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Educational status of women at the time of Ahom Dynasty.

Dr. Daisy Rani Chutia

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Abstract:

The Ahom Kingdom was laid their foundations when the first Ahom king chaolung Sukaphaa came from Mong Mao. The Mong Mao kingdom was located on the easternmost reach of the Indian subcontinent. Along with chaolung Sukaphaa, his three queens and two sons and a retinue of nobles, officials and soldiers were came to modern day Namrup on 2nd December 1228. Ahoms did not bring their women folk. They enlarged their holdings in the new territory by marriage and conquests. Ahom society was mainly agriculture based and at that time agriculture was the main source of income for every household. Literary education was not encouraged in general except for Brahmins and scribes. But the sons of the Ahom priests and astrologers like the Deodhais, Mohans and Bailungs were taught lessons on religion and history at homes. No formal education was seen for women at the period of Ahom era. Education was very much limited among women. Only non-formal education was prevailed for women folk. For them education was a philosophy of practical life. It was founded on the faith "for the good of them and for the good of the household in which they were supposed to spend the rest of their lives as housewives.

Key words:

Ahom, Dynasty, Education, women etc.

Introduction :

The Ahom Dynasty ruled the Ahom kingdom in present-day Assam, India for nearly 598 years. The dynasty was established by Sukaphaa or Tsue-Ka-pha, a shan prince of Mong mao who came to Assam after crossing the patkai mountains. The Ahom Kingdom was a late medieval kingdom established in 1228 in the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam. The Ahom originated in southern China, in what is now Yunnan province. They migrating into mainland South east Asia and northern Myanmar about the 1st century AD. In the early 13th century, the Ahom crossed the Patkai mountain range from Myanmar and entered the upper Assam plain. There, they conquered the local chiefs. Many Ahom soldiers married local women. In the 15th century, the Ahom were the dominant power in upper Assam. In the 17th century the ahom defeated the Koch, kachari and other local rulers to gain control of lower Assam up to Goalpara. In the year 1786, the Ahom capital was shifted from Rangpur to Guwahati.

Objective of the Study:

- To know about the history of Ahom kingdom.
- To know about the Religion and Administration of the period.
- To know about the educational status of women in the Ahom Era.

Methodology:

This paper is written only on the basis of 2nd hand data and is descriptive in nature. Data has been collected from different historical books, paper cut, etc.

History of Ahom Kingdom:

The Ahom Kingdom were laid their foundations when the first Ahom king chaolung Sukaphaa came from Mong Mao. The Mong Mao kingdom was located on the easternmost reach of the Indian subcontinent. Along with chaolung Sukaphaa, his three queens and two sons and a retinue of nobles, officials and soldiers were came to modern day Namrup on 2nd December 1228. They settled in the area on the south bank of the Burhidihing river, the Dikhau reiver in the south and Patkai

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mountains in the east. Making his capital at Charaideo, he befriended the local tribes consisting of the Barahi and the Marans peoples. The technology Sukaphaa and his people had bought with them was shared with the local people of the region. This technology was the wet rice cultivation with an increased agricultural output of the region. Gradually, the Ahom way of life and polity absorbed other people of the region such as the Barahi, increasing the Ahom numbers significantly. For his position Assamese history, the honorific Chaolung is associated with him. Where *chao* means great, while *lung* means great. Sukaphaa would pass away in 1268 having laid the ground work of a strong sovereign kingdom.

The Ahom Kingdom would see its first major engagement against an imperial power in the form of the Mughal Empire in 1615. The Ahom capital of Garhgaon was occupied by the Mughals in 1662, but they were dislodged in subsequent engagements. During the battle of Saraighat in 1671 the Ahoms under Lachit Borphukan managed to repel a major Mughal invasion and in the process extended their boundaries westward up to the Manas River. Mughal presence in the region would be permanently ended by 1682.

After that the last set of Ahom rulers, the Tungkhungia kings, towards the end of the 17th century, would come to power. Their rule was marked by advancements in arts and construction but also by internal conflicts which shook the foundations of the kingdom. The later part of their rule was marked by the Moamoria rebellion whose rebels were put down by British soldiers. But it failed to end the conflict. In the end following the Treaty Yandabo in 1826, the Ahom Kingdom fell under the control of the British Empire.

The Ahom Religion:

The Ahom religion is the ethnic religion of the Ahom people. The people who came into Assam included two clans of priests, joined later by a third, who brought with them their own religion, rituals, practices and scriptures. The religion is based on rituals oriented ancestor worship that required animal sacrifice though there was at least one 'Buddhism' influenced ritual in which sacrifice was forbidden. There is no concept of hell. It was the state religion of the Ahom kingdom in the initial period. The kingdom expanded suddenly in the 16th century and the Ahom peoples become a small minority in their own kingdom- though they continued to wield control. Subsequently, they slowly converted and by the early 19th century, Ahom religion declined to be replaced by Hinduism. The three priestly clans (*mo'sam*, *mo'hung*, *Mo'plong*) of the Ahom people are the current custodians of the Ahom religion.

Administration of Ahom Kingdom:

Ahom have some outstanding administration system. The system of government under Ahom rule was Monarchical but in many of the times it was adjustable. Captain Welsh described it as both 'Monarchical and 'Aristocratic' in reality. The king was the head of administration and he was considered as sovereign and independent. The king was assisted by 3 ministers (Gohains)- The Bor Gohain, Buragohain and Barpatra Gohain. He was also assisted by BarBarua and Boarphukan.

Educational status of Ahom women in the Ahom Era :

In Assam during the medieval period specially Sanskrit culture & learning continued by the Ahom kings. In the period of Vaishnavit Movement, the new religious institutions like Satra and Namghar become the most important agency for education in Assam. But no formal education is prevailing for girls. Thus all these formal and informal types of system together built the massive superstructure of medieval education in Assam.

Ahoms did not bring their women folk. They enlarged their holdings in the new territory by marriage and conquests. Ahom society was mainly agriculture based and at that time agriculture was the main source of income for every household. Literary education was not encouraged in general except for Brahmins and scribes. But the sons of the Ahom priests and astrologers like the Deadhas, Mohans and Bailungs were taught lessons on religion and history at homes. No formal education was

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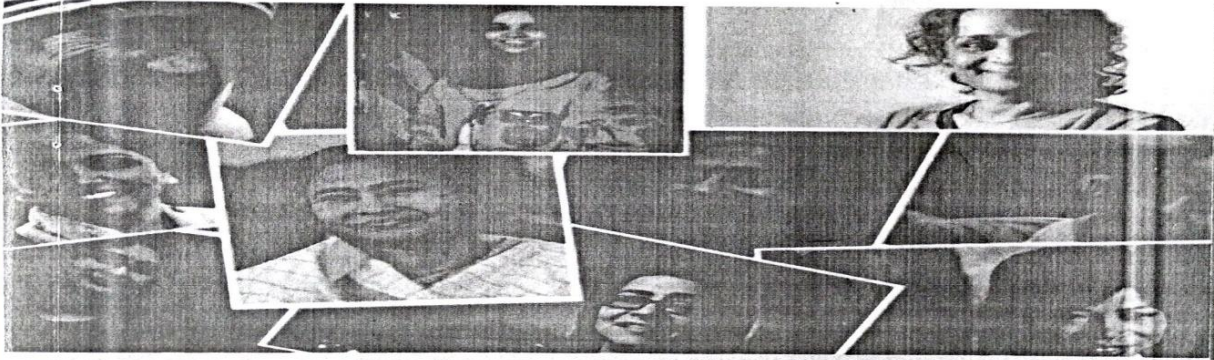
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Women's Empowerment Issues and Challenges



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Weaving As A Means Of Economic Eempowerment Of Mising Women- A Study On The Jonai Subdivision Under Dhemaji District Of Assam.

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Abstract of the paper:

Handloom sector has rich cultural heritage, so it created a dominant role in Indian textile Industry. Considering its contribution handloom sector has the space near- by agricultural sector. It has major role in developing the livelihood of rural people and eradicating poverty because most of the weaver's society are situated in rural area. It provides employment opportunity to thousands of weavers and allied workers. It helps to reducing the discrimination of men and women. Lot of women workers are working in handloom industry. It makes a platform to reduce the gap between rural and urban people. Handloom Industries are producing eco friendly energy saving products the outcome is enhancing the sustainable development. The most popular economic activity of Mising women of Assam is the cult of Weaving. The Mising women are expert in weaving and they weave variety of beautiful cloths for men and women. In fact weaving of colourful traditional dress is the sole identity of the Mising community. The main aim of this paper is to identify the problems of the Mising weavers and to identify the socio- economic status of the handloom weavers of the District ..Both primary and secondary data has been collected for this purpose.

Key words: Weaver, Economic empowerment, Weaving, Mising.)

Introduction:

India has long tradition in weaving especially in hand weaving. We are moving through different diversity; handloom is one of that. Also handloom is one of the cultural heritage of India. This shows the dexterity and artistic ability of weavers to produce attractive products. Handloom always promotes innovations in its products through experimentation and exhibitions. Through its uniqueness and peculiar design, the handloom sector is well known industry in all over the World. Handloom sector has rich cultural heritage, so it created a dominant role in Indian textile Industry. Considering its contribution handloom sector has the space near- by agricultural sector. It has major role in developing the livelihood of rural people and eradicating poverty because most of the weaver's society are situated in rural area. It provides employment opportunity to thousands of weavers and allied workers. It helps to reducing the discrimination of men and women. Lot of women workers are working in handloom industry. It makes a platform to reduce the gap between rural and urban people. Handloom Industries are producing eco friendly energy saving products the outcome is enhancing the sustainable development.

Economic Activity of Mising Women :

The most popular economic activity of Mising women is the cult of Weaving. The Mising women are expert in weaving and they weave variety of beautiful cloths for men and



women. In fact weaving of colourful traditional dress is the sole identity of the Mising community. Mising women usually use two types of looms i.e. mini loom and common ordinary loom. The mini loom is used for weaving Gadu or Mirijim. This mini loom can be used even during leisure hour because of its simple and portable features. The Mising women weave cloths like gadugalar, tapum gasar, mibu galuk, ribi gasar, ega gasar, dumer gasar etc. Mising women usually grow small amount of local variety of cotton for their loom. This cotton is especially for weaving and making gadu (a type of blanket). The unique and striking feature of Mising women is that their weaving products are with proper pattern and colour of perfect taste which is incomparable. Today Mising women weave Muga Silk mekhela-sadar, sarees and other Muga items with their beautiful dream designs. Today they prove their expertise in making variety of mekhela-sadar, sarees gamusa, cushion covers, comforters by using Erisilk, Toss silk, Noonni silk and by many other new threads. Many Mising women are also directly engaged with producing Muga silk, Eri silk and Noonni silk for selling purpose. Today most of the Mising women of the villages are engaged with weaving as one of the economic source of earning.

Empowerment of women:

"There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless, condition of women are improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly only with one wing." ----- Vivekananda.

"Women empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision making process and access to power are fundamental for the advancement of equality, development and peace"

-----Beijing Declaration.

Economic Empowerment:

Economic empowerment involves both the ability to succeed and advance financially and the power to make and act on economic decisions.

Review of literature:

Dr. Selvaraj A and Tamilarasi N. (May 2016) studied about "factors influencing handloom weavers to enter into the field" The main objectives of this study are-

- i. To measure the factors influencing the handloom weavers to enter into the field.
- ii. To offer suitable suggestions for further development.

In this study a lot of factor is found to enter into this field that is heredity, easy to start, less working capital, practical knowledge, availability of raw material, regular income, easy market, self employment, own interest. Out of this regular income is the most important factor to enter into the handloom field.

K.Rari John and S. Kamini (Dec. 2016) had conducted a study in "socio- economic status of women entrepreneurs in handloom sector". In this study they found the traditional weaver community is not active in the field in Trivandrum district. All the caste and communities are involved in weaving activities. Weaving makes income generating activity through caste diversity. Working conditions are pathetic. The sheds accommodate 8-10 loom; looms are too closed to each other. Most of the sheds are open with unfinished floors, low roofs, thatches, tin- sheet, cramped with pit looms and without proper lighting

Lakshmi Devi C.S. (April-2014) studied about "an analysis of socio- economic status of handloom weavers in India". In this study she finds out the handloom sector or the non farm sector has been slowly deteriorating over the years and there has been a steady decline in the