1.1 The Problem

Conflict is one of the terms that have been frequently used in Sociological Sciences. The definition of conflict is very broad. Generally, the term conflict has been interpreted as the opposite of peace. Conflict means an encounter with arms. It is identified with fighting whether physically or verbally with implications of winning or losing. Conflict can occur between individuals, within families, among community members and between different ethnic groups. According to the ‘Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences’, ‘Conflict involves the defence of what one already has or the acquisition of what one has not; and acquisition may mean the taking away of that which pertains to another or the appropriation of that which another will like to have. The defensive, destructive and obstructive aspects of conflict become entangled with one another in every crisis’. It can also be ascribed as a result of relative deprivation, dissatisfaction of basic needs, and failure of organizational functions, asymmetric power relations and dominant social structure (Gurr, 2010). Conflict is a situation where co-operation does not exist or partially exists (Tannam, 2007). Conflict is ‘social constructions instigated by political entrepreneurs but rooted in the social continuities of state structures and processes and reproduced through violence itself’ ((Biswa & Thomas, 2006).

Conflict is defined as “a struggle over claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise or eliminate their
rivals’. Later he defined conflict as a ‘clash of values and interests’ (Coser, 1965). Kalevi J. Holsti (1996) describes four categories of conflict based on a typology of actors and/or objectives: i) Standard state versus state wars and armed interventions, ii) Decolonizing wars of ‘national liberation’ iii) Internal wars based on ideological goals (internal factional/ideological conflicts), and iv) State-nation wars including armed resistance by ethnic, language and/ or religious groups, often with the purpose of secession or separation from the state. Conflict is a clash of interest. Conflict may be violent or non-violent whereas violence by definition involves the use of force, be it physical or psychological. Unlike violence, conflict does not necessarily inflict physical or mental violence on others. Simmel has carried out a classical analysis of various forms of conflict and held that “Conflict is a form of socialisation and that a certain amount of discord, inner divergence and outer controversy is originally tied up with the very elements that ultimately held the group together.” “Conflict is conceived as a socio-psychological phenomenon of deviance which is to be contained for ensuring structural stability of a plural society (Mathur, 2003). Conflict can be peacefully resolved through negotiation without the use of violent weapons. When a peaceful process fails, the stage of armed conflict is reached.

Armed conflict means conflict supported by armaments or we can say it is a narrow category of the general term ‘Conflict’ which means those conflicts where one or both sides resort to the use of force. An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility which concerns government and or territory where the use of armed forces between the two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state,
results in at least 25 battle related deaths. The separate elements of the definition can be operationalized as follows:

**Use of armed force**: Use of arms in order to promote the parties’ general position in the conflict, resulting in deaths.

**Arms**: Any material means, e.g., manufactured weapons but also sticks, stones, fire, water etc.

**25 deaths**: A minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year and per incompatibility.

**Party**: A government of a state or any opposition organization or alliance of opposition.

**Government**: The party controlling the capital of the state.

**Opposition organization**: Any Non Governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force.

**State**: A State is

An **internationally recognized sovereign government** controlling a specified territory,

Or

An **internationally unrecognized government** controlling a specific territory whose sovereignty is not disputed by another internationally recognized sovereign government previously controlling the same territory.

**Incompatibility** concerning government and/or territory the incompatibility, as stated by the parties, must concern government and/or territory.

**Incompatibility**: The stated generally incompatible positions.
**Incompatibility concerning Government:** Incompatibility concerning type of the political system, the replacement of the central government or the change of its political composition.

**Incompatibility concerning territory:** Incompatibility concerning status of the territory, e.g., the change of the state in control of a certain territory (interstate conflict), secession or autonomy (interstate conflict).


Armed conflict situation arises at the instance of external aggression by a foreign country or internal strife within the country ranging from ethnic strife, communal hatred, attack on marginalized communities and minorities, religious fundamentalism, extremism, class and caste conflict and state repression. In the event of armed conflict, the state machinery performed functions, such as protecting repressive state elites from rebellion by their own people. This is often described as maintaining the internal security of states at the expense of non-elite citizens (Goswami, R., & Dutta, I. 1999).

The modern intrastate armed conflict is based on three overlapping types, namely state control, state formation and failed state type. On the basis of the analysis defined in International Humanitarian law (Branch of International law), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) propose the following definitions which reflect the strong legal opinion. International armed conflicts exist whenever there is resort to armed force between two or more states. Non-International armed conflicts are protracted armed confrontations occurring between governmental armed forces and the forces of one or more armed groups or
between such groups arising in the territory of a state (Party to the Geneva Conventions). The armed confrontation must reach a minimum level of intensity and the parties involved in the conflict must show minimum of organisation (ICRC Opinion Paper, March, 2008). In India’s North East, armed conflict denotes the entire gamut of the resistance movement along with the struggle for ‘identity’. In Assam, the use of systematic force through insurgency, reduction of democratic space, violations of human rights have resulted in perpetuating fear and insecurity and thereby fragmenting the emotional fabric of the community.

**Types of Armed Conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Common Denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Interstate Armed Conflict</em></td>
<td>Occurs between two or more states.</td>
<td>International Armed Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra state Armed Conflict</td>
<td>Occurs between a state and non state group outside its own territory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>International Armed Conflict</em></td>
<td>Occurs between the government of a state and internal opposition groups with intervention from other states.</td>
<td>International Armed Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Internal Armed Conflict</em></td>
<td>Occurs between the Government of a state and internal opposition groups without the intervention of other states</td>
<td>Internal Armed Conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


At present, the whole world has witnessed various forms of armed conflicts. South Asian countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Afghanistan, European
countries like Bosnia and Yugoslavia and South African countries like Rwanda, Somalia etc have witnessed the situation of age long armed conflicts. In the regional level also Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur is under the stage of armed conflict situation.

Each conflict has its own unique and complicated history. The genesis of most of the conflicts that has engulfed the North-eastern states of India is either to preserve the unique indigenous identity or due to lack of economic development and opportunities for the large majority or both (Madhab, J. 2006). Contemporary armed conflicts in the North Eastern region of India are primarily internal conflicts, occurring between different identity groups or between the states versus the armed activists, within a state. Assam which is one of the seven states of Northeast India lies at the heart of the region has seen numerous conflicts of varying intensity. Its history is littered with interesting case studies of all different kinds of conflicts of varying intensity and that have been plaguing the region. These have ranged from mass civil disobedience movements endangered by long-standing grievances against the Indian State to armed militancy favouring secession from the State to ethnic and communal riots, as well as genocides aimed at ethnic cleansing (Goswami, 2014). The genesis of the conflict in Assam is rooted since the days of the treaty of Yandaboo\(^1\) and the endorsement of ‘Cabinet Mission Plan’\(^2\), which placed Assam along with the rest of the North East in group C\(^3\).

\(^1\) Assam came under British Rule in 1826 by the Yandaboo Treaty that ended Anglo Burmese War. Treaty of Yandaboo was signed on February 24, 1826. By article 2 of this treaty, the Burmese King relinquished all claim over Assam. The British control of Assam was formalized henceforth.

\(^2\) The British Cabinet Mission of 1946 to India aimed to discuss and plan for the transfer of power from the British Government to Indian leadership, providing India with independence.

\(^3\) Group C consists of the part of the Muslim League ruled area. Group A-Madras, Bombay, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa (Hindu majority provinces); Group B-Punjab, North West Frontier Province and Sindh (Muslim Majority Provinces); Group C-Bengal and Assam (Muslim Majority Provinces).
Moreover partition caused enormous economic and physical disadvantages to Assam. Coupled with these, Assam’s identity was in crisis due to the large-scale immigration from Bangladesh and Nepal which has changed the demography of Assam.

Due to migration the rate of growth of Assam’s population during the period 1951-61 was 34.9% as against the all-India average of 24.6 per cent. In the next decade 1961-71, the population in the age group of 15 to 59 years, which normally constitute the workforce, increased by some 20.59 lakh or 41 percent. The number of jobseekers went up from 295,000 in 1961 to 938,000 in 1971.\(^4\)

The Nepalese are another small labouring community who migrated to Assam during the period of colonisation of Assam. The British employed Nepalese in Gorkha Regiment. They were also engaged in the business of milk supply, employed as chowkidars, body-guards, peons and labours etc (Baruah, 1985). The Nepali migration was quite unnoticed because they preferred to settle mostly in the forest areas near the foothills along the northern border of Assam.

Besides pressure on land with already lowered land-man ratio in the valleys, vitiated democratic environment, perceived injustice, intra-group economic competition, lower economic benefits for the indigenous groups in spite of the presence of ‘enclave’\(^5\) industries therein has created fertile ground for growth of secessionist movement in Assam.

According to Tillotama Mishra, despite being the largest producer of tea, oil, plywood and forest products, Assam is one of the poorest and the most

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\(^5\) Oil, coal, tea etc comes under ‘enclave economy’
industrially backward states in the country (Mishra, 1998). So, along with the issue of identity, ‘underdevelopment’ was another factor that gave birth to conflict. It is a sad reality that a state which was comparatively a peaceful state prior to 1979 has been transformed into a violent one marked by conflicts and militarization and overall rise in violence in the society at all levels (Deka, K. 1990). Assam Movement under the leadership of AASU against illegal migration followed by the movement of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), an insurgent organization against the authority of the state has created the state volatile.

In an armed conflict situation, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and sex. Armed conflict results in massive levels of harassment of women physically, psychologically, culturally and economically. The concept of patriarchy has undermined the status of women in society. They are considered as weaker sex. As a wife, mother or sister, women in armed conflict situation suffer terribly. They have to take the whole burden of the disordered situation. Women along with children have always become the innocent victims of conflict as they rarely play an active part in the war or conflict itself. They are assaulted, beaten, raped and murdered during conflicts (Coomarswamy, 1998). They have to live under the threat or fear of violence.

The main consequences of armed violence are mental and physical effects on the victims. The pain of sexual violence, the pain of single motherhood, levels of fear and mental health problem increase the levels of depression, anxiety, rates of suicide. The losses of family members which include husbands, brothers

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6 Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, Beijing, 4-15 September, 1995.
and children have long-term psychological effects on women. The loss of male family members leads to the path of poverty. Women are forced to take household responsibility. Living in the midst of constant fear, women have lost self-esteem, self confidence, femininity and honour. Rape of a woman is far more widespread than killing of men during armed conflict. Rape has often been used as a weapon of war to punish, humiliate and intimidate. Rape of woman is not just about assaulting or punishing her, it is about humiliating and demoralising her family, community and nation. ‘When rape is perceived as a crime against honour or morality, shame commonly ensures for the victim who is often viewed by the community as ‘dirty’ or ‘spoiled’ (Coomarswamy, 1998). So the effects of violence on women have different dimension. Women are compelled to lead a life of insecurity. Finding no other solution some of them have to take the path of prostitution etc. Consequences of sexual violence physically, emotionally and psychologically have devastated the survivors of such violence. They have to cope with post-trauma stress.

Parties to the conflict frequently locate military targets in and around civilian objects, in an attempt to shield them from the attack from the opposing party. Civilians are used as human shield in this case. Such methods do not prevent ongoing attacks but instead results in increased civilian casualties. Instances are there where women and children are used as ‘cannon fodder’ by militant groups (Coomarswamy & Dilrukshi, 2004).

As a result of armed conflict situation, human rights of women are violated. Women have lost their human rights including the right to life, liberty, security, and freedom from torture and cruel inhuman degrading
punishment, right to equality, freedom of movement, right to property and social security etc.

1.2 Research Concerns

Assam is considered the gateway to North East. For the last three or four decades the North East region has witnessed various forms of unrest, conflict and violence. In Assam unrest, conflict and violence are manifested through insurgency, ethnic movements, and terrorism etc. In 1979 Assam movement for achieving Assamese identity started under the leadership of All Assam Students Union (AASU) and Asom Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP). The twin concerns of the Assam Movement were detection and deportation of illegal immigrants and the step motherly attitude of the centre towards a peripheral state like Assam (Mahanta, 2013). At the same time an insurgent organization called United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) had emerged in Assam. Initially, AASU resorted to the democratic, non-violent method to achieve its goal. Though in the beginning, ULFA worked in close association with the Assam Movement, but later on it tried to keep the distance itself from the anti-foreigner movement since it had faith on armed struggle. It observed the Assam Movement as battling the symptoms rather than the disease (Varghese, 1996). The real problem, as viewed by ULFA leadership, as the ‘infected and decayed system’. There was a growing realisation by the radical group that New Delhi Government was not going to listen to the language of Non-Violence and Satyagraha. The increasing army and police atrocities forced group of Assam agitationists to think that perhaps the time had come to act violently to extract the benefit from the Central government. Thus, the Assam Movement has acted as the precursor to a violent movement by
the ULFA. Initially, ULFA was branded as an organisation for protecting the interest of the Tai-Ahom Community. Later on the organisation has substantially increased its mass base and perhaps it is the only organisation of the state which has the representatives from almost all the communities (ibid). Factors of unemployment, poverty, feeling of relative deprivation, corruption, underdevelopment, devastation caused by flood etc were acting as the breeding ground for ULFA (ibid). Gradually the dissidents of Assam Movement realised that to create an exploitation free society, armed revolution is the only alternative. It is seen although the Assam Movement was predominantly a non-violent movement it witnessed massive violence. This was largely triggered by massive state violence and police atrocities. The state violence was used mostly against the innocent people who had nothing to do with the criminal activities. Such state violence of unprecedented scale also made many workers rebellious and they wanted to take revenge either by joining ULFA or giving support to it (ibid). After ULFA began really as an expression of opposition to more than 100 years of exploitation. They talked about the need for a *swadhin* (Free) Asom where ‘scientific socialism’ would be the way of life and where its natural resources would be exploited for the benefit of its own people, including the immigrants and not to the benefit of power elites in Delhi. So, ULFA’s primary target and enemy was the Indian State and not the immigrants. It clearly states in its document ‘When we refer to the Assamese, instead of meaning the Assamese people we actually mean the different intermixture of tribal nationalities- who are committed to working for the good for Assam. The mixture of nationalities that is the Assamese in reality, the result of immigration from East Bengal constitutes a
major part of the national life of the people of Assam. Our freedom struggle can never be successful without these people...the masses who earn their living through hard physical labour can never be our enemies. All the labouring masses are our friends and the main motive force of our freedom revolt.’’ 7 So these Bangladeshi immigrants have been considered by the ULFA as an ‘‘integral part of the Assamese Society and culture and as one of the indispensible building-blocs of the people of Assam’’ (Das, 1998). This had led to the subsequent impasse with the AASU. An accord was signed between Assam Movement Leadership and Government of India on the midnight of 14th August, 1985 and a regional party Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was formed under the leadership of Assam Movement. AGP was the child of an alliance between All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the Asom Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP), an umbrella organization of political rejects and right-wing sub nationalists seeking a ticket to power. The newly formed political party came to power after gaining overwhelming majority in the legislative assembly election held immediately after the signing of Assam Accord. ‘‘While coming to power AGP in 1985, ULFA started spreading its network very fast and there is little doubt that in this it received a lot of direct and indirect support from the state government. Thus in the process, ULFA entered into a rather complex sort of relationship with the state authority. Many ULFA cadres were close to the Asom Gana Sangram Parishad and the latter could not help but patronize them’’ (Misra, U. 2000). So, the AGP virtually built ULFA and provided the required atmosphere for its growth. Gradually, it was seen that ULFA was not satisfied with the activities of the

Government. The failure of the Assam movement to achieve its goal and oppressive policies of the government acted as the most rewarding incentive in the growth of an armed rebellion. As a result the terrorist activities of ULFA increased gradually. As the extremist outfit intensified their activity, President Rule was imposed. On 27th November, 1990, ULFA was declared as an unlawful organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and was banned. Simultaneously five ‘Black Laws’ viz Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958(amended in 1972), Terrorist And Disruptive Activities Act (TADA)1987, National Security Act 1980, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act,1967 and Disturbed Areas Act,1955 were imposed in Assam. The AFSPA gave a free hand to the security forces to indulge in extra-judicial executions, custodial deaths, torture and rape as tools to contain insurgency. This law gave army blanked immunity against any legal interference. It means that there can be no prosecution, suit or any other legal proceeding against anyone acting under that law. Nor is the government’s judgement in an area being ‘disturbed subject’ to judicial review (Government of India, 1972).

As Ravi Nair of the South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre in New Delhi has pointed out, the AFSPA violates the Indian Constitution right to life, the right against arbitrary arrest and detention, the rules of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code relating to arrests, searches, and seizures, and almost all relevant international human rights principles (SAHRDC,1995). In 1991 when Congress Government came to power, Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia declared general amnesty to ULFA. Number of high profile leaders and cadre of the insurgent outfit came over ground surrendering to the Government of Assam and
they are popularly known as SULFA (Surrendered ULFA). Soon violent clashes occurred between ULFA and SULFA. Later during the second term of AGP rule in 1996 secret killings had started. The secret killers were recruited from amongst a section of surrendered rebels of the ULFA. These rebels were allowed to retain their arms and their services were often utilized by the army and the police for searching operation. A number of family members of ULFA leaders were assassinated by unidentified gunmen. As a result of it many innocent people also lost their lives (Ahmed, 2010).

Army atrocity started through Operation Bajrang (27th November, 1990 to 20th April 1991), Operation Rhino (14th September, 1991) via Operation Cloud Burst (15th September, 1991) and the Unified Command Structure (Since 1997) and lastly Operation All Clear (2003). Unified Command Structure was imposed to coordinate the functioning of the various forces carrying out operations against the insurgents. Operation All Clear (2003) was a joint venture of Indian and Royal Bhutan Army to destroy the camps established by ULFA in Bhutan. As a result of this operation, a number of ULFA leaders and cadres were killed, many remained missing and top leaders were arrested.

There was a gross violation of human rights which has also undermined human security. Humanity has been the worst victims in the hands of both state actors (police, army and paramilitary forces) and non-state actors (militants, terrorists etc). In the midst of the situation, the condition of women has become vulnerable.

Depending on the six role model propounded by Roshmi Goswami (2000) following categories of women are affected in armed conflict situation-
1. **Women victims of sexually and physically abused (House Wives):** Mostly uninvolved, innocent civilians who are targeted by the state and non-state abusers.

2. **Women militants and combatants:** Women who are actively involved in the struggle, (a) by choice (b) through coercion or c) who have become the part of the struggle because of circumstances.

3. **Woman relatives of state armed forces:** Mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and partners of the police, armed personnel and targeted state officials and others, who have no choice in being part of the conflict and who often remain the forgotten and invisible ‘other’ category.

4. **Woman relatives of armed activists:** Mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and partners of armed activists, who are in the struggle by choice or otherwise, but are impacted upon, in the same way. They are also specially targeted by the state.

5. **Women shelter providers:** Women who provide food, shelter and labour (as porters) to the combatants, either as sympathisers or through coercion, and are extremely vulnerable either way.

6. **Women peace negotiators:** Women leaders who have taken the initiative, not always supported by the community and extremely vulnerable to suspicious and attacks by all factions of non-state actors as well as state actors.

As a wife, mother, sister, women in armed conflict situation have to take the whole burden of the volatile situation. Women and children always become the innocent victims of conflict as they rarely play an active part or conflict itself. They are assaulted, beaten, humiliated, raped and murdered.
during conflicts. They have to live under the threat or fear of violence (Judith and Michelle, 2001).

This study tries to focus the various categories of women who are the victims of armed conflict. The proposed two districts of the study are Nalbari and Kamrup of Assam. Nalbari District is situated in between Kamrup and Barpeta District. Earlier it was a sub-division of undivided Kamrup District in 1967. Nalbari Subdivision is formally declared as District on the 14th August, 1985. Nalbari District was further divided into 2003 for creation of Bagsa District in B.T.A.D area. The northern side of the district is bounded by the Indo-Bhutan International boundary as well as Bagsa District and the southern side of the mighty Brahmaputra. The Kamrup and Darrang District are located in the East and the Barpeta District in the West. The Nalbari District Occupies an area of 2257sq.km. and has a population of 7,69,919 (as of 2011) (Source: Nalbari District Website). Nalbari district is chosen for the study for its interesting demographic composition, geographical location and peculiar socio economic background as well as a history of conflict. Nalbari district of Assam is home to indigenous populations like Bodos and Rabhas along with Nepalese, migrant tea garden workers and Assamese people. It has a long history of poverty and ethnic conflict. For over a decade, the district had been suffering from various types of low intensity conflicts like ethnic clashes, militant violence, counterinsurgency operations and extrajudicial killings, political assassination and criminal violence. Top leaders of ULFA including former Deputy Commander in Chief Raju Baruah, one time Publicity Chief Secretary Mithinga Daimary, Cultural Secretary Ms Pranati Deka and several others hailed
from this district. The synergic effect of poverty and social settings on one side coupled with its strategic location near Bhutan Border and ease in availability of small arms on the other has become a great threat to the human security of the local inhabitants as well as for India’s national security and integrity. In Nalbari, 85.29% of the population live below the poverty line (2001 Census) which can be considered an important cause of rising insurgency. Four blocks are taken for study. They are Pub Nalbari, Pachim Nalbari, Barkhetri and Barbhag.

Kamrup district is an administrative district in the state of Assam. Prior to 1980s, the present administrative districts of Nalbari and Barpeta were the parts of undivided Kamrup. Assam has been referred to as Kamrup in many of the ancient Indian Literature. It was also known as Pragjyotishpur due to the practice of astrology practices that prevailed in this part of the country. However ‘Kamrup’ became more predominant name in the later part of the history. The District is bounded by Udalguri and Bagsa District in the North, Meghalaya State in the south, Darrang and Kamrup Metropolitan District in the east and Goalpara and Nalbari District in the west. After the Census of 2011, the district has been divided into the Kamrup Metropolitan District and Kamrup District, the former comprising the metropolitan city of Guwahati and the latter the rest of the District. (Kamrup District Website). The Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup District together occupies a total area of 4345Sq Km and has a population of 15,17,202(2011 Census). Kamrup Metropolitan District is one of the 27 districts in Assam. It was created on 3rd February, 2003 by bifurcation the erstwhile Kamrup District. This District occupies an area of 127.84 Sq Km. and a population of 12, 60,419 (2011 Census). Many families of the ULFA cadres
belong to Kamrup District. One time various insurgent activities were conducted from Kamrup District. Four blocks are taken for study. They are Hajo, Kamalpur, Rangia and Sonapur.

**Distribution of Population in Nalbari District according to 2011 Census**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
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<td>11692</td>
<td>11672</td>
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</tbody>
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*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*

**Distribution of Population of Four Blocks of Nalbari District according to 2011 Census:**

1. **Pub Nalbari Block**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
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*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*

2. **Pachim Nalbari Block**

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*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*

3. **Barbhag Block**

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*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*
4. Barkhetri Block

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Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati

Map of Nalbari District

Blocks of Nalbari District

Source: Nalbari District website
Distribution of Population in Kamrup District (Including Rural and Metro) according to 2011 Census:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
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<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
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Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati

Distribution of Population of Kamrup (Rural) according to 2011 Census:

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<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
<th>ST (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,375,148</td>
<td>706,140</td>
<td>669,008</td>
<td>88,975</td>
<td>45,829</td>
<td>43,146</td>
<td>1,80,192</td>
<td>91,154</td>
<td>89,038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati

Distribution of Population of Kamrup (Urban) according to 2011 Census:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
<th>ST (Female)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,42,394</td>
<td>72321</td>
<td>70073</td>
<td>18852</td>
<td>9408</td>
<td>9444</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati

Distribution of Population of Four Blocks of Kamrup District according to 2011 Census:

1. Hajo Block

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
<th>ST (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>232531</td>
<td>134603</td>
<td>127928</td>
<td>36725</td>
<td>18640</td>
<td>18085</td>
<td>2355</td>
<td>1169</td>
<td>1186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati
2. **Rangia Block**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
<th>ST (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>155333</td>
<td>80630</td>
<td>74703</td>
<td>5505</td>
<td>2793</td>
<td>2712</td>
<td>9350</td>
<td>4673</td>
<td>4677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*

3. **Kamalpur Block**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
<th>ST (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>169235</td>
<td>88582</td>
<td>80653</td>
<td>7180</td>
<td>3700</td>
<td>3480</td>
<td>2920</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>1390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*

4. **Sonapur Block**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Total SC</th>
<th>SC (Male)</th>
<th>SC (Female)</th>
<th>Total ST</th>
<th>ST (Male)</th>
<th>ST (Female)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>143371</td>
<td>72735</td>
<td>70636</td>
<td>22138</td>
<td>11367</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>20625</td>
<td>10195</td>
<td>10430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2011 Census, Central Census Office, Bhangagarh, Guwahati*

**Map of Kamrup (Metro) District**

*Source: Kamrup District website*
Map of Kamrup (Rural) District

Source: Kamrup District website

Blocks of Kamrup (Metropolitan) District

Source: Kamrup District website
1.3 Objectives

1. To find the nature of the linkage between the violation of Human Rights and the conflict situation in Assam.

2. To highlight the different dimension of violations or discriminations suffered by women in an armed conflict situations and get governmental and non-governmental organization to address the specific needs of women in such situation.

3. To study the response of civil society to human rights violations.

4. To highlight the lacuna in the existing legal system in ensuring justice to women who have faced the violation in such situations.

5. To evaluate the efficacy of State Women Commission, Assam Human Rights Commission towards achieving its goal and objectives.
6. To evaluate the perception of the people, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, media etc.

7. To strengthen networking of women’s groups in the region on issues of violence against women.

8. To set out a list of recommendations that has emerged out of the research and extensive interviews and discussion.

1.4 Hypotheses

1. Conflict situation promotes condition to the violation of human rights.

2. Insurgency and counter insurgency operations are the main factors of human rights violation in Assam.

3. Human rights awareness among women in Assam is low.

1.5 Methodology

The research study is totally based on historical, analytical and psychological methods. The research study has both qualitative as well as quantitative aspects.

i) Sources: The sources of data are both primary and secondary. The study is primarily based on secondary sources including newspapers, articles, books and research papers, official publications, journals, reports etc.

By conducting interview with various categories of victimised women, persons from different governmental organization, non governmental organization, judicial authority etc primary sources of data are collected. Amongst the victimised women, some notable cases are tried to be focused. Since a case study generally aims to provide insight into a particular situation and often stresses the experiences and interpretations of those involved in it.
ii) **The Study Area:** Two districts of Assam namely Nalbari and Kamrup District have been studied. There are altogether fourteen blocks in Kamrup (Rural) and four blocks in Kamrup (Metro). In Nalbari District, there are seven blocks. Four blocks from each district are selected. The blocks of Kamrup District (Rural) are Rangia, Hajo and Kamalpur, and Kamrup (Metro) is Sonapur. The blocks of Nalbari District are Pub-Nalbari, Paschim Nalbari, Barkhetri and Barbhag. Since the sample of my study is different categories of victimised women which are scattered in different parts of each block, I had to take four or five villages from each block for my study. In the post 80s the activity of ULFA, as an insurgent organization was at the highest point. Similarly, armed atrocity on ULFA was high. As a result of this terrible situation women had become most vulnerable (on the basis of the pilot study conducted, block office report as well as various police station reports).

iii) **Sample:** This study is based on theoretical as well as empirical part. Empirical study is totally based on field work. In the beginning, a pilot study was conducted to identify the targeted population. Purposive Sampling was applied to focus different categories of victimised women. Simple Random Sampling was then conducted and sample size was fixed at 200, one hundred from each district. The numbers of samples vary from one block to another depending on the availability. Since the nature of the research study is related to women in armed conflict situation in these two districts, stratified random sampling on the basis of gender was administered. Moreover as the study is based broadly on two districts, cluster sampling method was adopted which categorically clustered into district, blocks and villages.
iv) **Tools used:** Schedules were designed on the basis of the pilot survey. While conducting interview, six types of interview schedule were taken for data collection since different categories of women were to be interviewed. Interview schedule having both open-ended and closed-ended questions was taken to elicit responses from the direct victims of armed conflict.

While framing interview schedule, a number of relevant information about the victims such as sex, religion, educational status, occupation, socio-economic status, women’s role in the peace process were also considered.

A digital voice recorder for recording the interviews and field work notebook was being maintained in times of interview. Digital camera was also used to preserve some relevant photographs as a part of field work.

**1.6 Theoretical Perspective**

The *theory of Patriarchy* has been used within the women’s movement to analyse the principles underlying women’s oppression. The concept itself is not new. It has a history of feminist thought, having been used by earlier feminist like Virgina Woolf. It is trying to provide a critical assessment of some of the uses of the concept of patriarchy within contemporary discourse, it is important to bear in mind the kind of problems which it has been used to resolve. Politically, feminist of a variety of different persuasions have seized upon the concept of the patriarchy in the search for explanation of feelings of oppression and subordination and in the desire to transform feelings of rebellion into a political practice and theory. And theoretically, the concept of patriarchy has been used to address the question of the real basis of subordination of women, and to analyse the particular forms which it assumes. Thus, the theory of patriarchy attempts to
beneath the particular experiences and manifestations of women’s oppression and to formulate some coherent theory of the basis of subordination which underlines them. In other words, we can say that the term patriarchy has been used to refer to male domination and to the power relationship by which men dominate women (Source: Feminist Review on Patriarchy, 1979, pp.66-82).

Women who have joined the insurgency speak through interviews, addressing the dilemmas in their situation. On the one hand in their genuine desire to bring about social justice, to transform their lives and the lives of their communities, On the other is the framing of the extremist discourse within which they must play out their role as a women militant and activist, accepting a framework that is patriarchal in method, ideology and leadership. A clear link is made between conflicts and militarism, arising out of the patriarchal definition of nationalism that legitimizes armed conflict. Actually each society is rooted in patriarchy, which leads to a masculization of the definition of nationalism and patriotism, creating a political context in which democratic norms fail to prevail and all dissent is subject to brutal repression. Women are subsumed by the overarching masculinist and militarist ideological framework that easily transforms conflict into a form that can only be expressed through the use of violence. Most of the actors involved in a conflict are male, whether they belong to liberation or anti-state groups or to state or government security or intelligence forces. Even when women form a significant part of the structure of the insurgent/militant group, their military roles tend not to be as significant as those of men. Civilians in general, and women in particular, suffer the most in these conflicts, since most often they are caught between the warring factions and face
the consequences of social fragmentation and disruption of homes, social networks, and livelihoods. In the civilian sector, women’s agency is most apparent in those situations in which they become active initiators of peace-building processes, within their own communities and in the political arena. When the conflict moves into a moment of transition, conflict transformation, dialogue and reconciliation through formal and informal peace processes, the positions women have reached during the conflict are most often not taken into consideration. Women are generally absent in political negotiations between the combatant parties. Rape is a by-product of patriarchal culture and socialization that predisposes men towards violence, while encouraging them to view women as sexual objects. Women are systematically targeted for rape in times of war, because women’s bodies are sites in which men imprint their identities and exercise their sexual and political power. Women’s bodies, therefore, become the sanctioned sites of revenge, retaliation, and humiliation.

*The theory of Justice* can be applied to study the conflict situation of women. The effect of the long period of conflict on women has been especially negative and women continue to live in an extremely vulnerable situation. Whereas men are rehabilitated and given jobs and compensation in exchange for their losses, women who lose their ‘honour,’ find it extremely difficult to lead a normal life and gained acceptance. Honour, victory and revenge are played out in their bodies. Men faced violence and humiliation at the hands of their enemies and come out as victorious as heroes and martyrs, women faced violence and humiliation as victims of war, first at the hands of enemy and then as an object of shame within their communities and homes. The difference in treatment is
embedded in patriarchal norms and the ideology that governs states, communities and families. Women are victims of violence and injustice in pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situation because they are negatively affected by the structure of inequality and injustice that pervades everyday society.

The Gender perspective tries to explore how men and women’s roles and social relationships are constructed in a society. Gender relations are consequently about the balance of power between men and women and gender justice is a system of gender relations that encourages the greatest possible participation of both men and women on equal terms in society. The greatest obstacle to gender justice is the prevalence of patriarchy, defined as a system of social relations in which men’s power is dominant. This does not mean that all men are dominant, but that systems of decision-making and resource allocation favour certain groups of people over others and this tends to advantage certain groups of men in particular.

The Feminist perspective on human rights has accepted rights as an appropriate vehicle for change. It tries to identify features of the existing legal regime of human rights that take no account of the realities of women’s lives. A primary insight relied on by those who criticise the content of rights is the division drawn between the public and private spheres which is a feature of western arguably, other legal systems. The law operates in the public world of politics, economics and leaves unregulated the private world of home, hearth and the family. The gendered nature of this division is readily identifiable: men live out their lives in the public world and it is in the private one where women are found. The two spheres are not equal in importance in the eyes of the law; the
realm of the public, the world of men, is where all the power and authority lie. The world of women, on the other hand, is subordinate and of less significance.

*The Greed and Grievance Models* can also be applied here. Supporters of this model like Collier, Jaffrey Sachs and Easterly link underdevelopment, poverty and conflict and say that specific ‘traps’ lead to conflicts. The greed analysis shows that regions with young unemployed men, low average incomes, low growth and high export of primary commodities such as oil and timber are prone to civil conflict.

**Radical theorists** believe that class analysis, economic exploitation, injustice and imperialism need to be factored in to understand armed conflicts. Armed conflicts are attributed primarily to economic reasons. Ted Gurr focuses on minorities and uses a political economy framework and subscribes to the idea that it is relative deprivation but not inequality in itself that leads to conflict.

### 1.7 Limitations of the Study

It was seen that the whole state was affected by conflicting situation. Since the issue was of very sensitive nature, the study was found to be extremely difficult. Few books are available in this field. Again limited work has been done on the issue; therefore getting adequate data was a problem. Moreover in many cases sufficient statistical data was lacking. Often it was found that women were either frightened or embarrassed to speak about their experiences.

### 1.8 Significance of Study and Relevance

Assam has experienced for decades of political unrest, frequently escalating to insurgency and armed conflict. This violence has been devastating for the communities involved, but within the community women have been
suffering most. The proposed research focuses on victimised women specifically who are considered as neglected gender of the society.

It shows that how human rights of women are violated as a result of the conflict situation.

It would portray the various physical, social and psychological impacts of conflict on women.

The study is significant since it would analyze the various steps taken by the governmental and non-governmental organizations for settlement and rehabilitation of victimized women.

In the struggle of ULFA for sovereign Assam, women have been the most affected section of the society. They have been victimised by both the non-state terrorism of ULFA as well as the state terrorism. Unfortunately, no substantial studies relating to women victims were done to replicate the conflict situation of Assam that had been facing during the period 1980-2003. In this regard, this study is expected to enrich the knowledge of the problem.

1.9 Chapterization

The present work has seven chapters including introduction and conclusion.

The First Chapter i.e. *Introduction*, outlines the basic research problem. It presents an overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework to analyse and understand the research problem. This chapter also includes objectives, hypotheses, methodology, theoretical perspective and a brief outline of chapterization, significance and relevance of research, limitations of research and review of the literature relating to the problem.
The Second Chapter, titled *Conflict Situation in Assam: Role of State and Non-State Actors* tries to analyze the background of conflicting situation in post-1980s, Assam. This chapter also tries to analyze historical and political background of armed conflict. This chapter also deals with conflicting situation arising out of insurgency and imposition of various repressive laws such as Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958 (amended in 1972), National Security Act (NSA), 1980, Disturbed Areas Act, 1955, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967 etc arising out of counter insurgency. In this chapter, it tries to explain how the women, most vulnerable section of society is affected as a result of the insurgency as well as counter insurgency.

The Third Chapter, titled *Human Rights Violation and Armed Conflict* deals with the concept of International perspective of human rights and how human rights of women such as right to life, liberty, property, dignity, security etc are being violated as a result of conflicting situation. This chapter tries to focus narratives of some women victims under conflicting situation. Through this chapter, it tries to show a grim scenario of human rights violation of women in projected two districts of Assam. This chapter also tries to explain the victimized women from the angles of socio-economic and psychological impacts or examine how far women have been victimized.

The Fourth Chapter titled *Women as Peace Makers and Role of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organization in Conflict Management and Peace Building* tries to examine the role of Women Peace Makers and role of various Women Organizations in matters of conflict management and peace building. This chapter also tries to examine the efficacy of various organizations
such as Human Rights Commission, State Commission for Women, the legal system and NGOs in dealing with conflicting situation.

The Fifth Chapter titled *Role of Government and Non-Governmental organization on resettlement and rehabilitation of women victims* tries to explain how far government and non-governmental organization has been taking steps regarding resettlement and rehabilitation of women victims and has been successful in solving the problem.

The Sixth Chapter titled *Data Analysis* with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

The concluding Seventh Chapter titled *Conclusions and Recommendations* presents a brief summary of findings of the present research. In addition few suggestions are also been made which may have policy relevance in the future.

### 1.10 Review of literature

1. **Banerjee Paula(Ed), ‘Women in Peace Studies’**: This book gives importance to women who are important actors in peace politics. War or violence is a great impediment to peace. This book deals with multi-dimensional aspects of peace as imagined and as practiced over years by women in the world with special reference to South Asia. Bangladesh, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan have all portrayed that women’s bodies are the fields where war is waged. It is established premise that no nation treats its women as equal to its men. Conflict increases this inequality of women within the nation, no matter what their sacrifices and adds on to their vulnerability. The various mother’s associations in certain ways epitomize women’s peacemaking roles in South
Asia particularly in Sri Lanka, Nagaland and Manipur etc. in the form of Sinhala Mothers Front, Jaffna Mothers Front, Naga Mothers Association, Maira Paibis etc.

2. Caroline O N Moser and Fiona C Clark, ‘Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? ‘Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence’: This book shows that numerous countries have endured decades of armed conflict. Gender issues cut across all sectors of society, regardless of political, economic or social context and articulation in situation political violence and armed conflict are particularly marked. Consequently, the impact of armed conflict and political violence on gender relations and gender equality becomes a key issue. This book aims to contribute to a more comprehensive global understanding of complex roles, responsibilities and interest of women and men, whether as victims, perpetrators or actors in armed conflict and political violence.

3. Chenoy M. Anuradha, Chenoy Mitra A Kamal, ‘Maoist and other Armed Conflicts’: Through this book the writer tries to examine the situation of armed conflicts in different parts of India such as Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, North East, Naxal affected areas etc. Draconian laws like Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act, National Security Act etc are responsible for this armed conflict situation. In the midst of the abnormal situation, the authors try to examine masculinity and feminity in this conflicting situation. Through interviews with insurgents, activist especially women, civil society, politicians this book is a powerful critique of national security approaches for resolving armed conflicts.
4. Chenoy M. Anuradha, ‘Militarism and Women in South Asia’: This book tries to understand the phenomenon of militarism and national security from a feminist perspective. National security and militarism have traditionally been male domains. This book also attempts to trace the course of militarism in several South Asian Countries, with a more detailed account of women’s experience of it in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Conflict has embraced everyone. It has not necessarily arisen only from beyond borders; it exists within societies and states and in the home, which is equally violent and disruptive. This is the challenge of feminist process which challenges all systems of domination. It recognizes that violence is structural and that militarism is structural violence legitimised.

5. Coomaraswamy Radhika and Fonseka Dilrukshi, ‘Peace Work’: This book shows women are neglected gender for many years. Women are the worst affected by war. In today’s conflicts, 85% of victims are civilians of which majority are women. Women in a conflict environment are at risk from multiple forms of violence because of their subordinate positions in everyday society. Rape is used as an instrument of war. Women are systematically targeted for rape in times of war, because women’s bodies are sites on which men imprint their identities and exercise their sexual and political power. Women’s bodies become the sanctioned sites of revenge, retaliation and humiliation. This book clearly explains women are victims of violence and injustice in pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situation because they are negatively affected by the structure of inequality and injustice. At last it tries to show that both war and peace are gendered activities.
6. Dhamla Ranju & Bhattacharyee Suklpa, *Human Rights and Insurgency (The North East India)*: The book makes a critical intervention in contemporary discourses on Human Rights and examines them in the context of insurgency, particularly in North East India. The institutionalization of human rights has made the modern Nation States and international bodies like the UN, the custodial of individual and collective rights. The violation of Human Rights takes place when such bodies and the state assume the role of ‘hegemonic discourse appropriates the various agencies of statist domination, posing a threat to the legitimacy of the state’. The primary concern was to locate the subject of the drama of hegemonic and counter- hegemonic violence-women, children and innocent masses who suffer the casualty on this tension.

7. Gill Pretti (Ed), *The Peripheral Centre Voices from India’s North East*: This is an edited book. This book seeks to give too many issues which have emerged as a result of the last three decades of conflict and violence of North-East. This conflict has a deep impact on women who become the victims in the hands of the state as well as non-state actors. Through many articles of this it seeks to give a gloomy picture of the conflict in North-East.

8. Goswami R., Sreekala MG and Goswami, M, *Women in Armed Conflict Situations*: This book beautifully describes the armed conflict situations in North East India. The concept of ‘mainstreaming gender’ into the international human rights system gained centre-stage with the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights. This was the result of a long history of struggle for the acceptance of women’s rights as human rights and of violence against women as a violation of their human rights. The Beijing Platform for Action highlights
the special impact of armed conflict on women, pointing out that although all sections of society are affected, ‘women and girls’ are particularly affected because of their status in the society and their sex. Women constitute a major portion of the reported 85% civilian victims of present day conflicts. Women relatives of armed activists, Women relatives of state armed forces, Women militants, Women shelter providers, Women victims of sexual and physical abuse, Women peace negotiators and Women rights activists are generally affected by violence. This book has explained various cases of women relating to armed conflict particularly in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. As a result of armed conflict situation women have become the victim of rape, sexual abuse, molestation etc. The PFA defines violence against women thus ‘‘any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life’. In the North East Region, women have been the targets of violence by state and non-state actors. Many NGOs have come to deal with violation of human rights of women in armed conflict situation. State Commission for women and State Human Rights Commission have formed to deal with this type of situation yet they have not played a positive role in this regard because of their own limitation in their arena. The role of Police is also not positive one.

9. Hazarika Sanjoy, ‘Strangers of the mist Tales from War and peace from India’s Northeast’: Through this book the writer has tried to depict the problem of North-East. He not only tries to focus the problem of India but also Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. He focuses the rise and growth of ULFA
(United Liberation Front of Assam) as a militant organization in Assam. In this book the writer tries to give certain suggestions to solve the problem of militancy as well.

10. Hess B. Beth and Ferre Mark Myra (Ed.), ‘Analysing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research’: Chapter 19 of the book ‘Feminist Thinking about War, Militarism and Peace’ (by Cynthia H. Enloe) deals with the gendered aspect of war, militarism and peace. According to the author, those women in the world with the most pressing need to discover the underlying causes of war and peace are the ones, who reeling under a state of subordination are often perceived as “threats to national security”. Patriarchy often promotes and sustains military values and needs. Two principal non-feminist theories on militarization are

a) Militarization as a logical consequence of capitalism and

b) Militarization as being caused by inherent inclinations of the state regardless of the nature of its economic system.

According to author, several analysts propose that the reason why women are often excluded from the institution of the armed forces could probably be that, combat per se is at the core of masculine uniqueness, so that sharing this experience with women would diminish their identity as masculine creatures (Goldman, 1982; Chapkis, et al.1982, 1985). The author believes that although peace is commonly understood to be the absence of violence, it is not that simple. Peace is a process and it must be able to produce itself. The Feminists define peace as women’s achievement of control over their own lives and
believe that such achievement is fragile unless processes are created to reproduce it.

11. Leatherman Janie, ‘Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict’: This book offers a comprehensive analysis of the causes and consequences of sexual violence across a range of conflict zones. It explores the function and effect of wartime sexual violence and examines the conditions that make women and girls most vulnerable to these acts before, during and after conflict. To understand the motivation of men and occasionally women who perpetrate this violence, the book analyses the role played by systematic and situational factors such as patriarchy and militarized masculinity.

12. Mahanta Aparna (Ed), ‘Human Rights and Women of North East India’: This book is an edited book and comprises of various articles relating to human rights and violation of human rights of women in North East India. In introduction it is stated that during the last few decades the issues of human rights in the context of conflict situation prevailing in most of the North Eastern region of the country has been very much a burning issue all over India as well as internationally. As a result of conflict, human rights of people are violated. Women are often the major sufferers in conflict situations as victims of rape, as widows of dead militants or security forces, as displaced persons, as the single mother left of social and psychological support. It is stated that legal awareness among women is low and also the practical failure of bodies like National and State Human Rights Commissions to ensure redress to victims of human rights abuses. Another three articles deals specifically with the violation of human rights in conflict situations with particular reference to the North East situation.
Women living in a situation of internal armed conflict have been particularly vulnerable to rape and other violations. Living under the shadow of the gun and the fear of bullets is very unhealthy for one psychological growth. People in North East are the witness of the spurt in violence and insurgency in different degrees. The lack of political will and vision among others, insurgency-related violence has assumed diverse proportion of varied consequences. The effect of violence has different dimensions. The psychological trauma associated with sexual violation and with the loss of disappearance of family members last long after peace returns. The psychological health of prolonged condition of conflict is devastating. The discrimination and violation faced by women in the situation of conflict, women are also denied their rights to be and their rights to personhood and to an expression of their individuality. The setting up of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) are designed to safeguard against the human rights violations, but they are totally powerless to deal with complaints of violations of human rights committed by members of armed forces.

13. Manchanda Rita (Ed), ‘Women, War and Peace in South Asia’: This book purely deals with women victims of conflicts. Various articles written by prominent writers revolved around the issue of women in the conflict situation. It tries to describe how women have become the victim of the conflict situation in Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Assam, Nagaland and Nepal. Various articles in the book try to prove women are the worst sufferers in conflict. Women have negotiated conflict situation by becoming citizens, combatants, and heads of households,
war, prostitutes, producers of soldiers and war resisters and political leaders at
the local and national level.

14. Riamei Gaikhamsin, ‘Violation of Human Rights in North East India’: This book explains insurgency in North East India elaborately. The historical background of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958 (amended in 1972) is also explained here. Imposition of this Act led to the emergence of various insurgent groups in North East. Because of insurgency human rights of people are violated badly. The security forces are also at the same time responsible for systematic and gross human rights violations including arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, rape and extra-judicial execution. Because of insurgency people have lost human rights like the right to life, liberty, property and economic security etc. This book focuses certain case studies of women victims of conflict situation in North East.

15. Srestha Darsan Ava & Thapa Rita(Ed), ‘The Impact of Armed Conflicts on women in South Asia’: This book tries to discuss the different ways in which women react and respond to the conflict in the five countries namely Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and India. They become victims of various acts of repression and abuse. This book also exposes the different ways in which violent conflicts increase patriarchal controls on women and the impact of militarization on women and men, on masculinities and feminities. It is seen that women’s involvement in militancy and peace building as enabling a new construction of democracy, human rights and citizenship. This book exposes that even in armed conflict militant women choose to respond to violence with
violence. On the other hand militant’s mother responds violence with non-violent means of political agitation.


References:


Ibid.


*  *  *  *