

CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUSION

The topic of the present research work is “The Voices of women In Assamese Folklore: A Study on selected Folksongs of Assam”. In the first chapter, it has been showed the concept of folklore along with the objectives, scope and methodology of the research work with special reference to the songs sung in Assamese language by women. Folksongs are the most inclusive category of folklore and rich in variety, tunes and rhyms. The Assamese term used for songs is “*Geet*” which in turn, always express the inherent tradition of a particular ethnic community. The folksongs are the best source of entertainment for the women. They remain busy in household work and also in paddy fields in the village. They do go through many feelings; either good or bad are expressed through folksongs. Sometimes the hopes and aspirations of the women are dominated by their respective societies and they are often unnoticed by the academic literature and popular media and hence, the marginalization process of female gender too remains unnoticed. Thus, this research work has generated new knowledge about the marginalized section of the society who has always been straitjacketed. This topic has dealt with the women of Assamese society. This research work has revealed different feelings of women heart, i.e, the feeling of motherhood, joy and pain of the same, the expectation of women from the marriage and the pain they go through after marriage and yet expecting the wellbeing of their husbands,children, in-laws and relatives. The voices of resistance of women have been shown in *Nisūkānî Geēt*, *Biyāānaām*, *Gōālpāriyāā Lōkgēēt*, Ritualistic songs and etc. They have demanded better condition of their lives and lives of their closed ones in these folksongs. For this research purpose, both the primary and secondary sources of data have been used. For collection of data,

the emphasis is given on contextual studies, while full advantage of the relevant textual data has been adopted. Data are collected mainly in the form of written document. Since, adequate research materials are not available in printed forms, so the data have been collected by applying observation method and interview method has been used. Interviews of local women of different parts of Assam, expert singers and tradition bearers have been taken and hence the songs have been collected. Visual equipments for recording has been used. This study was also dependent on secondary sources and hence help from books, thesis, papers, magazines has been taken along with internet. For the various conceptions regarding feminism, women empowerment and present status of women in India, articles present on internet have been widely studied. After that, the documents have been systematically indexed, classified, arranged and analysed in the relevant chapters.

In the second chapter an analysis has been made on the concept of folklore along with the concepts of culture and civilization. An analysis has been made on different kinds of folksongs sung in Assam in general which includes songs of prayer and supplication, songs of ritualistic association, devotional songs with philosophical overtones, songs of ceremonies like puja and other ritualistic functions, songs of ceremonies related with life-cycle, songs of seasonal and agricultural functions, bihu songs, love songs in camouflage, moisali and maut songs, baramaahi songs, songs of jest and humour, lullaby and nursery rhymes and ballads with relevant examples. An analysis has also been made how women have used folksongs as a tool of education and how women cherish womenhood with the help of folksongs. In Assam, women do sing various songs which are exclusively made only for women. Some of them are- *Nisukāni Gēēt*, *Hûdûmpûjār Gēēt*, *Aulāā Pujā*, *Suwāguritolā Gēēt*, *Biyāānāām*, *Jengbihu*, *Nisukāni*

gēēt , *Dhāināām*, *Āināām*, *Apesārāā sābāhār Nāām* , *Goalpariyāā Lokgēēt* etc.

Lullaby in Assamese folklore is known as *Nisūkāni Gēēt* and the nursery rhymes are known as *Dhāināām*. Such kinds of songs are usually fanciful composition containing simple, direct statement made with tenderness and delicacy. Mothers and young girls and women sing such kinds of songs to please their beloved children and introduce them with star, moon, fairies, slumbergiver aunts and other talkative animals. Through the lullabies, the mothers also make the children to dream about their future. *Biyāānāām* means marriage songs. An Assamese marriage is a musical marriage. The delicacy and refinement of woman's heart come out in caressing tunes when the leader of the chorus has to describe the beauty and the grace of the bride and other ceremonies related with the marriage ceremony. In these marriage songs she is instructed about the dos and do nots after the marriage. She is also made understand that she will be missed in the residence of her father, but as giving away the daughter in marriage is a rule of nature, so the rule of nature has to be maintained. . Mother small-pox is very much feared by Assamese women and therefore, flattered with all sorts of sweet names. She is called *Sitōlāā*, the cool one, the *Āāi* or mother. Whenever a child catches measles or any other variety of rashes classed under small-pox, it is said to have "flowers on it as *Aāi* is also said to have appeared on it. *Aināām* or prayer to prohibit *Āāi* is women's affair. The women gather together and sing to the tunes of claps. The *Aināām* reveal the same quality of tenderness and refinement as the *Biyāānāām*. The Assamese mothers believe that if their children survive and attack of measles or small pox, it will have extra luck and they sing to please *Aināām* Goddess *Sitōlāā*. Children particularly young girls, sometimes are afflicted by ailment that are believed by simple village women to be caused by certain fairy-like female spirits who have been offended and who need to

be propitiated through special rituals towards the affliction. Special songs addressed to the spirits are sung and known as *Apesārā Nāām* or *Apesāri Nāām*. Women also sometimes observe ritualistic fasts which feature the singing special songs. Such songs, which are special preserves of female folk are extremely simple, both in literacy and musical contents and yet have a touching quality. For example, *Sāre-Bārat*, *Subāchāni Pujāā*, *Ukūni Būri Pujā* etc. *Sāre-bārāt* or *Sōrāāi Brātaā* literally means the bird-fast where only the young girls and married women take part. *Subāchāni Pujāā* is held in different parts of Goalpara district. The ceremony is held outside the house in the courtyard in the morning and women observe the *Subāchāni Pujāā* and one *Kāthātī* i.e. a expert singer sings the songs of this worshpping ceremony. *Hûdûmpûjāār Gēēt* has also its own significance. The *Hûdûmpûjāā* is prevalent in Goalpara region. *Hûdûm* according to a belief current in Goalpara region is a rain-giver god. The women folk worship *Hûdûm* by singing songs of an erotic nature in paddy field. Nudity is a part of this ceremony. Other important folksongs associated with ritualistic festival is *Aūlāā Puja*. In some parts of Kamrup region, grown up unmarried girls perform this ceremony. It takes place at the time of *Durgāā puja*. On the particular day of the ceremony, the girls keep awake whole night singing songs in praise of goddess. Bihu is the most characteristically typical Assamese festivals and many *Bihu Geets* are associated with this festival. Bihu songs are excellent poetry. *Jēng bihū* is exclusively celebrated by women folk. In *Jēng Bihū*, there is no any place for men. Men are totally excluded from this ceremony. Women go out to the field, worship and with *Tōkā*, *Gāgānā* and Claps they sing and thus bihu is celebrated. By this occasion, women get a chance to enjoy their womanhood and share their feelings. Thus, these are the most important folksongs sung exclusively by women through different occasion.

In the third and fourth chapters *Nisūkanî Geet*, *Dhāāināām*, *Biyaānāām*, *Goālpāriyāā Lokgēēt*, *Jēng Bihū*, *Sorāā* or *Sārē Barāt*, *Kāāti Pujar Gēēt*, *Subōsôni Pujār Gēēt*, *Hūdūm Pujār Gēēt*, *Apēsôrā Sôbâhôr Gēēt*, *Aāilāā Pujār Gēēt*, *Aāi Nāām* and *Ukūni Burhî Pujār Gēēt* has been explained with relavant examples and a trial has been given on finding voices of resitance in those songs. In some songs like *Nisūkanî Geet*, *Dhāāināām*, *Biyaānāām*, *Goālpāriyāā Lokgēēt*, and *Jēng Bihū*, the voices of resistance have been found where they have sometimes celebrated motherhood and womenhood, and sometimes they have been found dissatisfied with the social customs, nonstop duties and responsibilities levied on them. In lullabies, the expectation of a mother from her child is prominent and in some other lullabies the heart of the mother is crying as her financial condition does not permit her to provide her children what they want and deserve. But fortunately, the women of the present Assam is financially independent and they are capable enough to fulfil the needs of their own as well as the demands of the children. Due to the advancement of science and technology, children are more attracted towards the electronic gadgets as compared to Nisukani geets. The children prefer to play games in smart phones or computer. Moreover, many cartoon channels have come into exiatance and children are noticed to be attached with the cartoon characters like Shin-Chan, Doremon, Chota Bhim etc more than the moon. The children are addicted to video games nowadays. Even the mothers are seen to play videogames with their beloved children. Another issue is, most of the mothers are working mothers. Sometimes, due to official responsibilities, they reach home so late that they are left with no motivation to read fairy-tales for the children or to sing. Sometimes, it is a great relief on the part of the mothers that the children are busy with TV, Mobile, computer or video games. The system of joint family rarely exists in

present Assam. Sometimes the concept of nuclear family steals the charm of being with the grandparents, who are the depot of the *Nisukani-geet* and *Saadhu-katha*. In some of the marriage songs women are describing the rituals associated with the marriage ceremony and in some other marriage songs women are teaching the would be bride to handle life according to the social norms. She has been asked to remain polite with the family members of her husband as they believe that the women have no one in their lives except their beloved husbands. The future bride has been, through marriage songs, have been instructed to perform the household duties without any complaint and if necessary, they have been asked to write letters to her parents to fulfil her needs but she has been prohibited to ask anything from in-laws as that may disturb her marital life by annoying her husband and other family members. In this case even, it can be seen that, women are highly qualified, modern, intellectual and intelligent. They are self-dependent and financially free. Women have the right to choose her life-partner and get married to him. Both are job-holders or economically independent. Thus, women do not think that she has to tolerate every injustice cause to her by her husband and in-laws. She also has the right to file for divorce if she thinks that, there is any kind of threatening to her life. Moreover, the family of the girl always stands like a strong support system. The educated family of the bridegroom has also learnt to accept the daughter-in-law as their own daughters. Thus, some marriage songs have lost the importance of the words. Due to shortage of time, Joron and Biya use to held on the same day. Thus, no time is left for singing the marriage songs. In the folksongs sung in Goalpara district represent a strong voice of resistance where a woman has courage to speak against the society, parents, in-laws etc. She has courage to say when she is sad and what makes her unhappy and what may be the probable options which is pregnant

with the scopes of making her happy. In Jeng Bihu too, the voices of resistance is prominent. The simplicity of women heart with loads of fear for the society clearly comes out in *Jengbihu*. The conflict between heart and society is clearly revealed in the lyrics of *Jengbihu*. But, in some ritualistic songs like *Sorā̄* or *Sārē Barāt*, *Kāāti Pujar Gēēt*, *Subōsōni Pujār Gēēt*, *Hūdūm Pujār Gēēt*, *Apēsōrā Sōbāhōr Gēēt*, *Aāilāā Pujār Gēēt*, *Ukūni Burhī Pujār Gēēt* etc the simplicity of women heart has clearly came out, In these ritualistic songs, they have prayed for the wellbeing of their husbands, children, fathers, brothers and other relatives. They have always been found buttering God to save their family from any kind of misfortune. Some ritualistic ceremonies have been found in demand of a male child because having a male child increases the the reputation of the family as they believe.

In the fifth chapter, the concept of woman empowerment has been described along with the ways of empowerment of women in general with special reference to economic benefits of women empowerment. It has been seen in Indian perspective that women have always enjoyed lower position in all spheres of life---family, community, religion and politics. They have always enjoyed lower status than that of men in exercising power. It is believed that women should be protected by her father until she gets married, after marriage the responsibility of her protection is on her husband and in her old age she should be protected by her son. Thus the women have been made dependent on her male relatives. During the old age, she is bound to live with her sons without much desire and will. She doesnot have the power to decide where, how and when the money will be invested or spent. If she desires to spend money for herself, she is always answerable to her male members or female elderly members where and why she needs to spend money. For this reason, economic independence is very necessary

and this economic independence will be achieved through employment. In order to be employed, she needs to be educated. Education is the main pillar for making women economically independent which will in return establish the gender-equality as well. Women-empowerment will not only establish gender-equality, but also, it will eradicate all the social evils. In order to discuss about the empowerment of Assamese women, examples of some really brave women of Assam have been picked up to show how the women of Assam have represented the concept of empowerment of women. *Mula Gabhoru*, *Joymoti Konwari*, *Kanaklata Baruah*, *Khahudi Nath*, *Kumli Neog* and *Bhogeswari Phukanani* are the classic examples who paved the way of empowerment of Assamsese women in different section of society in different fields. They have sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation. They have fought for the independence of their motherland. The sacrifices of *Mula Gabharu* and *Sati Jaymati* has encouraged *Kanaklata Baruah* to do something for her motherland and the sacrifice whas so intense that she did not hesitate to die for her motherland. Like *Kanaklata Baruah*. *Khahuli Nath*, *Kumli Neog* and *Bhogeswari Phukanoni* also sacrificed their lives for their beloved nation. The participation of women in freedom movement, paved the way of Feminism and the women became conscious of their right along with their role, responsibility and status in the society.

In the sixth chapter, a clear difference between sex and gender has been described and it was revealed that, sex is a biological concept and gender is a sociological concept. Discrimination between male and female children is a hot topic of discussion and assigning different roles and responsibilities to masculine and feminine is a topic of debates. Gender based discrimination against the female children is pervasive across the world which, in turn, is a topic of sociological significance. In a

society like India, female children are understood as a burden and male children are preferred over the female children. Some scholars have argued that, due to this mental set up of Indian people and restricting women in taking part in social and political activities of the nation, women do not understand their rights or fail to understand their rights. Women feel inferior though they are omnipresent. The domestic violences like female foeticide, restricting women to pursue education, early marriage, dowry system, wife battering, and inhuman attitude towards widows add flavor in the sense of inferiority. The best cure to stop all the injustices in the society is to expand the education. Education enlightens the soul and removes ignorance. It is none other than education which can establish the Gender equality. Position of women in India from Vedic Era to modern age has also been analysed. The position of women in ancient India was very complicated one because of the paradoxical statement in different religious scriptures and sometimes in the same text at different places. Somewhere the status of women has been described as very high, where she was worshipped as the Goddess. Her status and position was same as men. She was considered as the lamp of the family who used to drive away all the darkness. She was a compulsory part in performing puja along with her husband. She was regarded as the *Ardhangini* which means the better half. Many women sages of that period created many Slokas. Women had right to chose her husband through Swayambar Pratha. She even had the right to get married at a matured age. In some scriptures, the status of women was described as equal to men, while, some others have held not only disrespect but even in positive disrespect. The position of women in India with the invasion of Islamic Rulers and that led to introduction of Purdah Pratha, childmarriage, boycott of widows and many more. The arrival of British was a relief as they tried their best to stop the social injustices

going on in Indian Society. Those were the men who at first started movement for the rights of women and later the fight were joined by Indian women. The participation of women in Indian freedom movemet also paved the way of Feminism in India. In this chapter, the norms of society for women has been discussed through the examples of Dakar Boson i.e. proverbs of Dak and other proverbs which were used to judge the character of a woman. Along with this discussion, focus has been given on present status of women of Assam and how they have tried to encounter the society with Assamese Folksongs. A discussion has been made on prominent ladies of Assam in different fields who are the assets of Assam and represented Assam in all India basis and in international fields by their intelligence, beauty, hardwork, sincerity and charisma and made Assam a proud state.