Conclusion
Katigorah represents the microcosm of a population which is exclusively rural. It is symbolic of rural India with its simple life and moderate wants. On the physical plane, it borders a foreign country, Bangladesh; it also borders a state of the Indian union, Meghalaya and a district of the state, North Cachar Hills. Considering different aspects, the study of the Katigorah constituency yields much information which is similar to that of any other rural area of the country.

The area is not only demographically diverse, territorially also shows a great amount of diversity having undulating hills and flat lands. Its location should attract attention of the planners and administrators at the regional level. Its territory is used for the very strategic national highway that connects south Assam, states of Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. This vital highway breathes into the economic sustenance of the whole region. The interiors of the constituency are not fortunate to have good road connectivity. Many tea gardens with good yields are located within the constituency. This provides a different colour to the study. The tea gardens in their pay roll have large women workers. The stock of information is collected from the primary sources and very few information are available from the secondary sources. No printed book could be retraced from any source on Katigorah and its history.
The bulk of the commerce and trade of not only South Assam but also of other neighbouring states of Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur are carried through the road link which is known as National Highway 44. This important National Highway enters South Assam through the Katigorah constituency covering Malidahar, Gumra, Kalain and ends up with the Barak road bridge covering a distance of 30 kms within the Katigorah constituency.

The communities live within the territory show a wide diversity, in terms of languages spoken, their cultural pattern and value system. The economic conditions represent their standard of living. Profession wise, there is diversity which can be termed as traditional. Most of them are farmers, not much touched by the modern innovations, though the fertility of the land is assured through the good rainfall, the area receives every year. The fishermen communities earn their livelihood traditionally going to the river Barak which borders it, small rivulets and streams. The economic backwardness prevails as the land is not fully utilized for productive use. The lands are cultivated only once and only a few patches of lands experience intensive cultivation throughout the year. The tea gardens, seven in number employ large number of workers who were brought to the gardens by the planters in the nineteenth century. The overall population exhibits social and
religious diversity.

The constituency is blocked in the west by the rising hills of the south eastern flank of the Meghalayan range and the northern border touches the Barail hill range within the district of North Cachar Hills. The Kalain Development Block, the westerly part of the constituency has greater share of lands where most of the lands are above the flood level. The Katigorah Block has, on the other hand, wide stretches of flat lands which are flood prone. The area experiences heavy rainfall during monsoon. The rainfall is substantial and the floods ranging from moderate to heavy occur here, sometimes with paralyzing effects on communication and agriculture and the constituency remains isolated from the outside world for days. The area reels under the effects of such floods and it takes months to recover from the damages. The flood occurring in the month of June and July, 2004 which paralysed connections with the outside world for months is comparatively of a recent memory.

Though the primary source of income of the people is agriculture, the advanced method of cultivation could not make much headway as there is lack of initiative and drive from the cultivators themselves and the government agencies are failing to motivate the cultivators. For a clear half a century, there was no attempt made to improve the irrigation facilities in the constituency.
The winter months (from October to March) are generally rain free and the farmers experience the paucity of water in their lands during these months.

The British commercial enterprise in the nineteenth century established some tea gardens in the area, some of them, Jalalpur, Kalain, Hilara and Kalaincherra are big and yielding but besides these tea gardens, there is no such industry that may bring economic stability for people. There is no small industry to supplement agriculture as the fresh sources of income for the people. There is obvious lack of enterprise among the young people and the expertise to start small or cottage industries are absent. The absence of a visible economic activity in the constituency left the areas unchanged for many decades. There is influx of the outsiders who do not contribute substantially towards the production except occupying the hitherto virgin lands in the area. Kalain, Digorkhal and Gumra are on the NH 44 and hundreds of trucks carry tons of goods and stop at these small stations. Some hotels and dhabas appeared on the roadside to provide them food and shelter. This movement of the trucks which cover long distances in the country continues throughout the year. The rural poverty takes some young men and women to the high way traffic. Soon, many girls surrender to the ‘unseemly relationships’ with the truck drivers who stay there
for rests. The road side dhabas have sprung up for the temporary stays of the truck drivers and their attendants. It is seen that there is absence of any positive police inspection in the whole area and the highway passes through sparsely populated tea gardens and the jungles on the slowly rising hills which gathers heights after entering the state of Meghalaya some kilometers away from the place. There is no surveillance over these socially damaging activities. The reports of such unseemly relationships are obtained from the indirect references made in the ‘Aids survey’ conducted on the constituency by the Deshabandhu Club in the years 2007-08. The police force working in this inter state border region are not remembered for good reasons and so much of unauthorized tolls are received by the policemen on duty and the postings in these stations are considered lucrative by many of them. Looking at the green fields, undulating hillocks and streams, one can visualize the prospects of economic development of the constituency but the dismal show of greed and nepotism destroy all such possibilities. Good fishermen do not know how to make use of hundreds of ponds and streams for the production of fish which may be a potential source of income. Though there has been a long standing demand by the people of the constituency to declare the constituency, a civil subdivision, there is no vigorous movement in
support of the demand and thus it remained unfulfilled till today. The lack of innovation and enterprise is visible everywhere and the mere establishment of a civil subdivision will not take away its backwardness.

Another important reason for the under development of the constituency is that except few, all the members of the Assembly representing this constituency were rank outsiders. They evinced least interests in the development of the area. The members who hailed from this constituency too failed to leave any mark in the field of development. When the general character of the members to the Assembly are analysed, one common feature comes out, their complete disinterestedness in serving the people. The people point out some problems to them many times but no permanent solution is initiated from their end. The communication, education, health and employment, all are in disarray. None is convinced when a member cites reasons for the non completion of vital roads connecting headquarters town of the district with the important places within the constituency. The Kalain-Silchar road may be mentioned in this respect and there is a long standing public demand to make this road an alternative to the Silchar Kalain road via Badarpur. There are sheer incompetence rules every where. The NH 44 is always found in utter state of disrepair. The road

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communication serves as the indicator of development and in this respect, the constituency fails miserably. It is noticeable that the popular aspirations run high and the people want their representatives to deliver but they hardly have any concept of development. A representative must put the interests of the constituency above self. The agencies in charge of development are inactivated as there are many levels of executing a project in the field, often they clash with each other over ‘the spoils’ of development. There are four internal roads within the constituency, namely, the Gumra-Sadirkhal road (5 km) near the Bangladesh border, Lakhipur-Baraitali to Digabor Tea Estate (8 km), Mahanpur to Banaimullah Sluice Gate (7 km) and Tarinipur to Sialtek (5 km) which can be specially mentioned as these roads are under the Prime Minister’s Sarak Yajana Scheme which are directly supervised by the Government of India. The people’s faith in the projects of the Central Government are retained because of the standards of execution is better. The roads constructed under the SYS are comparatively better than the roads maintained by the state. There is better system of accountability exists.

The general improvement of some of the roads in the constituency has indirect effect on the socio-economic condition. A serious patient can be brought to the hospital quickly. A student can
attend his school in time and the commercial activities of the small shopkeepers and the marginal farmers increase and become viable. The women are encouraged to come out and participate in many activities which were not possible earlier. As the study relates to the women of the area, we may assess the effects of it on them. Young girls from different communities crowd the schools and study along side boys. The road connectivity is therefore, breaks a barrier of gender as well as brings women to the path of development.

The improvement of road connectivity has a bearing on the enrolment of girls in schools. It is seen that the enrolment of girls in schools in the constituency increased and mothers, irrespective of diverse economic backgrounds, now show a better awareness in many matters concerning the girl children. They consult the doctors at the pre-natal stage. In our study, it is observed that many women are now voluntarily coming forward to take advantage of the scopes available to them.

The Deshabandhu Club, a non-government organization of the Katigorah constituency and it is well-known in South Assam for its activities in different fields ranging from medical care, education and to road building. It focuses on the maternity and child care and now runs an educational centre for the disabled children also. The socio economic resurgence of rural women occupies much of its
attention. Some panchayat areas where the Deshabandhu Club works, already made their presence felt. They have some projects in hand like Reproductive and Child Health, Self-Help Groups. The socio-economic conditions of women of those areas, previously had less attention from any development agency and after the arrival of the Deshabandhu Club in the scene, the women are responding spontaneously to the requirements of the maternal and child care.

Regarding health awareness for women, it is observed that the areas where the Deshabandhu Club and its field NGOs are working, a section of women have educated themselves enough to spread the message of the health care on scientific lines. Women of upper class Hindu and Muslim families are already to some extent aware of different hazards related to health. In this way, except the women of tribal communities who are already to some extent empowered by involving themselves with their traditional handloom production, a good percentage of women of general category are economically empowered by way of Self Help Groups organized by the Deshabandhu Club. Yet, a large section of women, not in touch with the working government agencies and NGOs, are still in dark about the remedies and they suffer silently in remote villages where no information is received. These women remained socially and economically dependent on the males who earn much less to
provide any health care to their family members. The survey leads to one experience that there is suppression of all emotions and even facts by the illiterate and tradition bound woman, fearful of dominating males in the house who retained the right to beat her for speaking truth to an outsider even though that outsider is a woman. In a society where the religious bigotry, illiteracy and economic impoverishment combine together, women are the recipients of all the miseries of life. This state of affair is seen where there is no effort spared to develop better road connectivity, schools for imparting good education and health care units.

Regarding political empowerment, it is observed that in the Katigorah constituency, very few women are politically empowered in true sense of the term. Political empowerment does not mean that a person is politically empowered when he or she is a member of a decision making body. During survey, it is found that a large section of women Panchayat President/members manage their office duties with the help of either husbands or some other male colleagues. When some of them are interviewed, they do not have any time to talk as they are busy with household matters. Even they do not have idea about their duties to be done in the panchayats.

The political empowerment for women at grass root level cannot be achieved in one day. It is a gradual process. It is the
manifestation of an inner call coming out of the depth of mind. The benevolence of a state in its right frame of mind and sensible NGOs may back on the inner call to manifest properly. There is continuous need of enlightening women to shake off their veils and come out in the open to have their rightful places in our democracy. The socio-economic development for women is fulfilled only when they come out in the open to grab the opportunities.

Women of India should be taken into such a position that they realize the true meaning of what political empowerment is and the necessity to be politically empowered. A woman is traditionally confined to her home but a democracy accords equal partnership in the efforts to build our nation. As the meaningful utilization of man power is the goal we set, women power should be utilized properly. A girl has as much right as a boy to grow up meaningfully and the nation would enjoy the real strength of a democracy when their combined efforts turned into the strength of a nation.

In this context, Swami Vivekananda observed, “Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way and Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.”

REFERENCE: