

**Report of the National Seminar
ICSSR (New Delhi) Sponsored National Seminar
On
Development of Weaker Section in North East India: Issues and
Challenges**

**Organised by Department of Sociology in Collaboration with
IQAC, Tingkhong College**

The two-day National Seminar on “Development of Weaker Section in North East India: Issues and Challenges” held on 19th February and 20th February, 2021. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Jibeswar Mohan, Principal (Retd), Tingkhong College the inaugural session began at around 10 am on 19th Feb, 2021. The ceremony started with a chorus performance of the college anthem by the students of the college. After the felicitation of the dignitaries and lighting of lamp, the welcome speech was delivered by Dr Jyotimala Giohain, Principal, Tingkhong College. She briefly described about Tingkhong area and information about Tingkhong College , only full fledged government college in the Tingkhong Legislative Assembly Constituency. She also highlighted few points regarding the theme of the seminar.

In his inaugural speech Prof. Jyotiprasad Saikia, Vice- Chancellor, Birangana Sati Sadhani State University and formerly Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Dibrugarh University expressed his pleasure as invited to give inaugural speech. According to him development is a broad concept and he said that Development is a process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. He said that development cannot touch all the people of India and still some section of people are far lagging behind specially in north East India.

The Keynote address was provided by Prof. Chandan Kumar Sharma of Dept. of Sociology, Tezpur University. In his keynote speech he talked about who are considered as weaker section, what are the areas in which they are lagging behind, the problems of weaker sections, what are the constitutional provisions for development of this section of people and what are their duties to overcome such challenges. The main focus of his speech was on scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and their criteria, classification, characteristics, abilities and disabilities.

The keynote address was followed by the speeches by guests of honour Prof. Nabam Nakha Hina and Dr. MunindraKonwar.

In the presidential speech, Mr Jibeswar Mohan said that development does not mean economic development. It means all round development that is economic, political, social, educational, cultural etc. He expressed the hope that the kind of activities and some policies to be prescribed for development of weaker section like STs, SCs, OBCs, Women, Minorities etc should come out of this seminar.

Vote of thanks offered by Dr. Diganta Kumar Gogoi, Coordinator of the seminar.

Day :1:1st Technical Session : 19-02-2021 (12.00 pm)

The prestigious National Seminar began at around 12.00pm. on 19-02-2021. There was a total of two technical sessions. The sessions were divided according to the types of the topics. There was a wide range of papers that deal with a varied range of topics.

The first technical session began at around 12.00pm. Dr. Chandan Kumar Sarmah and Jyotiprasad Rajkhowa were the respected resource persons who took the helm of this particular session. After an introductory session of the resource persons by Mrs. Fatima Begum, the session successfully began.

The first presenter of the session was Dr. Minu Kumar. She presented her paper on the topic “Genesis of growing Crime Against Women: A Study of Guwahati in Assam”. The paper dealt with various issues like crime against women like rape, murder, kidnapping, domestic violence, sexual abuse and so on. She focused specially on the crime against women in Assam which is one of the highest in the nation.

This presentation was followed by the paper of Miss Shilpa Sahu and Niharika Barman. The title of the paper was “ A Detail Analysis of Konoklota Mahila Urban Co-operative Bank and its Role in Empowering Women”. Their paper discussed the crucial role of the bank played in the process of empowering women. It provided a detailed study about the functioning of the bank, the various facilities like deposits and loan facilities, role played by it in encouraging women to undertake various activities and the problems faced while its functioning.

Another presenter, Dr. Munmi Gogoi presented a paper on the topic “A Sociological Study in T.P.S. of Assam. She discussed about gender-based problems regarding medical facilities, promotion, salary, bonus, field work, job assignment and problems faced by female employees during menstruation period. Apart from addressing the problems she also suggested some remedial measures like respect at every field, providing adequate facilities etc.

Dr. Nilakshi Goswami and Dr. Dimpri Chakraborty presented the following paper on “Involvement of Female Workforce in Agriculture and their Empowerment: A Case Study on the Upper Brahmaputra Valley of Assam”. This paper attempts to make an analysis of rural workforce participation in various crop cultivation activities and their decision-making power relating to household activities.

In this particular session there were six powerpoint presentations. Banjit and Bagmita addressed the topic “ A Study on Workforce Participation of Female in Northeast India” in their powerpoint presentation. The paper tried to deal with the reasons behind less participation of women in workplace with special reference to North Eastern states.

Dhrubajyoti Saikia and Lakhya Protim Nirmolia presented a joint paper entitled “Understanding Child Labour in Assam : A Human Rights Perspective”. In their paper they discussed about how the rights of children are violated through crimes like child trafficking, child labour, child pornography, child prostitution etc.

Dr. Dilip Bania presented a paper on “ A Study on Role of Micro Insurance Service in Providing Social Security to the Poor- A Case Study” discusses about the awareness level of micro insurance among the rural group of poor people in Joypur Development Block under Dibrugarh district of Assam.

The last presentation of the session was yet another powerpoint presentation by Pronita Rajkhowa. In her paper entitled “Weekly Women’s market- A Step Towards Women Empowerment; A Study in Namrup and Borhat Area of Assam” she discussed about women in the market and how they try to find out the source for the economic support for their family.

The session was concluded at around 3.00 pm after an interactive session between the participants and the resource persons where the various aspects were discussed whereby improvements could be made.

Day:1: 2nd Technical Session: 19-02-2021(3.00pm)

The second session of the first day took place in the presence of the resource person Dr. Nabam Nakha Hina and Dr Munindra Konwar. The session started at around 3.00pm by explaining the time limitations and other necessary rules that the participants ought to follow. Miss Hemarani Changmai was the first presenter of the session. She presented a paper on the topic “Human Rights Violation Against Women in Assam: Issues and Challenges”. She started with a definition of human rights. Further, she discussed the problems of the division of two spheres of gender discrimination. She highlighted patriarchy as the root cause of all the discrimination. She explained in detail about gender roles and the basis of gender discrimination. She explained how women are allocated gender roles that lay the basis of gender differences. Traditional customs relegate women to the lowest strata of the society. She furnished the rate of domestic violence, dowry death as well as witch hunting. She also talked about various cases of physical and mental harassment and women trafficking. She talked in detail about various malpractices like witch hunting that is specific to Assam. She also provided suggestions to remedy the situation.

The second presenter of the session was Mrs. Archona Saikia who presented a paper on the topic “Women’s Concern and Violation of Constitutional Rights – Case Study on Itakhuli Tea Estate of Tinsukia”. In her insightful paper she talked about the low rate of political participation and high rate of violence against women. She explained about the objectives of her paper like finding out the awareness level, challenges and offer resolution to all those problems. At the end of the session a question was posed by Hemarani regarding the role of women in the electoral process and their impact on the women voters.

The next paper was presented by Bornali Saikia Sonowal on “Health and Nutritional Status of Women and Children in Assam”. Her paper surveyed about various health determinants like maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate. She discussed in length about various ills like malnutrition. Women and children do not have agency to make decisions. Many a times they become victims of poor healthcare due to this very reason.

Marriage was another important factor that was analysed in terms of various data that were collected. Further, various healthcare related topics like obesity, under nutrition and anaemia were also discussed.

The next presenter of the session was Tutumoni Chutia who presented a paper on another important topic “Women and Mental Health- A Study in Rural Areas of Dibrugarh District of Assam”. WHO’s objective clearly identifies mental well-being as an important part of a healthy individual. Her paper concentrated upon the mental ailments that were found among the women in two rural areas of Khowang.

The next paper of the technical session was presented by Sri Bipul Kumar Gogoi on “Domestic Violence Against Women: Causes and Consequences on Family”. He addressed the issue of violence against women and how women are victimized by the patriarchal society. He highlighted that women are victimized even in the family. The paper discussed how violence against women can not only be physical but mental as well. He mentioned various factors behind the violence upon women. The resource person appreciated the paper as it addressed a very important topic. He advised to make it more resourceful and include database.

Mrs. Runumi Sonowal, assistant professor of the Department of Assamese from Naharkatia College presented a paper on an assamese play “Story of a Garment” and the Voices of Protest Against Oppression in it”. The paper discussed how the writer Ali Haider creates awareness against the social injustices meted out to the weaker section of the society by means of the play. It discussed how the play acts as medium that instills the sense of rebellion against the bourgeoisie of the society. The session was ended over at 5.30 pm.

Day: 2: 3rd Technical Session :20/02/2021(10.00am)

There were two technical sessions that took place on the second day of the national seminar. The first session was overlooked by the resource persons Dr. Doli Phukan, an associate professor of the Department of Political Science in Dibrugarh University and Dr. Pranjal Protim Buragohain, associate professor of the Department of Economics in Dibrugarh University. After felicitating the resource persons, the technical session started at around 10 am.

The first presenter of the session, Prasadjyoti Boro presented a powerpoint presentation. His paper was entitled “The Economy of the Garos of the Poschim Bosti Village in the District of Sivasagar”. The paper discussed about the cultivation in Garo village. It discussed about the purpose and method of cultivation as well as other related topics like daily wage of the workers etc.

Jyotsna Kaman and Bimal Taaye in their joint paper “Educational and Socio-Economic Conditions of Women of Mishing Community: A Case Study of three Mishing Villages under Borboruah Development Block of Dibrugarh District, Assam” discussed about the deprivation of the Mishing community specially in case of education.

The next paper was presented by Dr. Reepa Sarmah on the topic “Women Empowerment: A Study from the Perspective of Philosophy”. It discussed about how women have been treated since the Vedic period in India. She attempted to make an analytical study of the

problems encountered in the course of women empowerment as a critical issue in the present society.

Sheela Sarmah in her paper entitled “Haves and the Have-Nots: A Study on English Language Learning Scenario of the Weaker Section of Our Society” criticized how the poor or the have-nots fail to get the opportunity to learn the second language, English.

Mrs Jashashya Borah, Department of Sociology, Duliajan Girls’ College presented a paper on “ Government’s Role in Creating Awareness Among the Weaker Section(Women) Regarding Different Family Welfare Schemes with Reference to No.1 Naoholia Village, Dibrugarh District Assam”. Borah in her paper mentions the different schemes taken by government for the support of women.

Kunja Mukul Gogoi from Naharkatia College presented a paper on “Naharkatia Girls’ Residential Training Centre: A Case Study”. In his powerpoint presentation he showed different aspects related with the girls students of Naharkatia Girls’ Residential Special Training Centre by collecting firsthand information.

Three more papers were presented by Rameswar Boruah, Ranjan Gogoi and Anindita Borah.

Day:2: 4th Technical Session: 20-02-2021(1.00 pm)

On the second day another technical session also took place whereby only papers based on assamese literature were presented. Dr. Chabi Gogoi, Associate professor, Dept. of Assamese of Namrup College and Dr. Trailokya Dehingia, Associate professor, Dept. of Sociology of Khowang College were the resource persons of the session.

The first presenters of the session were Tulika Changmai and Hemanta Kumar Boruah. Their paper discussed about the role of women in the plays of Jyotiprasad Agarwalla. Nilima Sensuwa presented a paper on the “Depiction of the Oppression Faced by the Tea tribe Community in the novels of Juri Borah Borgohain. The next presenter, Mandira Gogoi also presented a paper on a similar topic that dealt with the problems faced by the people of tea tribes. Her paper dealt with various setbacks that are faced by the people belonging to this community ranging from lack of proper education to the prevalence of various superstitious beliefs. In the subsequent paper Bijumoni Dutta and Dr. Atul Chandra Gogoi presented a paper on the portrayal of women characters in Bhabendranath Saikia’s novel “Antarip”. The paper explored various facets of women characters that are presented by the novelist. It discussed how each of these facets contributed towards the overall upliftment of women in the society by means of generating awareness.

Thus the session ended with its valedictory programme at 4.30 pm under the chairmanship of Dr Jyptimala Gohain and where the programme was ornamented with the valuable valedictory address by Dr Pranjali Protim Buragohain. Resource persons Dr Dolly Phukan and Dr. Trailokya Dehingia were also present in the valedictory ceremony. Dr. Dolly Phukan also delivered her valuable speech regarding the seminar. Vote of thanks offered by Dr Diganta Kumar Gogoi , Coordinator of the seminar.