

## Chapter I

### **Ecology and Ethnicity in Select North East Indian Women Writers Writing in English**

The Indian English literature is the most important literary area in the Pre- Independence and Post-Independence Era. The literature of Indian English is gaining prominence in the present era. As in the historical contexts, we come across many incidents that provoked the writers to showcase the realities of the era; it seemed to be an important ground to discuss the problems of the then period. Writers like Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Amrita Pritam, Anita Desai and many others tried to make their mark in English literature. Earlier to these writers, the poets were getting more importance, but in recent years, the interest in poetry had declined. As a result of it, the novelists are getting the ground to express their feelings. The novelists of the contemporary period are more expressive than the preceding generation. They look upon the issues with a deeper insight and discuss it in fuller scale. In the modern era, female writers have the opportunity to discuss their problems. In the Post-Romantic era, the writer like Jane Austen in English literature made her mark by asserting over the plight of women in that era. Latter to it, the Victorian and modern writers like George Eliot, the Bronte sisters, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf showed the world of the females and gave them “a room of one’s own”. As in the words of K.R.S.Iyengar:

“Women are natural story-tellers even when they don’t write or publish. And in India, we have seen how the marvellous Torulata (Toru Dutt) wrote both a French and an English novel before she died at the age of 21 in 1877. Other women writers too have since made their mark in Indian fiction in English”. (435)

So, the world of the female writers is entirely based on the plight of the women in the typical male-dominated society.

The Indian English women writers were giving much stress towards the realities of life. The facts and fictions are two things that make a difference between the “told-things” and “showed-things”. The gap between showing and telling is very different. The male writers used to posit the female world as to be a world of sublime thoughts, clear image and purity. They frame the female in a basic sub-standard manner by showing them as calm, quiet and meek figure. In doing this they actually miss the important factor of how they are and what they feel. The males are never able to portray the condition of the females of the society. The world of the females and problems associated with them cannot be justified by any male writers. Therefore, the male cannot avail the thoughts and psychology of the female in the world of fiction writing. The female writers had a wider vision on the issues of the females in the society. They project the feminine mind with great clarity. The writers have a common idea to illustrate the females with all the aides that they want to render to the females. The works of the female writers make us think about the typical life of the subverted females of the society. Most of the writings focussed on the female plight and the contemporary thought is about the male subjugation of the females. The world of the females had those problems which remained as it is from an earlier period. Since a long time the females suffer from the imposition of the varied rules and regulations. These rules and regulations make her feel subjugated, subverted, alienated and suppressed. The writers showed these feelings of being oppressed, suppressed, alienated and subjugated in their fictions. They opined that the world of the females were away from “a room”, in which they can create their own world and thereby make “a space” of their own.

Indian female writers are mostly projected as the “voices” for the female spectators of society. Their prejudiced notions about the female plight are always surrounded by preconceived ideas of society. As shown in many Indian female writers the society always pushes the females to abound within the premises of the household matters only. They are not given any privilege or support. They are always betrayed by their own ideas about their own strengths. Their strengths became their flaws. Female writings of Indian origin construe the satires about the male world and the problems aroused because of the males. In a very different manner, the female writers usually make the audience understand that their problem is not only because of the family but because of the society also. Particularly, their own plight is for the negligence by the patriarchal system. Female world always remain unexplored. They are always constrained within the sphere of the house. The female writers always try to raise their voice for those who are already the victims. It is quite discernible for the audience to see the suffering of the females in the stereotypical male-dominated society. As J.S.Mill states in his book *The Subjection of Women*:

“The principle that regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes- the legal subordination of one sex to the other- is wrong itself, and is now one of the chief obstacles to human improvement; and it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality that doesn’t allow any power or privilege on one side or disability on the other”. (2)

This statement clarifies the view that how the females are not given any value as compared to the males of the society. This problem is not only the problem of India but also of the whole world. In the contemporary world, this idea is not fully justified as now the females are getting some sort of equality in many fields of interest. That is why in recent times, we find more of female audiences franchising their luck in all the fields of life.

The Indian writers are always busy with the life and problems of the mainland. They mostly deal with the females of the urban cities and their identity. But many of the women writers of the past had tried to delineate the life and plight of the women living in North East India. A very few writers went to that extent to justifiably show the world “the land of peripheral individuals”. The people from the urban cities were only emphasizing on the aspect to see themselves in the mainframe. They were not even conscious of the problems of the people of the North East. This deceptive conception made them think about the people of North East as to be ignorant towards the surging globalisation in the entire world. The North East people are sometimes regarded to be less knowledgeable and less modern. For this reason, they are sometimes neglected and ignored by the people of the mainland. Furthermore, they also make people aware of the problems they usually face in their life. With an affirmative view, the North East writers projected the disputes and hurdle that the land has. As the male writers of the North East, the female writers also try to uncover the truths about their life as well. The female writers of the North East talk about socio-cultural background of the region. The fight is for their revelation of identity and seeking of truth in the sphere of mainstream India. North East writers want to attain the required space for revealing themselves as important citizens of India. It is seen with an open eye that how the North East writers are able to reckon the sufferings and pangs of the people. The North East female writers attribute themselves along with the inherent problems of the North East. The female writers know that having no voice creates more problem than having a voice. The controversies regarding the writings are of different realm. This problem of “voice” makes the female writers think that how miserable their life is without any speculation. They usually mark their thought by their own insight about life and society, and in doing so they always highlight

the social norms and customs that hinder them to reflect their experiences and outlook. Thus, female writers are reluctant to abhor the male-dominated society.

The North East female writers like Mitra Phukan, Temsula Ao, Uddipana Goswami, Teresa Rehman, Mamang Dai, Rita Chowdhury, Easterine Kire Iralu and so on made their place in the field of literature by writing on the context of North East and its problems. Same as the male writers, they also created a proper realm for the discussion of the varied issues of the state. These problems were never settled by anyone. The female writers were making the people aware of the problems which they undergo in their life. The female writers of North East are always inclined towards their own world of fictional characters, which could decide their outlook and visions regarding their own customs, traditions and dogmas. This makes them be a practitioner of their preserved tradition. The female writers usually highlight the problems of various kinds of ethnic disturbances and turmoil that brings chaos in the state. Temsula Ao's work *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* depicts the problems that the people endured in Nagaland. There are certainly other examples of North East writings which make the critics understand the critical situation in North East. Rita Chowdhury's *Chinatown Days* speaks about the condition of Chinese individuals who suffered during the time of British invasion in Assam. There are certainly numerous works on the advent of violence, ethnicity and identity. They are much inclined towards reality and the actual world. The entity and ethnicity play a major role in the background of North East literature. Cautiously they entangle all the incidents without being censored by the natives of the mainland. They never state any offensive remarks in order to offend the people. They only state the things which are regarded as customary tradition. The female writers, however, deal with customs of North East in their works in diverse manners.

These speculations are very important for the understanding of the customs and traditions of the North East.

The works of the North East female writers are thoroughly based on the ecological background of the place. The works can be regarded as an account of the beautiful landscapes and terrains of the North East. North East is considered as the home of the beautiful mountains, hilly areas and big rivers. It is a land of eternal magnificence. People in the earlier period were interested in mystery and suspense that is presumed by them for decades together. The North East writers dedicatedly wrote about them in their works. The details about landscape, pastoral, picturesque, sublime and eco-feminism or women and nature are deeply engraved in the works of North East female writers. The female writers of North East make their clarified view about the place with certain other things, viz. wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling and earth and so on. The background of the works is made in such a manner that it comprises the inner consciousness of the writer. The female writers are always inclined towards their suffering and misery and that is expressed by their works. In accordance with the works, the female writers always express their grief not only through their narrative but also through the background. The contours of North East are fully shown by their novels. Ecology plays a significant role in the writings of North eastern writers. It is one of the keen factors. Not only male writers are capable to show the element of ecology, but also the female writers as well. Female writers in one way or the other try to give their concern regarding the beautiful landscapes of North East. The pictures of hills, mountains, valleys and rivers make the narrative more interesting and enticing. The female writers transcend the ecological background by depicting the conflicts of the mind. The female writers can be called to philosophize the ecological details about the North East.

The writers of North East, especially, the female writers, like Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire and Rita Chowdhury uses the ecology as the main component not only to express the beauty but also the perilous element that is found in North eastern states. These writers belong to the recent period and would rather emphasize on the recurrent issues of the day. North East is a part of a great canvas of beauty and splendour. The writers usually write in order to create a philosophical bent of mind among the audiences. The female writers endeavour about the journey of the female character self. They give more emphasis on the growth of the pastoral element in the landscape in the background. The set up is done by the females in such a manner that it truly excites the mind to know the facts about the place and other matters related to the place. Ao's inscribing of the Naga community and landscape in her works is truly interesting. The descriptions in the text are the account of the terror-happenings in the land. As the name suggests these tales have been recorded from a "war zone". The stories revolve around the aspects of insurgency, ethnicity, violence and illegal migration etc. These stories centre round the chief aspect of the apocalypse. In Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism: A Critical Idiom* the concept of apocalypse has been illustrated as:

"It was mapped out in a new literary genre called apocalypse, from the Greek Apo-calyptein, meaning 'to un-veil'. Apocalyptic literature takes the form of a revelation of the end of history. Violent and grotesque images are juxtaposed with the glimpses of a world transformed; the underlying theme is usually a titanic struggle between good and evil... Apocalypticism has been described as a genre born out of the crisis, designed to stiffen the resolve of an embattled community by dangling in front of it the vision of a sudden and permanent release from its captivity. It is underground literature, the consolation of the persecuted. (Thompson 1997: 13-14)" (94)

This concept suggests that Ao's use of violence in her works had come out because of some crisis. Like Ao, the other writers Rita Chowdhury and Easterine Kire depict the problems that the natives usually suffer from. As we come across Rita Chowdhury's fiction *Makam*, translated to English under the name of *Chinatown Days*, we are able to know about the injustice that was meted out to the Chinese origin people in the early nineteenth century. The novel is set in a truly disturbing atmosphere. In the whole text, the problem of identity and ethnicity is fully seen. And along with the violence, we can also see the element of apocalypse in the novel. Rita Chowdhury's work has the entire surrounding of the tea industry in Assam. The story is a poignant example of love and loss, bonding and separation and bitter politics of war. Love and cross-border politics have a gripping impact on the story. The tale also throws light to the Indo-China War of 1962. The author is able to bring in the depressing situation in the story with full justice. Therefore, we can assume that the story of *Makam* has all the features of ecology.

Apart from Rita Chowdhury, the fictions of Easterine Kire are surrounded by other features. Her famous work, *A Bitter Wormwood* is able to bring forth the issue of Naga culture and beauty of the place. Like Temsula Ao, she also based her novel on the backdrop of violence in Nagaland. In her *A Bitter Wormwood*, the novelist describes the culture, custom and social setup of the place. Wilderness and picturesque are the chief elements in the background of the novel. Picturesque in words of Alison Bylerly in Glotfelty's book *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* is: "The word picturesque- which had once referred to things that were graphic, visually particular, capable of being represented in a picture- came to designate a specific mode of pictorialism."(54)

The novelist takes a leap to the land of the Naga community thereby to describe the customs and traditions associated with the land. She recovers all the beauty and bliss that the land has.



Describing the landscape and apocalypse we don't give importance to the manifold issues that are hidden inside. She, in her novel, is quite realistic and simple. The dexterity with the novelist lies in the delineation of the females who were subjugated and oppressed by the Indian army. Like Temsula Ao, she also writes about the horrifying devices of rape and murder used by the Indian army to suppress the Naga people during the period of Naga Nationalist Movement. A *Bitter Wormwood* is a tale of the bitter experience of Naga people when the Armed Forces Special Power Act was imposed. The description of landscape and wilderness is deeply put inside so as to know the ins and outs of the situation of the place. Therefore, through the novel, the novelist wants to retrieve the secrets of misery that was followed up by the Naga people during that period.

The female writers are quite reliable to depict about the depiction of the ecology of North East. In their hands, ecology and its aspects get fully justified as they make a realistic picture in the fictions as living and breathing. Temsula Ao, Rita Chowdhury and Easterine Kire all are eclectic writers who profess the ideology of female suppression in their respective novels. It is a matter of shame that the fiction writers of the whole world of literature never gave any emphasis towards the North Eastern problems and issues. Hence, we find more culpable about the writers who did not focus on the varied problems of the North East.

The problems of the North East are many and among them the problem of identity is the most important one. Ethnicity is the main issue for the evocation of the problem of identity. In all the works of the writers of North East this problem has been discussed with the utmost clarity and precision. This element of identity and ethnicity is taken to a different epoch in the writings of the contemporary writers. There is a sort of gripping effect in the novels of the contemporary writers. The works of the North East writers focus on the issues of

turbulence in the North East states. Ethnicity makes the people aware of the fact that though they belong to the nation, yet they are not considered as part of the nation. The worst faced scenario is seen in case of imposition of AFSPA over various states of North East. The Special Powers Act was imposed in order to maintain peace and security throughout the region, but it sometimes proved to be a curse for the natives of Northeastern states. In the name of letting the power, the Armed Forces took away the freedom of the natives. They usually strangled their freedom and made them realize that the place where they reside is away from any civilization. So, the people also do not trust upon the Armed Forces, for which there was an air of distrust and horror in the background. The feminists look upon the brutality that was meted out to the natives, particularly the females of the tribal community. As a result of it, we find that as the females are being suppressed by the Armed Forces, so the females were the first who never liked the Act. Therefore, there were many militant outfits in order to retaliate against the atrocities of the Armed Forces.

The problem of ethnicity is not only visible in case of social ground but also visible in case of the political and economic ground as well. The problem of “home” and “belonging” is chiefly seen in the fictions of North East. “Home” to the natives is not just a place to dwell but a place of their own entity. The element of identity is proclaimed with the idea of ethnicity. They are not being considered as a part of the nation, makes them think that they are “foreigners” to their own nation. In the fictions of Rita Chowdhury, Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire it is visible. These three female writers made the factor of identity and ethnicity as to be more vibrant in their works. Ethnicity in the hands of the aforesaid writers is fully justifiable. Writers, as well as critics made their remarks always at the conditions of the people of North East. The sufferings of the people are unbounded and it is for the cause of the imposition of the Armed Forces Act, that

their suffering knew no bounds. Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire in their works, *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* and *Bitter Wormwood* respectively used the problem of ethnicity in a very unique manner. These writers open up the spectrum to look upon the things of diverse nature. “Home” for them is a place for their own identity. The narratives in their works are fully vested upon the depiction of the tumultuous situation of the place. The constitution of the tribal communities and their customs is fully visible in their works. The battle of ethnicity and identity sometimes goes to such an extent that it seems to be more violent than being cooperative.

The writers of female origin are able to depict the trauma associated with the people of the place, mostly women. In Rita Chowdhury’s work *Makam*, translated into English as *Chinatown Days*, incorporate the idea of ethnicity. The whole story is seen to be a tale of varied problems, including both ethnic and national. Makam (in Chinese means ‘The Golden Horse’) describes the story of a Chinese girl, Mei Lin, who lives a satisfactory life with her husband Pulok Barua. In the very first chapter in Chowdhury’s *Chinatown Days* we see how the problem of ethnicity is highlighted:

“You! An Indian

So nationality was somehow related to her hatred towards me!”(3)

Here the lines refer not to the factor of being an India but to the spirit of nationalism. The story of *Chinatown Days* surrounds with the distressful condition of the people of Chinese origin. The very outset of the story suggests about love, betrayal, jealousy, nationalism, ethnicity and violence. And throughout the background it is seen to the fullest. The importance of “home” and

“belonging” play a major role in the story. As Jasnea Sarma in “Asian Ethnicity Journal” says about Rita Chowdhury’s *Makam*:

“The author shows how a new Chinese-Assamese community develop through intermarriage and become an integral part of the Assamese society and live peacefully until 1962 when as an aftermath of war, this group of people, almost 1500 in number, have to face the brunt of suspicion only because their roots can be traced to China, though they are Assamese in heart and soul. They are then taken from their home in Makam, upper Assam and sent to detention camps at Deoli, in far away from the Indian state of Rajasthan from where some are either deported to China or settled elsewhere in India”.

This account of “de-rootedness” makes the story more engaging as we can come across the feeling of sadness that wraps them up. The ‘de-settling’ and ‘re-settling’ make the problem of ethnicity more valid. Further deep analysis of this story reveals how the creepy situation lurks out of some political matters. The politics of pseudo-nationalism makes the entire scenario a melancholic one. That is why; Rita Chowdhury’s *Chinatown Days* has all the elements of how political turmoil could rise up the problem of ethnicity.

Like Rita Chowdhury, Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire used the element of ethnicity in their fictions. Temsula Ao’s short story collection, *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* brings in the essence of ethnicity and the problems aroused because of ethnicity. The short stories of the collection are all centred on the Naga culture and community. She in her views about the plight of the people makes it clear that the atrocities meted out to the people during the time of imposition of the AFPSA were too much disturbing. That was the period of extremity and militant outrage throughout the region. The whole area was emitting out

the fire that was for the suffering of the people. The battles between the militant outfits and armed forces were always in the news. The whole region of nearby areas of Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya was continuously under the scanner of the militant outfit. The commotion of North East was built during this period. People of entire India had this conception that North East region are implied with violence. So, the responsibility was given to the writers to avail the truest information about the on-going incidents in North East. In the fictions and short stories of various writers, this attitude is there. Among all the short stories in the book of Temsula Ao, the description that is given “The Curfew Man” is quite different. The illustration of this tale is too much intriguing. There are certain places where we can find the atrocities that were being held on the natives of the places. Among the rudest description one is:

“These were stories about how people carrying the sick to the hospital or in the search of doctors were stopped and subjected to humiliating searches causing unnecessary and sometimes even fatal delays. Often these helpless people were sent back with abuses and threats completely disregarding the urgent need of the poor patients. There were several incidents where civilians were shot dead by the patrol parties after curfew and their deaths reported as those of underground rebels killed in ‘encounters’ with the army” (230)

From the tale’s description, we acquire the idea that how the people were maltreated during the time of the Naga Rebellion. The attitude of armed forces to show their supremacy is seen in case of the fake encounters that were done by the armed forces. These types of encounters in Nagaland sprouted a generation of hatred and harshness. For that reason, the rebels took to a more violent standard in order to teach the armed forces a lesson. The people can be considered as the victims to that phase. They were prey to the hands of the dictatorship of the armed forces and also the legal authorities. The tension which is grown is only because of the political

negligence and the faults of the governmental agencies. “The Curfew Man” is also a tale of double- standard of people in the higher authorial ranks. The poor plight of the characters in the story surrounds the idea that how men are used by other men for their own benefits. The character of Satemba and Jemtila is depicted with the features of low-profile natives. The two are the victims of atrocities and negligence of the government and authorities, but they are not at all sad about it. The two characters always try to live a life of health and success, but their ill fate didn’t allow them to do so. This negligence by the authority can be termed as one of the factors of ethnic difference and otherness. Hence, in Ao’s story, it is clarified that ethnicity is a barrier to the growth and development of a nation.

Easterine Kire’s fictions are quite similar to the above-said writers. Her visions regarding the atrocities towards the Naga communities are never overlooked by her. In her *Bitter Wormwood*, she comes across the problem of ethnicity and the binaries that are created by it. The story is surrounded by the evil spirit of violence. The work gives details of an atrocious atmosphere of Nagaland. She, in the novel, highlights the impact of the Naga Rebellion. The main spirit of the story revolves on the struggle of Naga people during the time of its Revolution. The story mainly brings in the stoic characters of Mose, the protagonist. It deals with the ups and downs of the character. It’s a tour of a character from his teenager to old age. The shift is from being a soldier in Naga freedom struggle to an old, wise and retired underground cadre who witnessed the destruction and loss of lives of his fellowmen at the hands of the Indian Army. This thing is further taken away by the fake encounters of the Naga people. Same as Temsula Ao, she also accounts the atrocious behaviour of the Indian Army. The attitude of harshness and brutality is seen all over the text. Powering the spirit of freedom there are many extremist factions who turned up against the authority. The burning question of terrorism hence rose up

after these incidents. The people had a great distrust and dishonesty on the Indian Armed Forces. The problem of ethnic “voice” is inherent in the text. The Naga people are always trampled by the powerful authorities. In retaliation to the Naga Revolution, came into being a force of militant consciousness. Kire’s book is extremely a hardcore political text. The ‘Introduction’ by the author says all about the text:

“Today, many young Nagas struggle with a confused identity. This confusion began after Indian launched its war of occupation and enacted the creation of Naga statehood in 1963. Statehood was an agreement between a small group of Nagas and Delhi government. Under statehood, Indian citizenship was imposed on Nagas, but they were denied many of the rights of citizens of India under the Indian constitution. Laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and The Disturbed Areas Act took away the fundamental rights of Nagas and continued to put them at the mercy of the armed forces.” (4)

The illustration at the beginning of the text reveals the harsh atmosphere that is lying outside the text. The story is all about the Naga struggle and the civil strife. The ethnicity is the primary hurdle which mends the mind of the people against the government and authority. Distrust among the people made the localites to go against the authority and thereby to voice out for the sufferings they meted out in their lives. Kire’s work launches the idea of “confused identity” that seems to be a barrier in the case of ethnicity. The reason of confused identity rises up another aspect, i.e. racism. She finds the Naga movement as a sort of freedom struggle against the odds of the community. Her main motive is achieved by the fiction where she is able to make a confrontation with the suffering and misery of people. Thus, Easterine Kire found a medium to express her angst against the authorial order.

The ethnic conflict abounds with the intercultural element in the case of the North East. The writers of North East always give focus to this idea. They usually vest their time in discussing the so-called situation in the different parts of the North East. It may be the civil strife between the Armed Forces and the extremist factions or the natives fighting against the aboriginal races. The problem of ethnicity is the reason for all the intercultural clashes. The area might be narrowed but the prospects will still be the same. The North East can be considered according to many critics, as the place of ethnic conflict. Fighting among the tribal communities was persistent since before Independence. Those intercultural conflicts were for showing their own dominance and supremacy. That period was full of homicidal incidents, people killing their natives for some wrong notions. The battleground was having all the features of massacres, bloodshed, intrigues, conspiracies and sometimes murders. The genocides and killing of people were under the altar of rituals, customs or traditions. Those were the basis of one's life during that period. But in the modern period, the fight was more for political insight. They were battling out not only to show their dominance but also their power over others. Power, in that case, was more political in manner. The writers went on to say that the Revolution that happened in that period was thoroughly political in origin. The intercultural conflict took to a different turn in the novels of many writers. In some places, they were praised for showing the natives the spirit of freedom and in some places; it showed its dominating power. So, from this, it can be assumed that the intercultural conflict was at times good and bad as well.

The North East women writers of North East discuss the contemporary issues. They accentuated the incidents that make the people realize the pangs and miseries they usually suffer from. They by their works bring out the problems that the North-easterners face in their day-to-day life. The women writers enter into the world of death for passion and try to bring in



the harsh realities of life. “Violence” is the common theme for all the writers of North East. Like ethnicity, violence makes their fictions more contemporary in manner. The women writers of North East focus on the brutal aspects of life. They urge for making contemporary issues more vibrant. Their feministic beliefs and thoughts are completely justified in their works. The writers from the mainstream handle all the problems which are of supreme importance. In their works, they readily discuss intercultural conflicts. These conflicts make them think about the battle that the place is going to see in its succeeding phases. “Violence” and “ethnicity” give their fiction an endeavour to create an air of knowledge about the problem of the North East people. All the contemporary writers of North East achieve glory by confrontation with the burning issues of the places. Writers, such as Rita Chowdhury, Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire completely show the realistic picture by their works. Their works and writings pave the way towards how violence is used by the writers to make awareness among all the problems of the North East. North East writers, however, clarify the scenario of brutality and animosity.

The writer like, Rita Chowdhury is considered as an important gem in the field of North East literature. Her *Makam* is one of the well-accounted novels ever written in Assamese literature. It is being translated into English and given the name of *Chinatown Days*. Rita Chowdhury’s novel is by far the most important work in Indian literature. The English version also has a distinctive way of approach. *Chinatown Days* is an account of the historical drama about the Britishers and the natives of the country. The story has the element of “othering” in it. The novel also traces the story of a few Chinese families who were brought by the English people a century prior to India’s independence. The problem of ethnicity is there from the beginning of the text. The moral implication towards the ethnic differences is sorted out with jealousy and hatred. There is a love affair in the plot that became passive when the factor of

Indo-China difference is brought about. Chowdhury is of the view that the politics of ethnicity is responsible for creating the problem of violence. The migrants from China were being deported to China or some other parts after the Indo-Sino war was over. This incident paved a way towards the thought of the Chinese people who lived for centuries together, that they do not belong to the nation. The loosing of the home during the time of the war makes a sense of high political drama that goes in the background. The turmoil and conflict are because of the extradition of the migrants from the region. Chowdhury's novel acts as an exposure to violence that was between the Indian natives and the Chinese migrants. Intercultural violence was also present in the novel and it was intimidating. The whole scenario is fully set on politics of frontiers and that is why there is a clash between two races. The two races fought for their own supremacy and in doing that they created an air of hatred among the mind of the Chinese origin people that were there in the region for many years. Hence, it is found that Chowdhury's novel brings in the effectual impact upon the politics of the two countries.

The writings of Rita Chowdhury are similar to that of the other female writers. The contemporaries of Rita Chowdhury try to write on the varied issues that exist since time immemorial. Her situating the problem of ethnicity and ethnic conflict are used by Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire as well with great precision. Both the writers are from the same cultural background and seem to have the same perspectives over it. Ao's poems and short stories make a tremendous impact on contemporary issues as same as Kire's novels. Talking about Ao's *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone*, that throws light towards the problem of ethnicity and violence during the time of the imposition of the AFPSA in Nagaland. Her view as a feminist is quite different from the other writers of North East. She has her own opinion regarding the cruelties meted out to the locals. Her *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War*

*Zone* recounts about the violence that was considered as an evident part of the North East during that period. The tales that were written in the collection are actually the account of exploitation and suppression of the natives by the authorial rulers. In the story, “The Curfew Man”, we can assume the narrow-mindedness of the personnel of the higher order. The character of Satemba appears to be the main victim who happens to be a local football player. Being a good player he got a job in the police, irrespective of having any education. But when a mishap happened to him, he was thrown out of the police force. As long as he was a football player and have sound health everybody used him for their own benefits. He franchised all the privileges and fortunes that were destined for him, but as soon as he was wounded, his career ended. He is thrown away from the police force thereby saying him an unfit. As he was not educated, so he was not even offered any desk-job also and that’s why he suffered a lot of hostility at the hands of the police and authority. Being rejected he became an “other” figure in the story. His wife Jemtila seeks some job in some neighbour’s house. She is a lady who truly takes care of her husband and manages to live life. It is because of the mishap that their life is completely changed. But in the latter half, he got a special offer from the SDO, as his wife used to work in the quarter of the SDO. The intercultural aspect of the tale leaves the whole scenario with fear and awe. The curfew in the story has an impervious impact. The two characters, Satemba and Jemtila are both susceptible to the incidents that were happening, as they were confident that they would be protected by the authorities if they fall into any trouble. The author has highlighted all the pros and cons of the Revolution and how it had an impact over the mass. The last lines of the tale speak about the negligence done by the authorial rulers; “A new curfew man would be in place by evening and the man with the two smashed kneecaps had already become history”. (237) connotes negligence by the authorities for a “useless object”. The tale like other tales present in

the collection talks about intercultural violence that brings in the trouble for people to lead their life with peace and comfort.

Easterine Kire's projection of the problems is slightly different in manner. She situates her story both as an insider and outsider. She usually tells her story from both perspectives. Unlike Temsula Ao, her fictions have a more harsh and perceptible image. Kire's fiction is quite similar in its background with Ao. They were engrossed with the idea of the brutalities that were being done by the armed forces to the local people. One such is *Bitter Wormwood*. This novel has all the enlivening issues of contemporary Nagaland. The various issues like suffering humanity, brutality, animosity, corruption, power all these features made the novel more interesting and engaging. *Bitter Wormwood* holds background that has all the miseries and agonies in it. The hatred amongst the people is seen in the story. The actual cause of the turmoil was the freedom from the power of the armed forces. The story opens with the character of Mose, who happens to be a victim of the clash between the Naga rebels and the armed forces. The main subject of the novel is how the common people were affected by the ruthlessness of both the armed forces and agents of freedom struggle. The violence which was there resented the mind of the people. The Indian security forces unrestrained the power to conduct the military operations in the territory, was an "act of terror" for the local natives of the place. In the novel, Mose has all the problems with the ongoing revolution. Mose in the story is projected as the person who has a lot of endurance for pain. His life is wrapped up with many confrontations. The intercultural clashes or violence is grown because of the ethnicity of the Naga tribal community. The story revolves within the sphere of cultural ethnicity and ethnic identity. The suppression of the tribal community by the armed forces is a real and depressing effect that is there in the text. Kire's idea in the book invests towards her depiction of the

problem of subduing the fates of the locals at the hands of the ruthless armed forces. Her overall assumptions made her think that the act of deployment of the armed forces was rather an act of terror rather an act of peace. Therefore, Easterine Kire's novel *Bitter Wormwood* has all the elements of a perfect novel.

It is, however, seen in terms of the female writers that what they are able to project in their fictions; the male writers cannot project it. The style of interpretation is very different in the case of the female writers. All the women writers as mentioned above; are considered as veterans of arts. Rita Chowdhury, Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire are all the finest contemporary writers. Chowdhury's *Chinatown Days*, Ao's *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* and Easterine Kire's *Bitter Wormwood* all have the said problems of North East. The problem of ethnicity is the common aspect in all the fictions and short stories of the female writers. Chowdhury's interpretation of female psychology is very different from the other two writers, i.e. Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire. The way of approach of all the writers is immensely based on the phenomenological concepts. Temsula Ao and Easterine Kire's fictions are entirely based on the sufferings of the people of Naga community during the time of AFSPA. The female writers of the North East thereby make an assertion regarding the miseries and troubles which fills up space with discomfiture. In accordance with their writings, it is thought that their positioning in the society is being accorded in the novels and fictions. Even though they try to make a very interesting picture of the background but they are sometimes censored for depicting their plight in the fictions. They are, therefore, the writers who intensely bring in the atrocities that usually hamper the people from getting into the mainstream. They project the people as ethnic thereby to make them significant.

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