

## National Seminar

on

### ***'Equity with Special Emphasis on North Eastern Region'***

Organized By:

Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University In

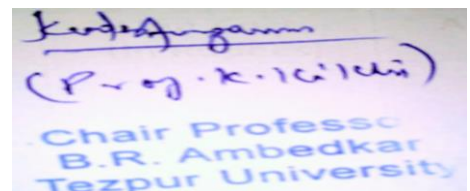
collaboration with

ICSSR, New Delhi & ICSSR-NERC

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

With its acknowledgment as a key for development, the term 'equity' turned to become a buzzword among academicians and planners towards sustainability. Yet the predicament of its fuller comprehension to be reduced into a definition remains. Probably this is due to dynamism entailed in the concept of 'equity' making it transcendental and also its entanglement with absolute ideals of 'equality' has added further obfuscation. However, there's no denial to the fact that aim of any society for true and holistic development can't materialize if it is not equitable too. Establishing 'equity' is a mindful (albeit arbitrary) act of doing as well as undoing to attain higher yet common prosperity in a given context. The context could be one or many with their demarcation still conjoint at a common horizon of human welfare.

In this way the concept of equity involves judicious distribution of available resources ensuring positive access and avoiding over and under consumption in the process. Therefore, the most prominent underlying aspect here is 'justice' a concept which itself is ever evolving since time immemorial though it has remained an essential ideal for a state

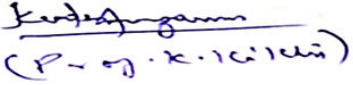


marching towards peace and prosperity. Important questions that emerges here spontaneously are Justice – of what, for whom, and how. Further, it could be noted that these questions rest on a more fundamental query of 'why' at all this is needed? The hypothesis which has emerged is concentration of available resources (natural as well as created) will accentuate existing imbalance and lop-sided (undesirable) development of a state.

All the developing states fall in rudimentary and nascent stage of equitable environment due to transition phase(s) they are undergoing. India with its queer socially stratified structure on primordial lines and attuned economic as well as other development areas has become a classic example of faulty (re)distribution. Here It may also be noted that normatively assumption of primary onus on sovereign authority of state to ensure equity holds enough merit.

To cite and infer a few scholarly deliberations, 'equity' may be associated with 'fair distribution' (Rawls, 1971), capability enhancement (Sen, 1985; 1997; 2001; 2002), compensatory for untoward primordial situations (Dworkin, 1981), equal opportunity policy (Roemer, 1998), and also environment (biotic and abiotic factors pertaining to geography). Apart from environment equity which is largely related to geography, there's preponderance of social equity with broad dimensions on the lines of gender, caste, tribe, minorities, and disability. And some of the conspicuous issues that have cropped up relates to education, health, polity as well as other developmental aspects. Some of the indicative dimensions of equity in education includes equity of access, equity of results, and equity of outcome however there are influential factors as income, identity, technology, critical literacy, hidden curriculum, institutional habitus, soon and forth. Health equity is identified as basic (Sen, 2002) for its inter-relation with other aspects of human life. Health disparity is one conspicuous feature with differential availability, utilization, and affordability of health services.

Though the issue of equity is a matter of prime concern for India as a whole, comprehension of different federal states and region shall provide a relatively neat scenario at empirical level. North Eastern Region of India is peculiar in almost all terms as culture, geography, and historicity. The region has remained aloof of the fruits of development at the Centre (in Delhi) and had been integrated (instead of assimilation) to act merely as a security buffer. Only very recently after the year 2001 the government of India made some modest attempt to justify its recognition and initiated special plan of developing North Eastern Region by setting up a Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. Apart from general issues of equity though in nuanced form from other parts of India, there are issues


  
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as of Bio-Diversity and those pertaining to ascribed sub-national identity for the people in this region.

In this context, an attempt to have confluence of ideas on equity in India in general and North Eastern Region particularly is being made by Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University. The initiative is in the form of a national seminar for duration of two days (21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018) at Tezpur University Campus. There will be selected few presentations of eminent persons across the country, and for the benefit of the larger academia these papers will be published in the form of edited volume. The broad themes are:

- a) Concept of 'Equity' – its dynamic linkage to various development approach
- b) Issues coming under the umbrella of Equity – Philosophical and Empirical Aspects
- c) Role of State to ensure Equity
- d) Need for Equity in North Eastern Region (demographic & other developmental profile)
- e) Suggestive Frameworks

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## Two Days National Seminar

(21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018)

### Theme: *Equity with Special Emphasis on North Eastern Region*

Organized by:

Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University (Assam)

In Collaboration with ICSSR, New Delhi & ICSSR-NERC, Shillong

Report

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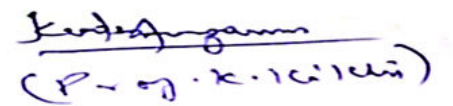
Contribution to the Existing body of Knowledge

*Kanta Anandam*  
(P. N. K. 10/10/18)  
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With the concept of 'equity' in the context of North Eastern Region, a two days national seminar was organized by Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018. Sponsorship for conducting this seminar came through two organizations namely, ICSSR, New Delhi, and ICSSR-NERC, Shillong. This seminar was an attempt to develop a confluence of ideas on 'Equity' in India in general and its comprehension in north eastern region particularly. In order to justify the said aim a deliberate mechanism of generating discourse through selected few (invited) papers was followed. These (papers) were of eminent persons working in this or similar area, and at the same time were willing to come here on the scheduled dates for the benefit of larger academia. To add clarity and lucidity, two days of seminar were divided into six technical sessions excluding keynote and valedictory sessions. In total there were twenty presentations, each followed by a detailed discussion in the form of providing answers towards queries raised by the audience. The seminar in terms of national representation, could be aptly regarded as the one with respectable diversity whereby representation from institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University, National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration, Jamia Millia Islamia, Centre for Study of Developing Societies, Indian Institute of Technology- Guwahati, Indian Institute of Advance Studies, Central University of Punjab, Guwahati University, Nagaland University, Manipur University, Rajiv Gandhi University, and North Eastern Hill University was there apart from having experts from Tezpur University itself.

### ***Inaugural Session***

Adhering to previously announced program schedule, seminar began on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 at 9.30 am. The session started with a welcome note by Prof. K. Kikhi, Chair Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, who briefly introduced the names and institutes of the paper presenters. He also gave a brief introduction of the Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University highlighting its mandate to gradually act as a core centre for furthering ideas and philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar, and emancipation of disadvantaged sections for the entire North Eastern Region of the country.

  
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### **Inauguration session with introduction by Prof. K. Kikhi**

This was followed by invitation and felicitation of the dignitaries which included Prof. P. K Das, Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tezpur University (Chairperson of the session); Prof. Narendra Kumar, Jawaharlal Nehru University (Keynote Speaker), and Prof. Dilip Kumar Saikia, Pro-VC, Tezpur University as a special invitee.

Introducing the theme of the seminar “Equity with Special Emphasis on North Eastern Region”, Dr. D. R. Gautam, Research Officer, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, began with a hypothetical question whether we are living in a situation or a state which can be considered as a best proposition. He adds on, if it is the best proposition, there is no point of going for equity. However, viewing from the lens of justice, he emphasized that there are inequalities existing around. Thus, the need to achieve equality and the means to achieve it arises. He also mentioned that equality has remained as an elusive ideal since time immemorial although it was an ideal to be achieved at any point of time. In this context one sees an attempt towards equality through equity which involves elements of justice i.e. various acts of doing and undoing. The result of which is to have a justified system where all get the liberty in holding privileges, decide their status, etc.

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Coming to the Indian social context, he stressed that India always had and continues to provide a classic example of faulty re-distribution. The reason, he claimed, India has a socially determined economic situation where the stratification is ascribed on the basis of primordial lines. He added that in the Indian context, there are issues pertaining to caste, tribe, gender, minority and disability.

He mentioned that developmental aspects have been prioritized in the light of equity with special emphasis on Northeast Region, in this seminar. The reason, he stated there is a shift towards a priority which has been given to northeast regions, prior to that northeast is always considered a buffer state, lying outside the mainstream India. He also added emphasis has been given to northeast region in order to comply with the mandate of Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Tezpur University.



### **Introductory remarks by Prof. D.K. Saikia, the Pro Vice Chancellor, TU**

This was followed by opening remarks by Prof. Dilip Kumar Saikia who pointed out that India being a diversified nation in terms of social, economy and status, equity becomes a very challenging area. Therefore, it is essential to have a deep understanding of issues and continuous persuasion at all level.

### ***Keynote Address- Debating Equity and Equality: Some Theoretical Conceptions***

*Kanta Anjan*  
(P. of K. Saikia)  
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In his keynote speech, Prof. Narendra Kumar outlined the difference between equity and equality by placing latter as the precursor of the former. There was the aspect of need (of equality and hence equity) was highlighted which crudely mentioned 'lack of it' as the primary cause. Referring this concept as universal and evolutionary, he cited example of French Revolution which ushered the concept of Equality as one of its few fundamental goals. To simplify the concepts and their difference one hypothetical example was placed whereby a scenario was imagined with viewers (having differing height) for any sport. There is a single standing equally available for all that could ensure equality in one sense however this proposition when implemented was not gainful (in terms of viewing) for all as the standing was (equally) provided to all irrespective of their (viewers') requirement, i.e. those who doesn't need (for viewing) were also provided with standing while those who require more than one found her(him)self at disadvantageous position (in viewing the game). Thus a fairer redistribution of available (limited) resource(s) was required for equitable distribution to take place when the aim was providing view to all. This was his comprehension about equity however Prof. Narender Kumar attempted towards equality through definition by three political scientists namely H. Laski, Barker, and Rousseau. And the focus was on natural and political/moral equality or inequality. However, important here is to examine source for inequality so that equality could be ensured. Here argument of private property by Marx was given and the speaker made it contemporary by adding views of Thomas Piketty on inequality in the world. He mentioned that inequality in one form has consequence of inequality in other forms, and cited example of primordial divisions as found in Indian context.

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### **Keynote address by Prof. Narendra Kumar**

Taking the argument further he cited shift in the approach of the government towards withdrawal of welfare policies leading to enhancement of economic inequality. Thereafter, he established the importance of equity and justice in order to attain sustainable development. In the context of sustainable development, reference of Brundtland commission (originator of the idea of sustainable development at global level) was made along with its interpretation about poverty.

Coming back to India, he mentioned Dr. Ambedkar in reference to equity. And cited two examples, i.e. Right to Property (Art. 31), and Right of Minorities by placing the contemporary viewpoint of the government. Lastly, he tried to summarize the difference between equity and equality by giving five key differences, i.e. fairness/same, process/product, impartiality/uniformity, difference/similarity, need/abilities. Making a critical assessment of the global scenario, Prof. Narender Kumar summarized that people may criticize equity as had happened in England in 14<sup>th</sup> century but this entails a challenge which is about changing the mindset.

### **Session I**

**Theme: Concept of equity – theoretical perspectives and inclusions in Indian social milieu**

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## Chairperson: A. C. Sinha

The session began with the presentation of Dr. Dhruba Pratim Sharma of Gauhati University where he presented his paper 'Equity- A conceptual note'. His paper presented a generic understanding of the concept of equity and differentiated the notion of equity from equality. He touched upon the basic theories on equity starting from Aristotle and Plato to Amartya Sen's theory of justice. Thus, his paper was a summary of theories on equity mostly based on secondary literature rather than any original empirical work.



### Paper presentation by Dr. Dhruba Pratim Sharma

The second presenter was Joseph K. Lalfakzuala from Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati. His paper was titled 'Equity through Social Justice: A study of Local Governance in Mizoram'. In his paper he elaborated the findings of his study on the local governance institutions in Mizoram. He explained how funds to the local governance was misused and did not reach the public or hampered infrastructure development like roads, bridges. He linked corruption of local governance institutes to the idea of social injustice and how it hampers remote areas in inequitable growth and development.

*Kerdes Anzamm*  
(P. of J. K. Lalfakzuala)  
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The third paper was presented by Barasa Deka from Gauhati University. She presented her PhD thesis 'Locating Women within Ethnic Movements: A Case of Assam'. In her work, she looked at women cadre that joined the Assam movement and later moved on to participate in the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). She discussed the role of women in these movements and how women were marginalized within those revolutionary spaces. She tried to theorise as to how and why women did not take centre stage and were pushed to the margins even when the movement itself was revolutionary in nature.

The session ended with a question answer round of discussion where each participants attempted to resolve the doubts and adding clarification for comments on their paper.



**Paper presentation by Dr. Joseph K. Lalfakzuala**

## **Session II**

**Theme: Ethnicity- A Long Waited Struggle for Assimilation**

**Chairperson: Prof. Y. Josephine**

In the second session of the two days national seminar on *Equity with Special Emphasis on North Eastern Region* there were four speakers who were presented their paper on the common theme titled *Ethnicity- A Long Waited Struggle for Assimilation*. This session was

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chaired by Y. Josephine, retired professor from National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA).

The first paper was titled *Sikkim search for Scheduled Tribal Status for the Communities*. The presenter of the paper was Prof. A.C. Sinha who started with a story that took back to the days when he was summoned as a chairman of a commission to undertake ethnographic project in Sikkim as directed by the Government of India. He began with a brief history of the state formation of Sikkim. The state of Sikkim became a part of demography of Indian state in the year 1975. Before being recognized as an Indian state, Sikkim was a sovereign kingdom with no categories demarcating communities as Scheduled Tribes (ST).

So, with the inclusion of democratic rule, there was a rush among various communities to be recognized as Scheduled Tribes which included the Brahmins. A total of two dozen communities applied for ST status claiming to have their own distinct culture and language. There was another commission chaired by Prof. Roy Barman reported that Bhutias should be recognized as STs. Sinha states that there was disparity at various levels as few communities which were recognized as Other Backward Classes (OBC) at state level but were recognized as General category at national level. This paper basically dealt with the stance of Sikkim's demand for scheduled tribal status and the problems associated with such demands at national level.



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## Presentation by Prof. A.C. Sinha

Prof. Susmita Sengupta, in her paper titled *Equity and Ethnic Politics in North east India* talked about core and periphery model in reference to North East India. The central theme of the paper was equity and equality which referred to equal treatments in reference to caste, culture, creed, etc. but it also encompassed equality in terms of ethnicity in a multiethnic society as well. She narrated instances from the state of Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya where there is wide disparity between tribals and non-tribals (mostly the migrants). She highlighted the issues such as the difference in allocation of social economic and political resources between the locals and the migrants, electoral politics, etc. are the causes that are widening the gap between tribals (locals) and non-tribals (migrants) in tribal dominated areas.



## Paper presentation by Prof. Susmita Sengupta

Susmita Sengupta's paper was followed by Dr. N. Kipgen whose paper was titled as *Ethnicity, Food Security & Deprivation: The Marginalized Hill People & Distributive (In) Justice in Manipur*. This paper is built on the basis of his PhD field notes back in 2008. The speaker Kipgen highlighted few important issues such as– malfunctioning of public distribution system, negligence of the government of India in terms of infrastructure, connectivity, transportation, etc. all these in some way also paving the path to sub-national movement (relative

*Kendrajana*  
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deprivation). He asserted that people should receive what they are entitled and this equates to equity in real sense.



### **Paper presentation by Dr. N. Kipgen**

The last speaker of this session was Roluah Puia highlighted how land becomes an important cursor for social identity which has resulted in various ethnic movements in North East India. In his paper titled *Contesting Land Reforms: Tribals and the Land Question in Manipur* he tried to explore the dynamic nature of land rights in the state of Maipur and how they are produced in land conflicts and contestation. He stated that the role of the state is crucial as the state becomes the sole guarantor of rights and laws. Thus, the various rights and laws and acts enacted and implemented by the state eventually give power to the state.

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(Prof. K. K. K. K.)  
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### **Paper presentation by Dr. Roluahpuia**

The presenters in this session touched four states of North East India namely Sikkim, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

### **Session III**

**Theme: Religion: An Agent of Othering**

**Chairperson: Prof. Priyoranjan Singh**

The third session titled 'Religion' started after the tea break at around 4:10 pm with Dr. D. R. Gautam inviting the guests to take their seats. The chairperson of the session, Priyoranjan Singh, introduced the topic for discussion, i.e. religion and said that this topic is something that arouses primordial feelings in many of us. He mentioned the context of north-east India where the major religions of India arrived quite late to the region like say for example Christianity. With a brief introduction on the topic, he invited the speakers to deliver their lectures.

*Priyoranjan Singh*  
(P. Priyoranjan Singh)  
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### **Paper presentation by Prof. Amarjeet Singh**

The first speaker was Amarjeet Singh and he spoke on the Pangals, who are the Manipuri Muslims. He raised some important questions as to how Muslims are viewed in Manipur, how are they projected etc. He said that there is a negative connotation about Muslims in Manipur and they are often labelled as outsiders. The Pangals are officially the third largest group in the state but there is very less available literature on them. Historically they were considered as inseparable part of the Manipuri society and they came to the state from places like Cachet, Silchar etc. before Hinduism came to Manipur. The situation changed for the Pangals after Hinduism became the state religion in Manipur. The Pangals presently are marginalised: the development indicators are amongst the lowest, political participation and representation is also very low. The speaker concluded by saying that currently there are a lot of movements going on in Manipur like ST movement etc. In that case, what about the Pangals?

The chairperson gave his own comments after the session and mentioned two important points, firstly the typecasting of minorities in the country and secondly, segregation of minorities that is seen to be happening. He then invited the next speaker. The next speaker was Rabin Deka who spoke on Religion and Social exclusion with his case study of the Barpeta Satra. The speaker used slides to present his findings where he analysed the institution of satra through the lens of caste, class and gender. He first briefly mentioned about the Satra, the history of the institution, its association with Bhakti movement, the role of the

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bhakti saint Sankardeva, the prayer hall (namghar) etc. He also talked about how satras became feudal estates and pillars of caste system in the post-Sankardeva era.



### **Paper presentation by Prof. Rabin Deka**

He mentioned some other facts about the satras, its relationship with land, tea and so on. Talking about caste discrimination, he talked about few incidents that point in this direction like lower castes not being allowed inside the main prayer hall of the satra and so on. He then focused the gender dimension and said how women have traditionally been excluded from the proceedings of the satra. However, he speculated that since women were integral part of the Bhakti movement it is possible that women's denial of entry inside the main prayer hall was possibly a later development. He concluded by saying that there have been public debates on this issue over the span of many years and this has resulted in some cosmetic change but overall the discrimination and marginalisation of women still persists.

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(Prof. R. Deka)  
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### **Paper presentation by Dr. Padmakshi Kakoti**

The chairperson gave his brief comments after the talk and it was followed by the third speaker. The next presentation was done by Dr. Padmakshi Kakoti. She began by saying that it was supposed to be a joint paper but due to official commitments, the other person could not join her. Her talk was based on a project done by ICSSR on the scheduled castes of Tripura and she used slides to explain her findings. She began by explaining what is meant by manual scavenging and the people associated with such work. Her findings were interesting in the sense that although discrimination was present among the SC groups but overall, the SC communities in Tripura were quite aware of their rights, they had their caste certificates etc. and overall their condition was improving and much better than others in rest of India. She concluded by quoting from Ambedkar and tried to relate her topic to the overall theme of the seminar. This was followed by a Q&A session and the session concluded.

*Padmakshi Kakoti*  
(P. of K. Kakoti)  
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**Group photo after the end of the sessions for day one**

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**Day Two: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018**

**Session IV**


**Theme: Gendered Perspectives: Need for Change**

**Chairperson: Prof. Sushmita Sengupta**

The second day began with a technical session on Gender with a chairperson's remarks by Prof. Sushmita Sengupta who then opened the floor for presenters. The first presentation was made by Prof. Nani Bath of Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh, and the title of his paper was '*Equity women's political representation in Arunachal Pradesh*'. He started by shedding light on the political status of the state of Arunachal Pradesh by stating that unlike any other state, Arunachal Pradesh was directly controlled by the President of India. And the first assembly elections were held in 1978 where no representation of women could be noticed except one Zilla Parishad member. Further, he stated that from 1979 to 2014 – 3.3%(average) women representative were in assembly. It shows low percentage of women in political system. All women representatives are either better half or relative of male political leaders. Apart from this, it could be noticed that women are not represented in international organisations. He highlighted probable factors responsible for low representations as

- Superiority of male child in the society. For example, male child is considered as wooden bridge while female child is considered as bamboo bridge. This shows rigid social structure of the society.
- Socialisation – Politics is male domain
- Fairness in societal values is not there

Suggesting solutions in this kind of scenario, Prof. Bath has suggested measures. Firstly, there's a need for altering the entire process of socialization. Secondly, more opportunities for political participation should be created, one way could be through dedicated quota for women. Finally, it should be ensured that not merely quantitative enhancement but qualitative improvement in terms of participation of women especially in political level.

  
(P. S. Sengupta)  
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### **Presentation by Prof. Nani Bath**

The second presentation was done by Dr. Madhurima Goswami of Tezpur University whose paper was titled as *Empowerment of Women: Need for Affirmative Approach*. She outlined that there are deep troubles within the system at operational level especially when looked through the lens of gender. There's conspicuous gender inequality at both structural and more deeply at functional level. She pointed out that representation of women is far less than satisfactory level at all the developmental aspects in the country. It's generally found that environment is non-conducive for a woman to reach at higher level. The speaker highlighted several dimensions through which gendered aspect that is prevalent in north east region particularly and India in general sense could be comprehended and attempted for possible solution. Firstly the cognitive dimension whereby she mentioned aspect of cultural practices which are prevalent in the form of customary laws, and are practically detrimental from the viewpoint of progress for women.

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### **Presentation by Dr. Madhurima Goswami**

Citing an example, she mentioned practice of unwed mothers which is prevalent in state of Arunachal Pradesh and causes personal suffering (to women) albeit customarily sanctioned. Therefore, we'd notice social sanction of practices breeding inequality. Secondly, she presented psychological aspect where there is a control over the belief of modernity probably ushering change however empirically it's found that there's contradictions lying within. At the outset there's modernity in material terms but simultaneously rigid social practices/customs are allowed. Thirdly, there's an economic dimension where at the surface level of north east it appears participation of women as workforce while lacking any control over the finance. Lastly, Dr. Madhurima highlighted the physical dimension and cited that body of woman is seen as a site of exploitation, and north eastern states are no exception to it as there are increasing number of trafficking of women and female children. However, the saddest part in this entire scenario is women being instrumental in exacerbating this situation. Therefore, proper mechanism should be developed to educate them (women) about themselves and about different facets of patriarchal mindset.

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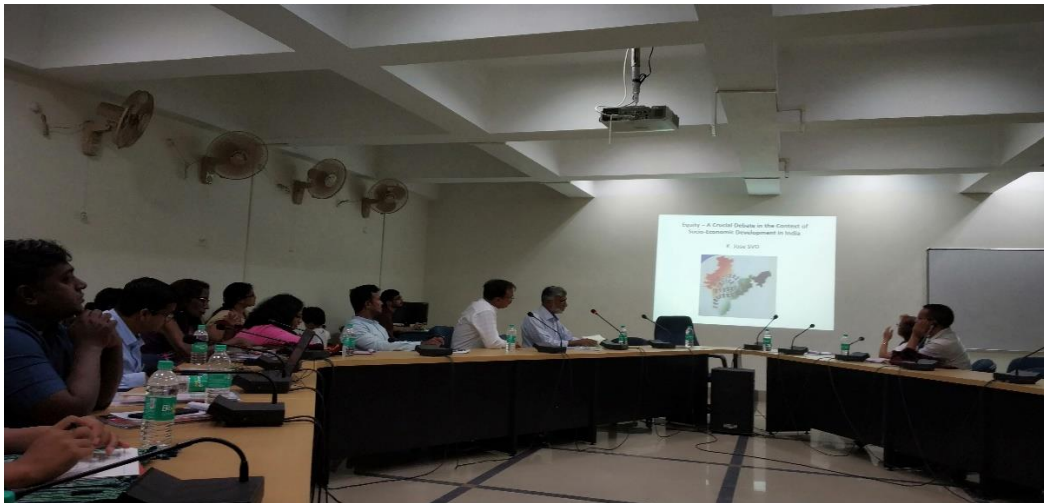
### **Discussion by Prof. Susmita Sengupta**

Prof. Susmita Sen Gupta, from North Eastern Hill University, Shillong gave the third presentation which was on 'Equity and Ethnic Politics in North- East India'. She marked her beginning making a conceptual analysis for the idea of 'equity' and shifts in it. This was done utilizing scholars like John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Charles Tilly to give a theoretical understanding. And was elaborated through (Indian) constitutional provisions for Right to Equality which hold the inherent principle of 'equity' (relative equality within. In order to contextualize the concept in north eastern region, she brought internal colonial model of Michael Hechter who has highlighted 'dominance' in multi ethnic societies (like that of India) which not only fosters 'regionalism' (by shifting some or many to periphery by the core/dominant group) but also leads to lop sided and vulnerable development. This proposition was tested and verified through ethnic policies in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya over the ownership of resources in these states. It was found that differing stands by state and union government has led to enhancement in ethnic polarization in these states particularly. She's highlighted that even tribal domination could be inimical to minority community there, and hence for holistic development.

The final presentation for the session was done by Dr. K. Jose from Sanskriti, Guwahati who made a presentation for the topic 'Equity – A Crucial Debate in the Context of Socio Economic

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Development in India'. He made a logical attempt to interlink aspects of Peace, Progress, and Prosperity wherein equity becomes essential. In the context of socio economic development in India, he argued for enhancement of Pluri (and not Uni) cultural identities in which are here since time immemorial. He mentioned economists as Mahbub ul Haq to highlight the difference between economic growth and (real) development, and therefore former may not be (mis) understood as an indicator of the latter. There are issues like poverty, hunger and corruption to challenge development while violence and fanaticism are emerging as a threat to peace and prosperity.



### Presentation by Dr. K. Jose

Constant overlook of these issues has led to a situation where poverty, ill health, unemployment, underdevelopment, communal violence and disharmony have become rampant in India. Dr. Jose mentioned that North Eastern Region is not an exception to the situation prevalent in India as a whole though the cause may have context specific variance. There's a shift in demographic pattern due to immigration which has also led to a scenario of dependency syndrome for indigenous population. There are struggles for land and resources in different states of this region apart from communal environment. Thus, Dr. Jose suggested there's an immediate requirement for 'inclusive' development of all the sectors of economy which includes equitable society as well.

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## Session V

### Theme: Educational Development and Equity

#### Chairperson: Prof. Amarjeet Singh

The session was chaired by Prof. Amarjeet Singh. Prof. Yazali Josephine was the first speaker who presented a paper titled “Equity driven financial reforms for school education developments in NE states of India”. Ms. Joseline tried to look at where NE India stands under different development models. She talked about the development models of education India adopted: a) economic development, b) human resource development, c) millenium development goals, d) sustainable development, e) digital development/digitalization. She strongly emphasized on government intervention through financing and different windows of funding to NE India. Joseline further talked about recent reforms in education and changing role of local bodies. She also argued that quality of education is a cause for major concern and that there is a need to bring in need-based reforms rather than formulaic ones.



#### Presentation by Prof. Y. Josephine

The second speaker of the session was Dr. Malish C.M. He presented a paper titled “Classroom as a site of exclusion in massified higher education in India”. He began his paper with an observation that there is a classic change in the composition and classification of

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(Prof. Y. Josephine)  
Chair Professor  
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higher education development. Malish finally argued that positive changes in the higher education institutions can be brought out by capacity of institutions to adapt to changing nature of student diversity.



### **Presentation by Dr. C.M. Malish**

The third paper was presented by Dr. S. HariPriya. In her paper “Just add NE and stir: Brewing knowledge in university”, HariPriya looked at incursion of market in university and what implications it has on the production of knowledge in universities. She also looked at university as a space of production of higher culture and examined how NE India features in contemporary academia. She argued that there is a need to look at these new developments critically and maintained that NE as an academic hinterland needs to be seen critically.

*Kanta Anandan*  
(P. of K. I. C. I. U.)  
Chair Professor  
B.R. Ambedkar  
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### **Presentation by Dr. Soibam Haripriya**

#### **Session VI**

#### **Theme: Issues pertaining to Development**

#### **Chairperson: Dr. K. Jose**

Prof. K. Jose chaired the session. Ch. Priyaranjan Singh was the first speaker who presented his paper titled as “Institutional impediments to equity: Developmental divide in the hills and villages of Manipur “. Singh in his paper emphasised on what is happening in the hills of Manipur in comparison to other hill parts of North-east. Singh argued that unless we have a common agreement on values, developmental policies will not serve purpose. He gave examples of population distribution in Manipur in terms of thinly populated villages and high rate of population growth. Through graphical representation Singh showed sectoral employment shares in terms of hills and valleys. He also talked about area and types of cultivation in hill districts, modern inputs in agriculture and Industrial base like infrastructure (road density, banking and health etc.). Priyaranjan Singh also highlighted occupational distribution in terms of heads of households. He also showed cultivational types in the three villages called Tharon ,Lamluba and Khongsang . Priyaranjan Singh also talked about food and income security while giving examples of hill districts in Manipur. Graphically he showed different figures related to hill valley dichotomy.

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### **Presentation by Prof. Ch. Priyoranjan Singh**

The second speaker of the session was Runumi Das. She presented her paper titled “Social marketing: A tool to seek Equity with reference to North east”. In her paper, Das argued that Insurgency problems and communal conflicts in the north eastern region led to underdevelopment. According to her we need to adopt the application of commercial marketing techniques to social problems. When we try to change behaviour of large section of people or bring change over large period of time, we should run commercial marketing techniques. She also talked about effective social marketing communication.



### **Presentation by Dr. Runumi Das**


*Kundajungam*  
(P. of K. I. C. I. U.)  
Chair Professor  
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The third speaker of the session was Dr. Vinod Arya (Faculty Member, Central University of Punjab) who presented his paper titled “Equity of access to public health care services in NE India: A human rights perspective”. In the beginning of his paper, he first highlighted the diversities that existed within the north eastern region. He also tried to define equity and equality. According to him equity is fluid – multiple in nature. He focused on operationalizing social equity in terms of public health or how to achieve equity in terms of health. In his presentation, Arya also showed zone wise number of primary health centres / community health centres in his area of study. He showed the number of PHCs with the allocated number of doctors to understand the picture of average population served in proportion to Government allopathic doctors. He also emphasized on how equity versus equality works in case of public health.

### **Valedictory Session**

Valedictory session was announced by Prof. K. Kikhi wherein he invited three most experienced resource persons of the seminar, namely Prof. A. C. Sinha, Prof. Y. Josephine, and Prof. Narender Kumar, to give their reflections/feedback for the seminar conducted. There was a unanimous response as the exercise of conducting (seminar) was fruitful in myriad ways like shedding light on the concept of equity, comprehension of various facets of equity, and contextualization of north eastern region through empirical research and indigenous understanding.

Prof. Narender Kumar highlighted the importance of equity (as different from equality) and shared his indebtedness for getting enlightened about his surmised understanding about issues of north eastern region. Prof. A. C. Sinha who’s a veteran of north eastern studies mentioned the need for context specific comprehension for developing policies for north eastern states. It was also emphasized by him that indigenous population who are the stakeholders, should become involved in designing the inclusive model for their states. Taking point of inclusion further, Prof. Y. Josephine mentioned lapse of information/awareness of the policies developed at the centre. Probably, a way forward (in this scenario) is in collaboration with different central bodies like NIEPA to enrich the outcome-based research for this region.

  
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Final concluding remarks were given by the organizers, Prof. K. Kikhi, and Dr. D. R. Gautam, who pointed out that this (seminar) was an attempt to know and have confluence of ideas surrounding 'equity' in north eastern region. And probably this attempt may have achieved little immediate success in unravelling the context of North Eastern region with the lens of Equity having different facets. There was comprehension about some 'doing' and several 'undoing' phenomena to ensure equity. This includes normative aspect of different (social and economic) sectors of development, and therefore critical consciousness and mindful pattern should be adopted for sustainable growth.

They (organizers) have thanked all the resource persons, collaborators (ICSSR, & ICSSR-NERC), Tezpur University, and faculty members/scholars of different departments for their immense support.



**Concluding remarks by Prof. K. Kikhi & Dr. D.R. Gautam**

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*K. Kikhi*  
(Prof. K. Kikhi)  
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