



Social Disabilities for Women in Assam

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Abstracts

This paper investigates the type of social disabilities that comes to the differentiation of women equality in Assam. The Assamese women education, and level of feminism achievements are explored. The authors evaluate the paradigm of a society that causing social disabilities for women, despite women power. The paper concludes with the future Assamese women hope, young women generation that create new fulfilment for their

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communities and who are reaching out with their voice and proper communication with their society.

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1.0 Introduction

Women in various places are denied educational facilities, which is a basic human right. Without education, we become limited in our endeavours and cannot progress. On top of that, due to lack of services, there exists a huge barrier in the state of women. These include communication, a major issue that had to be tackled. Like many less developing areas around the world, Assam women have taken up selling commodities in the market. However, it is to be noted that it is just for survival, and not profit. They have survival on their minds. This just further proves that development is much needed in this society.

In this paper, the authors investigate whether gender inequality is prevalent in Assam society. The authors see whether society understands the importance of equality and how much value it carries. Assam province, being one of the sisters in North-Eastern India, is such a place where people were not discriminated against based on their gender clearly. Even though inequality does exist, it is in a much smaller dose than in the rest of the country. The most prominent of examples here would be the non-existence of the dowry system and the celebration of menstruation, commonly known as 'Tuloni Biya' in the Assamese language.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Differentiation of Women Equality in Assam

The women in Assam never had to face the evils of the dowry system, where the woman is basically sold to the family of a man. It has never been a part of our Assamese culture to incorporate dowry. The women enjoy the benefits of the no dowry system as now they have been freed from a lifetime of injustice and hurting. The dowry system, which views women as nothing but property to be sold off, had resulted in the deaths of many women who have failed to provide some sort of compensation to the family of the man. Such is not the case in Assam. Though not unheard of, cases like these are quite rare and not heard of usually.

The 'Tuloni Biya', or which can be called the Menstruation Celebration, celebrates the start of the menstrual cycle of a girl and, in doing so, accepts the girl as she naturally is. In many societies, of the menstrual cycle usually ends in the girl being termed as unpure or polluted, whereas it is the most natural thing in the world. In Assam, people accept the fact and even celebrate the day when the girl blossoms into womanhood. Hence the women are quite safe and respected here.

Apart from this, there are certain cultures in the North East, where the society is a matriarchal one. That is, the woman is the head of society. Now for those who are not able to

fathom the fact that a woman can be the head of the family, maybe you are in need of changing that narrow mindset of yours. The women in Meghalaya, are the ones who run their families. The men, after marriage, move into the house of the woman. The woman is the head of the family and the one who sits in the shops. It has been like that for decades, and there have been no complaints till now.

This is to say that women are definitely in a better place in the North East as compared to the rest of the country. Though crimes against women are not unheard of; it is comparatively much safer than places like Delhi or Uttar Pradesh.

Women in Assam believe that there are certain things a man can never do. There are things a woman can never do. They clearly see the difference in men and women, and acknowledge the fact that both genders are different and embrace why it is so.

2.2 Women Education in Assam

We assume that schooling has become a norm now and imagine that every child by the age of 3 or 4 starts some form of schooling, but in many rural areas, if the child is a girl, then there are many obstacles to her access to education. Women education in India is still perceived as an unnecessary indulgence in many parts, while Kerala is at the top with 92% of women literacy rate and Assam is at 67%.

There are many reasons for the cause of women literacy downfall. Firstly, domestic issues. So speaking of domestic issues, it is caused because of the topical Indian mentality that the woman has to stay at home and do all the household works and look after her family. This stereotype is social backwardness. It all starts with a girl being married at an early age without letting her finish education.

In India, women education has been linked with employment; in other words, the children are educated simply because they are to get some job. Those people who are not interested in favour of sending their daughter for a job or employment do not feel the necessity to educate them. So it all comes down to our conservative mind, which is another factor for which women literacy rate is this low. There are lots of efforts that our government has taken to improve the status of women education in India. Ample of the scheme has been introduced such as *beti bachao beti padhao* and the *sarva shisha abhiyan* schemes.

Inducing these government schemes has provided free education for women, but these efforts will go waste if we don't change our mindset. We have these amazing people from India, such as Indira Gandhi, Kaplan Chawla, Anandi Gopal Joshi etc, who has set an example for us that women are equally powerful and talented. Along with all these instances, what we can do is we can create awareness in order to improve the current status. Individuals and organisations can take it upon themselves to educate the populace on the importance of sending their female school as to how beneficial it'll be for them.

Women have the astonishing ability to give birth to a new life, but at the same time, we're considered to be less powerful, weak and not allowed to get the basic desire of a beautiful future by getting an education. Hence, in Assam, women need to spread awareness of let the girl child live, let them achieve as Malala Yousaf Zai said, "all I want is education, and I'm afraid of no one".

2.3 Feminism Movement in Assam

Feminism is the belief that men and women are equal and should have equal rights and opportunities. Many young women in Assam believe that even though we are living in 21st century, but women still face the sexist problem. No doubt women are progressing and doing great in their fields it is true that society's negativities cannot turn off a women's desire to become something, but at the same time, it is also true that when someone tries to pull us down we get demotivated it's in our human nature several restrictions like women are not allowed to go outside at night just because it's not safe or for whatever reason it might, the freedom and right of women.

It is so unfortunate that women still face problems like this; even after being in this generation, women are still unable to enjoy freedom women don't even have the freedom to wear clothes of their choice without any restriction. Women in Assam need to start with their brother, with their fathers, with their uncles, with their sons to act like civilised human beings and educate them that men should not touch women inappropriately without any consent or disrespect them at any cost.

Women are not weaker than men society needs to understand this, and many women also proved it several times that we women are not weaker or lesser than anyone. India has good examples of what women can bring to the country. Hima Das the Indian sprint runner, Mary Kom the Indian Olympic boxer, the iron lady of Assam Sanjukta Parashar, the brave IPS of Assam Mamoni Raisom Goswami, the Assamese editor, poet, professor scholar and writer; these are some of the women who made Assam proud. Such women inspired lots and lots of women to work for what they desire to be and neglect all the negativities. However, society will never stop discriminating between males and females; the fact that we are still fighting for women's rights is itself the reason that we are still not developed.

2.4 The Challenge of a Society that is Asking Women to be Perfect

The other social disability for women in Assam is that society sees that women need to be perfect. Descriptions of women being "too thin", or "too dark", or "too short" shows that many members of society still need to understand the fact that many times what is in your body it's not your choice.

In certain communities, women are still forced to eat separately, sleep separately and do everything separately. In other areas, women are not to enter Temple during periods. Society don't get the fact that it is a biological process, and we don't have to hide it. Shopkeepers do not really have to wrap sanitary pads with paper or black polythenes it's not something we should hide there is nothing to hide.

Women can rarely walk to their place safely without any comments on their body and man needs to understand that it's not a compliment it's not "just a joke" it's not respectful stereotypes about women like they cannot drive they are born to be perfect for marriage pink is for girls, etc. should be removed because these is one of the reasons that cause discrimination between men and women. In such a community, divorced women or

widowed women get humiliated by society for moving on in their lives with someone new, where in case of a man doing the same stuff doesn't really get treated the way women gets treated.

2.5 Women Power of Assam

We know from different experts that the development process in Assam is not gender-neutral. The condition of women is quite inferior as compared to average women in the world. Women enjoy a better status in Assam in terms of decision making power at the household level, but the situation is reversed in the case of their financial autonomy. Women are sexually objectified, due to which they are thought to be limited only for household chores. Yet, we have come through instances where women have crossed all social norms and barriers and proved themselves in different fields. For example, Hima Das is an Indian sprint runner from Assam, Avishka Kashyap is the first commercial female pilot from Assam, Rims Das is a filmmaker from Assam known for her film "Village Rockstar" which won several national and international awards.

We know from development theories that a high level of human development would lead to the empowerment of women, and conversely, highly empowered women would bring a high level of human development through their contribution to the development process. Assam is not the worst among major states of the Indian union in terms of human development and equality, but it ranks quite low. Assam has a largely rural agrarian economy, which is characterised by a high rate of work participation of women. Though the female work participation rate (FWPR) is high, as it is subsistence farming, women do not benefit economically. According to an economic survey, Assam 2009 -10 women constitute 32.5% of all organised sector workers, against this only 19 % of all India in the same sector. Interestingly, since the 1990's women's employment in the organised sector has been 30 %, where majorities of women are employed by tea industries.

Assam has the largest concentration of handlooms and Weavers in India. The handloom sector has long been a traditional occupation for women in Assam. The women of Assam weave fairy tales in their looms. In earlier times, most of the women in Assam are experts in weaving; no two hand-woven silks are exactly alike. The personality of the Weaver, her hereditary skill, her unique sense of colour and balance all help to create a unique product. Missing women, despite being engaged in household activities throughout the day, would spend some time on their loom every day. They make Germany's mainly for everyday use, through handloom weaving. They also weave classy products for special occasions. Assamese women Weaver has always been able to earn respect and appreciation from around the world for their work.

Women's though are working in different sectors, but most of them doesn't get an organised sector. In such an unorganised sector, staff with daily or monthly paid salaries are not kept. As a result, they doesn't get appropriate working place and salaries according to their eligibility.

Assam is the largest state in northeast India, in spite of its rich natural resources and culture, the state lagging behind the rest of the country. The reason is none but the status of women in the state. Though the entire region, including Assam, is free from dowry, sati pratha, female feticide, but other forms of gender discrimination do exist.

Education is the key factor in overcoming the barriers that women face and the basic tool for empowering women. But the educational status of women in Assam is poor as compared to the other states of the country. Yet we have seen that many Assamese women, after higher studying in different parts of India and some even in different parts of the world, comes and works for development of Assam. For example: Sanjukta Parashar is an IPS officer from Assam. She is widely recognised as the woman forefront of India's battle against Bodo militants of Assam .

2.6 Role of Young Women of Assam

“Youth” is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. The UN defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. In some instances, the youth begins at eight years old; in others, it starts at 16.

Young women are the most active participants in society. They are taking part in every sphere of the society. Young people are always taking a positive stand for society and also taking part in the decision making process. Every youngster in today's world has a great thought for the nation. They always take a firm stand for society and leads the society in the way of development. Youngsters of Assam are forming groups like AASU, which is a student's union protects the thoughts of the common people to reach the government and also Sonapur NGO that works for the youth and society.

The young women of Assam have worked for educating the people of Assam. Many 'craft work's programs were conducted for children to explore their hidden skills and talents. Educational trips are also arranged to learn about different issues and topics. Many children were given exposure to programs in dance and performing arts to encourage their cultural awareness. The burst of social media has been a major reason why youth has been engaged with political sector. Social media is the main battlefield where the youth have erupted in different political colours. They are maintaining their responsibility as citizens of Assam. Youth of Assam have also worked for social justice and equality. Many workshops and training were conducted on gender, sexuality and LGBTQ rights by the youth of Assam.

4.0 Recommendation and Conclusion

While working for the society, many young women in Assam have to face many difficulties like unemployment, illiteracy and many social barriers. Unemployment of women in Assam is a big problem, as the education system of Assam is not developed enough. Illiteracy is also a big problem. Many youngsters are illiterate due to poverty or some social barriers. This creates problem for the working generation. In today's world, only literate people get a job,

and that's also true for Assam. Many social barriers cause a problem for women as they are not given equal opportunities.

Young women of Assam are very much enthusiastic and hardworking. Their input in social change can make a great differentiation in society. However, they have to face problems they still make wonderful and amazing for the community development. Therefore, more focused programs are needed to end gender inequality in Assam.

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