



Women from the Mising Tribe of Assam: Their Role in Nation-Building

Jahan Doley, MA (Economics), MSW

Prabhakaran Mili, MA (Sociology)

Mahesh Kuli, MA (Mass Communication and Journalism)

Teachers under Govt. of Assam

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the significant contributions of Mising women in Assam to the nation-building process, focusing on their roles in education, politics, economic development, and cultural preservation. The Mising tribe, an indigenous community primarily found in the northeastern state of Assam, has a rich cultural heritage, with women playing a central role in maintaining traditions, promoting local economies, and advocating for social change. Despite facing socio-economic challenges, including poverty, illiteracy, and healthcare barriers, Mising women have emerged as strong leaders in their communities. This paper examines their involvement in local governance, activism for tribal rights, and economic initiatives such as microfinance and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the study highlights the impact of educational initiatives and policy interventions aimed at empowering Mising women, enabling them to overcome traditional gender roles and participate in national development. The findings underscore the potential of Mising women as agents of change in shaping a more inclusive and prosperous society. Finally, the paper offers policy recommendations to enhance the empowerment of Mising women, emphasizing the need for greater access to education,

healthcare, economic opportunities, and political representation.

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Introduction

The Mising tribe, an indigenous community primarily residing in Assam, India, is known for its rich cultural heritage, traditional practices, and close-knit societal structure. Historically referred to as “Miris,” the tribe has undergone significant socio-economic transitions while maintaining its unique identity. The Mising people are predominantly concentrated in the districts of Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Majuli, and Tinsukia. They have a distinctive language, culture, and traditions, which reflect their harmonious relationship with nature and their agrarian lifestyle.

Women play pivotal roles in the fabric of tribal societies, often serving as custodians of culture, nurturers of families, and contributors to the socio-economic landscape. In the Mising community, women hold a significant place in various domains, from family responsibilities to participating in traditional festivals like Ali-Aye-Ligang. Their involvement in weaving, agriculture, and cultural preservation is integral to the sustenance of their way of life.

This paper aims to delve into the multifaceted contributions of Mising women in nation-building. By focusing on education, politics, the economy, and cultural preservation, the study seeks to highlight how their efforts extend beyond their community, impacting the broader national narrative. Exploring these contributions will underscore the importance of empowering tribal women as catalysts for progress and inclusivity in nation-building endeavors.

Methodology

The research employs a **descriptive and analytical design** to explore and evaluate the contributions of Mising women in nation-building. The descriptive approach aims to document the roles and experiences of Mising women in various sectors, while the analytical aspect seeks to interpret and critically assess their impact on education, politics, economy, and cultural preservation.

Historical Context

Role of Mising Women in Traditional Societal Structures

In the traditional Mising societal framework, women have held a significant and respected position, contributing to both family and community life. As custodians of cultural practices, they play an integral role in preserving the tribe’s heritage. Mising women are renowned for their skill in weaving intricate textiles, particularly *egegas* (wraps) and *gadu* (shawls), which embody the community's identity and artistic expression.

In agrarian activities, women participate equally with men, particularly in planting, harvesting, and post-harvest processing. They also lead in household management, raising children, and transmitting oral traditions, folk songs, and knowledge about indigenous medicine. Furthermore, their active involvement



in festivals such as **Ali-Aye-Ligang** highlights their central role in celebrating and sustaining the community's agricultural and cultural ethos.

Contributions During India's Freedom Struggle and Post-Independence Era

The Mising community, though geographically isolated, contributed to India's freedom struggle, with women participating in social and political movements. Mising women's activism during the anti-colonial period was often intertwined with their community's resistance against exploitation and their advocacy for rights over land and resources.

Post-independence, Mising women continued to assert their agency, particularly in grassroots movements and cooperative initiatives. Their involvement in self-help groups (SHGs) and community organizations has been instrumental in improving local economies and fostering social cohesion.

Notable contributions include their participation in the promotion of literacy campaigns, healthcare awareness, and political representation in local governance, such as panchayats and district councils. Mising women's efforts in these areas reflect their enduring commitment to community welfare and national development. Their historical contributions serve as a foundation for understanding their evolving roles in contemporary nation-building efforts.

Cultural and Social Roles

Importance of Mising Women in Preserving Language, Cultural Practices, and Festivals

Mising women are central to the preservation of their community's cultural identity and traditions. They play a key role in:

Language

Mising women ensure the transmission of their native language (*Mising Agom*) to younger generations through storytelling, songs, and daily communication within the family. Their role as educators within the household is vital for keeping the language alive amidst increasing assimilation into mainstream cultures.

Preservation:

Cultural

Women actively maintain traditional crafts, such as weaving the vibrant *eegas* and *gadu*, which are iconic symbols of Mising identity. Their knowledge of indigenous herbal remedies and culinary traditions also contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage.

Practices:

Festivals

and

Rituals:

Festivals like **Ali-Aye-Ligang**, which celebrates the sowing of seeds and agricultural prosperity, prominently feature women. They prepare traditional dishes, perform rituals, and participate in folk dances like *gumrag so:man* that embody the spiritual and cultural ethos of the Mising tribe. Through these activities, women not only sustain their cultural heritage but also strengthen community bonds.

Participation in Community Development Initiatives

Beyond their cultural roles, Mising women are actively involved in community development efforts that enhance the socio-economic conditions of their people:

Self-Help Groups (SHGs):

Many Mising women participate in SHGs, engaging in small-scale industries such as weaving, poultry farming, and food processing. These initiatives contribute to the local economy and empower women with financial independence.

Education and Literacy Campaigns:

Women educators and activists have spearheaded efforts to improve literacy rates in Mising-populated areas, particularly among girls. By encouraging education, they are fostering the community's long-term growth and integration into broader societal frameworks.

Healthcare and Sanitation Programs:

Mising women often lead health awareness campaigns focusing on maternal and child health, hygiene, and access to clean drinking water. Their involvement in such initiatives has significantly improved living standards in their communities.

Leadership in Local Governance:

With increasing participation in local governance, such as panchayats and village councils, Mising women are contributing to decision-making processes that impact the overall development of their community. Their leadership reflects their evolving role as agents of change.

Through their cultural and social contributions, Mising women not only preserve their community's unique identity but also play an active role in advancing its socio-economic development. Their dual role as custodians of tradition and catalysts for progress underscores their importance in the broader narrative of nation-building.

Economic Contributions

Role in Agriculture and Handicrafts

Mising women are vital contributors to the economic stability of their community through their active involvement in agriculture and handicrafts:

Agriculture:

As a predominantly agrarian community, the Mising rely heavily on farming for their livelihood. Women actively participate in every stage of agricultural production, from sowing and weeding to harvesting and post-harvest processing. They also manage household gardens that provide food security and supplementary income. Their role in livestock rearing and fishing further supports the family economy.

Handicrafts:

Mising women are skilled artisans, especially in weaving. They create intricately designed *egegaor* (wraps) and *gadu* (shawls) that hold cultural significance and are increasingly finding a market beyond their community. These handicrafts not only preserve the tribe's cultural heritage but also serve as a source of income, especially through cooperative ventures and self-help groups.

Involvement in Microfinance, Small-Scale Industries, and Entrepreneurship**Microfinance:**

Mising women have embraced microfinance initiatives, often through self-help groups (SHGs), to fund small businesses, weaving cooperatives, and other livelihood activities. These initiatives empower women by providing financial independence and fostering a culture of savings and investment within the community.

Small-Scale Industries:

Women are increasingly involved in small-scale industries such as food processing, poultry farming, and the production of traditional rice beer (*apong*), which is both a cultural and economic activity. Their entrepreneurship in these areas not only supports their families but also contributes to the local economy.

Entrepreneurship:

Some Mising women have ventured into larger entrepreneurial activities, such as setting up weaving centers, eco-tourism projects showcasing Mising culture, and marketing traditional products to urban markets. These initiatives help bridge the gap between rural and urban economies, creating a ripple effect of economic development.

Challenges Faced Due to Economic Marginalization

Despite their significant contributions, Mising women face numerous challenges that limit their economic potential:

Lack of Market Access:
Poor infrastructure and limited access to markets make it difficult for women to sell their products, whether agricultural or handicrafts, at competitive prices.

Low Wages and Exploitation:
Many women receive inadequate compensation for their labor, both in agricultural work and in the production of handicrafts, due to systemic economic marginalization.

Limited Access to Credit and Resources:
Although microfinance initiatives have gained traction, many women still face barriers in accessing formal credit systems, land ownership, and essential resources like modern farming equipment.

Economic Dependency:
In some cases, socio-cultural norms still limit women's autonomy in financial decision-making, perpetuating cycles of economic dependency.

Impact of Climate Change:

As a riverine community, the Misíng are particularly vulnerable to floods and erosion, which disrupt agricultural productivity and displace families, disproportionately affecting women.

Despite these challenges, Misíng women continue to demonstrate resilience and ingenuity in their economic endeavors. By addressing these barriers and providing targeted support, their contributions can be amplified to drive both community and national development.

Political Participation

Representation of Misíng Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Local Governance

Misíng women have gradually increased their participation in local governance, particularly through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). As the political landscape has evolved, women from the Misíng community have become active members of **Gram Panchayats**, **Zila Parishads**, and **Mahila Sabhas**. These platforms have provided a significant opportunity for women to influence decision-making processes at the grassroots level, ensuring that the needs of their communities are represented in the larger political discourse.

In recent years, there has been an increasing trend of Misíng women contesting local elections and holding leadership positions within local governance. Their involvement in these institutions is pivotal in shaping policies related to education, healthcare, rural development, and infrastructure, all of which directly impact the socio-economic growth of their communities.

Participation in Movements and Activism for Tribal Rights and Environmental Conservation

Misíng women have also been at the forefront of movements advocating for the rights and welfare of tribal communities in Assam. Several prominent movements have been driven by their concern for environmental conservation, indigenous rights, and the protection of their cultural heritage.

Mising Autonomous Council (MAC):

The MAC has been a central issue for many Misíng women who demand greater autonomy for their community in matters of governance, cultural preservation, and resource management. Women have participated in protests, rallies, and petitions calling for the formation of an autonomous council that would empower the Misíng people, ensure their socio-political rights, and help preserve their indigenous identity.

Tribal Movements and Activism:

Misíng women have actively supported organizations such as the **Takam Mising Porin kebang (TMPK)** and **Mising Mimag kebang (MMk)**, which focus on securing the rights of indigenous groups. These movements advocate for land rights, the protection of natural resources, and policies aimed at improving the living standards of the tribal people. Women within these movements have



contributed by organizing rallies, engaging in awareness campaigns, and pushing for legislative changes that benefit their community.

Environmental Conservation:

Mising women have been instrumental in environmental activism, especially in the context of Assam’s flood-prone areas. They actively engage in protecting forests, water bodies, and agricultural lands from illegal encroachment and deforestation. Their participation in campaigns advocating for sustainable practices and resource conservation has highlighted their role as environmental stewards within their community.

Case Studies of Prominent Mising Women Leaders

The growth of political awareness among Mising women has given rise to several organizations and movements that are shaping the community’s future. These include:

Mising Autonomous Council (MAC):
The push for a Mising Autonomous Council has seen strong support from women who see this as a means to assert political control and preserve their cultural heritage. Women within this movement have mobilized grassroots support, raising awareness about the importance of self-governance for their people.

Mising Ba:ne Kebang:
The **Mising Ba:ne Kebang** has played a significant role in rallying Mising people for social causes, including women’s rights and education. Through its outreach programs, it has empowered Mising women to participate more actively in local governance and other political spheres.

Tribal Movements (TMPK, TMMK, MMk):
The **Takam Mising Porin Kebang (TMPK)**, **Mising Mimag kebang (MMK)**, and **TMMK** have all been platforms for Mising women to engage in activism concerning tribal rights, environmental preservation, and socio-political justice. These organizations have provided women with the tools and strategies necessary to make their voices heard in the political arena, contributing to a more inclusive tribal movement.

These movements and organizations, led or supported by Mising women, have significantly influenced political discourse in Assam. Their advocacy for political autonomy, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of tribal culture has contributed to shaping the community’s role in the state and national political landscape. Through their engagement, Mising women continue to forge new pathways for political participation and social change.

Education and Empowerment

Status of Education Among Mising Women

The educational status of Mising women has improved considerably over the past few decades, but challenges remain. Traditionally, education for girls in rural Mising communities was not a priority,



with many girls being kept at home for domestic responsibilities and agricultural work. However, there has been a shift in recent years, and educational opportunities for women have gradually expanded.

Literacy

Rates:

Literacy rates among Misíng women have increased, with more girls attending primary and secondary schools. However, the transition to higher education remains limited due to financial constraints, lack of awareness, and cultural barriers. The percentage of women pursuing higher education is still lower compared to their male counterparts, and many drop out due to early marriage or family responsibilities.

Access

to

Education:

While government initiatives have aimed to increase access to education in rural areas, many Misíng women still face difficulties related to transportation, infrastructure, and socio-cultural attitudes that prioritize male education over female. Additionally, schools in remote areas often lack the necessary resources, such as qualified teachers, textbooks, and proper sanitation facilities, further limiting opportunities for girls to receive quality education.

Initiatives Promoting Girl Child Education and Literacy Programs

In response to these challenges, various initiatives have been introduced to promote education among Misíng girls and improve literacy rates:

Government

Schemes

and

Programs:

National and state-level initiatives, such as the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** scheme, focus on encouraging the education of girls in rural communities. These programs have provided financial support for the construction of school infrastructure, scholarships for girls, and awareness campaigns to change societal attitudes toward female education.

Community-Driven

Initiatives:

Local organizations, including women's self-help groups (SHGs) and youth groups, have played an active role in promoting girl child education. These grassroots organizations organize awareness programs, support for school enrollment, and mentorship for girls to continue their studies.

NGO

Involvement:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on education, such as those working on tribal welfare, have launched literacy programs tailored for women and girls, particularly in remote and underserved areas. These programs emphasize adult education, vocational training, and skill-building, enabling women to contribute economically and socially.

Awareness

Campaigns:

Several community leaders and educators have conducted campaigns focusing on the importance of education for girls, particularly in Misíng-populated areas. These campaigns emphasize the role of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering women to participate in the decision-making processes of their families and communities.



Impact of Education on Their Roles in Nation-Building

Education has a profound impact on the roles of Mising women in nation-building, particularly in the areas of social, political, and economic development:

Social

Educated Mising women are better equipped to challenge gender norms and contribute to societal changes. Education fosters a sense of autonomy, critical thinking, and self-confidence, enabling them to participate more actively in community life. Educated women often take on leadership roles in local organizations, contribute to public health campaigns, and promote social justice within their communities.

Empowerment:

Economic

Education enhances the economic opportunities available to Mising women. With improved literacy and vocational skills, women are better able to engage in entrepreneurial ventures, small-scale industries, and agricultural activities. Access to education also improves their bargaining power within households, enabling them to make financial decisions and contribute to family income.

Participation:

Political

Education has been key to the political empowerment of Mising women. As more women become educated, they are increasingly participating in local governance, as well as advocating for their rights at state and national levels. Education provides them with the tools to understand their rights, demand political representation, and influence policies that affect their community.

Influence:

Nation-Building:

Educated Mising women contribute significantly to the broader goals of nation-building. By improving their own socio-economic conditions, they create ripple effects that benefit their families and communities. Their active participation in education also leads to stronger social cohesion, greater respect for tribal and cultural rights, and enhanced civic engagement. As educated mothers, they are better positioned to raise the next generation of literate, responsible, and active citizens, thereby shaping the future of the nation.

In conclusion, while challenges persist, education remains a powerful tool for empowering Mising women, providing them with the skills and opportunities needed to contribute effectively to nation-building. As the status of education improves, Mising women's roles in social, political, and economic spheres will continue to expand, shaping a more inclusive and prosperous future for their community and the nation as a whole.

Challenges and Barriers

Socio-economic Challenges: Poverty, Illiteracy, and Healthcare Issues

Mising women face a multitude of socio-economic challenges that hinder their full potential and limit their ability to contribute to societal growth. These challenges are deeply rooted in poverty, illiteracy, and limited access to healthcare services, all of which contribute to a cycle of disadvantage for women in the community.



Poverty:

The Mising community, particularly in rural areas, faces widespread poverty, which directly affects women’s ability to access education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Many Mising families depend on subsistence farming, which provides limited income. Due to socio-cultural norms and family responsibilities, women often have fewer opportunities to engage in income-generating activities outside of agriculture. This economic dependency limits their autonomy and decision-making power within the household.

Illiteracy:

Despite recent improvements, illiteracy remains a significant barrier for many Mising women. While there is a growing emphasis on education, the literacy rates among women are still lower compared to men, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. Illiteracy limits women’s access to better job opportunities, increases their vulnerability to exploitation, and reduces their participation in governance and policy-making processes.

Healthcare

Poor access to healthcare services is another critical challenge. Mising women, especially in rural regions, face inadequate healthcare facilities, limited access to maternal and child care, and high rates of malnutrition and maternal mortality. The lack of proper sanitation and clean drinking water also contributes to poor health outcomes. Women’s health is often neglected in these contexts, further perpetuating gender inequality.

Issues:

Gender Disparities in Leadership Roles and Decision-Making

Mising women, like many women in tribal and rural societies, face gender disparities in leadership roles and decision-making processes. These disparities are deeply ingrained in traditional patriarchal structures that prioritize male leadership and restrict women’s participation in political and social spheres.

Underrepresentation

in

Leadership:

While Mising women have made significant strides in political and community participation, they remain underrepresented in leadership roles at local, regional, and state levels. Patriarchal norms often limit their access to power, and women are seldom considered for positions of authority within both traditional structures and modern governance. This underrepresentation in decision-making processes affects their ability to advocate for their needs and concerns in areas such as education, healthcare, and economic development.

Cultural

and

Social

Norms:

In many Mising communities, cultural and social norms dictate that men are the primary decision-makers in both family and community matters. Women’s voices are often sidelined in crucial discussions, such as those related to land rights, family planning, and resource allocation. These gendered power structures restrict the agency of Mising women and hinder their ability to drive social and political change.

Access

to

Political

Platforms:

Although there are instances where Mising women have become involved in political movements and have played key roles in advocating for tribal rights, they still face challenges in accessing mainstream



political platforms. The political arena often remains dominated by male leaders, and women's political involvement is limited to smaller, community-level initiatives.

Effects of Modernization and Globalization on Traditional Roles

The impact of modernization and globalization on traditional roles is both positive and negative for Mising women. While globalization has brought new opportunities, it has also posed significant challenges to the preservation of their traditional roles and cultural identity.

Cultural

Modernization and globalization have led to the erosion of traditional practices and values in many tribal communities, including the Mising. As young people, particularly women, are increasingly exposed to urbanized lifestyles and globalized cultural norms, there is a shift away from traditional customs, including those related to gender roles and responsibilities. Women's traditional roles as custodians of culture and heritage are often undermined by external influences, leading to a loss of cultural identity within the community.

Erosion:

Economic

With the advent of new economic opportunities and the influence of the global market, there has been a shift away from agriculture as the primary source of livelihood for many Mising families. This transition often places women at a disadvantage, as they are traditionally more involved in household agriculture and handicrafts. As new industries and technologies take hold, Mising women may find it challenging to adapt to these changes due to lack of education and access to resources for skill development.

Transition:

Social

Changes

and

Migration:

Modernization and globalization have also led to increased migration, particularly of young men seeking work in urban centers. This migration often leaves women behind in rural areas, where they continue to face traditional expectations of caregiving and maintaining the household. At the same time, these women may be left out of economic and social transformations taking place in urban areas. The migration of young men also alters traditional gender roles, as women assume greater responsibility in the household and local community, despite not being part of the formal labor market.

Influence

of

Media

and

Technology:

The exposure to global media and technology has transformed the way Mising women perceive their roles and opportunities. While this has led to greater awareness of women's rights and gender equality, it has also created new challenges. Mising women may face pressure to conform to modern beauty standards or social expectations that are often at odds with their traditional identities. Additionally, the rise of digital technology has opened up new avenues for education, entrepreneurship, and activism, though access remains limited in rural areas.

Conclusion

The socio-economic challenges, gender disparities, and effects of modernization pose significant barriers to the progress of Mising women. However, despite these challenges, Mising women have demonstrated resilience and determination, continuing to contribute to their community in vital ways. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, as well as challenging traditional gender norms to



empower women in leadership roles and decision-making. Through concerted efforts at the local, regional, and national levels, these barriers can be overcome, leading to greater gender equality and empowerment for Mising women.

Case Studies of Notable Mising Women

While specific names are not mentioned in this study, the following case studies provide insight into the contributions of notable Mising women who have made significant strides in various fields, contributing to the overall process of nation-building.

Case Study 1: Educator and Social Reformer

A Mising woman from a rural village in Dhemaji district has made profound contributions to the education of young girls in her community. Coming from a family that valued education, she was determined to ensure that other girls in her village did not face the same obstacles she had to overcome.

Background and **Challenges:**
Growing up in a low-income family with limited access to formal education, she witnessed firsthand the difficulties faced by girls in rural Assam. Gendered expectations in her community often led to young girls being kept at home to assist with household chores or farm work, rather than attending school.

Contributions to Education:

After completing her studies, she returned to her community to become an educator. Starting as a teacher in a small village school, she focused on promoting girls' education, working tirelessly to ensure that more girls attended school and completed their education. Her initiatives included organizing awareness programs for parents, emphasizing the importance of educating their daughters.

In addition to teaching, she advocated for better school infrastructure and worked closely with local authorities to improve educational facilities in remote villages. Her efforts helped increase the number of girls enrolled in schools in her area, contributing to a wider trend of educational empowerment for Mising women.

Impact:

Today, many of her students have gone on to pursue higher education and secure jobs in the public and private sectors. Through her leadership and dedication, she has inspired a new generation of educated Mising women, breaking the cycle of poverty and illiteracy in her community.

Case Study 2: Women's Rights Activist

A Mising woman from Lakhimpur district has been an influential figure in the fight for tribal rights and women's empowerment. She grew up in a family that encouraged social justice and activism, which instilled in her a passion for advocating for the rights of marginalized groups.

Background and **Challenges:**
In her youth, she observed the struggles of Mising women, especially in terms of limited access to



resources, healthcare, and opportunities for economic independence. This disparity motivated her to become actively involved in the community to address these issues.

Contributions to Women's Rights and Social Justice:

Her involvement in the **Mising Autonomous Council (MAC)** and the **Mising Ba:ne Kebang** (the Mising women's council) allowed her to work on several key initiatives aimed at uplifting the Mising community. She advocated for better representation of women in local governance and supported policies that addressed issues like child marriage, domestic violence, and gender-based discrimination.

Additionally, she led campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of women's health, focusing on maternal care and access to sanitation. Her work extended to organizing women's self-help groups (SHGs) that provided financial literacy training and helped women access microcredit for small businesses.

Impact:

Her activism has contributed significantly to the increased participation of Mising women in local governance and decision-making processes. She has become a role model for young women in her community, demonstrating that women can be powerful agents of social and political change.

Case Study 3: Leader in Political Movements

A Mising woman from the Majuli Island has played a crucial role in advocating for the rights of indigenous communities and in the preservation of the environment. Her work as an environmental activist and community leader has left an indelible mark on the region's political landscape.

Background and Challenges:

Majuli, known for its rich cultural heritage, is also highly vulnerable to environmental degradation due to erosion and flood-related issues. Growing up in this fragile environment, she witnessed firsthand the adverse effects of climate change on her community. She saw the struggle of Mising women who were often excluded from political discussions related to land rights and environmental protection.

Contributions to Political Activism and Environmental Advocacy:

She emerged as a leader in the **Takam Mising Porin Kebang (TMPK)** and became actively involved in the environmental and land rights movements, pushing for the protection of the Mising's ancestral lands. She worked to bring awareness to the environmental challenges affecting Majuli, particularly the erosion of land due to the mighty Brahmaputra river.

Her leadership in organizing protests, lobbying for better policies, and advocating for the inclusion of women in land rights discussions brought attention to the pressing needs of her community. Through her efforts, Mising women gained more visibility in political dialogues, particularly regarding environmental conservation and resource management.

Impact:

Her advocacy has not only helped protect the environment but has also empowered Mising women to take a more active role in political and environmental activism. She has inspired a new wave of female leaders who are now taking up the mantle in various political and environmental movements in Assam.

Conclusion

Key Findings

The role of Mising women in Assam has evolved significantly over time, with their contributions spanning across various sectors such as education, politics, culture, economy, and social activism. They have played a critical role in preserving cultural traditions, promoting women's education, leading political movements, and contributing to economic development, particularly through entrepreneurship and community-based initiatives. Despite facing numerous challenges such as socio-economic disparities, illiteracy, and gender-based discrimination, Mising women have emerged as resilient leaders in their communities.

Cultural and Social Roles: Mising women have been instrumental in preserving the community's language, festivals, and traditional practices. Their participation in cultural events, such as the **Ali-Aye-Ligang** festival, helps to strengthen cultural identity and foster unity within the community.

Economic Contributions: Through agriculture, handicrafts, and involvement in small-scale industries, Mising women have contributed significantly to the local economy. Their participation in microfinance and entrepreneurship has paved the way for greater financial independence and social empowerment.

Political and Social Advocacy: Mising women have been actively engaged in local governance, with many holding positions in the **Panchayati Raj Institutions** and other community organizations. They have also been at the forefront of activism for tribal rights, environmental protection, and gender equality.

Potential of Mising Women as Agents of Change in Nation-Building

The contributions of Mising women illustrate their potential as powerful agents of change in nation-building. By actively engaging in various domains—education, politics, culture, and the economy—Mising women are not only uplifting their own communities but also contributing to the larger socio-economic and political landscape of Assam and India.

Their role as educators, leaders, activists, and entrepreneurs challenges traditional gender norms and sets a precedent for future generations. The empowerment of Mising women is crucial for achieving inclusive development and social equity, as they are central to the advancement of their communities. Through their ongoing efforts, Mising women are proving that they can be powerful catalysts for positive change, contributing to both local and national development goals.

Suggestions for Policy Interventions and Empowerment Strategies

To further empower Mising women and enhance their contributions to nation-building, the following policy interventions and strategies are recommended:

Education and Skill Development:

Invest in educational infrastructure, particularly in remote and rural areas where Mising women reside, ensuring that girls have access to quality education at all levels.

Provide specialized skill development programs that focus on vocational training, entrepreneurship, and leadership to equip women with the tools to succeed in various sectors.

Gender Equality and Social Protection:

Strengthen policies aimed at reducing gender disparities in leadership roles and decision-making, ensuring greater female representation in local governance and politics.

Implement social protection schemes that provide financial support, healthcare access, and legal assistance to women facing gender-based violence or economic marginalization.

Economic Empowerment:

Support initiatives that promote women's entrepreneurship, particularly in agriculture, handicrafts, and small-scale industries. Access to microfinance, credit facilities, and markets should be expanded to enable women to build sustainable businesses.

Facilitate the creation of women-led cooperatives and self-help groups to foster community-driven economic development.

Cultural Preservation and Promotion:

Encourage policies that support the preservation of the Mising language, traditions, and festivals. This can include funding for cultural programs and promoting indigenous knowledge through educational curricula.

Promote the role of Mising women in cultural heritage preservation by involving them in decision-making processes related to cultural initiatives.

Healthcare and Well-being:

Address healthcare challenges faced by Mising women by improving access to maternal health services, sanitation facilities, and general healthcare.

Promote awareness programs focused on women's health, including reproductive health and nutrition.

Environmental and Tribal Rights:

Enforce policies that safeguard the rights of indigenous communities, particularly with regard to land ownership and environmental conservation. Mising women, as key stakeholders in these areas, should be included in the decision-making process concerning land and natural resources.

By implementing these strategies, the potential of Mising women can be fully realized, leading to greater social and economic empowerment and contributing to the overall development of Assam and India. As agents of change, Mising women can continue to play a pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future for their communities and the nation.

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