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WOMEN IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATION: UNDERSTANDING INDIA'S NORTHEAST

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ABSTRACT

Women in India, be it in the north, in the south, in the west or in the east or in the eastern most part of the country is not free from different types of harassment, gender prejudice or gender bias in different spheres of life. Coming to Northeast India, ever since decolonization this part of the country has been facing violent agitations, separatist insurgencies and different kinds of ethnic conflicts which has led to huge bloodshed. States in this region have dynamic societies and are modernizing in varying degrees of response, stress and stability. It is regarded that women in Northeast India enjoy a better position in the society particularly the tribal women compared to other counter parts in the rest of the country in the absence of social evils like dowry, infanticide etc. However, we cannot deny the fact that women in Northeast face various social and economic implications of constant conflicts, illiteracy, poverty, landlessness, poor health, alcoholism, drugs, broken homes, domestic violence, discrimination of democratic participation in decision making, traditional institutions at the cost of customary laws, discouragement of participation in electoral politics etc. Drawing on the case studies from the ethnic conflicts in Northeast India, it will seek to provide a holistic gendered analysis of the agency, identity and sufferings of women during conflict and post-conflict scenario. The study is based on descriptive and analytical methodology. The paper while primarily qualitative in nature will employ certain degree of quantitative methods whenever necessary. While review of literature has

shown existence of literature on subjects related to women in conflict generally, there is a serious lack of substantive body of literature as far as narratives on the plight of women in Northeast India is concerned. As such, it is incumbent on the study to carry out extensive interactions with those who have been directly affected by the various conflicts in Northeast India.

Keywords: Conflict, Women, Northeast India.

INTRODUCTION

Many Indian states have seen varying degrees of violence, which has had long-lasting effects on a significant portion of the population. The nation's progress has been hampered by the large number of homeless people and the numerous instances of post-conflict violence. The demands and goals of post-war reconstruction are determined by the nature of the conflict and the history of repression. Violence still permeates relationships between men and women and is one of the biggest threats to women's lives and physical and mental health, despite the growing strength of women's voices and the victories in their fights for equality around the globe. It will attempt to present a comprehensive gendered analysis of the agency and identity of women and men during conflict and post-conflict situation, drawing on case studies from the ethnic conflicts in Northeast India, notably Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) in Assam. My decision to choose the

Northeast as the primary case study was influenced by both practical concerns and my desire to learn more about this region of the country. The history of women with war, conflict, and peace has been mostly suppressed. The contributions and efforts made by the indigenous women of the Northeast during and after conflicts need to be highlighted and discussed.

Women in India experience various forms of harassment, gender prejudice, and bias in a variety of aspects of life, regardless of where they live—in the north, the south, the west, the east, or the easternmost region of the nation. In terms of northeast India, the region is made up of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim, each of which has its own distinct ethnic groups, languages, history, customs, and religious practises. Numerous ethnic and national wars have occurred in this area of the country. Geographically, the area is nearly completely cut off from the rest of the nation by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, and China. Given the lack of social ills like dowry and infanticide, it is believed that women in Northeast India—particularly tribal women—have a better standing in society than their counterparts in the rest of the nation. We cannot, however, ignore the fact that women in the northeast experience numerous negative social and economic effects due to ongoing conflicts, illiteracy, poverty, homelessness, poor health, addiction, broken homes, domestic violence, discrimination against democratic decision-making, traditional institutions at the expense of customary laws, discouragement of electoral politics, etc. The purpose of the study is to analyse how ongoing conflicts affect women, with a particular focus on many case studies from Northeast India, which is typically thought of as a region of India that experiences a lot of conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While there isn't a lot of literature on women in Northeast India during conflict, there is some. Few studies have been done on what happens to women in the Northeast during and after the conflict, despite the fact that much has been written on the gender gap, women's empowerment, and their standing in Northeast India. It's critical to comprehend the variety of circumstances that women in the Northeast face as they develop. Due to a paucity of relevant material, this study focuses more on the experiences and observations of women in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts of Assam in Northeast India.

Authors like Sanjay Borbora has written about conflicts in India's North-East and their origins. He focussed on a detailed examination of the larger discussions on the subject of ethnicity which is necessary for an interpretation of the conflicts in the North-east. Ethnic claims to territorial integrity made by various groups are frequently pitted against requests for a larger homeland made by others, even while political and administrative policies may cause poverty and ethnic conflict (Barbora, 2002). While this essay gives us understanding on changes in land use patterns and social control over land in an effort to connect ethnic politics to the expanding significance of land relations and land usage, it does not discuss the role of women in such situation. Sandhya Goswami talks of how ethnic conflict and assertion have been present in the state of Assam, which is home to ethnicities with strong primal values, for a considerable amount of time. The failure of the State to meet the ambitions of the opposing ethnic communities in a more objective manner is at the basis of many separatist calls for autonomy, disputes over linguistic and religious issues, and insurgent situations. (Goswami, 2001). Then there are authors who points out the importance of women's

role in peace making. Jyoti Bhattacharya discusses how in Northeast India, women have historically played a significant part in the region's peace process. One bright spot in the otherwise hopeless scenario of the Northeast is the growing involvement of women in the peace process. What then is depressing that although women's contributions to the peace process are lauded and encouraged, their involvement in politics is frowned upon. In the Northeast, women's peace groups appear to still be restricted to the municipal realm of their power, which is circumscribed by their ethnic affiliations. Women in the Northeast were able to make a significant contribution, but they were unable to fully participate in the region's political process. To become an independent movement, the Northeast women's peace movement still has a long way to go (Bhattacharya, 2010). The article by Ranabir Samaddhar and Ajuman Ara Begum "New Fault Line in Conflict? Women's emergence as the subject of peace in Northeast" provides a study of the variables that bind, make it easier for, and affect women's participation in the process of creating peace and reconstruction in Northeast India. (Samaddhar, Begum, 2014).

Using the expanding arsenal of international instruments designed to safeguard and enhance the human rights of women, the Dr. Diptimoni Boruah makes an effort to examine the various elements of abuses and discrimination experienced by women in the North East during armed conflict circumstances. The report also emphasises India's persistent and egregious failure to uphold women's dignity and to gradually fulfil their fundamental human rights in times of armed conflict (Boruah, 2017). She reinforces that Conflict circumstances are particularly difficult for women since they are frequently seen as the embodiment of the family's honour, making them twice as isolated and prone to attacks from the aggressive opposition. Legal procedural

elements along with the social notion of 'honour' have denied women justice for sexual violence. Paula Banerjee work "Women, Violence and North-East India" is very relevant to my study. She talks about the nature of women's involvement in armed conflict, how it affects women, and what happens to these women when the camps are disassembled and a truce is declared. In the backdrop of conflict-ridden Northeast India, the paper makes an effort to place women once again at the forefront of discussions about political space (Banerjee, 2014). Preeti Gill in her article "Women in the Time of Conflict: the case of Nagaland" points out that Women face violence from three fronts: militants, the government, and a corresponding increase in violence that occurs in their households. Effect of violent crimes like rape, physical abuse, assault, and sexual abuse have produced serious a very high incidence of psychological and emotional trauma as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. In order to face the reality of daily life; as moms of the children, the hurt and the wounded who are innocent victims, they have a responsibility to do so. They are the victims to conflicts that were not of their making. They are the wives of soldiers of rival factions, and the wives of men who have been hurt, handicapped, or gone missing (Gill, 2005). There is literature that puts more of an emphasis on women as victims and peacemakers. The specialised study of the many consequences that women in the Northeast experience during and after conflicts has to be expanded upon. Only a small handful of distinguished authors have discussed and written about women in the Northeast. Fewer people have expressly discussed women in comparison to the Northeast's ethnic violence and conflicts. The purpose of this study is to close this knowledge gap and advance our understanding of women in the Northeast.

METHODOLOGY

The study, which focuses on the predicament of women in Northeast India during the multiple conflict situations, is based on a descriptive and analytical technique. Despite being mostly qualitative in character, the article will occasionally use some quantitative techniques. When it comes to narratives about the fate of women in Northeast India, there is a major dearth of substantial body of writing, despite the existence of literature on topics connected to women in conflict generally as revealed by a review of the literature. Therefore, it is necessary for the study to conduct in-depth interviews with persons who have been adversely effected by the numerous conflicts in Northeast India. Additionally, the study will refer to secondary materials such books, scholarly publications, and online sources.

Understanding Conflict and Post-Conflict

Women face particular difficulties and opportunities in conflict and post-conflict environments. For the majority of women living in conflict zones, the end of the fighting implies significant trauma and shame. Peace does not always imply an end to pain. Numerous reports of rape, forced marriages, and discrimination continue to persist, undermining the social status of women throughout communities. Women are prevented from effectively participating in societal affairs for these reasons. It's critical to comprehend and research the effects of conflicts on women. In order to examine the worrying social, psychological, physical, and economic ramifications that continue to afflict women, the post-conflict environment needs to be examined. Over time, there has been a growing awareness of how war affects women. Statutes that attempt to safeguard and enfranchise women in crisis zones have been enacted by a variety of

international platforms, protocols, laws, and resolutions. It's vital to remember that traditional analysis was previously used to examine the security situation facing women during and after conflicts. Since the end of the cold war, there has been a shift in perception regarding the importance of focusing on human needs and ensuring that each person is free from fear and desire (Maina,2012).

The term "conflict" is used to refer to a wide range of situations, including intrastate combat, insurgencies motivated by ethnicity, and secessionist movements. However, political violence not related to riots, caste disputes, or terrorist acts is outside the scope of this investigation. The impacts of conflict, particularly on women, will continue to be the main focus of this study. Understanding the effects of the variables causing these disputes is crucial. The traditional warfare-military conflicts between nation states to protect their territorial integrity and independence have given way to new wars or intra-state conflicts where the state is only one of many other players in the conflict, marking a clear and noticeable shift in the emerging discourse on conflict analysis.

Post-conflict recovery is a concept that combines conventional academic fields like political science, economics, sociology, psychology, and history with more recently created fields like development studies and peace and conflict studies. The various interventions made in the name of infrastructure rehabilitation, governance, economic development, demilitarisation, security sector reform, public administration reform, refugee settlement, peace building, women's empowerment, health, and education—among many others—add to the complexity of the conversation. Even additional facets of post-conflict practise have emerged. It should be described in terms of its goals and objectives, namely to revive social and economic development in order to foster

an atmosphere of peace that will thwart the resurgence of violence. A single post-conflict context is likely to include several geographical areas and populations at varying stages of crisis and development, despite the fact that there is widespread agreement on such a definition in literature. The boundaries between relief, recovery, and development are constantly shifting. (Barakat,2009). According to Sultan and Steven, a more structured architecture of integrated, guided recovery may help to depoliticize post-conflict reconstruction (Barakat, 2009). A significant threat to state sovereignty and stability exists in many post-conflict countries because they have adopted too many often incompatible political and economic agendas. This has led to an increasingly onerous set of expectations and goals that further marginalise the recipient state institutions.

Context of Northeast India

For almost 60 years, the North-eastern area of India has experienced continuing, low-intensity armed violence. This region has been plagued by an undeclared draconian emergency leading to militarization for more than 60 years. All of the eight states that is entirely or particularly ruled by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act of 1958 and the national security laws. The societies of the states in this region are dynamic, and they are modernising to varied degrees of stress, responsiveness, and stability. Conflicts of varying intensity are currently affecting almost every state in the northeast. Such wars have involved up to ten different ethnic groups, including the Bodos, Nagas, Kukis, Karbis, Dimasas, Paites, Reangs, Mizos, and Bengalis. In Northeast India, conflicts typically start when the current state system fails to provide the requirements and basic interests of the populace. The public sphere is frequently divided along entrenched social, economic, and political

lines, preventing some groups from having an equal opportunity to engage in all activities. Armed conflict in Northeast India has severely damaged the idea of "normal civilian life" and resulted in many incidents of abuse of civilian populations, notably women, by both state-agents and non-state actors.

Since independence, violent agitations, separatist insurgencies, and various ethnic wars have plagued India's northeast, resulting in tremendous displacement and bloodshed. In this region of the nation, the state institutions' shortcomings are causing insecurity, major conflicts, and population relocation. The societies of the states in this region are dynamic, and they are modernising to varied degrees of stress, responsiveness, and stability. As the military and militant groups strengthen patriarchal values, violent conflicts are accompanied with an increasing marginalisation of women's rights. State-run organisations take advantage of women, but there aren't enough protections in place to ensure their employment or help them deal with the added financial strain and social and psychological stress. In addition, women in the Northeast face pressure from their own communities to uphold their cultural and ethnic identities, which discourages or prevents them from challenging gender-biased customary rules and practises. In addition to having profoundly painful repercussions on women, losing males to violent death, injury, or fighting will force them to bear entire responsibility for their families and dependents. These women from the Northeast frequently migrate to large Indian cities like Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai, where they are also at risk of exploitation. Statistics also show that prostitution and human trafficking rise during times of armed conflict, which has additional negative effects on women's physical and mental health.

Women as Peacemakers in Northeast India.

Political turmoil in the India's northeast has persisted for decades, frequently escalating into military warfare and insurrection. In all of South Asia, no other nation or region of India has experienced such protracted upheaval. As the effects of long-distance marginalisation seem to be emerging one after another and calling for attention, the process has grown more complex over time with no indication of a recession. Women have undergone a great deal of change, trauma, and uncertainty in this situation. Women in Northeast India have exhibited remarkable drive and talent in the peace talks of the conflict-ridden societies, much like many other women around the world. In the Northeast, there are a lot of women's organisations that promote harmony and conflict resolution. The Naga Mothers Association (NMA), founded on February 14, 1984, declared in its preamble that it was necessary to "conscientize citizens" toward a purposeful existence and the advancement of humanity. Their catchphrase was "Shed No More Blood." The Naga Mothers Association (NMA) rose to prominence in Nagaland's civil society. They actively took part in the 1997 ceasefire's peace mediation between the Government of India and the NSCN (IM). When talks between the Indian Government and the NSCN first began, the Naga Mother's Association was at the forefront of efforts to strengthen the process. In support of a ceasefire, the NMA and the Naga Women's Union of Manipur travelled across the Myanmar border to the NSCN(K) headquarters to speak with their commander Kaplang and at the very least contemplate negotiating with the NSCN (IM) (Gill,2005). For NMA, maintaining peace has always been a top priority, and they recognised its significance for the state. The Naga women are exceedingly traditional, and their collective intervention is influenced by their sense of who they are. the nationalism issues surrounding the struggle for

independence. They frequently do not question the idea of the state and their assigned responsibilities. These women clearly relate peace with development since they have placed a lot of emphasis on social development and health issues (Gill,2005). The Naga Women's Union of Manipur (NWUM), a different organisation, has actively worked with the Naga Mothers Association to mobilise and educate people about the need to rebuild peace in the state's Naga-inhabited areas (Bhattacharya, 2010). In Manipur, Meira Paibi was founded in the 1970s. They were known as the "Torch Bearers," and they patrolled their neighbourhoods carrying lit torches to apprehend young men participating in anti-social behaviour like drinking and other activities. By the 1980s, Meira Paibi could have significant influence, but at the same time, their goals diverged. They began acting on behalf of the insurgents by warning the neighbourhood about army patrols and occasionally engaging in negotiations with the army when men from their neighbourhood were taken into custody (Bhattacharya,2010). Mamoni Raisom Goswami, a well-known female activist and academic in Assam, worked alone without outside assistance or affiliation with any group to mediate a settlement between the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the Indian state (Bhattacharya,2010). In order to bring about peace in the area, numerous other women's organisations, such as the Northeast Network and Tangkhul Shanau Long (All Tangkul Women's Association), were founded (NEN). In the 1995 World Conference on Women, NEN sought to advocate for Northeast women. Among the significant women's organisations that contributed significantly to the peace in the region were the Mizo Women's Federation (1974), Khasi Women's Organization, Bodo Women's Justice Forum, All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation, Kasturba Gandhi Memorial

Trust, Matri Mancha, Anchalik Mahila Samitis, and Sajagta Samiti of Assam (Bhattacharya,2010).

Dr. Anjali Daimary, a renowned Bodo academic and activist who also founded the Bodo Women Justice Forum, has frequently fought against the excesses of the armed forces in the Northeast. In most crisis scenarios in the Bodo areas, as in other parts of the world, women have suffered the most. Dr. Anjali Daimary charts the Bodo community's fight throughout the 1980s. Bodo women bore the burden of police and security force raids during the conflict between the two Bodo militant groups, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT). Many people were tortured, assaulted, and raped during such raids. Anjali Daimary and a group of Bodo women founded the Bodo Justice Forum in 1992 to raise awareness of the rights of the community. Even though this group's members were all women, they nevertheless talked about topics that affected the community as a whole. This group exhorted women to actively contribute to the community's efforts to bring about peace and glory. Dr. Anjali Daimary and hundreds of members of the Bodo Women Justice Forum organised a daring political demonstration with the slogan "Rape Us" written on their chests and backs in response to the countless atrocities committed against women and the entire community during times of conflict. In both peaceful and violent situations, women are disproportionately affected. In both peaceful and violent situations, women are disproportionately affected. In times of war, both the military troops and the "enemy" rape, torture, and degrade women. Women are ignored and the targets of many forms of violence, such as domestic abuse, discrimination, etc., even in times of calm. Women's organisations in the northeast that frequently revolt and call for peace and equality are sometimes

born out of resentment against such atrocities.

The All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation, a collection of women-led organisation, has actively contributed to establishing peace in the Bodo regions of Assam. This women's organisation has worked to promote peace since the Bodoland movement began, or perhaps even earlier. Women endure the greatest suffering both during and after conflicts. The All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (A.B.W.W.F.) of Assam has actively participated in all spheres of the conflicts that occurred in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. As stated by Mithinga Narzary, the former president of the A.B.W.W.F., they have started numerous peace negotiations in numerous disputes that have taken place in the BTAD. They would meet the District Collector, she continued, and ask him to maintain the calm. The government has helped them in many different ways. She described an episode that occurred in 2012 (the Bodo-Muslim dispute), when, with the assistance of the government and police, they had gone to the Muslim community's relief camp to speak with the victims and leaders in an effort to restart peace talks. Many of the Muslim relief convicts were furious when they arrived at the relief camp and had been whispering among themselves to kill or slay the Bodo Women right away. Mithinga Narzary and other A.B.W.W.F. members were petrified to death, but they managed to start conversations with the leaders of the other village and persuade them that there was no use in continuing their hostility because the common citizens of both communities were suffering.

Women and women's organisations have made significant contributions to the North-eastern peace effort. In northeast India, women typically serve as peace messengers and mediators, much as anywhere else in the globe. However, the fact that women are frequently excluded

from the post-conflict reconstruction process, whether consciously or unconsciously, despite their significant contributions to peace initiating and negotiating, needs to be addressed. Many of the ideas proposed to reconstruct the communities plagued by conflict leave out women and their problems. Forget about not including women and providing them a fair role in the political system; frequently, their contributions aren't even acknowledged. Women are never included on the decision-making team or given a share of the positions of power. The patriarchal structures of the cultures plagued by war seldom respect the contribution that women make to society. Women in the Northeast have not been successful in garnering much national or worldwide recognition for their peace activities. It was unable to rise above ethnic affinities or to transcend the civic sphere of influence of their different civilizations (Bhattacharya,2010).

Beyond Peacemakers

Armed conflict has had a negative impact on women's lives for ages. Though they are frequently seen as the victims of the conflict, women are also increasingly recognised as the perpetrators and enablers of violence. There is no doubt that conflicts have also given women exceptional opportunity to alter severely constricted societal structures and expectations as a result of the social shift brought on by the violence. Violence between and within states produces a highly unstable environment where women face a lot of uncertainty, expense, and opportunity (Fionnuala, 2010). International acknowledgement of women as conflict victims is seen in UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889. The resolution's basic tenet is that specific action is necessary to meet the needs of women who are impacted by other women. The resolution places a strong emphasis on honouring and taking

into account the agency of women in conflict. In essence, it takes into account include women when developing conflict resolution plans and envisions incorporating a gender perspective into humanitarian aid and post-war reconstruction efforts. Despite all of this, as Fionnuala said, there are persistent societal and legal restrictions that hinder and heighten the vulnerability of women during the post-conflict phase (Fionnuala, 2010).

Evidence-based research has shown that gendered power shifts resulting from conflict and peace can help women, but they also all too quickly turn into patriarchal reaction. Following a disagreement, the gendered public-private gap resurfaces, forcibly driving women back into the private realm. In times of war and peace, motherhood politics disempowers women while empowering them. Even if the local conditions may vary from area to region or state to state, gendered politics of being used as objects in stories of power are the same everywhere. Nobody ever asks women "What do you think" when peace agreements or post-conflict conditions have been reached, whether it be the Taliban with its ideology of subjugating women or the so-called Northeast India where women are in a better position. Many former members of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) participated in politics or had an opinion on how the government and society made decisions in the recently concluded Peace accord 2020 of Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam between the governments of India, Assam, and the NDFB. Even though many former female NDFB members were denied access to basic amenities, they were not included in major decisions. In 2015, the top-down Indo-Naga framework agreement was signed, but the Naga Mothers and other social groups leading the peace campaign were excluded. The provisions of the

agreement will most likely follow the pattern of prior agreements with identity conflicts, unconditionally guaranteeing the community's customary laws, and disregarding standards for the protection of women's rights. How can women overcome the complex sociocultural constraints that prevent them from participating as equal citizens in the reconstruction of societies that have been impacted by violence and a stable and just peace?

Demilitarization, power sharing, and, most importantly, truth, justice, and reconciliation are essential for healing societies that have been wounded by war, combating impunity, and re-establishing the rule of law and government as a post-conflict environment. The ability of crimes against women to go unpunished has decreased the societal bar for abuse of women through violence and sexualization. On the journey to school as a young child, you run the risk of being mined or getting shot in the head. Extremist diktats, dictatorships, and gender anxieties all have the potential to violate reproductive rights and obstruct access to education, employment, and public office. Reports from the UN human rights council raise concerns about the rising frequency.

Nine (9) Bodo girls and one (1) elderly woman were gang-raped by the Assam police and Assam Police Task Force on the nights of January 25 and 27 in 1988 in the village of Bhumka in the Kokrajhar district of the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam in North-eastern India. One of Assam's major tribes is the Bodo. They make up about 35.06% of Assam's whole Scheduled Tribe population, according to the 2011 Indian census. 1,36,735 people make up the entire population (census 2011). Despite being dispersed throughout the Northeast, they are primarily concentrated in Assam's five districts of Udalguri, Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang, and Tamulpur. Bodos have been

calling for a separate state within India because of historical Bodo oppression by the Assamese majority in the state of Assam. The Bodoland movement, which sought the independent identity of the Bodos (an ethnic tribe) in Assam, is considered to have had some of its darkest days on this day in its history. I tried to engage the rape victims as much as possible in amicable conversation when I went to Bhumka on December 6, 2017, but they were reluctant to discuss the occurrence. Some even refused to acknowledge that such a horrifying occurrence had occurred in their village. A woman who was a teenager when the incident occurred (name withheld) made friends with me and shared her feelings of sadness and dread with me. She described how a gang of guys wearing handguns barged into their home, pulled her to a room, stripped her Dokona (the traditional attire worn by Bodo women), and then sexually assaulted her. She said that other of her neighbours' acquaintances were also raped at the same time and place as her. At that hour in the middle of the night, all that could be heard were the cries and sobs of women. While some of the women in the village were being raped and others had to witness this horrifying torture, the women could only scream, sob, and shout at the police. They were unable to aid one another. The fact that the majority of them are single is another thing that has me very fascinated. There is now a stigma among neighbouring villages that women from Bhumka are not pure and should not be married because it is publicly recognised and well-known that nine women from this village were raped. Women are put in a double-risk situation because they must endure the horror of being raped while the conflict is in progress and the pain of being humiliated afterwards. As a result, it is claimed that peace in a post-conflict setting does not necessarily translate to peace for women. For women, the effects of war and battle last a lifetime. Men who

suffer in a war are compensated or given jobs after the battle. Women are not treated equally to males when it comes to heroism. Women who have been sexually attacked or raped during a war are thought to have lost "honour," and they find it very difficult to conduct normal lives and get over the stigma after the conflict. Women frequently experience abuse and humiliation at the hands of the "enemy" and are treated shamefully by the men in their own communities (Gill,2005). The patriarchal traditions have gender inequality ingrained in them. Conflict not only claims human lives, but it also leaves a legacy of unfortunate events (Gill,2005).

As the military and militant groups uphold patriarchal beliefs, armed conflicts are accompanied by a greater marginalisation of women's rights. Women are taken advantage of by government organisations on the one hand, but inadequate measures are not taken to protect their employment or help them deal with the increased financial load and social and psychological stress on the other. Furthermore, there is internal pressure on women to uphold cultural and ethnic identities, which prevents or hinders them from challenging gender-biased customary rules and practises. Where it is possible, sexual violence can induce women to withdraw from economic activity out of fear of the repercussions. Children, particularly girls, may also be kept out of school out of fear from their mothers, which puts them at a disadvantage and makes them the target of prejudice.

CONCLUSION

Despite the severe effects of armed conflict on women, they are underrepresented in post-conflict reconstruction and conflict settlement of Northeast India. Women aren't encouraged to make decisions since they

are either seen as victims or as healers. Even while the victims and survivors must receive the utmost care, repair and rehabilitation must inevitably take place within an environment of empowerment and equality. The impact on the conflict and post-conflict resolution processes in North-east India has been significantly impacted by the relatively low participation of women in decision-making bodies, whether they be traditional bodies or modern democratic institutions, such legislative assemblies. Women in the Northeast have experienced extreme agony and doubts that no other women in the country have ever experienced. Despite all of this, these women continue to lack acknowledgment and a sense of entitlement. With this idea in mind, the current study makes an effort to highlight and discuss the contributions made by women in the northeast during both peaceful and turbulent periods.

The growing importance of women in Northeast India's peace endeavours is more of a corollary and compelling reaction to the conflict situation's deterioration. A true desire and readiness to start a women's group is lacking. It comes about as a result of difficult circumstances and demands. Women cannot bear to see their relationships, families, and communities disintegrate, so they must take action to put an end to violence. Even in the changing environments of the post-conflict reconstruction process, the dangers and traits of patriarchy persist. Due to the ethnicity-related nature of the majority of disputes in the Northeast, women are frequently under pressure to uphold the ideals of their ethnic identity, which are frequently very patriarchal. Women leaders who step up during times of conflict are typically not supported by society or the community and are seen with varied degrees of distrust. The type of role that women want to play in the peace process will affect how vulnerable they

are. Only the roles of "Healers" and "Pacifiers" are acceptable for women (Bhattacharya, 2010). They cannot advance past that and take on significant decision-making roles. Women who speak out against the oppression of underground non-state groups are seen as "overground agents" of terrorist organisations and women who protest against state oppression are thought to be terrorists. Therefore, regardless of the role that women play during and after the conflict, subjugation of women persists (Bhattacharya, 2010). However, the involvement of women in the North-eastern peace process demonstrates that the presence of women is necessary for the achievement of peace. Women's exclusion following the battle has consequences. Women need to evolve from being peacemakers to being decision-makers

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