

## Keeping a tab on the Media



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Rituparna Goswami Pande 3 December 2007 17639 views

The role of the media in today's society is two fold. It reports the goings on of our society as well as tries to reform its social evils. But there is a certain section of the electronic visual media which also attempts to kick off a controversy by exaggerating their reporting which ultimately leads to a public outcry followed by its repercussions.

The recent furor created by the Beltola violence where Adivasi rallyists clashed with locals is a direct result of such a trend. Moreover, it also exposed the gaping ignorance of the national channels regarding the region that is termed the northeast.

The media's attempt to sensationalize the incident of the Beltola clash reached boiling point when it telecast repeated footage of an adivasi woman being molested by a few sick youths. The news item gave the impression that such incidents are a common occurrence in Assam whereas in reality Assam and the entire northeast is known for the equality of the women folk and the absence of Dowry which plagues the rest of the country. As a result Assam is burning today reeling under the violence and counter violence. Bandhs, road blockades, group clashes are still going on in many parts of Assam, the tea gardens being the worst sufferers.

Sadly, the doings of a few twisted youths has stained the name of Assam and it's the duty of the government and administration to bring the culprits to book.

As is the trend in India the politicians are trying to cash in on the situation by politicizing the whole situation which has led certain organizations like the All Assam Student's Union and the Adivasi Student Organisations to say "Stop giving a political colour to the unfortunate Beltola clash."

Though the All Assam Adivasi Mahila Mancha has hinted that it would intensify the agitation demanding Scheduled Tribe status but it also promised that the forthcoming agitations of the tea community would be violence free.

The Assam Press Correspondence Union (APCU) has appealed to the media to exercise restraint while reporting on the protest programmes of the agitating communities. It also stressed that the media should lead the way to peace in crucial times. Similarly the Journalist Federation of Assam (JFA) too has called upon the media to remember its accountability to the state and place its reports in a controlled manner.

The media should refrain from sensationalism for the sake of news for it does more harm than good to society which is its bedrock.

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**BY RITUPARNA GOSWAMI PANDE**

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