

Bearing Witness: The Impact of Conflict on Women in Nagaland and Assam



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The Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research and the Heinrich Böll Foundation have pleasure in inviting you to a series of events to be held in a number of cities in India through September to October 2011. The events showcase the Research Report, Film and a Photo Exhibition conducted by C-nes and supported by HBF, under the project titled “Reviewing the Impact of Conflict on Women in Assam and Nagaland”, to a wide ranging audience and thereby, aim to generate awareness, understanding and discussion on the issues of concern.

The research, filming and photography for the project, 'Impact of Conflict on Women in Assam and Nagaland' were conducted by the C-NES team between 2009 and 2010. Its major aim was the rigorous documentation of how women in the two states have suffered since the first conflicts between Naga insurgents and Indian security forces – and between the idea of India and those who sought political and cultural spaces outside of it – and extensive dissemination through publications, the production of a documentary film, seminars/conferences and the media. The project sought to place these issues in the larger context of the challenges of nation-building, the enduring issues of human rights and their violations, enshrined in 'national security' laws which have been opposed for over 50 years. Regional growth and the failure of stakeholders and non-State groups to address these concerns are also reviewed.

The project has looked at not just who was affected or how they were affected but also the broader issues of just laws, the use of State power and the rights of individuals, especially women, in conflict zones. Violence against women during times of armed conflict has been a persistent and widespread practice over centuries. Until recently, violence against women in such situations has been couched in terms of protection and honour. This has been particularly devastating for women for it perpetuates their subordination in an insidiously deep-rooted manner.

The course of field research generated a diverse and challenging set of new perspectives, concerns, conclusions and experiences. As the C-nes team puts it: ‘To bear witness has been a challenging and disturbing experience; listening to and reading the testimonies of the victims has been particularly painful and saddening – especially as we are deeply aware that virtually none of the victims have had access either to compensation or justice by getting the legal system or even the administrative system to take care of the harm they have suffered. For some, the nightmare persists because they remained unhealed and unreached; for others the nightmare is renewed when they see the alleged killers of relatives or friends walking around free. We have been privileged to have been included in some of the most personal and difficult situations which these women and other individuals have faced. Although the title of the project is “The Impact of Conflict on Women in Nagaland and Assam”, it is not as if the suffering was confined to women. Indeed, while they have suffered acutely, other members of society also has been harmed, across the gender divide’.

We believe that the hard work, dedication and sincerity in bringing out this volume of work would contribute to a larger discourse about the situation in the North-east. The Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research and the Heinrich Böll Foundation have pleasure in inviting you to a series of events to be held across Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Kohima and Guwahati through September to October 2011. The objective is to showcase the Research Report, Film (A Measure of Impunity) and the Photo Exhibition, conducted by C-nes and supported by HBF, under the project titled ‘Reviewing the impact of conflict on women in Assam and Nagaland’, and bring it to the attention of a wider audience. In the process, we believe it will generate awareness, understanding and discussion about the plight, as well as, the courage of the women in these two states of North-east India.

We are immensely grateful at this stage of dissemination to a number of organisations in Delhi (IIC), Mumbai (NCPA), Chennai (Madras University), Kolkata (Seagull) as well as to C-nes team members and partners in Kohima and Guwahati for supporting and coordinating programmes in these locations.

Series of Events at all locations include the following:

- Photo Exhibition
- Film Premiere
- Report Release
- Panel Discussion

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Press Conference

Delhi

Date: 7-9 September 2011

Time: 6:30 pm on all days

Venue: IIC, New Delhi

Downloads: Invitation/Programme Schedule, Poster

Chennai

Date: 23-25 September 2011

Venue: Madras University, Chennai

Kolkata

Date: 29-30 September & 1 October 2011

Venue: Seagull Foundation for the Arts

26, Circus Avenue, Calcutta 700019

Tel: +91-33-2287 3737 / 2287 7942

Mumbai

Date: 15-16 October 2011

Venue: National Centre for the Performing Arts

NCPA Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021

Tel: +91-22-6622 3737

Guwahati, Assam

Date: 22-23 October 2011

Venue: Machkowa ITA Complex, Machkhowa, Guwahati

Kohima, Nagaland

Date: 28-29 October 2011

Venue: tbc

editor

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