

Beyond Single Axes: Understanding The Multiple Marginalised Identities Of Mising Women Through An Intersectional Lens

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Abstract:

Background: The ethnic identity crisis in Assam reflects a nuanced phenomenon influenced by socio-cultural and political dynamics. The Mising (Mishing) tribe is the second-largest prominent indigenous community after the Bodo tribe, known for its rich cultural heritage and distinct lifestyle. The Mising, the only riparian tribe of Northeast India, deeply connected to the river banks of the Brahmaputra and Subansiri, grapples with unique challenges in sustaining and reconciling its ethnic identity. The idea of autonomy also relates to the objectives to preserve indigenous cultures, enhance political representation, and promote sustainable preservation of land and natural resources. , the Mising Autonomous Council Act of 1995, which gave birth to the Mising Autonomous Council under the category of Statutory Autonomous Council of Assam, was enacted for the social, economic, educational, ethnic, and cultural upliftment of the Mising and other Scheduled Tribe communities residing in Core and Satellite Areas. This article tries to analyse how intersecting identities of gender, class, ethnicity, and location shape the lives of Mising women, positioning them at the nexus of multiple and overlapping forms of marginalisation. Tribal women in the state of Assam encounter the gender discrimination common to all women in patriarchal societies; their indigenous or tribal identity further entrenches their socio-economic vulnerability, resulting in multilayered axes of marginalised identities.

Research Methodology: The research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaire (close ended questions) and follow up interviews (open ended questions) within a mixed-methods research design. The Sample for the study comprises tribal women who live in the villages of MAC. However, secondary data has been collected through the H.Q. of the Mising Autonomous Council situated in Gogamukh, Dhemaji, and the official website of the Mising Autonomous Council, etc. However, Intersectionality as a research paradigm is used in order to explore the unique socio-cultural and political positioning of Mising women within the state of Assam.

Discussion: The study reveals that the political participation of women as voters is higher, as 100% of respondents directly participated in the democratic processes by electing their own representatives. However, the representation of women in the decision-making bodies of MAC is very low. Weaving, agriculture, wage labour, and business occupations like pig farming, selling rice beer, are some of the major sources of income for Mishing women. The Autonomous Council also plays an important role in improving the condition of tribal women. For that reason, some schemes are introduced in order to eliminate the economic crisis. However, there is a gap in the proper implementation of the schemes and programs, as the majority of women from different districts are not fully aware of the schemes/ programs available under the Mising Autonomous Council. However, educational status also plays an important role in this regard. Distance, mobility restrictions, family responsibilities, area of location, and lack of proper transportation facilities also play significant roles in accessing the training programs provided by the Mising Autonomous Council. However, most of the policies/schemes are reinforcing the traditional gender roles.

Conclusion: Patriarchy is not a "stand-alone" system- it intertwines with other systems of power to produce different lived realities. Mising women in the state of Assam encounter the gender inequality common to all women in patriarchal societies; their indigenous or tribal identity further entrenches their socio-economic vulnerability, resulting in multilayered axes of marginalised identities. The majority of Mising women reside in remote or resource-rich regions and often experience linguistic and cultural barriers within mainstream Assamese society, which creates geographical and structural marginalisation. The Mising women's distinct struggles and experiences within the state of Assam cannot be fully understood through a "Single-axis" approach, which overlooks the intersection of multiple axes of marginalised identities. In a nutshell, Mising women in Assam face an identity crisis not only due to their ethnic identity but also because of their gender, class, location and low literacy rate. They have to fight for multiple identities- fighting for greater autonomy or demanding Sixth-Schedule status to preserve their ethnic identity, gender-based inequalities, economic marginalization, geographic isolation, land alienation, and limited access to education.

Key Words: *Mising women, marginalised identities, Intersectionality, Mising Autonomous Council, Ethnic identity, Gender identity*

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I. Introduction

Assam, a state in Northeast India, is characterised by a diverse population comprising multiple ethnic communities. The ethnic identity crisis in Assam reflects a nuanced phenomenon influenced by socio-cultural and political dynamics. Every tribal community in Assam represents a unique ethnic identity, which is reflected in their distinct customs, religious practices, traditional attire, dances, music, and unique lifestyle. The Mising (Mishing) tribe is the second-largest prominent indigenous community after the Bodo tribe, known for its rich cultural heritage and distinct lifestyle. They are identified with the Yiluto-Burmese group, which is classified as a subcategory of the broader Mongoloid population (Payun, 2021). They primarily reside in upper Assam, which includes districts like Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Majuli, and parts of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh. The Mising, the only riparian tribe of Northeast India, deeply connected to the river banks of the Brahmaputra and Subansiri, grapples with unique challenges in sustaining and reconciling its ethnic identity. The occupational and cultural identity of the Mising community is deeply intertwined with farming and fishing. However, their well-known celebration of 'Ali-Aye-Ligang' has its roots in Jhum cultivation. However, the Mising tribe has assimilated into the broader Assamese society; still, they continue to have their unique language and customs, particularly their traditional attire, weaving, and handloom craftsmanship.

Table 1.1
Population of Mising tribe

Tribe	Male	Female	Total population
Mising (Mishing)	345,786	334,638	680,424

The Census report of India, 2011

The concept of autonomy entails self-administration, self-legislation, self-established rules, self-determination, and self-organization that are founded on the principles of minority and indigenous rights (Sarmah, 2011). The idea of autonomy also relates to the objectives to preserve indigenous cultures, enhance political representation, and promote sustainable preservation of land and natural resources. The Sixth-Schedule and Statutory Autonomous councils in Assam have been established in alignment with these aims and objectives. However, power varies between the Sixth-Schedule and Non Sixth-Schedule autonomous councils. By instituting the concept of Statutory Autonomous council, the Hiteswar Saikia-led government undertook additional measures to protect and promote the distinct identities of other plain tribal communities apart from the Bodo, which is included under the Sixth-Schedule provision. These councils were introduced in the Assam legislative assembly. As a result, the Mising Autonomous Council Act of 1995, which gave birth to the Mising Autonomous Council under the category of Statutory Autonomous Council of Assam, was enacted for the social, economic, educational, ethnic, and cultural upliftment of the Mising and other Scheduled Tribe communities residing in Core and Satellite Areas. Thus, the MAC is not included under the Sixth-Schedule provision of the Constitution of India. The Mising Autonomous Council has its headquarter at Gogamukh, Dhemaji, and has been granted executive power and functions over 34 subjects to foster the socio-economic development, cultural, and infrastructural improvement of the Mising community. However, the former renowned rice bowl of Assam, now Lakhimpur and Dhemaji, became one of the backward and worst-affected areas, which are vulnerable to recurring floods and soil erosion, along with widespread poverty. However, to understand the situation of Mising women, it is essential to examine how gender intersects with other social categories, such as ethnic identity, class, place of living, etc. This article tries to analyse how intersecting identities of gender, class, ethnicity, and location shape the lives of Mising women, positioning them at the nexus of multiple and overlapping forms of marginalisation. Tribal women in the state of Assam encounter the gender discrimination common to all women in patriarchal societies; their indigenous or tribal identity further entrenches their socio-economic vulnerability, resulting in multilayered axes of marginalised identities.

Objectives Of The Study

- To analyse the economic and political status of Mising women.
- To explore the role of the Mising Autonomous Council in the empowerment of women through their policies/schemes.
- To analyse how the intersectionality of gender, class, ethnicity, and location creates unique challenges and opportunities for Mising women.

II. Research Methodology

The research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaire (close ended questions) and follow up interviews (open ended questions) within a mixed-methods research design. The Sample for the study comprises tribal women who live in the villages of MAC. Out of the 36 constituencies of MAC, 2 constituencies are selected, and out of the 2 constituencies, 5 villages are selected. A total of 60 samples are collected in order to know the actual picture. The research has been done by using a multi-stage random sampling method. However, secondary data has been collected through the H.Q. of the Mising Autonomous Council situated in Gogamukh, Dhemaji, and the official website of the Mising Autonomous Council, etc.

Table 1.2
The following method has been used to select the sample.

Name of the Constituency	District	Name of the villages	Total Population	Total ST Population	ST %	Total samples collected
Sadiya Constituency	Tinsukia	4 No. Mising Gaon, 3 No. Mising Gaon, Padum Pathar (Bahir and Bhitor Rongdoi Mising)	968	958	98.9%	37
Dihing-Sessa Constituency	Dibrugarh	Chaulkhowa NC	1246	1246	100%	23
						Total= 60

Sample selection criteria:

1. The study includes only one Statutory Autonomous Council of Assam
2. Villages with a tribal population comprising over 95% of the total population are selected
3. Only tribal women are selected as participants
4. Above 18 years , who are eligible to cast their vote

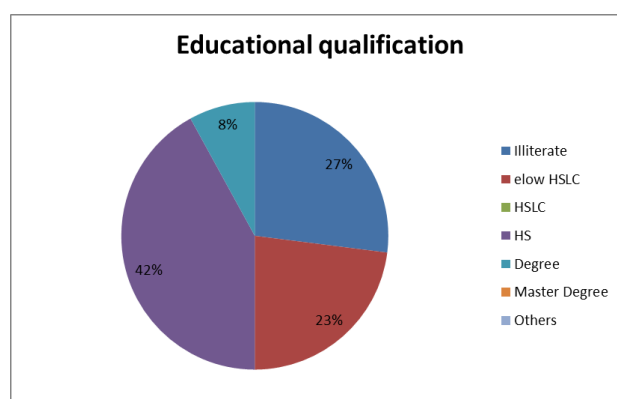
Exclusion area:

1. The study excludes areas governed by the Sixth-Schedule Autonomous Councils

III. Primary Data Analysis

Table 1.3
Educational qualification of the respondents

Qualification	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Illiterate	16	27%
Below HSLC	14	23%
HSLC	0	0
HS	25	42%
Degree	5	8%
Master Degree	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	60	100%



There is a cause for concern regarding the literacy rate among tribal women. Since 27% of women are illiterate, 23% of women did not finish their HSLC exam, and 42% of women completed their higher secondary board exam but did not finish their graduation. However, only 8% of women have earned their degrees. However, the educational backgrounds among Mising women vary widely, with only a tiny proportion of tribal women holding higher educational degrees.

The Political Status Of Mising Women

By reinforcing the idea of representative democracy, these non Sixth Schedule Autonomous Councils are composed of elected representatives called as councillors and conduct periodic election in very five years based on the principle of universal adult franchise. Women's political participation is contingent upon factors such as voting, attending rallies, campaigning, party membership, running for public offices, and being represented in decision-making bodies etc. In a patriarchal society where men predominate in politics, women's political empowerment is a matter of concern. The low representation of women in decision-making bodies will undermine not only women's right to equality but also jeopardise the concept of inclusive democracy.

Table 1.4
Political participation of the respondents

Questions	Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Do you vote regularly?	Yes	60	100%
	No	0	0
Are you a member of any political organisation?	Yes	7	12%
	No	53	88%
Do you participate in public meetings, campaigning, and socio- political rallies?	Yes	26	43%
	No	34	57%
Did you take part in any protest movement demanding for Sixth-Schedule status?	Yes	7	12%
	No	53	88%
Did you take part in any online political discussions, campaigns or social media activism?	Yes	5	8%
	No	55	92%

The research reveals that 100% of tribal women routinely cast their vote, which is a positive indication of their political participation as voters. The majority of tribal women have not joined any political organisations since they have no interest in politics. Just 7% of women express their interest in politics, and they are actively involved in the political sphere directly or indirectly. They are member of the BJP and All Mising Women Wings (Takam Mising Mime Kebang). The majority of women are not interested in taking part in public meetings, campaigning, and socio-political rallies. Only 12% of women actively participated in public meetings, campaigning, political rallies, or processions. A Sixth-schedule status is currently being demanded by the Mising Autonomous Council and hence actively participated in the protest movement demanding Sixth-Schedule status. However, only 7% of women are aware of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and hence are not actively involved in the protest movement. The majority of tribal women are active in social media but do not take part in online political discussions, campaigns, or social media activism. Merely 5% of women actively participate in social media platforms for political change.

Table 1.5
Council body of Mising Autonomous Council

AC	Total elected members	Govt. nominated	Total Executive Councillors	Total general members	Total councillors
MAC	32	4	14	22	36

The council body of MAC has a total of 36 members. Out of 36 members, 4 members are nominated by the government of Assam whereas the other 32 members are directly elected. The council members have further divided into executive councillors and general councillors. Out of 36 members, 14 members are executive councillors and the other 22 members are general councillors.

Table 1.6
Representation Of Women In The Mising Autonomous Council

AC	Total executive councillors	Total general councillors	Govt. Nominated	Total elected women members	Percentage
MAC	2	4	Nil	6	17%

Out of the 36 members, only 6 members are women, i.e. 17% of the total members. The council members are further subdivided into General members and Executive members. Out of 6 women members, 2 women are executive councillors and the other 4 are general councillors. There are no government-nominated women councillors, as all the women are elected representatives. However, in the council body, out of 36 members, 6 seats are reserved for women. In the MAC, no woman occupies the unreserved seats. Samita Sen rightly points out that the concept of political representation is fully defined only when women can improve, develop and expand the idea of politics and power in a variety of ways. Women's political leadership is crucial because feminist claims that go beyond simply sharing power and governing, to change the nature of power and governance (Sen, 2000).

Economic Status Of Mising Women

The Mising tribe's economy is largely dependent on agriculture, which is considered the most unorganised source of livelihood. The Mising women have a significant role in both domestic and reproductive activities. The majority of women rely on their husbands for financial support, and thus their role in the production process is crucial. The vast majority of the Mising tribes reside in rural areas covering different districts of Assam. The Mising women are skilled weavers, and the handloom has traditionally been a household practice in every house. Pig farming and rearing are another long-standing traditional practice of the Mising tribe in which women have played a vital role. However, women continue to follow these unorganised traditional practices for their daily livelihoods. The Social Welfare Department of the MAC is committed to inclusive development, but in a society where women lack formal education and are financially reliant on others and belong to the marginalised tribes, they face discrimination in every aspect of life and are economically, politically, and socially marginalised.

Table 1.7
Economic status of the respondents

Questions	Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Are you the family's bread earner?	Yes	4	7%
	No	53	88%
	Husband/wife (both earning together)	3	5%
If yes, what is your current source of income?	Govt. Jobs	1	Total = 7
	Running small scale business	5	
	Politics	1	

Table 1.8
Monthly income of the respondents

Monthly income	Number of Respondents
Below 10000	2
10000-20000	4
20000-30000	Nil
30000 and above	1
Total	7

The majority of tribal women are homemakers and financially dependent. Only 7 i.e. 12% of total women are economically independent.

IV. The Role Of Mising Autonomous Council

The Mising Autonomous Council also plays an important role in improving the condition of the tribal community and has implemented many welfare schemes/programs for the upliftment of tribal people. The council plays a vital role in fostering the social and economic development of the Mishing tribe by providing educational opportunities, focusing on infrastructure development, agriculture development, healthcare, and skill development in the areas covered under the MAC. However, to promote and preserve the culture, language and traditions of Mising communities is the ultimate objective of the establishment of MAC.

List of total Livelihood Schemes/Programs provided by the Mising Autonomous Council

1. Assistance for Banana Cultivation
2. Assistance for Piggery Farming
3. Assistance to Farmers for Fishery Development
4. Assistance to Farmers for Lac Culture on Indian Plum Tree
5. Assistance to Farmers for Poultry Farming

6. Assistance to Farmers for Sugarcane Cultivation
7. Demonstrative Bodo Rice Cultivation
8. Project Report on Rubber Plantation
9. Project Report on Toria Seed Bank in Majuli
10. Skill Up-gradation Training for Weavers
11. Beautician and fashion designing

However, the study is mainly focused on three women-benefited schemes such as Assistance to Piggery Farming, Skill Up-gradation Training for Weavers, beauticians and fashion designers. These three schemes are mainly targeted at tribal women. The paper also highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the schemes/policies implemented by the respective autonomous council.

Table 1.9
Financial Assistance awarded by Mising Autonomous Council during the last 10 years of Governance

Sl. No.	Name of Financial Assistance	Total Nos. Of implementation during 10 years	Future target (Next 5 year)
1	Rural Entrepreneurs/SHGS for Piggery Farming with Hand Holding Program	838	2000
2	Weavers Skill Up gradation	647	2000
3	Beautician and Fashion Designing	65	100

Source- Achievement report of MAC 2013-23

Table 2.0

Questions	Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Do you practice pig farming?	Yes	57	95%
	No	3	5%
Do you know weaving?	Yes	58	97%
	No	2	3%
Are you aware of the livelihood policies/schemes provided by the MAC?	Yes	36	60%
	No	24	40%
Are you aware of that your respective autonomous council provides training on good management practices for pig farming?	Yes	22	37%
	No	38	63%
Are you aware that your respective Autonomous Council provides weavers skill up gradation training programs?	Yes	43	72%
	No	17	28%
Did you receive any other entrepreneurial training from MAC?	Yes	60	100%
	No	0	0
Did you receive any financial assistance/educational scholarship from MAC?	Yes	3	5%
	No	57	95%
Do you aware that there are weaving facility centres available under MAC?	Yes	3	5%
	No	57	95%

The majority of Mising women are directly involved in pig farming and rearing. It is an old traditional practice of the Mising tribe. Although Mising women play a significant role in pig farming and rearing, the revenue generated by pig farming is not well organised because their husbands make the majority of the financial decisions. Weaving is another old traditional practice of Mising women, and their traditional clothing is extremely popular in the market. However, the majority of women only use this traditional practice in order to manufacture their personal clothing, but not for commercial gain. The majority of women are aware of the schemes provided by their respective autonomous councils. However, there are 40% of women are not aware of the schemes/programs provided by their respective Autonomous Council. The majority of women are not aware of the training on good management practices for pig farming provided by their respective Autonomous Councils. The majority of women are aware of the weaver's skill upgradation training program provided by the Mising Autonomous Council. Although they are aware of the scheme, none of them has received any training. The majority of women have not received any other entrepreneurial training provided by the Mising Autonomous Council. Only 5% of women receive educational scholarships, but the other 95% of women do not receive any financial assistance from the Mising Autonomous Council. 57% of women are not aware of the weaving facility centres available under the Mising Autonomous Council.

V. Discussion

The study reveals that the political participation of women as voters is higher, as 100% of respondents directly participated in the democratic processes by electing their own representatives. However, the representation of women in the decision-making bodies of MAC is very low. Out of the 36 members, only 6 seats are occupied by women members, which reflect a significant gender gap in the decision-making bodies of local self-governance. Other than socio-cultural barriers, economic barriers, patriarchal attitudes, and political party dynamics, psychological barriers also play an important role in determining the political participation of Mising women. The majority of women in general and Mising women in particular are not interested in politics, which also affects their overall picture of political participation. Due to household responsibilities and stereotypical gender roles, tribal women are not able to fully participate in the political sphere. The majority of tribal women actively participated in public meetings, political campaigning, political rallies or processions, but their representation in decision-making bodies has been restricted. However, the statutory autonomous councils of Assam are currently demanding Sixth-Schedule status, and they are continuing their ongoing protests to fulfil their demands. Women also actively participated in the protest movement, but when it came to forming the decision-making bodies, women were subject to being disregarded. However, in order to increase the number of women in the political sphere, the Autonomous Council also needs to encourage women from their side.

In terms of economic status, the Mising women are mostly financially dependent on others for their daily livelihoods. They are poor and economically dependent on their husbands and play an important role in maintaining their family and household responsibilities. Jobs are scarce, and unemployment is a matter of concern among the Mising tribe. However, women are the most vulnerable in that sense. Weaving, agriculture, wage labour, and business occupations like pig farming, selling rice beer, are some of the major sources of income for Mishing women. However, the majority of women practice these services in order to live their daily livelihood. This is totally unorganised and runs within household premises. The Autonomous Council also plays an important role in improving the condition of tribal women. For that reason, some schemes are introduced in order to eliminate the economic crisis. However, there is a gap in the proper implementation of the schemes and programs, as the majority of women from different districts are not fully aware of the schemes/ programs available under the Mising Autonomous Council. However, educational status also plays an important role in this regard. Distance, mobility restrictions, family responsibilities, area of location, and lack of proper transportation facilities also play significant roles in accessing the training programs provided by the Mising Autonomous Council. There are a total of three training centres for Weaver's skill upgradation training programs, but the majority of the women are not aware of these facilities. However, most of the policies/schemes are reinforcing the traditional gender roles. All the schemes/ policies are focused on economic empowerment, but not a single scheme is available to encourage women into the sphere of politics.

Reconsidering Homogeneity-Tribal Identity, Class, Location, And Gender: Intersectionality As A Research Paradigm

Women do not constitute a homogeneous entity; rather, their socio-cultural positioning is not only shaped by gender, but through the interplay of gender with ethnic identity, class, geography, educational background and other social hierarchies. Mising women in the state of Assam encounter the gender inequality common to all women in patriarchal societies; their indigenous or tribal identity further entrenches their socio-economic vulnerability, resulting in multilayered axes of marginalised identities. The majority of Mising women reside in remote or resource-rich regions and often experience linguistic and cultural barriers within mainstream Assamese society, which creates geographical and structural marginalisation. Mising women face multiple marginalised identities which intersect with each other and shape unique struggles and experiences. Thus, the Mising women are marginalised in both feminist spaces (that prioritise gender but ignore tribal identity) and the autonomy movement (that prioritise the autonomy of the tribal group but ignore gender). The Mising women's distinct struggles and experiences within the state of Assam cannot be fully understood through a "Single-axis" approach, which overlooks the intersection of multiple axes of marginalised identities. Intersectionality refers to an approach that looks not only one dimension but considers how multiple grounds of identities intersect in shaping the social world (Lisa Disch, Mary Hawkesworth, 2016). The way social systems are built can marginalise certain groups in ways that single-axis approaches cannot see (Lisa Disch, Mary Hawkesworth, 2016). Intersectionality as a research paradigm is used in order to explore the unique socio-cultural and political positioning of Mising women within the state of Assam. How political movements or advocacy efforts (e.g. autonomy, feminist movement) can sometimes marginalise people who live at intersection of multiple identities, because these movements often focus on just one axis of marginalisation. Politics and movements can unintentionally erase those whose experiences don't fit neatly into a single category of marginalisation.

VI. Conclusion:

Political and economic statuses are interconnected and interact with each other. In a society where women are still economically dependent on their husbands and parents, the political empowerment of women is a matter of concern. The patriarchal burden has been a source of pain for the Mising women since ancient times. Despite their great potential for economic improvement, their contributions are not acknowledged in the patriarchal Mising culture. Women are mostly engaged in household activities and play an important role in caregiving and rearing children. These stereotypical gender roles restrict women from participating in the sphere of economy and politics. The Mising women are also living in a patriarchal society and play a secondary role in the sphere of politics and economy. Using women as a voting bloc and not providing tickets to women candidates are the characteristics of a patriarchal society. The Autonomous Council should take special measures in order to improve the conditions of women by not reinforcing the traditional gender roles. Patriarchy is not a “stand-alone” system- it intertwines with other systems of power to produce different lived realities. A wealthy white woman and a poor immigrant woman both live under patriarchy, but the way they experience it is shaped by their race, class, nationality, sexuality, and other identities (Lisa Disch, Mary Hawkesworth, 2016). The Mising community has been continuously fighting for greater autonomy to protect their land and resources. However, MAC is presently governed by the state legislature, which lacks both legislative and judicial powers. In a nutshell, Mising women in Assam face an identity crisis not only due to their ethnic identity but also because of their gender, class, location and low literacy rate. They have to fight for multiple identities- fighting for greater autonomy or demanding Sixth-Schedule status to preserve their ethnic identity, gender-based inequalities, economic marginalization, geographic isolation, land alienation, and limited access to education. However, apart from political favouritism and corruption, low representation of women in the decision-making bodies is another issue of concern associated with the Autonomous Councils of Assam (Islam, 2020). Historically, women in Assam actively participated in the autonomy movements and played significant roles in these communities' struggles for their autonomy, yet their presence in the formal political structure has been restricted, and when it came to forming decision-making bodies, women were disregarded and forgotten (Sharma, 2014). Demanding Sixth-Schedule status by this tribal community to preserve their distinct culture and ethnic identity is the contemporary political scenario in Assam. Jagdish Mukhi, headed by Ranoj Pegu on August 24, 2021, formed a cabinet sub-committee. The committee is currently searching for an alternate Sixth Schedule solution to meet the demands and desires of these three communities, such as Rabhas, Mishing and Tiwa. (Sharma R., 2023). Nonetheless, Mishing women actively participated and were in large numbers at the protest movements calling for greater autonomy. Despite their active participation, women hardly got tickets to contest elections in the non-reserved seats of the Autonomous Council. Mishing communities are largely dependent on agriculture and closely connected to nature. Mishing women under the area of their respective autonomous council reside in rural areas covering different districts of Assam. The intersection of location and gender identity uniquely impacts and creates distinct experiences for Mishing women. The Autonomous Council should take special measures in order to improve the conditions of women by not reinforcing the traditional gender roles. In a nutshell, the concept of Intersectionality highlighted the importance of recognising multiple, intersecting dimensions of identity in shaping organisations, institutions and dynamics of the social world (Lisa Disch, Mary Hawkesworth, 2016). Political Intersectionality, in contrast, exposed how women of colour inhabit multiple marginalised identities within different groups whose political agendas may not align and thus are contradictory in nature (Disch, 2016, p.385). Their political agendas are often contradictory, as they are compelled to contend and advocate for multilayered axes of marginalised identities. Tribal people often adhere to customary laws that are a set of unwritten traditional norms transmitted through generations to govern social and regulate community life. Along with land alienation, tribal women inhabit a position of intersectional subordination that arises not only from gender based inequalities but also from the socio-economic, political, and cultural marginalisation of their communities within the broader Assamese identity. The patriarchal restructuring of tribal societies further marginalised women's roles and voices. Consequently, Mising women often find themselves alienated within their own communities, excluded from decision-making bodies and situated at the crossroads of ethnic identity crisis, class, location of the village, and gender, resulting in multiple and overlapping layers of marginalisation. Thus, the paper delves into the realities of marginalized identities of Mising women, recognising that gender intersects with other social categories like ethnic identity, class, and places of origin to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege.

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