

UDAYAN

Light up Rotary

FORTNIGHTLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF GAUHATI SOUTH

Rotary



R.I. President
Rtn Gary C.K. Huang

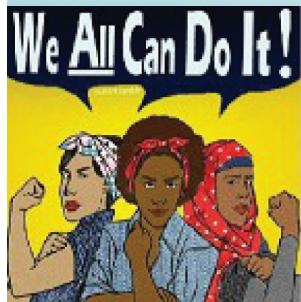
Dist. Governor
Rtn. Swapna K. Choudhury

President
Rtn. Paramesh Dev Choudhury

Secretary
Rtn. R. M. Hazarika

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THERE IS NO TOOL
FOR DEVELOPMENT
MORE EFFECTIVE
THAN THE
EMPOWERMENT OF
WOMEN



Editor's Comment:

Women Empowerment

It is an irony that despite being solely gifted with the power of procreation, from time immemorial female of the human species is being perceived to be the weaker sex and is vulnerable. It is obvious that only distinguishing feature to corroborate this perception vis a vis the male can only be in the physical attributes, more specifically, the physical power. Men have fully exploited this power to impose their dominance and claim their primacy and prevail over every sphere of life. Instances are not rare that society has miserably failed to protect the dignity of the women. Obviously rationality gave in to blatant discrimination. But the evolving human society has come a long way since. With time and events maturing prudence brought to fore that status quo is best not allowed to continue if human civilisation is to transcend to its next level. This cannot be achieved leaving the potential of 49.76% of the population at sub optimal level. So really speaking no one is doing a favour by exploring ways and means to empower women. This is a simple historical inevitability. This nascent process calls for accelerated movement forward. We as a human society must ensure that women are duly accommodated in their long deserved rightful space so that they can contribute equally in carrying forward our civilisation. They have to be duly enabled with wherewithal providing required resources and congenial environment to sharpen, acquire, and refine necessary skills society would benefit from. They must be secured with proper safeguard against systemic ulterior manipulative maneuvers of male dominance. Women are

endowed with unique multitasking managerial skills, be it raising children, making a home, strategising a social maneuver, governance be it in public or in corporate domain. Given the opportunity they can and have been proving their mettle time and again. We only need to cheer and standby them all the way.

In the words of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi -

"Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not as a result only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over woman which they do not deserve and ought not to have. Many of our movements stop half way because of the condition of our women."

Tarun Ch. Bordoloi

Laugh to a healthy life ! Don't Mess with the Elderly !

Doris Mason, a little old lady living in Cheltenham, England, answered a knock on the door one day, to be confronted by a well-dressed young man carrying a vacuum cleaner. 'Good morning, Ma'am,' said the young man. 'If I could take a couple minutes of your time, I would like to demonstrate the very latest in vacuum cleaners.'

'Go away!' said Doris brusquely. 'I'm broke and haven't got any money for new fangled contraptions,' and she proceeded to close the door.

Quick as a flash, the young man wedged his foot in the door and pushed it wide open. 'Don't be too hasty,' he commanded. 'Not until you have at least seen my demonstration.' And with that, he emptied a bucket of horse manure onto her dining room carpet.

'Now, if this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this horse manure from your carpet, Madam, I will personally eat the remainder.'

Doris stepped back and said with a smile, 'Well let me get you a spoon, young man because Southern Electric cut off my power this morning.'



Minutes of the Weekly Meeting of RC Gauhati South held on 7th November 2014 at Hotel Rajdhani Regency



Induction of Dr. Tejendra Bordoloi



Induction of Dr. Sunil Saikia



Some more images of the Weekly Meeting of the 7th November 2014

1. President Rtn Paramesh Dev Choudhury called the meeting No: 1825 to order at 0700PM, which was followed by the National Anthem.
 2. The President welcomed all the members including the Guests present. President on behalf of all the members wished Rtn Ranjan Kumar Borah & Tripti on the occasion of their marriage anniversary on 7th November in their absence.
 3. **President's Time:**
 - President informed the members about the withdrawal of nomination of Rtn Rajkamal Bhuyan for DGND for the RY 2017-2018. He clarified that as per the rules, PDG Rtn Dr Pranab Kumar Baruah, who happens to be a member of our Club, being the Chairman of the District Nominating Committee our Club cannot nominate a candidate for DGND for the particular period. The Club was unaware of this restriction.
 - President thanked all concerned for the help & cooperation in the successful conduction of the Vocational Award function on 31st October 2014. Rtn Arman & Ann Mahmuda deserve special appreciation for hosting Rotaractor Navin from 30-31st October 2014.
 - Papers /documents for "Child Insurance Project" covering 500 students from - Rashtriya Siksha Sadan & Hatigarh Prathamik Vidyalaya have been submitted to Oriental Insurance Company.
 - Second HTFI has been conducted successfully on 1st November 2014 at Sipajhar College for 100 students /participants in association with Yuba Vikash Kendra. Principal Dr Pradip Deka inaugurated the programme while Dr Malini Nayar, Coordinator welcomed all present. Rtn. S C Goswami spoke on 'Preparation for the Interview' & 'On the Day of Interview', Rtn Bijay Ketan Baruah took up the topic of CV/ Resume , Rtn. P D Choudhury spoke on 'Tips for Effective Interviewing'. At the end Certificates were distributed. President also thanked Rtn. Arman Ahmed for providing his car while going to Sipajhar College.
 - President also appreciated the efforts made by IPP Dr. R N Mazumder, Rtn Prashanta Goswami, Rtn. Dr. Bibekananda Saikia and Ann Amiya Mazumder in visiting the Upper Dikshak L P School on 2-11-2014 . They handed over a pair of table with drawer, a locker and a chair for use by the teacher. They also visited the Fishery & Piggery projects.
 - President also informed that Rtn Dr Mazumder has purchased 7 nos. of steel cloth racks for Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan, Jalukbari which will be handed over to Sadan Authorities at a later date. Rtns. Minoti Barthakur, Sweta Pegu, Dr Anil Mahanta, Dr B N Saikia, Prashanta Goswami donated Rs. 1000 each (Rs 5000) which has been utilized for this purpose. Club records its appreciation for this laudable gesture.
- President also informed the house about the finalisation of the District Seminar on "Women Empowerment" scheduled to be held on 23rd November 2014 to be hosted by our Club. Highlights:
 Chief Guest Rtn PDG Kalpana Khound, Mrs. Monisha Behl, Chairperson, North East Networks as Key-Note Speaker, Speakers- Dr. Archana Sarma, Smti. Suniti Sonowal, Rtn. Jayanti Chaudhuri ; All Clubs / AGs are invited. Registration Rotarians Rs. 500 (for Spouse Rs. 400).
- November: "The Rotary Foundation Month", TRF seminar on 22nd Nov2014 at 3 PM at Institute of Engineers Building, Panbazar
- Our Club has sponsored 2 candidates Sri Pankaj Sarma- Gauhati Commerce College (selected by Rtn. Sweta Pegu) & Abhijit Deka-College of Veterinary Science (selected by Rtn Dr B N Saikia) to RYLA at Bongaigaon on 14-16th Nov 2014.
- President informed that Registration Fee for the District Conference, 9-11th January 2015 at Asansol, till 15-12-2014 Rs. 2000.00 & RI Convention at Sao Paulo, Brazil, 5-9th June 2015, Registration Fee till Dec 2014 is \$ 325, by 31st March 2015 is \$ 375.
- Quiz: **When was Rotary Foundation instituted ?**: Answer: 1928. Answered correctly by: Rtns. MC Deka, Rtn Dr R N Mazumder.
4. The AG Rtn Jayabrata Banerjee (his 5th visit to our club) was invited to the dais for induction ceremony.
 1. Induction of **Dr Tejendra Bordoloi**:
 Dr Bordoloi was introduced by Rtn Renu Goswami, felicitated with a bouquet by Rtn Sweta Pegu , with a gamocha by Anne Purabee, Lapel pin fixed & Kit handed over by the AG. Rtn Dr Bordoloi spoke briefly about his involvement in Rotary . President welcomed Rtn Dr Bordoloi into Rotary fraternity.
 2. Induction of **Dr Sunil Saikia**.
 Dr Saikia was introduced by Rtn Biswadip Barooah, felicitated with a bouquet by Rtn Malatee Baruwa & with a gamocha by Anne Nandini, Lapel pin fixed & Kit handed over by the AG. Rtn Dr Saikia spoke about his experience & wished to work for the society through Rotary. President welcomed Rtn Dr Saikia into Rotary fraternity.
 5. At the end, AG also spoke welcoming both the new members and appreciated RC Gauhati South's efforts on various fronts.
 6. Secretarial report:

Rotarians	:	20
Annes	:	8
Guests	:	1
TRF Collection : Rs. 430.00		
 7. Rtn Sweta Pegu offered the vote of thanks.
 8. President adjourned the meeting at 0805PM.
 (Fellowship was offered by Rtn Sweta Pegu)
- Compiled by : Rtn. Paramesh Dev Choudhury, President**



On 2.11.14 a team of Rotarians and Anne, namely, Rtn Prashanta Goswami, Dr. Bibekananda Saikia and Anne Mrs Amiya Mazumder led by IPP Dr. R N Mazumder visited Upper Dikshak L P School and handed over a pair of table with drawer, a locker and a chair for use by the teacher. So long there was only one pair of table & chair in the school though there are two teachers and had to use them only by turn. In view of such a plight of the teachers members decided to

Visit to Upper Dikshak

help them with a pair of table & chair and Dr. Saikia volunteered to donate the same. It was handed over to Sri Lakhan Rahang, Head Master of the school . He thanked RC Gauhati South for meeting a long felt need of the school. Members also advised him to get the school secured by fitting the windows with iron grills in phased manner, if they have fund constraint. Once it is secured, providing ceiling fans may be considered in future.

The team also visited the handloom project , the fisheries and the piggery. Concerned members of the self help group, which was in charge of the project was not available for interaction. However, information gathered,was very frustrating. The handlooms were lying idle, pigs were shared among some members and sold, but fisheries did yield some revenue and hoped that they will yield more in the coming season. The team found the tube well , provided under Global Grant project in RY 2010-11 too was out of order for quite sometime as it was damaged by some antisocial elements.

Compiled by : IPP Rtn. Dr. R.N. Mazumder

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THE GENDER PERSPECTIVES

Prof. Shiela Bora, (Retd.)
Dibrugarh University

"Recognition of equality and dignity of women must be an integral part of all programmes for development, peace, security, democracy and Human Rights,"

- UN Secretary- General B. B. Ghali

The prevailing discourse on the woman's issue in India since the 1990s has been that of "empowerment". Earlier, the discourse went through phases like "welfare", "equity" and "rights" in keeping with the shifts in the national policy towards women. But whatever be the latest word in fashion, the government policies towards women, which in turn reflect deep-seated social attitudes, have not displayed a dynamic change in favour of gender justice in all its multiple forms.

Since 1945, when the Charter of the United Nations prepared the first international agreement that affirmed the principle of equality between women and men, the UN has been promoting the participation of women as equal partners with men in achieving sustainable development, peace, security, and full respect for human rights. The empowerment of women continues to be a central feature of the UN's efforts to address social, economic and political challenges across the globe. In 1995 another groundbreaking framework for achieving equality between women and men.was prepared by the Beijing Conference.

In addition to such international efforts made for empowering women, the Indian Constitution guarantees all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and

fraternity without any discrimination. e.g Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution provides equal rights to all men and women and serves as a document of social change. Under the Constitution, women have the right to vote, the right to move freely and earn a living and also the right to own property. Attempts have also been made to put in place several policies and statutes aimed at gender mainstreaming.

- the National Commission for women was set up in 1992 to safeguard women's rights.
- The National Health policy was streamlined to give the highest priority to programmes relating to women's health.
- Special programs were introduced in the education sector to help increase women's literacy and reduce the gender gap in the school system.
- The central government's policy of gender budgeting was incorporated in India's national budget 2005 - 06 specifying that 30% of funds must go to women related sectors.

Undoubtedly as a result of such legislations, policies and statutes women have been successful in breaking the barriers and Indian women have excelled in every field. It now appears that there is no arena that has remained unconquered by Indian women, whether it be politics, sports, entertainment, literature or technology. Today India has the world's largest number of professionally qualified women, the largest population of working women in the world and even more women doctors, surgeons, scientists and professors than the United States.

Yet, behind the façade of 'India Shining,' and in spite of all legislations, traditional patriarchal norms continue

to shape women's destiny. Norms for appropriate female behaviour that had been fixed by Manu, the ancient law giver, between the years 150 to 200 B.C. still continue. Manu had laid down that, "... by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house...In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent." No wonder a common Hindu wedding blessing continues to be "May you be the mother of a hundred sons."

It was in 1974 that the **Committee on the Status of Women in India** submitted a report highlighting the marginalisation of women in every sphere of life. The report gave rise to a series of protests which provided new dimensions to the women's rights discourse. With the emergence of a number of women's groups such as Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Manushi etc, women's protests now began to focus on survival issues like scarcity of water, fuel, fodder, demand for minimum wages, protests against domestic violence and drunkenness as also against sexual violence. While civil and political rights till now, had focussed on the rights of individuals, the new movement was based on group rights, collective rights and people's rights. The women's movement thus emerged as one of the most articulate and widespread movements in India. It not only critiqued patriarchy, casteism and feudalism, but also promoted a new awareness of women's rights and empowerment. It initiated public debates on the issue of women's status, domestic violence, dowry, rape, custodial violence, trafficking and the invisible labour of women in the household.

Essential strategies to be adopted towards Empowerment of Women:

a) **Need for relevant education :** There is no doubt that there has been significant achievements in the sphere of education and economic empowerment whenever, there has been large-scale political mobilisation of women for achieving broader social justice. Education is often believed to be a tool for the political empowerment of the masses. Statistics reveal that there has been a significant rise in the enrolment of women in schools and colleges in the last hundred years. However, even if we take the increasing figures of enrolment of girls as a significant national achievement, the point at issue is not just how many women are receiving the benefits of education, but whether the type of education they are receiving has led to empowerment. In other words, does the present system of education build up adequate awareness amongst women about their political, economic or legal rights? In reality very few women have enough information about the workings of the democratic system.

b. **Women's participation in economic activity:** In order to ensure women's empowerment, women's participation in economic activity and control of the income earned from it are critical to their use of choices that education and health make available for them. Even today, the content of the UN Report (1985) which says that, women perform nearly two-thirds of the society's work, receive a tenth of its income and own less than a hundredth of the

property at a time when India posts a high growth rate in the corporate sector, rings true. Though most women work harder than men, their work is hardly recognized as they are mainly engaged in unskilled work. Neither household chores, nor her work in the field is ever counted as a work. With industrialisation and monetisation of the economy, women's burden has increased, but this is not reflected in their share of income.

c. **Poverty alleviation :** Poverty alleviation amongst women is an essential part of building a safer world since they constitute the majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor. Poverty alleviation demands a more vigorous response from policy makers and civil society at national and international levels. Malnutrition and the feminisation of poverty generally translates into gaps in health, and education. While women in the United States and Europe often measure sex discrimination by pay scales and seats in corporate board rooms, women in the Third World gauge discrimination by mortality rates and poverty levels. Women's reproductive health is essential to ensure gender equality. Generally women are the ones who eat last in the family and their food intake does not contain the optimum nutritional value that is required for maintaining a healthy body. Nutritional deficiency leaves women not only anaemic but incapable of achieving their full growth, resulting in an unending cycle of undergrowth. Malnourished women cannot give birth to a healthy baby. Since women are often not free to move out of the house on their own and need permission from a male member of the family, her visits to a doctor are infrequent. Deprived of post-natal care, she remains weak, prone to diseases and early death. The female mortality rate in India is among highest in the world. India's maternal mortality rate is 385 to 487 per 1 lakh live births, which is the second highest in the world. In Assam, the maternal mortality rate for in 1998 was as high as 409 per 1000 live births. The latest child sex ratio is 914 females against 1000 males, the lowest since Independence.

d. **Care for the girl child :** The Census Report of 2011 has indicated a continuing preference for male children over female children. This in turn results in deprivation and neglect of the girl child culminating in greater female infant mortality. Women without a male issue reduces the nursing period for a girl child in order to get pregnant at the earliest possible in the hope of bearing a male child. The preference for male children also leads to higher allocation of nutritional and medical resources to male children. Thus the girl child is denied adequate nourishment and health care. Moreover, early marriage and pregnancies at a young age leads to complications and gynecological problems which may cause early death. Baby girls, still considered to be a curse or a burden by certain strata of society, are often killed soon after birth. Today technology can determine the sex of the unborn baby and a girl child is often aborted. Women have very little say in the matter of abortion, the wish of the husband mostly prevailing. In the last 10 years, more than 10 million girls in India have gone "missing" due to sex selection and

abortion (Source: 'The Lancet', a British journal); this despite the government having banned foetal sex selection in 1994.

e. **Violence against women** : Violence against women is a crime whether committed behind domestic walls, in public spaces or in conflict zones. Despite a plethora of legislations the conviction rate of crime against women is very low in India and violence against women, both physical and mental, exists not only in rural areas but also in the cities and urban areas. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, passed in 2005 includes in its ambit, not only women in marriage and live-in relationships but also those living in a shared household related by 'consanguinity or adoption'. Several legislations are also in force to prevent sexual harassment of women at work place. Unfortunately, despite the women's movement and the passing of numerous legislations, discrimination against women persists in all regions and societies. Systematic and flagrant violations of women's human rights continue both in law and practice. According to the National Crimes Report Bureau, 150,000 crimes against women are registered annually out of which nearly 50,000 are related to domestic violence. Every hour a woman is raped and every 93 minutes a woman is burnt to death due to dowry problem! Despite anti dowry laws, the evil has spread both horizontally and vertically such that communities with no tradition of dowry, or those that practiced bride price, have taken to this practice. Though the **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1986**, raised minimum punishment for those responsible for dowry deaths to five years' imprisonment, the Courts are still flooded with cases related to dowry deaths and harassment. Anti dowry movement has remained confined merely to aggressive slogans.

According to figures provided by the Government to the Assam Legislative Assembly session, rape and dowry cases in Assam are as follows

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009 November, 2010	Till
Rape	1203	1310	1419	1631	1610
Dowry	2548	3000	3410	4385	4811
Kidnapping					2931

As far as human trafficking is concerned, 236 cases of human trafficking have been recorded in Assam in the 10 year period between 2001-2011, while only 616 human traffickers were arrested under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.

A pilot study on 'Registration of FIRs by police in a metropolitan city,'(Tata Institute of Social sciences, Mumbai) reveals that "if a woman goes on her own to a police station to get an FIR lodged, she is abused or not heard...foul language is sometimes used and uncomfortable comments may be passed." The study also states that the behaviour of the women constables was equally rude and not different from that of their male counterparts. The Press and the electronic media, showing police indifference in dealing with dowry deaths, have highlighted a number

of cases. In most dowry cases the police are not prompt and thus valuable evidence is lost.

f. **Participation in decision-making process:**

Marginalized from decision-making processes at all levels women are unable to make an adequate contribution to society. A large percentage of women are not empowered to take decisions, even related to their own life independently. They have to take permission of the male members in the family for each and every matter. Ironically, at the annual conference (2002) of the Indian Association for the Study of Population, the demographers while trying to ascertain the degree of empowerment enjoyed by women in each state were of the opinion that the percentage of women who do not need permission to go to the market and the percentage of women who are involved in decision making to purchase jewellery or other costly items are important factors to be considered.

Though women vote in large numbers, they are kept out of the political power structures or political offices that govern our society. It is partly because of the pressure from the women's movement that the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were introduced in 1993, for ensuring participation of women in the electoral process and governance. These Amendments provide women one third of the elected seats in local self government institutions providing a definite impact on the participation of women in the democratic process. Reservation for women in the Panchayats has definitely succeeded in bringing women's leadership qualities to the forefront. Unfortunately, even women's reservation in panchayats has not broken the back of patriarchy. Men, threatened by the possibility of a shift in gender powers (90% of Panchayat secretaries are males), are dismissive about women leaders and do not like to deal with them. Caste bias is also clear in the case of SC/ST women representatives. This makes it difficult for the elected women representatives to function. "Sometimes these women sarpanches would just find themselves locked out of their office..." said an activist of a women's organization in Rajasthan

An important question that remains to be answered is whether even when elected as MPs, do women actually take up issues that support their cause? Have they ever risen over sectorial party politics to fight for issues like joint-patta, mothers' right of natural guardianship, maternity leave or gender-just laws? Barring a general condemnation of violence against women, all women MPs have their personal convictions hemmed by party positions. More so, often lacking a solid grass-roots political background, the women representatives do not themselves take their roles seriously.

Conclusion:

- If women are to be empowered, it is imperative that rather than attempting to reform women, it is the social conditions that oppress women that must be reformed.
- Educational opportunities of the right type must be provided. It may be worthwhile to ensure that education does not hinge around the theme that women's main sphere of activity is the home. Women should be encouraged to seek occupational roles that stress the aspect of

- competition and not merely cooperation with men. Even highly educated women generally lack confidence and prefer occupations like teaching, nursing and social work rather than high level administrative work or business because these require attention, dedication and ambition in the enterprise. Women, traditionally bound to the home, finds her attention half divided between her household and her place of work.
- Women need to be acquainted about their constitutional rights at the elementary stage of education. The poor can only avail elementary education and their drop out rate is high and hence some rethinking on the content of elementary education or continuing education may prove beneficial.. Higher education for girls to be treated as a part of human resource development, rather than as a time filler.
 - Since religions have played an extensive role in keeping women subordinate in the Indian society the malaise can be removed only through interventions of the prophetic religious agencies and the reinterpretation of the Scriptures.

Feminists within the various religious institutions will need to join hands with other secular movements that work for the dignity, rights and liberation of all the downtrodden on earth.

- While it is true that the status of women can only improve through transformation of social attitudes, government policies also have a very important role to play in this regard because they carry with them the necessary resources and the authority that can influence social attitudes. It is imperative therefore to understand why despite constitutional guarantees of social,economic and political justice to all Indians, the State has failed to react effectively towards the legitimate socio-economic problems of women. Official rhetorics apart, in the operational side there is always a tendency to give low priority to women's issues, in the matter of distribution of public resources or in enforcing the existing laws in favour of women.

Challenges facing women are not problems without solutions. If we are to change the historical legacy that puts women at a disadvantage in most societies, we must take specific, targeted action in a number of areas.

Celebrating Children's Day



Observance of Childrens Day at Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan on the 14th November 2014

A contingent of 10 Rotarians & 2 Annes attended the Children's Day programme at Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan, a foster care centre, on 14th November 2014. Sweets, pencils, chocolates were distributed amongst the inmates. On the occasion 7 nos. steel cloth racks were donated to the Sadan. In a brief function held in the premises of the Sadan, the President Rtn. PD Choudhury, Rtns. Dr RN Mazumder, Minoti Barthakur addressed the 32 inmates in presence of the President and the Secretary of the Sadan. Earlier, the Secretary of the Sadan, Dr Manju Rani Devi welcomed the members of RC Gauhati South.

Compiled by : Rtn. Paramesh Dev Choudhury .,President

Empower Women

Ann Kalpana Bordoloi

My command over English language is not something that I can really be proud of. Yet, when I heard about a special issue of 'Udayan' being brought out on the occasion of the 'District Seminar on Women Empowerment' I could not resist penning my thoughts on the issue which I always hold so strongly in my heart. I looked up the Dictionary and it says, 'to empower' means 'to give ability to; enable or permit '. To me a lady of the house is like a main column which



supports the whole structure of the family. (A civil Engineer may please forgive me for my conception or misconception!) If this column is strong no storm or quake can damage the house. I am told that is the reason such columns are reinforced. Similarly, empowerment gives that extra strength to the column. If each lady of each family is strong a Nation becomes strong.

What then makes a lady strong? Apart from many others it is the 'Education' that gives her freedom to make a choice and take responsibility. When I say education, I am not meaning the ability to only read and write. She has to earn knowledge in every sphere of life - about her self, private and public life. I have often heard wise people saying 'Knowledge is power'. With knowledge she will gain confidence to conduct herself. This reminds me of a situation and takes me four decades back. Early years of my marriage and my life in tea plantation as a wife of a Planter. It was 1976. I was in my late twenties. By nature I love people and their proximity. So in those early days I felt somewhat lonely in the plantation environment. One afternoon while lazing around and brooding an idea struck me. The women folk in plantations in those days being away from the main stream life virtually remained disconnected with the world around. They

themselves were hardly aware of their own talent and skills. I felt they need to be made aware that they are worth much more than being capable of dealing with day to day house hold chores. I started working on them. Within a short time they took everyone by surprise. They learnt how to organise themselves formed their own women's club & could think of generating funds making productive use of their skills to run it. Gradually I got them involved in educating daily wage earning working women on hygiene, child health, saving, operating Bank account to have control over their family finance etc. Over the time they turned out to be a confident transformed lot - an unimaginable scene a while ago.

Women by nature are sensitive and kind hearted. The blend of their sensitivity and inborn administrative skill makes them uniquely talented. All they need is an opportunity to contribute. Their femininity does not make them inferior to men in any respect. Such considerations should not come in the way of assigning them any responsibility. Give them an opportunity they will surprise the world.

My simple understanding is that a nation is a huge cluster of small individual families. A nation succeeds if these families succeed and the lady/ladies of a family play a major role in success of a family.

Minutes of the Weekly Meeting of RC Gauhati South held on 14th November 2014, at Hotel Rajdhani Regency



Images of the weekly meeting of 14th November 2014

- President Rtn Paramesh Dev Choudhury called the meeting No: 1826 to order at 0650PM, which was followed by the National Anthem.
- The President welcomed all the members, Rotarylet Amrita and the guest speaker Dr Gitartha Roy Medhi & the other 2 members of "Saol".
- The Secretary on behalf of all the members wished Rtn Kaberi Bhuyan ahead of her Birth Day on 16th November in her absence.
- **President's Time:**
- President informed that 7 nos. of cloth racks were donated to Assam Sishu Kalyan Sadan on 14th November 2014 in presence of Rotarians RM Hazarika, Dr. RN Mazumder, Minoti Barthakur, MC Deka, MN Borah, Bhupendra Nath Das, Biswajit Barooah, PD Choudhury, Gayatri Bhattacharyya, Dr. Tejendra Bardoloi, Anjana Buragohain, Annes Amiya Mazumder and Tultul Borah. In a brief

function held in the premises of the Sadan, the President Rtn. PD Choudhury, Rtns. Dr RN Mazumder, Minoti Barthakur addressed the inmates in presence of the President and the Secretary of the Sadan. Earlier, the Secretary of the Sadan Dr Manju Rani Devi welcomed the members of RC Gauhati South. On the occasion of the Children's Day, the children were distributed sweets, chocolates and pencils. Members appreciated the gestures of Rtns. Sweta Pegu, Prashanta Goswami, Dr B N Saikia, Dr Anil Kumar Mahanta, Minoti Barthakur who have contributed Rs. 1000 each.

- President informed about the preparedness for the forthcoming "District Women Empowerment Seminar" on 23rd November 2014 to be hosted by our club. He solicited 100% registration by our Club members including the Annes. Registration fee for Rotarians is Rs. 500.00 & for the spouse it is Rs. 400.00.
- President also requested participation of members in the coming "The Rotary Foundation" seminar on 22Nov2014 at 3 PM at the Institution of Engineers Building, Panbazar. Registration Fee is Rs. 600.
- President apprised the house that both the candidates, Pankaj Sarma- Gauhati Commerce College and & Abhijit Deka- College of Veterinary Science, sponsored by us have reached Bongaigaon for RYLA being held from 14-16th Nov 2014.
- President informed that Registration Fee for District Conference, from 9-11th January 2015 at Asansol, is Rs. 2000.00 till 15-12-2014 & for the RI Convention at Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 5-9th June 2015, is \$ 325 till Dec 2014 and \$ 375 by 31st March 2015.

- President handed over Quiz prizes to Rtn MC Deka & Rtn.G. Bhattacharyya
- President also gave away the pending Teachers' Day gift to Ann Lovely Singh along with a gift to Rotarylet Amrita on the occasion of the Children's Day.
 - At the request of the President, Rtn R M Hazarika, Secretary, introduced Dr Gitartho Roy Medhi the Guest Speaker of the evening. He was felicitated with a gamocha by our new member Rtn Dr Sunil Saikia.
 - Dr Roy Medhi gave a very interesting talk on how to keep fit by keeping the heart fit. He elaborated on various functions of the heart & also gave many tips on natural care of the heart. He also stressed the need on oil-free food for healthy living. President presented a gift to Dr Roy Medhi.

■ Secretarial report:

Rotarians	:	22
Anne	:	7
Visiting Rotarians	:	Nil
Rotarylets	:	1
Rotaract	:	Nil
Guests	:	3
TRF collection	Rs.	420.00

- Vote of thanks was offered by Rtn Amrit Pal Singh, who also spoke briefly on his recent International Friendship tour to RC Thimphu, Bhutan. Rtn Singh also handed over a Flag of RC Thimphu to the President. The President adjourned the meeting at 0805PM.

(Fellowship was offered by Rtn Jayanta Madhab Baruah)

Compiled by : Rtn Paramesh Dev Choudhury,
President

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Professor Meeta Deka
Gauhati University

'Women empowerment' is more often than not judged by quantitative indicators : number of women in top government , managerial or academic, posts. And why not when Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner is President of Argentina, Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of Australia, Sheik Hasina Wajed, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Dilma Rousseff, President Brazil , Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica, Jadranka Kosor, Prime Minister of Croatia, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Prime Minister of Denmark, Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland and the list goes on!

Anyone reading newspapers since Narendra Modi took over as the 15th Prime Minister of India would think and even believe that women empowerment has reached its pinnacle! The list looks impressive enough with Sushma Swaraj as Minister of External Affairs, Uma Bharti - Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation , Smriti Zubin Irani - Minister of Human Resource Development, Maneka Gandhi - Ministry of Women and Child Development, Harsimrat Kaur Badal - Minister of Food Processing Industries, Dr. Najma A. Heptulla - Cabinet Minister for Minority Affairs , Nirmala Sitharaman - Minister of State (Independent Charge) , while with the expansion of the Modi cabinet on November 9 last, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti became the only woman who took oath to increase the number of ministers to 66.

On 07 May2014, **One India** writes: '...the important point to be noted is that women accounts for 25% in the government. There are total seven women in the Modi team, who have got serious portfolios, thus hailing the women empowerment [emphasis mine].' And then again compares it to the former UPA government where, 'there were just 7 women out of 71 ministers and only two-Girija Vyas and Chandresh Katoch - were in the cabinet.' The Indian Express 9November 2014: 'One of the many surprising and unique factors of this cabinet has been the inclusion of

maximum number of female ministers including six with Cabinet rank in the 45-member Council of Ministers, which is highest ever in the history of India' [emphasis mine].

Times of India on 2 Nov 2014 however, critiques: 'Women empowerment may be the key slogan for every government since independence, but the findings of a government report show women still lag way behind men in having a say in decision making and in their participation in economic activity. The Central Statistics Office (CSO)'s publication , Women and Men in India 2014, found that women occupied seven out of 45 ministerial positions in the Narendra Modi's council of ministers, which is a little more than 15%, against around 10% in 2004'.

The Assam Tribune, 16 Nov 2014 read: *Women's participation in economic arena abysmal* where Pranjali Bhuyan begins: 'Even as the State Government continues to make tall claims about improvement in various social indicators, women's participation in the economic arena in Assam continues to be abysmal' and provides statistics derived from the 16th Edition of Women and Men in India-2014 brought out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to show that the workforce participation rate of females in Assam, besides employment status, in rural and urban areas, is only 22.46 per cent, which is not only the lowest among the seven North Eastern States, but also one of the lowest across India.

Examples of women empowerment may be culled from the list of **10 Most Powerful Women at the United Nations** selected from the UN Senior Management Group: Valerie Amos is Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief. Michelle Bachelet is Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and head of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), a composite

entity of four offices all focused on the advancement of women. Judy Cheng-Hopkins is Assistant-Secretary-General for Peace-Building Support while Helen Clark is Administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Radhika Coomaraswamy is the Special Representative and Under-Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Angela Kane is Under-Secretary-General for Management. Susana Malcorra is Under-Secretary-General and Head of the Department of Field Support. Patricia O'Brien is the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the UN Legal Counsel. She is the first woman to hold this position. Navaneeth Pillay is the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the principle UN human rights official, which has a mandate to promote and protect all human rights. Josette Sheeran is the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, the world's largest humanitarian agency. Avril Davis states that Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro is the current Deputy-Secretary-General of the United Nations, making her the highest-ranking woman in UN history.

So any assessment of women's empowerment or development generally tend to go by numbers or quantitative indicators. Quantitative indicators , are important no doubt, but they refer to collective empowerment linked to social change and tend to reduce its scope to women's ability to take individual responsibility on their own. Such indicators do not consider changes in economic and social structures. The notion of empowerment goes further. It examines deep social and economic structures and questions the role of men and women within development policies.

History traces the origin of the concept of empowerment to the Afro-American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and also to the formulation of the Brazilian philosopher Paolo Freire's theory in 1970 based on the development of a critical conscience. Since 1985, popular women's movements in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as feminist movements have seen the notion of empowerment, *first*, as seizing of power through self-esteem /self-confidence and making one's own decision in life, and *second*, as the collective power to change gender relations in the economic, political, legal and socio-cultural spheres. Ten years later, in 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing declared **women's empowerment as a key strategy for development**: 'Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace'.

The process of empowerment involves four controls of power, viz. power with, power to, power within and power over. 'Power with' highlights the notion of common purpose , to unite together to negotiate and defend a common goal (individual and collective rights, political ideas such as lobbying, etc.). 'Power to' includes the ability to make decisions, have authority, find solutions to problems, and which can be creative and enabling. The notion therefore refers to

intellectual abilities (knowledge and know-how) as well as economic means, i.e. ability to access and control means of production and benefit (the notion of assets). 'Power within' refers to self-awareness, self-esteem, identity and assertiveness ---how individuals, through self-analysis and internal power, can influence their lives and make changes. 'Power over' involves a mutually exclusive relationship of domination or subordination.

Empowerment therefore operates on two levels: Individual level and Collective level. The Individual level is in relation to its capacity for personal change, greater independence , capacity for self-determination, to allow individuals to broaden their opportunities. The Collective level is in relation to political , social and economic change, the capacity of a group to influence social change ---a fair and equal society, in particular in its relations between men and women. It is therefore crucial that the indicators established allow both individual and collective empowerment to be monitored, each reinforcing the other. Working to develop a society means contributing to social change at an individual and at a collective level (society / community). Indicators at this level must serve to monitor social change so as to build a fair society which enables its members to form organizations and put in place mechanisms, systems and structures that guarantee women and men the same opportunities and rights .

We talk of 'women empowerment' as women are generally, the most exploited and oppressed in all cultures . In fact, this imbalance or social injustice results from differential access to power and authority which results in both oppression and victimization. It is perpetrated by those , more often than not by men, who control resources and opportunities. So women empowerment is about establishing gender equality in a society or the strengthening of social justice. The Beijing Conference (1995) stated that women empowerment should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. Equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and the only way to build 'a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and 'equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples'. The concept of social justice in the development plans and processes have taken into consideration the roles and actions of men and women and brought them on an equitable platform with enough space to create a person's identity by having equal opportunity for both men and women. Women empowerment and social justice are thus interlinked in the sense that both refer to the ability to realize one's potential in the society and to be active and contributors to tone's own community and effectively create a socio-political space as well as access to and control of different means of resources, power, etc. (economic power).

If you empower a woman, you empower her children, her community, her nation. [UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon]

Welcome to Rotary!

Dr. Tajendra Bardoloi

Dr. Tejendra Bardoloi was born on 3rd December 1950 at Guwahati. Having completed his early schooling from Don Bosco High School, Guwahati he went on to pursue his college education at the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat. He graduated as a B.V.Sc. & A.H. from the same university in the year 1972. Thereafter he completed his Post Graduate studies from the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Agra University in the year 1974. Finally on completion of his Doctoral Research he was conferred Ph.D. by Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat in 1989.



Dr. Bardoloi served as a faculty member of Assam Agricultural University and ICAR in various capacities. Finally, he hung his boots as a Professor after more than three and half decades of glorious service. He has been a recipient of several awards and recognitions for meritorious service in the field of veterinary sciences.

Dr. Bardoloi has a number of research papers on different topics in the area of veterinary Sciences to his credit published in national and international journals. He has travelled overseas to several countries to make presentations on his research papers.

He is happily married to Indira

We are proud to welcome Dr. Bardoloi and his spouse Dr. (Mrs.) Indira Bardoloi to our Rotary fraternity.

Dr. Sunil Kr. Saikia :

Dr. Sunil Kr. Saikia was borne on 23rd October 1953. The Degrees that he hold - M.Com, M.A. (Eco), LL.B, Ph.D. (Management) would be the testimony to his intellectual versatility. He has been engaged in training and research in entrepreneurship development and management for over thirty three years and has specialised in the area of Entrepreneurship Development and Marketing Management including Export Marketing.



Dr. Saikia started his teaching career as a Lecturer in C.K.B. Commerce College, Jorhat (Assam) during seventies. Later he moved to Gauhati High Court Bar where he practiced as an Advocate for a few years. He then joined the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (then known as Small Industry Extension Training Institute (SIET Institute), NER Centre, Guwahati in March 1980. In mid-eighties he was transferred to Hyderabad the H.Q of the Institute where he was assigned to organize both national and international level programmes.

Dr. Saikia retired as Director i/c & Head (CEDM) in the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati, and an organization of the Government of India under the Ministry of MSME. He is also a Visiting Faculty in Gauhati University, Tezpur University and National Institute of Technology (NIT), Silchar in the M.B.A. Department. Dr. Saikia has carried out a number of research studies and also regularly contributes to various journals and newspapers. He has been also associated with a number of Academic and Professional forums/bodies and has held the post of Honorary Secretary & also Vice President in Guwahati Management Association (affiliated to the All India Management Association, New Delhi). Presently he is a Member of Quality Assurance Cell & Adviser, Entrepreneurship Development Cell in Tezpur University and also a Faculty Member of five years integrated M.Com course in Gauhati University. Dr. Saikia visited many countries & also took official delegations as a Team Leader from India to Japan, South Korea etc. Dr. Saikia has authored and published sixteen (16) books on industrial development and management, health management, travelogue, traditional food habits etc. He is also a popular writer in local Assamese newspapers & magazines.

He is married to Ms. Akanti Saikia who was a lecturer in Gauhati Commerce College. She is now running a children crèche.

Images of the District TRF Seminar held at Tinsukia on the 16th November 2014



Images of Rtn Raj Kamal Bhuyan making a presentation at the District TRF Seminar held at Tinsukia on the 16th November 2014



Senior Rotary leaders gathered on Tuesday the 7th October 2014 at the White House to honor 10 women for their service projects, an event attended by members of U.S. President Barack Obama's senior staff.

The Rotary members presented their projects, in the hopes of creating new inroads for government partnerships and support.

"This is recognition of the great work that they do but also serves as a great vehicle to inspire others to do similar kinds of things," said Rotary General Secretary John Hewko. "One of the things we're doing a better job of is sharing our story to the non-Rotary world."

The honorees were selected by Rotary senior leaders and endorsed by the White House from clubs around the U.S. but their projects touch lives across the globe.

Carolyn Jones, of Anchorage, Alaska, has served numerous times as a Rotary volunteer in Russia, three of them as a preschool teacher for developmentally delayed children in orphanages. During her presentation she lamented hearing about a child sold for a bottle of vodka, and vowed to use her honor as a stepping stone to save more lives.

Jacqueline Parsons, a licensed professional counselor from San Antonio, Texas, works on projects in her community and abroad, including the FLAG (Fitness, Literacy, Attendance, and Grades) program, which provides incentives to students to go to school, including bikes, sports equipment, and other items.

Ginger Vann from Baker, Louisiana, coordinates tutoring for at-risk students. With the help of her club, she renovated an uninhabitable school building, and worked with tutors to reach 50 students each day. She's also passionate about workforce development in Baker, where well-paying craftsman jobs often go unfilled.

"We just don't have enough craft workers, people who are certified to do the jobs," she said.

Michelle Clandland, from San Diego, California, works with Monarch High, an alternative school designed for homeless children.

"Right now there are over 1.3 million homeless kids on the street in America. That's more than there are Rotarians around the world," said Clandland. "Twenty thousand of those kids are in San Diego alone."

"How can a child focus on school if their tummies are growling, their shoes don't fit, and they don't even know where they are going to be sleeping the next day?" she asked. "It takes an entire community to work together to solve this problem."

The other honorees Tuesday were **Bernadette Blackstock, Marion Bunch, Carol Butler, Elizabeth Usovicz, Deepa Willingham, and Jane Winning**.

Winning, a registered nurse from Chowchilla, California, has provided immunizations and health exams to more than 2,500 people in need across Mexico, Honduras,

Women of Action ! THE WHITE HOUSE HONORS ROTARY WOMEN FOR THEIR HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

Ecuador, and Guatemala. She's also worked with Rotoplast International to provide free cleft lip and palate reconstructive surgery to those who cannot afford it.

"A gentleman was 65 years old and he said, 'I can kiss my wife for the first time,'" Winning said of the man post-surgery. "Those are incredible experiences you don't get to share every day."

Butler, also from Anchorage, highlighted two projects. The first is a statewide suicide prevention plan. According to Butler, Alaska has the highest rate of suicide per capita in the nation. The public awareness plan educates Rotary members and Alaska residents to recognize the warning signs of someone in crisis. She also talked about her club's partnership with the Alaska Mission of Mercy, a collective of dentists, staff, and other volunteers who provide free dental services throughout the state.

"Dental care is a gateway to good health," says Butler. "There's an increasing problem nationwide with people seeking dental care in emergency rooms."

Usovicz, of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, has worked on service projects in Missouri as well as abroad. In Malawi, she helped to reduce the rate of malaria deaths by 65 percent to 70 percent in less than a year by supplying the community with mosquito bed nets.

Willingham, of Solvang, California, is the founder and chair of Promise of Assurance to Children Everywhere (PACE), an organization that educates girls and their mothers, and works to prevent child trafficking and early marriage in India.

Bunch, of Atlanta, Georgia, is the CEO of Rotarians for Family Health and AIDS Prevention. She has received numerous awards on behalf of her work for AIDS, and considers herself a mom who represents the face of AIDS because she started her work after losing her son to the disease in 1994.

"Because of that one single tragedy, my life's journey changed dramatically from a very engaged business woman to a warrior on AIDS and advocate of human rights," Bunch said.

As a result of her leadership, in April some 343,660 people received health care, medical checkups, and counseling from 8,150 Rotary volunteers during Rotary Family Health Days across Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa.

Like Bunch, Blackstock, of Franklinville, New Jersey, has turned her love of service into a career, launching the People for People Foundation, which assists families struggling with financial hardships. To date, the foundation has helped some 10,000 families afford food, clothing, rent, utilities, medications, and other life necessities.

"Our combined mission today is not only to provide small grants but to serve as advocates for our families and provide life-skill training and mentoring and case management where needed."

The event in D.C. was also an opportunity for the honorees to share ideas with each other.

"There are some resources still available to expand and improve projects even amongst the women here," Jones said.

"Listening to the ladies, I was in awe," said Vann. "I was thinking what if all 10 of us got together on one project. That would be amazing. We're talking and it's exciting to be a part of that conversation." (Source : www.rotary.org)

(e - version of this Bulletin regularly features in our Club website www.rotaryclubofgauhatisouth.com)