

CHAPTER – V

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction:

The chapter tries to throw light on the main findings followed by a conclusion based on the elaborate explanations in the contents of the study. Further it tries to suggest policy initiatives and recommend necessary actions urgently called for improving the women in spaces of ethnic violence and conflict in particular.

On October 31, 2000 the Security Council adopted a resolution (No. 1325)¹ on women and peace security. It upholds the importance of the role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace building and humanitarian response. It also stresses on equal participation of women and their full involvement in promotion of peace and security. The resolution urges the increase of women participation in all committees so that the gender perspective can be incorporated in all United Nations peace and security efforts.

The resolution also makes provisions to take special measures to protect women and girl child from gender-based violence in armed conflict situation, particularly rape and sexual abuse. It provides many important operational mandates, with possibilities of future action for Member States and the other units of the United Nations system.

In the study various aspects of women in conflict zone have been explored and it can be concluded that there are hardly any inclusive role of women in peace building or policy making.

5.2 Concepts and Literature Review:

The first chapter attempted a brief overview of the condition of women in India in general and especially Assam during and in post conflict situation. It also conceptualized the basic terms like ethnicity, ethnic conflict, violence, spaces of women etc. The methodology followed in this study was explained. The literature review done showed that though there are numerous works on ethnic conflict and violence, very little study has been done on women in the conflict zone of BTAD.

5.3 Formation of Bodoland:

The second chapter delved into the causes of the movement by the Bodos for a separate state. Historical evidences show that the Bodos were the original inhabitants of Assam but with the advent of the Aryans they were eventually marginalized and their language and culture were at stake. To protect and retain their own identity instead of assimilating into the mainstream Assamese society they started a movement for a land of their own. The participation of women especially AATWWF was highlighted in the chapter.

5.4 Women in Conflict Zone and Media:

Media, the fourth pillar of democracy, has a very important role to play in disseminating information to the public. The third chapter tried to show how news on women is rarely highlighted unless it is of some political interest or there is a

public uproar. From the analysis that had been done it was found that the physical, emotional, psychological problems of women in violence ridden BTAD area was hardly been given space in the print and visual media.

5.5 Women and Violence:

The fourth chapter focused on the interviews and data that were collected during the field study. The women in conflict zone of BTAD, both in the relief camps and in their villages, were shadowed by the fear and insecurity of being attacked or displaced. The physical discomfort and the loss of privacy of women during the period of conflict were overwhelming not to talk about medical attention and food supply. Even in a situation like this, the dynamics of patriarchy dominated.

5.6 Findings of the Study:

The main findings relating to women in spaces of ethnic conflict and violence in BTAD area are summarised in the following points.

- Irrespective of causes and nature of violence and conflicts, the women and girl child are always found to be more affected and victimized.
- The situation in the areas of ethnic violence affirms that women are marginalized and they experience marginalization differently and face socio-economic insecurities during conflict and also in the later period.
- The societal distortion created by community clashes resulted both in short term and long term consequences specifically for women and girl children either in-camp living or their condition in post conflict period. The following are the aspects identified by the study.

- Loss of home and property leading to absolute poverty
 - Deprivation from medical attention because of which health of women and children are at stake
 - Interrupted education makes the future of the children in these conflict zones uncertain
 - Persistent fear psychosis
 - Direction to trafficking
 - Sexual abuse
 - Trauma
 - Victimization from their own relatives
 - Lack of trust among the communities
 - Improper sanitation
 - Lack of baby food and sanitary pads
- A comparative look into three phases of women's condition – pre-conflict, conflict and post conflict revealed that the nature of subjugation remains a cyclic phenomenon. During the conflict though the women were not bound by the chains of dos and don'ts because of the crisis but once they went back it is observed that it was the women who were again suppressed and failed to lend a voice in the affairs of the family. However, they never complained for they have accepted the conventional norms of patriarchy.
 - Camp living condition of women was found to deprive them of their private space and was subjected to humiliation which was reported to be overlooked.
 - Though it is usually assumed that women are vulnerable, it has been observed that crisis arising out of conflict situation make women stronger.

- The experiences that the women underwent during conflict and post conflict period both in relief camps, rehabilitation centres and in their villages has brought immense change in their thinking process.
- The women politicians hardly participated in discussions on the conditions of women and their needs in the conflict zone.

The above findings draw the following conclusion and recommend the actions called for.

5.7 Concluding Remarks and Actions Called For:

Women have created new pathways for themselves to sustain their families that were ruined by violent conflicts. Conflict situations have opened a window to women empowerment that cannot be ignored. This has not only improved the lives of women but also helped the communities to recover fast from the disaster and reduce poverty.

However, based on the field work and interviews of women staying both in their own house and women who lived in relief camps during and also post ethnic conflict period, the investigator found that the following areas needed to be addressed:

- During conflict and in the post conflict period there is a special need to arrange local security for women.
- To encourage women to develop connectivity to market outside and thereby strengthen their economic participation.

- Women should be allowed to accumulate and have independent control over major assets.
- Women's empowerment and community participation must be encouraged for the foundation for development programmes and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Support has to be provided to affected women to create their own income sources. Specialized technical and financial support from the government to enable women to invest in profitable business should be provided.
- Social networking should be provided for access to active market, exchange ideas, information and financial or material resources.
- Women should be encouraged to join self help credit groups sponsored by public agencies or NGOs so that there is some authenticity.
- Social assistance should be provided especially to poor widows and orphaned children.
- Participation of women in peacemaking policies, planning refugee camps, reconstruction of families and society in conflict zone is recommended.
- There is a need to take up confidence building measures for restoration of permanent peace and this cannot be done without the sensitive participation of women.
- Sensitizing the affected people in the rehabilitation centres on women's issues becomes important so that the women who are already marginalized do not feel desolate and despaired. It is only through such efforts that women's respect can be restored.

- Vocational training in camps that has been there for many years
- There is a need to include more women in making policy especially concerning women issues.
- Women must be included in peace-building efforts, peace negotiations committees and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.
- Policies should be initiated to see women become the agents of socio economic growth and not victims of the society.
- More women must actively involve themselves in the field of journalism to highlight the women issues which are ignored by men and contribute directly or indirectly towards the development of the image of women and bring solution to their problems.

5.8 New Directions:

There are some examples of initiatives adopted by governments to give agency to women and improve their situation which is a healthy move. A news item titled '*A lot happens over a coffee in Ethiopia*' states that 'Bunna Tetu'- a coffee ceremony that is a routine affair in Ethiopian households- is one occasion being utilized by the government to promote health care and healthy life style practices.

Another programme initiated by the Ethiopian Government through the 'Women's Development Army' is where women volunteers are trained by health extension workers to focus more on behavioural changes such as encouraging good hygiene, sanitation and setting up separate cooking spaces (*The Hindu*, November 25, 2013).

From the above an example can be drawn how the government can promote women centric health care plan. Similarly a number of problematic issues arising out of conflict can be resolved. From the study it can be seen that women are the worst sufferers in a conflict situation and more often than not their sufferings are overlooked. They have to find their own ways to solve their crisis for which self confidence and empowerment is very important. The empowerment special schemes for women must be introduced. Moreover participation by external partners who will stand by these affected women needs to be encouraged. Post conflict situation can be taken as an entry point towards empowering women. This will certainly help in bringing the affected people out of psychological, social and economic crisis.

End Note:

¹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/> dated 11/05/2017

Newspaper

The Hindu, November 25, 2013, 5