



## **DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that the thesis titled “Women in Photographs: A Study of Changes in Women’s Dress in Assam in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” submitted by me to Tezpur University in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Studies under the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, is a result of my own study and research on the subject and that it has not been submitted to any other institution, including this University in any other form or published at any time before.

Date:

Siwani Mech

Place:

Registration No. TZ155057 of 2015



## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled “Women in Photographs: A Study of Changes in women’s Dress in Assam in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tezpur University in part fulfillment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Studies is a record of research work carried out by Ms. Siwani Mech under my supervision and guidance.

All help received by her from various sources have been duly acknowledged. No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for award of any other degree.

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## Glossary

1. *Mekhela*: Assamese women's lower garment. It is wrapped around the waist and reached the ankle joints. It is a large, cylindrical piece of fabric that is folded into one or two pleats and tucked into the waist. *Mekhela* are often woven from cotton, *muga*, *eri*, (silk manufactured in Assam) and silk yarn.
2. *Chador*: The *chador*, the upper component of the two-piece dress, is a long length of fabric with one end tucked into the upper portion of the *mekhela* and draped across the chest and back. Woman in Assam usually wears the *mekhela chador*, an indigenous traditional clothing of the region.
3. *Dhoti* :A piece of cloth worn by male that is knotted around the waist and extending down the legs
4. *Methoni*: A garment worn by ladies, typically covering the breast to the knees. It was especially prevalent in rural areas where ladies wore it wrapped around their bodies (without a blouse). It is frequent even among women of the older generation today.
5. *Cheleng chador*: An upper garment used by both man and woman in Assam. It is worn mainly during religious and special ceremonies. It is similar to shawl, usually made of cotton fabric.
6. *Riha*: Another significant female upper garment is the *riha*, which is worn usually by married women. However, in contemporary times it is used. It was made of *muga* or *endi* silk. Wearing *riha* with *mekhela* and *chador* by women was a mark of modesty and decency in Assamese culture.
7. *Chemise*: A dress (specially made of cotton) that hangs straight from the shoulders and provides a uniform shape. A form of modern undergarment or attire for women that was introduced to Assam in the 20th century.



8. *Chauga* and *chapkan*: A Mughal style shirts worn by the king, ministers, and other high-ranking officials. Additionally, the *chauga*, a robe drapery, was a mark of aristocracy and was worn over the *chapkan*.
9. *Chapkan*: It is similar to men kurta (upper garment), whereas *pajamas* is the lower garment (like trousers, made of cotton or silk fabric) of Bengal.
10. *Gamosa* an traditional scarf is the unique identity of Assamese society. The Assamese culture holds this small piece of fabric in high regard and makes extensive use of it. *Gamosa* is a one-of-a-kind cloth item with multiple applications.
11. *Aideo*: Formal way of calling a woman in Assamese
12. *Kurta* : A loose-fitting collarless shirt typically worn by people in South Asia
13. *Salwar kameez* (sometimes spelled *shalwar kameez*) is a traditional clothing worn by women in South Asia and Central Asia, and in some locations by men.
14. *Sari*: A dress made of a length of silk or cotton that has been intricately draped around the body and is typically worn by women from South Asia.