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Cover designed by: Mr. Baharul Islam Laskar, Department of Visual Arts, Assam University

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EDITORIAL

It is with great pride, enthusiasm, and anticipation Barak Education Society and the ‘Editorial Board’ is delighted to publish the 14th successful issue INTELLECTION.

The objective of our Journal is to publish up-to-date, high-quality and original research papers alongside relevant and insightful reviews. With these objectives Intellection has started its swift journey from January’ 2013 and with the passage of time Intellection has occupied its place in the ‘web’ which can be accessed round the clock across the globe.

Our appeal for paper contribution and write-ups for publication in the journal ‘Call for Papers’ got good responses from every corner. The paper contributors have spent their time and energy to produce good articles, but we could not include all; even after declining several articles on review, we had to include fourteen papers in this issue.

Being an interdisciplinary journal this issue of Intellection like its earlier issues includes articles from Literature, Sociology, Philosophy, History, Economics, Politics, Art and Culture etc, which makes the issue much more vibrant and useful to academic readers.

It gives us an opportunity to thanks all the journal’s contributors and supporters. On behalf of the Editorial Board and the Barak Education Society, I would like to express our gratefulness to the authors of articles published during the past years, and to acknowledge generous help which we obtained from the peer-reviewers during the process of publication of the issue. The collective efforts you rendered make it possible for us to publish the journal successfully and to the best of our capabilities. We believe that this issue of the journal would turn out to be of significant use to all categories of readers, especially researchers and educators.

Needless to say, any papers that you wish to submit, either individually or collaboratively, are much appreciated and will make a substantial contribution to the continuous development and success of our journal. Best wishes and thank you in advance for your contribution. We welcome feedbacks, remarks and suggestions from all our readers regarding this issue. You can access the soft copies of the journal since its inception at http://www.besngo.org/ and mail your responses to beseduso@gmail.com.

With warm regards

Dr. Baharul Islam Laskar
Editor, Intellection

Dated: Silchar
The 1st July’ 2019
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Meinong and Plato on Non Being and Non Existent Objects: An Analysis

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Abstract
The main point of discussion in this paper is on the concept of non being primarily as discussed by Plato in the well-known dialogue The Sophist and Non Existent objects as discussed in Alexius Meinong’s seminary work titled ‘Theory of Objects’. Both the scholars have written extensively on the notions of being, non being and other metaphysical issues. Although the abstract concept of Being has been discussed a lot in many philosophical works, however the concept of non being has not been worked upon by many scholars apart from Plato and Meinong. Mainly focusing on the comparison between Plato and Meinong on the concept of non being and non-existence, I would like to bring out the similarities and differences between both the scholars on the topic. Also I would point out as to where exactly would Meinong place his ‘Non Existent objects’ and also give my opinion as to whether it is considered as a negative statement or a falsehood or any other. The primary texts being referred to are Plato’s ‘The sophist’ and Meinong’s ‘Theory of objects’ as translated by Roderick Chisholm, a self-proclaimed Meinongian.

Keywords: Non-being, Non-existence, Objects, Falsehoods

Plato on the concept of Non Being in The Sophist
In his famous dialogue, Plato talks about the ever perplexing notion of non being. Whether there is any such concept as non being? What sort of a being is non being? Where exactly must non being be placed? These and some other questions or issues are primarily dealt with by Plato in ‘The sophist’. The dialogue starts between a stranger and the young Theatetus in which the stranger starts by mentioning about falsehoods and negative statements. Since according to the stranger these matters are full of confusion, therefore even if someone is talking about these issues it makes the speaker fall into self-contradiction. Now, Parmenides would say that non being cannot be said to exist as the only true reality is that of being and an inquirer should keep his mind off from the enquiry of non being. For Parmenides, non being appears to be unutterable and even unthinkable.

The stranger asks the first question ‘Where exactly this name non being must be applied?’, in other words, to what should one apply the term non being. Non being cannot be applied to some existing being as that application would turn out to be self-contradictory according to the stranger. The second question asked by the stranger raises talk about treating non being as a subject and asks whether one of the things that are (being) can be applied to non being? According to the stranger, one is faced with difficulties when one is forced to apply unity or plurality of number to the notion of non being. When one utters the word non being or non beings, one is applying unity or plurality of number to the concept non being which showcases the biggest perplexity concerning us, as the unity or plurality of number cannot be said to exist for the stranger as according to him it would be simply irrational.
After this, the stranger asks Theatetus to exert his brain and try to say something substantial about non being without adding any number or mathematical entity to it. Theatetus mentions about the concept of an image which according to him is something made similar to a true thing and another like it, the image cannot be the true thing and hence cannot truly be, rather it still ‘is’ somehow. Being and non being are intertwined in an image because in its very being an image is genuinely a likeness.¹

Plato also distinguishes between negative statements and falsehoods and tries to explain how falsehood can be possible. Plato radically differs from the Parmenidian conception of non being. According to Parmenides, as already mentioned no one can even utter the word non being and if someone even tries to say something substantial about non being, he/she can be said to be regarded as saying nothing about the topic. Therefore, Plato and Parmenides both differ from each other in this sense.

Just as imitations are not what they seem to be, so negative statements say what is not the case. Now falsehood is something that opines things that are not, as existing and things that are, as not existing in any way whatsoever. As discussed, Plato clearly refutes the earlier position held by Parmenides that being only exists and that whatever exists must be true. For if this is the case, then it would not be possible for any individual to speak anything falsely or even to have a false belief. Which is not the case as individuals are said to have false beliefs and false opinions, according to Plato. Plato concludes the dialogue by putting the earlier theory to test by stating that non being in some sense ‘is’ and being in turn ‘is not’ in some way.² The entire tension between the two notions of ‘being’ and ‘non being’ is resolved via a third notion, namely the notion of ‘becoming’. Therefore, it is the notion of becoming which for Plato resolves the entire tension between being and non being.

**Meinong on Non Existent objects in The Theory of Objects**

Meinong is known most for his work ‘The theory of objects’ which came out in 1904. Meinong starts the article by stating that no one can question the fact that all psychological events have the character of being directed to something. For example, we are happy about something or we are interested in something are examples of such psychological states. Now the various sciences or scientific disciplines which claim to study the objects have a major bias or prejudice for the actual, or more precisely those objects which are present to us as objects of cognition. Meinong was mainly concerned about the problem of intentional states which are not directed at anything existent. It is true that sometimes people imagine, desire or even fear something which does not exist.³ For example, it is easy to imagine a golden mountain even if no such thing exists or to fear a ghost which also does not exist.

According to Meinong, the totality of the objects of knowledge easily surpasses the totality of whatever exists in the spatio temporal realm. Now this very fact remains unnoticed because of the already existing bias for the actual or existent. All the distinguished sciences find that the non-existent is something for which ‘science’ has no application of any worth. Meinong deflates the knowledge claim of these sciences towards the prejudice for the actual by bringing in the concept of ‘ideal objects’ which of course cannot be said to exist but which certainly ‘subsists’ according to him. Agreeing to a certain extent with Plato and his

conception of the ideal objects, Meinong states that the objects of this type ‘subsists’ in reality, but these objects themselves are not a part of the actual or the existent. For example, pure mathematical knowledge is never concerned with anything that can be regarded as ‘actual’ or be said to exist in the spatio temporal realm. “The being (sein) of mathematics is never existence per se rather it always remains within subsistence (bestend). Therefore, for Meinong, the totality of what exists, including what has existed in the past and what will exist in the future is infinitely very small in comparison with the totality of the objects of knowledge.”

Meinong mentions about the concepts of sosein, nichtsein and aussersein of a pure object in his famous work The theory of objects and also distinguishes between an object and an objective, where objective can be referred to the states of affairs in which it is related to judgments, the way an object is related to its presentations. Meinong regards these terms as fundamental to his enquiry into the general theory of objects. The sein of an object is its existing or its being real; the nichtsein of an object is its non-existing or in its being unreal whereas Sosein, on the other hand, is the object having certain characteristics or attributes, a seins objective is an objective consisting of something having characteristics or attributes and a nichtseins objective is an objective consisting of an object which is nonexistent or which is unreal.

The existing sciences along with traditional metaphysics would hold the already explained prejudice in favor of the actual or real and state that we can speak of a sosein of an object only if its sein is presupposed. For example, to call a house big or small would make sense only when the existence of the house is presupposed. To this, Meinong will say in his works that the mathematical entities and the figures of geometry does not itself exist, but still their properties and characteristics (sosein) can be set up. Furthermore, He would say that a sosein of an object does not get affected by its nichtsein (nonexistence). For example, non-existent objects like golden mountain or unicorns are both made of gold and are single horned respectively. This showcases the principle of the non-dependence of the sosein on the sein. In other words, the characteristics or the attributes of an object can be said to exist regardless of the existence or the non-existence of the object of whom the characteristics are mentioned. In order to know that there is no round square, I must make a judgment about the round square which may not be the judgment about an object but which can be a judgment about the characteristics of an object.

If we are able to judge that an object is not, then we are able to apprehend or grasp the object in some way or the other before saying anything about its ‘non being’ or ‘being’ which is in complete contrast to the notions set forward by Parmenides. Now an objective stands in relation to its object, as the whole to its part and if the whole has being, so must its part. Therefore, if the objective has being, so must the object which belongs to it, even when the objective is an objective of non being (nichtsein). Therefore an object is said to ‘exist’ or be real in this way not as existence or subsistence, rather as a third kind of being which is to be considered along with both subsistence and existence, also this kind of a being which comes under that which does not have being sounds absurd at first even for

5 Alexius Meinong, The theory of objects, Translated by Roderick Chisholm, Realism and the background of phenomenology, Free press, 1960, p. 82.
6 Ibid. Pg. 82.
7 Ibid. Pg. 84.
Meinong and Plato on Non Being and Non Existent Objects: An Analysis

Meinong. Therefore, to clear this air of seeming absurdity, he brings in the concept of ‘Aussersein’ of the pure object’ which is discussed in detail in the next section along with Plato’s conception of Non being.

Meinong and Plato: Non Existent objects and Non Being

Plato and Meinong have both mentioned about the concept of non being, negation, falsehoods or non-existent objects in their respective texts. Plato’s explicit reference to the study of non being is in ‘The sophist’ while Meinong has mentioned about his theory of non-existent objects in his work named The theory of objects (gegenstandstheorie). At first glance one might wonder that both of them are placing non being in more or less the same place and in the same manner, but with a closer study we realize the fundamental differences between both the scholars on the treatment of the concepts of non being or non-existent objects. Plato thought that the fictions, shadows and the like (AB) had a lower degree of reality than the ordinary objects and therefore were not proper subjects of philosophical enquiry whereas Ideas (For Eg. mathematical objects, CD) were regarded as proper subjects of philosophical investigation. Meinong, on the other hand seemed to take fictional and other non-existent objects quite seriously as objects worthy of philosophical study, while at the same time maintaining that they have no kind of being or reality whatsoever.

Meinong wrote ‘There are certain objects of which it is true that there are no such objects’. Meinong holds that all the objects can be divided into three categories on the basis of their ontological status. Objects can have one of the three modalities of being and non being: Existence (existenz), which denotes the spatio-temporal world of objects, subsistence (bestehlen) which denotes the ‘idea’ or being of an object and finally the third type which can be called ‘absistence’ or being given which denotes being an object but not having any being. Certain objects can exist (like tables, chairs, humans, etc.) while other objects can be said to subsist (Mathematical entities, theorems, etc.) whereas the third type of objects neither exists nor subsists (golden mountains and unicorns). For Meinong, all objects are said to subsist, a less number of objects subsists and even a lesser number of objects actually exist. As mentioned before, the sosein of an object is not dependent upon its sein which can be simplified as stating that an object may have a set of qualities whether or not it has any other kind of being. Regardless of the object ‘existing’ in the spatio-temporal world, the characteristics or the attributes of an object can be said to be real.

For Meinong, among all the objects of the world, there are some objects which exist and some which do not exist. For example, horses are said to exist while golden mountains or unicorns are objects which can be said to not exist. Among these objects which do not exist in the actual world, are objects which can be said to ‘subsist’, whereas others may not even be said ‘to be’ at all. The subsisting objects are more or less like the ‘platonic ideas’ that does not exist in the spatio temporal realm but which are simultaneously real, but unlike Plato’s conception of the theory of ideas, Meinong’s subsisting objects are not the true reality of which the existing objects are said to be a reflection. Meinong held the view that there are certain objects which are ‘indifferent to being’ and that they stand beyond being and non

8 http://mally.stanford.edu/plato-meinong.html
9 Alexius Meinong, The theory of objects, Realism and the background of phenomenology, Translated by Roderick Chisholm, 1960, p. 56.
10 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexius_Meinong
For him, what exactly is an object, it’s real essence depends upon the properties of the object. These properties can be said to exist whether the object exists or not.

Meinong would say that although every object may correctly be said to be something or the other, but every object cannot be said ‘to be’. For example, unicorns, square circles and golden mountains are those objects which may not be said to exist at all. However, everything is said to be an object whether or not it exists or it has any other kind of being. In simple words, every object at least has the characteristics whether or not it has any kind of being. As already mentioned before, the sosein (characteristics) of an object is independent of its sein (being).

Plato would assert that certain objects that do not ‘exist’ have certain properties (Eg. ideas) but an object has properties if and only if it is real. The ideas are simultaneously real for Plato, although they cannot be said to exist. But Meinong would say that ‘The totality of objects stands far beyond the confines of what is merely existent’. Therefore, the total objects of knowledge in this world are far more than the existent or the actual objects. But unfortunately there is no science which deals with these ‘other’ kind of objects in a comprehensive way.

Meinong would be quick to point out that it does not mean that such objects like golden mountains or unicorns have a kind of being other that existence or subsistence, rather it means they have no kind of being at all. In Meinong’s own words ‘These objects are homeless objects which cannot even be found in Plato’s heaven’. Certain scholars like Chisholm refer to these objects as being lost in the ‘Meinongian jungle’, a term coined by Chisholm himself. Therefore, as mentioned before, all objects are said to absist, a certain smaller subset subsists and even a smaller one in the subset is said to exist. For Meinong, non-existent objects like unicorns and golden mountains can be considered as having different properties even though they still lack ‘being’ proper. Meinong would say that there are certain truths which seem to refer to objects which are such that there are no such type of objects existing in the spatiotemporal realm while at the same time maintaining that someone’s intentional or psychological attitude can be directed upon the characteristics of these objects. If any individual is asserting the statement that ‘Golden mountains do not exist’, the object that he/she is denying must have certain characteristics or attributes otherwise the statement would not be a meaningful statement since to deny something is to presuppose at least the attributes of that ‘some’ thing that is denied. Therefore for Meinong, the act of intending is prior to the act of denying that it has being.

Conclusion

Therefore, in this paper it has been tried to show how both Plato and Meinong would treat the concept of non being. In fact, in my opinion both would agree that there is something ‘beyond’ the existing objects of mundane consciousness. The difference lies, however that while Meinong would talk about objects with no being at all to be also included in the science of objects, Plato would certainly not consider his concept of non being as an object, rather as the ‘other’ of being which is the true reality for Plato. My attempt had been to focus

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11 Ibid.
12 http://www.ontology.co/meinonga.htm
15 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meinong%27s_jungle
on the position that both the scholars take on the notions of non being and non-existent objects while focusing at the same time on how Meinong’s conception is different from Plato.

References

Patriarchy and Women’s Body in the popular text; Mādhavī in the Mahābhārata

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Abstract
Scriptures are often used to make patriarchal control sacrosanct over women’s body. Principal women characters of the Mahābhārata like Draupādi, Kuntī and Satyavatī having more than one man in their life, suggest that the values that governed gender relations were not as rigid as it became later. Along with the expansion of the epic, the lives of the women characters in the epic underwent transformations to suit the patriarchal perception. Women characters that had more than one man in their lives had their virginity restored before she is given to another man. The boon of restoration avoided the situation of moral discomfort. Restorations of virginity of these women restore the honor of men who are supposed to be protector and owner of woman’s sexuality and procreative power. These women characters are portrayed as passive who allow their bodies to be manipulated according to men’s convenience and sense of honor.

Keywords: Body, Honor, Patriarchy, Possess, Silence.

Objective: This paper is an attempt of understanding the changing attitude towards sexuality and gender power equations in ancient India as reflected in the Mahābhārata in the context of Mādhavī’s story.

Introduction
“Whether we realize it or not, it remains a fact that we in India still stand under the spell of the Mahābhārata” (Sukthankar 1998: 32)
This statement made by Sukthankar, the distinguished scholar of the Mahābhārata way back in 1942 still stands true. The fascination for the centuries old epic refuses to die down. The prediction of Ugraśravas, one of the narrator of the epic seems to be proving true.
“Poets have told it before, poets are telling it now, other poets shall tell this history on earth in the future” (Buitenin 1973: 21)
The epic is believed to have been acquired written from 400 B.C. to 400 A.D. (Buitenin 1973: xxv) Though the language used in the narration corresponds to this period, but the episodes like Draupādi’s polyandry seems to be the residuals of the remote past. (Dhand 2008: 243) The behavioral patterns that were accepted in one period became socially unacceptable with the passage of time, but their memories had survived through the text. Having incorporated the stories from the different traditions the epic had become a kind of literary mosaic. Sukhantakar says,
“The result is naturally a confused assemblage of heterogenous matter originating from different hands and belonging to different strata” (Sukthankar 1998:10)
Not being written by an individual and having developed over centuries makes it more valuable as a source of history. In spite this variegated nature; the patriarchal influence over the epic is obvious. A
woman being treated as man’s property is obvious when Ambā is told by her former lover Śālva that she is ‘Bhīṣma’s chattel’ as Bhīṣma won her in a duel. (Buitenen 1978: 499) In general, the lives of the women characters in the epic are shaped according to men’s convenience, justifying Foucault’s postulation that power is essentially what dictates laws related to sex and what is permitted and forbidden. (Foucault 1990: 83)

### Why Obsession with Virginity?

In line with the patriarchal desire of controlling female body and sexuality, also came the expectations that a woman should be a virgin at the time of her marriage as it is through her that the linage continues. In the Varṇa divided society, the purity of the Varṇa status depended upon the sexual purity of women.

> “Women are recognized as the repositories of class and family identity. It is only they, through faithful sexual conduct, who can preserve the integrity of the Varṇa system.” (Dhand 2008 : 1696-1697)

Though the responsibility of preserving the purity of bloodline is mainly shifted on women, men are not let off altogether. Promiscuous behaviors for both the sexes are censored and celibacy and being faithful to one’s partner are upheld as great virtues. (Shah 2012: 75) But the empirical data from the Mahābhārata on sexuality is highly diffused, giving a tantalizing glimpse of widely differential societies and cultures. (Shah 2012: 69) The residual of the past promiscuity exist in the epic as Pāṇḍu tells Kuntī,

> “…in the olden days, so we hear, the women were uncloistered, …….they were their own mistresses who took their pleasure where it pleased them. From childhood on they were faithless to their husbands, but yet not lawless, for such was the Law in the olden days…….this is the eternal law that favors women.” (Buitenen 1973: 253)

This behavior was later curtailed and restrictions were imposed upon the chaotic man-woman relationship. (Buitenen 1973: 254) As the norms governing the sexual relations changed over the time, the residuals of promiscuous behaviors in the epic created a situation of moral discomfort. One way to resolve this dilemma is to alter the text in such a manner that the façade of the male prestige is maintained. It is probably for this purpose, that many women characters in the epic like Satyavatī, Kuntī and Draupadī, who have more than one man in their lives, have their virginity restored before they are given to another man. The women do not become virgin again for their own sake. It is only if she is to be given to another man that her virginity is restored. It is also postulated that virginity is a state of mind. (Chaturvedi 2010: 161) This implies that a woman shall erase the memory of her earlier relation before she is given to another man. A woman who has given her heart to some other man is considered dangerous. Bhīṣma refuses to give Ambā to his brother,

> “What a man who knows the perilous flaws of women would ever allow a woman in love with another man to lodge in his house like a snake?” (Buitenen 1978: 506)

By restoring virginity, the epic creates a narrative that husband is the owner of woman’s unspoiled, intact body and mind and she should carry only his bloodline in her womb. This also restores the honor of father/guardian, who was supposed to protect the virginity of his daughter before he gave her in marriage to a suitable groom. The epic obviously struggles to justify Draupadi’s polyandry by interpolating different myths. (Buitenen 1973:319-320, 369, 371-374) Thus gives a message that virginity is a prime virtue for a woman. She is doomed if she lost it and needs to be rescued; if necessary by a boon.

The expectation of carrying the bloodline of husband can be compromised in certain cases as obvious from the different episodes of Nīyoga in the epic. (Khangai 2015:14-24)

### Mādhavī

Mādhavī’s story is narrated in the Udyogaparvan of the epic and she is also subjected to the textual manipulation of her body. (Buitenen 1978: 398-414) Sage Viśvāmitra had a disciple named
Gālava. As per the usages of the time, the disciple wanted to offer gurudaksinā; the departing fees given by the pupil to his teacher at the time of completion his studies. As Galva was poor, the sage refused to take anything but Gālava insisted. This enraged the sage and he gave a very difficult task to Galva,

“Give me eight hundred horses, each having a black ear, and having the luster of the moon” (Buitenen 1978: 398)

Gālava worried over this difficult demand of his guru, goes to different places. Finally he goes to king Yayāti and requests for the help. Yayāti says that he does not have adequate wealth to give him for purchasing eight hundred such horses, but he does not want to disappoint the Brahmīn sage and is willing to give his daughter to him. He adds that his daughter is capable of giving birth to sons and is so beautiful that even the Gods want to possess her and any king will give away his kingdom as a prize for his daughter, so what to say about eight hundred horses. Throughout this conversation Mādhavī does not say anything; neither she protest against her father’s decision of giving her away to stranger.

Gālava walks away with Mādhavī and takes her to king Haryaśwa of Ayodhyā and request for the horses in return of Mādhavī. The king says that he does not have eight hundred horses but only two hundred. But the king becomes afflicted by desire after seeing Mādhavī and request Gālava to let him produce one son on her. His obsession is obvious by the way he describes Mādhavī’s beauty. (Buitenen 1978: 407) Now Gālava is in a dilemma, he had planned to give Mādhavī to the king who can give him the desired eight hundred horses. Here Mādhavī rescues him by reveling that she had a boon of becoming virgin again after giving birth to a child and Gālava can give her to four different kings and have eight hundred horses. This is the only time she speaks in the story. The king produces one son on her and after that she is taken to two more kings i.e. king Divodāsa of Kāśis and king Uśīnara of Bhoja. They both produce one son each on her and Gālava takes two hundred horses of the same descriptions from each of them. Thus he collects six hundred horses by exchanging the procreative power and sexuality of Mādhavī to the three different kings for specific periods. The relations between Mādhavī and the three kings do not remain confined to the reproduction only, but their romance is vividly described in the epic. There is no stigma attached to her relations with the next two kings even though she already had a son with the first king.

Gālava does not find remaining two hundred horses and finally goes to Sage Viśvāmitra and requests him to take six hundred horses and also take Mādhavī. He also tells the sage that three kings have already produced three sons on her and the sage can also produce one more. The sage looks at Mādhavī and says,

“Gālava, why did you not give this woman to me to begin with? I would have had four sons to prosper my line” (Buitenen 1978: 410)

After this the sage accepts Mādhavī and produces one son on her and also accepts six hundred horses. Gālava now takes Mādhavī back to her father Yāyati, who now organizes a svyāṃvara, a bridegroom choice for her. Many people, including kings come to this svyāṃvara as suitors. Mādhavī however selects forest as her consort. The text further describes that Mādhavī entered the forest, practiced austerity and was decked with chastity. (Buitenen 1978: 411)

**Changing value system**

The patriarchal anxiety to produce son is obvious in the story. All the four sons remain with their respective fathers. The king after king and even sage Viśvāmitra accepts Mādhavī, even though she had already given birth to a child from someone else. Even after giving birth to four children from four different men, her svyāṃvara attracts many suitors. This indicates that in the particular poetic tradition from where this story has entered in the epic, premarital relation and pregnancy of unmarried girl was accepted without blemish. The sun God tells the same thing to Kuntī,

“...a free girl is on earth called kanyā ……because she desires them all….All women are untrammeled, as are men” (Buitenen 1975 : 789)
Mādhavī is not given in marriage, but treated as disposable property by men in her life who alienate her or her reproductive capacity and sexuality at will. (Shah 2012: 46) The story seems to have gone through lot of alteration and she is repeatedly made virgin to bring her in line with the changed patriarchal perceptions. A boon is a handy tool that is used as a façade to white wash the uncomfortable textual legacy of the past.

**Meaningful silence**

Mādhavī’s silent but resolute rejection of all the suitors at the time of svyāṃvara and selecting forest as her consort challenges the patriarchy who wants to harness woman’s sexuality and procreative power. But there is no whimpering about it in the text! Does the sensitive mind of the poet gives space to her to express her anguish/disgust with the world of men by rejecting them? Men had made use of her for sensual pleasure and for begetting sons and she finally thought the life of celibacy will be better than a life of a domestic bliss? Throughout the episode Mādhavī speaks only once and that to support her own repeated mortgage. Patriarchy managed to silence her at will and also managed to use her as an agency in her own exploitation. Her sacrifices are not complete here. The merit that she earned while leading the life of ascetic is also sacrificed later for her father’s sake. (Buitenen 1978: 412.) Woman’s sexuality and austerity both are put to use to serve the purpose of men.

**Men’s Dharma, women’s sacrifice**

It was a Dharma of Yayāti to honor the wishes of the Brahmin ascetic and it was the Dharma of Gālava to give gurudaksinā. Both are saved by sacrificing Mādhavī. Women’s sexuality is put to use to uphold the Dharma of men is also narrated in a rather strange case of Oghavatī, who provides sexual favor to the guest for honoring the Grihasthāshramadharma i.e. householder’s duty of her husband. (Debroy 2014:503) As a reward for this, Oghavatī’s husband goes to the abode of divine in physical body. Oghavatī also does not incur any sin out of the act. So when the Dharma of men is at stake a sexual transgression of women does not remain a transgression but she becomes co-partner in upholding the Dharma. It is lauded in the epic that a householder should not refuse anything to a Brahmin guest and he should be treated like a God. Oghavatī’s episode raises a question if a wife had an independent personality or she is reckoned as one of the household item? (Dange 2001:xx)

Yayāti’s inability to provide adequate wealth to Gālava to purchase required eight hundred horses is like a violation of the code of conduct for a Kṣatriya king and not honoring the wishes of the Brahmin guest is supposed to bring great calamity. (Buitenen 1978: 406). Yayāti’s redeems his inability by sacrificing the sexuality and procreative power of his daughter at the hands of the strangers. The text legitimizes Gālava’s repeated act of pimping a maiden because his obligation towards his preceptor is more important.

Staking of woman without her consent to settle the matter between men occurs repeatedly in the epic. It is not only Yudhiṣṭhira who staked Draupadī during the dice game with the hope to win back the kingdom, Kṛṣṇa whom Draupadī trusted also tries to lure away Karṇa just before the Mahābhārata war with the offer of becoming the sixth husband of Draupadī.

“And at the sixth turn you shall lie with Draupadī” (Buitenen 1978: 444)

There is no mention of Draupadī’s consent to this.

**Stockholm syndrome?**

Mādhavī and Oghavatī’s willing compliance with the respective wishes of their father and husband are examples of ‘hegemony with consent’. Women due to the psychological conditioning that they receive since childhood become agencies through which patriarchal perception is reinforced. They take pride in their subjugation to male hegemony. Commenting on this Hirsi Ali writes,

“Because they have internalized their subordination, they no longer experience it as oppression by an external force but as a strong internal shield. Women who have mastered the survival strategies derive a certain pride from living this way. They are like prisoners suffering from Stockholm
syndrome, in which hostages fall in love with the hostage takers and establish a deep, intimate contact with them. But it is an unhealthy intimacy, comparable to slaves who are subordinate not only in body, but also psychologically, and who preferred the certainty of their existence in slavery to a freedom that they perceive as treacherous.” (Ali 2008: 646-651)

**Conclusion**

The excessive importance given to virginity not only put women at disadvantage, it creates a fear in the mind of those who are supposed to be responsible for her.

“The daughter was misfortunate also because safeguarding her virginity was an exacting task. Unlike celibacy in males which symbolizes their own self-control, the virginity of girls implies control over their behavior by their kinsmen. Its loss, therefore is a loss of prestige for them” (Shah 2012: 82)

This notion of sexual purity puts women to great disadvantage. During the communal riots and rapes following the partition of India in 1947, many Hindus refused to accept their women when they were brought back from Pakistan. (Karve 2008:190)

However the epic does put limits to the tyranny of men and also put them under obligation towards women. Bhīṣma has to pay prize for his wrongdoing to Ambā and she became the cause of his death. Draupadí’s humiliation angers Kṛṣṇa so much that he says that the men who have angered her will lie on the face of the earth and their women will weep. (Buitenen 1975: 251) Bhīma is always eager to please her and avenge her insult by killing all her tormentors. Women as a mother also receive high respect. The Pāṇḍavā as are depicted as always being obedient to Kuntī.

**References**

Rethinking Kinship and Environment: An Eco-critical Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide

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Abstract

Kinship involves relationships that are primarily based on consanguinity and biological affinity. When people group and classify themselves in the line of descent or lineage, blood becomes an important biological referent. In the Indian socio-cultural context such bondings are accorded utmost priority and they are often termed as ‘natural’, as if there is a correspondence between the human world and the surrounding environment. David M. Schneider defined it under the category of the ‘order of nature’ as opposed to the ‘order of law’. Kinship can be conceptualized by Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ecological systems theory which interprets the interrelations between the individual and his or her surrounding environment at 'micro', 'meso', 'exo', 'macro', and 'chrono' systems levels. The environment is defined a priori as a normative system that shapes human bonding but such notion is challenged by the constant uprooting of anything called permanent in nature and the dissolution of topographical fixity. This in turn has set the platform for reshaping of biological ties and ushers in an eco-literary consciousness. To bring out my point I will focus on Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide where the ebb and flow of water has reshaped kinship.

Keywords: Kinship, Biological Affinity, ecology, ebb and flow, dissolution, fixity.

“There was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings”. (Carson 1)

The quoted words from Rachel Carson’s fairy tale, Silent Spring suggest a bonding between human beings, other creatures and their surroundings. This interdependence has shaped various socio-cultural and ecological aspects in the environment. The relationship between an individual and his or her surrounding also influences the mode of interaction between the individual and his or her ethnic community. This thoroughfare is possible at multiple levels and in human society various degrees of relationships can be traced. Family is an important unit in society and it basically offers space for an individual’s exposure to his or her surroundings. So, an individual exists in a web of relationships both at micro and macro levels. Since, nature is conceived as a normative system, family ties and kinship presuppose some kind of norm in society. Kinship involves relationships that are primarily based on consanguinity and biological affinity. When people group and classify themselves in the line of descent or lineage, blood becomes an important biological referent. In the Indian socio-cultural context such bonding are accorded utmost priority and they are often termed as ‘natural’, as if there is a correspondence between the human world of family ties and kinship and the surrounding environment. In this respect only biological affinities are part of that normative system and any deviation from the norm challenges the socio-ecopoetical discourse. It is based on the fixity and definitive nature of thoroughfare between human being and their surroundings. David M. Schneider defined it under the category of the ‘order of nature’ as opposed to the ‘order of law’. In ‘What is Kinship All About?’ he wrote:

That is easy to see when we remember that blood relatives are considered to be related in nature and that they are parts of the natural order of things as defined in American culture. Their second distinctive feature, the code for conduct, is simply part of that much wider category called the order
of law, defined in opposition to the order of nature. This is the order imposed by man on nature, the order defined in American culture as consisting in rules, regulations, customs, traditions, and so forth which man, with the aid of human reason, creates. (263)

But this normative approach to kinship has failed to take into consideration various dimensions and multiple units involved in the formation of family ties and kinship. It is based more on assumptions rather than exploration of various socio-cultural units and their contributions in reshaping family ties and kinship. Kinship is always in flux since it is configured and reconfigured by multiple factors. David M. Schneider in *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* wrote: “All theories of society are not equally valid; all presuppositions about how social systems work are not equally consistent either internally or with the evidence; all definitions of kinship, and in particular the very assumption that “kinship” can be identified and distinguished, are not equally logically consistent or equally in accord with the evidence” (5).

Ecopoetics traces the subtle link between kinship and environment at various levels. At the same time it also focuses on normative ecocentric ideas regarding kinship as compared to anthropocentric ideas and practices. The latter has posed a threat to existence of the former and is considered as an assault on ecology or the normative system. But it would rather simplify the matter and exclude various manifestations of family ties and kinship. An individual belongs to ‘conglomerate’ level of kinship system where he or she is simultaneously part of the ‘family of orientation’ and the ‘family of procreation’ (Deliege 12). Robert Deliege in *Anthropology of the Family and Kinship* wrote: “Each individual fulfils a multitude of roles and may be simultaneously father, brother, son, husband, and so on. The principle of nuclear family and the incest taboo dictates that each person has a precise and particular relationship on the one hand and, on the other hand, that he must extend his relationships beyond this limited circle. The phenomenon of expansion gives rise to an increasingly complex network of relationships” (12). It opens up the possibility of transformation from nuclear family to extended family where bonding at multiple levels is taken into consideration. Family ties and kinship can be conceptualized by Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ‘Ecological Systems Theory’ which interprets the interrelations between the individual and his or her surrounding environment at micro-(immediate environment having direct impact on the individual), meso-(interactions between two or more micro systems), exo-(environment not directly related to the individual but it has links with the micro system), macro-(broader system and culture that is all-inclusive) and chrono-(consistency and transition over the course of life) systems levels. According to this theory the ecological orientation focuses on the interrelations between the system levels for the understanding of the holistic development of the individual (i.e. kinship foster child) who is placed in his or her social ecology. This critical understanding also helps to adopt proper intervention measures and guidance to bridge the gap between an individual and his or her surroundings. At the ‘micro’ level family offers that space to an individual to adopt social roles and to form interpersonal relations that is reshaped by the environment. Family ties and kinship should be explored keeping in mind the interrelations between an individual and his surroundings. One should rethink about the interconnectedness between kinship and environment since various environmental factors at multiple levels lead to the transformation of family ties and kinship, as Greg Garrard has pointed out in *Ecocriticism* that “ecocritics seek to offer a truly transformative discourse, enabling us to analyse and criticise the world in which we live, attention is increasingly given to the broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture take place” (4). So, eco-literary consciousness involves various layers of understanding the cross-fertilization between human beings and the environment.

Family ties and kinship are to be reconceptualised to trace the dynamics of interaction between human beings and their surroundings. This is a form of ecological kinship which is based on emotional attachment and nuanced understanding. The interrelation between kinship and environment also foregrounds the binary between culture and nature and their co-existence. Schneider in *American Kinship* (1968) wrote: “The family, in American kinship, is defined as a natural unit based on the facts of nature.
In American culture, this means that only certain of the facts of nature are selected, that they are altered, and that they are built upon or added to. This selection, alteration, and addition all come about through the application of human reason to the state of nature” (36). The normative approach is no longer the viable alternative to explore each and every aspect of ecological evolution. Ecopoetics is redefined by the constant uprooting of anything called permanent in nature and the dissolution of topographical fixity. The ecological diversity and its various formations cannot be adequately addressed by the normative approach. Over the years it undergoes certain changes which are as unpredictable as multiple personas adopted by human beings over the life course. It also suggests the fragility of all borders (both real and imaginary) and fluidity of identity. In spite of the dissolution of everything permanent, bonding based on emotional attachment is sustained and the cross-cultural thoroughfare is possible beyond space, time and language. The cross-cultural thoroughfare between human beings and their surroundings both at micro and macro levels has ushered in a spirit for transformation of the traditional kinship network. This in turn has set the platform for reshaping of biological ties and raises an eco-literary consciousness which helps people to forge meaningful relationships beyond family ties and kinship. It has bound people across the border in an inextricable bond of unity which is both ecological and cross-cultural. It continues even after death as it is based on the redemptive power of love. At this point both the ecocentric and anthropocentric beliefs and practices merge together and form a shared space of interaction where an individual feels at ease with both his surroundings and the extended family network where he belongs.

To bring out my point I will focus on Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* (2004) which marks Ghosh’s preoccupation for the first time with the subaltern or marginalized people of the remote area of Sundarban which definitely indicates a shift in his novel and in postcolonial literature. The locale of Sundarban is the ideal site for breaking up of all borders and transformation of family ties. The journey began within family network of Nirmal and Nilima but traversing both ecological and socio-cultural domain, it culminates in Piya who said: “for me, home is where the oracella are, so there’s no reason why this couldn’t be it” (Ghosh 400). Piya, the American cetologist, finds solace in oracella and illiterate Fokir what she couldn’t find in the conjugal relationship of her parents. In spite of the adverse circumstances the tide country and its people became her only sanctuary and thus bridging the gap between the ecological and the anthropocentric domain. She draws inspiration from nature to forge an emotional attachment with the poor people of the Sundarban. She loves equally both Fokir and creatures like oracella and tigers. She could not tolerate the merciless killing of a tiger by the ruthless mob. In spite of her futile attempt to rescue the tiger from the clutches of death she reminds Kanai of the thoroughfare between human beings and the non-human organisms of nature: “How can I not be upset? There is the most horrifying thing I’ve ever seen – a tiger set on fire” (Ghosh 295). It is the redemptive power of love that transforms her jaundiced notion regarding relationship and inspires her to assist the poor people financially and in this way to sustain the image of Fokir after his death. The kinship formed at the emotional level between Piya and Fokir becomes the site of transformation of kinship. Both of them successfully transcended the linguistic border and Ghosh wrote: “speech was only a bag of tricks that fooled you into believing that you could see through the eyes of another being” (159). Fokir’s instinctive warmth and childlike naïve simplicity bind the two souls having different orientation. Nature in the form of a mighty storm dissolves the last border.

Their bodies were so close, so finely merged, that she could feel the impact of everything hitting him, she could sense the blows raining down on his back. She could feel the bones of his cheek as if they have been superimposed on her own; it was as if the storm had given them what life could not; it had fused them together and made them one. (390)

The narrative has traced how nature in the form of dolphin, tiger and storm has become an agent of transformation and also represents the organic unity between ecological and anthropocentric domains.

The locale of Sundarban is an important site for transformation of kinship. The ebb and flow of water dissolves the transient border between land and sea that symbolizes the shadow lines among people.
of different orientation. John C. Hawley wrote: “The tide comes in twice daily, resulting in a constant reshaping of the land and an uprooting of anything permanent … Furthermore, just as the natural tides of the area tend to obliterate the sense of permanent division between land and sea, Ghosh’s characters gradually learn to recognise the transient nature of the divisions between individuals – of whatever social class” (132) The relationship between characters like Fokir, Horen, Piya, Nilima and their surroundings is a form of kinship. They have not only settled at Sundarban but also adapted themselves with various ecological formations which in turn reshaped their relationships with one another. The adverse circumstances of the tide country have compelled them to adopt different strategies for survival. The ‘Badabon Trust’ established by Nilima was aimed to engage people like Moyna and Tutul in meaningful activities to earn livelihood of their own. No authority could snap this thread of unity. In the ‘Morichjhapi’ movement we find the sea of people hungry for land. The dissolution of border is also marked by ‘Bon Bibi’, the presiding deity worshipped by people belonging to different communities. She is also the symbol of unity so far as the bonding between human beings and between human beings and their surroundings is concerned.

The hunger of tempestuous nature is also internalised by the people of the tide country to forge emotional bond with others. The relationship between Nirmal and Nilima suggests the limitations of family ties and kinship. Though they lived side by side for years, there was no emotional understanding between them. Similarly Kanai, though a translator and interpreter by profession, could not understand Fokir who is easily approached by Piya without any linguistic tool. By getting close to Fokir, Piya has recognised the connectedness between human beings and their surroundings which help her to reformulate her views on family ties and kinship. Nilima could easily create her own shared space within the community and she is transformed into ‘mashima’. Nirmal and Kanai remained alien in the community and in their surroundings as a whole which ultimately led to their epiphanic realization. In an interview Ghosh said: “My fiction has always been about coming unmade and remaking themselves.” In this novel we find reshaping of topography vis-à-vis dissolution and transformation of family ties and kinship at multiple levels. In his notebook Nirmal wrote that transformation is the rule of life.

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State and Industrial Development: A Study of Industrial Policy in Assam in Post-Liberalization Period

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Abstract

One of the main functions of Government is policy formulation. Policy is in fact planning for action; it is getting ready for setting the sails to reach the desired destination. Industrial policy we mean the policy which is adopted by the government for promoting industrialization in the country. It refers to the measures which the government adopts in connection with the establishment, working and management of industries. It also includes the tax and tariff policy, the labour policy, attitude regarding foreign capital and similar matters. Each state evolves a specific strategy of organizing its resources. India followed a mixed economy model for first forty years of independence in which key industries will function in public sector and some scope is left for private initiative. It was followed when resources were scarce and private sector was ill equipped to undertake large industries. It has shifted to Liberalization from 1991 onwards where the objective was to undertake production activity in private sector. It was based on logic that free competition is the ideal framework in which each firm will be able to offer maximum efficiency and state intervention would result in distortions in free market. The present study aims to explore the specific design of industrial development undertaken in Assam during liberalization era. Assam is specifically characterized by low capital formation, higher levels of unemployment, rich natural resources and the presence of capital from outside the state.

Key words: Industrialisation, Industrial Policy, Liberalisation

Introduction

Policy formulation is one of the main functions of Government. In the words of Dr. Appleby, the essence of public administration is policy making. Policy is prior to every action. It is a pre-requisite to all management. It is the policy which sets the task for administration. It provides the framework within which all actions for the accomplishment of an objective are to be activated. Policy is in fact planning for action; it is getting ready for setting the sails to reach the desired destination.

As a concept of political science, "Policy" has at least two quite distinct meanings. On the one hand "Policies" are often considered to be ways of doing things. In other words they are the decision rules. For example, it is the policy of a particular office to handle the requests in prescribed manner. In this sense policy would answer the questions "how things are being done?" Policy is therefore called administrative policy. Alternatively, policies are often regarded as substantive programmes, referring specifically to how it is being done. Policies in this sense answer the questions "What is being done and what kinds of problems are handled."

Industrial policy we mean the policy which is adopted by the government for promoting industrialization in the country. It includes all those principles, rules and regulations which influence the industries of a country and its industrialization. It refers to the measures which the government adopts in connection with the establishment, working and management of industries. It also includes the tax and tariff policy, the labour policy, attitude regarding foreign capital and similar matters.

1 https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/59577/9/09_chapter%203.pdf
Studies are available on either industrialization as a process or industrial policy as an economic policy. Both kinds of studies are economically reductionist basically emanating from the ideas involving narrow models of economic behavior. They do not pay attention to how state actively organizes and constitutes economy. Industrial policy is the key instrument with which state organizes capital and labor and secures a civil space safe for accumulation of capital and resources. Industrial policy basically aims to mobilize resources for establishing industries and sustaining them by making it profitable by overcoming various social constraints like labour and political constraints like order.

Each state evolves a specific strategy of organizing its resources. India followed a mixed economy model for first forty years of independence in which key industries will function in public sector and some scope is left for private initiative. It was followed when resources were scarce and private sector was ill equipped to undertake large industries. It has shifted to Liberalization from 1991 onwards where the objective was to undertake production activity in private sector. It was based on logic that free competition is the ideal framework in which each firm will be able to offer maximum efficiency and state intervention would result in distortions in free market. The present study aims to explore the specific design of industrial development undertaken in Assam during liberalization era. Assam is specifically characterized by low capital formation, higher levels of unemployment, rich natural resources and the presence of capital from outside the state.

Objectives
The objectives of the study will be:
1. To study how the policy prioritizes the possibilities of industrial development.
2. To study the Industrial Policy of Assam in Post liberalization period.
3. To examine the Industrial growth in Assam in post Liberalisation period.

Research Methodology
The present study is in descriptive in nature. Data has been collected from secondary sources such as the important publications and reports of the Central Government and State Government, industrial organizations, laws, legislative debates as well as day to day information available through print media, magazine, journals, book etc.

Policy Initiative for Industrial Development of Assam
Assam is often described as a land of poverty in the midst of plenty, and rightly too. It is aptly described as "region of neglected potentialities and unrealized opportunities". There are vast resources of mineral oil, natural gas, coal, limestone, water and forest resources holding prospects for rapid industrialization. In spite of this, Assam happens to be one of the backward states in India in industrial development.

However the political upheaval starting in the late 1970s in the form of Assam Movement and subsequently, in course of time, due to economic liberalization in the country the government of Assam has also initiated some reform measures for promoting foreign investment, the development and management of industrial estate, restructuring of DIC (District Industry Center) and removing artificial barriers within state. As a result of economic liberalization in the country the industrialization process in Assam took some fresh beating.

Assam did not have any industrial policy until 1969. The first industrial policy of the state was announced on 8th March 1969. From 1969 to 2014 Assam announced seven industrial policies, three before economic liberalisation programmes were initiated, namely industrial policy of 1969, 1982, and 1986 and five more policies during the post-reform era, namely, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2014 for

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rapid industrial development of the state. Here, our study is only confined with the study of Industrial Policy in post liberalization period.

**Industrial Policy of Assam in Post-Liberalization Era**

During the liberalization era Industrial policy 1991 focused to ensure balanced regional development through rapid promotion of Khadi and village artisan, tiny, small and ancillary industries throughout the state on the basis of techno-economic potential surveys. In order to create a suitable environment, effective steps initiated for the development of basic infrastructure facilities and local skill and entrepreneurship through intensive publicity, motivation and training programs at district, sub-division and block level among traditional artisans and others. It has provision for special attention to less developed district. Besides few salient features of Industrial policy of 1991 tax exemptions for first seven years, power subsidy up to Rs. 30 lakh per units per year for five years, interest subsidy subject to ceiling Rs. 10 lakhs, state capital subsidy, and manpower development subsidy etc.

The Industrial Policy of Assam, 1991 has failed to make much headway in the industrial development of the state and the state also failed to reap the benefit of economic liberalization adopted throughout the country, under the new regime of economic reforms. In order to accelerate the economic growth and industrialization the AGP led alliance Government of Assam introduced a New Industrial Policy in 1997 to embark upon the high road of liberalization, privatization and globalization. The chief aim of this policy is to provide an environment for speedy promotion and growth of all industries with a view to generating a sound industrial base and employment opportunities in various directions.

The Industrial Policy of Assam, 1991 has failed to make much headway in the industrial development of the state and the state has failed to reap the benefit of economic liberalization adopted throughout the country, under the new regime of economic reforms. Under this precarious situation, it has become imperative on the part of the state government to redraft its new industrial policy considering its emerging problems and potentialities. In this regard, the need for adopting a new practical policy for the growth and development oriented approach was also stressed by a number of industrial and economic experts of the state at the time of finalizing the draft policy by the State Government. Therefore it has become imperative for the state to embark upon the high road of liberalization, privatization and globalization.

The basic thrust of Industrial policy 1997 was to create necessary conditions for maximum possible utilization of locally available raw-material and human resources and to offer competitive advantage for investors across the globe. Advantage offered by the State and Central Government are reaped by every one time and it also paid special attention on development of local skill and entrepreneurial abilities, development of woman entrepreneurs, maximum possible employment opportunities for local people, giving special attention to less developed areas and hill Districts, revival of sick units, development of village and Small Scale Service and Business Enterprises (SSSEBs).

The Industrial Policy of 2003 came up with focus on increase the share of the industrial sector to the State Domestic Product (SDP) from the present level of 13.29% to a level of at least 18% at the end of the terminal year of the Policy, generate more employment opportunities in the State, encourage private investment in Industrial infrastructure projects, create avenues for sustained growth and development of the Small Scale and tiny sectors and to make Assam one of the preferred destinations for investment for outside investors. The policy was aimed to provide an effective thrust for expeditious promotion and growth of all industries based on locally available resources with a view to creating a strong industrial base and employment opportunities in various directions. The new industrial policy is packed with incentives for investors and aimed to achieving annual industrial growth rate at 8 percent. The policy proposed to provide level playing field for investors in the state in light of availability of land, power, water and better

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3 Dhar, P.C. The Economy of Assam, Kalayani Publishers, New Delhi,2001
4 Dhar, P.C. The Economy of Assam, Kalayani Publishers, New Delhi,2016
environment. In addition to proposing various incentives to investors, the new policy assures to introduce single window clearance system at both district and state levels for the benefit of entrepreneurs.

The Industrial Policy of 2008 primarily focused on to generate economic development by accelerating the process of industrialization. The overriding priority of the Industrial Investment Policy of 2008 is to create conditions for income and employment generation in our state by encouraging the establishment of micro enterprises. The main thrust areas of this policy is to increase the share of the Industrial sector in the State Domestic Product (SDP), besides, the State Government would endeavor to encourage youths of the State, particularly the women entrepreneurs to set up industries, encourage to help increase exports and attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) particularly from NRIs. The Industrial and Investment Policy 2008 identify some specific sectors which offer tremendous potential for income and employment generation, such as- Multi Cropping in Agricultural Sector, Tea, Plywood Industry, Agar wood Industry, Silk, Bamboo, Horticulture, Fresh Water Processing besides other potential sectors like OIL, GAS and COAL.

‘The Industrial and Investment Policy of Assam, 2014’, a new industrial policy which came into effect in the state from March 1, 2014 to 28/02/2019. The change was seen as an effort to fine-tune the Congress-ruled state government’s policy to promote industry. The new policy has identified promotion of micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector as its “priority area”.

The new policy has laid down“various incentives” for units set up by private sector, joint sector, co-operative, partnership, self-help groups, trust, NGOs, as well as units set up by state government. Also incentives have been provided to service sector activities such as employment-oriented skill building and vocational training institute, hotels and resorts above two-star category and diagnostic facility.

The policy also provided value-added tax (VAT) exemption for 15 years to industries set up on or after March 1, 2014. For the first and the second year, 100 per cent VAT exemption, followed by 80 per cent in the third and fourth year and 50 per cent till 15th year. Additional VAT exemption proposed for units set up in designated industrial parks such as Food Park, Bamboo Park, Plastic Park, Tea Park, etc. Entry tax has also been exempted for all eligible units including state public sector units (PSUs) on procurement of plant and machinery from other states. The Industrial and Investment Policy of Assam, 2014’ has also exempted luxury tax by 50 per cent in hotel industry.

However, figures from recent years show the government-sponsored incentives, by both centre and the state, have failed miserably to attract sizeable amount of private sector investment in the state. In the last five years, the state could attract about Rs. 12,000 crore, out of which around Rs 9,800 crore was by the central government in the Assam Gas Cracker Project.

Though the private sector, especially the big-ticket investors, had often sited availability of land, power and a conducive environment as prerequisites for investments, rather than incentives, but the government can’t attract big-ticket investors because of unavailability of land to meet the demand for land and power for industry.

So the utmost priority would be on the MSME sector. Efforts are on to create a conducive environment for the MSME sector. The broad objective of the policy is to encourage sustainable investment in the MSME sector on local resources, create employment specially in rural areas, build a vast pool of skilled personnel, and to give special thrust on economic activities based on local resources. This policy also initiates various measures for the development of traditional industries of Assam which play a vital role in the state economy for employment generation. Traditional industries like Brass & Bell metal, Terracotta, Fireworks, Blacksmithy, Assamese Jewellery, Wood Craft, Cane & Bamboo works, Endemic Silk works, Weaving and Vegetable dyeing, Japi making, Water Hyacinth, Jute diversified products, etc. considering the problems faced by them.

An analysis of the objectives of the different industrial policies in post liberalization period reveals that they are largely similar. The policies emphasized balanced regional development, development of infrastructure facilities, employment of local people, encourage local entrepreneurs to set up industries,

utilization of locally available resources and development of Khadi & Village industries, Tiny, Small and Ancillary industries, setting up of Large and Medium industries as mother industries to create an industrial base; and revival of the potentially viable sick industrial units, etc.

But it has been observed that though government of Assam has made different Industrial Policy time to time for industrial development and the growth of industrial output and employment, yet today Assam is one of the industrially backward states of the country. With its abundant raw material, water resources, reasonably good climate, sufficient manpower and having huge development potential, the economy of Assam remained underdeveloped as it is characterized by poverty, underutilized manpower and untapped natural resources. In spite of being blessed with a high potential for development of resource based and demand-based industries in the states, the pace of industrialization in Assam had not been satisfactory. Unemployment has increased, rural-urban disparities have widened and the rate of real investment has stagnated. The incidence of industrial sickness has become wide-spread and some of the major industries are worst affected.

Although the process of economic liberalization could not create much impact on the industrial development of the state but the state is still maintaining a bright prospect for the development of different industries under the policy of economic liberalization introduced in the state.

**Industrial Development in Assam an Analysis**

Although the base for industrial development in Assam was created more than a century ago with the establishment of Tea, Coal, Oil and Plywood industries, it could hardly accelerate the pace of industrial development during the subsequent period. Assam has the distinction of having the first oil refinery, first plywood factory and also the first tea industry in the country. But due to several factors the state continues to remain industrially backward even after several decades of economic planning.

According to Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 20014-2016, Assam had a total number of 6158 factories which constituted 2.7 percent of total factories in the country. A total number of 243253 persons are engaged in the factories in Assam as a worker during 20014-2016.

**Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) in Assam**

The report of Annual Survey of Industries (Summary Results) as brought out by the Central Statistical Organisation from year to year provides some basic ideas and data about different characteristics of registered factory sector in the state. The following table reveals some important characteristics pertaining to the State of Assam as revealed by the ASI Reports for the past few years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No. of Factories</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>3019</td>
<td>3303</td>
<td>3518</td>
<td>3717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fixed Capital</td>
<td>Rs. in lakh</td>
<td>1515746</td>
<td>1310951</td>
<td>1444632</td>
<td>1616940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Working Capital</td>
<td>Rs. in lakh</td>
<td>474331</td>
<td>588926</td>
<td>713478</td>
<td>1113789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Invested Capital</td>
<td>Rs. in lakh</td>
<td>2185871</td>
<td>1927084</td>
<td>2135656</td>
<td>2582876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total Persons engaged (Employees, Worker etc.)</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>180531</td>
<td>167835</td>
<td>186483</td>
<td>195567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Value of output</td>
<td>Rs. in lakh</td>
<td>5292766</td>
<td>4985210</td>
<td>5761714</td>
<td>6176083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Net Value added</td>
<td>Rs. in lakh</td>
<td>654789</td>
<td>629229</td>
<td>801755</td>
<td>818613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>Rs. in lakh</td>
<td>566700</td>
<td>544538</td>
<td>719383</td>
<td>743312</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2015 and 2016*

The above table reveals that as per the ASI Reports, total number of factories in Assam has increased from 3019 in 2011-12 to 3717 in 2014-15. Total invested capital in these industries has also increased from Rs. 2185871 lakhs in 2011-12 to Rs 2582876 lakhs in 2014-15. Total number of employees engaged in these industries has also increased from 180531 in 2011-12 to 195567 in 2014-15. Total value
of output of these registered factories has also increased from 5292766 lakhs in 2011-12 to 6176083 lakhs in 2014-15. Again the net value added and the net income from this sector has also increased from Rs. 654789 lakhs and Rs. 566700 lakhs respectively in 2011-12 to Rs. 818613 lakhs and Rs. 743312 lakhs respectively in 2014-15.

Registered Factories in Assam

Total number of registered factories in Assam is an important indicator for the progress of industrialization in the state. As per information available from office of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Assam, there has been a steady increase in the number of registered factories in the state. The following table shows that total number of such registered factories in Assam was 4895 during the year 2012 increased to 6158 in 2016. The total number of workers employed in these factories has also increased to 185243 in 2012 to 243821 in 2016. Though past few years there has been a steady increase in the number of registered factories in Assam, but this increase is insignificant in comparison to the developed states of our country.

Table: Number of Registered Factories and Workers in Assam from 2012-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Registered Factory</th>
<th>Worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4895</td>
<td>185243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5271</td>
<td>192543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5537</td>
<td>210119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5799</td>
<td>219903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6158</td>
<td>243821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chief Inspector of Factories, Assam

The following table reveals district-wise number of registered factories and employment generated by the factories in Assam, during 2016.

Table: District-wise Distribution of Registered Factories and Workers in Assam, 2016 (As per NIC, 2008):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Factories</th>
<th>Worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kokrajhar</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhubri</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morigaon</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaon</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>18193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonitpur</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>23142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhimpur</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhemaji</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinsukia</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>25953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>29263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivasagar</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>15352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorhat</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>10170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golaghat</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>9153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karbi-Anglong</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dima Hasao</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>12632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table we see that districts Kamrup ranked first followed by Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sonitpur, Sibsagar, Jorhat and N. C. Hills and Golaghat respectively. The table also reveals that Dhemaji as the most backward district having only 8 registered factory. Chirangi, Baska, Goalpara, Dima Hasao, Nalbari, and Kokrajhar are placed just above Dhemaji. From the above table it has been noticed that a very significant imbalance is prevailed in industrial development scenario of the state.

**Industrial Production of Some Selected Industries in Assam**

The performance of manufacturing and processing sector of the State has not been much encouraging in the scenario of the State's Economy. The contribution of this sector to the total net State domestic product (NSDP) has been estimated at 10.5% at constant (1999-2000) prices during 2005-06 (Quick Estimates). The outputs of some selected industries of the State during 2010-11 to 2014-15 have been furnished in the following table.

**Table: Production of Some Selected Industries in Assam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Flore</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>1040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jute Textiles</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td>19956</td>
<td>22717</td>
<td>25625</td>
<td>24275</td>
<td>27237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum Crude</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td>5023</td>
<td>4861</td>
<td>4718</td>
<td>4447</td>
<td>4513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td>Tones</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>1169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer</td>
<td>Million Tones</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Table reveals that there are fluctuations in the output of most of the selected industries like tea, coal, jute textiles and fertilizers. The production of tea has increased substantially during 2015-16 with increasing number of small tea growers. Production of tea, which was 501 tones in 2011-12 gradually increased to 628 tones in 2013-14 and then production decline to 607 in 2014-15 and again rose to 652 in 2015-16. The production of coal in Assam maintained an increasing trend from 590 tones in 2011-12 to 797 in 2014-15. But its production declined heavily to 397 tones in 2015-16. But the production of Jute Industry is gradually increased over the previous year except in the year 2014-15. The production of petroleum crude is almost stable with slight ups and down but it cannot meet the required demands of the refineries of this State. The production of fertilizer industry shows stable trend. Production of fertilizer which reached the peak level of 515 million tones in 2013-14, declined to 488 and 505 million tones in 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. In case of cement industry, total production increased from 984 tones in 2011-12 to 1181 tones in 2012-13 and then declined to 1107 tones in 2013-14. Again it rose to 1277 tones in 2014-15 and declined again to 1169 tones in 2015-16. It is expected that total production of cement
will increase further in the coming years due to set up of some more cement production units in Assam in recent years considering the huge reserve of limestone available in the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill Districts of Assam.

Thus it is projected that a good number of large and medium scale industrial projects may be developed in Assam in near future provided suitable investment friendly climate is created in the State. This needs an active support from both the Central and State Government and also the active participation of the local masses of the State. However the Government of India will have to play a much greater and active role in Assam and the North-east for promoting industrialization process. The Centre must provide the infrastructure, if not, then provide counter guarantees and other necessary incentives to private investors in creating the infrastructure, without putting any burden on the State Government. The State Government should also take active steps to promote an investment friendly environment for attracting private investors, both domestic and foreign, so as to develop different small, medium and large scale industries based on the industrial potential of its state. In this connection "The Assam Start Up Policy" w.e.f. 01.01.2018 and “Assam Global Investors’ Summit” or “Advantage Assam Global Investors' Summit” on 3–4 February 2018 organised by the Government of Assam is a welcome step to promote and growth of start-up culture among the youths of Assam to participate in the economic growth of Assam and also to increase the trade and other relations with Southeast Asia countries. The summit focused on India’s Act East Policy which will help in achieving balanced and fast-paced growth of the north-eastern region in general and Assam in particular.

**Conclusion**

In the end, we should note that development of Assam is intricately linked with the development of the entire North-East. With sound policies and good governance, Assam should and can develop much faster than it has been doing. Until the security environment becomes conducive to private investment, the government needs to take the lead. Limited financial resources calls for responsible fiscal behaviour from the government and prioritization of expenditure becomes important. Besides that government will take necessary steps for the development of quality infrastructure for industrial growth. Based on the strengths of Assam in terms of its natural resources and the strong inter linkages with the rest of the economy, top priority needs to be given to agriculture and agro processing, fisheries, forestry and related industries and tourism. Assam can and should develop faster and catch up with the rest of the country.

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Witch-Hunt and Human Rights Violation in Assam: A Study on the Role and Responses of the Assam Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

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Abstract
Witch-hunt was and also continues to be one of the barbarous superstitious practices which has plagued Assam. The act of witch-hunt and the tortures on the victims are not only a criminal offence but also the grave violation of human rights which violates all the basic human rights. In this paper, we will discuss the issue of witch-hunt and human rights violation and will project the practice of witch-hunt as an act of grave human rights violations. In this paper, the role of the Assam Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has been analyzed. A detailed analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the members and office bearers of the AHRC has been shown in order to analyze the works of the AHRC as well as the awareness level of its members and officials regarding the issue of witch-hunt.

Keywords: Assam, Witch-hunt, Human Rights, Superstition, Violation

Introduction
It is commonly believed that the witch is the one who is accused of being the reason behind any kind of misfortune ranging from natural calamities to death of people and witch hunting involves the branding of victims, as witches, after an observation made by an 'ojha’ or a witch doctor. The victims after being branded as witch are subjected to several kinds of tortures, beatings, burns, they are paraded naked through the village, forced to eat human excrement, their hair is cut off and the victims are socially ostracized, raped and many times are even put to death. Thus, witch-hunt refers to the identification of an innocent one as a witch and torturing them to the extent that many times they are even put to death. Men, women and even children are at risk of being victimized by so-called ‘witch hunters’, and there have been several cases of murders where victims were killed on mere suspicion of being witches.

While non-violent witchcraft and mystical elements fall under protection of freedom of religion or belief, there is however grave human rights violations linked to such beliefs. Throughout the world, in many countries, due to the belief on witchcraft, black magic or other forms of evil have resulted in serious violations of human rights and the people who are accused of being the perpetrators of such evil practices have become the victims of human rights violations including death. There are different forms of human rights violations which have got lots of buzz by the human rights activists, researchers, human rights commissions etc. but witch-hunt is such an issue which has not gained much attention as a form of human rights violations. The extent and distribution of the practice of witch-hunt is largely unknown and even no formal mechanism exists to record, monitor or respond to such violations. There can be no doubt that the violence carried out due to these beliefs constitutes a serious violation of human rights. In recent years, due to the efforts of several NGOs, the human rights violations that take place due to the belief in the existence of witchcraft have entered into the discourse of violence against

3 Ibid.
men, women, children, disabled and the elderly. These violations are increasingly being recognized as being some of the most horrific abuses that is witnessed today.

Realizing the adverse impacts of such practices, certain international organizations have also come into existence in order to address the issue of witch-hunt as a major violation of human rights. The Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network (WHIRIN) is an international organization and is also a response to the wide-spread violations of human rights that has taken place around the world due to the beliefs in witchcraft and spirit possession. In order to raise awareness on the issue of witch-hunt, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) hosted the very first two-day workshop on witchcraft-related human rights violations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 21 and 22 September, 2017. Moreover, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) experts have also proposed action to end harmful practices related to witchcraft.

Apart from this, a look at the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the atrocities committed on the victims of witch-hunt also underlines the fact that atrocities committed on the witch-hunt victims violates the basic premises of the UDHR. The provisions of the UDHR clearly reflects that witch-hunt goes against the basic premises of human rights by violating the various Articles of the UDHR like, Article 3, 5, 12, 17 and 22. Article 3 specifies that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of a person”, Article 5 declares that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”, Article 12 mentions that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation”, Article 17 highlights that “no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property” and Article 22 underlines that “right to social security”. Therefore, witch-hunt violates those basic provisions of the UDHR which are essential to live as human beings.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to project witch-hunt as grave violation of human rights and to analyse the role of the AHRC on eliminating the menace of witch-hunt.

Methodology

The data are collected from both the primary and secondary sources. Primary sources of information include the empirical data collected from the office of the AHRC. In order to understand the correlation between witch-hunt and human rights and also to analyse the level of awareness of the office bearers of AHRC, 10 respondents were selected and interviewed from the AHRC through an interview schedule. Secondary sources of information include books, journals, newspapers, statutes, pamphlets, organization proceedings etc. Most of the data collected from the sources have been analyzed quantitatively but to arrive at a conclusion qualitative analysis has also been made.
Human Rights Commissions in India

India, although is lauded as the largest democracy in the world, has a consistently poor record in terms of human rights violations.\(^{11}\) For better protection of human rights and also to deal with the matters to human rights, the Government of India by an Ordinance provided for the constitution of the National Human rights Commission, the State Human rights Commission in States and Human rights Courts on 28th September, 1993.\(^{12}\) This Ordinance was replaced by the Parliament of India by Act No.10 of 1994 on 8th January, 1994 by the Protection of Human Rights Act. 1993 which came into force retrospectively on 28th day of September, 1993 under the statute of the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993 and is in conformity with the Paris Principles.\(^{13}\) Accordingly, twenty-four states of India have set up State Human Rights Commissions\(^{14}\).

The report published by ‘The Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network’ (WHRIN) have brought to light the fact that in Asia, the largest number of cases on witch-hunt is reported from India.\(^{15}\) In India, witch-hunt is being reported periodically in the states like Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Haryana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Assam and Andhra Pradesh.\(^{16}\) In Assam, which is one of the witch-hunt affected states of India, the belief in the practice of witchcraft has a deeper connection with its spiritual history.\(^{17}\) The fact that killing of witches has been making headlines of all local newspapers of Assam for quite some time, is not only disturbing but also alarming.

Assam is one of those twenty-four states which established the State Human Rights Commissions under the Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993 to deal with the violations of human rights within the state.\(^{18}\) There have been numerous incidents of human rights violations in Assam during the past twenty years and to deal with such incidents the Assam Human rights Commission was constituted on 19th March, 1996.\(^{19}\) Accordingly, the AHRC is conferred with certain functions which it can perform for the protection of human rights in Assam. The AHRC can inquire into complaint of violation of human rights or abetment thereof, or negligence in the prevention of such violation, by a public servant, can intervene in any proceeding involving any allegation of violation of human rights pending before the court, with the approval of such court; it can visit, under intimation to the State Government, any jail or any other institution under the control of the State Government, where persons are detained or lodged for purposes of treatment, reformation or protection, to study the living conditions of the inmates and make recommendations thereon; can review the safeguard provided by or under the Constitution or any law for the time being in force for the protection of human rights and recommend measures for their effective implementation; can also review the factors including the act of


\(^{14}\) [http://nhrc.nic.in/](http://nhrc.nic.in/), Accessed: 3-5-2017 (15.00 UTC).


\(^{19}\) Ibid.
terrorism that inhibit the enjoyment of human rights and recommend appropriate remedial measures.\textsuperscript{20} It can take all appropriate measures to create awareness on human rights such as it can undertake and promote research in the field of human rights; spread human rights literacy among various sections of the society and promote awareness of safeguards available for the protection, media, seminar and other available means and encourage the efforts of non-governmental organizations and institutions working in the field of human rights.\textsuperscript{21}

Despite the establishments of such human rights commissions at the center as well as at the state to deal with the acts of human rights violations, violations continue to take place. If we go through the functions conferred to the AHRC, then we find that AHRC has certain powers through which it can take actions against the acts that are violating human rights and also can take all the necessary measures to protects and promote human rights in Assam. Thus, as in this paper witch-hunt has been studied from the perspective of human rights, an attempt has been made to analyze the role actually played by the AHRC in dealing with the acts like witch-hunt that has violated the human rights.

Here, one may draw the attention to the fact that in the year 2012, a discussion took place between the concerned officers of the NHRC, the AHRC and the Chief Secretary of Assam on the issue of witch-hunt. The NHRC stressed upon the state authorities to initiate an extensive awareness campaign among the people and conduct prompt investigation and speedy trial in incidents of witch hunting.\textsuperscript{22} The NHRC has also sought reports from the police of Kokrajhar district of Assam on several incidents of suspected witch-hunting.\textsuperscript{23} These developments underline the concern of the NHRC on the issue and have also accordingly taken note on the rising incidents of witch-hunt.

Assam state legislature has passed Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015 which has now become an Act and the law was prepared in order to reign in the rising incidents of witch-hunting cases across the state. It was prepared in lines with the spirit of universal declaration of human rights, crimes in witch-hunting cases cause gross violation of basic human rights. While tabling the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, the former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi said, “Witch-hunting has become a burning issue in the state. While both men and women fall victim to this pernicious practice, predominantly women bear the brunt of this heinous crime and such practices cause gross violation of basic human rights.”\textsuperscript{24}

As discussed earlier, Assam has recorded numbers of witch-hunt cases which is a grave violation of human rights. In order to analyze the role of AHRC in mitigating the practice of witch-hunt, a detailed study has been carried out by interviewing the officials of the AHRC. The responses of the officials are analyzed below.

**Witch-Hunt and Role and Responses of the AHRC**

The focus on witch-hunt has always been from the perspective of gender only claiming women to be the victims of it. So, to know the viewpoints of the members of AHRC and also to understand their level of awareness on the issue, all the 10 members were asked separately regarding the victims of witch-hunt and the study observes that 60 percent respondents said that both men and women are the victims of witch-hunt and 40 percent respondents said that only women are the victims of witch-hunt. What is interesting to note is that they themselves never visited the areas where practices like witch-
Witch-hunt prevails and their opinion is based primarily on perception and to some extent reported case in police station but not on field experience

**Figure-1: Views on the victims of witch-hunt**

Witch-hunt has become a severe incident in Assam which is also breeding day by day and there are certain factors that have contributed towards the practice. So, it was significant to find out how AHRC views the reasons behind the practice. In order to understand the opinions of the members of AHRC, they were asked a question. The collected data reveals that 20 percent respondents mentioned superstition but 50 percent respondents said illiteracy, 10 percent respondents said personal grudge/greed and 20 percent respondents said that all the factors like superstition, illiteracy, personal grudge and greed are responsible behind the practice of witch-hunt. Witch-hunt has always gained attention as an act that is practiced merely out of superstitious belief in the existence of witchcrafts and witches but it can be said that superstition is not the only cause of witch-hunt rather other factors like illiteracy, personal grudge, greed etc. have also contributed towards it.

**Figure-2: Factors behind the practice of witch-hunt**

In order to analyze their perception on the matter of responsibility to be taken to eliminate witch-hunt, they were engaged with discussion on the matter. The data reflects that 50 percent respondents responded Government, 20 percent respondents said NGOs and 30 percent respondents replied that all the agencies i.e. govt, NGOs and the AHRC should take the responsibility in eliminating the practice of witch-hunt. It was very noteworthy that even the respondents from the AHRC believe that AHRC should also take the responsibility in eradicating witch-hunt from Assam and it also reveals that they want that the government should take the maximum possible responsibility and only few expressed faiths on the ability of NGOs.
Next query was on their views on witch-hunt as human rights violations. Answering this, all the respondents said that witch-hunt is a violation of human rights. This shows that the realization and understanding is there but implementation and execution do not match with their understanding. The inference that can be drawn from the collected data is that though all the respondents believe that witch-hunt is a violation of human rights but have not taken the issue seriously.

If we analyze the functions of AHRC, then it is found that AHRC can play an important role in issues relating to the human rights violation. So, in order to understand the works of the AHRC, an open-ended question was asked to them regarding the measures they have taken to deal with witch-hunt. In an answer to this question, the respondents said that AHRC has been continuously working for the

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25 Intervene in any proceeding involving any allegation of violation of human rights pending before the court, with the approval of such court, Review the factors including the act of terrorism that inhibit the enjoyment of human rights and recommend appropriate remedial measures, Encourage the efforts of non-governmental organizations and institutions working in the field of human rights; and such other functions as it may consider necessary for the promotion of human rights.
protection and promotion of human rights in Assam, organizing awareness campaigns on human rights issues, AHRC has also attended different meetings related to witch-hunt and have given their opinions on it. Moreover, AHRC has also dealt with two or three cases related to witch-hunt. But it gets reflected that AHRC has taken measures related to human rights as a whole and but has not taken any noteworthy measures to address witch hunt because witch hunt is a violation of human rights but it varies from all other forms of human rights as its elimination has to be a holistic one keeping in mind its very root in belief.

As of now, AHRC has handled only two cases, it was imperative to understand what they think of their limitations. 70 percent respondents believe that there are no such limitations and AHRC is working at its best for the cause of human rights in Assam. The 30 percent respondents who said that there are certain limitations, they further said that though the AHRC is established to protect and promote human rights in the state, it is not given free hand to work for the cause and certain limitations like limitations in powers and functions are there.

Figure-5: Limitations in the powers and functions of AHRC

It is found that even after accepting witch-hunt to be an act of human rights violation, AHRC has not taken identical measures to remove the practice. Thus, the members of AHRC were engaged in a discussion on the reasons behind insufficient works of the AHRC on the issue of witch-hunt and the respondents replied that as the powers and functions of the AHRC are similar to other Courts thus it cannot take any action by its own. Moreover, it cannot dictate rather it can only advise which is also not bounding on the authorities. Further, they said that the AHRC is a nodal agency of government and thus cannot go against the will of the government and despite limitations, AHRC has tries its best to promote and protect human rights in the state. But the fact is that the powers provided to the commission clearly show that AHRC can take innumerable measures to eliminate the practice of witch-hunt.

Conclusion

The above discussion shows that witch-hunt cannot be seen just as a crime rather it is a practice which is against the spirit of human rights. As all the human rights commissions be it international, national or state human rights commissions that are established only to protect and promote human rights have not taken any identical measures to eliminate the practice but actually all the commissions should take appropriate measures. This is not only their duty but also their responsibility. All the agencies/actors like AHRC, govt and NGOs need to work together as the goal is the same- to save mankind from the atrocious crime against humanity. Until and unless such practices are stopped, violations of human rights will continue to take place.
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Abstract
Even though we have seen women achieving greatness in diverse fields, their ability is still a matter of suspicion in the society. They have never been the first priority; exceptions are sometimes just a matter of symbolic representation only. However, the truth is that women do possess the ability to do things the way men do. But for utilizing their ability and proving it to the society, first they need support, trust and co-operation from the society itself. Hence, there is the need of research, experimentation about what women can do and for that matter rigorous study on their role is very much important. Keeping this in mind a study was carried out, the objective of which is to see the role of the elected women of Barak Valley in depicting the issues of the region in the legislature. The study covers the time period of 2006 to 2016 comprising the 12th and 13th Assemblies of the Assam Legislative Assembly. Data were mainly collected from the Assembly Proceeding Records found in the Assam Legislative Assembly Library, Dispur (Guwahati). The study finds that up to considerable level women members were able to inform the House about the problems of the region. It was also found that road connectivity, load shedding, flood, backwardness, practice of corruption, anomalies in education sector are some of the major issues affecting the valley.

Keywords: women, representatives, legislature and issue

Introduction
Election being the greatest festival of democracy is a matter of enthusiasm and excitement for almost all the sections of the society. People share their excitement to know who and which party has won the elections and who is going to form the next government. This eagerness of the common people is normally going to be alive for at least two three months of the formation of the new government; then gradually everything gets evaporated until and unless some new developments take place in and around the government. Same thing happens to the elected representatives also. In most of the cases, it is seen that what was promised during the time of the election campaign is not always the end of the representative forms of government rather it is proved as a mean to acquire the desired position only. But that is not where the essence of democracy lies. Being the supreme authority of a democratic form of government, it is the duty of each and every citizen to keep vigil on the day to day working of the government on the one hand and on the other hand, being the elected representative of the people, it is the duty of the representatives to be accountable to the common masses for each and every work they perform as people’s representatives. It is in that context that a study was carried out to see the role of elected representatives inside the Assembly House in informing the legislature about the problems of the region.

Objective & Rationale of the Study
As mentioned above it is a study about the role of the elected representatives inside the Assembly House. However, this study is not about the role of all the representatives of the total 126 Assembly constituencies of the State- Assam. The focus is mainly to see the role of elected women representatives only and to be more specific, it is about the role being played by the elected women
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MLAs of Barak Valley only. The rationale behind such narrow down is firstly, to testify women’s ability to lead. A common belief is always there which says that women being full of emotions are not suitable to lead and take part in the decision making process. Even the father of Political Science himself never felt it necessary and important to recognize women’s genuine ability and kept them away from politics making a huge gap between men and women for which the society in general and women in particular are still suffering. Hence, a study depicting women’s performance as people’s representative is expected to be able to diminish the gap between men and women and society’s negative connotation about women’s ability to a considerable level. Secondly, Barak Valley, being the other important part of the North Eastern State Assam seems to be isolated to some extent from that of the Brahmaputra Valley. Lack of proper transport and communication, slow industrial progress, backwardness are some identified factors for such isolation. So, here the question comes- do the elected representatives have succeeded in portraying the actual issues of this valley (or some parts of it) in the floor of the highest law making body of the State because to solve a problem, the problem needs to be identified and informed first and then only its remedial measures can be expected to come out and that is why informing the government about the actual problems accurately bears special significance.

Methodology

To pursue the study, data were mainly collected from the Assembly Proceeding Records of the Assam Legislative Assembly Library. Other required data were collected from the government records. Then, analysis and interpretation of the collected data has been made on the basis of individual understanding of the researcher.

An Overview of the Area of the Study

So, this study is about the role of the elected women representatives in the Assam Legislative Assembly of Barak Valley region in depicting the region’s issues in the legislature and it covers the time period of ten years starting from 2006 to 2016 comprising the 12th and 13th Assemblies. To be more specific, it is about the study of the role of total five women- two in the 12th and three in the 13th Assembly. The honourable women members from the valley in the 12th Assembly were- Dr. Rumi Nath from Borkhola LAC under the ticket of the BJP and Smt. Bithika Dev from Silchar LAC under the INC ticket. The other three women members (of the 13th Assembly) were- Smt. Sushmita Dev (Silchar LAC), Smt. Mandira Roy (Algapur LAC) and again Dr. Rumi Nath (Borkhola LAC); all were from the INC.

Now, before starting with the performances of these ladies, let’s have a quick overview of both the assemblies. So, the election to the 12th Assembly took place on 3rd and 10th of April, 2006 at two phases. Following the result declared on 11th of May, 2006 the new Assembly (Twelfth) was constituted on 13th May, 2006 under the leadership of Shri Tarun Gogoi with 113 male MLAs and 13 female MLAs. The first sitting of the 12th Assembly was held on 29th May, 2006 and continued up to 8th February, 2011. Shri Tankabahadur Rai and Smt. Pranati Phukan were unanimously elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Assembly respectively. After the completion of the term of the 12th Assembly, election to the 13th Assembly was held (the first phase was held on 4th April and the second phase was on 11th April, 2011) and it was constituted on 16th May, 2011 again under the leadership of Shri Tarun Gogoi and continued till 4th February, 2016. However, due to the demise of one of the member of the AGP from Algapur constituency by-election was held (on 24th February, 2013) and Smt. Mandira Roy (INC) won the election. Again, another by-election for 2 seats was held as Shri Sirajuddin Ajmal (Jamunamukh constituency) and Smt. Sushmita Dev (Silchar Constituency) resigned from their respective seats on being elected as Members of Parliament in the General Election held on 13th Sept. 2014. 1 So, the 13th

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1 Kalita, Akankhya, Participation of Elected Women Representatives in Assembly Debates: A Study of Assam (2006-16), Assam University, Silchar, unpublished, 2018. Pg. 5

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Assembly was constituted of 15 elected women representative altogether out of which 3 were from the Barak Valley.

Data Analysis & Findings

It is noteworthy to mention that a law maker or a representative needs to function in a two way process- one at the constituency level and the other at the institutional level. Normally, each session of assembly takes place for less than thirty days in a month and more than thirty days in a year. When no sessions are there, the representatives are expected to work at the constituency level like visiting the constituency, accumulating and understanding their problems and so on and so forth; and accordingly the problems need to be addressed in the House. Though the primary function of the legislature is to formulate the laws, it has endowed with numerous activities to fulfill (as the process of law making goes through all those numerous activities only). However, since the aim of this study is to look into the issues being raised by the elected women legislators (from Barak Valley), hence we are not going into the details of their association with all the legislative activities except the question hour section. So the following section deals with the issues being raised by the elected women leaders from the Barak Valley-

One of the most important legislative tools to keep the House informed and to exert pressure on it to work in a particular direction is question hour. The notice of a question shall be given in writing to the Principal Secretary and shall specify the official designation of the Minister to whom the question is being addressed along with the date on which the question is proposed to be placed on the list of questions for answer.

It is again noteworthy to mention that in the 12th Assembly there were total 132 sessions of which data of total 131 sessions were collected. And in those 131 days sessions, data for question hour sessions were collected for total 119 days. Again, in the 13th Assembly there were sessions for total 123 days and data could be collected for 114 days out of which total collected question hour sessions were for 108 days. It was also found that in those collected days the highest number of questions were asked by Dr. Rumi Nath (total 227 questions) in the 12th Assembly in total 92 (question hour) sessions; whereas, Smt. Bithika Dev asked only 11 questions in total 8 days in the 12th Assembly. The practice of asking questions by the women members from Barak Valley actually got reduced to a significant level in the 13th Assembly. Only 34 questions were asked by all the three women during their whole tenure of office. It should be reminded that putting questions in the House carries a significant mark as it is not only about informing the government as well as the concerned minister about what needs to be done but also indicates the representatives’ level of accessibility and availability in their respective constituencies. In one sense, it is a kind of exerting pressure on the government to do some previously undone works. In that context, raising less question means putting less pressure on the government on one hand and on the other hand, doing injustice (in the form of less visit and communication with the electorates) to their constituencies and electorates as well. However, the following lists of subjects would tell us the focusing points of issues being raised by these honourable members of the Valley in the question hour section-

1. **Agriculture**- government step to fill up vacant posts of gram sewak in the State, government awareness about the non-functioning of the irrigation system in Borkhola LAC, details of amount sanctioned under the Varsa-Bima 2005 scheme, preventive measures taken against draught, scarcity of water, details of

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2 Lakshmi, V S Swarajya, *Role perceptions and participation of representatives of legislative bodies in India with special focus on the members of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly*, University of Hyderabad, unpublished, 1990. Pg. 16
agricultural loans and its beneficiaries, amount of fund received by the department from the government of India, government step towards filling up of vacancy;

2. **Co-operative**- position of co-operative society, functioning of co-operative society, government awareness about the end of tenure of managing committee of co-operative society;

3. **Education**- total number of vacant posts of teachers in high and higher secondary schools in the State, student-teacher ratio, provincialization of the girls’ high school, attendance of teacher, number of venture schools in the State, functioning of provincialized high schools under Borkhola LAC, action against corrupt officials, position of shifting of educational institutions, distribution of text-books, corruption in construction of school building, enquiry report of suspension of the DEEO of Cachar district, transfer order of the DI of schools of Silchar, anomalies of the Central Resource Coordinator, violation of government order by the BEEO of Sonai, appointment of the officers, corruption in the construction of cooking shed, salary of the DI of schools of Cachar district, rationalization of school teacher, successful candidates of HSCL and high madrasas and their admission, programmes under the SSA, non-receipt of salary by teachers, non-receipt of government pension by the college teachers, alleged misappropriation of government money by a retired teacher, number of vacant posts of LP school teachers;

4. **Environment and Forest**- government awareness about the possible displacement of indigenous people due to alleged expansion of the Borail wild life sanctuary, smuggling of timber, ongoing schemes under the department, amount of fund released for schemes to be taken up in Cachar district, amount of centrally sponsored schemes and works executed under the social forestry wing in the district Cachar, rate of forest materials;

5. **Finance**- employees’ resentment on the Pay Commission Report;

6. **Fishery**- details of amount sanctioned from the World Bank, amount of fund received by the department from centrally sponsored schemes and state share in the district Cachar, fund allocation to the fish farmers’ development agency;

7. **Food and Civil Supply**- government awareness about the alleged irregularity of commodity distribution under fair price shops, prices of essential commodities, detail number of beneficiaries under the APL/BPL schemes in the State, details of the members of vigilance committees, irregularities in the supply of the ration cards, total numbers of the APL card distributed in the district Cachar;

8. **General administration**- declaration of holiday, strike of employee association, details of freedom fighters who have received pension, CBI enquiry of anomalies, number of VDP committees in Assam, government awareness about the incident of attempt to murder Dr. Rumi Nath at Karimganj;

9. **Handloom, Textile & Sericulture**- schemes for the ST/SC/OBC/MOBC/Tea Tribes, heavy taxes on textile items;

10. **Health & Family Welfare**- devastating situation in the PHC of Borkhola LAC caused by flood and shortage of medicines, detail number of PHCs and sub-centers running without doctors and Para-medical...
staff, enquiry about large number of alleged vacancy of teaching and non-teaching staff in the Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH), mobile health service for the tea garden and hilly area people, government awareness about selling of an infant from the SMCH, establishment of PHCs in Barak Valley, supply of anti-rabies vaccine, Janani Suraksha Aehani, sanctioning vacant posts, centrally released fund, construction of Borkhola PHC, details of fund sanctioned under the AIDS awareness programme, upgradation of the Borkhola CHC, malaria epidemic in the State, building construction of sub-centers and appointments, increase of incentives of the grade III and IV employees, managing committee of the SMCH, discontinuation of schemes, details of fund sanctioned for AIDS control, details of applicants applied for grade IV posts in the SMCH, government step towards the establishment of the Assam Unani Medical College and Hospital (AUMCH), fund for repairmen work of boys and girls hostel of the SMCH, setting up of model hospital, government step towards regularization of fixed pay to the asha workers, details of vacant posts at the SMCH;

11. **Home**- government awareness about unsatisfactory progress of construction work of broad gauge line in Lumding-Badarpur section due to lack of security for the workers and contractors, payment of outstanding dues in connection with the Assembly Election 2006, public complaints about dacoit and other criminal activities, detail list of cyclone affected families, details of investigation of serial blasts in the State, need of setting up of fire brigade center, present strength of the Assam Police, government awareness about the shortage of men power in Borkhola Police Station, IOC Gas bottling plant;

12. **Information & Technology**- information relating to Community Information Center (CIC) project;

13. **Information and Public Relation**- deprivation of the Barak Darpan (newspaper) from receiving any government advertisement, status of schemes under the accelerated irrigation benefit programme;

14. **Inland Water Transport**- government awareness about the accident of a ferry;

15. **Irrigation**- number of erosion protection bund at Borkhola LAC, detail of the policy for installation of the Shallow Tube Wells (STW) in Barak Valley, public complaint about the quality of canal scheme;

16. **Judicial**- posting of judges, government step towards establishment of village courts;

17. **Labour & Employment**- information about deposit of provident fund by tea gardens to concerned authority, non-receipt of gratuity money by the tea garden employees even after their death, functioning of the Sirikona ITI;

18. **Panchayat & Rural Development**- fund allotment for panchayat and rural development in Cachar district, panchayat elections, corruption charges against the Cachar DRDA, details of release of district wise fund for rural development, fund allotment under the SGSY Scheme, action against one BDO, schemes under the GPs, detail list of the SHGs (Self Help Group), details of unutilized funds, detail list of the NREGA Schemes, anomalies in public fund, fund under the NREGA, 5 year action plan under the NREGA, schemes under the District Development Plan in Cachar district, steps taken for proper implementation of the NREGA in the districts of Assam, government policy for providing salaries to all the three tier panchayati raj in Assam, government step for labour budget in the districts of Assam, list of
executed schemes, number of job card labourers, details of secretaries with dual charge, fund for maintenance of the PMGSY works, details of work executed under the SGRY;

19. **Pension and public grievances**- information related to recruitment of employees;

20. **PHE**- fund for stabilization of water supply, enquiry about the areas affected by arsenic, details of defunct schemes, number of schemes under the department, delay in the start of the World Bank assisted sanitation scheme at Algapur, number of new schemes for Borkhola LAC;

21. **Planning & Development**- beneficiaries of the Dharma Jyoti/Gyan Jyoti/Jibon Jyoti schemes in Assam;

22. **Political affairs**- implementation of the Assam Linguistic Act, progress status of the NRC;

23. **Power**- need of electrical sub-division at Borkhola LAC, details of schemes included under accelerated power development reform programme in Barak Valley, government awareness about the problem of load shedding in the whole of Cachar district and some parts of the Barak Valley, utilization of electrical posts, power sub-station, government decision to shift a dam project, position of the RGV scheme at Borkhola LAC, slow progress of the RGV scheme, number of villages not covering by the RGVS, status of progress of work of the RGV scheme;

24. **PWD**- the PMGSY scheme and the details of fund allotment, details of scheme allocation under the World Bank, government awareness about the deplorable condition of the Silchar-Kalain road, repairmen of the Silchar-Kalain road, road congestion and traffic jam due to increase of number of vehicles in Silchar town, fund for construction of road, details of amount spent under different schemes, low quality work, additional charge of Inspector of Schools, total amount sanctioned for repairmen of the Silchar-Kalain road, case registration against the JE of Salchapra development block and its enquiry report, reason for not taking up repairmen work of the Silchar-Kalain road, amount of fund sanctioned for repairmen work, details about special package to the Barak Valley, amount of fund sanctioned for the Silchar-Kalain road under the NEC;

25. **Revenue**- difficulties faced by the people due to the breach of embankment, government awareness about displacement of people due to construction of the Mahasadak especially in bordering area of the North Cachar Hills, allotment of land, relief for flood and other natural calamity victims, anomalies of fund, enquiry against corrupt officials, details of flood affected families, closing of land settlement operation, government plan on promotion of chainmen, appointment of headmen, government step for sanctioning one circle office at Borkhola LAC;

26. **Social welfare**- filling up of vacancy and appointment of anganwadi workers, present position of the ICDS Projects, payment of honorarium to the workers of the Silchar Regional Rehabilitation Center, details of fund allocation for implementation of schemes of differently able persons, details of amount allotted for the scheme of Bima Jivan Jyoti/health care in Cachar district;

27. **Sports**- enquiry about government initialization to set up the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Center in Barak Valley to impart sports training;
28. **Tourism** - development of Ramnagar Anna, government plan to expand tourism programmes in Barak Valley, position of construction of tourism lodge, details of the implemented schemes of the department;

29. **Transport** - decision of withdrawn of check gates, total number of check gates in the Barak Valley, distribution of boats, regularization of services of master role workers, ASTC bus services;

30. **Urban development** - strike of the employees of municipalities in demand of provincialization of their services, drainage and sewage scheme, inauguration of the Gandhibagh Park, schemes of planning and development under the Cachar district, total amount of fund sanctioned for water drainage scheme, public complaint about setting up of mobile towers, total area of municipality taxation;

31. **Veterinary** - abandonment of veterinary building, problems faced by common people due to shortage of medicine and man power;

32. **Water resource** - present status of the schemes under the water resource department, number of total sluice gates, maintenance of sluice gates and embankment, present position of the multipurpose drainage project scheme at Borkhola and Katigorah LAC, sanction of fund for sluice gate, demand for construction of dam, total amount of fund received by the government for execution of various schemes, space technology for better flood control management, schemes under the department, government awareness about river erosion, amount sanctioned for the Cachar district for the protection of embankment, government awareness about the urgent need of new water supply projects at areas under the Borkhola LAC, details of amount of fund allocated and utilized;

33. **WPT** - number of backlog vacancies in Cachar district, allegation against discrepancies in recruitment process of tribal youths, creation of tribal belts and blocks, beneficiaries under the Family oriented Generating Schemes/pre-metric/post-metric scholarship, schemes taken under the Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council, schemes taken under various development boards of Cachar district, alleged deprivation of the hill tribes living in the plain districts of the Barak Valley from some privileges, up gradation and holding election of the Barak Valley Hill Tribes Development Council, details of schemes under the SC Corporation Board in Silchar, minority development fund in Assam, demand for setting up of the Assam Nath-Yogi development council, details of schemes implemented by the Nath Development Council;

Thus it is seen that the elected women members were active in bringing out and informing the House about the burning issues of the Valley. Certain remarks on the basis of this analysis can be made here-

**Firstly**, from the subjects of their questions we come to a conclusion that the region is mostly suffering from- bad road condition, underdevelopment, flood, problem of load shedding, corruption, anomalies in appointment processes, anomalies in various departments and their implementation of schemes. However, it was the Borkhola and Silchar constituencies mostly which found more expression than the other parts like Algapur.

**Secondly**, it is also observed that legislators from opposition parties remained more pro-active than the legislators of Ruling party. It is evident from the performances of these ladies in both the
Assemblies. For example, Dr. Rumi Nath who happened to be an MLA from the BJP in the 12th Assembly asked total 227 questions in 92 sessions (which is quite impressive), was not found raising even 50 questions in the 13th Assembly. Similarly, other members were also not found asking satisfactory numbers of questions making our perception stronger about the activeness of the members of opposition versus ruling party.

Thirdly, Dr. Rumi Nath not asking questions in the 13th Assembly as much as the 12th Assembly also gives an impression that no matter what kind of constituency a member is coming from; s/he will always try to fulfill the party interest first because in the 13th Assembly she got elected under the ticket of the INC Party which was the BJP in the 12th Assembly of course from the same constituency and it is almost illogical to believe that in her former tenure she could able to solve all the problems indicating the base of our observation correct.

Conclusion

Finally coming to the conclusion, we must say that nowhere the ladies from the Valley had proved their inability to lead and represent the people- especially the presence of Dr. Rumi Nath and Smt. Sushmita Dev was found visible to a larger extent than the other two members. They were found to be able to take their stand in the floor of the House. In fact, during the 12th Assembly it was Dr. Rumi Nath who staged walk out from the House in protest against the constitutional provision of saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in support and opposition of any amendment of a Government Bill introduced in the House for consideration and passing purpose (11th Session, Budget Session, No. 13, 21st July, 2009). Undoubtedly, that’s a bold step in a packed House of total 126 members. Moreover, these five women were also part of various legislative committees in the House. To mention, Dr. Rumi Nath was selected to function as a secretary of the Legislature Committee. She was also elected as the member of- the Welfare Committee for the OBC/MOBC (twice) and the ST/SC Welfare Committee and Government Audit Committee. Likewise, Smt. Bithika Dev was elected as the member of the Employment Review Committee of the Assam Legislative Assembly. Then Smt. Sushmita Dev was elected as member of the Town and Country Planning Advisory Committee and Public Undertaking Committee of the Assam Legislative Assembly (twice). Then again, Mandira Roy was also found to be elected as the member of the Public Undertaking Committee. All these things actually indicate that the honourable ladies were not merely the spectators of the show; rather, they were in a position to make their presence felt in the highest law making body of the State. Surely, they would be able to deliver some more stupendous works for the welfare of the people on the condition of getting more opportunity, support and co-operation from their colleagues as well as the people. For that matter political parties need to be the trend setter in accommodating more and more women in to their parties. The voters also need to change their outlook towards women candidates. Because it is not the gender that matters, but what matters most is how much a candidate is motivated to work willingly for the well-being of the society. So it is not justifiable to consider women misfit for politics on the ground of her gender identity.
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Abstract

We, the human beings, are separate from animals as we have rationality. Though we are rational beings, yet when we think about the occurrences like rape, gang-rape etc., questions arise about our rationality. In the animal kingdom, we seldom find instances like the gang-rape of Kāmduni. Two obstacles of women’s emancipation are religious prejudices and patriarchy. Wise people also give diversity of opinions and take separate standpoints about the matter of women emancipation, though the matters like rape, gang-rape etc. are criticised by them all. The feminists always demand equal rights of women. Though we always demand that our culture as the best as we worship woman as Goddess, yet it is a fact that in all parts of our country women are victims of exploitations. In family and society, we find that the position of women is degrading day-by-day. If we want to overcome this crisis, we may take shelter to Swami Vivekananda. In the present paper, I shall explain how Swamiji’s view about women can help us to overcome this situation.

Key Words: women, emancipation, Brahman, mother, education.

Explanation

Swami Vivekananda was a humanist in the true sense of the term. He spoke about gender equality. He thought that members of both gender are dependable on each other. All men are Brahman. So, neither male nor female is superior than other. General people treat woman as inferior than man. But Vivekananda had accepted mother’s grace as more valuable than father’s grace. He said that mother’s bless is the highest bless and a person always should follow the dictation of his mother.

Swami Vivekananda developed his concept about women from his childhood. He was totally an obedient son of his mother. He treated women as the copy of Devi. Without improving the position of women in our society, we shall not able to form an ideal state. He said that we can understand the progress of a nation by observing its attitude towards women.

In Sāṃkhya philosophy, we find the concept of evolution where it is said that evolution becomes possible when Prakṛti and Puruṣa come in-contact. That means, both are necessary for creation. A society can not develop without women. Swamiji treated women as the moral fibre of family. It is a fact that women in all countries has been suffering since time immemorial. Vivekananda said, “Woman has suffered for aeons, and that has given her infinite patience and infinite perseverance.” (COMPLETE. WORKS, Vol-7, P. 95)

In the process of this suffering, they had developed within themselves the virtues of tolerance, diligence etc. In modern society, we find the absence of these virtues. Though our tradition gave women a very higher place, but we, the people of modern India, totally have forgotten the teachings of our tradition. As a result, we have formed ourselves as the symbols of intollerance. Swami Vivekananda was a supporter of Vedānta philosophy. So, his concept of women was based on the Vedic concept of equality. Men and women all are pure ātman or Brahman. According to Vivekananda, soul has no sex. Sex exists only in our body. If we want to reach the highest state of
life, we have to reject gender discrimination. Gender discrimination will arise in the society, if we give emphasis on the human body. Vivekananda thought that due to māyā we think ourselves as male or female which is nothing but illusion. Vivekananda thought that the highest reality or Brahman is beyond gender discrimination. Common people divide man and woman on the basis of sex. The idea of difference will vanish from our mind if we deeply think about our exact nature. Vedānta philosophy does not treat any people as superior or inferior. Women can develop themselves like men if they think themselves as Brahman. They have to think themselves as human beings and they have to reject gender-discrimination. Soul is sexless. The soul is not limited in space and time. So, we should not describe ourselves as members of this or that country, followers of this or that religion etc. We should think the whole world as our own country, all religion as our own religion. Vivekananda thought that women have to know their exact nature. If they are able to do so, then they will be able to solve their own problems. “Women must be put in a positon to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them.” (C. W. , Vol-5, p. 229)

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Swami Vivekananda thought that in the history of ancient India, we find many instances where women proved themselves as equal with men. Women were the successful rulers of many states which proves their superiority. In the Vedic age, Maitreyi, Gargi and other ladies proved themselves as equal with men. We know that in a discussion about Brahman, Yajnavalka was challanged by Gargi. Here Vivekananda said that if in the Vedic period Gargi was able to do this, then it is also possible for the women of modern India. Vivekananda spoke in favour of the repetition of history. He thought that the progress of a country is dependent on the position of women. A country cannot reach in the highest position if it does not give proper honour to its women. If it gives proper respect and dignity to its women, then it can attain at the point of greatness.

Swamiji said that in Hinduism, women are described as images of Divine Mother or Devi. He said, “In India the mother is the center of the family and our highest ideal. She is to us the representative of God, and God is the mother of the Universe.” (C. W. , V-2, p. 506) So, disrespect of women means disrespect of Divine Mother. Such type of events lead to the downfall of the state. Without the contribution of women, a society cannot be organised. Women are the locus of creation. According to Manu, all ladies should be honoured properly (strīyāḥ sarvāsthāthaiṣa ca) (Manusāṁhitā, 2nd Chapter, Verse No. 123) Manu also said that ‘yatra nārāystu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ’ (Manusāṁhitā, 3rd Chapter, Verse No. 56) which means, Gods feel pleasure there where women are honoured. “Where women are respected, there the gods delight; and where they are not, there all works and efforts come to naught.” (C. W. , Vol-7, p. 215)

In the Epic period, women were inspired to follow spiritual life unquestioningly. As a result, women were influenced by the ideal of Sita and Sabitri. At that time women were not interested about education but they used to lead the life of spirituality. They always tried to make their life pure. To become pure, they used to follow morality and spirituality. It was believed that a man loses every thing if he loses his character. Thus women used to develop intrinsic values. Vivekananda thought that now-a-days people give much importance on money, rather than character. As a result, people become habituated to disregard women. It is not right to give more emphasis on intellectualty rather than purity. Vivekananda had accepted morality and spirituality as higher than intellectualty. We should endeavour to achieve this two.

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According to Swami Vivekananda, women may be of two types – the mother women and the fallen women. Maternal women possess spiritual qualities and they are pure. But the fallen women are sexual beings and possess negative qualities like lethargy, cowardice etc. If women can develop the qualities of mother, sister etc., then they become pure and spiritual. On the other hand, if they give
emphasis on their sexuality, then they become temptress, whore etc. Vivekananda observed that the concept of women of Aryans’ was totally different from the Semitics. At the time of devotion the presence of woman was described as dangerous by the Semitics. The Aryans, on the other hand, did not allow an unmarried person to perform religious acts. Such type of person can never be a priest. At that time, women were also allowed to be a priest. A man without a wife was described as half-man. “Amongst the Semites the presence of woman is considered dangerous to devotion, and she may not perform any religious function, even such as the killing of a bird for food: according to the Aryan a man cannot perform a religious action without a wife.” (C. W., Vol-5, P. 229).

The downfall of women is the result of the emergence of a new priest class. According to Vivekananda, “But with the advent of a distinct and separate priest-class, the co-priesthood of women in all these nations steps back.” (C. W., Vol-2, p. 504) The Assyrian race, which was originated from Semitic blood declared that at the time of marriage, the girls should have no voice and no right. This idea was accepted by the Partians and from them it was steered to Rome. Thus the downfall of women started in the various places of the world.

The concept of marriage was not present in the primitive society. Marital or connubial system came into existence in the later age. In the primitive age, the center of the family was mother and women enjoyed advantageous position in the family and society. Then polyandry was allowed in the society, i.e. at that time, an woman may has many husbands. Then children were named after mother, because in the system of polyandry, it is not possible to decide the exact father of children. Women were the owner of wealth.

In course of time, the marriage system was changed which was a cause of the downfall of women. Vivekananda said, “Another cause was instrumental in bringing this about- the change in the system of marriage.” (C. W., Vol. 2, p. 504) At that time, the ownership of wealth has been transformed into the hands of men. Women were declared as a sort of property like chattels. The supremacy of male was established in the society. In modern marriage system men take the upperhand in all respects which is an instance of patriotism. Vivekananda said that there are some places where women led everything still now. For example, Tibet, Malabar and some places of Southern India. Vivekananda thought that women may compete with men in every respect if they have given equal opportunities. Due to the oppression of men, women behave like fox, but if they are oppressed too much, they will definitely become lion.

Vivekananda blamed Buddhism and Christianity for the downfall of the position of women. The monasteries of Buddhists and Christians were responsible for the degeneration of women. “The development of all monasticism always meant the degeneration of women.” (C. W., Vol. 2, p. 506) The monestries proclaimed many warnings against women. “All blame was cast into women, and even the proverbs warned against them.” (C. W., Vol-2, P-505) Women were declared as the gate of hell, they were declared as the cause of our bondage. Though Buddha is regarded as the greatest man, yet he was against the community life of women. In this way, women became inferior than men.

Hinduism gave respect to women in various ways. But it may be said that this respect actually goes against women, because in terms of respect it prohibits women to go out. The concept of ‘Personal purity’ is also a cause of the downfall of women in India. Rgveda again and again speaks about personal purity. “This idea of personal purity has imprinted itself deeply into the very heart of the race, amounting almost to a mania.” (C. W., Vol-2, p. 505) It was thought that women are protected within the house. That means, women should be kept in shelter. It was declared that woman will not able to protect their chastity if they take part into the social life. Vivekananda thought that the greatest virtue of women is chastity. But there is no reason to think that social women cannot protect their chastity.
It is a fact that the same event may be judged by a man and a woman differently. Their spiritualistic approach is also different. Due to the differences of nature, their vision is different. Vivekananda observed, “Men have one angle of vision, women another; men argue from one standpoint, women from another.” (C. W., Vol-7, p. 378) Man always try to reduce the position of woman by critising their view. The ideal of Western man is wife, while in India, it is mother. “In the West it found its ideal in the wife, in India the mother.” (C. W., Vol. 2, p. 506) Indians accept mother as the highest ideal. Wife and children may make the life of a man like a desert, but mother can never do this. Mother loves selflessly. Nobody can love like a mother. The living images of sakti or Divine-mother are women. Vivekananda thought that the first manifestation of power is mother because with the name of Mother Divine energy comes. It is impossible for us to know ourselves if we donot worship the Divine Mother who is all-merciful, all-powerful and omnipresent. The sum total of energy in the universe is mother. We should love mother as she brings us into the world. Vivekananda observed that everybody cries by uttering the word, “mother”. “The emperor cries “Mother”, the field-marshal cries “Mother”, … … … the bagger in the streets cries “Mother”! A million voices in million ways, from a million places…. … … cry “Mother”, “Mother”, “Mother”! Everywhere is the cry “Ave Maria”; day and night, “Ave Maria”, “Ave Maria”! ” (C. W., Vol. 5, p. 506)

According to Vivekananda, education is an important way of woman’s salvation. Education will help woman to know her own self and she will come to know that she is nothing but Brahman. Through institutionalised form of education we only achieve some informations and so it is not real education. Real education helps a man to know the culture and history of his own nation. Real manifstation of self is possible through education. Women may built good character through education. Through education they can develop the good qualities and increase their intelligence, they can stand on their own feet. “Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them.” (C. W., Vol-5, p. 229)

Though in ancient India women were spiritually genius, yet in course of time, their position was degenerated due to the lack of education. Uneducated women always engage themselves with eating, drinking, gossiping etc. Women were frightened due to the lack of education. Vivekananda thought that Indian women needed such type of education through which they can develop their womenhood like Sita and Sabitri and they will able to form themselves fearless women like Sanghamitra etc. Vivekananda again and again spoke about the proper education of Indian women. Through education women will be able to develop strong mental character and also will able to save their chastity. Then women will be able to overcome all types of fear. Dr. Barnali Maity in her article entitled ‘Education for Women Emancipation: Swami Vivekananda in Today’s Relevance’ said, “In Indian social, cultural and economic context, women’s empowerment and emancipation can not be achieved within a sort span of time.” ( International Journal of Advances in Social Sciences, Volume: 4, Issue No: 2, Year: 2016, ISSN: 2347-5153) Dr. Maity observed that to improve the conditions of women Indian Government has implimented various schemes and women should utilise these chances.

Vivekananda observed that the downfall of women in India started when the priests seized the right of other casts as well as of women to study Veda. A nation can achieve the point of greatness, if it gives proper respect to its women. Kaushik Mondal in his article entitled ‘Women Education as Swami Vivekananda’s thought and it’s Present Relevance’ said, “Swamiji knows that there is no chance of any welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.” ( International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies, Volume- II, Issue: III, November 2015, ISSN: 2349-6711) Vivekanana advised to open girls’ school in every village of our country to uplift them. He said, “If the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the
name of the country- then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the land.” (C. W., Vol- 7, p. 220) The main reason of degeneration of our country is that now-a-days we do not give proper respect to women. Here we find that Vivekananda’s opinion is very much similar with the opinion of Kurl Marx because Marx also said that social progress is actually dependent on the social status of women.

Freedom is a condition of growth. Through education women can able to increase their productivity and minimize gender inequality. They may take decision within the family and society. Vivekananda thought that his concept of universal religion doesnot create any bar in the way of women’s emancipation. He wanted all round development of Indian women. Vivekananda wanted education for all people of the country.

Now I shal explain briefly the opinions of Mahatma Gandhi and Prof. Amartya Sen about women and prabable responses from the stand point of Swami Vivekananda.

Gandhiji did not consider women as weaker than men. In respect of physical power, women are weaker than men. But Gandhiji considered moral power as the real power of human being and in this respect women are stronger than men. Gandhiji accepted non-violance as the highest virtue and thought that women can adopt this virtue more easily than men. Self-sacrifice, tolarance etc are the virtues which are manifested more in women. To Gandhiji women’s freedom means freedom from male’s tyranny as well as freedom from feminine whims. He said that women’s emancipation will become possible if women can develop their intrinsic virtues rather to make themselves beautiful externally. He said that women should be self-dependent. In this context, he told about small or household industries. Gandhiji said, “Wives should not be dolls and objects of indulgence, but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service.” (Constractive Programme, p. 17-18)

Here it may be said that Vivekananda also did not accept women as weaker than male. Rather he thought that both men and women are equal as both are Brahman. Through proper education women can realise about their inner power. Education may help women to become perfect and then they can work both in small industries as well as in big industries.

Prof. Amartya Sen said that we can Judge women’s emancipation from two aspects- well-being aspect and agency aspect. He gives emphasis on agency aspect, because the agency of women may take an important role for their emancipation. “The active agency of women cannot, in any serious way, ignore the urgency of rectifying many inequalities that blight the well-being of women and subject them to unequal treatment; thus the agency role must be much concerned with women’s well being also.” (Development as Freedom, 1999, p. 190) Comparing the physical structure, we should not think that man is superior than woman. Rather, we should think that both are equally good in their own position. In the Vedic age, women felt comfort to live at home. Within the family their necessary requirements were fulfilled. They were not able to enjoy freedom. Freedom is associated with the agency aspect. Actually this two aspects are inter-related. As women cannot raise their voice within the family till today, so they are victims of inequalities. Prof. Sen said that if we want to improve the position of women, we have to give emphasis on the agency aspect.

But it may be said that the agency aspect alone is not able to solve the problem of discrimination against women. Though the agency aspect of women is increasing in India, but violence against women is still persisting. In their whole life sphere, women have been facing discrimination, injustice etc. All over the world discussion is going on about subordination of women. Vivekananda said that the agency aspect of women may be meaningful when they will understand that like men they are also Brahmen, they are also good and powerful.

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Conclusion: It may be said that women’s emancipation is blocked by three factors- patriarchy, orthodoxy and prejudice. Hindu women were not allowed to choose their marriage partners. The
supporters of Hindu orthodoxy did not allow property right to its women. They were not allowed to go outside the home.

Vivekananda accepted that biological factor is one of the cause of subordination of women. He thought that the minds of Indian women are very much pure and so they are the soul of our country. Indian women are mysterious in nature. Vivekananda again and again said that women should be worshipped like Goddess Kāli. The main cause of the degradation of India is that now-a-days we do not respect women. Vivekananda was devoted to his mother and to all women of the world. The youths of India can take lesson from this. He thought that we cannot repay the debts of our mother.

We shall be able to make our country prosperous if we respect our mother and all women of the country, like Vivekananda. We may call him a patriotic humanist because he was respectful on Indian culture and heritage where women are conceived as images of Sakti. Following Indian tradition, he gave honour on the chastity of Indian women. Indians should cultivate their own culture and after that they may be respectful to others’ culture. Nobody should reject his own culture. The young generation of India think that the Western materialism is more acceptable than Indian spiritualism. But Vivekananda said that such type of thinking is not right. No country can be developed by rejecting its own culture and heritage.

Women’s ethics is generally known as care ethics and men’s ethics is known as rule-based ethics or deontological ethics. We start to degrade care ethics when we degrade women. It is not right to think that care ethics is inferior than deontological ethics. It is a fact that most of the women of India live in village and are still illiterate. So, they feel comfort to live within the family. A general tendency of Indian women is that they prefer homely environment rather than institutional environment. But it is not right to say that women are not able to fulfil the demands of institution. Women are by nature sympathetic, soft and careful. We should not neglect these virtues of women. The main cause of the downfall of women in India is that we donot respect the care ethics of women. If we can accept Vivekananda’s view about education and religion, then we may be able to stop exploitations against women. Proper education will help Indian women to solve their problems in their own way.

Vivekananda thought that pleasure and pain are present in every moment of our life. We cannot avoid them. Most of the man of the world are optimists. But we are not able to fulfil our thirsts totally. Vivekananda observed that nothing is totally good or totally bad. The same event may be pleasurable to one and painful to another. We often feel bitter experiences though we always try to avoid them. Absolute seperation of good and bad people will bring eternal barrier and hatred in the world. Such type of thinking was considered by Vivekananda as more evil rather than evil itself. We should not think good and evil as separate entities, rather we should think that they are evolution of good. The sun shines on both saints and sinners. Similarly, mother loves both her good and bad son. Pleasure may originate from pain. Before the birth of a baby, mother feels tremendous pain. If we keep this fact in mind, then we shall be able to refrain ourselves from doing any type of misbehave against women. Following Vivekananda, we should think that Parabrahman is the highest reality. There is no sex discrimination in Parabrahman. There is only outwardly difference between men and women. Their real nature is the same. Vivekananda observed that people of all country represent an ideal consciously or unconsciously by their work. It is conceived that individual is nothing but an external expression of an ideal. A nation is nothing but a collection of individuals. So if we want to know a nation, we have to know its ideal. Mother is the ideal women in India. The life of an woman is fulfilled when she becomes mother. Tremendous responsibility comes-from motherhood. Vivekananda thought that due to pre-natal influence, a child becomes good or bad. Before the birth of a child mother undergo regorous penances to keep herself pure both physically and mentally. So, mother deserves worship. Indians accept liberation as the highest end of life. The world is creation of
Māyā. Vivekananda said that through knowledge both men and women can attain liberation. Following Vivekananda if we give proper respect to women, then we shall be able to stop all types degradation of women. So, it may be said that Vivekananda’s opinion about women is very much relevant even today.

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New Visualization in Contemporary Indian Sculpture with Reference to the Modern Indian Sculptors

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Abstract

In early 20th century, the Indian sculpture adapted to the western academic art traditions and thus, the artists who trained in the academic realist style at British art schools worked on secular subjects. The most important turning point in the modern Indian sculpture was in the form of works by Ramkinkar Baij in 1940s and 1950s. The 1950s onward, a variety of experiments have been done in the Indian sculpting. This includes experiments with wood, stone and unusual material such as hemp. Ramkinkar Baij was inspiration of many Indian Sculptors, like Dhanraj Bhagat, Sharbari Roy Choudhury, Chintamoni Kar, Pradosh Das Gupta and so many others. Present contemporary Indian art scenario is also running successfully on this track, Bharti Kher, Subodh Gupta, and Dhruv Mistry are the three big names who have been emerged from this way and they have contributed a lot in the Indian contemporary sculptural field. Contemporary scenario the artists are navigating the complex routes between the historical past and the present, fact and fiction, or new and old identities, during a period of societal flux. In this context, I focuses on three major sculptors namely Bharti Kher, Subodh Gupta, and Dhruv Mistry. Bharti Khers works are heterogeneous. Her exploitation of the drama inherent in objects, tapping into mythologies and the numerous diverse associations a thing can bring as a new imagery. Here, the use of bindi is astonishing and allusive to make their own mythologies. On the contrary Subodh Gupta’s incorporation of everyday objects that are ubiquitous throughout India, which reflects in his sculptures, as the economic transformation of his homeland and relating the artist’s own life and memories. Dhruv Mistry’s combinations of religious art of ancient civilizations along with the popular art of the bazaar, bearing a rich narrative quality and varies in style and scale-from small sculptures in bronze to monumental works of Public spaces, made of sand, cement, stone and stainless steel. As India continues its expression on the world economic stage, the work of its artists will become an even more widely acknowledged vehicle for expressing new ways and new imageries of being that are hard to convey outside the terms that art provides.

Key Words: Sculpture, Bazaar, Bindi, Techno, Pseudo realism, Crescendos

Objectives

• To study, the Historical Background of contemporary Indian sculpture.
• To discuss how the process of experimentation opened up a new way in contemporary Indian sculpture.
• To highlight the works of Bharti Kher, Subodh Gupta and Dhruv Mistry gave a new dimension of Indian Contemporary Art

Methodology

This paper includes both primary as well as secondary data sources has been included for the requirements of the paper. The primary data sources are direct photographs of their works. The secondary Data source are books, Journal, reviews, internet etc.
Introduction

In historic art, sculpture in stone and metal, mainly religious, has survived the Indian climate better than other media, and provides most of the best remains. The origin of Indian arts can be traced to prehistoric Hominid settlements in the third millennium BC. On its way to modern time, Indian art has had cultural influence, as well as religious influences such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam. In spite of this complex mixture of religious traditions, generally the major religious groups have shared the prevailing artistic style at any time and place.

The modernism in Indian sculpture has come via the transition from academism of the 20th century to well-defined non-objectivism of recent times. In early 20th century, the Indian sculpture adapted to the western academic art traditions and thus, the artists who trained in the academic realist style at British art schools worked on secular subjects. This was a significant departure from the ancient and medieval norms, where the artists worked on myths and deities. This was the phase of intense and exaggerated realism in Indian sculpture. Many of the famous sculptors were trained painters and vice versa. The most important turning point in the modern Indian sculpture was in the form of works by Ramkinkar Baij in 1940s and 1950s. Baij looked afresh at both western and traditional Indian norms, and mixed them up in modern context. He not only was able to input the indigenous content in the sculptures but also experimented with unconventional material such as concrete, gravel and cement. The rural landscape and tribal communities were his subjects. The 1950s onward, a variety of experiments have been done in the Indian sculpting. This includes experiments with wood, stone and unusual material such as hemp.

Contemporary art is the art of today, produced by artists who are living in the twenty-first century. Contemporary art provide an opportunity to reflect on contemporary society and the issues relevant to ourselves, and the work around us. Contemporary artist work in a globally influenced, culturally diverse, and technologically advancing world. Their art is a dynamic combination of materials, methods, concepts and subjects that challenge traditional boundaries and defy easy definition. Contemporary art is part of a cultural dialogue that concerns larger contextual frameworks such as personal and cultural identity, family, community, and nationality. Working with ideas that are both highly personal and representative of the shifts and changes taking place in the global sphere, to the contemporary scenario the artists are navigating the complex routes between the historical past and the present, fact and fiction, or new and old identities, during a period of societal flux.

Background Study

Sculptors who trained in the academic realist style at British art schools worked on secular subjects in a departure from ancient and medieval Indian norms, where myths and deities formed the major themes. Sculptures were now created to cater to the demands of the newly emerging upper and middle social classes. The innovation of Indian sculptors can be seen in the intense and exaggerated realism during this period.

The next phase of sculptural development is represented by artists such as D.P Roy Chowdhury, Fanindranath Bose and V. P. Karmarkar who were influenced by the dignified and monumental works of the French sculptor Rodin. It was only in the 1940’s and 1950’s that Indian modern sculpture developed a unique indigenous language; best represented by the works of Ram Kinker Baij. His distinctive style, he experimented with unconventional material and looking to the rural landscape and tribal communities for subjects. The 1950’s were marked by experimentations with wood and stone, in which the essential character of the solid block was retained. In the next two decades, sculptors utilized a variety of techniques to create new relationships between material, theme and form. The sculptures celebrated the spirit of humanism and their work was also infused with a sense of the spiritual that is reminiscent of classical sculptural styles. The search for pure form induced by European aesthetics added a new and interesting dimension. Experiments with unusual material,
sometimes in combination with traditional material, had intriguing results. Apart from the classical traditions, folk and tribal sources had a profound effect on the artistic imagination.

**Concepts in Contemporary Indian Sculpture**

Three dominant features cloud the paramount sky of the Indian sculptures. They reiterate with time in the crescendos of art and sculpture. Unique indigenous language unconventional materials such as concrete gravel and cement looking to the rural landscape and tribal communities for subjects which reaffirm the unquenchable quest for identity. The second is the use of Computer Graphics, photography and modern techno buzz and an amalgamation of other media in the threshold of the creation of sculptural art amidst the Indian artistic canvas. Again, last but not the least the exploration for individualist language of expression, the affirmation of Pseudo realism, and an art genre, which only originated in India. The stalwarts of Indian arts carried forward their nationalistic ideas, which were born in British era. In 1950s Ramkinkar Baij was inspiration of many Indian Sculptors, like Dhanraj Bhagat, Sharbari Roy Choudhury, Chintamoni Kar, Pradosh Das Gupta and so many others. Present contemporary Indian art scenario is also running successfully on this track. In this context, I focuses on three major sculptors namely Bharti Kher, Subodh Gupta, and Dhruv Mistry are the three big names who have been emerged from this way and they have contributed a lot in the Indian contemporary sculptural field.

**Working styles of Subodh Gupta, Bharti Kher and Dhruva Mistry**

**Subodh Gupta**

Subodh Gupta is working across a variety of media, he is best known for his monumental sculptural works composed of everyday metal objects such as lunch boxes, tin cans, and cookware. Self-described as a representative of a cultural history, his work translates a spiritual quality through the items from which they are composed. Born in Khagul, Bihar, India in 1964, he went on to receive his BFA in painting from the College of Arts & Crafts in Patna, India. Like many artists working in India today, Gupta's work encompasses a shifting economic and cultural Indian landscape, where materialism and political sway shape the future, rather than tradition. By using quintessentially Indian icons that possess innate dichotomies—such as a colonial-style ambassador’s car, sacred cow dung, or the stainless steel utensils of a typical South Asian kitchen—Gupta questions the ambivalence of a society caught between traditional customs and globalization, booming wealth and impoverishment, and old caste politics and religious beliefs. Subodh Gupta employs many of the original techniques of French conceptualist Marcel Duchamp by elevating the ready-made into an art object. Gupta chooses signature objects of the Indian sub-continent and relocates them as art objects in monumental installations of stainless steel and tiffin-tins. Spill is an overbearing work of great scale that has at its center a larger than life stainless steel water vessel, with many smaller steel utensils spilling over the edge like water pouring out. U.F.O 2007 is another work made up of hundreds of brass water utensils that are soldered together to resemble a flying saucer. This gleaming sculpture is amusing yet pertinent to ideas of sustainability, poverty and notions of otherness. The repetition of forms and the exaggeration of scale is a common element in Gupta’s work.

**Bharti Kher**

Bharti Kher One of the most important, and constant, motifs in Bharti's art is that of the bindi. An important symbol of Indian culture, worn by women as an indication of the ‘third eye’ on their foreheads, the bindi for Bharti is far more than a religious and gender-related symbol. Through her work, she wishes to move past the stereotypical beliefs associated with the bindi, and invoke a much deeper thought process. With the symbol of the bindi, Bharti combines male sperm to give birth to new ideas that bring together these two gender-assigned symbols, to build a thought that reflects the times of today. Through this work, she attempts to challenge social change and the “traditional” role of women in the Indian society. It is also a comment on the usage of a bindi as a commodity in today's day and age. Through her other artwork, Bharti attempts to challenge the so-called traditional and repressed
beliefs of our country, portray conflict, and most importantly, help change the position and portrayal of women. In the world we currently live in, every voice that attempts to break through the unfair and stereotypical perception of women, all over the world, is important. And through her art, Bharti makes sure that her voice is heard and makes an impact.

**Dhruva Mistry**

As a child, he enjoyed making things using twigs, thorns, leaves, reed, paper, carton, clay and wire. He saw his mother making diagrammatical figures on the floor. In the absence of attractions of print and audiovisual media like TV and computers, he looked at the world and people around him. Apart from joys of vernacular schooling in an urbanizing setup, his street was busy with carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, cobblers, repairers of utensils and variety of peddlers. There was a large factory under construction in the vicinity. It was an unending drama against ever evolving skyline of an agrarian economy. Watching people doing their work was fascinating which encouraged him to play with materials. Images of gods and heroes, offered range of figurative styles and traditions. At the art school, his focus upon a personal Renaissance made me learn and see things. It was a journey of discovery of sights, sounds, tastes, smells and feelings of individuation of himself and his work.

The nudity of the figures and their impassive facial expressions relate to the Indian Ascetic, an archetypal figure. Their frontal poses also demonstrate a central characteristic of Indian temple sculpture. There are, however, further resonances. Walking Man, striding forward with his arms held close to his sides and slightly bent at the elbows, is reminiscent of one of the earliest types of Greek sculpture, the Kouros or walking youth of the period c.660-580 B.C. In turn, this figure derives from older tradition the funerary-y sculpture of Egyptian tombs, which depicts the deceased standing, sitting or kneeling. That Mistry replicates each of these positions is an allusion to this tradition. A more recent influence is evident in the way the figures are modelled. Although the surfaces are covered in a non-naturalistic network of abraded lines, the figures are nevertheless rigorous in their anatomical detail. This, together with Mistry's use of fiberglass as a casting material reflects the influence of sculptor John Davies, whom Mistry met in India.

'Bust (1977), 'Female (1978), 'Female Deity' (1978) In the following sculptures also in ‘The Couple’, he attempted to give form to his experiences of life, the sensuality of physique and flesh, sexual fantasy, the indulgent flight of imagination that he perceived around; all interwoven. In the 'Bust1, to bring forth the instinctive strength of a male, he made use of the phallic form for the head with the normal animism of the head. In the 'Female’ animal sexuality is imposed on a chicken form with a suggestion of life in the gestures of the limbs as well as the stretch of the neck. The skinned form of the chicken accentuates sensual vulgarity. The ‘female deity’ shows the same sensuality in a flight of fancy deified. **Little Bird, (1985)** A wide range of sources - Islamic, Corinthian, Egyptian, Indian, Assyrian, mythological and religious - are equally apparent in the hybrid creatures which also date from around 1983, Little Bird places a female head on the shoulders of a bird of prey. Models for this combination of human and bird forms may also be found in the British Museum in the frieze decoration of late Corinthian pottery; the form of the bird's body is based on a sculpture in the Egyptian collection: the Falcon for Rameses II. **The River,** locally known as the Floozy in the Jacuzzi, is an artwork in Victoria Square, Birmingham, England. An international design competition was held for a central water feature in the square, which was won by Dhruva Mistry. Construction commenced in 1992 and was completed in 1994, Mistry's fountain is the largest sculptural piece in the square. Mistry's winning design for Victoria Square consists of four sets of works named The River, Guardians, Youth and Object, representing youth and eternity. The River features a 1.75-tonne bronze statue of a woman, 2.8 meters tall, 2.5 m wide and 4 m long. The surrounding pool is paved with watts cliff sandstone.
Conclusion

At present Indian sculpture is established in the global art field with full dignity and honor. After in detail study it can be concluded as, the story of Indian art and sculpture dates back to the Indus valley civilization of the second and third millennium BCE. Indian art has reached a high degree of sophistication and abstraction at various times in Indian history. In 20th century, more and more developments added by important sculptors such as D.P Roy Chowdhury, Fanindranath Bose and V. P. Karmarkar. After that, modern Indian sculpture turning point in Indian sculpture was in the form of works by Ramkinkar Baj, in his various medium of his works. In this modern age, there are a huge amount of materials for artists to call on for use in sculpture, from traditional stone and wood to modern plastic and resin creations. However, Baj used local material advantageously, and worked combining the skills of a modeler and a carver. Later Baj was inspiration of many Indian Sculptors, like Dhanraj Bhagat, Sharbari Roy Choudhury, Chintamoni Kar, Pradosh Das Gupta and so many others. Present contemporary Indian art scenario is also running successfully on this track. Bharti Kher, Subodh Gupta, and Dhruv Mistry are the three big names who have been emerged from this way and they have contributed a lot in the Indian contemporary sculptural field. The three sculptors- Bharti Kher, Subodh Gupta and Dhruv Mistry have taken new imageries and have greatly contributed to the contemporary Indian sculptures. There works, carrying- forms, embodiment, individual recognitions, the politics of communicative bodies at the new imageries. As India continues its expression on the world economic stage, the work of its artists will become an even more widely acknowledged vehicle for expressing new ways and new imageries of being that are hard to convey outside the terms that art provides.

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Politics of Identity and Autonomy Movement- A Theoretical Understanding

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Abstract  
Identity forms an integral part of human beings and each human being has multiple identities which is used according to the context. Identity is not fixed rather its fluid and dynamic. Identity has an emotional basis and hence its politicization can have great emotional impact. It is precisely for this reason that identity is very cleverly manipulated by the politicians. The politicization of identities is known as politics of identity and has become a core theme of discussion when it comes to autonomy movements. In this context, this paper will discuss the conceptual and theoretical understanding of politics of identity and autonomy movement and will try to analyze the linkage between the politics of identity and demand for autonomy. 

Keywords: Identity, Politics, Autonomy, Movement, People

Introduction  
The term identity can be defined with the help of two parameters; sameness and difference. The sameness concentrates on the self of identity and the difference focuses on the others of identity. Moreover, identity is not closed, fixed, static and narrow in scope, rather, it is open, dynamic, fluid and broad in perspective. Every citizen of a country has multiple identities like regional, linguistic, religious, caste, professional etc. and all these identities are as important as national identity, though one identity may matter more than the other in a given context, and the context may keep on changing.

Objective  
The objective of this paper is to understand the theoretical framework of politics of identity and autonomy movement.

Methodology  
The paper is purely based on secondary sources which include books, journals, articles, newspapers etc.

It can be seen that politics of identity plays an important role in a democratic process. Identity has emotional basis and hence its politicization can have great emotional impact. It is precisely for this reason that it is cleverly manipulated by the politicians. In independent India, various identities - religious, caste and regional are playing important role in shaping the politics of the country. In fact, in contemporary politics in India, national identity has taken a back seat. National identity will assume

importance only when there is internal aggression or strongly perceived threat. It happens with religious and caste communities also. Their internal unity is possible only when there is threat from the ‘other identity’. Politics of Identity thus may be defined as a phenomenon that arises out of shared experiences of injustice and marginalization of certain sections of the society. It occurs when some ethnic groups or social minorities find themselves as oppressed, marginalized and feel that their uniqueness and distinctiveness are under threat from the majority group. In such situation, there is collective mobilization within the group with a view to secure their distinct identity.

Autonomy has become one of the major concerns of our social and political existence. Right to autonomous life is now a political, cultural and social call of both individual and the groups and became the emblem of group rights. In time the idea of autonomy became not only the standard of rights or responsibilities, but also an issue of governmentality, something that denotes transaction, government, negotiation and relating to others on the basis of set rules. Kant described the protection of autonomy at the political level as encapsulated in the principle of right: that each person had the right to any action that can coexist with the freedom of every other person in accordance with universal law.

The study of Politics of Identity and Autonomy Movement tries to focus the linkage between the politics of identity and autonomy movement. Connecting with the requirement, various concepts and definitions are used to understand the problem, so these concepts and definitions are explained below.

**Autonomy**

Autonomy means ‘self-governing’ and comes from a Greek word meaning independent. The roots of autonomy can be found in ancient Greek political philosophy, which referred to the self-governance of city-states. Currently, the term is used in an exceedingly broad fashion in Western and Non-Western societies. According to Fred E. Foldvary, “Autonomy means not under the control of another; the control is a matter of degree. Global justice, transcending both country boundaries and culturally based ethics, implies that not just minority groups but all persons individually have a human right to a significant degree of autonomy.” Autonomy is not a self-contained concept, it cannot be divorced from responsibility, responsiveness and accountability. It is not a gift to be received from higher authority, it has to be earned through effective self-rule. While talking about autonomy one must not confine it to institutional or organizational Autonomy only, it has to be realized in terms of planning, programme and budgeting and their successful implementation to achieve the ultimate goals of public welfare. It may also be noted that Autonomy is not dependent on the relationship of different individuals within a particular group, it is dependent on its external relationship also.

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3Ibid.


Hechter describes ‘political autonomy’ as ‘a state of affairs falling short of sovereignty’. In Ted Robert Gurr’s understanding ‘autonomy means that a minority has a collective power base, usually a regional one, in a plural society’. Hurst Hannum and Richard Lillich stated in their influential essay on ‘The Concept of Autonomy in International Law’ that ‘autonomy is understood to refer to independence of action on the internal or domestic level, as foreign affairs and defence normally are in the hands of the central or national government, but occasionally power to conclude international agreements concerning cultural or economic matters also may reside with the autonomous entity.’ In similar terms, Tim Potier makes the point that autonomy ‘should be understood as the means whereby an authority, subject to another superior authority, has the opportunity to determine, separately from that authority, specific functions entrusted upon it, by that authority, for the general welfare of those to whom it is responsible.’

Movement

The use of the word “Movement” to refer to social and political phenomena, first appeared in English in the early nineteenth century. The large scale social changes and new forms of human distress that came with early industrialism were accompanied by semantic revolution of such term as ‘capitalism’, ‘ideology’, ‘masses’, ‘culture’, ‘revolutionary’ and many more. ‘Movement’ is used to describe group responses to the social and cultural crises produced by the conditions of factory labor and urban life during the industrial revolution. The protest movement is directed against political system or against some specific class or some segment of the society or against an organization considered harmful to the interest of those who have been activated in launching such protest. The protest movements are sometimes classified as peaceful and violent keeping in view the methods used by the organisers of these movements. It will not be improper to argue that most of the historically significant political movements by nature and implication are social movements. Many social scientists have attempted to provide definition of a social movement. The earliest definition, perhaps was provided by the Danish historian Lorenz Von-Stein in 1852. At that time, most of the social thinkers in Europe were engrossed in the various issues and implications of the industrial revolution and the French revolution. In his analysis of the French revolution, Stein defined social movement as people coming together to change the conditions of society. According to him masses were the volatile element in society which was capable of bringing about social disruption and political change.

Politics of Identity

According to Jonathan Hill & Thomas Wilson, “the terms “politics of identity” refers more to issues of personal and group power, found within and across all social and political institutions and collectivities, where people sometimes choose and sometimes are forced, to interact with each other in part on the basis of their shared, or divergent, notions of their identities. The politics of identity can take place in any social setting and are often best and first recognized in domains of the private, the subaltern, the subversive, where culture may be the best way or means to express one’s loss or triumph.” Politics of identity occurs when some ethnic groups or social minorities find themselves as
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oppressed, marginalized and feel that their uniqueness and distinctiveness are under threat from the majority group. In such situation, there is collective mobilization within the group with a view to secure their distinct identity. According to Mary Bernstein, “Identity has an emotional basis and hence its politicisation can have great emotional impact. It is precisely for this reason that it is cleverly manipulated by the politicians.” Thus, it is also identified as the politics of ‘recognition’ and the politics of ‘differences’. Politics of Identity can be defined as a phenomenon that arises out of shared experiences of injustice and marginalization of certain sections of the society.

Theoretical Framework

Here important approaches to the understanding politics of identity are discussed below such as Instrumentalist and Primordialist and approaches.

Instrumentalist views

Within instrumentalist thought, ethnic conflict does not emerge directly from differences in ethnic identity. Rather ethnic conflict arises only when ethnic identities are politicized or manipulated to generate political and socio-economic advantages for an ethnic group at the cost of depriving or neglecting other ethnics. Accordingly, instrumentalists point to factors other than ethnic identity to explain ethnic conflicts. These include, security concerns; competition and inequality and greed. Sentiments of discontent underlying these factors suggest that ethnic conflicts, under instrumentalism, are commonly motivated by grievances/frustration. Relative to primordialism, instrumentalism appears a more nuanced theory as it recognizes the relevance of political and socio-economic structural dynamics to account for temporal and geographical variations in the occurrence of ethnic conflicts. However, while instrumentalism highlights elite manipulation or politicization of ethnicity as the foundational source of grievances which induce ethnic conflicts, it cannot independently explain why people easily, cooperatively, and effectively mobilize along ethnic lines. It must draw on the wisdom of primordialism in recognizing the power of ethnicity to perpetuate a sense of ‘common blood’, a sense of shared values, shared interests, shared threats, and most fundamentally, a sense of solidarity, which is indispensable for collective action.

According to the instrumentalist point of view, ethnicity is not innate rather it is manipulated and the goals of such ethnicity is political and economic. They view ethnicity as changeable and not something which is given by birth. For them, ethnicity is the ways in which ethnicity is manipulated and used by elites to achieve desired goals. Ethnicity is the manifestation of sentiments and emotions of a group which is in pursuit to preserve its separate identity. Such sense of distinct identity generally rests on the belief of uniqueness about one’s own culture and tradition. From instrumental (acting as a means of achieving something) viewpoint, ethnicity is the creation of elites who in order to maintain their status quo or to gain political and economic advantage induce and mobilize identity consciousness within a group. Therefore, instrumentalism, with its intellectual roots in sociological

functionalism, treated ethnicity as a product of political myths, created and manipulated by cultural elites in their pursuit of advantages and power.23

Primordialist Views

According to primordialists, ethnic conflict fundamentally springs from differences in ethnic identities. Ethnic identity is assigned at birth, inherent in human nature and passed on genealogically from generation to generation. Thus, under primordialism, ethnic identity is fixed across time. As a function of (myths of) ‘common blood’ shared within each ethnic group, primordialists anticipate hospitality and cooperation among members of the in-group and hostility and conflict against out-groups. Because ethnic differences under primordialism are ancestral, deep and irreconcilable, ethnic conflicts arise inevitably from ‘ancient hatreds’ between ethnic groups and ‘mutual fear’ of domination, expulsion or even extinction24.

By emphasizing differences in ethnic identities as the foundational source of inter-ethnic hatreds, fear, and conflicts, primordialists suggest that, ethnically heterogeneous states will unavoidably experience ethnic conflicts25. However, even in sub-Saharan Africa, one of the most ethnic conflict-plagued regions of the world, some heterogeneous states, including Cameroon and Botswana, enjoy relatively peaceful inter-ethnic relations. The separate peace in some heterogeneous states could well be a function of special structural policies as argued by Mulinge (2008), but this highlights an even more serious weakness of primordialism: it is oblivious to varying political and socio-economic structural conditions within which ethnic conflicts develop. Thus, from the Primordial point of view, ethnicity is a ‘natural’ and ‘given’ phenomenon. Every individual carry with him some attachments derived from his/her place of birth, kinship, religion, language and social practices which are natural to him, spiritual in nature and provide a basis for an easy affinity with other people from the same background26. The primordial approach emphasizes on mobilization of the groups in defense of their established beliefs and faiths based on their customs and traditions.27 Steven George defines primordial ties in terms of attachment that people feel for their kin and local nativity. He believes that primordial ties are rooted in ones’ birth and the collective role played by the family, locals and own people for the protection of his/her life. Therefore, the human beings have to be attributed to his/her family. In general, ethnicity is defined as a comprehensive form of natural selection and kinship connections, a primordial instinctive impulse, which ‘continues to be present even in the most industrialised mass societies of today’28.

Conclusion

It is obvious that while in the contemporary world, ethnic consciousness is to be considered as a dimension of interaction between society and state as well as of social organization of production and culturally determined pattern of consumption, it is also related to man's quest for 'belonging'. This quest has been intensified in the context of the contemporary crisis of civilization, which for sometimes put competitiveness rather than reciprocity, profit rather than satisfaction, contract rather than companionate relation at the highest pedestal and which has created a condition, wherein survival
of life on the planet has become a doubtful proposition. Ethnicity in today's world is thus one form of assertion against the defacement of humanity. It is not necessarily against civilization or against wider social formations; frequently it is a protest against the perversion of civilization and a reinforcement of wider social formations, insofar as these social formations are compatible with the humanist-axiological imperatives of the historical situation. Henceforth, Indian History has proved that politics of identity many times leads to autonomy movement. Since India's independence in 1947, there has been many attempts made by different communities in India to establish independent countries separate of Indian union or separate autonomous states within Indian soil using terror and other means. In all the separatist or autonomous one thing which is common is that all the movements are based on particular identities. Manipulation or we can say that politicization of these identities give rise to the autonomy movements. In North-East India, there are many demands for separate states by different groups and over the years the Indian government has created autonomous states for the different tribes in this region within the Indian Union. These states were created by detaching different parts from Assam. In North-East India, while some have resolutely expressed the need for more autonomy within the present set-up, other movements have evolved more militant. To be particular, Assam has been experiencing several tribal movements- peaceful and violent and also a combination of the two-signaling the very complex problem of the national minorities within the Indian social and political system and the basis of these movements are particular identities.

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Development of Bollywood Posters in India

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Abstract

Indian film industry comprises films produced across India in different languages. Hindi film industry or more popularly known as Bollywood based in Mumbai, is the biggest entertainment industry in India. Over the decades, Bollywood film posters have been one of the major medium for film publicity. The film posters have been the reflection of changing times, technology, techniques and array of ideas and designs of different decades. In course of time, it has gone through significant changes technically as well as aesthetically. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the changes happened during the transition and its impact in film industry.

Keywords: Bollywood, Film poster, Publicity.

Introduction

The word “Bollywood” basically means Bombay film industry. It refers to the Hindi film industry based in India. The Bombay based Indian film industry- Bollywood has developed a unique visual language, articulated by the hand painted movie posters. Hindi film posters are commonly known as Bollywood posters (Ganti. Tejaswini, 2013). Film posters have been an integral part of Indian cinema right from the early days. It is only through the posters that the first impression of the storyline is created in the minds of audience. With passing decades though the posters have evolved keeping in view the need of changing times, their importance in promoting the film has increased manifolds. In the following paragraphs, a detailed timeline of the evolution of poster making industry has been presented to understand the role played by posters in influencing audience in favor of the movie. (Shahid. Mohammad, 2015). A single picture speaks more than a 100 words. Thus in any creative field, the importance of visual representation is given utmost importance; and film posters are not an exception to this. Since the beginning of film industry in India, posters have always been an integral part of the films for an obvious reason that it is always the first medium of summarizing the story and presenting to the world the theme of the movie in a single frame. Bollywood has evolved over the decades and so has the posters. The gradual shift of poster art from hand painted to offset and digital printing is a journey worth nothing. From hand painted posters with stars in beautiful paint brush expressions to total mechanization in the digital era, where one has to just capture a frame from the film and then blow it up leaves nothing to imagination or creativity. From the creative hand-painted vintage movie posters to the cut paste techniques of 80s and 90sto the sophistically created posters of today, this journey is worth discussing.

The early days (1950-1980)

Though the journey of hand painted posters started from the 1924 film Kalyan Khajina (Baburao Painter), posters were often not used in the films of that era. Publicity for the India’s first feature film, Raja Harishchandra which was screened more than 100 years ago now, was done in Times of India. India’s first sound film, AlamAra which was released in 1931 was promoted via text based handbills and newspapers adverts. Publicity through newspapers, leaflets and handbills was a norm for the theatre owners of 30s and 40s. However the beginning of 50s saw a change in the marketing strategy through
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posters. Hand painted story lines, broad brush strokes, retro look and classic 3D style fonts summarizes the posters of 50s. (http://www.wikipedia.com).

One notable feature of those posters is the usage of minimum amount of text in the poster body. This was mainly because Bollywood films being star centric, presenting the actor/actress, who played the lead role, in a larger than life character appealed more to the crowd. Local artists were hired and the film stories are narrated and key events from the film were painted to highlight the theme of the film. The poster artists played a very important role in presenting the actors an iconic identity. Be it the case of Bambaiwali (1941) where Nadia was presented as a fearless lady or creating the angry young man look for Amitabh Bachhan in Deewar (1975), poster artists played a vital role in creating a mass appeal even before the movie is released. (Qureshi. Irna, 2013).

The movie Deewar is about the rift between two brothers, Amitabh Bachhan and Shashi Kapoor one of whom turns to the world of crime while the other becomes an honest cop. The hand painted poster of Deewar clearly portrays the intense theme of the movie where the emotions are nicely reflected in the faces of the stars through efficient brush strokes. The poster reflects the clash between the brothers where the mother, Sumitra Devi (Nirupa Roy) is painted to express a mixed expression of confusion and hurt being sandwiched between her sons. (Mazumdar. Ranjani, 2003).

The Hindi film poster of Don was originally designed on a hand painted canvas by the greatest film poster artist, Diwakar Karkare. In this hand painted film poster, the artist captures the angry young man of Hindi cinema, Amitabh Bachchan, running from the police highlighting one of the famous dialogue from the movie “Don ko pakadna mushkil hi nahin – namumkin hai”, “It’s not just difficult to catch Don - it’s impossible.” So this poster reveals the dialogue that the Don is running and someone standing behind Amitabh holding a revolver in his hand. Zeenat Aman is seen holding a weapon at the bottom right corner of the poster. The film poster shows the image of Zeenat Aman and Amitabh Bachchan on bright red background with yellow brush stroke on their back as the colour red denotes passion and aggressiveness and which dominates the poster design.

The poster analysis of 60s can never be complete without the mention of one of the most popular Bollywood movies ever made; Mughal-e-Azam(Ed. Duncan Paul, Devraj Rajesh, 2010). Along with the intense love affair between Anarkali and Saleem, the high voltage conflict between Emperor Akbar and his son Saleem was also a major area of attraction in the movie. The poster thus was painted keeping both these aspects in mind. Akbar’s stern look on one hand and Saleem’s confidence in his decision (to marry Anarkali) was artistically presented which managed to create sensation among movie lovers of that era. (Ed. Duncan Paul, Devraj Rajesh, 2010).

Presenting the story by keeping the film’s central theme in mind and giving the stars and villains a larger than life identity, the poster artists have shed their sweats and injected emotions and energy for decades and turned innumerable pieces of lifeless sheets to evergreen posters that left a mark in the history of Indian cinema. The contribution of artists of high caliber like Baburao painter in this respect is immense. The fact that the poster painting sector was lucrative can be gauged from the very simple reason that the legendry Indian artist M.F. Hussain too began his career as a poster artist.

The medieval period (1980-2000)

This was a period of transition for the Indian movie posters where the hand painted posters of the past were gradually being replaced by photographic images from the actual movie scenes. This made the work easier and managed to showcase the central theme of the film by using photographs of some notable scenes. One major difference between the hand painted posters of 50s, 60s and the posters of 80s, 90s is that the producers were now keen in displaying notable scenes from the movie instead of showcasing the central theme. This minimized the time, budget and effort that went in creating a hand painted poster and was able to capture all the key moments of the film using realistic images. With the
growing demand of cut paste collage type posters, hand painted poster industry was soon becoming a dying art.

A usual Bollywood movie of 90s would have a mix of comedy, action, romance and emotional aspects. Images from various scenes were cut and pasted to form a collage of all the important events of the film in order to present the film’s summary in front of the crowd. (Mazumdar, Ranjani, 2003). Let us analyze the poster styles of a few blockbusters of 90s and their impact on the audience.

**Khalnayak:** This popular action film of 90s needs no introduction. Starting from action, drama and romance to sentimental aspects, this movie had everything required to keep audience glued to their seats. The poster clearly depicts the intense mood of the film by highlighting the most important scenes of the film. Various scenes including the background are copied from the film and pasted in a single frame to present an overview of the theme in front of the audience. The gigantic cloud of flames in the background is just enough to understand the bloodshed involved in the movie. The story is about a young child (Sanjay Dutt) going off the track for which he was eventually deserted by his family who then went on to join a terrorist outfit. *Ram* (Jackie Shroff) played the role of a police inspector was on a mission to arrest Sanjay Dutt.

This poster has served its purpose well by presenting this story in a nutshell where Madhuri Dixit is seen to be sandwiched between Sanjay and Jackie where vengeance look on Sanjay’s face and angry and frustrated expression of Jackie wooed the action loving audience of that era. And needless to say the movie turned out to be a blockbuster.

**Baazigar:** The poster has been creatively designed by using the traditional cut paste technique that was very popular in the 80s and 90s. A few scenes from the movie are selected and pasted to summarize the movie in a single frame. In the upper left corner of the poster Kajol and Shilpa’s face can be seen in goggle wore by Shahrukh. This cut paste technique of film poster is creatively designed to show the presence of both the heroines in the movie and also their relation with Shahrukh. The expression in Shahrukh’s face says a lot about his dual character in the movie whose sole aim in life was vengeance. (Ausaja, S M M, 2009).

**Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge:** The first image that comes in mind while recalling this classic romantic tale of late 90s is the scene where Shahrukh carries Kajol on his back as seen in the poster. This is how a well crafted poster creates an impression in the minds of audience. If we analyze this poster we can see that instead of making the poster clumsy with less important scenes from the movie, only one image is pasted so as to highlight the central theme of the film. And this calculated move was successful in attracting young crowd to the theatres. Apart from the out of the world story line, great music and mind blowing acting, DDLJ’s poster too played a major role in its success. (Goswami, Dr. ManashPratim, 2017).

**The present era (2000 till present)**

Welcome to the age of technology where creativity has scaled new heights. With sophisticated machines and high end editing software, sky is the limit for the poster makers today. (Ed. Dewan Deepali, 2009).

An analysis of present day high end poster designs can never be complete unless Dev D is included in the list. Two guitars representing the eyes while the face is given the shape of wine bottle says a lot about the character, Abhay Deol who is immersed in drugs and alcohol following the marriage of his childhood love, Paro. The poster is a result of high quality editing where various aspects of film has been creatively assembled together. (Sstkglitc, 2018).

In the creative poster of Chennai Express, the poster clearly shows the intent of the film which is a usual Bollywood melodrama where the hero elopes with his dream girl by crossing all the hurdles and hoodwinking the villains. In the poster the dusty background helps us understand the chaotic theme of the movie with humor to support the story line. Shahrukh and Deepika chased by goons is the central
theme of the poster which is in line with the movie’s plot which mainly is the story of the duo escaping from the ruthless gang of villains from time to time. The poster’s backdrop is made quite interesting with high end creative editing where villains are seen chasing the love birds.

Another creative poster with high end editing can be credited to Go Goa Gone, a comedy movie where three friends find themselves in an island full of zombies after a rave party. Perhaps the only way to include zombies, Saif Ali khan and the three stars in one single poster would have been by using high end editing techniques; and the designers did just that. Posters of this magnitude cannot be created by traditional cut paste or hand painted techniques which is why we can see a marked improvement in the quality of posters we have today.

One major difference between the posters of today and 20-30 years back is that now-a-days various photo editing software have given the flexibility to include special effects in the posters which was not possible with the traditional cut paste techniques. And this is probably the main reason why the hand painted posters has already become a dead art by now thanks to the digital revolution and only a few original posters have survived the test of time in museums and galleries.

Conclusion

The study assume that over the last 100 years though there has been some major shifts in the design and marketing through posters, the aim behind creating these still remains the same; to pull audience inside the theatres, so posters have stood up to the expectations. Since this is the first impression the audience forms about a movie, its role behind the success of a movie cannot be neglected. Posters have always been a potential tool for creating the initial momentum and curiosity about the movie among the audience which is why much attention is dedicated toward creating the perfect poster for promotions.

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Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, and Social Ecology: the Radical Approaches to Environment

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Abstract
Western thought tradition commonly labeled as system which has no ecological commitments. Most of the analysis upon Western thought and culture, tries to highlight positions which are negative to man nature reciprocal relationships. For example, Platonian dualism nature and man, Aristotle’s hierarchical order of existence, Cartesian over emphasis upon human reason etc. But the keen and systematic analysis of the systems and streams of Western tradition shows that this tradition having a strong ecological consciousness even from the period of Classical Greek. This paper tries to bring different kind of ecological approaches developed and practiced by Western tradition in general and specifically elaborate the some radical approaches to environment. Radical ecological approach is distinct from other approaches especially from shallow approaches, in its ethical, logical and metaphysical concerns. Radical ecology tries to address the ecological issues by a distinct manner; it analyses the roots of ecological depletion instead of its peripheral symptoms. Radical ecology develops an alternative environmental attitude through its counter cultural movements. Deep ecology, Ecofeminism and Social ecology are the important radical ecological movements. These three radical positions develop the realm of radical ecology and Eco philosophy through their counter cultural movements.

The analysis shows that even though these three positions are not at all a panacea for all environmental problems they are the better approaches among the approaches which are lacking philosophical maturity. Deep ecology, Ecofeminism and Social ecology develop an ecological consciousness; consciousness of togetherness.

Keywords: Deep Ecology, Eco-feminism, Social Ecology, Ecological Consciousness, Platonic Dualism

Introduction
Many ecological activists and eco philosophers considered that Western culture and philosophy lack ecological consciousness because of its exclusive and reductionist conception of ethics. But a keen analysis through the Western tradition makes change in the above opinion. Western tradition including classical, modern as well as postmodern possess certain kind of ecological consciousness. This ecological consciousness includes moderate as well as radical outlooks. Even though approaches are moderate or radical they have strong philosophical inclinations. From the classical period Western philosophical tradition holds natural philosophy which was positive and favorable. The Pre-Socratic schools like, Ionian, Eleatic, Heraclitean and Pythagorean identified the nature of reality which is very naturalistic in nature. For example Thales accommodated water as the basic and active stuff of the world. From Anaximander to Empedocles thorough going respect for ubiquitous principle of equality. The Greek myth and philosophy (a Sacred nature), Milesian hylozoism (a living Earth), Heraclitus (a process ontology), and Pythagoras (human animal kinship) are the clear example of deep ecological consciousness. They rejected any kind of mastery or supremacy over nature. They highlighted the
democratic pattern which prevails in the nature. Frank Thilly denoted this point. “As in the democratic polis the demons rules by turn”, hot could prevail in summer without injustice to cold, if latter has it turn in the winter, … And if a similar and concurrent cycle of successive supremacy could to be assumed to hold among the powers in the human body, then the karris of man and nature could be perfect”. 1

The positive attitude towards nature and harmonious living relation with nature is continued till the time of Great systems. The period of great systems marked a paradigmatic shift in the Western philosophy and Western culture. Plato’s fundamental assertion is that, ‘Human nature is dualistic-composed by body and soul’. By this assertion Plato emphasized that, human beings are both essentially and morally segregated from nature. Platonik dualism asserted only mechanical status to nature. Nature has assigned only mechanical and instrumental value (use value). “The Platonic forms are metaphysical hypostatization of logico-mathematical order assumed to be imposed upon a passive and chaotically inclined material to effects an ordered natural world.” 2 This Platonic reductionist ethical approach (instrumental value approach) to nature made a strong impact upon his followers especially in Aristotle. Aristotle placed nature as lower one in the hierarchical classification table of reasoning and maintained that less reasonable are exist for the sake of those with more. This hierarchical approach made a hard influence upon Medieval thinkers. With support of the philosophies of Great system and the interpretation of the Book of Genesis they developed an exclusive ethics which has based on anthropocentrism (the view that human alone are the origin and measure of all values). St. Francis of Assisi practice extreme exemption from this position and he made an alternative religious and philosophical approach to nature; approach of Stewardship or Companionship instead of Mastership. Lynn White proposed a title for him, “a Patron Saint for ecologists”. 3

Modern philosophy marked a strong re-visit of dualism; dualism of mind and matter made by Rene Descartes. Cartesian dualism put forward rationality as the criterion for mastership or custodianship. Rational man becomes the master of the irrational nature; “masters and possessors of nature”. 4 Even though Cartesian exclusive ethics made a far reaching influence upon modern philosophy, science and technology, some exceptions are there. Spinoza’s celebrated work; Ethics culminates a high ecological consciousness which has an expansive ethical conception. This expansive ethics transcends the limits of reductionism. For Spinoza, ‘Natura naturata’ and Natura naturans’, are the same and everything is connected necessarily with everything else and so on. Spinoza’s expansive outlook made a commendable influence upon modern environmental activists and eco philosophers. Even in Existentialism, which has central concern about man, also reflects certain kind of positive ecological concern. Martian Heidegger favored a healthy relation between man and natural environment. Through the famous article ‘Towards s Heideggerean Ethos for Radical Environmentalism’, Michael Zimmerman, writer on Deep ecology shows Heideggerean affinity towards ecological consciousness.

In the mid of the Twentieth century environmental problems became big and tough. Increasing awareness of ecological crisis has given rise to variety of popularity based responses that are collectively called environmental movements. The publication of Silent Spring (Rachel Carson’s best-seller classic, known as Bible of environmental activists) accelerated the activities of environmental movements. Most of the movements made little change in the situation of ecological crisis because much of the movements lacks philosophical maturity (philosophical core approach) in them. They addressed environmental issues only with their face value instead of root cause analysis. Since issues were analyzed in peripheral level ecological issues remains as the same or has been given temporary solutions. These types of movements are collectively called Shallow movements. (Preservation and conservation movements) The quest for an environmental approach with a philosophical core got a feedback by the emergence of eco philosophy. Eco philosophical approach tries to bring up a greater awareness of the intimate and manifold relationships that exists between ‘self’ and ‘environment’. This approach is not belonging not only to the sphere of ethics but also the spheres of metaphysics, epistemology, political and social
philosophy. Eco philosophy is used as synonym of environmental philosophy in its later stages of development. Environmental philosophy is often regarded as identical to environmental ethics. But the scope of environmental/eco philosophy is beyond environmental ethics, because it deals not only ethical issues but with metaphysical, epistemological, cultural and political problems. “… the scope of environmental philosophy reaches beyond ethical issues and includes diverse metaphysical, epistemological, cultural and political issues as well”.

Radical Ecology

Eco philosophy may be roughly divided into two major fields; Environmental ethics and Radical ecology. Environmental ethics asserts that progress could make in ending the ecological crisis by challenging anthropocentric ethical norms and extending moral considerability to non-human beings. The realm of Radical ecology is wider than Environmental ethics. It is a position which holds different attitude towards ecological crisis; they may be metaphysical, epistemological, political, sociological and cultural. “The second field of Environmental philosophy, radical ecology often associated with the counter cultural movements, included deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology, among others… their analysis disclose the conceptual, attitudinal, social, political and cultural origins of the ecological crisis”.

Radical ecological positions have different views about what constitute the roots of ecological crisis. Deep ecologists assert that the root of ecological crisis is nothing but anthropocentrism. Eco feminists assert that the major root of ecological crisis is patriarchy; an oppressive social structure. Social ecologists assert that the key root of ecological crisis is the social hierarchy. Radical ecology with its counter cultural movements provides an alternative thinking against ecological exploitation.

Deep Ecology

Arne Naess, the Norwegian philosopher and activist advocated a special kind of ecological consciousness; Deep ecology. He developed his Deep ecology on the basis of ethical holism (ethical position which transcends the boundaries of individualistic ethics and expands realm of ethics into all the cosmic entities) and transpersonal metaphysics (metaphysics of self-realization; realization of cosmic self). Naess made a distinction between Shallow and Deep ecological movements through the paper, ‘The Shallow and Deep, Long Range Ecology Movements’. By this distinction he shows the philosophical immaturity of popular environmental movements and also brings the necessity of movements which have strong ethical as well as philosophical bond. He criticized, shallow movements are mainly concerned with pollution, conservation and preservation of nature and all the movements aim the great satisfaction of the human race, not for the nature itself. Naess and George Session proposed an Eight point platform for Deep ecology.

1. The wellbeing and flourishing of human and non-human life as Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purpose.
2. Richness and diversity of like forms contribute the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and culture is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires a smaller human population.
5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive and situation is radically worsening.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary change.  

Being with this eight point platform Deep ecology addresses the ecological issues in a different and matured manner. This position warranted ideological as well as attitudinal positive approaches to environment. The point plat from pinpointed the very necessity of extended ethical concern based on the intrinsic value approach and the necessity of new policies which have the capacity to affect the existing technological, economic and ideological structures. Naess asserts that in order to make changes in policies one must understand the present policies and its ideologies. For that purpose peripheral understanding of an issue or policy is not enough. Right understanding of the issues and its roots possible only by questioning; questioning means deeper questioning. In that sense entire exercise of shallow approaches become worthless because they never intend to make any kind of deeper understanding of the situations and root causes of an catastrophe. On the light of this understanding Naess made strong criticism towards Shallow approaches and recommended Deep approaches which are the most favorable approach to ecological issues. “The decisive difference between a shallow and deep ecology based in practice, concerns the willingness to question and an appreciation of the importance of questioning is both ‘deep’ and public writers within the deep ecology movement try to articulate the fundamental presuppositions underlying the dominant economic approach in terms of value priorities, philosophy and religion. In the shallow movement, questioning and argumentation comes to a half long before this. The deep ecology movement is therefore ‘the ecology movement which questions deeper”.  

Ecofeminism 

Ecofeminism one of the radical eco philosophical approach identified the major root of ecological crisis is patriarchy. “Ecofeminism is a recent development in feminist thought which argues that the current global environmental crisis is a predictable out com of patriarchal culture.”  

Ecofeminism argues that domination over nature and domination over women have connections. “The major project of ecofeminism, then is to make visible these ‘women nature connections’ and where harmful a women and nature, to dismantle them”.  

Ecofeminists identified eight sorts of women nature connections, which are considered as the back bone of Ecofeminism.

1.Historical typically causal connections: One alleged connection between women and nature is historical. Some eco feminists trace historical- causal connection to prototypical patterns of domination began with the invasion of Indo-European societies by nomadic tribes from Eurasia. Some other feminists focus on cultural and scientific changes that occurred during the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

2.Conceptual connections: Three basic conceptual links have been offered. One account locates a conceptual basis of the twin domains of women and nature in value dualism and value hierarchies. Second account of conceptual connections expands value dualism and value hierarchies larger, oppressive conceptual frame works- ones that are common to all isms of dominations for example , ‘sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and ethnocentrism as well as ‘naturalism’. A third account locates a conceptual basis in sex gender differences. The claim that the female body per se, situates women differently with respect to nature than man.

3.Empirical and experimental connection: Eco feminists have focused on uncovering empirical evidence that links women with environmental destruction. Some eco feminists point to various health and risk factors borne disproportionately by women, children, racial minorities and the poor-risk caused by the presence of low level radiation, pesticides. Toxins and other pollutants.
4. Symbolic connections: Eco feminists have explored the symbolic association and devaluation of women and nature that appears in religion, theology, art and literature. Ecofeminism offering spiritual symbols; Gaia and Goddess symbol. Some eco feminists focus on language that is language that debases women and non-human nature by naturalizing women and feminizing nature. For example, “mother nature”.

5. Epistemological connections: Eco feminists criticize the Western rationalism and develop views of the ethical, knowing self that do not maintain harmful value dualism and hierarchies. They criticize ‘nature versus culture’ dichotomy.

6. Political Connection: Ecofeminism has always been a grassroots political movement motivated by pressing pragmatic and empirical concerns. Eco feminist political perspective range from issues of women and environmental health to science, development and technology, the treatment of animals and peace, and antimilitarist activism.

7. Ethical connection: The goal of eco feminist environmental ethics is to develop theories and practices concerning the human and the natural environment that are not male-focused and provide a guide to action in the pre-feminist present. This way involves developing an eco-feminist ethics of care and appropriate reciprocity, kinship ethics, eco feminist animal right positions and eco feminist social ecology. They criticize the main stream environmental ethics. “… main stream environmental ethics are inadequate to the extent that they are problematically anthropocentric or hopelessly androcentric”.

8. Theoretical connections: Ecofeminism is an umbrella term for any feminism, which have feminist concern about the environment. Different eco feminist theories exploring alleged women nature connections and developing environmental philosophies based on these insights. In this way eco feminist theories deviate from traditional approaches to environmental ethics.

On the basis of these ‘women –nature connections’, eco feminists take environmental problems as a feminist issue. Ariel Salleh argues that the present society is a system believed and based on patriarchy and patriarchy is the root cause for the exploitation of women and nature. In a ‘patriarchal belief system’, nature and women are considered as resources without inherent worth. What is need she argues, “The unconscious patriarchal connection between women and nature needs to be made conscious and the heretical fallacies of the ‘great chain of Being’ acknowledged before there can be any real growth towards sane, humane, ecological future”.

Eco feminists generally believe in the power of the environmental ethics that grows out of and takes seriously narrative, context and such values and relational attitude as care, loving perception, and appropriate reciprocity. They think that the power and premise of ecofeminism is that re-conceiving and re-visioning of both feminism and environmental ethics.

Social Ecology

Social ecology is one of the counter cultural movements of eco philosophy which asserts, ‘social hierarchy as the root of ecological crisis. Social ecology is the awakening earth community reflecting on itself, uncovering its history, exploring its present predicament and contemplating its future. “As philosophical approach, social ecology investigates the ontological, epistemological, ethical and political dimensions of the relationship between the social and the ecological and seeks the practical wisdom that results from such reflections”. Social ecology develops an approach to nature which is based on the principles of unity in diversity and non-hierarchical nature of ecological communities. It gives emphasis upon the smooth and reciprocal development of all the members of a society. Each member can achieve personal self-realization while developing a sense of identification with and responsibility towards the larger social and natural whole. Murray Bookchin denotes this point, “Potentialities that are themselves actualization of a dialectical continuum present the challenge of ethical self-fulfillment not simply in the privacy of mind but in the reality of the procedural world”.
Social ecologists considered politics as a branch of ethics, that is, as the pursuit of the good life and of ‘self-realization’ both for the individual person and for the entire community. Social ecological view reinterprets ethics in the light of a holistic outlook and tries to avoid dualism between humanity and nature. Social ecology asserts that there is no purely external nature that can serve as a model for human activity since both the person and the society are thoroughly ecological in their fundamental nature. Social ecologists argue that various hierarchical and authoritarian institutions are the central cause for socio-ecological crisis. According to them, dominance of economic power is the most powerful determinant of both social and ecological crisis.

Social ecologists give emphasis upon the concept of social transformation, which have a comprehensive outlook. They argue that social transformation must be based on the needs and interests of the local community. “Social ecology takes as the measure of its success the organic growth of a compassionate, cooperative, ecological culture, rooted in the specificity of history and place but developing growing interconnections within the entire earth community”. 15

Conclusion

The investigation made through the radical approaches of eco philosophy uncovers that, these three positions having a common ethical as well as philosophical root; ethical holism and transpersonal metaphysics. Ethical holism and transpersonal attitude (departure from individualistic optimums) act as the foundation for their ecological consciousness. Their approaches towards nature based on this kind of ecological consciousness always assert individual dignity along with dignity of natural environment. Ecofeminism, Deep ecology, and Social ecology commonly emphasize the interconnectedness among the beings with the universe. These radical movements with their counter cultural activities provide sufficient coverage to eco philosophy as an alternative thinking for ecological exploitation. This alternative approach is not a panacea for all ecological illness but a better approach compare to shallow ecological approach. By the method of deeper analysis of the root cause of ecological problems radical approaches make a distinctive position in the realm of ecological movements. Radical ecological movements stand as a better option among the ecological movements with their philosophical maturity. In short Radical ecological movements bring the scope of eco philosophy beyond the boundaries of an ethical theory by their dealings with metaphysical, social and political roots of ecological problems.

Notes and References

6. Ibid., p. 4)
8. Ibid., p. 18
11. Ibid., p. 270
12. Ibid., p. 278-79
Human Development and Girl Child Education in Assam: A Reflective Discourse

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Abstract
As per human development index, girls’ education is considered as the most sensitive index of social or national development. It is a significant means of improving quality life in all respects. Girls’ education highly influences fertility rate, infant mortality, population growth, marriage age, life expectancy and national productivity etc. Problems of illiteracy among girls’ children vary from place to place, region and across the groups. Among the numerous barrier gender disparity and gender inequality are most reported. Girls’ education, particularly in rural India draws the attention of all stakeholders to serve for rural development and reconstruction towards the socio-economic improvement of the country. Biased views against the female education influenced all aspects of family and social life and equality between the sexes. Hence, the present paper is an attempt to understand the situation of girls’ education in Assam under the Right to Education Act 2009 and to explore the role of social work professionals in dealing with the issues and concerns. For this paper, authors have relied on secondary sources. The secondary information collected from various reports like Census of India 2001 & 2011, Human Development Report of Assam 2003 and 2013, India Human Development Report 2011, 2014 & 2015, Economic Survey 2013-2014, Report of 12th Five Years Plan and other credible sources like books, article and websites to make the analysis well informed and up to date. Accordingly drawing inferences & arguments were building. With this backdrop, the study also underlines implications for upcoming research and practice

Keywords: Education, Girl Child, Gender Inequality, Human Development, Social Development, Women Empowerment.

Education as a Metaphor and Reality in India
Education is an immeasurable part of human condition. Essentially, it is a central tool for receiving bright future and bringing changes in life. Also, plays an imperative function in the progress and development of the nation. The development is a process which creates space for human to live a meaningful life and better society at large. Human development denotes that society must be educated and be able to contribute for the economic development with a good health. Further, it indicates towards making people productive human resource and capital. As Human Development Report 2012 highlighted–

The enlargement of Human Development Index is connected with the expansion in public expenses on education (UNDP, 2012, p.78).
Besides, right to education modulated a vital position in the progressive dreams. Literacy rate and educational attainment are the two key components of human development index of a country. As the quality of life of a person is depends on educational achievements. Most importantly, to enhance literacy and level of education of a girl child is presupposes set of enabling conditions ensuring adequate an equitable opportunities. Howsoever, in India females are having a lower literacy rate (65.46%) as against male literacy (82.14 %). Simultaneously, there is no exception in context to Assam. The state is showing as high as more than 11 percent gender gap in literacy (Census of India, 2011). Lower level of literacy not only has a negative impact on female lives but also on their families and overall economic development and prosperity of the state. Acknowledging the benefits of girls education for social development and reconstruction the Govt. of India committed to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the 6-14 years age group. Presently, it’s a Fundamental Right of every child in India after the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act in December, 2002. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or ‘Education for All’ programme is the outcome of this Act. SSA recognized girl’s education not only required to change the education system but also in societal norms and attitude. Equality in education of girl child is understood as that stage of human development. An Individual rights, responsibilities and opportunities cannot be ascertained by the truth of being born as male or female. It is a stage of human development while both men and women equally realize their full potential and became partners in every sphere of their lives (Singh, 2014).

The disadvantages facing by girls are a major source of inequality. Very often, girls are discriminated in enrollment, retention, attainment and access of education. Female constitute almost half the human race. Girls’ education has been recognized as an essential agent of social change and development in any society. Prominently said, “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (country)” (Suen, 2013, p.61). Education is considered as a powerful instrument which processes modernization and social change come to exist. Education offers essential skills to people to disclose their innovative ideas and views. To think harmonious development without educating girls is impracticable. Therefore, the emphasis regards to women education should be to equip her multiple role as citizens, housewives, mother, and contributor to family income, builders of new society and the nation (Ranis et al, 2005). Gustav Ranis and others has highlighted that female education is an important input of the human development which explains by the effectiveness of expenditure on. In this present paper, an attempt has been made to understand the contemporary situation of girl child education in Assam on the basis of several parameters like literacy rate, enrollment, retention, dropouts and gender disparity, access, rate, dropout rate, number of teachers working in primary schools, teacher student ratio in school and other infrastructure facilities. Besides, it also tries to highlight the challenges of girl child education in Assam. Lastly, it explores the role of social work professionals in dealing with the issues and concerns of girl child education as Assam human resource development.

**Girl Child Education: A Milestone towards Human Development**

“There is no more valuable investment than in a girls’ education” —Ban Ki Moon, secretary-general, United Nations.

Offering basic education to a girl is an undoubtedly giving them greater power to make genuine choices over their lives. This is not a luxury. Rather, as human development, a girls might have the chance of a healthier and happier life should be reason enough for promoting girls' education (King & Winthrop, 2015). Similarly, there are also significant benefits for society as a total. An educated girl has the skills, information and self-confidence that she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen. For example, an educated woman likely to marry at a later age and have fewer children, more productive at work, earn money that spend back into their families and communities, and participate more active parts to their communities and countries development (Ibid). Further, Female education has important bearings on
child health and their survival too. Girls’ education enables to reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate, raise community participation, development activities, income opportunity, reduce poverty, improve productivity and last but not least she can educate children of one generation to another.

**Economic Perspectives**

Educating girls is economically beneficial as it enlarges girl’s rate of participation in the labor force. An increases female participation in the labor force is valuable as it boosts GDP growth and per capita income. As a whole, its increasing competition and thereby the overall quality of the workforce, leads to a rise in productivity levels. Studies have shown that one percent investment in female education raises the average level of GDP by 0.37 percentage points (Global Development report, 2009). Almost 50 percent of India’s populations are female. Hence, being a developing nation female participation in labor force is a mandatory significant for the country’s economic progress.

**Health Perspectives**

Globally, health is known as wealth. As per UNESCO (2014) if all the girls in low and middle-income countries completed primary school can reduce 15 percent of its (less than five year) child mortality. Girls when accomplish lower and upper secondary schooling the positive effect is more significant. Child mortality then drops by 49 per cent for those under five years of age. Hence, Undoubtedly Girls’ education has a plus effect on the health in society. The educated girls will able to better look after their children’s and own health. Moreover, knowledge influences female choices when it comes to pregnancy check-ups, childbirth and nutrition. Educated girls and women turn to the health services to a greater degree and effective when it comes to combating child marriage, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS etc.

**Social Perspectives**

Educational opportunities for girls and boys are an equally fundamental human right. As it is the basis of equal opportunities later in life. The schooling and learning can play a significant role in changing attitudes and in promoting gender equality. Equal opportunity of the sexes – such as equal command over resources, access to education, health, freedom to develop their potential has an central worth in its individual right. The equal treatment or equity of the sexes is intrinsic reasons for helps in reducing gender-imbalances and to bring welfare economics. The Global Partnership for education, 2016 [cited in Somani, 2017] has presented some of the key benefits of educating girls as highlighted in Table 1.

**Table 1. Importance of Educating Girls**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance for themselves</th>
<th>Importance for families</th>
<th>Importance for communities and countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s earning raise by 10% through additional year of schooling</td>
<td>A child of a literate mother is 50% more likely to live past 5 years of age</td>
<td>Investing in girls’ education in Sub-Sahara African can boost agricultural output by 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls with secondary schooling are six times less likely to marry as children</td>
<td>12.2 million children could avoid becoming stunted if their mothers had a secondary education</td>
<td>35% higher gross domestic product per capital is associated with each additional year of education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Global Partnership for Education (2016).*

Girls’ education can play a crucial role in empowering women status. Though, the implication of girls’ education is largely recognized, but issues of unequal participation still remain. Education enhances the social status of girls and is invariably linked with her economic position. Educational
attainment is one of the components of composite index of human development. So, empowering girl through education automatically enhances human development. In Assam, females are having a lower literacy rate of 66.27% per cent as against male literacy of 77.85% per cent (Census 2011). Low level or huge gender gap in literacy not only has a negative impact on girls’ lives but also on their families and overall prosperity of the state.

Contemporary Situation of Girl Child Education in Assam

Assam is one of the prominent states of India. State with endless dynamic features related to geography, climate, demography, culture and ethnicity. The total population of Assam is 3.12 cr. in which males were 15,939,443 whereas females were 15,266,133 (Census of India, 2011). Female constitute almost half of the state population. But capacity building among the female is still a bigger challenge. Besides, there is a drastic gender inequality in all human development sectors. It is a fact that the women in Assam having poor education and economic status. As per Census 2001, average sex ratio number of female is 932 per 1000 male and it increased to 958 female per 1000 male in (Census of India, 2011). But still the sex ratio rate is high in some district of Assam. One can see that the child sex ratio is massively declining in age group of above 6 years. Even in India, as per Census 2011, due to the mal-practices of sex selective abortion, the sex ratio has massively declined over the years (in 1961 it was 976, in 2001 it was 927, in 2011 it was 914). This is also true in the context of the some district in Assam. In 2001, the child sex ratio in Assam was 965 which had declined to 957 in 2011. It shows that parents are still not willing to prefer a girl child as she is considered to be a liability in future. Thus, the negligence of human resources starts from the birth of a girl child in our society.

Regards to literacy, the total literacy rate in Assam i.e. 73.2 percent, the male literacy is 78.8 whereas the female literacy is 54.6 percent. The gaps between the male-female literacy are almost 24 percent. In literacy ranking Assam stand at the 26th position out of 35 states of the country (Census, 2011). The state has, however, gained about 10 per cent in the total literacy rate over the last Census (63.25 in 2001). That’s shows by each year one percent gained in literacy rate but still it has far to achieve 100 percent. In contrast to the male-female gap in literacy, rural-urban gap is huge it is almost 30 percent. With regards to female literacy rate both the state and national level is 50.7 % and 46.1 % respectively. It is, moreover, seen that while the range in literacy rates among Assam urban females is quite high. But still it’s not reach as compare to male and to all female. The fact reveals huge gap towards the dream of human development. Plentiful studies show that Female literacy is a sensitive index of social development and is important for various reasons including its contribution in lowering fertility rate, population growth rate, infant and child mortality rate, earning potential and autonomy within their household. In Assam literacy rate of female is always much lower than their male counterparts. Though, the government has expressed a strong commitment towards education to all. However, Assam still has one of the lowest female literacy rates in North East India. The low female literacy not only has a negative impact on female lives but the state’s economy as well. As Assam Human Development report, 2013 heighted the situation girls in Assam (see Table 2).

Table 2: Literacy Rates in 7-14 Years Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
<th>7-14 yrs. Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table discloses that the literacy rates among the boys and girls are 86.7% and 77.6% respectively. In addition, girls’ literacy rate is 9.1% i.e. less than boys’ literacy. Further, 22.4% girl’s child literacy rate is uncovered in the state age group of 7-14 years. Again, the gaps in the rates of literacy i.e. rural-urban, social category, religion and spatial diversity become more pronounced as the age progresses.

Table 3: literate percentage of children in the 7 + (14) age group, by Social Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Category</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>87.85</td>
<td>78.63</td>
<td>83.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>86.94</td>
<td>76.69</td>
<td>81.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>89.03</td>
<td>79.28</td>
<td>84.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>84.98</td>
<td>76.53</td>
<td>80.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>86.72</td>
<td>77.56</td>
<td>82.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Survey, Assam (2013)

The table reveals that girl child literacy is less among ST (76.69%) and general (76.53%) social category than OBC (79.28) and SC (78.63). Moreover, there is a gap between boys-girls literacy rates different in each category. Further, it shows the highest gap among ST and OBC Category.

Table 4: Literate percentage of Children in the 7 + (14) Age group, By Religious category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>89.79</td>
<td>80.72</td>
<td>85.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>80.29</td>
<td>70.87</td>
<td>75.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>83.91</td>
<td>73.51</td>
<td>78.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>81.56</td>
<td>72.14</td>
<td>77.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>96.00</td>
<td>89.74</td>
<td>93.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>88.89</td>
<td>76.83</td>
<td>83.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>86.72</td>
<td>77.56</td>
<td>82.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Survey, Assam (2013)

The above table shows that girl child literacy rate is more among Sikh and Hindu religion i.e. 89.74% and 80.71 % respectively. However, Among Muslim religion literacy rate of girl child is lowest i.e. 70.87% in Assam.
Table 5: Rate of Enrollment of children from 7-14 years in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>GPI</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-14 Year Enrolment Rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93.59</td>
<td>94.13</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>93.56</td>
<td>96.28</td>
<td>93.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Survey, Assam (2013)

The above table displays the children from 7 to 14 years (including both boys and girls) the rate of enrolment is 93.85%. In this age group girls enrollment is more as compare to boys. Moreover, regards to rural enrolment is less than urban area among the children from 7-14 years age group. The universal enrolment is still an issue in the state, as only 93 per cent of the children in 7-14 age groups in the households are currently enrolled in school. A large number of children are out of school accounting for 6.45 per cent of the total elementary school age children and this is not an avoidable fact as for human development.

Table 6: Percentage of Drop out Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Who Are Out Of School (Assam)</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Enrolled</td>
<td>11.31</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>22.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left After Enrollment (Dropouts)</td>
<td>43.88</td>
<td>29.18</td>
<td>73.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled But Do Not Go To School</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Survey, Assam 2013

The table reveals that girl child is less dropped out in compared to boys. As per HRD report, (2013) total (including boys and girls) 73.06 % child are left after enrolment (dropouts) among them girls (29.18%) are comparatively less than boy (43.88%) in this age group. Moreover, 22.7% children have actually never been enrolled and 73.06% of those who were enrolled have left or dropped out of school at different classes. Lastly, a negligible portion of enrolled children, although they have not formally given up school but do not go to school. Students dropping out of school are a serious issue in Assam. The dropout rate in the state at the primary schools in 2013-14 was 7.44%. The dropout rate at primary schools in 2014-15 was 15.36%. Thus, it enlarged by 7.92 portions as compared to 2013-14. As per state-wise dropout rate at primary level during (2014-15) report Assam was at the top in terms of the dropout rate amongst the various states/UTs in India in 2014-15.

Table 7: Reasons for School Dropout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work At Home</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>8.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need To Support Earning</td>
<td>23.87</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>32.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed In Exam</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>10.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Not Afford</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>8.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Interested In Studies</td>
<td>19.44</td>
<td>12.06</td>
<td>31.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Survey, Assam 2013
The table 6 reflects majority of girl child are dropped out from study either to support family income or because of unconcern in studies. Besides, dropout especially among girls for domestic work including helping parents, occupational work, sibling care, early marriage, social taboos, parental illiteracy, lack of motivation and economically poor family who cannot afford education cost of their children which leads to unsound attitude towards girls’ education.

Discussions
Girl child education is the only way to boost up the social transformation for the welfare of any country. Education can build girls as economically empowered, educationally competent, self-reliant, self-dependent, and enable to take own decisions and choices in day-to-day life. Thus, there should be steps to be taken in this direction to improve the status of literacy among women, especially in rural areas. Nonetheless various schemes launched by government to provide universal elementary education but the goal has not yet achieved. More efforts are needed to aware about government schemes for free education and importance of girl child education in everyone’s life. The dropout rate at primary schools in Assam during 2014-15 was 15.36% which is quite high in NE states. Gender equality and empowerment of girl is recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. Males and females both constitute a society so their equal development is significant for the holistic development. Education is the main tool of girl’s empowerment as it enables– to respond to opportunities, to challenge traditional roles, to change lives in a significant way and to secure means of living with self-dignity. An educated girl becomes a self-confident she can recognize her potentialities and aware of her rights and privileges. Ultimately, it’s help her in making decision over the circumstances that influence her life and free from shackles imposed on in the name of custom, belief and practice. Gender-parity has been the overarching concern of the system on the whole. By education, gender and social disadvantages can be resolved and equity can be achieved. Therefore, it is high time to understand the structural and social barriers to girl’s education and bring out systematic change. The status of girl’s education among the social category likes Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Muslim are vulnerable. The poor socio-economic factors and societal attitudes are leading them to become school drop-outs. Girls child are being treated unequally in education when they grow up. They assigned to sex roles such as home making roles that restrict them from job opportunity, girl’s educational inequality, lack of livelihood opportunity, restriction in economic and political participation makes them dependent both socially and economically. Women participation in work force is important for our national economic growth. Hence, it is the need of the hour to give emphasize on girl’s education from both government and Non-Government side. Although the female enrolment is increasing in elementary level but it is less in secondary and higher education level than men. The rank of Assam in terms of educational development Index of 2009-10 was 31 and 32 at primary and elementary level respectively among the 35 states of the country (MHRD Report, 2013-14).

According to 12th Five Year Plan, the North Eastern region of India, there is a wide range of variations in terms of GER at the higher stage. In the North East, Assam has comparatively poor GER (16.8% as per AISHER 2014-15) compared to other North Eastern States. This reveals that the overall inclusion of girls in higher education is too poor to be compared to boys and men.

Role of Social Work Professional
Social work is a theory and practice based disciplines. The knowledge and the skills that social workers are learn through the education and training in social work needs to be applied in the field as interventions. Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work– values, principles, skills and techniques to one or more. Helps is to obtain actual services, providing counseling and psychotherapy for individuals, families and groups, communities or to improve social development services and participating in relevant legislative processes. As globally accepted definition given by two
bodies namely, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has been jointly defined in 2014, social work profession is as highlighted:

[. . .] Social work practice is to promote social change, development, social cohesion, empowerment and liberation of its citizens. Practices are fundamentally guided by social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and value for diversity. Using by theories – social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge. Social work connects people and structure to deal with life challenges and improve wellbeing. The practice is mainly considered relationship between the persons and their environment [italics mine] (IASSW & IFSW, 2014).

In today’s scenario, regards to education, social worker help is to provide to maintain school-home-community linkage. Thus, they try to prevent behavioral, economic and scholastic problems. Social worker can use their efficacy in education sector too. They can make sure that the extreme pressure is relieved off from the students. Help them to gain maximum out of the learning process. Social worker helps educators with new and innovative ways of handling children in child friendly manner. The approach of social work focuses on individual child helps to take care of each child in his/her overall development. The social workers can help to increasing literacy rate by convincing more parents to send their children to school. The social workers can look into the reasons for dropouts from school and they can provide individualized help for such children who dropout due to certain reasons such as poverty. They can help these children with school equipment such as books, uniform, food and financial assistance. There are many children in India who are forced to work for the survival. Social workers can arrange evening classes for such children who are deprived of education. The social workers can also arranged classes for girl’s education. They can provide formal as well as vocational education to these girls. Such people can use their knowledge and skills to improve their living standard. Social workers can help to conduct non-formal education to bring children up to 14 years of age to the fold of education. Children who are not able to attend formal schools can be helped in such classes. The ultimate goal is to bring social development that’s what the social work profession. Also, to secure for people of everywhere and their satisfaction at least to meet basic social and material needs. Above all, the main focus is promotion of social justice, gender equality, inclusion, citizen’s awareness, empowerment and improvement in quality of life. For improvement of girl child education the researcher has developed the steps of social work intervention can be adopted as presented (see Diagram 1):
Conclusion

Girl child Education is a major fact for the development of a country. Unfortunately, our societies, Assam and India have failed miserably in attaching the true power of girl child education in bringing about the desired changes. This is a significant for nation’s goal of equity, human development and to minimize the gender gap among the unreached. The unreached and deprived girl children are to be paid attention in education. It is quite often stated that girls of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, lower class and minority are socially disadvantaged. The disadvantaged groups of the society are lagging behind in the sphere of enrollment, retention and achievement as well. Education for girl is one of the best progressive investments one can make. Empowering girl child through education automatically enhances a space for human development. It’s having a positive impact on numerous areas such as uphold health and wellbeing for the future generation. Most importantly can help nations to reduce poverty and slow down population growth. But girl child situation of this region till date is not very encouraging. Hence, excluded literacy rates need to be paid attention towards empowering and development of human resource. There is a need to be taken more steps on the part of the government to ensure higher female literacy which would lead to higher human development. A lot needs to be done in terms of incorporation of girl child concern in all state and national development plans. The present issues demands for social work professional, research, political will and further attention of media to influence and raise mass awareness.
References

Gender Disparity and Political Participation of Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions

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Abstract
India established democracy as a form of government and no democracy would be successful unless there is equality between citizens which comprises both men and women. In this regard the 73rd amendment to the constitution was a landmark step in India which acknowledged 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the rural local self government or Panchayati Raj Institutions. As Indian women comprises almost 50 percent of total population and more than 70 percent of India’s total population reside in rural areas, the introduction of the system of reservation is viewed as a key to increase participation of women in the local decision making process and reduce gender inequalities in traditional rural societies. Therefore it is high time to judge the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in respect of women’s participation in local decision making process. This paper discusses how far reservation for women at Panchayat level politics helping women to participate actively in politics.

Keywords: Democracy, Participation, Equality, Panchayati Raj, Gender.

Introduction
Women have always been an integral part of the society irrespective of its nature and form, but they hardly get what is due to them. For centuries, women who constitute half of the humanity have been suppressed, oppressed and treated as subordinates. However, the position of women had been deteriorated since late Vedic period though a ray of consciousness against the disgraceful condition of the women emerged with advent of renaissance in the nineteenth century India.

The women of the nineteenth century fought against their degraded condition and pursued with all sincerity the object of women emancipation to raise their position in the society. But a few political demonstrations or a few years of organized activity do not bring emancipation rather it needs most importantly a favourable infrastructure, consciousness and desire for equal and free life. In this connection, the founding father of Indian constitution did a magnificent job in ensuring gender justice in supreme law of the country, the Constitution. The Preamble to the Constitution, inter alia, assures justice, social, economic and political, equality of status and opportunity and dignity of individual. The Fundamental Rights guarantee women’s equality under law. The Directive Principles of the State Policy provide for affirmative action for securing adequate means of livelihood for men and women, equal pay for equal work, raising level of nutrition, maternity relief and condition of work ensuring decent standards of life and full enjoyment of leisure.

Despite the liberal provisions of the constitution and various laws, serious inequalities remain with regard to women in India. A major factor contributing to these inequalities is the nature of women’s identity in the traditional patriarchal society which has been the strongest influence in the development and construction of gender roles in India. The 73rd constitutional amendment Act is a direct attempt to ratify that which calls for a reservation of minimum 1/3rd of seats for women both as members and as Chairperson within all of India’s locally elected government bodies commonly referred to as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). More recently in 2009, the Govt. of India approved 50% reservation for women in PRIs and many states including Rajasthan, Odisha and Assam have implemented the same.
Affirmative action to ensure women’s political participation is an important step which provides the women with a constitutional platform to stand up to men, to raise their voice on issues concerning women oppression, subjugation and related issues and thus in fact provide them with an identity in an orthodox male dominated socio-political set-up. In short they are provided with a much needed forum to seek redressal of problems directly affecting them and hence got the true essence of empowerment.

Review of Literature

There is a vast body of literature that discussed the low political participation of women not only in backward countries but also in advanced countries is due to the existence of gender inequality and traditional patriarchal society and thus refrain the women from the true essence of empowerment.

Studies on women’s participation shows that the representation of women is low even in advances countries compared to men. Laura Kramer (2004) in her book *The Sociology of Gender – a brief introduction*” mentioned that in the United States Congress has consistently had lower percentage of women representation than the legislature of many other nations.

Bina Agarwal (2001) in her paper “Gender Equality: From Legislative Vision to Everyday Family Practice” clearly pointed out that most of the Indian women in practice remain property less even though there is a Hindu Succession Act, 1956. So equality as an idea needs to be embodied not just in laws but it also in the institutions and practices of everyday life.

Sangita Barthakur (2010) in her paper “Empowerment of Rural Indian Women” pointed out that women’s low confidence, lack of education as well as lack of control in decision making process are the factors deterring women empowerment. She clearly mentioned that none of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will be achieved without progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Shiv Kumer Lal (2013) found in his study conducted in two development blocks of Allahabad district that lack of education, male dominance, degraded social status, family workload, immobility and ignorance of rules and regulations etc are serious impediments in their performance. Besides 80% of women are of the view that employment generation for women will prove to be a better and more effective delivery vehicle for empowerment rather than increasing women’s participation.

Lalneihzovi (2009) in the article “Political Participation of Women in Mizoram” depicts the male dominance and gender inequality is root cause of low political participation of women. In 1998 election 33 percent seat reservation for women was being debated but no major political party in Mizoram allotted seats to women except Mizo National Front (Nationalist).

Sandhya Thapa (2009) in her paper “Women of Sikkim- in Changing Perspective” cites that the women are although well represented in local Panchayats, in reality the situation is characterized by low participation in Panchayat meetings and surrogate proxy representation.

Girin Phukon (2004) in his article named “Panchayati Raj in Assam” put forwarded that there may hardly be any scope for peoples active participation in grass root democracy where majority of people live below poverty line and are illiterate.

Besides, a good deal of literature on working of Panchayati Raj in India tries to focus on opportunities available to the women elected member. Aparna Thomas (2004) rightly observed that reservation of women was seen as a means for encouraging greater participation in public life. Reservation therefore not only ensured political participation but also indirectly encouraged women to came out of their traditional boundaries as wives and mother.

Nani Vadekar (1997) in a survey conducted in Yavatal district of Maharastra found that a female Panchayat member called a meeting to discuss the problem of dowry, clearly indicating a desire to pursue an issue affecting women.

Neelam Gorhe (2001) in her paper “Combating Violence Against Women for Their Empowerment” clearly cites that the reservation of seats for women in the local self governments has
emboldened them and created a class of women’s leaders who are unafraid of talking the issue of violence and denial of rights head on and giving it visibility it require. Women reservation in grassroots’ democracy is mainly initiated with a view that women can resolve problem of gender inequality better as it is related to them. But a good deal literature shows that Panchayat functions as a platform to women’s practical gender needs rather than their strategic gender interest.

A joint publication of International Centre for Research on Women and UN women (2012) finds that water, sanitation, road construction, wages and pensions are the important issues raised in Panchayat meetings rather than the issues related to women’s development. Thus the literature supports the proposition that the reservation is conducive to increase women’s participation in Panchayat Raj Institutions and thereby at the level of grass root democracy and also a means of women’s empowerment but not an end in itself.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to enquire into the nature of political participation of women at the level of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the context of policy of reservation for women at various level of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The study is bases on following objectives

1. To find out the socio-economic background of women political participants in the Panchayati Raj Institutions
2. To know the level of participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
3. To examine the socio-cultural, economic and politico-administrative challenges faced by women political participants in the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Methodology

The present study is conducted in Cachar district of Assam. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed for the purpose. The proposed study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from the field. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, government reports etc. The tools like survey/questionnaire/interview schedule are employed for data collection depending on the nature of respondent and type of data. The universe of the proposed study is composed of 27 nos. Gaon Panchayats of two Community Development Blocks of Cachar district i.e. Udharpont Development Bolck and Borkhola Development Block. The sample size consists of 100 persons consisting of GP member, GP president, AP member from women and women party worker

Findings

A. Social Background

It is revealed from the study that average age of the women elected members is 35-40 years and 85% of them are married. It indicates that the women enter in to the local politics after marriage when they have comparatively less responsibility regarding children. From data analysis, it is found that the highest educational qualification of elected women members is senior secondary (6 %). About 10% women passed HSCL and nearly 20%, 42% and 22% read upto High school, Middle school and Primary standard respectively. Though there is no illiterate women member but their educational level is not enough to understand how Panchayat Raj Institutions work and to carry on their official works independently. The study also reflected that the women from different caste categories are able to participate in rural local self government. In the present study almost 60 percent of elected women belong to general category and the representation of other categories like SC, OBC, ST and TGL are 20, 8, 3, 9 percent respectively. As far as religious background of the elected members of PRIs in these two development blocks are concerned, the study revealed that both Hindus and Muslims are represented almost equally with 51.22 percent and 46.34 percent respective. Only 2.44 percent of elected members
belong to Christianity and there is no place for other religious group like Buddhist, Sikhs due to low percentage of population and lack of local support or party backing.

**B. Awareness about Panchayati Raj Institutions**

The active and fruitful participation in any field needs a comprehensive knowledge of that particular area or field. No one is able to avail the benefit of the rights and privileged unless and until he or she is fully aware of the same. Thus, to guarantee active participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and to avail the opportunities of 73rd amendment Act, the women elected members should have complete knowledge of working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and should be aware of their role and responsibilities. The data represent that only 24% of ward members are aware about their role and responsibilities as public representatives. But in case of GP president and AP member, the figure is as low as 15% as such post are mostly filled up by proxy candidate i.e. as proxy for male members of family as male could not contest due to women reservation. This happens mostly for the posts of GP president and AP member as these posts are regarded as more prestigious and powerful whereas, most of the women candidates for ward members contest and get elected on their own accord. Thus it is unjustified to expect active participation in local democracy from the women representative with such low level of awareness and gendered nature of the society where their male counterpart is just pushes them into politics only to retain power, if not at their own with the proxy candidate in the of form wife, mother, sister, sister-in-law.

Further, to enquire into the level of participation of women in rural local self government, data is collected which demonstrate that more than 80% of women are active in politics only after being elected as public representative and they contesting election only after the seat is reserved as it is found that there is no elected women against the unreserved seats. It is also found that only 18.3% of rural women are motivated to contest election on their own and that too limited to GP member as other two positions have higher status, power and responsibility than the former which their male counterpart try to hold by whatever way. It is found that 80% of the women PRI members attend the Gram Sabha very frequently but only 27% of them involve themselves in decision making and raising questions relating to women is limited to only 10%. Thus it is clear that the participation of women in all level of PRIs is much below the expectation and it is due to gender biased in the society, lack of education, lack of confidence, lack of political consciousness, ignorance and most importantly the patriarchal nature of the family where women are largely dependent on their male counterpart and dictated too.

**C. Challenges to Participation**

An attempt is also made to know the challenges faced by the elected members of Panchayat in performing of their duties. In this regard, data reveals that 85% of the elected women members are married and they find it very difficult to maintain a balance between their role as a house wife and public representatives. Nearly 84% of women whose educational qualification is below HSLC admitted that the low level of education is a major constrains to be a successful participant in local democracy. It is also came to the light that though there is a provision for monthly honorarium for elected members that too was increased to considerable amount in 2013 but they have not been paid the same since they hold the office during entire period of the present term except once. As it is found that more that 80% of women have family income below 1 lakh and they find it difficult to attend meetings or training programmes at District or Block level due to scarcity of fund. Thus it is found that reservation policy makes the entrance to grassroots’ democracy for women much easier than to work there actively and without any bias as they are still less politically educated, excessive family burden, excessive dependence on male member and lack of recognition and reward by the government.

**Conclusion**

The above discussion reveals that the reservation of seats at the Panchayat level definitely increased the level of women’s participation quantitatively in grassroots’ democracy and provides them the opportunity to come out of their traditional role as a house wife. Moreover, it is no doubt a good sign
that women find easy access to local democracy due to reservation policy and also a good numbers of women are participating actively and thereby got the opportunity to be empowered. But this is only one side of the coin as women work in local democracy under extreme challenges due to patriarchal nature of the society, excessive dependence on family members, non-cooperative behavior of their colleagues and their role as proxy member which results in ignorance regarding working of PRIs. The result of the study is not much encouraging as gendered nature of the society still plays a very important role to make the women inactive in local democracy and thereby the goal of active participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions is still a dream.

In conclusion, it can be said that though the gender equality in politics is still a dream even after the implementation of 50% reservation of seats for women in local democracy for many reason, the role of such huge human forces cannot be underestimated in a democratic form of government as no democracy would be successful unless there is equality between citizens which comprises both men and women. Thus it may be considered that to achieve the objectives set for minimising inequality and gender discrimination in politics, progress can be made through the co-ordination of different sections of the society such as family members, religious heads, political leaders, government official, NGO’s and they should come forward ignoring their personal differences to recognise and appreciate the work of the women. Besides, the duty of the government and society is not over by providing reservation but it is their duty to achieve the goal of reservation through active participation of women in decision making process in local self government. So, every segment of the society, government organisation including NGO’s should develop positive attitude and join hands to make the rural women aware about their role and framework of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Then only the realisation of real objectives of reservation at grassroots’ level may be realised. At last, the road to achieve the goal of reservation through minimising gender discrimination would be more challenging unless the patriarchal structure and gendered nature of society is transformed and replaced by an egalitarian/ gender sensitive society where men and women are co-workers and enjoy equality of status and opportunity not only in paper but also in practice.

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Gender equality forms a crucial aspect in developing a sustainable world. It is also a prime goal under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) developed by the United Nations Development Programme. The pivotal role played by media in promoting gender equality that eventually leads to the empowerment of women and girls alongside economic growth and development across the world cannot be ignored. Gender stereotyping can be defined as preconceived ideas whereby men and women are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their gender. Stereotypes about any specific gender result from deeply ingrained attitudes, norms and prejudices against that specific gender. The role played by women and men in media are heavily influenced by existing social and cultural norms, including gender stereotypes. For example, women working as journalists or newsreaders tend to be thin and sexualised. Commercials for domestic products like detergents, floor cleaners and others often portray women wearing Indian ethnic salwar suit or sari, holding the product and telling the viewers how the product with its striking features has helped her in her household work. Sports media also contributes to the construction of masculinity since professional sports as a genre is dominated by men ranging from athletes and coaches to the commentators and reporters. This study is based on mixed methods approach starting with quantitative data collection using a survey of questions to capture how gender representation across television is perceived by the audience and then it is followed by qualitative analysis of a selection of soap operas, advertisements and news for a more in depth understanding of gender stereotyping in Indian television content.

Keywords: Gender, Society, Marketing, Television, Stereotype, Sexuality

Introduction
Gender equality holds a central position in the establishment of a sustainable society. Discrimination and pre-conceived notions against women characterises Indian society as a patriarchal society in front of the entire world. Even in the 21st century, India is a country where the birth of a boy is celebrated with pomp and ceremony and the birth of a girl is often a muted affair secluded from the celebrations. India is a country where religious beliefs make women a goddess and the same women are exploited on a regular basis. It won’t be wrong on our part if we regard our Indian society as a society of double standards as far as our outlook towards women is concerned.

The Gender Development Index measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for disparities between women and men. The GDI (2018), calculated among 189 countries and India’s position at 130, can be rightfully asserted as fairly disappointing despite reasonable rapid rates of economic growth. Crimes against women show an upward trend, especially barbaric crimes like rapes, dowry deaths and honour killings. The dichotomous view of gender (the notion that one is either male or female) is specific to certain cultures and is not universal. The European Institute for Gender Equality defines gender inequality as a legal, social and cultural situation in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or
enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles. These pre-conceived notions affect their status in all spheres of life in society and play a crucial part in establishing the role they play in the family or labour market, in political life or at workplace, in decision making as well as in social gender relations.

Gender stereotype may be defined as a generalised view of characteristics, roles and duties that people of specific gender must possess and practice. For example, a lot of books for children told stories where girls and women were princesses, beautiful, weak and often waited for a Prince Charming, who always tends to be a very handsome person, muscular and can fight off the evil to save the girl often leading to the girl getting married and then “living happily ever after”.

Candace West and Don H Zimmermann, in their article titled ‘Doing Gender’ (1987), introduced the concept of gender not as a social role or social representation or as a definite trait but, as an accomplishment that is a product of daily social practices and behaviours. In this article, the authors discuss ‘gender’ as opposite to the ‘sex’ assigned by birth.

Undoubtedly, television as a medium of mass communication plays a very prominent role in shaping up a person since childhood. If a child is exposed in early viewing years to advertisements where women are portrayed as experts in managing household chores, from mopping to washing, where women take the back seat while men drive the luxurious cars or bikes, high probability exists that the child may grow up with all these gender assigned roles at the back of his mind. With television being the most watched object in the country, can we expect our India to achieve a sustainable society with such gender stereotypes existing in Indian television content?

**Objectives of the study**

- Critically analyse the familiarity of the respondents with the term ‘Gender Stereotype’.
- To capture how gender representation in television is perceived by the audience.
- To find out if gender stereotype in television leads to any kind of barrier that inadvertently hampers the respectful relationships existing between men and women.

The objective is then followed by qualitative analysis of select examples of various advertisements, soap operas and news clips that the researcher watched and attached along with the questionnaire in order to relate the respondents to this study and findings.

**Methodology**

As the main focus of this study is to analyse the gender stereotypes existing in Indian television content, a mixed methods approach has been undertaken by the researcher to critically analyse the findings. It starts with quantitative data collection using a survey of questions to capture how gender representation across television is perceived by the audience. The technique of simple random sampling was applied for the collection of data and the questionnaire was distributed in the form of Google forms across social media and instant messaging application platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Hike. This was followed by qualitative analysis of a selection of soap operas, advertisements and news clips for a more in depth understanding of gender stereotyping in Indian television content.

**Survey and Findings**

The researcher developed the survey, modelling several questions on key concepts like gender equality, gender stereotype and gender representation coupled with specimens of advertisements, soap operas and news clips prevalent in Indian television content.

Respondents who failed to ‘meaningfully’ complete the survey have not been included in the survey analysis. The survey was conducted in the district of Kolkata. The survey received a total of 1224 valid respondents. The sampling technique of simple random sampling was applied to collect data.
Profile of respondents
- Most survey respondents identified themselves as women (61%)
- A very small population of respondents lived in suburban areas
- 53% of respondents are aged between 17-24 years
- 34% of respondents are aged between 25-40 years
- 13% of respondents identified as above 40

Findings:
- The survey found that 63% of the total respondents were aware about the term ‘Gender Equality’
- 86% of respondents were found to be familiar with the specimens attached along with the questionnaire
- When asked, do they find women journalists and news readers to be thin and sexualised, 74% of respondents marked ‘Yes’ as their response
- 76% of respondents agreed that the picture of women on packs of detergents and floor cleaners is a classic example of gender stereotypes prevalent in Indian advertisements
- The concept of ‘Gender Equality’ was identified by most of the respondents. The analysis of the responses by the respondents (after analysing the data with adequate research tools) also reveals the perception of the sample population on gender equality and gender stereotype.

Discussion
All mediums of mass communication are very dynamic in nature. They change and add other important traits in accordance to the changing needs of time, advancement of technology and temperament of the target audience. Stereotypes may be regarded as a common opinion of a section of society towards another society, which develops over the passage of time or socialisation. In a patriarchal society like India, most people by nature prefer to see women in the roles of mother, sister and wife or as the perfect home maker.

Gender Stereotyping in Advertisements on Indian Television
Advertising is one of the most effective types of mass communication. Advertisements are generally one sided, from the company on products and services to its potential customers. In this era of technology, television as a medium of mass communication with ample reach, advertisements’ being broadcasted 24x7 across channels is a common phenomenon. Gender stereotyping has been part of advertisements since a long time and to assert that these advertisements forces men and women to choose social acceptance over their personal view/opinion won’t be wrong.

The questionnaire that was sent also had attachments in the form of pictures from Indian television advertisements and the respondents could easily associate with the gender bias present in Indian television content. Tanishq Jewellery in an advertisement released just prior to Diwali portrayed men buying jewellery for their better half and loved ones. Their tagline was – “Khushiyon ko banaao aur khoobsoorat Utsava ke saath. Aao manaaye #TanishqWali Diwali”. Well, undoubtedly the visual aspects of the commercial was very good but, it raises a question that threatens our entire society, can men only buy expensive jewellery for their women? In this country, can only men earn enough money? What is the economic status of women in this country?

Nirma, a true Indian brand, which took on mighty multinationals and rewrote the marketing rules to win the heart of the consumers. Nima Rose, a popular choice as a bathing bar of Indian middle class society, did involve in gender biased advertising since the 90’s. This advertisement portrayed sensuous women bathing with this soap to attract consumers. Well, apart from establishing as a popular bathing bar it also did install a belief across nation that beautiful and thin women, portrayed as bathing with this bar, can be
treated as parameters of beauty whereas, it was nothing but sexual objectification of women, up for gazes from men.

In recent times, Maruti Suzuki, launched a new commercial for their upcoming car, New Wagon R where a man is portrayed taking the front seat of the vehicle and going out with his family. Well, why men are only portrayed taking the front seat of a vehicle? The fact that is much more highlighting and is definitely thought provoking is that it is not only limited to any definite company like Maruti Suzuki but across automobile giants like Toyota and Hyundai. This proves that irrespective of celebrating women empowerment with pomp and glory, it comes down only to men driving bikes and cars.

Even still today, when the advertisement industry is trying to fight over gender stereotypes, the role of women as a care taker of family is muffling the voice of change. For example, in the Airtel 4G advertisements, a women is portrayed as the boss of her husband in the company and she is also seen as giving a deadline to her husband (which can be treated as a new approach towards women empowerment) but at the same time she is also seen as arriving early in her house in order to cook food for her husband.

**Gender Stereotyping in Soap Operas on Indian Television**

With the expeditious growth of television networks, there has been a tremendous increase in the viewership. This has given rise to a number of daily soaps. They revolve around themes, like family, love and marriage. They often touch upon various issues faced by women in their daily life. From teenagers to grandmothers, the very entertaining plots of these serials have got the audience hooked on to them. Inadvertently, they have become a part of our daily lives. What concerns us is the portrayal of women in gender specific assigned roles.

*Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*’ (premiered on July 3rd, 2000 on Star Plus) can be regarded as a serial that enjoyed a lot of popularity from all the provinces across India. This serial portrays a mother in law’s struggle to put up with three bahu’s. The iconic character of Tulsi, portrayed by Smriti Irani, portrays women as ideal wives, always listening and caring about the nitty-gritty affairs of a joint family. The three major drawbacks of this serial considering to gender stereotypes is focussing affirmatively on the ‘Bahu’ culture, where a women is expected to put vermilion above forehead, cover her head with a veil, always help in household chores, especially cooking. Well, can’t a woman be as much active with her professional life as she is expected of her daily household chores? Is she not allowed to wear anything, but sari? Why is she expected to take care of the kitchen? Can’t she just take the front seat of the car while taking her family to any place? A woman who smokes, drinks and parties is portrayed as a vamp. Sometimes we find the girl (generally the protagonist) is married off to a stranger just because love marriages are against India’s rich heritage and culture. And no matter how much moral ethics these families apparently have, they do not hesitate for a moment before they ask the man to divorce his wife and get married to another woman who satisfies their criteria of an ideal daughter-in-law.

Talking about a recent serial that became quite popular, *Diya aur Baati Hum* (aired on Star Plus from 23rd August, 2011) where the main protagonist Sandhya, spends the most of the episodes wearing a sari along with a veil trying to please her mother in law by learning to cook and clean. After a lot of time, as the plot moves ahead we find certain changes in her character. She convinces her entire family about her dream of pursuing career as an IPS officer but, all this looks very artificial and fake to an extent. The impact of the character Sandhya, this serial had generated since its inception on the audience becomes very hard to give away and bring in a new concept of women empowerment drastically. But the main question still lies, why a women needs to persuade her family to allow her to work?

**Conclusion**

This study with the usage of mixed methods approach finds out that majority of the respondents agree that women in Indian TV advertisements and soap operas were mostly portrayed in decorative and family role. A large portion of the respondents agreed on knowing terms such as ‘Gender Equality’ and ‘Gender Stereotypes’ respectively. They believe that such stereotypical portrayal of women across all formats of
television not only creates a deeply ingrained negative impact about that particular gender on the audience but also leads to loss of self esteem for that specific gender. Irrespective of the age of the respondents, the majority of them are of the perception that women across serials and advertisements are mostly portrayed in family role.

Tracing the footprints of feminism, it can be divided into four broader areas namely, liberal feminism, marxist and socialist feminism and development feminism. Liberal feminism states that gender differences are not based in biological categorisation of sex and therefore men and women can be labelled as not all that different. Post modern feminism and queer theory challenge gender stereotypes cast by the society to a large extent. They firmly state that sexuality and gender are fluid, shifting and can be further divided into multiple categories. A prime medium of mass communication, television, must portray gender to its viewers across all its genres, in its true form. To label gender or sexuality as binary or fixed and develop characters across all formats of television (advertisements, soap operas, reality shows, sitcom, etcetera) that only adds up to the stereotypical portrayal of gender must be looked upon with utmost importance at the earliest as television attracts a lot of viewers and is not limited to any definite gender, literacy or strata of the society.

India, a diverse and vast country, is working its way out by applying strategic ways that helps to improve the quality of woman’s life in the country but at the same time it must pay attention to male stereotypes that exists in contents across television. Men portrayed as ideal husbands, sons, fathers and in other roles creates a stigma which is hard to get rid of keeping in mind the picture it portrays about a specific gender on the Indian society. Glimmers of hope that are evident in modern day television content which are trying hard to break gender stereotypes, rules established by the society and taboos prevalent in Indian culture must be applauded at the juncture where India is standing today.

References

To inspire persons having notable contributions in their respective field, Barak Education Society has introduced / initiated following awards:

1. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Memorial Ideal Teacher Recognition: This award is for the teachers with notable contributions in the field of teaching at primary/ middle/ secondary school/ madrassa levels in Barak Valley who are selected through a definite selection process. They are awarded the recognition on the occasion of Teachers Day every year in a formal felicitation function. Notice for this purpose of selection/nomination is generally issued in our website and also in print media as news item in the month of May/June every year.

2. Begum Rokeya Smarak Sammanana: This award has been started in 2013 and is given twice in a year. The objectives are as follows:
   (a) To encourage individual/organization/institutions engaged for promoting the ideals of Begum Rukeya.
   (b) To encourage woman/women organization working for the cause of promoting female education particularly in Muslim community.
   (c) To encourage woman for notable contribution in literary activities or social service.
   (d) To encourage girl students for remarkable result in any examination from H.S.L.C onwards.
   The selected person should be from Barak Valley or at least should have Barak Valley origin. Generally the award is given/ or name of awardee is announced on the occasion of birthday of Begum Rokeya i.e the 9th December.

3. Moulana Azad Smarak Sammanana: As a part of celebration of National Education Day, the society has instituted a Smarak Sammana w.e.f 2014 in memory of the great leader. The award has been given away once in two years.

4. Dr. A.P J Abdul Kalam Memorial Research Medal: This award has been instituted for felicitating the members of the society for acquiring M.Phil/Ph.D degree from any recognized university

5. Syed Mujtaba Ali Sahitya Sammanana: This award is given once in two years to a person of Barak Valley for his notable contribution in the field of Bengali Language and Literature particularly for promoting communal harmony. Educationist with outstanding contribution in socio-cultural field may also be considered.

6. Swamy Vivekananda Shiksma Sammanana: For notable contribution in the field of education. It is under process for drafting rules/guidelines by the society.

7. Inspired Social Worker Award: This award has been proposed for the persons who are dedicated in social service overcoming various personal difficulties particularly who are still in service at government or other sectors. However, for this purpose relevant rules/regulations/guidelines are under preparation and finalization.

Intellection has been published by Central Executive Committee, Barak Education Society, (Regn. No. RS/CA/243/54 of 1997-98), Hailakandi Road, P.O. Meherpur, Silchar-788015, Assam, India.