CHAPTER II
THE CONCEPT HUMAN VALUES

The concept 'value' is expressed in different life situations as significant in fulfilling our mental, emotional, spiritual or practical requirement. It may also simply be described as that which we find good or meaningful. It is very common to comment on the value of things that one prefers or likes and for which one may make conscious effort to acquire. But as human beings we are particularly struck by the values which we discerned in human relationships or in men’s actions and behaviour. Therefore, 'value' is a concept which is widely applied in man’s life. In view of the variety and diversity of human life, the concept cannot be easily explained. Referring to this phenomena, Paul Roubickez, explains: “In the sphere of values, contradictions are the rule”. In the next sections, we will consider different scholarly views on the concept ‘human values’.

2.1 Human Values – Their Nature and Meaning
2.1.1 The Concept of Value

Before considering human values in the selected stories, it is felt important to have a clear understanding of the concept 'human values'. A preliminary consultation of literary and philosophy books do not yield satisfactory definitions since general discussions are under the term ‘value’. This is explained by the extremely complex nature of value. Barbara Hernstein Smith lucidly explains as follows:
The term value seems to name an aspect of the world so fundamental to our thinking – so elementary and at the same time so general - as to be both irreducible and irreplaceable; it defies attempts to analyze into simpler concepts and efforts to explain.\(^2\)

This in itself makes it difficult to arrive at a simple all-encompassing definition of human values. Therefore, a preliminary consideration of the general term value may project useful points in the understanding of human values. In this connection, the Oxford Encyclopedic Dictionary explains the term ‘value’ as:

A worth, desirability, quality on which these depend.\(^3\)

The above definition emphasizes ‘value’ as a desirable quality in things, men and action. This is normally understood. But Paul Roubiczek explains value in the context of valuation:

A value expresses the significance of things – great or small – which man ascribes to matters related to a particular activity or experience or to his life in general and thus provides him with guidance for his behaviour.\(^4\)

In the above explanation, the word ‘ascribes’ projects man’s act of valuation for value to exist. But this is easier said than done. In the literary context, Bulwer-Lytton brought out this problem when he commented, “We do not observe any frivolity in Walter Scott, when he describes with elaborate care the set of ruffle…of Sir Walter Raleigh.” But this rule does not apply all the time for “we do not require the same minuteness in describing the smock frock of a labourer.”\(^5\) Another example is J. L. Mackenzie’s reference to “a simple fairy tale may be
artistically better for a child than Hamlet”. These illustrations highlighted the complexity of human valuation. At the same time the words ‘activity’, ‘experience’ focus on man’s act of valuation in practical life. The two aspects – significance and valuation are recognized by Mackenzie in a simple explanation when he states:

Not only do things have value, but we value them.  

The comment is significant in suggesting the role of man in the recognition of value. But man’s act of valuation is a complex process. A literary critic, E. Olson attempts to throw more light on the abstract sense which he refers to as the objective and subjective aspects. He insightfully illustrates their implications as follows:

We do not see painting, we see the coloured paint; we do not hear the music, we hear the sound; we come to the perceptions of the painting or music through the operation of faculties other than sense.  

The objective presents the permanent nature of value which is explained as that which “resides in the object itself”. In the context of human values, it directs attention to the unchanging and intrinsic nature of human qualities of kindness, love, sympathy and truthfulness. The subjective according to Olson is an inner perception and evaluation involving emotions and thoughts of man. Thus, as explained by Olson, “the objective arises immediately from the properties” while in the subjective “values are contingent upon what we are evaluating”. However, in practical life, man’s judgmental power ascribes value. Therefore, after explaining values to refer to “interests, pleasures, likes,
preferences,...” the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* further explains:

Values, in other words, are found in the large and diverse universe of selective behaviour.  

This explanation is of significance as it takes cognizance of man’s diverse nature in the ascription of values. To sum up, the concept value implies the objective aspect but also projects man’s act of valuation of the judgmental and subjective aspects. All these aspects contributed to the complexities in the concept value and its multifaceted nature. In the experiential context, man is the main factor. Paul Roubiczek further clarifies this position when he observes:

Values do not exist as objects in time and space, but are established by judgements - by judging things from a personal point of view.  

Value no doubt manifests an unchanging permanent nature but man plays the deciding role. Thus to Roubiczek, “A thing is not useful of itself” and “the lowest and highest values are indefinable and their appreciation therefore depends on our sense of values.” Therefore in view of the complex nature of the concept value, the ongoing projections direct attention to ‘the knowledge of man as an important variable’ in the understanding of the concept value. This is of significant relevance in the all forms of literary expression of human values in general and in the study of the selected Khasi short stories in particular.
On the subject ‘man’, scholars and philosophers have offered many views and theories which give valuable insights into the understanding of human values. However, at this stage, a general explanation of the concept ‘human values’ may introduce the subject of the present study.

2.1.2 The Concept of Human Values

The two projections, ‘significance’ and ‘valuation’ give rise to different types of values. Of these, the human values which as pointed out in the Introductory Chapter, are the main concern of literary authors. Therefore, in the absence of an all-inclusive definition, the views of Walter Besant, a frontline literary critic in the 19th century critic on the motive of fiction is found to throw light on such understanding. His opinion on this is quoted below:

The strongest defense of fiction should be the fact that the true presentation of humanity from any point must tend to the increase of certain virtues — sympathy, pity and an order of inextinguishable justice.\footnote{12}

Although Besant did not use the term ‘human values’, the virtues referred to are values aspired for a meaningful life. This clearly explains the meaning and nature of human values since they are values associated with human qualities of kindness, sympathy and moral inclination for truth and justice.

Of special interest is the view of D. S. Khongdup, a prominent Khasi author, who clearly emphasized the place of human values in the
short stories. Khongdup relates human values with the human heart as evident in the following observation:

\[ \text{Ka Khana Lyngkot ka dei ban don ka dur, ka doh bad ka dohnud... ka dohnud kaba sngewthuh ia ka jingkwah kiwei pat, bad kaba pdiang ia kata ka jingkwah jong ki ba ka long ka ain ba ka dei ban bud.}^{13} \]

(The Short Story should possess form, substance and a heart..... a heart which understands the expectations of others and which accepts such expectations as the norms that should be observed.)

The portion, “a heart which understands the expectation of others” directs attention to the basic values of the inner man, free from egotism and accepted by others. Thus, it highlights the thematic criteria that the Khasi short story should not merely narrate an incident but should also reflect human values.

Therefore, in the light of the significance of human values in the life of man, the topic “Human Values in Khasi Short Stories” deserves serious literary attention. Further, in view of the traditional values and the value awareness among the Khasis and the Khasi short story writers, it is felt that the Khasi short stories have ample scope for such study and research.

The importance of human values is also underlined by other literary critics such as, K. L. Knickerbocker and H. Willard Reninger.\(^{14}\) Their explanation throw more light on the nature of human values. This is brought out by their differentiation between “means values” and “end
values” or human values. Means values are connected with material things – land, food, clothing for achieving a good life. End values are man’s attitude towards material things and towards life. These are represented in the ‘genuine’ and ‘the enduring’ as contrasting to ‘the shoddy’ and ‘the vulgar’. These are human values for they give substance and meaning to man and his life.

However, in the process of living many things are of human significance for man’s survival and well being. These aspects affect man differently. The scholarly views project roughly two main approaches. The first is the innate nature involving the heart, mind and soul of man. The second is associated with the humanistic and well-being theories. The latter emphasizes man’s potentialities and individual capacities, and the conditions of his existence. In addition to these is the projection of man’s weaknesses and strength. These views and theories may now be considered for understanding the nature of man as a human being. This will guide our understanding of the concept ‘human values’.

2.2 Approaches to the study of human values through the understanding of man as a human being

2.2.1 The concept of human values and man’s inner reality.
On line with the explanation of the heart, mind and soul of man, Karen Horney, the psychologist, made important observations on human values. Based on her clinical findings, she noted the integral relationship between man’s true nature and human values. Thus she concludes:
Briefly our belief is that the constructive possibilities, stem from man’s essential nature, from the core of his being, from what we call his real self.\textsuperscript{15}

The definition clearly implies that the essential reality of man is the source of constructive possibilities or values. It focuses attention on the heart, mind and soul of man as expressed in feelings, thoughts and actions. These are mainly responsible for man’s act of valuation. This is supported by the \textit{International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences} (1969: 283) which explains “sheer reflex behaviour does not manifest value or valuing”. The manifestation of these inner aspects of man therefore need to be further highlighted in order to understand the types of human values evolving from them.

\textbf{Man’s Feelings and Emotions}

Man’s feelings and emotions stem from the human heart. John Macmurray\textsuperscript{16} brings out the value significance of feelings in the fact that they increase our sensitiveness of the world. Thus we know the value reality of the moral and altruistic acts. These are valuable to man as these are in tune with the emotional reality of man. These cannot be fully expressed by the short story but it could illuminate powerful feelings and convince us of their authenticity. This may be the moral insight through a girl’s strong feelings of sympathy for the slum dwellers in Katherine Mansfield’s “The Garden Party”.\textsuperscript{17} Her bright costly frock throws into relief her life of abundance and luxury in contrast to their abject poverty. This urges her to acts of kindness by providing them with the party’s lavish food.
L. A. Blum\textsuperscript{18} refers to feelings of sympathy, compassion and concern as altruistic emotions. Such feelings lead to altruistic values. Blum argues that these are moralistic in nature for these motivate beneficent acts to alleviate the misery, pain and woe of others. From the viewpoint of genuine worth, these are free from egoistic tendency and may even involve self-sacrificing acts.

**Man’s Conscience**

However man’s actions and behaviour also manifest a moral sense of right and wrong which guide him to shun wrongful paths. Erich Fromm explains conscience as that which evokes a ‘feeling of inner approval’, and ‘rightness’. Whereas acts, thoughts, feelings contrary to conscience create feelings of uneasiness characteristic of a ‘guilty conscience’. Emphasizing its moral and positive impact on the human person, he explains:

Conscience is thus a re-action of ourselves to ourselves. It is the voice of our true selves which summons us back to ourselves, to live productively to develop fully.\textsuperscript{19}

The moral connotation of the above aspects is made clear when he clarifies that “it contains also the essence of our moral experiences”. Thus conscience “permits him to know what he ought to do in order to become himself”. Paul Tillich also refers to man’s conscience as that which guides man in “what he ought to be” and “calling him back to himself” (Titus and Keeton 1966: 36). But in the practical complications of life, man is often tempted to do otherwise by his greed and selfishness. As such the ‘still small voice’ needs to be deliberately strengthened.
Therefore, conscience aided what Immanuel Kant calls “the good will” for achieving “character” (Titus and Keeton 1966: 92).

Man’s conscience shapes his moral and ethical values. Again literature in general and the short stories in particular reflect on moral and ethical values when they depict man listening to his conscience amidst the conflicts of life.

**Man’s Spiritual Aspects**

Philosophers give several reasons for man’s spiritual longings for the divine or transcendental power such as God. John Macmurray explains these urgings to be due to man’s longing for communion with others through love. At its highest level it is the communion with God (Macmurray, 1971: 63). These find expression in faith and belief in God in different religious systems. The human value of religion as suggested by Jean L. Holm is that it provides answers to certain ultimate questions, such as: What is the meaning of life? How do I come to terms with suffering and evil? The answer is faith and hope in the power and love of God.

Religious values are characterized by the spiritual qualities which are of intrinsic worth as these reflect the divine qualities of God. Morris Ginsberg noted their value impact for their “insistence on sincerity and inward nature of virtue” (Titus and Keeton, 70). In this connection, we are reminded of the Biblical list of spiritual values highlighted by St. Paul. These are “love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”. In the Khasi context, L. G. Shullai
mentioned 1841 as the year when the Christian faith was introduced in the Khasi Hills. Therefore, this study will explore the impact of these values on the lives of the Khasis as reflected by the selected Khasi short story writers.

The values of the emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of man exemplified Horney’s description of man’s “constructive possibilities” which is man’s essential reality. These fulfill his nature and are aspired by him. Therefore, while emphasizing the presentation of sympathy, pity, justice in the novel, Besant emphasizes the presentation of these values as a literary criterion for short stories also. Thus he specifies:

I advance it in favour not only to works that move a whole nation, but of the humble stories whose only merit is their presentation of the plain and unvarnished truth.  

**Man’s essential reality: its universal nature**

The essential reality as clarified in the above sections is true to all men in all places and all times. It means that man is sympathetic and kind by nature. This fact has been recognized when the Webster Dictionary explains the meaning of ‘humane’ as ‘kind and sympathetic’. As such human values which are moral, altruistic and spiritual are unchanging and intrinsic in nature. Paul Roubiczek clarifies that the value of friendship does not change even if the person whom we befriended proved to be unworthy (Roubiczek 1969:p.222). The true test of a literary piece is its convincing power in illustrating the truth and reality of moral and altruistic values. In this respect, the short story is at times charged with lack of depth, yet the stories of great masters like Gogol’s “The
Overcoat” or Anton Chekhov’s “Heartache”^2^5 arouse powerful feelings of compassion and fellow feelings. These convincingly brought out the capacity and potentiality of the short story in expressing intrinsic human qualities of compassion and kindness.

**Man’s mind - his rational power**

In addition to being human, Aristotle emphasized man’s rational power (Titus and Keeton 1966:140) as part of man’s innate nature. This is considered as man’s unique power. Its value implication is obvious when the philosopher explains that man unlike plants and animals is not satisfied only with food and nutrition. This power enables man in “the contemplation of truths” and “the performance of his practical functions”. Reason being man’s judgmental power, therefore, philosophers like J. L. Stock^2^6 concluded that “what is valued is the fundamental activity of the mind”. Reason is also free from emotions which may be unreliable. In his observation on the discerning power of reason, J. L. Mackenzie highlights its relation to intrinsic values:

> What has true value, or what is really good is not simply to be identified with what is desired or chosen, but only with what is chosen after careful reflection, or, in other words with that which is an object of rational choice.\(^2^7\)

In the moral life, man’s reason discerns the intrinsic worth and hence man made conscious efforts towards becoming a good human being. We can say that man’s conscience convicts him of his faults, reason enforces his will to the values of being human.
Man's rational power also aids him to cope with the situational demands and complexities of life, freeing him from the unnecessary hassles of life. The short story for all its brevity, captures moments of reasoning in which man perceives the truth of good human qualities. He then arrives at self-realization. The stories also display the application of common sense and prudence in men's reaction to diverse practical situations in his day-to-day life.

2.2.2 Other Approaches to Human Values

In addition to the explanation of human values as related to man's innate nature are the humanistic and well being theories. These associate human values with man's sense of fulfillment and well-being for the full realization of the meaning and purpose of his life. This is through man's self actualization of his potentialities and fulfilling the basic existential needs.

In this connection, these theories also highlight man's weaknesses and baser aspects thus giving insights into human values in the practical context. As such these explained the diverse significances operative in the life of man. Thus, refuting the claim of reason alone, Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw explain:

Happiness does not lie in the use of reason; but it also lies in the use of our human faculties for physical survival and well being, for play and for aesthetic experience. All of these are aspects of a human being.

Therefore, these theories may be considered for further insights into the explanation of human values.
2.2.3 The humanistic Approach

In addition to the explanation of human values as basically related to man’s nature of being human, recent researches have projected other explanations. Based on clinical findings, leading psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Erich Fromm proposed the humanistic theory.\(^9\) The meaning of humanism given in J. A. Cuddon’s dictionary of literary terms clarifies the implication of this theory:

At its best, humanism helped to civilize man, to make him realize his potential powers and gifts.\(^{10}\)

The theory emphasizes the values of self actualization of man’s potentialities and capacities towards a full human person. As Maslow observes, the concept human values as human qualities does not explain “the increasing number of scoundrels in the world” (Maslow, 1959:119). Therefore, they drew attention to man’s other innate potentialities and constitutional differences differentiating men as individuals. Drawing attention to the value implications of man’s potentialities, Maslow observes:

Capacities clamour to be used, and cease their clamour only when they are used sufficiently.\(^{11}\)

Highlighting common potentialities and individual capacities with specific value implications Maslow clarifies:

Some values are common to all mankind, but also some values will not be common to all mankind, but only to some specific types of people, or to specific individuals.\(^{12}\)
Based on these projections, the common potentialities and individual capacities may be considered for insights into human values.

2.2.4 Man's Potentialities: value implications

2.2.4.1 Social awareness

In addition to his heart, mind and soul, man also displays social and political awareness. In the social aspect, Aristotle had long ago highlighted “man is by nature a social being” (Titus and Keeton 1966: p. 140). These ensure man’s happiness by emphasizing values of social behaviour and social relationship. Erich Fromm has identified man’s distinct social tendency such as rootedness and a sense of belonging (Maslow 1959: 154-157). As pointed out by J. N. Smelser33 man’s social sense also led to societal development of certain norms, practices and values guiding approved social behaviour. While strictures against social evils such as alcoholism and gambling are important social expectations for a healthy social life, family values of love, care, and responsibility are emphasized as part of Khasi traditional norms. As reflected by U Jeebon Roy34 these are strong social values which are aspired in traditional conventions. These characterized moral values in social relationship ensuring happiness and security in social life.

2.2.4.2 Political awareness

In the political context, the social consciousness in a tribal society resulted in a strong sense of identity. One of its expression according to Rajat Kanti Das35 is the consciousness of ‘territorial rights’ and the tendency to retain ‘traditions and culture’. In the modern context of change and exposure to outside dominion, the sense of identity as
projected by Das suggests political significance as “a social group should have a political identity” as part of the “survival strategies”. In the tribal community this is of utmost significance as it ensures survival and a sense of security. Viewed in this light, the human significance of political values in the context of a tribal community needs no emphasis.

Political values also imply public awareness of improved conditions of public life. This resulted from the social realization which Isaiah Berlin explained as “the liberty of some must depend on the restraint of others” for the common good. It led to the empowerment of an accepted body to oversee the security and welfare of all. But such power may prove to be a blind administrative force causing untold sufferings on the weak and the innocent. Therefore political scientist Ernest Barker emphasized political values of justice and equality for a just and right conduct in human relationship. The value of justice is such that Barker observes that without it, law is not valid. The principle of equality explains that all equally matter before the law. This gives insight into the human significance of political awareness to prevent misuse of political power. Therefore, fiction writers like Joseph Conrad, E. M. Foster and George Orwell are deeply concerned with the negation of social and political values of their age. Therefore, in the complicated world of change and development, the analysis of the selected stories should also focus on this aspect of human values. This will be an important aspect if the value perception of the authors is to be measured against all important human issues.
2. 2.4.3. Individual capacities

The focus on individual capacities is significant as this direct attention to personal values as part of the multifaceted nature of human values. The relevance of this approach in the literary context is that it directs attention to the diverse personal traits as projected by literature in different characters. In their attempt to project a realistic explanation of human values, philosophers have taken special note of these capacities. In this regard, D. S. Khongdup, a noted Khasi author touched on this point when he explains human life as “kaba bun syriap” (many layers). Therefore, to Michael Oakshott what is called human nature is recognized as:

An organization of emotions and intellectual dispositions, propensities, inclinations aptitude, traits, tendencies ‘humours’, demeanours, proclivities, etc.

These evolve multifaceted values among which are diverse ‘personal values’. Maslow clarifies these values as:

Constitutional differences in individuals generate preferences among ways of relating to self and to culture and to the world, i.e., generate values.

Highlighting the importance of individual difference, another leading philosopher J. N. Findlay offers further insight into personal values by quoting Hume’s explanation:

While reason ‘discovers objects without addition or diminution’, taste has a productive faculty, and gliding or staining all natural objects with colours borrowed from internal sentiments, raises in a manner, a new creation.
The ‘new creation’ is a unique viewpoint, an interpretation of life, an uncommon attitude standing out from the ‘run of the mill’ way of life. Life projects these individual value manifestations and literature gains added charm when it expresses the personal way of life. These have an impact on the value insight of men and women, enriching and enlarging their understanding of life. In the literary context, the richness of a particular literature is its ability to go beyond the moralistic in its perception of the human values residing in varied human possibilities. In addition, the literary display of wit and humour is of significance in the well-being context. These are discussed in the following sections:

**Wit and humour**

Among man’s individual capacities, the display of wit is the most stimulating and entertaining. Christ Baldick explained its manifestation in literature as follows:

A much debated term with a number of meanings ranging from the general notion of ‘intelligence’ through the more specific ‘ingenuity’ or ‘quickness of the mind’ to the narrower modern idea of amusing verbal cleverness.⁴³

The above explanation clearly emphasizes intelligence in the use of words for conveying the author’s meaning. Therefore wit is the intelligent use of words for illuminating the author’s meaning by projecting the resemblances in dissimilar things. It also exposes the hidden implication which the author conveys in a subtle and ingenious manner.

The capacity of humour, as noted by Richard Spilbury, is “another of man’s most striking and valuable propensities” for its “contribution it
has made to human survival”. His observation in this respect may be reproduced:

It eases and sweetens social intercourse, relaxes tension, disarms men’s fears and aggressiveness (though some humour is aggressive), assist learning, prevents depression and so on.44

Further, as highlighted by Spilbury, it underlines a moral implication in its corrective capacity:

Humour helps define our common humanitas, our unique follies and unique remedies for folly. It is intimately related to human freedom and purposiveness and the capacity for evaluating the experiences of life.45

In the light of man’s struggles, intensified by endless rush and competition, the human significance of these capacities towards man’s well-being aspect could not be ignored. These make life tolerable, worthwhile and therefore meaningful. These capacities also feature as typical to the nature of the Khasis. P. R. T. Gurdon highlighted this point as follows:

The Khasis are of a cheerful disposition, and are light-hearted by nature, and unlike the plains people, seem to thoroughly appreciate a joke.46

As explained by Baldick and Spilbury, humorous and witty expressions manifest similar value implications. In his article on S. J. Duncan, B. L. Swer explains the Khasi humorous expressions as ‘ka
biria rai’, ‘ka biria bangja’ and ‘ka biria dei por’. The first ‘biria rai’ which is equivalent to the expression “wit and humour” is explained as:

Ka jingshemphang jingsngewthuh, ka jingsted ka jabieng ban ai nia, ka jingbit ban pyndonkam ia ka ktiend bad ka jingsngewthuh ia ka longbriew manbriew bad ia ka imlang sahlang.  

(An insight and understanding, a mental agility in arguing, a skill in the use of words and a perception of human life and society.)

He further explains that the author’s wit and humour not only make us laugh but stimulate thought after provoking laughter. As such it displays Spilbury corrective power. In this way ‘ka biria rai’ is different from the other mode, for it creates laughter by exposing the follies of in particular human characters. It may also be laughter and a humorous sense at one’s own short comings. The other facets of humorous displays of ‘ka biria bang ja’ or ‘ka biria dei por’ as explained by Swer are valuable for their entertaining effects for these relax and relieve our mind. The two approaches to wit and humour showed the Khasis as fully aware of the significance of wit and humour in human life. Their interpretation through the narrated episodes will bring out their practical sense and also their essential humanity in being moved by both the sad and the happy.

**Man’s weaknesses and baser nature**

Human nature is also characterized by weaknesses and baser nature. As with man’s other capacities, these are to be focused upon for
their insights into the understanding of human values in the context of actual life. The Webster Dictionary defines the term ‘human’ as referring to attributes of kindness and sympathy but also denoting faults and failings such as those which people possessed. Philosophers and psychologists have taken note of man’s greed, selfishness, pride and jealousy which are related to man’s ego. In his essay on Hoppes, Larry May referred to Hoppes’ awareness of this nature leading to the state of life in which “life is short, nasty and brutish”. On the same lines, Paul Tillich drew attention to the tendency to be tempted by the narrowness of compulsive self-seclusion, into what everybody does and everybody thinks (Titus and Keeton 1966:36). These human weaknesses complicate man’s sense of value and make the explanation of human values in practical living to be extremely complex. This is where literature exhibits its superiority for by presenting value experiences, it explains human values in the complexity of human weaknesses.

2.3 The Well-Being Theory of Human Values

The well-being theory explains human values in the light of man’s conditions for survival. As with the humanistic theory, it focuses on what are called the “varying individual capacities” but in the context of conditions of existence. Man’s existence projects basic needs without which man’s life cannot find value in its practical relevance. In James Griffin’s words:

The rough explanation of basic needs is clear; they are what we need to survive, to be healthy, to avoid harm, to function properly.
The merit of the theory is in emphasising that ‘man needs to act rightly’ in order to survive and to be happy. This includes the ability to act, to be prudent and to be free from muddle and ignorance, to accomplish fulfillment. D. W. Gotshalk (Titus and Keeton 1966:410) clarifies this view when he explains that being happy in everyday life does not necessarily involve the ‘heroic’ and the ‘grand’ but simply performing well in one’s capacity. In the light of the modern complications of life and the erosion of values of fellow feelings and honesty, this theory highlights the values of prudence, common sense, expediency in coping with such practical realities. James Griffin refers to these values as prudential values (Griffin, p. 37). These are the facts of life and modern literature increasingly highlights these aspects as part of a total interpretation of life. Whether the Khasi short story writers reflect these values, will be one of the objectives of this study.

2.3. Other well-being values

In addition to the prudential values, there are many activities and experiences which are valuable in themselves and which contribute to man’s well-being. The nature of such values is clarified by J. L. Mackenzie when he refers to experiences in which “the evaluation comes to us without any conscious effort” (Mackenzie, 1929:131). In literature, these aspects relate to a display of wit and humour, the sense of wonder and curiosity, the thrill of adventure, and the impact of the strange and the unusual. These are of human value, for their restoring and refreshing effect in the face of life’s monotony and drudgery. They also open up the varied possibilities of life, thus enlarging and enriching our understanding of human life.
These projections of human nature highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of human values, each corresponding not only to the innate human nature but to the varied human aspects as displayed in diverse individual nature and the situational demands of everyday life.

In addition to these projections, as the present study is on the Khasi short story, a focus on the Khasi view of human values is highly essential. This will ensure the needed stress on the significance of traditional values in a study such as the present one.

2.4. The Khasi Concept of Human Values

The Khasis have a profound philosophy of life. This is based on their strong awareness of God, the creator and sustainer of life. This philosophy explains the moral and spiritual essence of the people’s approach to human life. These values guide man’s individual life, his relationship with God, with his family and the society at large. These are considered below.

Moral and Spiritual Values

The moral and spiritual foundation of the Khasis is highlighted by H. O. Mawrie when he explains:

It is God who gives him “ka longbriew ka manbriew (being and growth) – being a man he must spiritually grow.”

With this godly gift is man’s unique reality associated with “ka sap tip briew, ka sap tip Blei” interpreted by Mawrie as the “inherent and instinctive power of know-man, know-God” (The Essence of the Khasi Religion, 1981:17). This enables man to perceive the unchanging nature
of God’s truth explained by Sib Charan Roy as ‘ka sot’. Hence, there is a strong spiritual element in the Khasis’ sense of values for they discern God’s truth and righteousness. According to Sib Charan Roy, the elders believe that “God is within us – in our own soul”. These values are embodied in the moral precept of “kamai ia ka Hok” (to earn righteousness). Mawrie explains this precept as ‘to act, live and walk righteously to earn righteousness’. (The Essence of the Khasi Religion, 1981: 3). The other moral precept is a life of “tip-briew, tip-Blei” (know-man, know-God). R. T. Rymbai’s explanation of this precept emphasizes the nature of being human:

Man can only know God when he understands his fellowmen. Knowing one’s fellow men connotes performance of one’s duty to them - which is to be compassionate and helpful to one and all and never to cause harm and injury to anyone for one’s profit and pleasure.

This statement is based on man’s innate nature which partakes of the godly qualities of love, sympathy, kindness and truth as highlighted by Sib Charan Roy. As long as man retains the truth and righteousness of God, and as long as he conducts a life of ‘know-man, know God’, he retains his ‘rngeiw’ (aura). Mawrie explains this as the divinely sustaining power (The Essence of the Khasi Religion: 33). In the spiritual context, the elders prohibit harming the ‘rngeiw’ of our fellow being.

Social Values

The traditional Khasi social values are mainly embodied in the social tenet of “Ka akor kaba tam” (politeness counts). From the explanations of H. O. Mawrie and R. S. Berry’s “Ki Jingsneng
(Saying of the Elders), it is evident that this tenet has clear moral implications. To the Khasis, ‘to be polite’ includes efforts not to cause harm or to hurt others. Berry believes that to be ‘discourteous’ would affect a person’s ‘rngiew’.

But of particular interest is the prudential element in human values among the Khasis. This is referred to by Mawrie as “ka buit ka akor” (The Khasi Milieu, 1981: 81). Berry conveyed the prudential in the lines “Always with discretion talk and act/It’s an investment that remains in tact” (Bijoya’s translated version pt.1 32.1-2.). The lines “do not trust everything on a foolish friend/He may let you down, though loyalty is intense” also cautions prudence (Bijoya, translation pt.2. 57. 1-2).

The Khasis also manifest a sound sense of social values as reflected in family and clan organization. This is the tradition of the unique position of ‘U Kni’ (the maternal uncle).

The other kinship values are the tradition of “tipkur tipkha” translated by Rymbai as knowing one’s maternal relatives and paternal relatives (Rymbai 1995: Introduction in Bijoya’s translation of Berry’s Ka Jingsneng Tymmen). These are further explicated by H.O.Mawrie and also Mrs. Sweetymon Rynjah. This precept entails love and respect towards one’s relatives and almost reverential love and respect towards one’s paternal relatives. As pointed by Rynjah, the Khasis also attach special significance to the values of “ka longmei” (motherhood). The other tenets are the oft-quoted tenets such as “ka juban lak” (the worth of a spoken word) and “ka hok kaba tam” (honesty counts). These are
projected by R.T. Rymbai and U Jeebon Roy (1897: 33-38) while describing the sterling Khasi character referred to as the nature of being “Khara”.

The above discussions established the fact that both the scholarly views and the Khasi concept of human values emphasize the moral and altruistic qualities as basic human values. However, both approaches do not overlook the human significance which relate to the social and prudential as well as the well-being aspects in actual living. As highlighted these human values evolve from the diverse human nature of man. Hence, the multifaceted nature of human values. The *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* confirms this when it explains the term values as:

> The term “values” may refer to interest, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties moral obligation, desires, wants, needs, aversions and attractions and many moralities of selective behaviours.

But for value to exist, man has to ascribe, to select, to appreciate and to perceive. This fact is established when even in permanent values such as love, kindness, compassion and honesty, their value reality has to be perceived by man. As such John Dewey, another leading philosopher, rules out infants and imbeciles from the purview of moral values. The moral vision of the short story is, when within its episodic constraints, illustrates that even heartless and shallow people through moral conviction gained self-realization. But man’s value ascription also directs attention to certain distinct characteristics of value as manifested in the complexities of day-to-day living.
2.5 The characteristics of human values: the negative, scale and degrees of values

In the practical context of living, man’s judgmental power endowed important characteristics (Roubiczek 1969: 222-228) on the nature of value. These evolve facets and nuances of values. These are the value implication of the negative, scale and degrees of values. The value of the negative is lucidly brought out when Roubiczek explains, “we can think, for instance of pure goodness. But to experience it fully, we must have known evil.” In the literary context, the depiction of the erosion of values or man’s baser tendencies, enhances the value perception of the positive values. Values evolving from such negative situation are referred to as negative values. In addition, in actual life, our value judgement leads to value choices and preferences which are most appropriate to the situation and our basic nature. Its moral significance is thrown into relief when man has to choose between wealth and a good conscience. In the author’s scale of values, the human values are his priorities.

Lastly, human values also manifest degrees and nuances of values. These relate to the degrees of values which vary from person to person and from situation to situation. All these characteristics are conveniently embraced in the concept of human values. The superiority of literature is that it meaningfully demonstrates all these characteristics in its interpretation of life. The short story with its varied episodes accommodate a wide range of human values in facets and degrees and therefore faithfully expresses life.
To sum up, in the light of Horney’s projection of man’s essential realities, philosophers have agreed on the weightage of the moral and altruistic over the non-moral. The reason is that the former touch the authentic nature of being human. Thus J. N. Findlay\textsuperscript{62} underlines their difference by projecting two categories - those of the ‘life of feelings’ and those of the ‘life of practical endeavour’. In the opinion of J. S. Mackenzie, value is “what helps us in our way forward” (Mackenzie 1929: 99-101). But he makes a distinction of “what we value and what has value”. What has value is “what avails us in our struggle forward towards a distant goal in which the soul may find rest.”\textsuperscript{63} In this connection his reference to “even in our ordinary life we do find intervals of repose” has a striking relevance to the position of the short story. This is because it presents such intervals which display acts of kindness and compassion, positive attitudes and moral will. However brief, these do impact our everyday life. In spite of our preoccupation with the business of living, these stand out for their moral manifestation. It is for these fragments that the short story as a literary medium owes its credibility. These values are of the ultimate importance for these are in tune with the true self of man. For man amidst the trials and complexities of everyday life, these may be a distant goal, but man aspires for this value condition.

The Khasis with their strong spiritual and moral awareness expressed a life valuable which Rymbai quoted as “leng rangbah u briew jolt, suk u Blei lyngai”\textsuperscript{64}. It means “with man asserting his human self, God is at peace”. This reminds us of Mawrie’s explanation of the value of a human person where in order to attain the stature of man, he should
spiritually grow and maintain it accordingly. Such human triumph is the intrinsic value condition which man aspires.

However, man’s world is an imperfect one full of complications and contradictions. Practical circumstances and human weaknesses are such that man often times cannot conduct himself as a good human being. In the light of these realities, the prudential and well-being attained their human significance. Moreover, in diverse human situations and diverse human nature, higher values need not always be in full form but are also expressed in the superlative degree.

The human value of personal capacities and human situations which are valuable in themselves has been recognized by Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw (1974:33-34). They drew attention to the Aristotelian viewpoint in which man’s rational power enables man to excel in practical activities. As such philosophers emphasize the Aristotelian viewpoint which implies “to be happy means living a whole life. Therefore, to understand the meaning of human value, one should take a comprehensive approach of what a human life is. They conclude - “to be happy one must remain open to all our possibilities as human beings.”

These projections explain human values not only in the moral and spiritual but also in the personal, the social and the political. As highlighted, it directs attention to the practical, the prudential, the well-being and the varied human possibilities. On the basis of these highlights, the two approach theory of Ethics Wide and Ethics Narrow, offered by May Edel and Abraham Edel is found suitable to be applied in the
analysis of the selected Khasi short stories. In Ethics Wide the explanation is:

There are all sorts of human ‘values’- any interest, any pleasure, any conception of the desired and the desirable, any thing fitting or attractive or serviceable may come to rank as a value to human beings.⁶⁶

Ethics Narrow, as explained by them, emphasizes the moral and altruistic aspect as well as man’s conscience:

Ethics narrow focuses on the moral experience, moral judgement, moral feelings of the individual. It wants a systematic picture of these sentiments and responses. At times this has meant construing man’s moral feelings as complex sympathy reactions, at times as finely drawn conscience- responses.⁶⁷

The strength of this theory is that it highlights most of the scholarly and traditional projections outlined in the course of our discussion. While value has a foundation of its own, it owes its existence to man’s thoughts and emotions and to his conscience. In the practical context of change, of variety and diversities, the desired and desirable, the fitting and attractive as well as the serviceable as in the prudential context do have their place.

2.6. Summary

To sum up, different theories and traditional views discussed in this chapter project important conclusions in our understanding of human values.
The concept human values based on scholarly explanations of the general term value, projects a complexity which defies definition. To J. S. Mackenzie and E. Olson this is due to the two aspects-value and valuation. This phenomenon is projected by Paul Roubickez as man’s judgement, while the Encyclopedia Social Sciences refers to this as “the large universe of selective behaviour”. These facts direct attention to the knowledge of man as a prerequisite in the understanding of human values.

In the literary context, Walter Besant explains human values as acts of sympathy and kindness. But in the varied implications, the understanding of human nature as presented by the humanist, the well-being theorists as well as other scholarly views explained human values as multifaceted in nature.

To these projections, the Khasi concept of human values is found to be moral and spiritual in nature but not overlooking the prudential and the well being values.

The views project two broad aspects of human values - those with moral implication and therefore intrinsic and those without moral implications but essential in actual living. These categories are recognized by May Edel and Abraham Edel in their theory of Ethics Wide and Ethics Narrow.
End Notes


32. Ibid.


46. Gurdon, P. R. T. *The Khasis*. Delhi, LPP [Rep], 1990, pp. 4-5.
56. Mawrie, H. O. *Ka Pyrkhat u Khasi* Shillong, the Author, 1994, pp. 33-36.
64. Rymbai, *op. cit*, p. 75.
65. Grietzet and Germain, *op. cit.*, p. 34.