

Marxist-feminism in North-East India

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ABSTRACT

North-East Indian history is shrouded with complex intricacies and is almost forgotten by the rest of the world. North-East India is also one of the least developed areas in India and only contributes around 2.5% to the National Gross Domestic Product. Within this isolated region lies a dearth of traditions, systems, and injustices, hindering the development and emancipation of its people, especially its women. North-East Indian women are victims of the government, the militia, and the local men around them. They also make up a very small percentage of the primary workforce in India and are almost invisible in local and national decision-making bodies. This paper focuses on Marxist-feminism as a lens to analyze mainstream Indian democracy, ethnic terrorism, and separatism and advocate for women's rights. It also proposes a range of possible Marxist-feminist policies that can be applied in this region to guarantee women equal rights and opportunities while simultaneously championing socio-economic development. By bringing about substantial changes in the education system, agricultural practices, military control, masculinist terror groups, foreign influence, resource distribution, and work opportunities, men and women in this region can both prosper and advance. Thus, Marxist-feminism can serve as a crusader framework for the overall development of this region and women's progress in particular.

Introduction

The North-East region of India encompasses a wide variety of people, cultures and intricacies, with one of the densest and most diverse populations. It has a culture vastly different from mainstream Indian culture due to over a century-long history of militancy, Naxalism and its proximity to China. Naxalism is a radical leftist movement based on Maoist policies funded by the Chinese. This region's unique geopolitical history of development and oppression, bordering five countries - China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan - and harbouring indigenous tribalism independent of Hinduism and Islam, has led to the establishment of a society that fails to fit into the categories of issues Indian mainstream democracy claims to govern. While the Indian government's ability to be a "problem-solver" ends with Hindu-Muslim riots, crop prices, and occasional protests in the capital, the North-Eastern people, especially the women, are plagued by entirely distinct issues such as ethnic violence, communist militia, and Chinese strategic interests.

The North-East Indian local community has been continually exploited by the forces and conflicting pressures of capitalism, international expansionism, mainstream Hindu nationalism, and the Indian government. Although women of this region are viewed as 'liberated' because they partake in the tertiary sector workforce, this is far from the truth. Both men and women of this region have been deprived of numerous fundamental rights, despite their right to work - such as receiving a primary education and access to essential resources like food and shelter - by opposing militia and government forces. They make up the lowest paid faction of the Indian workforce and do not have equal opportunities compared to mainstream Indian areas. Men in this region, who are intensely exploited by the capito-patriarchal system in place, further go on to exploit women. Women, in turn, form the lowest rung in society, to be used and discarded by all as and when they please.

Women's issues in North-East India comprise a range of problems, from economic inequality where they are paid less than men or not at all, to cultural repression where they are deprived of vital resources such as equal amounts

of meals and rest in a family setup. Women remain unprotected from physical and sexual assault and are often used as scapegoats in the ongoing war between activist organizations and the military. They are viewed as an unlimited resource for men of all backgrounds and sides to exploit for their purposes. Women can be controlled to carry out others' tasks and be depended on to sacrifice their needs in emergency times, thus being utilized as free domestic and professional labour.

For the Indian military, women are the backbone of the insurgent communist movement. For the militants, women make up the first line of fighters to be sacrificed for the "greater good". In the ongoing civil war in the region, women are mere pawns, controlled by either side but protected by none. The military only views women as links to dangerous militants, and insurgents treat women as replaceable objects, to be abandoned at the slightest hint of a threat. Neither farce gives women autonomy over their actions and decisions. They are roped into a faction based on their family or community's predisposition. However, no one is willing to view women as individuals capable of holding independent political positions in relation to how they position themselves in the context of war and intra-regional strife.

The understanding of gender-based issues as a problem inferior to issues of poverty, classism, and capitalist exploitation, arises from the belief that addressing sexism in rural environments leads to social polarization between groups on opposing sides of the gender issues spectrum. In almost a century of forced democracy by the Indian government, North-East Indian women are far from equal citizens. Separatists claim that progress can only be achieved by dissociating from India, whereas democrats believe the region needs policies similar to metropolitan India. Both separatists and democrats consider each other the true oppressor of women, with their ideology being the superior one. However, neither has worked towards the real emancipation of women. What this region requires, I argue, is a movement more focused on women's rights and equality. A rejection of extremist policies of both sides is necessary, along with the inculcation of an anti-classist ideology. North-East Indian women require assistance in many shapes and forms, but most importantly, they require a voice. If a movement does not provide them with a platform and power to take action, it is not a true liberation movement.

A Marxist feminist analysis of this region, targeting the reduction of violent terror groups while focusing on women's freedom for a positive communist future, is applicable here:

How can applying a Marxist-feminist lens to politically unstable regions of North-East India simultaneously demonstrate the futility of (masculinist) militarized terrorist groups and the necessity of the women's emancipation movement for the possibility of a positive communist future?

Problems in North-East India

In India, metropolitan women, such as from New Delhi, Bangalore, and Mumbai, typically view North-Eastern women as 'independent' and 'self-sufficient', as they are working women. Most North-East Indian women either move to urban areas to earn a living or are employed in small/family businesses at home. They make up a bulk of the workforce in the tertiary sector in urban India. Meanwhile, urban women in cosmopolitan cities who are at least college graduates, among whom many also have professional degrees, are stuck within the walls of their homes doing housework and other uninspired tasks, still bound by the regulations of their husbands and fathers. Observing North-Eastern women, who are just regular store clerks, hairdressers or housemaids, but have the liberty of dressing how they like, going out when they want to, is more than what they could have asked for. Both sets of women envy each other, one for the luxuries and comforts they have without having to work for it, and the other for the opportunity to go out, hustle and be your true self. It is both the denying of one's partial privilege and the un-acknowledgement of another's miseries.

Although North-Eastern women have the liberty of living day-to-day life the way they want to, away from home, they are engaged in unorganized casual labour and make little over minimum wage. Moreover, they are plagued by several shrouded issues. For instance, most of these women have to send a considerable amount of their salaries

home to support their families, who are dependent on them financially. Since most North-Eastern people have more in common with the neighbouring countries of China and Myanmar, these women also become victims of racist crimes carried out by mainstream Indian populations when they work in major metropolises, ranging from verbal to sexual abuse. They are also often viewed as outcasts when they return home. No matter how far or where these women go, they are always limited and marked by their otherness.

Women and AFSPA

A human rights violation specific to the North-Eastern region of India is the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958. According to this Act, the Government of India grants special powers to Indian Armed Forces personnel to preserve public order in “disturbed” areas. Essentially, under this Act, citizens lose all their democratic rights. Armed forces personnel can prohibit gatherings larger than five people, open fire at a civilian if they suspect unlawful activity, make illegal arrests without a warrant, and ban firearms while being immune from prosecution. Arguably, this Act is one of the most contested acts passed by the Government of India. Several deaths, killings, and rapes have been linked to its unfair employment, such as the 2000 killing of 10 innocent civilians waiting at a bus stop in Malom, Manipur. This incident sparked Irom Sharmila’s 16 year fast against AFSPA, which ultimately failed to bring about any significant changes.

Initially, this Act was passed as a counter to Naxal and ethnic militia bands, which were seen as hampering development. Additionally, this area is also strategically crucial to both India and China due to its location. China has territorial and economic interests in this region and is also a threat to India due to the physical and cultural similarities between the Chinese and North-East Indian people. However, under the Disturbed Areas Act of 1976, AFSPA can only be enforced in areas for three months. The Act, which has been imposed since 1958, is also in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, and other international treaties, which prevent military intervention in a particular area permanently. As of 2021, it is only valid in some districts of the North-Eastern states of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and no other region of India. It has recently been revoked in Meghalaya and Tripura.

Women are treated as collateral in the ongoing war between the Naxal insurgents and the Indian military in this region. Under this Act, they are subject to rape, forms of sexual harassment, and domestic violence at the hands of family members, militants, and Indian military soldiers. There has been a rise in sexual harassment cases in the last two decades wherein the culprits, usually, soldiers, go unpunished. For instance, in the case of Thangjam Manorama, who was raped and murdered by Assam Rifles soldiers in 2004 on the assumption that she was linked to a communist militant group, no arrests have been made (Roy, 2015). Many women’s groups stood in solidarity to fight her culprits and get justice, but this was to no avail. The Meira Paibis, a North-East Indian women’s group that protests against violence against women at the hands of the Indian military, also protested for Manorama to get justice. Over 30 Manipuri women marched naked in protest in Imphal, with a placard reading “Indian Army rape us.” In the same month, five young men attempted to self-immolate in front of the chief minister’s office as a sign of solidarity with Manorama.

Indian military and paramilitary units have also been accused of killing innocent individuals they suspect of being associated with communist ideologies. Between 1958 and 2019, over 1500 alleged fake encounters - killings staged by the military - had taken place in just Manipur, a state on India’s eastern border sharing a majority frontier with Myanmar. In 2013, the Santosh Hegde Commission also admitted to over six encounters being staged (Indian Express, 2019). Potentially, one of the most damaging outcomes of this law has been the gradual increase in distrust of the armed forces, leading to further suppression and isolation of women in the region by their communities and national government. Without any cooperation from the civilians, the military and paramilitary forces have made little social and economic progress in the area in the 21st century. Women are also bound by their roles at home or by the actions of the militia around them. The North-Eastern community, specifically the women, continue to suffer at the hands of forces too nebulous for them to comprehend and too large for them to resist.

Women and Militancy

Most militant groups, whether separatist, communist, or ethnically affiliated, claim to work for their respective communities as a whole, such as the Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (for Assamese Muslims) or the Rabha National Liberation Front (for Tibeto-Burmans). In reality, however, they fail to effectively recruit women in their decision-making bodies and are only working towards the interests of men in the organization, using women as front-line soldiers. Insurgent groups' demands fail to address women's issues specifically or work for better opportunities for them. In advancing only their own interests, they also promote age-old patriarchal and paternalist notions and practices. Most extremist groups exclude women wholly or deprive them of influential positions in organizations. It appears they are to be sacrificed like pawns in a sick game between opposing groups of men or otherwise completely ignored.

Further, ethnic divisions have been mirrored within Manipur's women's movement. Tensions have split Manipuri society between the Meiteis in Imphal Valley, Naga populations in the north, and Kuki communities in the south. Because of their isolated setting and conflicts between the Meitei and Naga people, Naga women's groups operating in the hill areas hardly communicate with organizations working in other parts of India. Kuki women's groups have been confined to the state's southern hill regions, where inadequate infrastructure and various militant groups have hindered their capacity to network with other women's groups (McDuaie-Ra, 2012).

Women's associations such as the Bodo Women's Justice Forum, the Naga Women's Association, and the Naga Women's Union of Manipur have all publicly condemned violence, advocated for peace on a local level, and joined peace talks among armed units and the government. However, this feminist activism is limited due to several factors. A significant number of women choose to take part in ethno-violence - they are either brainwashed by family members or lack alternatives - placing the community's needs as a whole above the specific needs of women. Not only this, women who actively speak out against major political groups and the government are alienated and tormented by all violent factions. They are treated as social pariahs and are subject to many forms of humiliation at the hands of insurgents, and they are constantly on the government's radar, leading to an increased chance of unfair arrest and subsequent torture under AFSPA.

Since the government or local governing bodies do not recognize or provide resources to women's organizations, they remain primarily unorganized, scattered and inefficient. With the lack of a proper system where women can gather, confer, and collaborate, they do not have the power to bring about substantial change. Moreover, a commitment to feminist activism seems to mean sacrificing any semblance of a "normal" life without friends, family, marriage, or community. Women, therefore, remain on a dangerous no man's land, fighting against both sides but claimed by none.

What is Marxist feminism?

Marxist-feminism analyzes how women are exploited through the interlocking forces of capitalism and patriarchy. Marxist-feminism encourages women's reclamation of their bodies and power over their lives by attempting to eliminate class-based divisions. It envisions a system where women have significant control over land, resources, labour, reproductive and social rights (Armstrong, 2020). This theoretical approach can be applied in the context of North-East India, as most women are either working in domains they do not have a choice in, such as those forced into ethnic terror groups, or are unable to work to their full potential, such as women in groups promoting peace in the region. The assumption that women are satisfied or liberated with only domestic labour or work that has been assigned to them is incorrect. Women's desires and choices can range over a broad spectrum, which can be allowed to develop under a Marxist-feminist approach.

Under capito-patriarchal systems, men in the household/community depend on women to be actively engaged in unpaid domestic labour or wage labor outside the home and contribute to household earnings without taking a part of it for themselves. The capitalist system also depends on this gender-based exploitation to further its ambitions. Augmentation of existing and creating new systems of this kind depend on having a solid, unbreakable foundation - formed by women. As long as women in North-East India continue to toil for others' benefit, this system will not be eradicated or modified. Under this system, women who are involved in the workforce and are seemingly independent of forced domestic labour and exploitation are also victims of the class system. However, most women are paid less despite working harder and get a minor share of the resources (Das, 2013).

In North-Eastern Indian cultures, women are inarguably subordinated to men. By treating women like second-class citizens, they also become more vulnerable to forces of racism, sexism, casteism, and religious bigotry (Cooper 2017; Mojab 2016). A Marxist-feminist interpretation can open channels for providing equal opportunities to women by involving them in decision-making bodies and giving them control over their economic lives.

Why Marxist feminism over other kinds of feminism?

In this section, I will attempt to justify why Marxist-feminism is the best choice for an analysis of the situation of North-East Indian women. I will analyze other kinds of feminism, examine their impacts on the region and women, and demonstrate why they are insufficient for the treatment of North-East India.

The fundamental causes of gender inequality, according to liberal feminists, are ignorance and socialization. However, liberal feminism primarily reflects white, middle-class women's experiences. In the context of India, liberal feminism would apply to privileged, urban, middle, upper-middle and high-class women, usually part of the workforce. Even those in the workforce, women in North-East India are usually part of the lower middle and lower classes and live in environments with limited financial, emotional, and physical freedom. There are very few legal reforms to protect them, and close to no progress has been made for their betterment in the last few decades. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution prevents discrimination based on no specific criteria, so it is not gender-specific and 72 years old. AFSPA, only legal in a few North-Eastern states, allows the military to exploit all citizens, especially women, without any legal reproach. Thus, liberal feminism is not best suited for this sect of women.

Radical feminism, on the other hand, views patriarchy in society and its institutions controlled and ruled by men. Radical-cultural feminists believe that the feminine is superior (Thompson, 2016). They envision a world in which men are almost entirely eliminated from women's lives. This is highly unrealistic as no society can function by silencing almost one half of the people in it. Not only is this impractical in North-East India, but also in several other regions of the world. Excluding a whole group of people is morally ambiguous and detrimental to the development of an area as a whole. In Maria Mies' words, "Rejection and abolition of the principle of colonizing dualistic divisions (between men and women, different peoples and classes, man and nature, spirit and matter) based on exploitation for the sake of ever-expanding commodity production and capital accumulation", is necessary (Mies, 2014). Increasing forces of separatism and division in an area already plagued by ethnic violence are ineffectual and could exacerbate issues, further isolating women and making them targets of violence.

Socialist feminism claims that the oppressive structures of class, race and gender are mutually reinforcing. They argue that women must have a sense of sisterhood in order to be liberated from patriarchal oppression. The ideals of Socialist feminism are similar to Marxist-feminism, that is, socio-economic justice. However, Socialist feminism argues that the capito-patriarchal system has been created to specifically target and exploit women, whereas Marxist feminism argues that the oppression of women is one of the consequences of this system. Marxist feminism is a more suitable approach for the North-East region as men in the region are also victims of class-based exploitation, toxic masculinity, ethnic violence, militia groups, etc. Women's emancipation cannot be carried out without liberating men from the shackles of capitalism and patriarchy.

According to postcolonial feminist scholars, women are suppressed by the patriarchy and colonial power, and this suppression continues in many nations even after achieving independence. The North-East Indian population has a long history of being abused by British colonial laws, such as the Forest Laws in Assam, which took away the cultural rights of many ethnic groups to access forest resources. However, both post and pre-independence, the North-East has also been exploited by mainstream Indian, Chinese, and Bangladeshi forces. The outpour of Bangladeshi Rohingya refugees into Assam has threatened the indigenous people's rights. China has also been reported to fund and supply arms to several terror groups, such as Kachin Independence Army and Arakan Army. Thus, postcolonial feminism does not cover the broad and complex range of problems encompassing this region.

Marxist-feminism in North-East India

Because North-East India did not experience the same social and economic advancement and Westernization as other parts of India in a post-colonial scenario, the ideologies and politics there developed very differently. Due to the distinct nature of the geopolitical concerns in the area, more organized and far-reaching policies might be more suited for the emancipation of women in particular and the development of the region in general.

Marxist-feminism examines how the interlinked forces of capitalism and patriarchy jointly exploit women and other minority communities. These forces encourage a form of social hierarchy beneficial to a limited population sector and are challenging to bend or change. One of the main problems with modern society is the need for one to feel like they "own" their partner (Kollontai, 1977). This desire for ownership can extend to those - in this context, women - that allow men to be in positions of power. Despite being victims themselves, many men in this region go on further to exploit women. By introducing changes in the hierarchy structure, the gap between those at the bottom and those at the apex can be bridged and eventually eliminated.

Through a Marxist feminist lens, focus on masculine terror groups - unorganized ideological violent groups - with unclear aims, advocating for the betterment of only a small community composed of mostly men, can be reduced. A shift to less extreme women's movements will enhance stability and security and drastically boost socio-economic improvements. Productivity will improve with women entering the organized labour force and being rewarded with money, job security, and other benefits.

Reducing toxic masculine ideologies associated with traditional and Westernized cultures, such as property ownership and inheritance, will enrich the social environment and result in healthier secondary and group social development. The proposition of one broad theory applied to a whole region will also introduce political uniformity, thus providing an agenda for drafting rules, laws, and domestic and foreign policies. It will also prevent the exploitation of this community by other majority powers or the government.

Some Marxist feminist policies that can be applied to North-East India would ideally comprise:

- The reduced role of the military

Under the AFSPA law, Indian soldiers and other paramilitary units have been flooding North-East Indian areas. Consequently, they occupy more land, space, and resources that the locals could utilize towards the improvement of collective civil life. They also alter the power structure of the area, exploiting both women and men and placing women at the lowest ring of society. How the locals interact with each other is also dependent on the military presence in the area to some extent. Since they have the highest assumed authority, the military is not held accountable for defaults and can exert dominance. None of the accused faced any penalties in the above-mentioned instances of the Manorama rape case and Malom killings. Instead, their identities were hidden by the government, and they were allowed to continue with their jobs peacefully. Under Marxist-feminist policies, the military would have a reduced role in society. This will require a reduction in the number of soldiers posted in a particular area and the amount of land they occupy,

the extent to which they have rights over localized natural and human resources, their authority in detaining citizens, and their accountability to the Indian judiciary system.

Additionally, local police and military units should not be under the control of the national military but should be included in military decision-making so the locals have representation. As a result, both local men and women will be given greater autonomy, have the right to vote, and will be governed by locals who have essential knowledge of the area and its heritage. They will have rights over primary resources of land, food, and infrastructure. Furthermore, their human rights will be guaranteed to a large degree. If the people are permitted to go about their daily lives freely without the threat of military interference, they will interact more efficiently. Women will also experience truer liberation as they will not be used as tools in the ugly war between local militants and the army. They will be able to reclaim their individuality and will be included in decision-making bodies as collaterals of war.

- Reduction in segregation of society

Marxist-feminism envisions a society liberated from oppression linked to capitalism and patriarchy. Under this approach, no one is at an advantage or disadvantage because of their gender, economic class, social class, religion, caste, ethnicity, or language. North-East Indian society is segmented based on several of these lines, the most significant being gender and ethnic groups. Not only has this alienated people from the region from the rest of India, but also from each other. This separation has halted economic progress and allowed outside forces like China and Bangladesh to exploit them. Not only are other countries and corporations unwilling to invest in this area, but the Indian government also does not want to develop this area due to the imminent threat of conflict. If Marxist-feminist policies are inculcated in this region, it will attempt to establish a less segregated society. Schools, colleges, and other educational institutions that only admit students from a specific group or linguistic community will be eradicated. Education costs will also be reduced to a bare minimum.

Other public sites - like specific forests, restaurants, and farms reserved for a particular community- will also be developed and distributed equitably. State and local parliaments will also have reserved seats for each community of the region it governs and an additional 33.3% reservation for women, further divided based on ethnicity. Men and women from diverse groups can be encouraged to interact and work alongside each other. This will open up new arenas for acculturation and bring about positive, pragmatic changes in society.

- Equitable and controlled distribution of resources

Dominant socio-economic groups, such as upper-caste Hindu men in India, often regulate access to more resources than others. They also have access to more efficient and utilizable resources, such as more fertile land, more qualified jobs, better educational opportunities. If Marxist-feminist policies are applied to North-East India, disadvantaged groups will be guaranteed essential resources through guaranteed reserves and more economical control and independence. Additionally, a system of resource distribution will also reduce intra-group conflict. If a system in place warrants members of a specific community or gender a particular amount of grains or land, for instance, they will have legal claims over it, and no other group can challenge their rights of ownership. Obstacles to economic progress can also be eliminated. If resources are distributed equitably, i. e., depending on each group's requirements and needs, people will have the opportunity to expand and progress. Women will have greater access to opportunities to advance in their lives. This can be achieved by modifications such as assigning communal plots of land to each community in a particular area, determined by their average annual income, spending, family size, and so on. If clear boundaries and limits are defined, it will also reduce the area for debate and dispute. This can be equated to a system of reservation in the context of each particular resource. Through this, people of the area will have equal prospects of advancing socio-economically.

- Self-sufficiency

North-East India is dependent on mainstream Indian, Chinese, and Bangladeshi markets for various supplies. A fundamental aim of Marxist-feminism in this area can include self-sufficiency. This can manifest in several different ways. For instance, agricultural self-sufficiency comprises adequate grains, chemicals, tools, machines, and labourers. If individual plots of land are turned into communal farmlands, this can be achieved. Not only will this drastically increase the workforce and the size of the landholdings, but a magnified budget can also purchase better and more productive tools and chemicals.

Additionally, incorporating sustainable practices in agriculture, industries, market, etc., is also vital. Due to the minimal size of land holdings in North-East India, sustainability is necessary to ensure the completion of long-term goals. Self-sufficiency in the market and industry, on the other hand, can be ensured by improving local production and stabilizing prices. If a diverse range of products is grown locally or even in other parts of India, customers will purchase fewer Chinese and Myanmar goods, reducing the incoming funding to terror groups. Stabilizing prices in the initial years is also crucial to this development. The cheaper the products, the more likely people are to pick them over foreign goods. Self-sufficiency substantially promotes regional and national economic growth and trade and also encourages a positive spirit. People will be quick to adapt to new policies of Marxist-feminism if they can identify durable changes.

- Reduction of foreign influence

Another imperative aspect of a Marxist-feminist approach is promoting local, regional, and national development. This becomes amplified in North-East India, as much military/terrorist violence is closely linked to outside influence. Many such violent groups are funded by the Chinese, Myanmar, and Bangladeshis. As a result, Indian military presence in the area also rises. These forces vastly hinder domestic progress. Foreign influence can be reduced in several areas, ranging from industrial production, market and trade, to cultural, administrative, and power dynamics. If indigenous North-East Indian culture is encouraged, locals will not have to align themselves with North Indians, South Indians, or foreign nationals to feel a sense of unity or belonging. This will also liberate them from being used as pawns by the more enormous powers of the New Delhi government and the Chinese military. This can be accomplished by adding cultural and historical elements in secondary education syllabuses, outlining the national strategic importance of the area, and empowering citizens to accept their identities without the need to feel part of a more extensive community. Consequently, people can conceive their community and territory's future independent of mainstream Indian or foreign influences.

- Standardizing the education system

In Karl Marx's words, "The education of all children, from the moment that they can get along without a mother's care, shall be in state institutions at state expense" (Das Kapital, 1867). Standardizing primary education across all states to a certain extent is vital for developing the North-East region. This ensures that all children have equal information and opportunities, and parents spend less on their children's education. It also prevents ethnic/social/economic conflict between youth over the right to equal resources. Additionally, values of self-sufficiency, socio-economic independence, classless/genderless equality, and the appreciation of one's heritage can also be inculcated from a young age. This revised education system will also expose the youth to a moderate degree of Westernization and first-world ideals. A combination of Western and Indian education is a better fit for this region than a purely mainstream Indian one due to its unique history and features. Instead of teaching a patriotic history dominated by North Indian leaders, a more localized and unique approach would better fit the requirements. A more liberal education can manifest flexible

and distinct choices for students, diversity in the institution, and proportionate facilities. This will reduce conflict, assist economic growth, and boost the literacy rate.

- Provision of equal and diverse opportunities for women

Arguably, the most affected victims of the current geopolitical scenario of North-East India are the women of the region. Not only do they serve as a renewable resource for others to misuse, but they are also the first to be sacrificed in times of crisis. Additionally, North-East India has one of the highest rates of rape and gender-based domestic violence and one of the lowest female participation rates in government bodies. A simplistic solution would involve reservation for women in electoral bodies, workforces, educational institutions, etc. More complex solutions involve state-sponsored schemes for female employment, education, and protection on a smaller scale. If women are provided with an incentive to come to work and school, for instance - higher pay, fewer expenses, or additional facilities like loans and discounts, they will be exposed to many more opportunities. Reserved seats will also assist women in having a say in how to run their lives.

Furthermore, legal and marital protection for women, especially married homemakers, is also a necessity. The state can also support women's organizations and NGOs that work with rural women directly. A vast and instantaneous network of police and legal support for female victims of rape and harassment and stricter sentences for the offenders will reduce the crime rate. Through appropriate measures, the women's liberation movement can be bolstered, and supported by men and women alike from all regions of India.

Conclusion

By decreasing the influence of the military, violent activist groups, and traditional patriarchal administrative systems, women will have more freedom in running their lives. Marxist-feminist policies can potentially introduce an era of peace, equality, and independence. North-East Indian people can claim their own identities and territories without being dominated by another power. Women can lead safe, joyful lives without the threat of being reduced to puppets in the hands of men who are not concerned with their rights. Marxist-feminism can improve the living conditions of people in this area, with a specific focus on the women's empowerment movement.

Applying a Marxist-feminist lens to politically unstable regions of North-Eastern India simultaneously demonstrate the futility of (masculinist) militarized terrorist groups and the necessity of the women's emancipation movement for the possibility of a positive communist future. In the words of Thomas Sankara, "There is no true social revolution without the liberation of women. May my eyes never see and my feet never take me to a society where half the people are held in silence" (Sankara, 1988).

Discussion

Analysing North-East India through a Marxist-feminist lens also opens up other areas for further research, such as the impact of Marxist-feminism on the economic conditions, the civil war-like political situation, and the conflict between civilians and the Indian army. Marxist feminism can also be explored as a concept in other war-torn areas, such as North African and Latin American countries and other parts of Asia.

While this paper only focuses on theoretical aspects of the political inclusion of Marxist-feminism in North-East India, additional research can be carried out in the practical field application of the same. As the poverty gap and gender issues intensify in many parts of the world, theories like Marxist-feminism are becoming increasingly relevant as alternative solutions. It has immense potential and should be examined to address the world's growing human rights' crises.

Limitations

While Marxist-feminism might serve as a proponent for women's rights and socio-economic development in North-East India, it also has some shortcomings. Marxist-feminism is a relatively new concept in South Asia and has not previously been applied to any other third-world region. Since it differs vastly from democratic and post-colonial contexts, it might also be challenging to explain this to the North-East Indian population.

Additionally, it can also be interpreted as suppressing local religions and cultures of the area, thus coming across as anti-national or foreign. Lastly, when being applied to North-East India and its women, one must not forget that it is for the betterment of the region and its people and not for the advancement of a particular political ideology or sentiment.

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