

## CHAPTER – IV

### **4.1 STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE IN BONGAIGAON DISTRICT AREA :-**

As per population census of 2011, Bongaigaon District Area (BDA) contains 7,38,804 people. Out of which, the female consists 3,62,986 of total population and their percentage is 49.13% which is maintained in table 5.1 BDA covers almost all category of people like General caste, SC, ST, other backward class (OBC) etc. Though the lion share of population goes to Koch Rajbongshi Community, but there exists about 36.32% Muslims, 12% SC, 1% ST and others (Brahmin, Yogi etc) 3%.

Therefore, we must discuss the social status and role of women in BDA area separately so that actual facts come into light.

#### **4.2 : Women in Assamese Society :**

The Assamese society is a rich society in so far as the status of women is concerned. In a human society, each individual can utilize his or her own thoughts and ideas and that is considered to be the basic human right of an individual. But it is a matter of fact in recent time that in reality each one of us hardly gets any opportunity to display our own individual ideas. Especially the women are the most vulnerable sections of society are often being sidelined from taking any important decision. They are facing problems like torture, domestic violence, dowry related problems, rape, eve-teasing etc. etc. Another very important aspect of this point is that women themselves are still ignorant about their own rights and policy formulated especially for them. Since of late modern educated women has become very conscious of their rights, and empowering the women as a whole has become a new motto of the world around.

*Mahatma Gandhi, while defining empowerment of women, had described it as a situation “when women, whom we call abala become sabala, all those who are helpless will become powerful.”*<sup>23</sup> This means that the position of women should be as equal as of men.

However, the greatest challenge in our society is to improve the status of

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23. Retrived from <https://www.ukessays.com>

women who constitute half the population of the country. The Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles given in the Constitution of India bear faithful application of the principle of nondiscrimination so that women are entitled to the same rights as men as citizens of India. Yet women are not treated as equal as men. The Indian Constitution gives equal political rights to both men and women, but the representation of women in Parliament and State Legislatures is very less. The 81<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment Bill to provide for one-third reservation for women in Parliament was tabled for the first time in 1996 but was soon engulfed in the conflicts over the demand of special quota for women of other Backward Castes and Minorities. Till today there are no sincere efforts on the part of national and regional political parties towards the passing of the Bill.

Position of women in north-eastern region of India is different in comparison to those living in the other part of the country. Position of women in Assam is better in comparison to the women of some other States of India. One salient feature in the Assamese society is the absence of the dowry system in the past. But in the post-independence era, the evil of dowry system has stealthily been invading the Assamese society with the result that some dowry death cases have been reported. *“The State of Indian Women Report 2001-02” released by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, revealed that the crime rate against women is even higher than the all-India average. In 1999, crimes against women including rape, molestation, sexual harassment, abduction, dowry deaths and cruelty at home were 127 cases per million persons at the all-India level. In contrast, in Assam it was 138 cases per million persons.*”<sup>24</sup> The statistics are eye capturing. Moreover, incidents of molestation, trafficking, murder and domestic violence have also gone up, indicating that all is not well with women in Assam in the present times. Some recent incidents have make us to say that there is an insecure position of women in some parts of Assam.

Sex ratio is a very important indicator that reflects the status of women in society. It reflects whether she enjoys those rights to survival, protection and development. *In 2001 the male-female ratio in Assam was 1000: 932 which was lower than the all India average of 1000: 933.*<sup>25</sup> The imbalance in the male female ratio is due to blind faith as well

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24. State of Indian Women Report 2001-2002 released by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.

25. *ibid.*

as the result of illiteracy which have resulted in destruction of the baby girl at prenatal stage due to sex determination test, results in deliberate malnutrition and neglect of the girl child which results in this imbalance.

In the field of education, women in Assam are in a better position than the all-India average. *As per 2001 census the literacy rate for Assam is 64.28 per cent as against 65.38 per cent for India. While male literacy is 71.93 per cent (India-75.85 per cent), female literacy stands at 56.03 per cent (India-54.60 per cent).*<sup>26</sup> The male-female gap in the literacy rate is still prevailing though it is declining over time and is much below the all-India average. Acquiring of higher literacy rate alone does not indicate that a community educationally advanced. Completion of elementary classes of education and continuation of school up to 14 years of age, etc. are taken as indicators of literacy rate. The problem of school drop-out is a negative indicator of educational attainment. Dropout rates of both boys and girls (specially) in the state of Assam remained higher than all-India average from 1981 to 2001.

Women work participation is another indicator of women's status in the society. The maximum number of female in salaried jobs, the better is their position for most women in the world. The state of Assam is not the worst among majority states of the Indian Union in relation to human development and gender equality but it ranks quite low. The state has rural agrarian economy, which is featured by high rate of work sharing of women. Although Women Work Participation Rates (WWPR) is high, as it is subsistence farming, women do not benefit economically, because they share a dismonitor share of the work load. The work participation rate of the women in Assam is obviously lower than that of men in general except in the basic sector where the rates are in favour of women. Participation of female in the secondary and tertiary sectors is low in Assam. The male-female gap in the work participation rate is considerably in favour of female, in the primary sector and in favour of male in the other two higher sectors.

The matter of concern is that the status of women in Assam is the worst in terms of their share in decision making bodies. In Assam in 1977, out of 3 female candidates who contested for the Lok Sabha, 2 candidates were elected. No women from the

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26. Census Report, 2001.

State of Assam contested in the Lok Sabha election in 1984 and 1989. In 1991, 7 women candidates contested for the Lok Sabha but none was elected. In the general election of 1996, only one woman was elected to the Lok Sabha out of 9 contesting candidates who contested. Participation of women is low not only in the elected bodies but also in administrative posts. The over-all picture seems to be quite dismal. However, there are much possibilities and potentialities for increasing participation of women of Assam in the national mainstream.

### **Women Groups in Assam :**

Our earnest efforts to discuss about women groups in the state of Assam along with a brief history of the past and the challenges which are facing by them at present. Our discussion on the nature of women's work, their organizational capacities and the changes that women's organizations or mahila samitis need to deal with today.

The status of women in north-eastern region of India is more or less different in contrast to those living in the rest of the country. For instance, mobility of women in Assam is far higher. This may be due to factors like, a) absence of purdah, b) absence of caste groups resulting in caste flexibility and c) An influence of tribal work pattern where rural economy revolves mostly on women's labour. But this does not mean that women in Assam enjoys equal footing with men. One can only observe that despite a strong patriarchal order, there is a distinct tendency towards matriarchal functioning. A major finding of our analysis is that low income village women 'faces negligence' in all spheres of livelihood.

### **Women's Traditional Work Pattern:**

Our analysis of rural women's livelihood in Assam has showed examples of greater mobility in their work pattern and social position. An outstanding characteristics of intra-household power sharing in various communities such as the Muslin, Bodo, Kacharis, Mishings, Bengali Hindus and the Assamese is the relative autonomy that women enjoy with regard to their incomes. Earnings of unmarried young women, for instance, are not allowed by other family members. They normally work for investment in domestic animals or yarn for weaving. Secondly, while income from economic activities is not really earned in cash, a system of barter and loan is prevailing largely at the village level. Thirdly, work in the form of traditional labour groups by mahila samitis, has acquired much improvement in their economic position. An interesting example of group work was seen among the

plains tribal people of Assam who look after paddy crops. Under the system, young women from many households pool their share of grain and offer it for loan. Any needy person can borrow from this system while the borrower gets definite time frame (usually six months) to repay the loan along with an interest amounting to half the quantity that the person borrows. This way the paddy bank grows quickly. Members of this bank get their share whenever occasion arises. Seldom they sell the total amount of paddy and buy yarn for weaving with that money. This traditional form of nonformal group activities amongst village women in some parts of Assam has significant relevance to mahila samitis which found a social platform, and to an extent, helps in the growth of rural economy of Assam. While mahila samitis had their beginning in the wake of India's Freedom struggle, a large number of samities were formally established as part of the Community Development Programme in the 1950's. Village women shed their reservations and readily came under the umbrella of the mahila samiti because of their earlier experience in handling group work through traditional, nonformal labour collectives at the local level of the society.

#### **Role of Mahila Samitis:**

The changing role of women from nonformal labour groups to mahila samitis had far reaching influences. Women of towns and villages had a significant opportunity to work together during the freedom struggle. Rural and urban women thus came together, developed a relationship, which extended to the emergence of district and village level mahila samitis under the guidance and leadership of Assam Pradeshik Mahila samiti, in the first quarter of the 20th Century. Women work through these mahila samitis to meet their socio-economic demands, particularly at the village level, which help in transforming their ideas into action.

#### **Activities of Mahila Samitis :**

From the past historical studies of Mahila Samitis which has revolved around the objectives stated above, several schemes, reaching village women were initiated and they were centered on nutrition programmes, weaving projects under bank loans and so on. An agriculture development programme is started in the Bongaigaon District by the Agriculture Department, implemented with the help of the mahila samitis. The Mahila Samiti and some Self Help Groups (SHG) has been performing some other works, like – making of house mats, materials from coconut fibre, banana plant's fibre, thread made bags, house decorating materials, achar (pickle), etc. It is seen that some group members of such

mahila samiti and SHG's has been earning 5000/- to 7000/- rupees per month. The mahila samities soon became a training ground for improved agricultural practices and other productive activities and inspired many women to participate in it. The example mentioned above is a success story. But unfortunately Government is not much careful about encouraging these type of Mahila Samities as well as SHG's. That is why some such samities and groups has been facing tough situation. Besides, it is alleged that due to red tapism in the administrative system, some projects and schemes of work are not getting clearance in due time. This has made the situation worst they would only work if money would be extended to them. It is no surprise then that when researchers or socially concerned individuals visit mahila samitis, the first thing some members ask is whether money is going to be given to them and if so, how much. It is a matter of great concern and the appropriate authority must abolish this type of tendency and difficulties.

#### **Realities Regarding Status of Women :**

As we have seen in the above discussion, the functioning of a majority of the mahila samitis in Assam is dependent on the welfare programmes of the government since the 50s. This mode of functioning tends to ignore the more critical issues - women's potential earnings in agriculture productivity, women's access to safe water resources, access to yarn banks, access to health care, and knowledge of their legal safeguards against desertion or violence and so on- in relation to poverty in rural Assam. A superficial welfares' ideology still exists within these samitis, where women's socio-economic problems are discussed without addressing the root cause of it.

The question why mahila samitis have not been able to move away from a welfares' perspective should be seen in the context of their own functioning first and then in relation to external factors. Conceptually speaking, almost all mahila samitis maintain a middle position in being apolitical to situations that need public opinion and serious questioning. Another problem that is seen in the internal functioning of mahila samitis is the utter lack of documentation of their past efforts. However, women of mahila samitis are not usually a part of their internal management system. This relates directly to democratic decision making. Under normal circumstances we find that women have less institutional power than men to meet needs and realize interests. We find that their vulnerability lies not only in differences of roles and responsibilities but also in hierarchies of power and privileges. In a narrower sense, it is startling to find that something similar happens within

the internal functioning of mahila samitis of Assam. Finally, heads of samitis like presidents and secretaries hold the reins of power for too long. This discourages democratic functioning as well as a host of potentialities, such as younger women joining the fold. Speaking of external factors, mahila samitis have to be analysed in relation to State delivery systems - what works and does not work for civil society, and women in particular. This encompasses issues like healthcare services, free flow of rations under PDS and so on. It should also be seen in the context of how women are positioned in local governance. And finally it should be seen in the context of rights that women ought to know and wield in their favour. Domestic violence and violence against women, (VAW), in conflict situations are 2 categories that overlap, making analysis obscure rather than focused. For instance, a woman in Kokrajhar, who was assaulted by two army men, was rejected by her husband on grounds that she complied to 'their wishes'. She was beaten up by him before being sent out of the house. Did women of mahila samitis address these problems or were they sent away by the family on the pretext that this was a personal matter? We know that the All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation addressed the issue but added that popular support from the public and the government was lacking. There are examples of young women leaving their villages because of factional fighting between militant groups or because of the army who conduct frequent house searches. To avoid any kind of violence in such situations these young girls often migrate to cities like Guwahati and find employment as maids. Research by several NGOs like DAIPARC, GOLD, NNS and NEN has found that maids often run away from their employers and finally land up as sex workers in the process of looking for alternative employment. Though influential in some aspects, most women's organizations and groups have no decision making powers in local governance. This is one of the main problems of women's organizations all over the north east. Acute problems of communication have prevented some of the dedicated members in reaching out to village-level mahila samitis. Going out of the middle class from the realities of rural life - its culture and socio-economic situation -has widened the social disparities. More stress has to be laid on the part of the apex and district level mahila samiti members to involve rural women in direct economic action programmes and discussions on gender inequality, non-recognition of women's work capacity. Almost all of the 5000 odd rural mahila samitis in Assam, are not getting access to information about struggles and successes that other organizations have experienced in the rest of the country, let alone what state agencies have to offer them. New women's groups have been formed in recent years which have rightly made attempts at

mobilising women both at the urban as well as rural level. Several of these organizations have emerged, perhaps, as a reaction to the inertia of existing mahila samitis, which they criticize as lacking in ideological consciousness. Some have emerged in response to the increase in alcoholism and drug abuse amongst the youth. Regret to say, the rate of crime against women has gone up. It is of vital importance, therefore, to revamp the district and primary mahila samitis, whose weak functioning, is not just a result of women's immobility or the inherently repressive social system, but of poor documentation, poor financial or infrastructural functioning, total lack of exposure to the rights issues and lack of self-esteem amongst a majority of the women.

Finally, We hold the view that complete ignorance or disregard for women's rights, (which encompasses the right to information, to food security, to health and so on), reduces women's potential, as groups, in building confidence and solidarity amongst themselves and to question armed conflict and the factors that follow therein.

#### **Role of Women in Local Governance :**

Role of women in electoral democracy at grassroots level is the focus of this report which includes women's political participation as candidates, motivation for joining politics and problems faced during elections and overall obstacles encountered by women representatives. As the topic is broad so we have limited our study only to the state of Madhya Pradesh. The reason for choosing Madhya Pradesh is because MP has always been regarded as being at the forefront of decentralized system of government with 50% reservations for women candidates in the local electoral body. So it becomes interesting to know the role that the women play in politics there.

#### **Local Governance & Panchyati Raj :**

Government in its most discrete form is present in the form of the local electorate body. The local electorate is the one to which the people could directly identify with. While laying the foundation of our nation, de-centralization of power and governance was the core of the whole idea of democracy. In this respect the term "Local governance" holds the utmost importance in the view that it was one of the founding principles of the country. This theme research tries to search some of the broad questions related to the impact and functioning of the Village Panchyat as it is the local electorate body at the village level. In addition to that we would also try to know whether this whole idea of de-centralization of power was successful at all and if it has given some fruits or not. Reaped

any fruits or created more chaos in the system. For women, successful grassroots experience has meant a chance to form coherent voice, to be heard and to make a difference in their communities.

#### **4.3 : Tradition and Status of Women in Koch Rajbongshi Society :**

In the Koch Rajbongshi Community Koch Rajbongshi community (also known as Kochrajbongshi and Koch) is an indigenous community of the Bongaigaon District. Their branches are found in parts of present-day [Nepal](#); the [Indian](#) states of [Assam](#), [West Bengal](#), and [Meghalaya](#); and [Kishanganj](#) in the state of [Bihar](#). They are the oldest community inhabiting in the District.

There are some minor differences between the Koch Rajbongshi and Kacharies. But at present it is nearly impossible to differentiate these two communities of separate historical origins from each other. Today they are widely distributed over most of the plain districts of Assam. However, a heavy concentration is observed in the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara. Koch and Kacharies have some unique traditions which need to be known separately.

It is commonly believed that the Koch (Rajbansi) population forms a major traditional group. According to Gait (1905) "In Assam proper, it (the word Koch) has become the name of a Hindu caste, into which are received the converts to Hinduism from the ranks of the Kachari, Lalung, Mikir and other tribes". However, it is not known from which time the process of conversion started. It is viewed that major part of conversion took place following the preaching of Vaishnavite cult by Srimanta Sankardeva, a socio-cultural reformer and a religious preacher of Assam during the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. They worship God and Goddess which lead us to know that there is equal status of both men and women in Rajbongshi society. It is obvious to mention here that Rajbongshi people have some similarities with tribal people of Assam, but these similarities are merely identical in nature. While they were living in Kamatapur Kingdom, they were identified as son of "Bir" (The most strong and brave man). They remained busy in war and aggression to occupy other's kingdom. But at the same time, they celebrated highly attributable cultural functions in the form of dance, music, yatra party, palagan etc. etc. They tried to sow the seeds of unity and equality among all people they came to contact during conquest of other's kingdom. They are called real 'Warrior' of the land.

### **Habitation of Koch Rajbongshi People :**

It is found that the homeland of Koch Rajbongshi people comprises their ancient Kingdom, Kamatapur and Kamarupa Kingdom they inhabit in entire Assam and the total parts of the present West Bengal, Nepal and Bangladesh. They are the majority in Assam and while comparing the North Bengal, Koch Rajbongshi community have majority of the population in the entire region. Koch Rajbongshi people stay very close to nature. It is a tradition for Koch Rajbongshi Men to go hunting in a group in the wild. They are brave and bears soldierly instinct in their body and language.

They bring the "Prey" from the wild and share the meat in a Banana Leaf as per the requirement of each family. A traditional Koch Rajbongshi dwelling has a Mango Tree, a Jack fruit tree and a Small Kitchen Garden, with a small pond where they breed fish. They want to become self-sufficient. They do not want to remain under any one.

### **Language of Koch Rajbongshi People :**

Koch Rajbongshi people speak the [Rajbongshi language](#), which is an [ancient local language](#) spoken by five million people in [India](#), and more than 130,000 by [Nepali](#) Rajbongshi. Many are bilingual in either [Bengali](#) or [Nepali](#). They used some common words like 'Tui', (you), Kuti (Where), Jaish (go), etc. etc.

### **Culture of Koch Rajbongshi People :**

Koch Rajbongshi people wear their own traditional dress. Besides they wear common traditional dresses in some particular ceremony, events and also in general day-to-day life. Women and Men of Koch Rajbongshi have sets of traditional dress and jewellery. Patani being worn by the women of this community and men wear dhoti and a yellow color piece of cloth surrounded in the neck for men, They wear this yellow color cloth in their neck as a mark of respect for nature, elderly people also have a tradition to wear a turban or a lengthy cloth wrapped in their head. This turban is marked as a symbol of aristocracy and self respect. However, people have been giving up wearing of such turban.

It is seen that women wear patani from the chest till below the knee but it does not touch the ankle. It is also observed that the cloth stays above ground of around 6 Cms, the reason for wearing Patani not till the ground level or till the ankle because they believe that water is very much sacred as it is a part of the nature so while crossing lake or river the cloth should not touch the water, it is a mark of respect to the nature and they

believe that if cloth touch the water the purification of the water will be destroyed and hence they do not use it in their traditional ritual practice of worshipping nature. The dress code prevailing in Koch Rajbongshi Society is highly appreciable for two reasons. (i) The respect nature and to prove it they have used to wear dress in such a way. (ii) Their dresses are unique and this has automatically identify a people (both men and women) that he/she belong to Rajbongshi community.

Koch Rajbongshi women get up early in the morning and clean the house with a broom made up of bamboo and coconut tree. Then they provide water and food to all the animals first, then they take their breakfast. When they eat, if they have pets like a dog or a cat they also offer them the same breakfast, it is a ritual and tradition. In earliest time, keeping a parrot as a pet was a tradition of Koch Rajbongshi people. Whenever Koch Rajbongshi people go for hunting they take the permission from the elder and from the nature to allow them to go for the same. It is known that Koch Rajbongshi do not to kill any animal for pleasure but only for food purpose. They do not eat all kinds of animal. Some of them they consider as bad for their community if they kill (e.g. crow) They donot kill Dove or even they do not keep it as pet in the house but if a dove comes and makes a nest, it is considered as good luck for the household. Seeing a peacock is considered as good luck during hunting, but they do catch peacock for feathers for medicinal use but they release the peacock later on after getting one or two feather. Koch Rajbongshi people make fans out of coconut tree leaves, Tal plant leaves, and they also make fans out of bamboo. All the characteristics show that Koch Rajbongshi people are really nature friendly and kind to innocent animals.

During our study period, we have observed that Koch Rajbongshi people use leaves of [Mari Gold](#) for different purpose of treatment and bodily injury. Every house have Marigold plant which is considered as a medicinal Plant for Cough and Cold. They use [Tulsi](#) Leaves, Ginger, Black Pepper to cure cough and Cold. TO get rid of [Dengu fever](#) Koch Rajbongshi People takes small Chicken with Ginger, Black Pepper, Garlic and Turmeric, onion and make a paste of all these herbs in a Stone and held it in a Bamboo with Banana Leaves and put it in fire. They do body message for their children and old people with spring water, morning dew from the plant leave and warm oil which is mixed with ginger. They use natural medicines and herbs to get remedy from many type of diseases. It is also seen that this community have special treatment for [remedies arthritis](#), which modern

medicine yet have not discovered. From the above, we can say that Koch Rajbongshi people have sufficient medicine knowledge.

### **Fooding :**

During our observation of food habits, we have come to know that main traditional food of Rajbongshi's are 'Panta Bhat'. Usually they cook in a Bamboo along with Banana Leaves by putting it in fire. Then Koch Rajbongshi people Burn Brinjal and potato in fire directly and roast it and make a paste with hand and eat. They burn fish and eat and never wash the food item that is being burned for eating purpose, because they believe that [Mother Nature](#) will get offended if they wash and eat after burn. In ancient days, they did not use any utensils for eating, rather they use Banana plants Body part as a Plate and Banana Leaves as a wrapper to keep the food warm. They also use Bamboo Plant as a Vessel for Cooking ( e.g. Bash Pitha). They Wrap a special kind of Rice (Borni Chaul) in a Banana Leaf and tie with banana plant thread and put it in a mud vessel where water is poured and fire is given from down side for boiling. This is called 'Topla Bhat'. Again they use bamboo plant as a Drinking Glass for drinking water. They used matured bottle Guard shell as a vessel to keep dry food. Koch Rajbongshi people use dry food a lot, which are dried in the sun, cabbage, cauliflower, onion to use in the off season. Koch Rajbongshi people use to dry meat and keep it and use it whenever there is no meat in the family to eat. They also put 'Raw Fish' in a Bamboo and ferment it and use it as soon as there is no fish. They use a special stone to make paste for their herbal medicine. Every food Koch Rajbongshi people take have a significance for medicinal use. They thank nature for providing food before they eat, they sprinkle water around the Banana Plate before and after eating. They either eat in a community or along with Family but nobody gets up from the eating place until and unless everybody finishes eating. They use shell of Coconut, dry matured shell of bottle guard as a Ladle, and offer the remaining food to their pets. They respect every food with "Pranam" and offer thanks to God for providing food them.

Rajbongshi people have their own tradition and culture. They celebrate the new year with their traditional culture, and have their own culinary tradition. They respect elders and follow a rich cultural life, preferring to eat traditional food in their homes and welcoming guests with [betel nut](#). They use to take many items like pitha, chira, doi, (Curd), etc. Some people use to consume alcohol alsp.

It is found that Rajbongshi people's primary dialects include Western Rajbanshi, Central Rajbanshi, Eastern Rajbanshi and the dialect of the Rajbanshi of the hills, also known as Kamta or Rajbanshi. They use Assamese alphabets in Assam, Bengali alphabets in West Bengal, Nepali alphabets in Nepal and so on.

Rajbanshi people have been using the [olive branch](#) of [Mango trees](#) and olive branch of bamboo tree for oral Hygiene in ancient time. In the modern era, these people use a tooth brush but still it has been observed from years together that they still had been following the same rich cultural traditional Practice of Herbal method. For daily Tongue cleaning they use a thin layer of Bamboo piece, which can easily be bent. We have found that Tribal people across the globe follow some similar tradition for oral hygienic practices in their day to day. It is also the same as Koch Rajbanshi ethnic tribe of India. Koch Rajbanshi take baths in a community in nearby lake and they use Ritah for cleaning their Hair and for cleaning their costumes, they use stone and sand to rub their body, Ladies also use to rub turmeric pieces in their skin specially before marriage and before giving birth to a child. It is also been observed that Koch Rajbanshi boys do push ups in small lake during the time of taking bath as an exercise in the water. Our study also revealed that Koch Rajbongshi people have high respect to their female people, that is why there is no injustice or severe crime against women in this society.

#### **4.4 : Tradition and Status of Women in Muslim Society :**

In the Muslim (religious minority) area, traditional livelihood and lifestyle prevails. These sections of people are mostly located in the river in area. About 85% of people of this Community is engaged in agricultural sector. The rest are engaged in business, service (Government and Vencher institutions), carpentry etc. In the way of our study, it has found that women help and assist male people in agricultural activities. They help their house holds by supplying natural (cow dung) fertilizers to the corps/crop field, nirani, supplying kothia, earth filling etc. Paddy crops, jute, potato, maize, Bazra, sugarcane, and vegetable production are the principal agricultural production in the BDA area. Recently a few Muslim families have taken fishing as their profession. Muslim women help their household by making fishing net at home. They also prepare hutkimas (dry fish) etc.

It is also found that, a few years ago, Muslim women were not allowed to go to crop field or to engage in agricultural activities. Taking fishing profession was

totally abandoned in the Muslim societies in BDA. But now, the situation has been rapidly changing. Now women are not debarred from helping male people but it has been receiving widespread recognition day by day.

In the Muslim families, religious restrictions were very high in comparison to other caste-communities of BDA, a few years ago. They could not take part in the Socio-Political or cultural affairs. They had no any say on any social matters. They were totally dominated by male people but those conditions are gradually changing. Although Muslim women have not got full social status yet now. But at present they are taking share in some social matters. Even, on some family affair cases like family maintains, marriage etc. Some male people take opinion of their wives and maintain family. In the contemporary Muslim societies, some Mahila Samittee, self-help group (SHG), Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) etc. are taking leading role in the empowerment of women in social affairs. The name of Tapattary Gaon Unnayan Mahila samittee, Bamungaon Mahila Samittee, Aie Seuj Samittee (NGO), Human and Natural Development Society (NGO), Barjana Mahila samittee, Pragati SHG, Procesta SHG, Mererchar unnayan Samaj, khudra khowa Atma Sahayak Got (SHG) etc could be mentioned. These organization and groups have been trying to boost the interest of female, make them conscious on various societal matters and assist in the empowerment process for female.

The Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 have taken bold step for the empowerment of women by providing one third seats of panchayats in all respect reserved for them, This Act has also facilitated them to take active role in various government schemes sponsored by Zilla Parishad and Development Block respectively. The schemes which facilitate women empowerment are – community development and National Extension Service. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDPP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Jawahar Rajgar Yojona (JRY), Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojona (SGRY), Pradhanmantri Gramodaya Yojona (PMGY), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) etc. Among these schemes and projects, the MGNREGA have granted 100 days sure job to the rural people to both male and female by offering registered job cards. In the rural employment issue, this Act may be termed as a milestone of development and empowerment of all Section of weak people.

Now-a-days, women take part in various socio-economic developmental activities. These activities include rural road construction and repairing, digging fisheries, earth filling in various public institutions, construction of pucca building work etc. Since the panchayat Act of 1994 has been enacted, hat-ghat', beel, fishery etc. are allotted to women as per one- third reservation provision. The allotment of these things were out of imagination in the name of women a few years ago. At present, female are given due representation in the school management committee and Governing Body of various educational institutions. Even, the basic unit of elementary education in the Gaon Sikhsha Sammittee can not be formed without the active participation of women. The women get chances of being member or other important office bearer in various construction committees' constituted at different level in the District of Bongaigaon.

A few years ago, women were not allowed to go outside home alone. Cycling or driving was beyond imagination. But now, the modern education system has been gradually reforming the old traditions. Women in educated families and many other families are allowed cycling, in some limited sphere, they are allowed driving light vehicles. A negligible percentage of Muslim women are engaged in government services, while some formed Self Help Groups (SHGs), NGO, Mahila Samittee etc. The various government schemes as mentioned earlier and the Panchayat Act. 1994, have facilitated the women empowerment in broader field. But the leading role, in all these affairs has obviously taken by the educational institutions of BDA. These educational institutions include various primary schools established in almost all villages, Sarva Sikhsha Mission, M.E. School, High school etc. The Lengtisinga H.S. School, Mererchar H.S. School, Rajiv Gandhi Memorial College, Piradhara High Madrassa, Higher Secondary School etc. are the leading educational institutions of BDA. The educational percentage of BDA can be shown in a pie-diagram.

**Table : 4.1\***

<b>Education Percentage</b>	
Male literacy Rate	Female Literacy rate
59.95%	40.05%

\*Source : Census report: 2001

## MARRIAGE AND DOWRY SYSTEM :

In the traditional Muslim families, there was early marriage system. Since the early times to the 1990 'S' teenage girls mostly in the age group of 12-16 were compelled for conjugal life. Boys also not spared. They were also obliged for marriage before the attainment of 18 years of age. In fact, child marriage system was totally prevailing in this society. At present, this social tradition is almost abolished from Muslim Society. But it is found that the few orthodox Muslim family's mostly illiterate people still believe in child marriage system throwing out the legal procedures. Riverine area like Mererchar, Sikatari, Barman, Pachnambar Char, Rangapani area etc. witnesses such type of social customs and rituals.

One of the most infectious social evil the Dowry system has been prevailing in BDA area since the earliest times. But that Dowry system was completely opposite to the contemporary Dowry system because, in the past male people, i.e. the groom had to offer dowry in the form of money to the guardian of the bride or any other gifts in order to get and perform marriage. This system was known as "Pon". At present this pon system is abolished and another system of dowry has occupied its position. Dowry is a system through which groom family get huge amount of money, material gain or ornamental goods in the form of good will gesture. Furniture, motor byke, Television, Almirah, Alna etc. are some of the common things in the form of dowry. Although the Muslim clerics like Maulavi, Munshi, Maulana, Hafiz, Mufti, Kari etc. oppose this social evil system, but still it has been prevailing in almost all Part of BDA in an uncontrolled manner. Many dowry related cases and domestic violences occur due to this social evil. But most of these cases and facts do not come out due to illiteracy, economic dependency of women on the male people, unavailability of means of communication facility and lack of consciousness. Few untoward incidents like burning. Suicide etc. happened in this area due to this evil. Divorce also takes place due to this cause. In the past, Polygamy was prevailing in BDA but it has also come to down.

In the Scheduled Caste Hindu Society (Who form about 12.7% of total population as shown in the table 5.2), most of the people are engaged in traditional professions like Mason, carpentering, gual (milk supplier), small businessman, fisherman etc. The female segments are mainly engaged in the household activities, kid and cattle maintaining works, poultry management work etc. A few number of SC woman

are engaged in daily wage labour work in the form of pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). Food for work programme (FWP). Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) etc.

Marriage is a respectable social ritual in the SC social system. As most of the SC people belong of the Bengali Hindu Community, therefore, Bengali Cultural tradition prevails in the matrimonial Ceremony. Dowry is an accepted social custom in the matrimonial affairs and people of this category recognizes this social custom consciously or unconsciously. However the people of this category have been suffering a lot due to this evil social system. Sometimes some major dowry related accidents have taken place in the BDA.

As regards, there is a negligible other caste people like Brahmin, Rabha, Kayastha, Garo, Bodo etc. The Brahmin constitute only 14% (Fourteen) families Rajbonshi, Nath Yogi constitute 3% people and people belong to Rabha, Bodo, Garo, etc. Constitute 0.93% of total population as shown in the table 5.3. The Brahmins, Kayasthas, Rajbonshi, Nath & Yogi People follow Gaon Panchayat (G.P.), Deohati G.P., Manikpur G.P., Bidyapur G.P., Kalbari G Hindu Socio- religious traditions of both Hinduism and Christianity. Borigaon.P., Balapara G.P., Shankarghola G.P., Rangapani G.P., witness the presence of Brahmin. Rajbonshi and Nath-Yogi Community, while the pachonia – Khoragaon G.P. Borigaon G.P. witnesses Garo, Rabha, and Bodo etc. community people.

#### **4.5 : ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIAL SPHERE :**

Except some minor differences in cultural and religious matters, the social conditions, environment and economic position of the people of all sections of the people are almost same in the Bongaigaon District area. The linguistic identity of the people is same and the social atmosphere, sharing of sorrows and happiness, participation in cultural Programme are almost same among all Section of People. Women take Part in many Social activities like-establishment of Schools, and other educational institutions, clubs, etc. They become honourable members of these institutions. In this Context it is obviously mentionable that Smt. Hena Sarkar and Smt. Sulekha Khatun are the two leading women Social activists of this area who are associated with many educational institutions and become the member of governing Body and Managing Committee of educational institutions. Besides these two ladies, Mrs. Bina Das, Jumi Rani Rabha,

Romisa Khatun, Abida Khanam etc are some of the Panchayat representatives with a recognized social status.

In the past, Minority Muslim women were not permitted to take part in the social functions. They were not allowed to attend village assembly to solve any social conflict. They were totally submerged by the male people. Even women were not allowed to go to school, colleges alone without taking a male people with her. Purdah system was strictly followed up. Therefore Muslim women could not get education facilities. They became ignorant on many affairs and had no consciousness on many matters. These injustices were prevailing a few years ago in the Muslim families especially for women. The Hindu-families were free from these bindings. At present, after the passing of Assam Panchayat Act, 1994, this social system has totally changed. A social transformation from “have not” to “Having For” is going on. Now-a-days, women of various caste, communities and religion have got social status in the form of Assam Panchayat Act, 1994. Now they can participate in the social rituals, cultural programmes and by and large take part in the village assembly called “gram sabha”.

In the present social system women are not only “Ardhangini” of man’s life but they have become the partner of social life. Some women often participate in the Panchayat level development activities and supervise development works of the Panchayat bories, zilla parishad etc. In the context of Panchayat representatives especially the role of women Representatives are mentionable. Due to the continuous efforts of women representatives of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad, Social equality between men and women is established. Women get equal status in the Society. They not only look into the house hold works but also engaged in other social activities. Some women formed “Self-Helf Groups. These Self Helf groups are not only help them in economic upliftment, but also make their position strong. As Per the Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad source, there are 2615 Registered Self Help Group. Most of these groups are handled by women. While some self-help groups nurse cattle farm, others manages Duckery. Poultry Firm, Co-operative Samittee (Small money lendering organization), Handloom and weaving etc. Lakhimi self-help group (SHG), Pragati SHG, Prachesta SHG, Tapattary Mahila Samittee etc. are some of the leading SHG.

The Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad like other Zilla Parishad of Assam as formed under Assam Panchayat Act. 1994, performs many social Development

programmes. These programmes help the poor people specially the below poverty line people-group wise or individually. Women of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad area have got some kind of fruitfulness through Self Help Groups. Various such groups are taking some small scale projects with the financial assistance of Banks and other financial institutions. The State Bank of India, Lengtisinga & Abhayapuri Branch, Assam Gramin Vikash Bank, UCO Bank, Union Bank. The Assam co-operative Apex Bank limited (Both are Abhayapuri Town located Banks) assist the village women Self Help Groups, Prachesta, and Prerana Self-Help Groups are economically benefited groups in this regards. Swarnaayanti Gram Swarozger Yojana (SGSY) is a credit cum subsidy programme and women of this Zilla Parishad have benefited through this programme. Under this Yojana, 40% of self-employment has been fixed for women.

There is another important scheme for poor people as like as women in the Zilla Parishad cum District level area. This Scheme is known as 'Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana' (SGRY). This yojana have guaranteed economic up gradation of Backward and poor people. Women are also given Special attention in the Yojana. About 30% employment facilities are guaranteed for women under this scheme. The women of BZP area have engaged under this scheme in various self employment activities. Besides, they were given (below poverty line) free sanitary, facilities, water supply facility, construction of infra-structure for Self-Help Groups etc.

Besides these schemes, there is Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) etc make the rural women of this Zilla Parishad area conscious and strong. These schemes have immensely helped in in the empowerment of women. The formation of self-Help Group (SHG) in this context may be termed as the hallmark of women empowerment process.

Most of the people of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad area especially the women were illiterate a few years ago. Though, the Bongaigaon district administration documents show that there are about literate percentage, but in actual fact , it is seen that most of the people (both men and women) are half literate ie they can legible only in writing their names. They even do not know about the various schemes properly. This made them unconscious. Only the literate women (passed matriculation or more classes)

are more or less conscious and they are taking the facilities as mentioned. Muslim women wears sari, paticot, Blouse and take orni. Some of them use 'hijab'.

In the case of scheduled caste Bengali Hindu families, their social position is almost same with minority Muslim women. In Brahmin & Koch Rajbongshi family the social bindings are not as high as the two classes as mentioned. Women are more or less free in social activities in these families. They are educated and well conscious on many social and cultural affairs. They follow pure Assamese culture. Riha, Mekhela, Sari, Dakhna, Patti are their social dresses. They perform Bihu Dances, Bishuwa, and other social functions.

In this context, it is worth mentionable that, Muslim women faces "Talak" (Divorce) in the societies. Muslim shariyat (Islamic Law) are followed in the minority Muslim societies. In this system, a wife gets divorce if her husband sounds the word 'Talak' three times as per his own consignment. But this word Talak have to say in three different times in presence of witnesses in full responsibility and wisdom. Muslim clerics specially the "Mufti" a scholar of Holy Quran and Hadit gives "Fatwa" (Final verdict) in this regard. His judgment effects on legality of talak. If a women gets Talak and his previous Husband again wants to own her, then the Husband have to follow "Hilla" which is a system through which the women before come back to her previous husband have to temporarily marry another strong men for three months, Within this period, they will maintain normal conjugal life and after this thee months, if this person again gives her Talak as per Islamic rule, then she can marry her previous husband. By this way, the divorced husband and wife can get back their conjugal life. The marriage for three months with other person is known as "Hilla".

If a person gives 'talak' to his wife and again accept her without following hilla, then the society can socially abandon that couple. In this system, both Husband and wife can not speak with other persons or can not use any property of the society. They become lonely and they have no any path but to follow the system.

In our research work (this system of Hilla prevails almost all Muslim Society) when we met the villagers of Tapattary, Mererchar, Kalbari, Barjana, Khoragaon, Majer Alga, Bamuni Tila, we have came to know that Hilla is still prevailing in the Muslim societies but its continuity is almost nil. When we asked about its utility, one Mufti explain that 'Hilla' is a 'Nafred' (Condemn) like word and its main purpose is to

minimize 'Talak'. He again explained that when a divorce husband wants to get back his previous wife, then the wife have to marry other person as mentioned for three months and after then he can get his previous wife back. This will make the husband ashamed and a 'Nafrad' will grow in his mind against 'Talak'. More over, the new generation will also know about this Shame full narrowness. By this way people will remain far away from Talak and women will be safeguarded from this social evil. But our findings say that this 'Talak' system is a social evil for Muslim and by threatening to use this word three times, husbands make their wife weak and helpless. This worsened the life of Muslim women.

In the Muslim families and in the scheduled caste families it is noticed that most of the people are average wage laborer and their economic condition is miserable. As per Tapattary Development Block Report, there are 13,027 below poverty line families (BPL). So, the family conflicts in these Communities are very high. Some times women are beaten up also. In this context, one Panchayat Representative has beaten up his wife a few months ago which have become a discussable matter in the area. General house holds also beats and abuses women in some domestic violence matter. No organization or associations have come to rescue of these helpless women. In fact, the social and other organizations feel these acts as internal family matters.

Women of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad area are mostly engaged in house hold activities. But there are some government employees and most of these employments are done in the teaching line. In the Garo society, whose number is very low, there are matriarchal traditions. In this society, women marriages males and take their husbands at their (women) house.

However, in the Rabha and Bodo societies (Whose number is very low) women share equal status with men. In the Brahmin and Koch Rajbonshi societies, women get a respectable position but can not perform some rituals with men. In these families women do bath at the early morning and thereafter, perform their normal duties.

In the Muslim societies, there is a social system of polygamy. It means that a male person can marry women at his choice and wish. Normally three or two wives family is there in these societies. But in comparison to Muslim societies, there is no such social system in the Hindu society. These could happen because 'Birth control' programe is more or less failure in this Zilla Parishad area. Women have to give birth of five to ten children. Of late, the educated youths are adopting the system of birth control. Lack of

proper nutrition, health checkup etc have the Tapattary made the life of village women miserable. There is no any hospital facility in this Anchalik Panchayat area. There are only 4 No's of public Health centre (PHC) with one MBBS Doctor, one pharmacist, one fourth grade each. No, medical and health officer for villagers or no Hospital with beds is therein the Panchayat area. Many women get unbelievable miseries at the time of pregnancy and delivery. They have to follow traditional means of Delivery. No pregnancy lest facilities are there in the area. This made women's life worst. Same condition is seen in the other Development Block area of the District.

#### **4.6 : ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICS OF BONGAIGAON ZILLA PARISHAD AREA (BZPA) SINCE ITS INCEPTION :**

Zilla Parishads are given power to run and execute the rural development schemes through democratic decentralization of powers. Hence people's participation is immensely necessary for its success especially of women. Women are the important part of our social and political life. Their participation and involvement can bring fruitful results in the trends of village development. Taking in account of this thinking the Assam panchayat Act 1994 provided 1/3 (one third- seats in the Panchayat bodies reserved for women. At the initial stage of the introduction of Panchayat system in Assam, especially in the women participation in politics was very negligible and they did not come forward in the political spheres. There were some religious and social superstitions that women should not take part not only in the politics but also in the capturing of powers. The male people thought it as the dishonest matters. But this situation has hanged and women have become aware about their political participation now.

At present, women of the all section and all religions take active part in politics. Various political parties like Indian National congress (I), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), communist party of India (Marxist), CPI (M), All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) etc, have women wings and these wings are very active in political sphere. Some women leaders like Lina Singha, Swapana Bora, Hena Sarkar, Dhira Roy, Soneka Khatun, Jorina Khatun, Romisa Khatun, Charubala Sarkar, Lutfa Begum, Kalyani Banikya, Sandhya Rani Das, Jumi Rani Rabha, Etc. Have marked their presence in the Political Sphere in BZP area. These women leaders have a district level identity in the Bongaigaon district of Assam. The political participation of women may be discussed under following heads.

Voting Behaviour : The Voting behaviour of women in the BDP area is very positive and responsible. Women come forward to the voting centre in the early morning and it continues till to the end of voting process. Generally a separate line for women is arranged in every voting centre and they gather and cast their votes in maintaining queue in line. The District Election Office of Bongaigaon district reveals that the voting Percentage of women in the District is about 75% since the last ten years. Most of the women caste votes on the line of their guardians / husbands. The male population dominates over the female population in the voting system. About 90% women have no any separate voting belief and culture. This proves that women are not much conscious about their voting rights. Sometimes, when a women dose not likes the voting dominance of her husband or any other such authoritative guardian it brings conflict and tuzzle in the family. Sometimes this leads to the split in the family, maximum women caste their votes in the husband's line to have good family ties and some votes for fear of tussle.

#### **4.7 : WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC MEETINGS :**

Women in the Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad (BZP) area take parts in Public meetings. Though there were some Social and religious barriers in the area a few years ago, but with the Passing of time and advancement of societies, these barriers have withered away. Women take part in the Political and social meeting and offer their speeches. Generally in the public meetings women become audience and carry out the speeches of their leaders to the family. Women participate in the public gathering and meeting only after they secure permission from their guardians or husbands. Without the permission from their guardians or husbands, no women can go to the meetings. This is the general social rule for women in this society.

It is found that married women participate in the community developmental pogramme meetings and political party meetings and get membership. They take political opportunity by participating in such meetings. On the other hand, unmarried girls participate in the students body meetings, and involve in their respective programmes.

At present, women of all section and all ages (except teenagers and minors) take part in the meeting of No-Governmental Organization (NGO), Self-Help group (SGH), Mohila Sammittee etc. The participation in the Mohila Sammittee meeting is very popular in the Hindu Societies while it is not popular in the Muslim Societies in the BZP area. These Mohila Sammittees are working as means of eradication of social injustice, against women

them stages various awareness programme against discrimination against women and protest rallies. But this awareness programme and activities are not seen in the Muslim area. This is because of lack of education and consciousness among the Muslim women along with religious conservativeness.

#### **4.8 : PARTY MEMBERSHIP :**

Women of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad area are closely associated with Politicals. Some women are active party politicians while others are silent supporters. It is found from the official documents of various political parties that the Indian National Congress (i) have about 17250 women membership BJP have 1328 members. Besides INC and BJP other parties like AGP, BJP, AUDF, CPI(M) have also sizeable membership. AGP has 13205 memberships and AUDF has 926 women membership. Among these women membership Smt. Mofida Khatun, Sulekha Khatun etc, have successfully come to take over the Party Leadership in the area. At present Smt. Lina Singha has been occupying the post of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad.

The women Party members organize Political meetings. Seminars, awareness programmes etc, but these meetings are mostly confined with the women Problems. Women members carry out the party speeches and messages to the grass root level especially in the inside of family. But here also one can easily notice that women spread the party messages in the line of husbands and can not go any where without their permission. It means that religious and social bindings and customs are still very high in the society.

Various political parties organize membership drive in the villages. Women are also included in such programmes. Generally, it is seen that ruling party in the state always get advantageous position. In such matters majority vis-à-vis women easily take up the membership of ruling party. So that they get a favour in the development works and job opportunity. Political favoritism plays an important role in engaging any developmental works or getting in any government jobs. Block level as well as district level officers and employees follow Political directions. These employees and officer get transfer or favours only if they follow that type of directions. So, to have an opportunity, women irrespective of caste and Community takes membership of different Parties Specially in the ruling Party. Male People do not oppose in such a move, because maximum people wants political favours.

In this context, it is seen that, women like male people change political identity in large number when there is a political change in the state. Though Factionalism and split of party among women are not seen in high, but it can not be denied that women changes party with the changes of Government in the state. Moreover, lobby system is also seen among the women politicians.

#### **4.9 : PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION RALLIES :**

Women in Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad area often take part in the election rallies in election times. They Likemen also take part in other party functions. They shout slogans; make demands for any unwanted functions of their opponent parties. Every political party organize March past rally, cycle rally, Rickshaw rally etc. and many women irrespective of caste, community, etc take part in such programmes. It is observed that in joining such programmes women have to take permission from the guardians and husbands. Generally poor women participate in huge number in such programmes. They dream for political favourness by joining in such programmes. Sometimes sun heats or other natural barriers are also neglected for this purpose. Party leader's offer some fruit juice or slices, breads and eggs to feel them relaxed and engage them in their party activities. In this context it is found that, When the Bongaigaon District is newly created in 1989 by the then chief Minister of Assam Sri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, and in which the then Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Sri Ganesh Kumar, local M.L.A. Sri Chandan Bhushan Choudhury, a huge women participated in the meeting. In this meeting the chief Minister assured that this newly created district will be provided all kinds of help from the state administration and its main purpose will be to develop the rural communities specially the women. Keeping in mind, this District has been working as one of the main empowerment mechanism for women. This process of the block encouraged the local people and women to become politically conscious.

#### **4.10 : PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS PARTY PROGRAMMES LIKE DHARNA, PROTESTS ETC :**

Women not only participate in the election rallies and other Party works, but they also participate in various other activities like Dharna, Protest, agitation programmes etc. In the year 2002, the then sitting M.L.A. of a regional party had to face protest of women against his negligence of public works. Women come out in streets when there are misdoings by any public authority or person.

Besides these protest work, both men and women stages 'Dharna' against worse type of policy of state government. Various protest march is launches against secret killings of pervious Asom Gaon Parishad (AGP) government during the last part of 2000. One B.D.O. (Block Development Officer) and a junior officer of the block faced women protest in Tapattary area for their anti development function. This show that by and large, like men women, take active part in various party programmes and go to street for the safeguard of their interest.

#### **4.11 : POLITICAL REPRESENTATION :**

Since the establishment of Bongaigaon District, 02 women representative have contested in M.L.A. (Member of Legislative Assembly) seat and one in M.P. (Member of Parliament) seat from this area. But they failed to win. Although a sizeble women belonging to this area are actively involved in party politics and have marked their presence in the district level, but there is not a women leader either to contest Assembly elections or parliament election.

But in the Panchayat level, institutions like Zilla Parshad, Anchalik Panchayat and Gaon Panchayat, women are given one-third reservation facilities in each Body. Initially this reservation was provided only in the Gaon Panchayat level. There after, it has been offerred in the Anchalik Panchayat level and from the year 2004, this reservation have been axteneded to Zilla Parishad level. The extension of reservation from Gaon Panchayat, Anchalik and gradually to the Zilla Parishad means, government has taken up a planned programmes to make women politically conscious from grassroot level to the district level and this will encourage them to participate in the main stream politics. The law makers of our country has been convinced that until and unless, our women take part in the nation building programmes, our nation can not rise to a developed nation. Therefore, Panchayat Bodies are formed in such a way that women easily get encouragement and inspiration to participate in the grassroot level politics and then it will automatically lead them to take part in the state level and nation wide politics. Hence, it may be termed as the ground political platform for women or political training institution for women with the experience of handling Development works. Keeping these objectives in mind, all total 29 departmental works has been allocated to the Panchayats by Assam Panchayat Act, 1994. It is one of the best examples of women empowerment in the state. Women of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad are also getting the fruitfulness of this empowerment plan.

Bongaigaon District is formed in the year of 1989. At that time, only the Gaon Panchayat members and Gaon Panchayat President's seat were reserved for women, As already mentioned, there are 65 (sixty five) no's of gaon panchayat under Bongaigaon District and taking opportunity of women reservation, 23 women presidents and 217 women Gaon Panchayat members were elected in 2002. This time the state government hold Panchayat election in 2002 and grassroot level people vis-a-vis women again secure political representation whose term of office was ended in November, 2007. Thereafter, this process of holding Panchayat Elections has been continuing in the area.

In the Panchayat election of women get a huge representation in Panchayat Bodies specially in the Gaon Panchayat and Anchalik Panchayat seats. Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad is not exception to this situation. It is again mentionable here that the Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad is formed with 65 (Sixty Five) Gaon Panchayats. Therefore our study covers all these Gaon Panchayats. Out of these 65 (sixty five) Panchayats, women won 23 (twenty three) President Seats.

The Percentage of women representation in the Gaon Panchayat Presidents seat, is 35% in contrast to male representation.

In the Gaon Panchayat members seat, all total 217 female candidate successfully come out victorious in the election out of 650 seats. Their percentage was 34% in contrast to male representation.

The elected representatives of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad during the session 2009 are given below :

Sl. No.	Zilla Parishad Member's Name	Designation
1	Smti. Lina Singha	President, 4 No. Bongaigaon ZPC
2	Smti. Pranita Bala Sarkar	7 No. Dakhin Bijni ZPC Member,
3	Sri Pranab Kr.Choudhury	1 No. Dhaligaon ZPC Member,
4	Sri Surman Ali	2 No. Bidyapur ZPC Member,
5	Sri Gokul Kalita	3 No. Dolaigaon ZPC Member,
6	Smti. Shohida Begum	5 No. Patiladaha ZPC Member,
7	Smti. Anurupa Rajbongshi	6 No. Manikpur ZPC Member,
8	Smti. Jebinara Ahmed	8 No. Jopea-Namberpara ZPC Member,
9	Sri Dilip Kr. Ray	9 No. Srijangram ZPC Member,
10	Sri Shajahan Ali	10 No. Tapattary ZPC Member,
11	Sri Jyotsna Nath	11 No. North Salmara ZPC Member,
12	Sri Nowsad Ali	12 No. Jogighopa ZPC Member,

Sl. No.	Anchalik Panchayat Member's Name	Designation
	Abu Bakkar Siddique	AP President
	Junu Mondal	Vice-President
	Debayanti Basumutary	A.P Member
	Ismail Hussain	- do -
	Dulal Shill	- do -
	Sanjoy Kirtoniya	- do -
	Hasibul Ahmed	- do -
	Champak Kr. Das	- do -
	Halima Khatun	- do -
	Sajanti Bala Das	- do -
	Chakila Bhanu	- do -
	Anowar Hussain	- do -
	Anjuma Begum	- do -
	Indumoti Singha Saikia	AP President
	Ranjita Ray	Vice-President
	Shiv Charan Barman	A.P Member
	Tilok Nr. Dev	- do -
	Salam Ali Sk.	- do -
	Sakuntala Barman	- do -
	Janaki Barman Ray	- do -
	Tangkeswar Ray	- do -
	Puspa Barman	- do -
	Ajoy Barman	- do -
	Munin Barman	- do -
	Banalata Sutradhar	- do -
	Abu Bakkar Siddique	- do -
	Jaya Devi Ray	- do -
	Purnima Barman	- do -
	Srimala Ray	- do -
	Tahmina Khatun	A.P. President
	Dulumoni Barman	Vice-President
	Nalini Bala Ray	A.P Member
	Khiren Ray	- do -
	Umed Ali Mandal	- do -
	Dilip Das	- do -
	Anjum Anowara Begum	- do -
	Hiron Bala Mandal	- do -
	N.A.ima Sarkar	- do -
	Pampa Madak	- do -
	Lilima Chowdhury	- do -
	Bharati Nath	- do -
	Moiful Nessa	A.P. President
	Bibhamoni Saikia Adhikary	Vice-President
	Nurun Nehar	A.P Member

	Lokman Hussain Khan	A.P Member	
	Hamida Ahmed	- do -	
	Samej Uddin	- do -	
	Sanaton Arjya	- do -	
	Phirdishi Rahman	- do -	
	Niranjan Nath	- do -	
	Rajani Kt. Ray	- do -	
	Jyotshna Barman	- do -	
	Milishikha Ray	- do -	
	Ali Hussain	- do -	
	Smt. Nitu Das	A.P. President	
	Jamela Khatun	Vice-President	
	Manawara Khatun	A.P Member	
	Mofida Khatun	- do -	
	Nurul Amin	- do -	
	Charu Bala Sarkar	- do -	
	Mahammad Ali	- do -	
	Taibur Rahman	- do -	
	Mamtaz Begum	- do -	
	Fatema Begum	- do -	
	Abdur Rahim Jotdar	- do -	
<b>Gaon Panchayat Representatives :</b>			
	BALAPARA G.P.	Nirmal Baruah	G.P. President
	- do -	Nilima Nath	Vice-President
	- do -	Rabin Choudhury	G.P Member
	- do -	Sabita Das	- do -
	- do -	Rahendra Baruah	- do -
	- do -	Rita Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Moktar Khan	- do -
	- do -	Giri Bala Nath	- do -
	- do -	Lohit Baruah	- do -
	- do -	Mahendra Ray	- do -
	- do -	Anjali Nath	- do -
	CHALANTAPARA G.P.	Abdulk Hai Choudhary	G.P. President
	- do -	Chandana Das	Vice-President
	- do -	Anisha Kahtun	G.P Member
	- do -	Amina Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Afiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Ayesha Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Raju Das	- do -
	- do -	Chandra Kanta Barman	- do -
	- do -	Tanjur Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Alauddin	- do -
	- do -	Arif Hussain	- do -
	JOGIGHOPA G.P.	Komela Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Manjula Kolita	Vice-President
	- do -	Sontesh Ali	G.P Member

	JOGIGHOPA G.P.	Akbar Ali	G.P Member
	- do -	Gokul Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Najima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Nirmali Das	- do -
	- do -	Pabitra Sinha	- do -
	- do -	Rofika Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Mosida Begum	- do -
	- do -	NIL	- do -
	KABAITARY G.P.	Sajamal Hussain	G.P. President
	- do -	Sohima Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Bina begum	G.P Member
	- do -	Motleb Ali	- do -
	- do -	Somiron nessa	- do -
	- do -	Nur Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Hiralal Robi Das	- do -
	- do -	Mastafa Ali	- do -
	- do -	Swapna Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Shajahan Ali	- do -
	- do -	Tamena Khatun	- do -
	KHAGARPUR G.P.	Paran Ch Mandal	G.P. President
	- do -	Sonoka Sarkar	Vice-President
	- do -	Sabala Rabha	G.P Member
	- do -	Jiten Mandal	- do -
	- do -	Basana Mazumdar	- do -
	- do -	Ramani knt Nath	- do -
	- do -	Bireswar Koch	- do -
	- do -	Nobin Momin	- do -
	- do -	Kiran Mandal	- do -
	- do -	Chirala Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Monindra Das	- do -
	OUDUBI G.P.	Jayanti Das	G.P. President
	- do -	Manowar Hussain	Vice-President
	- do -	Abdul Kuddus	G.P Member
	- do -	Raham Ali	- do -
	- do -	Rofika Begum	- do -
	- do -	Nurjahan Begum	- do -
	- do -	Sarifor Nessa	- do -
	- do -	Sunoti Bala Das	- do -
	- do -	Romisa Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Malek	- do -
	SANKARGHOLA G.P.	Romen Pathak	G.P. President
	- do -	Ranjit Das	Vice-President
	- do -	Nomita Pathak	G.P Member
	- do -	Khudabax	- do -
	- do -	Phulmala Mondal	- do -
	- do -	Kasiron Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Jamuna Boiragi	- do -

	SANKARGHOLA G.P.	Sarojoni Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Moromi Sangma	- do -
	- do -	Modon Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Chitta Sarkar	- do -
	SOUTH BOITAMARI G.P.	Manik Ch. Nath	G.P. President
	- do -	Laila Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Nimai Chand Barman	G.P Member
	- do -	Mirijuna Begum	- do -
	- do -	Joygan Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Dalim Nr Deb	- do -
	- do -	Rotna Nath	- do -
	- do -	Badior Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Mamani Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Kailash Ray	- do -
	- do -	Keshori Ray Mahajan	- do -
	BOITAMARI G.P.	Nirmal Baruah	G.P. President
	- do -	Nilima Nath	Vice-President
	- do -	Sabita Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Rabin Choudhury	- do -
	- do -	Rahendra Baruah	- do -
	- do -	Gita Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Maktar Khan	- do -
	- do -	Giri Bala Nath	- do -
	- do -	Lahit Baruah	- do -
	- do -	Anjali Nath	- do -
	- do -	Mahendra Ray	- do -
	DHONTOLA G.P.	Tapan Singh Adhikari	G.P. President
	- do -	Anwar Hussain	Vice-President
	- do -	Husaina Bibi	G.P Member
	- do -	Namol Ch Barman	- do -
	- do -	Tunila Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Pratap Ch Burman	- do -
	- do -	Dimbu Adhikari	- do -
	- do -	Nomita Choudhary	- do -
	- do -	Rupali Choudhary	- do -
	- do -	Sobita Baruah	- do -
	- do -	Tayabbar Rehaman	- do -
	GHILAGURI G.P.	Renu Bala Goswami	G.P. President
	- do -	Jayanti Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Haider Hussain	G.P Member
	- do -	Sushila Ray	- do -
	- do -	Khagen Barman	- do -
	- do -	Rohini Das	- do -
	- do -	Tarulata Das	- do -
	- do -	Shoro Bala Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Subodh Das	- do -
	- do -	Modan Sarkar	- do -

	GHILAGURI G.P.	Dipak Barman	G.P Member
	PUB-MAJERALGA G.P.	Fatema Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Ashad Ali	Vice-President
	- do -	Jayeda Khatun	G.P Member
	- do -	Anser Ali	- do -
	- do -	Nur Uddin Ahmen	- do -
	- do -	Habizur Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Najir Hussain	- do -
	- do -	Nur Jahan Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Rohima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Howa Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Rahena Begum	- do -
	PASCHIM MAJERALGA G.P.	Begum Jesmina Ahmed	G.P. President
	- do -	Anowara Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Jayful Bibi	G.P Member
	- do -	Achiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Bellal hussain	- do -
	- do -	Abu Sama	- do -
	- do -	Monowara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Asiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Matleb	- do -
	- do -	Joynal Abedin	- do -
	- do -	Joynal Abedin	- do -
	ATUGAON G.P.	Bhanti Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Bindeswari Baruah	Vice-President
	- do -	Jayanti Barman	G.P Member
	- do -	Sobharam Barman	- do -
	- do -	Boijanti Barman	- do -
	- do -	Damayanti Barman	- do -
	- do -	Rameswar Barman	- do -
	- do -	Bindu Pathak	- do -
	- do -	Niyati Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Sriphani Bhusan Singha	- do -
	- do -	Larat Singha	- do -
	BAMUNITILA G.P.	Sukina Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Ramina Begum	Vice-President
	- do -	Hasina Begum	G.P Member
	- do -	Jaynal Sk	- do -
	- do -	Raben Choudhary	- do -
	- do -	Kumud Kr Deb	- do -
	- do -	Ananta Barman	- do -
	- do -	Baneswar Ray	- do -
	- do -	Rejia Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Sohor Banu Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Khireswari Sutradhar	- do -
	BIDYAPUR G.P.	Mashumita Dutta Baruah	G.P. President
	- do -	Sirajul Hoque	Vice-President

	BIDYAPUR G.P.	Dipak Kr. Barman	G.P Member
	- do -	Rofiqul Islam	- do -
	- do -	Dharmendra Baruah	- do -
	- do -	Poriton Nessa	- do -
	- do -	Parbati Bala Nath	- do -
	- do -	Champa Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Dipika Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Horen Nath	- do -
	- do -	Almina Begum	- do -
	BONGAIGAON G.P.	Purnima Sarkar	G.P. President
	- do -	Junu Sarkar	Vice-President
	- do -	Phulen Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Munil Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Runu Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Bhadai Burman	- do -
	- do -	Jaleswar Brahma	- do -
	- do -	Gajen Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Nirmala Sangma	- do -
	- do -	Abanti Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Khirod Ray	- do -
	CHIKIBIKI G.P.	Sofiqul Islam	G.P. President
	- do -	Tajiran Bibi	Vice-President
	- do -	Hasina Bibi	G.P Member
	- do -	Khiren Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Nirala Bala Adhikary	- do -
	- do -	Kalpana Barman	- do -
	- do -	Nirmala Ray	- do -
	- do -	Mohammad Ali	- do -
	- do -	Nur Mohammad Sk	- do -
	- do -	Habibar Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Chandan Ray	- do -
	TILOKGAON G.P.	Kalpana Barman	G.P. President
	- do -	Manabala Barman	Vice-President
	- do -	Kripali Hajarika	G.P Member
	- do -	Modan Barman	- do -
	- do -	Tilo Barman	- do -
	- do -	Modan Barman	- do -
	- do -	Reena Barman	- do -
	- do -	Ananta Barman	- do -
	- do -	Niranjan Debnath	- do -
	- do -	Khabiran Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Mohini Barman	- do -
	CHIPONSILA G.P.	Bishnu Ram Medhi	G.P. President
	- do -	Madhabi Gayary	Vice-President
	- do -	Ramendra Ch Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Namita Ray	- do -
	- do -	Maya Bati Sutradhar	- do -

	CHIPONSILA G.P.	Thireswari RAY	G.P Member
	- do -	Kalpna Ray	- do -
	- do -	Dinesh Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Kanteswar SARANIA	- do -
	- do -	Mintu Sarania	- do -
	- do -	Mohan Ray	- do -
	CHOKAPARA G.P.	Bidya Raam Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Ratna Bal Aray	Vice-President
	- do -	Alka Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Bhupendra Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Basudeb Medhi	- do -
	- do -	Bipul Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Ambalika Ray	- do -
	- do -	Raben Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Shantiipriya Ray	- do -
	- do -	Sujen Sangma	- do -
	- do -	Mina Kumari Ray	- do -
	DANGTAL G.P.	Binay Ch Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Jyotsna Barman	Vice-President
	- do -	Ilawati Singha	G.P Member
	- do -	Chandi Charan	- do -
	- do -	Jiten Burman	- do -
	- do -	Damayanti Singha	- do -
	- do -	Anwar Sheikh	- do -
	- do -	Reboti Ray	- do -
	- do -	Dilip Singhga	- do -
	- do -	Dipali Ray	- do -
	- do -	Pramila Sutradhar	- do -
	DHALIGAON G.P.	Dipika Barman	G.P. President
	- do -	Dipali Debnath	Vice-President
	- do -	Suprassana Chakroborty	G.P Member
	- do -	Tarun Ray	- do -
	- do -	Tarulata Singha	- do -
	- do -	Mamta Barman	- do -
	- do -	Nasir Uddin	- do -
	- do -	Madhab Burman	- do -
	- do -	Tarulata Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Sontosh Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Chandrabati Bala Sarkar	- do -
	DOLAIGAON G.P.	Purnima Barman	G.P. President
	- do -	Chand Lekha Choudhary	Vice-President
	- do -	Reekha Mech Narzary	G.P Member
	- do -	Bidyutjyoti Sarma	- do -
	- do -	Chinat Pathak	- do -
	- do -	Sanati Narzary	- do -
	- do -	Joynath Rajhgarh	- do -
	- do -	Jyoti Das	- do -

	DOLAIGAON G.P.	Motilal Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Jui Paul	- do -
	- do -	Sulnana Parbin	- do -
	KAKRAGAON G.P.	Bina Sutradhar	G.P. President
	- do -	Chitranjan Singha	Vice-President
	- do -	Ashiya Bibi	G.P Member
	- do -	Dayamani Ray	- do -
	- do -	Sabita Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Kharga Bahadur Chetri	- do -
	- do -	Hiren Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Amon Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Anima Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Shakirul Islam	- do -
	- do -	Ali Sheikh Mahish	- do -
	MULAGAON G.P.	Kuhila Sarkar	G.P. President
	- do -	Pranita Choudhary	Vice-President
	- do -	Trilokmohan Pathak	G.P Member
	- do -	Ranjit Pathak	- do -
	- do -	D=Bhanumati Chooudhary	- do -
	- do -	Binita Singha	- do -
	- do -	Binoy Kr Pathak	- do -
	- do -	Babita Ray	- do -
	- do -	Kamaleswari Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Gobinda Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Diganta Sarkar	- do -
	NORTH BOITAMARI G.P.	Mukul Ch Nath	G.P. President
	- do -	Mohita Barman	Vice-President
	- do -	Kalicharan Pathak	G.P Member
	- do -	Unen Ch Barman	- do -
	- do -	Kainati Nath	- do -
	- do -	Rukmani Choudhary	- do -
	- do -	Tarn Ch Nath	- do -
	- do -	Nogen Nath	- do -
	- do -	Bimala Nath	- do -
	- do -	Kamala Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Durgaram Barman	- do -
	POPRAGAON G.P.	Jasada Pathak	G.P. President
	- do -	Pankaj Das	Vice-President
	- do -	Chandan Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Chitra Barman	- do -
	- do -	Jaganath Das	- do -
	- do -	Phanila Barman	- do -
	- do -	Dhanada Barman	- do -
	- do -	Kalita Barman	- do -
	- do -	Nirmali Das	- do -
	- do -	Sabbar Ali	- do -
	- do -	Akhil Singha	- do -

	CHAPRAKATA G.P.	Janubala Rabha	G.P. President
	- do -	Devi Mandal	Vice-President
	- do -	Dobala Bala Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Jiban Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Kalpana Das	- do -
	- do -	Lolita Rajgarh	- do -
	- do -	Devi Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Sabin Ch Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Biren Basumatary	- do -
	- do -	Bina Bala Rabha	- do -
	- do -	Bikash Lama	- do -
	ALUKHUNDA G.P.	Momina Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Dipak Ch Das	Vice-President
	- do -	Kabir Ali	G.P Member
	- do -	Mofida Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Salimuddin Sk	- do -
	- do -	Salaman Sk	- do -
	- do -	Salaochona Bhowmick	- do -
	- do -	Kantibala Biswas	- do -
	- do -	Lakhi Bala Das	- do -
	- do -	Forida Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Mikumja Nandi	- do -
	BASBARI SALABILA G.P.	Billal Hussain	G.P. President
	- do -	Tapan Kr Namadas	Vice-President
	- do -	Sarowar Ahmed	G.P Member
	- do -	Habejuddin	- do -
	- do -	Ajgor Ali	- do -
	- do -	Osimuddin Miya	- do -
	- do -	Sontosh Majumder	- do -
	- do -	Sofer Ali	- do -
	- do -	Sekendar Ali	- do -
	- do -	Chandu Ram Barman	- do -
	- do -	Sattar Ali	- do -
	BAGHMARA CHOURAGURI G.P.	Reeta Biswas	G.P. President
	- do -	Bhagirath Sarkar	Vice-President
	- do -	Narendra Nath Biswas	G.P Member
	- do -	Dipali Bhowmick	- do -
	- do -	Kamini Bala Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Arun Ch Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Dulali Mandal	- do -
	- do -	Jaimati Ray	- do -
	- do -	Fulera Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Ganga Rani Rey	- do -
	- do -	Mamta Sarkar Bhowmik	- do -
	BHANDARA G.P.	Nurjahan Begum	G.P. President
	- do -	Mariom Begum	Vice-President

	BHANDARA G.P.	Ayesha Bibi	G.P Member
	- do -	Fatema Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Sahida Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Abdus Salim	- do -
	- do -	Keram Ali	- do -
	- do -	Abesh Ali	- do -
	- do -	Maynul Hoque Mondal	- do -
	- do -	Rati Kanta Ray	- do -
	- do -	Mahila Bala Ray	- do -
	DANGAIGAION G.P.	Smt. Bhanu Das	G.P. President
	- do -	Md. Rifiqul Hussain	Vice-President
	- do -	Smt. Usha Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Sri Sankor Ray	- do -
	- do -	Smt. Maya Das	- do -
	- do -	Sri Sujit Das	- do -
	- do -	Smt Astomi Das	- do -
	- do -	Smt Sakina Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Smt. Sajila Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Smt. Rohima Bibi	- do -
	- do -	Md. Abdus Salam	- do -
	GORAIMARI G.P.	Sahanaj Begum	G.P. President
	- do -	Golap Hussain	Vice-President
	- do -	Gobardhana Arjya	G.P Member
	- do -	Anita Namodas	- do -
	- do -	Hemen Ray	- do -
	- do -	Haimobati Barman	- do -
	- do -	Minsura Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Iman Ali Khan	- do -
	- do -	Rup Bhanu Khaun	- do -
	- do -	Saniyara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Abul Hashem	- do -
	HAPACHARA G.P.	Khaybar Ali	G.P. President
	- do -	Ramjana Begum	Vice-President
	- do -	Sailen Barman	G.P Member
	- do -	Shahima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Rustom Ali	- do -
	- do -	Ujala Begum	- do -
	- do -	Chinu Bala Arjya	- do -
	- do -	Ali Akbar	- do -
	- do -	Dhireswar Ray	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Ali	- do -
	- do -	Tilotana Barman	- do -
	JHAWBARI G.P.	Kusumbar Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Anil Ch Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Runu Kanta Rajbongshi	G.P Member
	- do -	Bhogoban Rajbonshi	- do -
	- do -	Niranjan Das	- do -

	JHAWBARI G.P.	Anita Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Rohima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Joya Boro	- do -
	- do -	Irabati Ray	- do -
	- do -	Aliya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Akhil Ch Pathak	- do -
	MANIKPUR G.P>	Nebadita Rajbongshi	G.P. President
	- do -	Dhananjay Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Ramprasad Adhikari	G.P Member
	- do -	Damayantuiii Pathak	- do -
	- do -	Ajirun Begum	- do -
	- do -	Anjana Das	- do -
	- do -	Morjana Begum	- do -
	- do -	Lohit Pathak	- do -
	- do -	Bikash Roy	- do -
	- do -	Dambarudhar Ray	- do -
	- do -	Monomoti Ray	- do -
	NOWAPARA G.P.	Md Dildar Gazi	G.P. President
	- do -	Deben Ch Das	Vice-President
	- do -	Md Mazed Gazi	G.P Member
	- do -	Samsun Nehar	- do -
	- do -	Sabita Das	- do -
	- do -	Jaharnara Bagum	- do -
	- do -	Khiroda Das	- do -
	- do -	Md. Nur Alom	- do -
	- do -	Md. Saber Ali	- do -
	- do -	Sujit Das	- do -
	- do -	Anima Das	- do -
	PATILADOHA G.P.	Sama Mathuk Das	G.P. President
	- do -	Anjana Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Nityananda Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Sabin Ray	- do -
	- do -	Biren Ray	- do -
	- do -	Bikram Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Mantosh Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Sobha Rani Karmakar	- do -
	- do -	Niroda Ray	- do -
	- do -	Dipika Ray	- do -
	- do -	Basanti Das	- do -
	PALENGBARI G.P.	Khojen Roy	G.P. President
	- do -	Pratibha Nath	Vice-President
	- do -	Kishor Roy	G.P Member
	- do -	Nabin Baishya	- do -
	- do -	Jiban Baishya	- do -
	- do -	Bharat Thakuria	- do -
	- do -	Dusmanta Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Ajanta Debnath	- do -

	PALENGBARI G.P.	Amina Baishya	G.P Member
	- do -	Labhya Ray	- do -
	- do -	Chandrika Baishya	- do -
	AMBARI BAREGARH G.P.	Momtaz Begum	G.P. President
	- do -	Khalilur Rahman	Vice-President
	- do -	Sahidul Islam Talukdar	G.P Member
	- do -	Mazeda Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Moinul Hoque	- do -
	- do -	Halima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Habibar Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Samila Ray	- do -
	- do -	Srimanta Kr. Ray	- do -
	- do -	Sanjali Bala Ray	- do -
	- do -	Minowara Begum	- do -
	DEOHATI G.P.	Dayal Nath	G.P. President
	- do -	B. Saikia Adhikari	Vice-President
	- do -	Snuritika Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Kamal Kishor Ray	- do -
	- do -	Golok Ray	- do -
	- do -	Nirmala Dutta	- do -
	- do -	Kamalata Brahma	- do -
	- do -	Nijra Ray	- do -
	- do -	Gautom Ray	- do -
	- do -	Hussain Sardar	- do -
	- do -	Rachna Ray	- do -
	GOLAPARA- BANGLAPARA G.P.	Kamala Kanta Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Abu Taleb	Vice-President
	- do -	Kohinur Begum	G.P Member
	- do -	Ambiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Hai Khan	- do -
	- do -	Rahila Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Anser Ali	- do -
	- do -	Shajeda Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Jamol Talukdar	- do -
	- do -	Moniruddin	- do -
	- do -	Samina Khatun	- do -
	KAKAIJANA G.P.	Bulumai Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Gobinda Ch Burman	Vice-President
	- do -	\Tapan Deb Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Dhireswar Choudhary	- do -
	- do -	Pratima Ray	- do -
	- do -	Dhojen Ray	- do -
	- do -	Pratibha Devi Barman	- do -
	- do -	Manika Ray	- do -
	- do -	Raynala Ray	- do -
	- do -	Dhijen Ray	- do -

	KAKAIJANA G.P.	Saberi Ray	G.P Member
	KIRTANPARA G.P.	Sunil Ch Barman	G.P. President
	- do -	Surjya Kanta Arjya	Vice-President
	- do -	Sahanubaj Begum	G.P Member
	- do -	Santara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Anima Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Hazera Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Hhurmuz Ali	- do -
	- do -	Abdus Salam Ali	- do -
	- do -	Chandra Kanta Arjya	- do -
	- do -	Subal Mondal	- do -
	KOKILA G.P.	Gulnaha Begum	G.P. President
	- do -	Arobindo Sarkar	Vice-President
	- do -	Engras Ali	G.P Member
	- do -	Monowar Hussain	- do -
	- do -	Anwar Hussain	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Korim	- do -
	- do -	Gorina Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Karimon Nesa	- do -
	- do -	Noboram Aktar	- do -
	- do -	Sofiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Asatan Nesa	- do -
	NORTH SALMARA G.P.	Kishori Mohan Medhi	G.P. President
	- do -	Probin Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Chamal Ray	G.P Member
	- do -	Chand Mamud Sk	- do -
	- do -	Jyoytsna Ray	- do -
	- do -	Drupadi Ray	- do -
	- do -	Alka Kachari	- do -
	- do -	Rekha Moni Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Ghanashyam Ray	- do -
	- do -	Ajay Ray	- do -
	NUMBERPARA CHAKLA G.P.	Rajeda Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Sufiya Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Banisuddin	G.P Member
	- do -	Altab Miah	- do -
	- do -	Solim Ali	- do -
	- do -	Jelkat Miya	- do -
	- do -	Feroza Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Somezuddin	- do -
	- do -	Sahanara Begum	- do -
	- do -	Mofida Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Shahi Kohinur	- do -
	SRIJANGRAM G.P.	Kalpna Singha	G.P. President
	- do -	Pradip Kr Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Kamaleswar Ray	G.P Member

	SRIJANGRAM G.P.	Jyoytsna Pathak	G.P Member
	- do -	Maher Ali	- do -
	- do -	Lolita Ray	- do -
	- do -	Madan Nath	- do -
	- do -	Sikendar Ali Bhuyan	- do -
	- do -	Dipali Das	- do -
	- do -	Minara Parbin	- do -
	- do -	Aliya Khatun	- do -
	BALARCHAR MATRAGHOLA G.P.	Hasina Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Fuljan Nessa	Vice-President
	- do -	Sanjita Sarkar	G.P Member
	- do -	Hamesh Ali	- do -
	- do -	Jalal Uddin	- do -
	- do -	Rabiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Atowar Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Rezzaque	- do -
	- do -	Mofida Begum	- do -
	- do -	Hasina Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Jayen Uddin	- do -
	CHAKRABHUM G.P.	Purnima Sutradhar	G.P. President
	- do -	Nandeswart Ray	Vice-President
	- do -	Kiran Kr Sutradhar	G.P Member
	- do -	Purnima Barman	- do -
	- do -	Piteswari Ray	- do -
	- do -	Rina Das	- do -
	- do -	Tulsi Arjya	- do -
	- do -	Dipali Mandol	- do -
	- do -	Samboru Ray	- do -
	- do -	Manik Ch Das	- do -
	- do -	Prafulla Kr Ray	- do -
	KACHARIPETY G.P.	Hajera Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Alkesh Ali	Vice-President
	- do -	Joynal Abedin	G.P Member
	- do -	Kasera Ali	- do -
	- do -	Asiruddin	- do -
	- do -	Moksed Ali	- do -
	- do -	Asma Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Jahanara Begum	- do -
	- do -	Rofika Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Rohima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Safala Khatun	- do -
	JOPEA G.P.	Ratan Ch Roy	G.P. President
	- do -	Salema Katun	Vice-President
	- do -	Ali Hussain	G.P Member
	- do -	Kamela Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Sukur Ali	- do -

	JOPEA G.P.	Sheikh Saalom	G.P Member
	- do -	Kohinoor Akhter	- do -
	- do -	Karuna Mandal	- do -
	- do -	Abdus Samad	- do -
	- do -	Sofiur Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Ambia Hussain	- do -
	BORIGAON G.P.	Raju Ram Ray	G.P. President
	- do -	Namita Mahanta	Vice-President
	- do -	Pramila Bala Arjya	G.P Member
	- do -	Sachin Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Rofikul Islam	- do -
	- do -	Rahima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Mohima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Niran Ch Ray	- do -
	- do -	Airina Begum	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Mozid	- do -
	- do -	Shibaji Ch Ray	- do -
	BARJANA G.P.	Abbu Bakkar Sardar	G.P. President
	- do -	Tayebur Rahman	Vice-President
	- do -	Muzzammal Hoque	G.P Member
	- do -	Dibar Hussain	- do -
	- do -	Rafiqul Islam	- do -
	- do -	Gulmajum	- do -
	- do -	Zamirur Nesa Bewa	- do -
	- do -	Manik Jan	- do -
	- do -	Aliya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Jesmima Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Mumtaz Begum	- do -
	- do -	Chanmiya Sarkar	- do -
	KALBARI G.P.	Dilip Nath	G.P. President
	- do -	Sarala Burman	Vice-President
	- do -	Nibha Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Parimal Halder	- do -
	- do -	Aminur Haque	- do -
	- do -	Kabita Ray	- do -
	- do -	Saindhya Rani Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Nitya Nanda Sarkar	- do -
	- do -	Nur Jahan	- do -
	- do -	Haradhan Das	- do -
	- do -	Joymati Nath	- do -
	LENGTISINGA G.P.	Amullya Biswas	G.P. President
	- do -	Romisa Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Nazrul Islam	G.P Member
	- do -	Akkel Ali	- do -
	- do -	Khitish Das	- do -
	- do -	Anita Ray	- do -
	- do -	Shyamoli Saha	- do -

	LENGTINGA G.P.	Santona Sarkar	G.P Member
	- do -	Jobeda Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Abdus Salam	- do -
	- do -	Solim Uddin	- do -
	MALEGARH G.P.	Aslima Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Anjana Das	Vice-President
	- do -	Gururam Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Kader Ali	- do -
	- do -	Sabiran Nesa	- do -
	- do -	Bandheswar Das	- do -
	- do -	Fulmala Das	- do -
	- do -	Folina Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Habibar Rahman	- do -
	- do -	Akbar Ali	- do -
	- do -	Rukiya Khatun	- do -
	MARARCHAR G.P.	Mofida Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Sofiur Rahman	Vice-President
	- do -	Mozibar Rahman	G.P Member
	- do -	Anowara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Rubiya Sultana	- do -
	- do -	Golapjan Nessa	- do -
	- do -	Hellal Uddin	- do -
	- do -	Jamiron Nessa	- do -
	- do -	Abul Hussain	- do -
	- do -	Kashem Ali	- do -
	- do -	Aslima Khatun	- do -
	NASATRA BAGHEKHAITY G.P.	Abdul Mannaf	G.P. President
	- do -	Monowara Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Abdul Karim	G.P Member
	- do -	Akbar Ali	- do -
	- do -	Roushanara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Jahanara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Johura Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Robiul Hoque	- do -
	- do -	Rukiya Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Aisuti Bala Das	- do -
	- do -	Haider Ali	- do -
	PACHANIA-KHORAGAON G.P.	Suniti Sutradhar	G.P. President
	- do -	Akbar Ali	Vice-President
	- do -	Moklesina Ahmed	G.P Member
	- do -	Deb Kr Roy	- do -
	- do -	Mayarani Das	- do -
	- do -	Dipali Barman	- do -
	- do -	Bijuli Sutradhar	- do -
	- do -	Subat Ali	- do -

	PACHANIA-KHORAGAON G.P.	Anita Begum	G.P Member
	- do -	Moninur Hoque	- do -
	- do -	Hormuj Ali	- do -
	PIRADHARA G.P.	Abdul Kader Bhuyan	G.P. President
	- do -	Aleya Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Rajab Ali	G.P Member
	- do -	Siddique Ali	- do -
	- do -	Ramjan Ali	- do -
	- do -	Fulmala Biswas	- do -
	- do -	Abdul Lotif	- do -
	- do -	Seminara Akhter Talukdar	- do -
	- do -	Anwara Begum	- do -
	- do -	Jasmina Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Sabur Ali	- do -
	RANGAPANI G.P.	Abdus Sattar	G.P. President
	- do -	Mofida Khatun	Vice-President
	- do -	Debojit Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Abdul Motin	- do -
	- do -	Raushanara Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Shaoukat Ali	- do -
	- do -	Basir Uddin Mondal	- do -
	- do -	Jalal Uddin	- do -
	- do -	Kohinur Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Sibatona Nessa	- do -
	- do -	Hamida Aktar	- do -
	- do -	Moziran Nessa	- do -
	SONTOSHPUR- DUMERGURI G.P.	Piyara Khatun	G.P. President
	- do -	Muhammad Ali	Vice-President
	- do -	Lalita Bala Das	G.P Member
	- do -	Jibon Ali	- do -
	- do -	Himani Banikya	- do -
	- do -	Shshim Uddin	- do -
	- do -	Mangal Ch Adhikari	- do -
	- do -	Marioum Khatun	- do -
	- do -	Rita Das	- do -
	- do -	Md. Utbatul Begum	- do -
	- do -	Najima Begum	- do -
	- do -	Sayed Ali	- do -

It is worth mentionable here that a total of 23 Anchalik Panchayat (A.P.) members have been directly elected by the A.P. area people through universal adult franchise system. Out of these 23 (twenty three) A.P. members, 4 (four) female candidates successfully came victorious. They are –

1. Smt. Hena Sarkar from Lengtisinga G.P.
2. Smt. Bina Das from Kolbari G.P.
3. Smt. Abida Khanam from Pachonia-Khoragaon G.P. and
4. Smt. Romisa Khatun from Rangapani G.P.

The percentage of female representation in the Zilla Panchayat bodies is 36.3% Mrs. Lina Singha is elected as the President of Bongaigaon Zilla Parishad form among the Z.P. members on women reservation quota.

In this context, it is worth mentionable here that beside these A.P. Presidents, local MLA and M.P.'s of local parliamentary constituency segment are the ex-officio members of Zilla Parishad. Therefore, Zilla Parishad is like a strong training centre for political education in grassroot level. All section of people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, language and community, get chances of political representation here directly or through one-third reservation system provided to women, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes etc. political participation of women has been definately enhanced by this system especially among the women section of people

In the last Panchayat election, a huge number of women representatives came out victorious in various portfolios. In this election, out of 65 Gaon Panchayat presidents post, 23 came out victorious. In this election Mrs, Suraton Nessa of Lengtisinga G.P. Halima Khatun of Barjana G.P., Kanchanbala Ray of Kalbari G.P. won the election. The percentage of women representative is 36%

However, the G.P. like Rangapani, Piradhara, Melegarh, Pachonia Khoragaon, Kalbari, Lengtisinga and Nasatra witnesses male representation in Anchalik Panchayat membership Portfolio.

In the Gaon Panchayat membership portfolio, all total 44 female contestant came out victorious out of 110 seats. The percentage of female membership is 40% Interestingly it has been observed that all the female representatives came out victorious in various portfolios like G.P. president, A.P. member and membership etc. only on women reservation category, It has also been observed that, no female candidate could win any seat in any respect by defeating male contestant in BDA area. Even the number of female

challenger against male contestant is vary poor. In my observation, it has also been observed that, no female candidate could win any seat in any respect by defeating male contestant in BDA area. Even the number of female challenger against male contestant is vary poor. In my observation, it has also been found that only candidate namely Mrs. Morzina begum of Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) challenged the male candidates in Piradhara G.P. but she could not succeed.

It is a matter of fact that before the enforcement of Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, the participation of women in the political affairs were too much low. This was due to lack of consciousness among our women section of people. Besides there were high bindings on women that they should not come out of their family. Their main task was to look after house hold works, feeding of children and to helping their husbands in the family related matters.

Moreover, due to patriarchal characteristics of our society, men did not want to gie share of political powers to women. Women were dominated in all sphere of livelihood. They were debarred of joining politics as politics was regarded as the dirty game for power. Any women who wished to join in politics or who wanted to contest election were neglected by all including her paternal mates. But the 33 % reservation for women in local self government I,e in the Panchayati Raj Institution and in the Municipal bodies has paved the way for attaining political power for women. What change we have noticed after the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, is that women has attained atleast a little amount of freedom and liberity alongwith share in decision making bodies. Although this is a small amount of political power for women, but we think this small amount of power will surely abolish the bondage of women in due course of time.

Now, it is time to come out a large number of women to the political field of the country in the light of such institution. During our study time, we interacted with a number of rural women as well as urban women asking them whether the 33 % reservation for women is beneficial to them ? All of them whom we interacted nodded their heads positively. To make us astonished, some of them asked us – why only 33 %, we need 50 % reservation as because we constitute about half of the total population of our country. They also expressed views that if government of India as well as government of Assam and the district administration truly want the real empowerment of women, then they should execute the reservation in all respects of society. There should be reservation in educational

institutions, government job, financial matters like offering of Banking Loan, providing skill training to women and to offer industrial training. If these facilities are provided to women , then real empowerment will happen. Otherwise, the present arrangement will become puppet in the hands of male partners of the society. They also wished to make the society develop by providing their service to the society. For this purpose they want opportunity.

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