush. The hole in this riddle refers to the mouth of a person and the white fluids to the saliva mixed with toothpaste. The simple act of brushing one’s teeth here seems to refer to sexual intercourse.

Hey can we romance tonight?
I am in the mood today....
Let’s get wild....
Lots of kissing and biting
Interested?
Want to know who am I?

Riddle referent: The mosquito.

In this riddle, the mosquito is compared to somebody who is in the mood to get intimate with some girls. A mosquito biting someone at night is being compared to a man kissing and giving love bites to a girl during their love making.

He came at night
Explored my body
Got on top of me
Touched and bit me
He sucked and swallowed
When he is satisfied
He left
I was hurt.

Riddle referent: The bloody mosquito.

Mosquito riddles are very popular among the Khasi youth. This may be due to the reason that mosquitoes can be found everywhere in the hills. In this riddle, the mosquito is compared to a sadistic lover who comes to his partner only at night to satisfy his sexual urge. But once he is satisfied he leave his partner alone and never bother to see whether he has hurt her physically or emotionally by his callousness or not.

Is there a place for me in your heart?
I am coming tonight and I’ll make you excited
We will enjoy by dancing and jumping together
Are you ready to take me into your heart?

Riddle referent: Heart attack.

This riddle joke seems to talk about a lover who wants to propose to his beloved and to make her happy. He promised to make her night an excited one by dancing and jumping around with her. But the descriptive elements of this riddle actually refer to a person having a heart attack.
I have one, you have one
Your mother uses your father's one
A married lady would acquire one
But a divorce lady would lose her one
The Pope does not use his one
Lord Krishna has a long one
Arnold has a longer one
Michael J. Fox has shorter one
How long is your one?
Which one is your preferred one?

Riddle referent: Your surname.

The above riddle sounds very sexual and risqué as it seem to refer to the male private part. But actually it answer is very tame as it refers to the surname of a person. This riddle talks about those who belong to the patriarchal society. And it is to be noted that the Khasis are a matrilineal society. But it has been observed that this riddle is very popular in Shillong especially among the Khasis. This is due to the reason that Shillong is a melting pot and the educational hub of North Eastern India where people from different communities come to live here. Because of this intermingling between the Khasis and the other people from different parts of the country, the riddle has become very popular even among the Khasis.

What four letter word of English start with f and ends with k?
And if a man cannot use it he uses his hands?
Riddle referent: The Fork.

In the above riddle, the descriptive elements seem to be very sexual as it seems to refer to sexual intercourse. But the answer is very innocent as it refers to fork which people usually use for eating food. In Khasi and Jaintia hills people always use to eat with their hands. But today we have seen many people especially young people in imitation to the Western culture started using spoon and fork while eating instead of their hands.

The word that start with *f* and end with *k* and all the young boys and girls are getting hook to it.

Riddle referent: Facebook.

This is another riddle joke that has been very much in circulation among many Khasi youngsters. The descriptive element in the above riddle seems to suggest to some sexual activities. But in fact it refers to the most popular social network site among the Khasi youth that is, the Facebook. With the launching of the 3G network by many mobile phone companies in Meghalaya, internet facilities have become accessible to everybody even in the remote parts of the state. Due to this now all the young people have access to the internet and especially Social Network sites for chatting and connecting with friends.

What does a guy have that is six inches long and proves that he is a man?
Riddle referent: His birth certificate.

The descriptive elements of this riddle seem to suggest something obscene and sexual. It seems to refer to the male genitals. But in reality it refers to his birth certificate. A birth certificate usually printed on a paper that is about six inches long and it is a proof to a person’s gender. Today in Meghalaya birth certificate is a must especially for applying jobs and for other purposes as well. It has been observed that there are always long queues in the Deputy Commissioners’ offices in the state where people stand for applying birth certificate.

She is sweet....
She is hot......
She always needs a lip kiss
Who is she?

Riddle referent: The Morning tea

The above riddle seems to refer to a sweet, sexy and passionate woman who always needed to be kissed by her man. But the answer to the riddle is quite simple. Everybody likes to have a cup of tea in the morning after getting up from bed. It has been observed that there are many people who cannot function properly without their morning tea.

To make it straight, she pulls it.
To make it stands she rubs it
To make it stiff she licks it
To let it in she pushes it....

Riddle referent: The woman threading needle.

This riddle joke falls under the Purported Obscene category. Here, this riddle seems to suggest something very vulgar and sexual as in a woman making love to a man. The descriptive elements of this riddle seem to refer to something indecent. But in reality, the riddle talks about a person most probably a seamstress who tries to put the thread into the eye of a needle for stitching purposes.

In which place men and women both have curly hair?

Riddle referent: Chi ... chi ... your thought is so vulgar ... It is in Africa.

The descriptive element in this riddle sounds risqué and seems to suggest to the sexual organs of both men and women but the answer to this riddle is Africa. The African hairs are very distinctive as all of them have thick and curly hair.

I want to suck you....

Want to move my tongue all over you...

Want to feel you in my mouth....

Riddle referent: That is how you eat an ice cream.

The above riddle falls under the purported obscene riddle. The descriptive elements seem to suggest to some love making scenes between two persons.
When in reality, it talks about the way how we usually eat the ice cream. Ice cream is very popular in Shillong and other parts of the state as well especially during summer.

It goes in dry and comes out wet
The longer it is in, the stronger it gets
We can have it in bed just you and me
It is not what you think. What is it?

Riddle referent: It is the tea bag.

Tea was introduced to us by the British. But today it has become part and parcel of our culture. Khasi people always offer tea to their guests as a sign of hospitality and goodwill. Tea is made by putting tea leaves in the hot water. Today teabags are also very popular among the Khasis. Brewing tea and having bed tea seem to suggest to some sexual acts.

**Real Obscene Riddles**

In real obscene riddles the riddle referent always have sexual connotation.

What is the height of laziness?

Riddle referent: The couple adopting a child.

The above riddle falls under the real obscene category. Here, the childless couple who adopt a child is ridiculed as those who are the laziest people on earth as they are alleged to be so lazy even to get intimate to conceive a child of their own.
What is the definition of suspicion?

Riddle referent: A nun doing press up in the cucumber field.

This riddle aims at making fun of nuns. It is a common knowledge that nuns have to observe vows of celibacy. But it is believed that all human being have their own sexual urges which they need to release. In such cases even those who lead a celibate life also have the same sexual urges which they need to control in accordance with their vows. In almost every culture, cucumber is a symbolic representation of phallus. So a nun doing press up in the cucumber field is a riddle which is allegedly aim to show the nun in poor light and suspicious manner.

Why is a good teacher like Shakira’s short skirt?

Riddle referent: Because a good teacher will not cover the whole of syllabus but only the most important portion.

This is a riddle joke created by those who have watched and seen that Shakira, one of the most popular singers today always wear very short skirts. During the last World Cup Football that was held from 11th June to 11th July 2010 in South Africa, Shakira, a Columbian singer, was chosen to sing the theme song at the Opening ceremony of the World Cup Football. While singing she was wearing a short skirt designed with strings like material which split apart and rode up when she danced and jumped. Those who created this riddle compare good teachers to Shakira’s short skirt that barely covered her decency. As to them a good teacher is the one who teaches only the important portions of the syllabus and leaves the irrelevant and unimportant ones.
What is the similarity between a woman’s breast and a park?

Riddle referent: Actually both were designed for children but enjoyed by adults.

This riddle joke actually targets the male population. Women are always encouraged to breastfeed their baby, as a mother’s milk is considered to be healthy for children. Scientists have also proved that women who breastfeed their children have less risk of getting breast cancer. A woman’s bosom is meant for nourishing and feeding the baby. Parks also are usually constructed to amuse children. However it is a universal fact that the woman's breasts always capture man’s fantasy. In the same way even though parks are mainly meant for children, still it has been observed that men also like to visit and spend quality time sitting with their dates or just ogling at girls who come to the parks. This could be seen here in Shillong like in Lady Hydery Park and Ward’s Lake, where you can find more adults in these parks than children.

What did the elephant say to the naked man?

Riddle referent: How do you breathe through that thing?

This obscene riddle joke compares man’s genital to the trunk of the elephant. It is said that the sexual organ of man is similar to the trunk of an elephant. Those who saw the similarity create this riddle to ridicule men.

Why is a salesman so jealous of prostitutes?

Riddle referent: You got it, you sell it, and you still get it.
In this riddle joke, salespersons are making fun of by the others. When a salesman sells his merchandise, he would never be able to keep it back with him. But a prostitute can sell herself to any man to perform sexual services for a certain period. After the expiry of the fixed time, she can sell her service to another person.

What do ugly girls wear in their lockets?

Riddle referent: A picture of a candle.

This riddle joke ridiculed and targeted the girls, especially those who are not pretty and who have passed their prime but still unmarried. A candle has always been identified as a symbolic representation of the male sexual organ. Usually people especially girls used to keep pictures of their boyfriends or husbands inside the locks of their lockets. But in the case of the sexually frustrated women, they are ridiculed that they put the picture of the candle instead of their lovers as no men want to have them.

Why did the Indian Government not make the postal stamps of Bipasha Basu?

Riddle referent: Because they fear that men would start licking on the wrong side.

Bipasha Basu is a former super model of India and a famous Bollywood actress. She is considered to one of the sexiest women in India and is known for taking up bold roles in the Hindi movies. She has captured the fantasy of many men in India and abroad as well. With her good looks, well toned body
and sex appeal as it is common with many celebrities like Rajnikant and others, many jokes about Bipasha Basu also circulate though the internet and SMS. The above riddle is a joke with sexual connotation related to Bipasha Basu. It is joked that the reason why the Government of India did not make postal stamps in honour of Bipasha is because with her sex appeal, many men would go crazy seeing her picture on the postal stamp and it would encourage inappropriate behaviour.

What do a hooker and 108 have in common?

Riddle referent: Both are opened all the time.

In this riddle joke, a hooker is compared to 108 services rendered by Emergency Management and Research Institute (EMRI). Hookers can be found everywhere especially in towns and cities across the country. Even in Shillong and other places in Meghalaya, there were many instances where the operation of flesh trade has been reported in newspapers and in electronic media as well. 108 Emergency services have been launched in the state of Meghalaya since 15th November, 2008. The service rendered by the EMRI all over Meghalaya is laudable. EMRI centres are opened to the public twenty four hours a day, in order to be able to help those who are in need of their help. Hookers are also said to offer their services to their customers at any time of the day. So those who see this similarity about the time of their services, create this riddle joke.
Which boy is allowed to get into the girl’s bath room and touches her everywhere while she is taking bath?

Riddle referent: Lifebuoy.

This riddle has sexual connotation, where Lifebuoy soap is compared to a boy who gets the opportunity to touch the different parts of the girl’s body.

Why was Kate disappointed on her wedding night?

Riddle referent: Because she thought that William had twelve inches.

The wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton that was solemnized on April 29th, 2011 was one of the most talked about wedding all over the world. Many people from across the world gathered at London to witness the Royal wedding with their own eyes. But there are also many anti-Royal people who tried to make fun of the newlywed royal couple by creating and circulating many jokes about them. One such riddle joke is given above that was circulated in Shillong which says that on her wedding night Kate, the new bride was not happy because she thought that William being of royal blood, his sexual organ would be bigger than the common men. But to her disappointment, she found out that his too is the same like any ordinary man.

References

