

WOMEN REVOLUTION IN ASSAM

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Abstract

Even after getting the same rights as men, the women are considered still inferior to men by our society. Although women are currently thriving in their education but still they are not able to live freely. The exploitation and harassment faced by women are not new. The act of giving dowry was prevalent even in the days of Ahom. It is said that there was rule for the girls from royal families to bring a maid with them as dowry.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The women of Assam got their first introduction to education after the arrival of the missionaries. According to the writings of Arunodai- until and unless the women don't get the same level of education as men, there cannot be any development of the society. Moreover a lot about women's education have been written in this paper. Gunabhiram Barua and Hemchandra Barua came forward to help women in getting a education. Gunabhiram Baruah took steps to educate his wife and daughter.

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ◆ These kind of discussions will help to remove superstitions in society.
- ◆ It will help to know more about the negative and cruel mantelity towards womem.
- ◆ These are actually the real ages of dominance over women. These discussions will strengthen women mantelly and make awareness too.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on table work and some data collected from field study. Also from different sources like research papers, research articles etc published in journals, periodicals, books and internet.

2.00 DESCRIPTION

At that time a lot of newspapers and magazines wrote in regards to women's growth. Magazines like 'Assam Bondhu' 'Mou' etc played a negative part in this. These two magazines also made insulting comments on women's education. Balinarayan Bora in his novel 'Tirutar Bon Ki' wrote that if

women became scholars, the society would collapse. It meant that Balinarayan Bora gave bitter comments that it would destroy Assamese people. Similarly, Lambodar Bora and Ratneswar Mahanta wrote novel against women's education. Getting an education was not acceptable for women from ordinary to elite

Child marriage was also a prevalent custom at that time. This was mainly seen in wealthy and brahmin communities. If a girl was not married by 11/12 year, she could never get married after that. And then that girl would be humiliated by everyone by calling her disgrace to the family. These cruel rules naturally crippled the women. They had to spend their whole live between the four walls of the house. Not only in Assam, this was the case for numerous women in India. After watching all this, Mahatma Gandhi became aware and took steps to promote women's education and eradicate child marriage. The problem of child marriage and child widows created a lot of complications for the people of Assam. Actually it was due to lack of education that these immoral values and customs were prevalent. Finally, the government at that time i.e., in 1930 passed the Sarda bill, which later became a law, against child marriage. According to this law if a girl under the age of 14 is married off, the parents of both bride and groom along with the priest were punished and had to pay a fine and were sent to an asylum. In Assam as a reaction to this law, the parents became more eager to marry off even infants as soon as possible.

Slowly the issue of child marriage and child widow worsened across the entire nation. A girl after being widowed at a young age, the persecution she went through is unimaginable. Even now widows are not perceived with respect or dignity. Politicians like Ram Mohan Das, Ishwar Chandra Bidyasagar came together to fight against child marriage and child widows. This was started by people like Anandaram Dhekiyal Phukan, Gunabhiram Baruah, Hemchandra Baruah, etc. After observing and understanding the problems of a widowed woman, Gunabhiram Baruah supported the remarriage of widows. Infact, he himself got married to a widow.

The steps taken by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom movement inspired women to grow. As a result of women's education, women in addition of being socially aware, became culturally, economically and politically aware. India's freedom led to many changes including Assam. In 1954, Nalinibala Devi by becoming president of the prestigious literary meet aka 'sahitya sabha' marked the win of Assamese women. She has a place in poetry. In 1964 she received the literature academy award and established the first acceptance of women. After this, now we can find many women in the field of literature. Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi, Nirupama Borgohain, Mamoni Rashyam Goswami, Nirupama Mishra, Prabeena Saikia, Alimunisha Piyar, Keshda Mahanta, Preeti Baruah, Toshprabha Kalita, Sheela Borthakur and many other by self appointing themselves in the literary field have voiced for women's growth. Similarly, women became more aware of the cultural and political landscape. Women started coming forward in the cultural field. Prior to independence, women couldn't even think about acting. Aideo Sandikoi had to face a lot of trouble in her life after acting in Jyotiprasad Agarwalla's 'Joimoti'. In July 1st, 1948, Guwahati, after the establishment of the radio station there was a cultural awakening. A lot of women were able to enter and flourish in the cultural field due to this event. Singers like Sudkhina Sarma, Pratima Pandey Baruah, Dipalee Borthakur, Lakhyaheera Das, Nileema Khatun, Archana Mahanta, Malabika Bora, Manisha Hazarika, etc gained recognition. Similarly in acting, Setona Das, Arti Das Bairagi, Purnima Saikia, Beenadas Manna can be named. Jyoti Chitraban established in 1968 helped

many women to enter the acting arena. With this the previous hindrances related to the cultural field were reduced and later women were able to come out.

In Assam the impact of women's revolution could be seen in the economic sphere. With the growth of women education, women also started to become more and economically stable. Women contributes the same in various areas as men. Women started thriving in all areas from literature to science & technology. Slowly, Assamese parents started paying attention to women's education. With the growth of education in girls, the society started to grow too. When women became skilled in various fields, their financial condition also improved. Women in rural areas too started their journey towards self reliance. Through various self help groups, homemade products, selling of everyday goods, these women in rural areas became financially independent.

3.00 CONCLUSION

Women took an active part in India's freedom movement. Women like Pushpalata Das, Amal Prabha Das, Renuka Devi Borkotoki by contributing to India's parliament proved Assamese women's consciousness towards politics. Assamese women took active part in the protests from 1960 to 1979. After 1979 the change in social environment made women to represent themselves in a new light. But till now women have not learned to think about themselves in an organised way. A lot of women still are under a man. Till now women are taught to be selfless and sacrifice themselves for others. We cannot let the history of women's revolution to fade or muted. It is vital to remain alert to keep Assamese women's consciousness and awareness first. Only then women empowerment will be possible.

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