CHAPTER IV

Translation in the Making of Identity

...identity is not in the main an individual affair. Individuals make their own identity, but not under conditions of their own choosing. In fact, identities are created in the crucible of colonialism, racial and sexual subordination, and national conflicts, but also in the specificity of group histories and structural position.

—Linda Martin Alcoff

The place of prominence occupied by the identity debate in the present age has made everyone to acknowledge the importance of it and the questions of ethnicity, location, and nationality has gained a central position. The formation of an identity carries with it the baggage of many parameters and it is not easy to isolate the process of identity formation from the cultural, political and locational components related to it. The complexity of identity formation, the difficulties of coming to agreement on a particular aspect of identity has lead to innumerable deliberations on the concept. Here as the emphasis is on translation, the complications rises further. The identity that we are talking about is related to the process of translation and how translation can contribute to the formation of a particular kind of identity. The act of translating the texts written by the women writers of Assam in a specific period (post 1980's) are taken here to examine the identity debate and validate an argument that translation in fact can create an identity. The location of the Assamese women writers within the category of ‘third world women’ and associated concerns like burden of colonialism, multilingual, multidimensional cultural heritage, nationalism provide a debated
space within which the identity formation process has to take place. In the process of bringing the identity of these women writers and their characters to be accessed by a world wide reading public, the help of the English language translation has been taken. Before examining the translations and how they can be used in the making of an identity; the concept of identity and its relation to translation has been established.

The interest and confusion related with identity has led to a conscious enquiry into this field. Identity itself is a paradoxical term and to go by the dictionary definitions, the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology terms it as: “Although the term identity has a long history – deriving from the Latin root ‘idem’ implying sameness and continuity – it was not until the twentieth century that the term came into popular usage” (232). Two major types of identities are mentioned here -- the Freudian psychodynamic theory of identifications and the sociological identification process. Erik Erikson saw identity as a process ‘located’ at the core of an individual and influenced by his or her communal culture.

The emphasis on the ‘individual’ and the ‘self’ has made identity a powerful term not to be ignored in any critical analysis. But there is hardly any agreement regarding the strong emergence of identity and its social and political effects. Linda Martin Alcoff comments that:

[Thus] identities need to be analyzed not only in their cultural location but also in relation to historical epoch. The constellation of practices, beliefs about identity, the lived experiences associated with various identities and the legal or formal recognitions of identity not only undergo constant change but can produce truly new forms of identity.

(Linda Martin, 2004:3)
She also point out how it is an imposed phenomenon and quotes Stuart Hall who briefly says,

...identities are norms we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narrative of the past.

(Linda Martin, 2004:3)

So, identity involves not the growth of the individual self in isolation but it is a constellation of histories, psychology, philosophy, culture and politics surrounding the construction of a particular identity. To analyze identity, we need to study the cultural location, experiences and beliefs associated with the formation of a particular kind of it. We have Fanon voicing a similar opinion when he implies that social identities affect the external as well as the internal aspects of ones life.

The complexities of identity discourse and the women centered perspective pertaining to ‘gendered identity’ can lead us to another direction. The identity formation and the role of translation in bringing it out to a wider audience is the point of discussion here while doing the translations. The thrust area is the search for identity by women through the world of fiction. Critics are of the opinion that women’s search for identity is not very successful within the world of fiction compared to the world outside it. When within fiction it is not successful, the world of translation is not supposed to offer a greater scope to women. Yet there has to be some specific point at which the process should initiate the action of establishing the idea of identity in a globalised culture through translation.

The feminist intervention in identity has opened new vistas for theorizing it in a different aspect. The political implications related to identity formation are
not like the politics that influences fundamental changes. Rather it is a reliance on personal identity, accepting the importance of it to bring change to the political, social institutions.

Over the ages the critical enquiry has returned results that reflect the problematic relation of women and literature. Since the 1920’s the main aspect of women’s writing involves itself with a search for identity and self and Showalter discusses it in her seminal work *A Literature of Their Own* (1977). Susan Gubar and Sandra M. Gilbert defined the aim of nineteenth century women’s writing as: “the women’s quest for self-definition.” (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979: 76). Women’s writing differs from the writings of men in a considerable way. The female consciousness is responsible for the creation of a different perspective from the masculine mindset. The female experience varies from male experiences creating separate models of expression. Judith Kegan Gardiner commenting on these differences in her essay “On Female Identity and Writing by Women” terms female identity as a “process”. This process can be used to define the diverse traits of writing by women. Gardiner calls the hero as “her authors daughter’ and uses it to convey her clarification on women writers distinctive closeness with her characters indicating a relationship between woman reader and character. The close personal relationship to literature helps in the analysis of the strategies of women writers— the identification between narrator, author and reader and the representation of memory. In this set of variables when the translator enters, a new dimension is created. The translator has to remain as an invisible link between source and target to carry forward the process of identity formation through the world of translated texts.
The identity theorists like Erikson, Holland and Lichtenstein do not offer any distinctive theory for female identity as against male identity. The recent trends have changed and the works of Nancy Chodorow comprehensively explain the psychoanalytic justification of gender. Chodorow argues that the personality of a female child shapes up differently from a male child and this idea does not correspond to Holland’s and Lichtenstein’s idea of a primary identity. The model proposed by the male identity theorists support stability and constancy as desirable for human identity. But Chodorow proposes a fluid identity for women where the identity grows in a process through infancy to womanhood. This assigns female identity a less fixed and more flexible identity than the male counterparts. The process of identity formation is a necessary criterion that we must realize before we can apply it to the writing by women. Gardiner puts forward her argument for the women writers and specifically the twentieth century women writers and confirms that they

........ express the experience of their own identity in what and how they write, often with a sense of urgency and excitement in the communication of truths just understood. Often they communicate a consciousness of their identity through paradoxes of sameness and difference – from other women, especially their mothers, from men ; and from social injunctions for what women should be, including those inscribed in the literary canon.

(Gardiner: 184)

The approach of the women reader and the women writer is different in certain ways from men’s perception. They relate to the text as a producer or consumer/reader with the specificity of their gender in the backdrop. Now when we try to go over to the field of translation – the identity debate takes another turn.
Translation as an activity, was assigned a place inferior to original writing. This disadvantageous position adds up to the hierarchical subversive position of women writers in translation. The emergence of strong feminist discourse since the 1970's and 80's have encouraged the debates in the field of translation as well. The process of translation which involves transfer from one linguistic code to another is not just a matter to be dealt in isolation. The issues that translation brings along include 'culture', 'identity' and there is a need to look at their formation within the field of translation.

Here we are concerned with another aspect as the works concerned belong to the post-colonial world — a less represented world of literature in the international scenario. The colonial context in India has been debated and explained by various critics and the theory that emerges is that English language was used in India to project a humanitarian face of colonialism in contrast to the direct rule of the British over Indian continent.

The postcolonial criticism offers another angle to the formation of identity and the cultural identity politics. The term ‘third world’ justifies the existence of a ‘first world’ and the identity debate within these two worlds brings in the matter of subversion along with it. Regarding this debate Gayatri Spivak suggests the margin being at the service of the centre and

When a cultural identity is thrust upon one because the centre wants an Identifiable margin, claims for marginality assure validation from the centre.

(Spivak, 1993: 55)

This position of the third-world women within an identifiable margin is quite unsatisfactory for critics like Spivak. The colonial discourse is not
satisfactory to the 'real' third-world women and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003: 20) uses the word 'colonialism' as a mode of suppression. She argues that the 'Othering' of 'third-world woman' invokes double-colonisation as the third-world women are considered politically immature against the progressive philosophy of Western feminism. In the light of such debates when we introduce translation practices to denote identity (cultural, linguistic, political or gendered) the outcome seems to be out of focus and control. Translation as a practice has already been mentioned as a mode occupying a lower hegemonic structure and the search for identity seems doubly endangered in such a position. Before examining the translations for the problematic of translation, we need to focus specially on cultural identity and the location debates.

The concept of cultural identity brings in more space for debate as the margin between personal identity and cultural identity is quite blurred. In the years after the Second World War, the concepts of “identity”, “personal identity” and “cultural identity” emerged in the field of humanities and social sciences. Though the terms were in use earlier, the inclusion of culture with the individual came later on. The Western worldview puts emphasis on the antithesis of the individual and society. There are cultures where no distinction is made between the individual and the society and no clear-cut distinction exists between personal and cultural identity. Jonathan Friedman (1993) mentions some traditional Asian cultures and gives the example of Japan where individuals’ personal identity is closely dependant on the relationships and ties with different groups. Social psychologists like George H. Mead, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman have shown that a persons self-image develops through social interaction establishing
the fact that the personal identity is a social and cultural phenomenon. With all these observations and debates, the concepts of identity remain rather vague. Erkki Sevanen (2004: 8) quotes Rien T. Sergers and Rinhold Viehoff to list a few dimensions for determining people’s cultural identity:

(a) A national, ethnic, religious and linguistic dimension.

(b) A dimension that is characterised by people’s sexual behaviour and self-definition and their roles in social life.

(c) A generation-specific dimension. Members of a single generation have same sort of basic experiences of the world.

(d) People’s social positions. The dimension includes people’s family and kinship ties and their places in wider social hierarchies.

(e) An organisational-corporative dimension. This dimension is determined by people’s places in working life and by the co-operation network of their workplace.

(Jari, Sevanen, and Stotesbury, 2004:8)

All these dimensions influence people’s identity and the cultural and personal identities intermingle within the structure.

In our discussion of the translation politics and the search and creation of identity which is essentially ‘female’ or ‘gendered’ the concept of location is another aspect which needs to be looked at. The location of the region from where the writings are taken up for translation definitely falls into the periphery of the ‘third-world’. Assam is a north-eastern part of the Indian subcontinent rich in natural and cultural resources with economic backwardness and geographical isolation from the main land. The problems of the region have definitely
overpowered its prosperity in the post-independence era and the accumulated angst among the people of Assam with the problem of ‘illegal’ migrants conjured up protests during the late seventies and early eighties. The turbulence in the region did not die down with democratic protests of the students’ agitation of All Assam Students Union(AASU) and the face of terrorism showed its worst appearance since the later half of late eighties. During this period massive change had come over the region and an entire generation suffered from the gross atrocities of the state machineries devising a change in the identity formation during the period. The literature that was written during this period by upcoming or established Assamese writers reflected the turmoil of the times. The literary world was more vibrant in its projection of the problem than it found national coverage in the real sense. Literature forming a nationalism of its own has been there all over the world. Here the situation was no different. But the case in point here is that- can translation help in creating a specific identity of the people of the region, specifically women, if we look at the writings of the post 80’s writers and their works to form a statement. The Assamese women writers creating fiction at the time had to go through those harrowing times influencing the identity question which involves the personal identity formation along the lines of social and cultural interaction. The post 80’s scenario of Assam saw a mixed bag of actions and reactions. The loss of young lives during the Assam agitation left the state in awe and the upcoming terrorist activities along with the strong action by armed forces created a gory scene all over. The scene finds reflections in the writings of the period, which needs to be brought forward to the National scene. In a multilingual and multicultural country like India, conceptualization of identity
through fiction seems to be a difficult task. The frame within which one has to work does not conform to a single structured whole. The cultural, political, gendered roles come into play while conceiving an idea of forming an identity to be projected for the wider canvas beyond the state and the nation. For this formation, the help of the English language, the language of the colonizer is taken up as the basis. This complicates the scene in such a way that the ground is lost and the theoretical framework brings in the concepts of an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) which is not a unified whole, but is concentrated upon the projection given by the women writing out their minds through short-fiction. The process of women's search for identity is even less successful within the world of fiction than outside it. Carolyn Heilburn in her book *Reinventing Womanhood* has dealt with the confusion regarding the debate of identity and claims that successful women are "male-identified" and this is her failure as "woman takes her identity from her men.” The debate over the male or female cantered identity creates space for further deliberation on identity. The formation of a cultural context is important as the region represented here through the translation is a less represented area in the national literary scene.

The lesser representation that the women writers suffer can lead to the debate of identity formation in an oblique way. Here we are not concerned with just the writings of the women but how through translation an identity formation can take place. Here Spivak’s remark can be taken into account when she says:

> We begin to see that the project of translating culture within the politics of identity is not a quick fix.

(Gayatri Spivak 1992,: 794)
The process involves globalization of the act of translation which also means that we live in a translated world sharing cultures and meeting at different crossroads with different cultures. Identity becomes a key issue where individual and collective selves are given importance to create a relation between the two. Sherry Simon observes that translation as a cultural production increases “internalisation and the struggles between two worlds and two languages.” She affirms:

Women ‘translate themselves’ into the language of patriarchy, migrants strive to ‘translate’ their past into the present. Translation, as a tangible representation of a secondary or meditated relationship to reality, has come to stand for the difficulty of access to language, of a sense of exclusion from the codes of the powerful.

(Simon, 1996: 134)

The identities of those who consider themselves marginal to the Western culture of power, yet again considers translation as an ambiguous term. Homi Bhaba takes his position in this regard considering “translational culture” as a process through which “newness enters the world” (Bhabha, 1994: 212). The destabilizing effect of translation upon cultural identity of the post-colonial subject is considered as: “the basis for new modes of cultural creation...crucial to contemporary thinking.” (Simon, 1996: 135)

The enquiry made by Simon in the field of translation studies has brought forward the result that the shifting limits of cultural identity affect the way translation is conceptualised. On the basis of the preceding arguments, and considering the conceptualisation of translation, the actual act of translation can now be looked at. The short stories that have been selected and translated do not
form a big bulk to build up the identity as a complete concept with its multiple components like cultural, political and gendered identity. The attempt initiates the formation of a new kind of identity that has been lying hidden from the public eye when we consider the dominant western worldview as 'public' and the marginalised Assamese identity as 'private' as the Assamese women writers find lesser space within the discussion of the identity debates.

The stories taken for translation are from the period after volatile eighties, and the consciousness of the women regarding the situation creates a healthy atmosphere of projecting the cultural, gendered and political identity of the women through the translations. The first story that makes a strong point for the identity formation is Purobi Bormudoi's story “Rajniti Nubuja Manuh” here the writer is concerned with the identity crisis that women goes through in the times of a crisis. The women in the story who are the central forces in the story witness a tense situation losing their self in the turmoil. Even at the birth of a child, the young mother Malati visualises a different picture as against the praises for the baby showers down:

People started fancying about his looks. Someone found him resembling his father, others said that he would be like his mother. Some people, some old ladies had a glimpse of his late grandfather in the boys face. Many people, many observations. But Malati saw a burning fire in the boy’s face. She saw her household that was destroyed in that fire. She saw her husband who was still untraced. The cows that they lost, the two bulls, the goats, the swans, the pigeons, the red-bordered Gamochas half-woven in the loom that
were burnt to ashes, the double bed in the bed-room, the hearth, the front yard, the backyard the place of worship – she saw all these. [p.174]

Malati’s experience of the world was not a happy one as from her childhood she had witnessed situations that never allowed her to form a strong sense of identity for herself. This individual experience has influenced the process of her identity formation, yet she is not a person to be carried away by the situation. At the time of trouble the importance of the moment is more critical than the excitement at the birth of her first child.

She had no one of her own, no parents, no brothers. Malati had been brought up by a distantly related aunt under constant hardship and humiliation – she understands misery, knows how to endure adversity. But now- getting the loving shelter and warmth of her mother-in-law’s bosom – she realizes that if you have desolation you should also have a bosom to rest upon and to shed tears. [p.174-175]

These moments in the lives of these women create a space which is very special and the women alone can share those exclusive moments as they have seen the oppression at different points to which they are subjected without their awareness. They share an identity, more specifically a cultural identity based on their experiences as women belonging to a specific time frame.

Satya P. Mohanty in his discussion on epistemic status of identity has proclaimed that the recent theories on cultural identity have focused on the status of personal experience, examining the claims to representativeness. He asserts that:
...the essential view would be that the identity common to members of a social group is stable and more or less unchanging, since it is based on the experiences they share.

(Mohanty, 1997: 202)

This basis of experience as an essential content for identity helps in explaining translation as a process of creating a new identity. The stories of the women writers that have been translated belong to a specific experience zone as the period has been ascertained and the particular aspects of their stories becomes the criterion for the selection of these stories for translation. The stories like Roudrasnan (A Terrible Sunbath) by Manorama Das Medhi, Ketiyaba Numali Edin (Sometimes on a Day Numali) by Arupa Patangia Kalita, Rajniti Nubuja Manuh (Stranger to Politics) by Purabi Bormudoi, Prem Gatha (Saga Of Love) by Manorama Das Medhi, Ejon Sainikor Mrityut (On The Death Of A Soldier) by Phul Goswami, Sahajatri (Fellow Traveler) by Phul Goswami, Atmasamarpan (Renunciation) by Anuradha Sharma Pujari form a part of that identity forming experience as they share the dilemma of the time. All the stories bring out the incidents that have their bearing on the critical times. The writer and her characters belong to different moments in time and place, yet the occurrences of events that are related to the Assam Movement and the terror torn environment helps in forming a specific identity, which at times remain hidden from the public eye as there is no one to voice it clearly.

The women writers of the selected texts have captured particular moments in such a way that they can be used for the understanding of personal or 'gendered' identities and cultural identities. Sergers and Viehoff's dimensions of determining cultural identity mentioned earlier clearly indicates that there is
intermingling of cultural and personal identities. Factors like people's social position, ethnic and national dimensions, social hierarchies influence identity formation. To locate these factors within the texts and how they can be used for the concept of making identity through translation a discussion of the texts and their translation are used here for the purpose.

In the stories *Roudrasnan* by Monorama Das Medhi and *Ketiyaba Numali Edin* by Arupa Patangia Kalita appropriates two particular moments of violence that have immense importance in the historic moment of Assam as they serve as deciding moments through which experiences of women finds an outlet in the short story medium. In *Roudrasnan* the victim of the moment is a young boy Son, who serves as a night guard in his village as village committees are formed with the members from the village households to protect the people from any adverse situation that can be created by the militants. The reluctant mother sends her son for the night duty with a lot of insistence that he do not expose himself to the cold of the night, and shows concern over his security. But her love does not save the boy from the accident in which he gets killed. Instead of keeping guard he falls asleep on the railway track with his friend and by mistake overrun by the train.

All of them are moving in a hurry to pick up Sôn and-------- the train sped away making great sound.

What may be the outcome? Pieces of flesh. They remained in the railway track for a long period of time. The mother arrived. She is not crying. She is shouting with all her might - Sôn! Open you eyes .......... [p.153]
In Arupa Patangia Kalita’s story, in a similar vein, the beloved youngest child of the family, Numali, gets killed in a shootout when there was an army raid in her village to nab a few terrorists. Numali in a bid to help the stranger who was asking the address of her neighbours house becomes a bait in the cross firing. Her lifeless body created a void in the atmosphere:

Looking through the window she saw a tall man holding Numali at his chest and firing shots. He had been trying to cover himself up by pinning down Numali like that. The mother could not clearly locate the girl hidden by the man’s body. Her voice is also not heard. In the smell and smoke of gunfire her long plait of hair resembling a black poisonous snake shook in the air, and then went out of sight. The youngest son closed the door when he saw that the mother was about to open it and run out and said – “Mother! father is no more and if now you too....” And that very instant the white chadar of Numali had been reddened with blood. [p.132]

In both these stories the mothers live through the same moment of panic and hopes are shattered beyond recognition. The victimised mother is a constant figure in the writings by women which is not just a fictionalised account of the times. The ultimate victim of the time is that woman, whether mother, wife or daughter; within the four walls of the household, bearing the burden of sorrow created by the times. This aspect of suffering has not found much voice in the outside world as the translation activity carried on till now are mostly restricted to the writings of Assamese writers who have already gained a place of repute. These
stories, mostly published in periodicals and much later collected in individual story collections of these writers have not created a gender specific or identity specific collection in the source language itself. In translation, their area specific representation is yet to gain prominence. But the striking similarities in the narratives make a strong point when we deal with them as texts which can help in making a specific identity statement.

The victimised mother again figures in Phul Goswami’s symbolic rendering of the modern onrush of human beings in no particular direction in the story *Sahajatri*:

Mother said to me just before her death – “If Bapu does not come even after twelve years then perform his last rites.” Why did mother think that he would not come? I learnt from his mates – the people who made him to commit the murder – relieved him of his life to wipe out all traces of that incident. But I could not understand why mother thought like that. Perhaps her compassion gave her insight. Getting that news a thought disturbed me repeatedly – the crimson flesh of his sturdy body taller than six feet perhaps occupied a considerable portion of space. [p.185-186]

Here the mother with her natural insight foresees the situation and accepts the reality as she had actually started losing interest in life since the day her son stepped into the web of unrest:
It has not appeared to me that my mother dies only now. She started dying since a long period of time.... The process of dying started when Bapu started coming home at the dead of night. [p.183]

The echo of this similar concern of the women writers and their insight into the situation forms a formidable discourse for establishing a separate identity. It is a fact that the male writers are writing stories with similar sensibilities and sometimes they express their concern of the social situation more urgently. But the lesser representation by women does not subject these writing unfit for translation. Rather they arouse more concern over the situation that why they are less vociferous.

Spivak in “The Politics of Translation” ruminate over the translation choices and comments:

…the translator from a Third World Language should be sufficiently in touch with what is going on in literary production in that language to be capable of distinguishing between good and bad writing by women, resistant and conformist writing by women.

(in Venuti, 2000: 404)

This choice of good/bad and resistant/conformist is inevitable to establish the identity politics and make translation a medium for making a particular identity. The third world women has not been represented in the manner the western women got their representation whether in theory or in fiction. So the stories that are taken up here serve as a strong medium for propagating the views of the women who observe the situation without having a hand in controlling most of the situations.
The politics of location, the moments in the history and a specific culture helps in the growth of an identity and these concepts has already been discussed in the earlier pages. Now a few examples from the stories can show us how the political turmoil of the students movement, the insurgency problem created a particular kind of narrative, which comes from a few women writers, who show their sensibility towards the situation and helps in creating that essential identity which does not exclude men from its consideration. Some of the stories have a male protagonist and the situations also evolve around them. Yet the ultimate outcome that we encounter helps in formulating the idea of an identity which is gender specific and carries the burden of the culture it comes from.

In the story *Ejon Sainikor Mrityut* (On the Death of a Soldier), Manorama Das Medhi has continually harped on the importance of a persona liked by very few for his eccentricities and constructs the character of Chowdhuri, as an unique one.

“People are sick, but they have not felt it. Sickness has turned into a habit.” – The gentlemen very often repeated these words. And for his words his relatives, his neighbours nicknamed him ‘Pagala’ (mad) Chowdhury. He had been identified as ‘mad’, ‘insane’ which made me curious to know him. Nobody enjoyed his company – they get irritated. People ignored him as a person who pokes nose in other’s affairs.

- His line of thinking is unique. Others follow the much trodden path – but he does not. Are these the sign of insanity? Barua expressed his irritation like this.
Actually the entire system is so rotten that the person cannot tolerate. We also feel it, suffer – but let it go on as it is – but Chowdhury cannot.

[p.201-202]

The eccentricities of this man termed as Pagala Chowdhuri is in reality reaction brought about by the practical versions of reality. But people have forgotten to realise the actual situation and at times indifferent to such situations which has given rise to the political upheavals of the time. The character possessed within him the flames to bum the impurities, but got no support from the society. Das Medhi puts her words in this manner to describe the death of the character of Chowdhury:

All people do not possess a fire within them; but there was a fire burning inside the heart of Chowdhury. The funeral pyre can bum that man’s physical body but what can burn out that fire within? That fire is not yet extinguished. Working in the kitchen at night, I look at the glow of fire running around in Chowdhry’s vegetable garden.

[p.204]

The character haunts the narrator of the story and he cannot accept the death easily:

People have failed to understand that the death of a person like Uttam Chowdhury should not be taken for granted. If they do not want to realize this -- what else will they realize? The man wanted to make us understand. He wanted to make us realize how
important it was to understand, to keep your eyes open! He was being laughed at — teased — and gathering them in his heart he breathed his last. This is no usual death — death of an epoch — an era. Noting else is to be done after this — end of all of doing and accepting how normally men have accepted this horrible end and have kept them busy in preparation for formalities. [p.209]

The spirit of the man is lauded by the author and such a death is regretted as people with the sensibility of the character of Chowdhury, might have helped to prevent the present political situation in Assam. The character is shown as someone protesting against the corruption and the anomalies in the society and since no one cares for those values, the story has to highlight on news items that has become common issues:

Have you gone through the newspaper today? More than two hundred people are dead. Twenty seven people were bunt alive — massacre by the people armed with weapons. Gujarat is burning. Quite recently seventeen people were killed even here at Paharpur. Hundreds of people are dying everyday.

Yes, I know. I have read all these news. Massacre at Neli, public grave at Hatisila, death at Paharpur, at Gujarat — not only me but everyone feels sorry about them. But the normalization of such news wears me out. [p.210-211]

Everything falls into normal pace even after incidents of terror. No one pauses for a moment to change the situation. This experience is vital to everyone
in Assam and the writer puts the situation in such a way that it sums up the whole scenario around which the other stories, which have been translated, are built up. The death of Chowdhury is not acceptable, as the need for such people have increased for building a saner society.

It is an error to accept this singular, exceptional person as a normal human being. People are sick. Unknown diseases are ailing them – Uttam Chowdhury thought so. Chowdhry is no more alive to think of respite from this disease. Let the flame burn in the kitchen garden – let the man be there. Entering a new body he will again have the advantage of thinking about people. [p.214]

The character of Chowdhury is shown as a lone crusader fighting to correct the society of its evil forces:

The man tried his level best. Fought against the powerful explosives with the simple dao in his hand. He fought till the end – never made a compromise. [p.211]

This urge to have people with correct insight is felt instantaneously by every sensible citizen of Assam as it can bring peace to the land. Through the male protagonist the writer has expressed the experience of her times and asks for a respite from such situations with the help of similar characters.

The story “Saga of Love” is a complicated story of multilayered identities. The identity of the writer Das Medhi, her creation of the character of the ‘writer’ and the world of the story written by the ‘writer’ is a unique process of identity
formation. Instead of making part analysis of the story, a reading of the whole story at one go can prove the point that translation does help in the making of an identity, which is very special for the women writers and though at times, Das Medhi faul ters in passing across a strong message (the ending scene of the story); the overall implication is quite heartening. These kinds of stories can actually enrich the process of translation in making many layered impressions on the reader looking for a context situated in the post eighties scenario of Assam.

The identity debates are complicated and the politics behind them in the process of translation has also been looked at. The translators identity, the identity forming power of translation and the influence of all these factors on the process of translation is a never-ending debatable proposition that needs serious attention from the practitioners of translation.