

In Memory of



Late Chitralata Phukon

26-06-1937 to 13-08-2013

*In cherished memory of Late Chitralata Phukon,
Retd. Vice-Principal, HOD of the department of Assamese,
Social activist, President of All Assam Lekhika Santha,
recipient of Basanti Bordoloi Award (2002) of Axom Xahitya Sabha,
Prabina Saikia Award (2003) of Axom Lekhika Santha and
Birangana Mulagabharu Award (2013) of Tai Yuba Parishad.
This book is dedicated to 'Baidew'.*

- Editorial Board

Acknowledgements

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— *Editor, Avagunthan*

EDITORIAL

A woman belongs to her father when she is born, to her husband when she is married, and to her son after she is widowed. (Laws of Manu, 300 A.D.)

Women have been treated more or less as second class citizens all over the world since time immemorial. Even after liberal movement in the European countries in the middle of the 19th century, universal female suffrage was not accepted even though a large number of women actively participated in it over the years.

The liberal politician Carl Welcker, an elected member of Frankfurt Parliament, said, "Nature has created man and woman to carry out different functions ... Man, the stronger women, the weaker, dependent and timid, requires the protection of man. Her sphere is the home, the care of the children, the nurturing of the family"

Such sexual division of labour and patriarchal attitude of the society turned women to a most vulnerable, marginalised section of the society. Women are looked upon as a commodity of sexual gratification. In spite of these obstacles

some women have proved themselves worthy and capable in every field of human endeavour and worked as equal with men in every sphere of life. But there has been no change in view towards women due to which sex-selective abortion, early marriage, sexual harrasment, rape, murder, dowry death, domestic violence, feminisation of poverty, AIDS, trafficking have been increased despite the strict enforcement of various laws and it creates an atmosphere of insecurity to lead a dignified, respectable life in the society.

The society should abort any sort of discrimination against girl children, they should be brought up as potential resource by imparting education, technical knowledge and skill. Every mother should teach her son to respect a girl as a fellow being.

Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi said men and women are equal but not identical. "Intellectually, mentally and spritually woman is equivalent to men and she can participate in every activity." He wanted women to outgrow the traditional responsibilities and participate in the affairs of nations.

United Nations has marked 8th of March as International Women's Day in 1975. Since then, it has been observed as women's day to create awareness regarding women's right. Women's right is human right which is inborn right to live a life with dignity as human beings. The theme of this year (8th March, 2014) is "Equality of women is the progress for all," in the current scenario, ignoring almost half of the population of the world, we cann't expect

sustainable development or human welfare of the world.

India has ratified various international conventions of women i.e., First World Conference on Women (Mexico Plan Action - 1975), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), The Third World Conference on Women (Nairobi Forward - Looking Strategies - 1985) and the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995) and as a follow up action, Govt. of India brought out the 'National Policy' for the empowerment of women in 2001.

The University Grants Commission has launched a scheme for Capacity Building for Women Managers in Higher Education to sensitize women to develop awareness and motivate them to be a part of administration in higher education. Training, workshops are being held in universities and colleges since 2003 to increase the proportion of women administrators and to develop a gender friendly environment.

World conferences on women emphasise the principle of shared power and responsibility between men and women in immediate as well as community institutions. Women should empower themselves and become equipped with devised strategies that specify their needs and interests. They have to create an atmosphere for continuous transformation in the society and then there shall be no gender discrimination.

The book contains multifarious aspects of gender related issues like invisible work of women, economic empowerment, participation of women in politics,

environmental awareness of women and its impact on women, emergence of entrepreneurship of women, gender budgeting, social status of women, property rights of women in our religious books, growth of feminism, violence against women, nutrition of women and reflection of women characters in historical perspective and literature.

Mira Bala Borah

May, 2014

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