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REWORKING VULNERABILITIES: LINGUISTIC RESURRECTIONS OF FEMININE IDENTITY

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Abstract: Language and linguistics are critical for exploring the ways in which society tends to perpetuate discrimination against women. The primary concern of this study is to analyze how female respondents understand oppressive patriarchal practices that they encounter in real life and how their language reflects their own orientation to their vulnerable position. In particular, it seeks to discover how language, as deeply embedded in the social construction of reality, helps women to mitigate patriarchal assumptions and practices thereby establishing a more egalitarian social standing. This study analyzes three narratives by female respondents from different socio-economic strata and occupations. The experiences they describe range from dress codes at work to reproductive rights and vulnerability associated with being in the public sphere. Their life experiences capture various facets of oppression including cultural imperialism, powerlessness and exploitation, but the way they use language to navigate this oppression helps with resurrecting feminine identity. The data for this study has been collected from 3 female Hindi/Assamese respondents (aged between early twenties to mid-forties for a representative sample of issues faced by women in adult life). The study uses a discourse analysis framework within a qualitative approach to explore women's lived experiences both the private and the public sphere. The analysis shows that women's resurrection of their social standing is made possible by their use of language, which can mitigate their vulnerabilities thereby redefining their identities in more positive light.

Keywords: patriarchal oppression, feminine identity, vulnerabilities, resurrection, language, discourse

1. Introduction: Language and Social relations of Power

Language is a means of producing, storing and exchanging ideas as reflections of reality in the course of human interaction. Through language, humans convey and express their thoughts and feelings as well as perform a number of societal roles. Social functions involve, amongst others, executing and organizing social acts including talking, debating, deceiving and telling people what they should or should not do. Through such acts, human beings co-construct social reality with their fellow humans and since language is one of the primary tools for human communication, it serves a variety of cognitive, conversational, social and identity purposes contextually. As a sophisticated and adaptable code it is fundamental to one's identity as an individual; works as a social group identifier and is a carrier of human culture.

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An important feature of language in its functional aspect is that it can encode and reflect power. That means, the various functions of language crucially highlight the underlying power that can be reflected through the communication context and manifested when this power has been employed. Our everyday language use has the potential to influence conversations, how we see other people, and how we position ourselves or are positioned in relation to others. Therefore, it is also important to see how the language-power relation works as well as its effects on the human communication. Gay (1998:1) lays down five assumptions on language and power:

(i) Language is a social institution, and one of the most conservative ones in any society.
(ii) Language is inseparable from the distribution of power in society, and these relations are unequal in every society.
(iii) Language is frequently an instrument of covert institutional violence.
(iv) Language shapes, but does not determine, human consciousness and behavior.
(v) Language that appears to ameliorate conditions of social violence can actually represent a merely formally sanctioned sphere of less violent discourse which leaves unchanged the cultural base that spawns and sustains various forms of social violence.

Language can be considered to be a weapon employed by the powerful to subjugate their subjects. Cameron (1985) questions why language, and understanding of how language works, should be a resource only just for the powerful and why this powerfulness should be seized by the one on whom it is deployed. Cameron considers *language to be a component of patriarchy* and believes that in order to combat this, feminist work must be devoted on reanalyzing society as a patriarchy, a system in which men conventionally have dominance over women (ibid: 1). Language is crucial in articulating maintaining and subverting the existing relations of power in society at various levels of interpersonal communication. In the context of studies examining relations of language, gender and power, as early as in the 1920s, Jesperson (1922) concluded that women had less extensive vocabulary, used simpler sentence structures, and had a greater tendency to speak before they thought, resulting in sentences that were often incomplete. Trudgill (1983) reported that women used 'correct'/ prestigious forms much more frequently than men *so as to compensate for their lower social status*. In the later decades of the twentieth century various influential sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Labov, 1966; Milroy, 1980; Trudgill, 1974) looked into 'markers' or isolated linguistic or phonological items that supposedly characterised women's or men's speech and their correlation with speaker sex. Lakoff's (1973, 1975, 1990) hotly debated studies added to these perspectives on essential language differences. Other studies in this tradition (e.g. Fishman, 1978 and Zimmerman and West, 1975) proposed that power inequalities and relations are typically reproduced in conversation between men and women and examination of linguistic features usually throw up aspects of male conversational dominance.

Fairclough (1989/1996) discusses the connection between language use and unequal relations of power in terms of two perspectives: to understand the *significance* of language in the *production*, *maintenance*, and *change* of social relations of *power* and to increase *consciousness* of how language contributes to the *domination* of some people by others since consciousness can be beginning towards emancipation. (ibid: 1, italics added). Power, then has multiple locations and valences and therefore, this perspective on power sees it as productive and effectively prevalent in the usage of language. Language plays a very important part in forming what individuals consider to be the reality around them. Furthermore, language is used to exercise power in ways that are constantly clear; hence, much power in the modern world is hidden in the sense that it becomes *naturalized* and this authority is used to establish *common sense* as well as *hegemony* as argued in Talbot et al., (2003: 5). Butler (1997) offers the groundbreaking view ascribing an agency to language in the form of power which can cause a sense of vulnerability that becomes a threat to whom this agency is deployed. In a way, the power of language can injure and position us as the objects of its injurious trajectory.

In the next section we examine how language production has the potential to express oppressive beliefs that support discrimination (reflected through the uneven power relations); how it thereby privileges such relationships in society and thus compromises the agency and autonomy of an individual or group.

2. Language as a form of Oppressive Patriarchy and its Impact on Autonomy

It is crucial to examine the ways in which the usage of language may create oppression for a certain group or individual within society while proffering advantages to other groups/ individuals. Bartkey (1990) opines that when we think of oppression, we usually think of economic and political oppression but *oppression can also be a psychological one*: to be weighed down in one's mind is to have a harsh domination exercised over one's self esteem (ibid: 22). According to her, psychological oppression is organized and systematic, and it aims to facilitate dominance by destroying the spirit of the dominated and leaving them incapable of recognizing the character of those responsible for their enslavement (ibid: 23). Psychological oppression can make an oppressed individual or a group gradually adopt the values or beliefs that are not their own as well as degrade their social position to inferiority; for example, one way that women internalize the feeling of oppression is because they are frequently viewed by others as being *childlike*, *cheap labour*, *objects of gaze*, or only for *sexual gratification*. This undervaluation hurts their social standing as human beings in society and places them in a vulnerable position (ibid: 106, 112). In a similar vein Stoljar (2022) has given three examples of 'hard cases' in which practices of gender oppression are directly linked or causes *failures of autonomy*. These are:

i. 'self-abnegation or excessive deference to the wishes of others';

ii. '"adaptive preference formation" in which choices and preferences are unconsciously accommodated to oppressive social conditions'; and

iii. 'decisions of agents to adopt what may appear to be practices of gender oppression' including those that seem to produce significant physical and psychological harm to women.

The first of these is of interest to feminists in the sense that the *deference and apparent preference for subservience it describes is gendered and an outcome of systems of gender oppression* since women are the ones who are supposed to assume the servile roles. Some theorists have argued that when habitual servility defines a woman's sense of self, then "this is not the kind of self to which a concept of autonomy can be applied" (Babbit 1993: 250). With regard to the second of these, both feminist and nonfeminist scholars (Elster 1983; Superson 2005; Cudd 2006) have noted that such 'adaptive preferences' get formed in circumstances of oppression due of unconscious processes which makes an agent turn away from a preference to avoid cognitive dissonances associated with holding it[1]. In other cases are of 'deformed desire' in which "the oppressed come to desire that which is oppressive to them…[and] one's desires turn away from goods and even needs that, absent those conditions, they would want" (Cudd 2006, 181). Finally, in the third type of examples, agents appear to self-consciously *adopt* (alleged) practices of oppressions (such as veiling), or participate in oppressive practices that severely curtail their options (eg. arranged marriages) or subject women to physical harm (e.g., "genital cutting" as reported in Meyers 2000). In the context of debates as to whether women who adopted such practices did it of their own choice, Narayan (2002) suggests a 'thin conception of autonomy':

> A person's choice should be considered autonomous as long as the person was a 'normal adult' with no serious cognitive or emotional impairments and was not subject to literal outright coercion by others. (Narayan 2002: 429)

This form of minimalism however, has been criticized for overlooking "the complex effects of gender norms effects and oppressive social conditions on agency (e.g., Bierria 2014; Liebow 2016; Johnston 2017)" as reported in Stoljar (2022).

In this context, we can refer to Young (1990) who identifies five faces of oppression viz.: *exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism,* and *violence* (ibid: 40, italics added). Of these, 'exploitation' refers social processes that bring about a transfer of energies from one group to another to produce unequal and also in the way in which social institutions enable a few to accumulate while they constrain many more (ibid: 53) 'Marginalization' is the process of excluding

[1] The classic case as reported in Elster (1983) is that of the fox that, unable to reach grapes, decides it does not want them after all.

an entire group of individuals from meaningful social interaction. Making a particular section of the society 'powerless' involves the process where that group is bound to follow the commands of the dominant group. 'Cultural imperialism', entails that the dominant group *projects* own experience as typical of humankind and as a result, it becomes stereotypical in the society thereby rendering the dominated group invisible. Finally, oppressive violence is systematic and targets individuals based on their membership in a group rather than on their individual characteristics or at random, and include physical violence or aims at degrading, *humiliating*, or *stigmatizing* group members (ibid: 53-61, italics added). Richardson-self (2018) adds *subordination* as a new form of oppression that tries to weaken, subordinate, or make a certain group inferior inside society. He asserts that feminists share the belief that because men tend to see themselves as the standard bearers for human civilization, women are the ones who suffer the most under the patriarchal structure of the society (ibid: 4).

Is there any way for language to mitigate such forms of oppressive patriarchy? If so, what are the strategies via which women can conduct such a subversion of oppression? As mentioned in the abstract, one of the goals of this paper is to discover how language, as deeply embedded in the social construction of reality, helps women to mitigate patriarchal assumptions and practices thereby establishing a more egalitarian social standing. This necessitates a looking into theoretical perspectives on *language as social action* and we will do that in this next section.

3.Language as Social Action

In scrutinizing the relationship between language and oppression, Morcoccio (1996) offers the view that language has taken the form of *language acts* that can also do harm and may conceal or reject one's own reality or identity (ibid: 147). He argues that language products may be regarded as actively fostering socially tangible relations of uneven power and privilege as well as revealing and reinforcing oppressive beliefs that legitimize discrimination. This very essence of ideological stand of language production and its influence on the individual or groups concerned, allows us to view language as social action, as both reflecting and constitutive of social relations. Morcoccio (1995) believes that understanding language as social action allows us to not only explore the effects of the output as language acts on the persons and groups involved, but also to evaluate the ideological content of the utterance.

The idea of seeing language use as action has been drawn from the theoretical perspectives of Speech Act Theory developed by Austin (1962) and later by Searle (1969). Searle (1979:162) states that language has long been thought of being an abstract symbolic system that may be partially understood through its use. However, the actual use of language in daily life shows that individuals conduct actions through the use of words. The theory of speech acts bases its interpretation of language as a tool for carrying out social action on this supposition. It implies that fundamental communicative

units include things like making assertions, asking questions, issuing directions, etc. These are referred to as speech because speakers perform certain actions in the real world through language.

Since language influences social processes and has social components that cannot be ignored, the relationship between language and the social environment is crucial. Usage of language, in terms of the actions people take when speaking, primarily refers to *what people do when they use language*.

> "People do things with their words. They order and promise and criticize and apologize and so on. In other words, to use language is to perform an action….viewing language as action, especially as a social action, makes clear many of the social psychological underpinnings of language use." (Holtgraves, 2002: 9)

Language usage as a human social action goes beyond the view of language as an impersonal, symbolic system. Language in this formulation is both an activity and a social action and implies that other individuals are involved to whom we orient socially, emotionally and psychologically. This reality both influences and determines the character of the action since understanding and being understood both require cooperation from others. Social interaction is largely conducted via language. It serves as the main mechanism of transmitting cultural information and provides us with the most direct access to the thoughts of others. Most phenomena including attitude transformation, social perception, personal identity, social interaction, intergroup prejudice and stereotyping, attribution, and so forth are affected by language. An examination of language as used in the presence of others will expectedly throw up linguistic features that exemplify language as social action. Crucially however, (given the underlying assumption of this paper that language can serve as a powerful tool to mitigate oppressive patriarchal practices) it is also expected to reveal strategies via which features are gainfully employed by speakers. In other words, how does our language recognize oppressive practices and how does this mitigate these form the crux of our enquiry and the following two section lays out the theoretical tool of Discourse Analysis in the service of identification and resurrection of feminine identity. Section 5 will then examine three discourse extracts that encode three of the forms of oppression discussed above while Section 6 will have the conclusions.

4. Discourse Analysis and Discursive Construction of Feminine Identity of Vulnerabilities

5.

Language is seen as a potent tool that influences our behaviour and performance as well as how we build reality and perceive the world around us (Woods, 2006). Therefore, language is much more than the sum of the linguistic components that make it up, as evidenced by linguists' relatively recent adoption of the term "discourse" for the topic we study when we examine "language in use," or the real language that real people use in the real world. For Candlin (1997),

> "'Discourse' ... refers to language in use/ as a process which is socially situated…discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh

> particular social discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation" (ibid: iix).

Jaworski and Coupland (1999/2006) offer the view that discourse is the use of language in relation to social, political, and cultural formations; it is language reflecting social order as well as language influencing social order and influencing how people engage with society. In offering a discursive view of language, Fairclough (1989) deems *language as a form of social practice* on three terms. Firstly, that language is a part of society, and not somehow external to it. Secondly, that language is a social process. And thirdly, that language is a socially conditional process, conditioned that is by other (non-linguistic/meta-linguistic) parts of society. For him, linguistic phenomenon is social phenomenon of a special sort and social phenomenon is (in part) linguistic phenomenon (ibid: 22-23). Linguistic phenomenon is social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen and read or write, they do so in ways which are determined by socially and have social effects. Even when people are most conscious of their individuality and think themselves to be cut off from most social influences, they still use language in ways in which are subject to social convention.(ibid: 23).

An important aspect of studying language as discourse is *context* where the context includes our experiences, assumptions and expectations that we tend to exchange with each other. It can be stated that in discourse analysis, analysts are devoted to examining how and in what contexts and for what purposes, language is used. DA is the study of the meanings that is being carried out through the use of language as well as the actions we carry out when we use language in specific contexts. Discourse analysis is also sometimes defined as the *study of language above the level of a sentence;* of the ways sentences combine to create meaning, coherence, and accomplish purposes (Handford and Gee 2012: 1). Scholars have offered variety of meanings regarding *discourse* and *discourse analysis* (Fasold, 1990, Mills, 1997, Wodak, 1997, Litosseliti, 2006/2013): Hamilton, Tannen and Schiffrin (2015:1) note that for some critical theorists the term discourse refers to a broad range of social practices *including both linguistic and non-linguistic and ideological presumptions* that collectively help to create or sustain racism or power of which is known as discourses *of power* and *discourses of racism*. They present three basic categories on discourse types based on Jaworski and Coupland's (1999: 1-3) formulations from a variety of sources: (1) anything beyond the sentence, (2) language use, and (3) a broader range of social practice that includes non-linguistic and non-specific instances of language.

Since discourses are a network of social themes, voices, assumptions, explanations, and practices etc., in a way they also produce distinct subject positions for individuals and groups, as well as constituting and re-constituting ideologies, which affect a wide range of larger social activities. Litosseliti (2006/2013) states that discourses are *contextualized*, *identifiable*, *ideological*, *supportive, competing,* or *conflicting,* and *relevant* in connection to other discourses. The discourses that usually place women and men in certain ways taking up specific gendered subject positions that form gender more

broadly leads to the gendered discourses. These kinds of discourses entail what identities are formed as a result of different social positions as well as what gender disparities that is formed or sustained.

Hollander (2002) notes that our social construction of gender or gendered ideologies are made in such ways *women are usually considered to be weak, vulnerable and fearful both in the public and private sphere* as they are expected to be less responsive or protective against this vulnerability. However, Hollander also argues that to comprehend such social construction, it is always significant to understand the notions of *power and resistance* not only to know how the dominant groups try to impose dominant assumptions but also how the subordinate groups contest such dominant conceptions. With regard to the social construction of language and sexuality, Cameron and Kulick (2003) argue that sexual identity can be constructed through the usage of language where sexual identity becomes language-dependent for its behaviours, conceptualization and expression (ibid: xi). According to them, language could be seen as specifically reflecting group identity, expanding the scope from the individual to the group. Claiming that there can be language of *homosexuality* and *heterosexuality*, the authors try to equate heterosexuality with a "*patriarchal institution*" and argue that there is some form of gender hierarchy "that subordinates women to men" (ibid: 45). In a similar vein, Weatherall (2002) states language as a form of subordination is inextricably tied to the dominant social and moral belief system in the form of *sexist language*. The important point is language about women is not only a trivial issue but also is extremely political (ibid: 10). Weatherall refers to feminist social psychologist Nancy Henley (1987) who suggested that sexist language can be classified into three types: *language that ignores women, language that defines women narrowly*, and *language that depreciates women* (ibid: 13).

A useful discursive model to the links minute discursive features to broader social relaities – and one that we will be using in this work is that of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS; Koller, 2017). The latter proposes three levels of CDS (adapted from Fairclough 2010: 133 and also Koller 2014: 153). This model lends itself to a bottom-up analysis that proceeds from the description of the text to an explanation of the textual findings by analysing the meso-and macro-level contexts[2].

> Because language and society are seen as constituting each other via discourse, a full-fledged analysis then returns to the text level to discuss how its text producers are not only influenced by contexts, but influence them in turn, constructing, reinforcing, negotiating and challenging social relations and identities through the use of language and conversational behavior (Koller, 2017: 29).

[2] The *macro-level* is the social context; the *meso-level* is discourse practice context (production, distribution,

reception, appropriation while the *micro-level* is the text itself (see Koller, 2017: 28 for more details)

We now proceed to examine how this model will be used to analyse the linguistic features and strategies that enable the resurrections of feminine identity in the face of oppressive patriarchal practices.

6. Analysis: Discursive Resurrections of Feminine Identity

This study seeks to look into the discursive resurrections of feminine identity. The study analyzes three narratives by female respondents from various socio-economic strata and occupations. The experience that they describe range from *dress code* at work to *reproductive rights* to *vulnerability* associated with being in the public sphere. The prime focus of this study is to explore how the respondents *use language* to *mitigate* such oppression and how discursive resources help in *resurrections* of their *feminine identity* within conversation. Their life experiences reported in the following extracts capture various facets of oppression including cultural imperialism, powerlessness and exploitation (Young, 1990; discussed earlier), but the way they use language to navigate this oppression helps with resurrecting feminine identity. Each extract is preceded by a template that gives all relevant information pertaining to transcript source[3], data cited, number of participants, speaker details (gender, age, background), language used and context.

Extract Number: I

Transcript Details: G2022_1

Total time of data cited: 2:25 minutes

Participants: 2

Speaker details: F= 40, Domestic Worker, Rural background

Language(s) used: Assamese

Context: Recording was done at G's workplace where she is employed as a domestic worker. G was asked certain questions on the choice of clothes both at her home or outside (private/ public space. G tells how she has been commented or judged on the basis of the dress code she has to wear at her workplace. Before the cited extract, G comments on those people who do not have any knowledge about the outer world or are less educated and thus usually have the tendency to judge other people. But according to her, those who are educated or know about the outer world give positive comments on other people. In this extract, her speech reports on the different mindsets of people at her village as well as her mother in law and she justifies her sartorial choice as being required at her workplace via different linguistic strategies reported below.

[3] Extract I and II are from the second author (B)'s current work for her PhD while Extract III is from the first author (S)'s earlier work on peer groups. The data cited here has not been used earlier.

Extract Relevance: Showcases episodic autonomy that contests cultural imperialism and social and familial contestations reflected through the lines 18-23 in Ia and 41- 45 in Ib (Appendix)

.

G2022_1_0039

13 G .hh *ami-e etija zetia dʰɔr-ɔk ↓bija ho-i ah-u*
1PL-EMPH now when take-HON.NF marriage BE-NF come-1.AGR

14. *mekʰela sadɔr pindʰ-i prɔtʰɔm-ɔte zɔin kor-isil-u* ↑ . hh {B.*.hmm .hmmm*}
mekhela chaadar wear-NF first-LOC join do-PERF-1.AGR

15. *tʰikɔk tʰik-e sol-i as-il*
fine fine-EMPH run-NF be-PST
'When we got married, at that time we wore mekhela chaadar coming and joining the work. Everything was fine then.'

→ 16. *zetia opʰis-ɔr pora ama-k parmisɔn di-l-e suizar*
when office-POSS from 1.PL-ACC permission give-PERF-3.AGR churidar

17. *pindʰbo lag-e* {B. *.hmmm*} *suizar pindʰ-i ah-u-te*
wear-FUT need-AGR churidar wear-NF come-NF-LOC

18. *ama-k ko-isil gao-t kisuman-e*
1. PL-ACC say-PST village-LOC some-NOM

19. "*baba re*↑ *ei bura kal-ɔt >bʰaxa-bilak-u*
god this old time-LOC language-CL-EMPH

20. *olop beleg nɔ-hɔ-i<* ((B:*a: laughs*))
little different NEG-be-NF

21. *<*"*@bapa re ei bura kal-ot suizar pindʰ-i za-i*
o' god this old time-LOC churidar wear-NF go-NF

22. *xent-e*↑↓ {B.*o o::*} *gotai* ↑ *dekʰ-uo-s-e*"*@>* (.1) {B.*o::::*}
3.PL-ERG all see-CAUS-ASP-3.AGR

23. .hh *>kisuman-e* ↑ *ko-isil xeneke<*
some-ERG[4] say-PST like that

[4] Mohanan (1994) argues that in ergative language, subjects are often connected with two distinct cases, one of which adopts inflection and the other of which is left uninflected or unmarked. The subject that is marked is known as ergative, whereas the subject that is not marked is known as nominative. Though for some of the scholars Assamese is either a nominative-accusative language (Goswami & Tamuli, 2003, Haddad, 2011) or an ergative language (Devi, 1986; Zakharyin, 2015), it has been argued that because of its differences

'But when there was permission from the office that we will have to wear churidar at work, then there were some people in the village who commented that, "Look at them, they are wearing churidar at such old age, just showing off." Their language is also a bit different no?'

24. *>tare bʰitɔr-te aru < kisuman-e ko-is-e @"nɔ-hɔ-i e ↑ tai* (.)
that inside-LOC and some-ERG say-ASP-3.AGR NEG-be-NF DM 3SG.FEM

'But again among them there were some people who said that, "No…'

→25. *tate kam kɔr-e nɔ-hɔ-i ↑ opʰis-ɔr*
there work do-3.AGR NEG-be-NF office-POSS

26. *pɔra-e di-s-i :: {B. o o::}* (0.2)
from-EMPH give-ASP-NF

'She works there and it has been given from office'

→27. *aru bʰal↓-he ↑ ° gɔl-ɔr pora eku dekʰ-a-e na-pa-i ° @*
and nice-EMPH throat-POSS from nothing see-NF-EMPH NEG-get-NF

'…and it is good actually…nothing is visible from the neck down…'

28. *mekʰela sadɔr pindʰ-i tʰak-il-e o >hoi pɛt-tu*
mekhela chaadar wear-NF stay-PST-3.AGR yes belly-CL

29. ulo-i tʰak-bɔ {B. o} nɔ-hɔ-i kiba eta< enke ulo-i tʰak-bɔ "
out-NF stay-FUT NEG-be-NF some one like out-NF stay-FUT

'…If you wear mekhela chaadar, either your belly or something will be visible. They would be out like that"

30. *kintu* (0.2) *zi-tu-e ama-k dʰɔr-ɔk ei* (.) *utsah-tu di-s-e*
but that-CL-NOM 3PL-ACC take-HON.NF this encourage-CL give-ASP-3.AGR

31. *nissoi bʰal-e tai olopman kiba buz-i pa-i* {B.*o o*}

in the case markings of the subjects which is influenced by the semantically guided case alternations, it leads to the *split ergative nature* of the language that is based on *agentivity* too (Saikia & Camilleri, 2019: 252). The split ergativity system of Assamese language also depends on intransitivity depending on whether an intransitive verb is unergative or unaccusative, which is solely based on *agentivity* and also affected by *person* and *number* (Amrtiavalli & Sarma, 2002, Saha & Patgiri, 2013, Saikia & Camilleri, 2019).

certainly nice-EMPH 3.SG little something understand-NF get-NF

32. *nissoi* *olop lik^{h}-a* *pɔrh-a* *as-e↓* *tai-r* {B.*o::*}
certainly little write-NF read-NF be-AGR 3SG-POSS

33. *aru* *zi-tu-e* *d^{h}ɔr-ɔk* *xeneke* *↓ko-is-e* *"bapare*
and that-CL-ERG take-HON.NF like that say-ASP-3.AGR o' god

34. *sa-u-sun"* *tai-r* *↓bud^{h}hoi* *ximan eta* *na-zan-e↑↓*
look-1.AGR 3SG.FEM-POSS probably that much one NEG-know-3.AGR

35. *aru* {B. *.hmm*} *lik^{h}-a* *pɔrh-a* *ba* *bahir-ɔr*
and write-NF read-NF or out-POSS

36. *zɔgɔt-k^{h}ɔn-ɔr* {*B. o o*} *bixɔje* *na-zan-e* {*B.o o*}
world-CL-POSS about NEG-know-3.AGR

37. *t^{h}ik xenekua* *aru* *bostu-bilak*
like like that and things-CL

'But the one who encourages us; she is certainly good and understands something. She must be a bit literate, but the one who is discouraging us, maybe she does not have much knowledge or does not know anything about the outer world. Things are like that only.'

Observations: The extract shows that respondent G puts her views clearly on how she had been commented or judged by the people at her village as well as her mother in law because of the clothes she has to wear at her workplace which, she does not fail to point out, is as required by the office (line 16). She uses micro-level features in the text such as animated and loud speech in quotative voice (marked by @...@; _____ and " …" respectively) in line no. 19 and 21, where she needs to assert that how the village people show their shocked reaction on her choice of clothes when she goes to her workplace. However, the respondent also reports other fellow villager's opinion, again in quotative voice in lines 24 and 25, marked by ***nɔ-hɔ-i*** (that means no in both the lines) to emphasize some villagers' positive attitude towards her choice of clothes at her workplace and their justification on why she has to wear *churidar* at her workplace. Moreover, her speech becomes softer marked by (°…°) focusing on village people's argument on how a *churidar can* be a much more dignified apparel than the conventional and culturally sanctioned mekhela sador traditionally worn in Assam since it covered her body parts and neither the belly nor anything else become visible (lines 27-19). She contests this cultural oppression both from the community and from her own mother-in-law (Extract Ia and Extract Ib in Appendix) in the sense of Young (1990) through a form of *episodic autonomy*[5] which starts from line no.51 in the latter. It begins with fast speech indicated by > <and

[5] The capacity to decide in particular situations Meyers (1989: 208) discussed in Stoljar 2002

becomes a bit louder in stating her point of view in front of her mother in law how a *churidar* can be a dignified dress to wear since it affords her dignified cover even though she works with thousands of men at work. Her unique use of hyperbolic lines 52-55 in Ib) helps to drive home the point and her mother-in-law finally concedes defeat by saying that she has learnt to speak (line 60-61 in Ib).

The meso-level and macro-level (Koller 2017) are both engaged when Respondent G postulates her argument that the *dress code* that she wears to *work* has been given by the *office* and therefore is socially justified since it is her work requirement. Although there were some villagers who were against the dress code, there were also certain social sanctions from some other villagers who have also supported her. She contests the *cultural imperialism* both at the societal and familial level were also reflected through her mother-in-law's language of protesting her dress code but it was mitigated when the respondent talks about the male gaze and personal bodily dignity at her workplace. Her social position as a woman and more specifically as a working woman has been highly affected by the comments or judgments at her choice of cloths both at her public and private sphere that has been judged by the people around her both at *social* level (indicated lines 19, 20, 21, 22) and at the *familial* level (indicated lines 38, 39, 40). Moreover, when she has to wear the permissible dress code at her workplace, people used to comment that by wearing *churidar* at such old age, she is showing off. However, she also puts her views regarding the difference of opinions among people at her village, where some of them show their positive attitude towards it. Her linguistic resurrection of her feminine identity is mostly reflected through line 24-29 where she talks about tolerant view of villagers; line 30-37 where she links these view to larger social realities of language and finally in line 41-47, where she argued that how a dress like *churidar* affords more bodily cover and hence more safety and dignity. She feels safe wearing that dress at her workplace, where male coworkers are also there. Moreover, her *self-determination*[6] is providing her freedom and choices about what to value, who to be, and what to do.

[6] Mackenzie in Veltman and Piper (2014), *Autonomy, Oppression and Gender*, 17

Extract Number: II

Transcript Details: R2022_2

Total time of data cited: 1:21 minutes

Participants: 2

Speaker details: F= 38, Homemaker, Urban background

Language(s) used: Assamese

Context: The recording was done at the R's place. B asks R if she has been questioned or judged regarding her family planning after their marriage. In this extract, R is describing how she has been asked about her family plans after her marriage many times and how once she has been questioned on her fertility. R mentions that she and her husband took some time after their marriage for a baby and within this period, she had to come across lots of questions, comments, judgments on her fertility or reproductivity. Before the cited extract below, R mentions (in lines 1-8 not cited here) how people used to comment on her weight as a potential cause for her purported infertility not only in her family but also in her social circles.

Extract Relevance: Highlights episodic and programmatic autonomy in terms of the social idea of reproductivity reflected through the line 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

R2022_2_0030

9. .hmm *mɔi* *ebar* *pa-is↓↑-u* (.) *mur* *deuta kʰub axukʰ ho-i* *as-ɛ*

   1SG once get-ASP-1.AGR 1SG-POSS father very sick be-NF exist-AGR

10. ()/ () *eta* *ko-u* {B.*hmm*}

    one say-1.AGR

    'I will tell an incident, my father was ill then.'

11. *sa-bɔle* *go-l-u* *↑mur* *sinaki* *aru*

    See-FUT go-PST-1.AGR 1.AGR-POSS acquaintance and

12. >*manuh* *e-gɔraki-e* *↓ko-l-e* < (.)

    person one-CL-ERG say-PST-3.AGR

13. *bʰal* *ne beja xudʰ-il-e aru* *tar-sɔt* *heri*

    good or bad ask-PST-3.AGR after-LOC DM

14. *a a .hmm >ki* *buli* *kɔ-i <.hmm* (.) .hh {B.*hm*}

    what COMP say-NF

    'I went to see my father and I made a lady whom I know and after that…'

15. ↓ "heri (.) *bat- a a* (.) *heri* *ne maina >lɔra suali >eneke< ko-l-e* {B.*hm*}

    DM DM QP maina boy girl like this say-PST-3.AGR

'Maina, boy or girl, she asked like this.'

16. *məi >ko-l-u* (.) *nai↑↓ etijaleke ↑bʰɔb-a na-i* {B.*hm*}
1SG say-PST-1.AGR no till now think-NF NEG-NF
'I said no, have not planned yet.'

17. "*dɔktɔr-ɔk ne-dekʰ-uao kele*" ↑*?*
doctor-ACC NEG-see-CAUS why
'Why don't you see a doctor?'

18. *>moi-tu asɔrit< >@DƆKTƆR-ƆK ↑kele dekʰ-uam akou↑↓məi @<* {B.*hmm*}
1SG-EMPH shock doctor-ACC why see-CAUS-1.AGR again 1.SG

19. *oo*(.) *məi >bulu "məi dɔktɔr-ɔk kele dekʰ-uam"*
1SG COMP-1.AGR 1SG doctor-ACC why see-CAUS

'I am shocked hearing that and said why should I go to a doctor.'

20. (.) "*nɔ-hɔ-i dɔktɔr-ɔk dekʰ-ua-i lo-b-i-sun* "(.)
NEG-be-NF doctor-ACC see-CAUS-NF take-FUT-2.AGR-IMP
'No, go to a doctor once.'

21. *DƆKTƆR-ƆR >nambar sambar-u di-s-e* ()/() *kɔnsal kor-ib-ɔle*
doctor-POSS number RUDPL-EMPH give-ASP-3.AGR consult do-FUT-ASP
'…gave doctor's number too for consultation.'

22. *a a mu-k-tu ↑↓ @ xudh-i-tu ↑↓ lɔba ↑ tumi*
1SG-ACC-EMPH ask-NF-EMPH take-FUT 2SG

23. *< məi ki ↑↓ bʰab-is-u* {*B.hm*}
1SG what think-ASP-1.AGR

24. *ki ↑↓ nai-bʰɔb-a> . məi no-kor-ibo-u par-u@ ↑* {*B.hmm*}
what NEG-think-NF 1SG NEG-do-FUT-EMPH can-1.AGR

25. *mu-r upɔr-t- . kɔtʰa-he ei-tu↑* {*B.hm .hm*}
1SG-POSS above-LOC matter-EMPH this-CL

26. *>'° manuh-*()/() *upɔr-ɔt-he< kɔtʰa'°*
man above-LOC-EMPH matter

'At least, you should have asked once what I am thinking too, I might not have plans, totally depends on me and my husband.'

Observations: Throughout the extract, it has been observed that the respondent openly puts her views on how she has been criticized and questioned on her family plans or even been doubted on her reproductive capacity. She begins enacting an incident of her past life when she went home since her father was unwell and met a neighbour who asked her about her family plans and assumed that since

she has not given birth to any child, she must have certain fertility issues. She puts emphasis on her speech marked by underline (____) to refer to her neighbour's statement of advising her to go to a doctor for consultation (line 17: *dɔktɔr-ɔk ne-dekʰ-auo kele*). Her speech tone gets dramatically louder (line 16) when she needs to assert that she actually does not need any consultation since she and her husband have not planned for child yet. Moreover, she emphasized on the point (line 19) when she states that the neighbour even shared doctor's numbers to be consulted. Her *episodic autonomy* as well as *programmatic autonomy*[7] begins from line no 21 where she emphasized on how people can easily take the privilege and right to take someone else's right to take life decisions even without their consent.

The extract basically focuses the social idea of reproductivity where one's right to take own life decisions is also compromised as well as a woman's choice of giving birth to a child. However, the respondent's linguistic resurrection of feminine identity has been significantly reflected through line 22,23,24, 25, 26 where she mentions about her and her husband's right to take the decision on whether and when they should have a baby or not. Moreover, it also enables her to take necessary choices and enact decisions that expresses and becomes coherent with her real identity. Additionally, her *self-governance*[8] enables her to take the necessary choices and make the required decisions as well as carry them out in a way that is consistent with and represents her true self.

Extract Number: III

Transcript Details: 18510_1517

Total time of data cited: 1:15 minutes

Participants: 2

Speaker details: F= 22, student; urban background

Language(s) used: Hindi and English

Context: S's interview with A had been on for about 8 minutes. Just before the cited extract she was talking about why she chose engineering and how she landed up at the particular institute. She was asked about memorable incidents in which she spoke about her weirdest fear of possibly not meeting any other girl in the college. She then mentions she was happy to meet her girl classmates and speaks

[7]Programmatic autonomy "is the capacity to decide major life issues (e.g., whether to be a mother, or whether to dedicate oneself to the pursuit of a career). Meyers thinks that oppressive socialization hampers programmatic autonomy but not necessarily local autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar 2000: 18)".

[8] Mackenzie in Veltman and Piper (2014), *Autonomy, Oppression and Gender*, 17-18

about an interaction with a senior student who was male and with whom she had a weird interaction after which she had in which she had nearly resolved that she 'would not initiate conversation with anyone ever'. The lines that are cited here are an extension of that weird experience.

Extract Relevance: Showcases programmatic autonomy (lines 9-11, 14-15, 19-20) in the face of being compromised in public sphere wherein her number was given to a senior student by a security and she was forced to go out and meet the person for fear of ragging.

18510_1517_08:36

1 A: *i had a few bad in-*(.) *ba::::d experiences but* (.)

2 *>↑most of it was nice<* (.). *>↑0most of it was nice0<=*

3 S: *=bad experiences? what kind?=*

4 A: *=<ba::d experiences as in:: ↑ people* (.) *getting my number:: ↑*

5 *and* (.)*> people asking me to come out<* (.) >FORCING *me to come out<*

→6 *and me:: being the stupid person* (.) *aa:: > ∀ragging ke dar se↑< chale bhi gae ba:har↑*

ragging of fear from go-3 also go-pst out

"… (and me, being the stupid person) fearful of ragging, I went out also"

7 *and >people judging me because* (.) *"ke↑↓se chali gayi tum baahar?*

How go-fem go-st-fem you outside

8 *matlab* (.) *dekhna to chahiye tha↑"< a-* (.)

means see-inf dm must pst

"(…and people judging me because) 'How could you go outside? Means…at least you should have seen'".

→9 (.) *first thing was ki* (.) *> ∀i did not give anyone my number↑<*

that

→10 *@mera nambar gaya kese↑?@* {S: *hmm*} *baa:d me pata chala ki jo sekyorit-*

gen number go-pst how later loc know go-pst that rel.pro security

→11 *wa:le bhaiyya*[9] *the*↑*, WO unko nambar de diye the {S: oh!} thik he?*
nom brother pst rel-pro he-acc give give pst okay pres

"(I did not give anyone my number). How did my number go out? Later, it transpired that the security (personnel) had given him the number. Okay?"

12 *and he (hehe) the sekyority wa:le bhaiyya he was saying ki*
security nom brother that

→13 *">are nahi*↑ *bohot accha ladka hae*↑*.* *bohot carin hae*↑*<"* ((S laughs))
dm neg very good boy pres very caring pres

"…and the security (personnel)… he was saying 'Oh no! He is a very good boy. He is very caring.'"

→14 *ham (.hh) bole ki ">a:p apna ka:m karo, ham DEKH LENGE khud*
i-hon say that you-hon self work do-2 i-hon see will self

→15 *car*↑↓*in hae kya hae<"*
caring cop what cop

"I said 'You do your work. I will see for myself… caring or whatever'".

16 S: *so he was giving [out your number*?

17 A: [*@ha:::@* (0.3) *that was very* (.) *weird.*

18 *and I had to* (.) *involve other guys to get rid of that person.*

((Lines deleted. S confirms if it was in her first year when that happened))

→19 A: →*<first year hi::> mam. uske ba:d phir everyone got to know ki bohot khadus hae*↑

20 *uske ba:d phir they were* (.) *at a distance*

"Yes. First year only, Ma'am. After that everyone got to know that (she) is very snobbish. And then, after that, they were at a distance"

A's exposition of her bad experiences following S's turn (in line 2 where she asks A to elaborate on what kind of bad experiences she had had) starts with slow and elongated speech and pitch variations in line 4 (marked by ::: and ↑). This rapidly turns into fast speech signalled by > < when she says "people" asked her to come out (implying out of hostel or her living quarters). She justifies her action with fast speech and pitch variation again in line 6: it was out of fear for ragging that she went out. For that she faced social censure – possibly from her hostel mates who asked how could she go out

[9] *Bhaiyya* means 'elder brother' and in Hindi this is commonly used as a deferential marker for male members in community who are elder or as a nominalizer even for occupation: 'security wale bhaiyya' is one such usage.

like that and she positions herself as a 'stupid person' right at the begging of line 6 both to justify her own action of going out as well as preparing the listener for the social questioning that follows. Her *programmatic autonomy* starts from line 9 onwards where she states in fast speech that she did not give anyone her phone number and how was it that her phone number went out in the public domain – it transpired later that a security guard The quotative voice is used by her both in line 7-8 where she recreates the social censure that she faced as she went out on being summoned and again in lines 13 to recreate the security guard's patronage of the male senior of A to whom he had passed on her number without her knowledge. Her reported speech of the security personnel in line 13 starts with "arre nahi" which implies he was negating her possible accusations by characterizing the male senior as good and caring. Her programmatic autonomy is resurrected in lines 14-15 where reports herself as telling the guard that he should do his own work and she herself would take a call whether someone was caring or not. Significantly, she alludes at a social a more socially harsh positioning as a khadoos (snobbish or fastidious). She says such incidents happened only in the first later – later everyone got to know that she was very 'khadoos' on account of which they kept their distance.

This kind of social positioning is perhaps necessitated by her being in the public sphere and hence an easy target for patriarchal oppression – her phone number is given out without her knowledge and she is harassed into going out against her consent for fear of more ragging by seniors, Things came to such a pass that she had to involve 'other guys to get rid of that person' and, lest she be construed as loose and not careful enough, she possibly cultivated the image of a khadoos. She says later when asked by the interviewer why she defines herself as a khadoos that she was 'very strict' in matters of academic integrity (not doing other's assignments for them) and 'straightforward' in real life. In the construction and resurrection of her feminine identity, her language becomes a major accomplice. She may have had to take help of others to get rid of the person who was harassing her, but her language allows her the control that she may not have had in real life[10].

7. Conclusion:

Although a qualitative approach is taken into account in the current study, a quantitative analysis of the micro discursive resources in all three of the aforementioned extracts has also been tried. Table I below lists the discursive resources according to the occurrences (indicated by line numbers from each of the extracts) that are found in all three extracts. Following the number of occurrences, an analytical diagram has been provided (Figure I) to demonstrate how and in what ways the use of these discursive resources in the form of micro level analysis is leading to the macro level analysis.

[10] There have other explorations into how language or even silences can impact gender identity amongst peers (see amongst others Barua 2016a; Barua 2016b;, Barua 2017 and Barua 2018/ 2020).

Table 1: Analysis Components of Discursive Resources (Micro level)

Analysis Components I			
Indicated in Concerned Lines			
	Extract I= Speaker G)	Extract II= Speaker R)	Extract III= Speaker A)
Types of Oppression → Discursive Resources ↓	Cultural Imperialism (Work Wear)	Powerlessness (Reproductive Rights)	Exploitation (Vulnerability in Public Sphere)
Untimed pause	24,30,52	9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20,	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,17,18,20
Timed pause	22,25,30		17
Louder	41,51	18, 21	5,11,14
Emphasis	19,24,25,27,31,33,34,53,55,56	17, 18, 22	
Fall in pitch	13,22,27, 32,33,34,50,53,56	9,12, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24	7,15
Rise in pitch	14,19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27,34,50, 51, 53	11,16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25	2,4,6,7,8,11,13,15,19
Prolongation	22, 32, 43, 58, 62		1,4,6,10,14,17,19
Fast	19, 23, 24, 28, 29, 51,56, 57, 59	12, 14, 15, 18, 21	2,5,6,7,9,13,14,15
Slow	21, 42,43, 45, 50, 58	23, 24	4,19
Animated voice	24, 27, 44,45, 53	18, 22, 24	10,17
Quotative voice	19, 21, 24, 51	15, 17, 19	13, 14
Code Switching			19, 20
Post posed subject	18, 43, 44		7

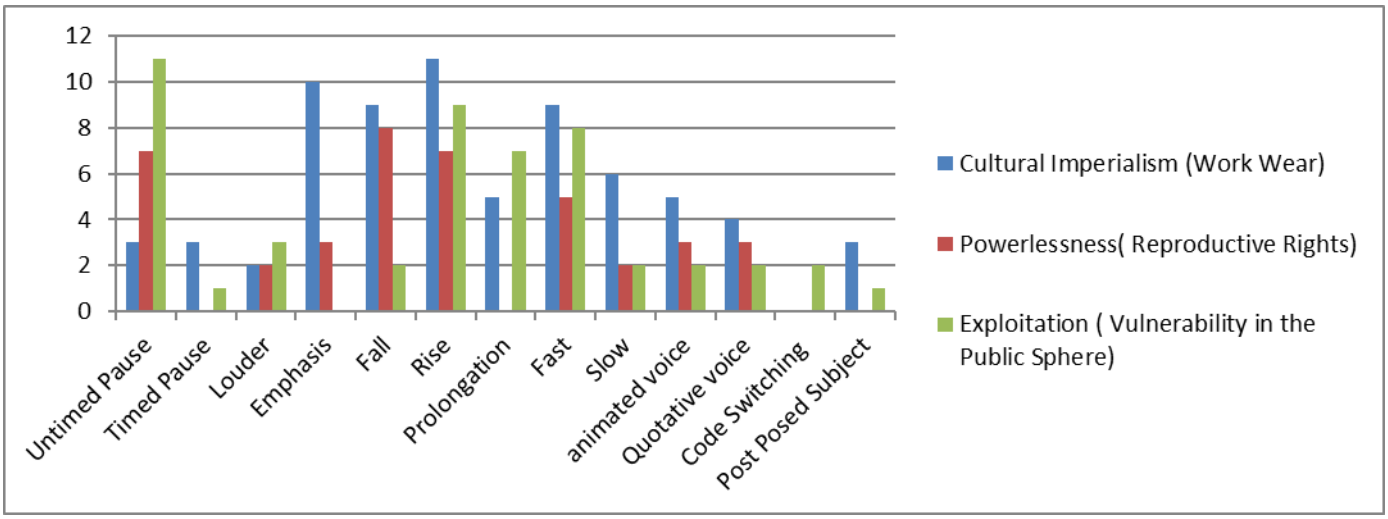

Figure 1: Micro Analytical Diagram on the Discursive Resources

It has been observed that the discursive resources are available throughout all the three extracts from word to phrasal level. As shown in Table I, which provides a general analysis of all three excerpts in terms of discursive resources, the first extract (on cultural imperialism) has the highest frequency of discursive resources (Figure:1, indicated by blue bar). For instance, it can be seen that this extract has the highest number of emphasized/stressed utterances, which may suggest that the respondent's speech is heavily focused on the parts where she must explain people's attitudes towards her dress code at her workplace. Moreover, her speech is also emphasized in justifying her stand on claiming *churidar* as a safe work wear. Additionally, if we consider the second extract (powerlessness in the face of challenges to reproductive life), it can be seen that the frequency of discursive resources (indicated by red bar) are decreasing in terms of the first extract. Since this extract highlights the tabooed issue where a woman is questioned on her reproductive rights, the respondent in this speech only emphasizes on the parts where her choice or liberty of giving birth to a child or not judged by questioning on her ability and further her justification for it. Moreover, it has been observed that the usage of *untimed pause* is more prevalent in the third extract (exploitation by virtue of being in the public sphere, indicated by green bar). It can be assumed that in explaining her experience of getting her number leaked in the public sphere, this respondent is using this discursive strategy to formulate what and how she needs to say in sharing her experience of being vulnerable in the public sphere.

The narratives that have been taken into consideration in the current research encode different forms of oppression viz. *cultural imperialism* (in the narrative on work wear); *powerlessness* (in the narrative on reproductive rights) and *exploitation* (in the narrative on the bad experience on account of a leaked phone number). It can be observed from the three cited narratives that increasing degree of psychological oppression which can be *aspectual* or *absolute* Work wear < Reproductive Rights < Vulnerability in the public space as represented in Figure 2 below:

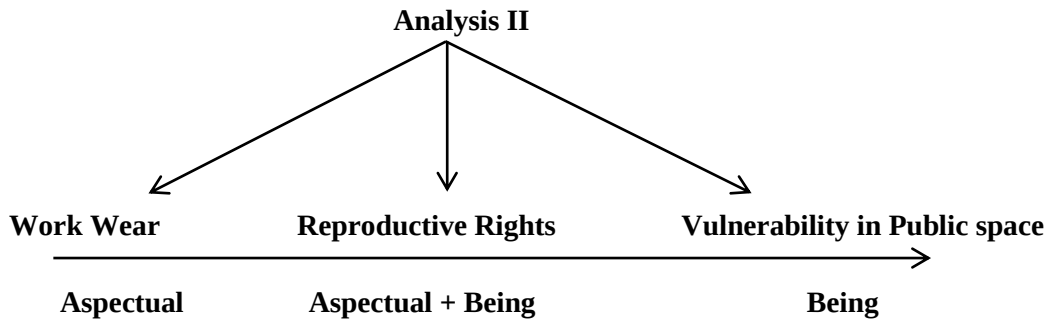

Figure 2: Macro Analysis: *Work Wear, Reproductive Rights & Vulnerability in the Public sphere*

Although the theory presented above by the current authors is tentative given that the narratives and the corresponding discursive features are limited, it definitely provides scope for further research in this area. Based on the analysis that have been presented so far, we can observe *differential social positioning* in the narratives, with G seeking for social justification challenging social as well familial contestations regarding work wear; R asserting her choice regarding her reproductive rights and A mitigating her vulnerability by re-asserting her decision making process. These views also allude to the *episodic* and *programmatic* autonomy that can be enabled via discourse. In conclusion, it can be said that women's use of language, which may therefore lessen their vulnerabilities in the face of patriarchal oppression and redefine their identities in a more positive light, makes it possible for them to regain their social position. Unlike the hard cases reported earlier (Stoljar 2022) that compromise autonomy, there is no self-abnegation or deference to the wishes of other but rather a positive assertion of choice over own body (Extract II); no adapative practice but a justified rebuttal of cultural oppression (Extract I) and finally, no adoption of oppressive practices but rather an informed perspective on vulnerabilities and consequent assertion of self-identity and decision making (Extract III) made possible by language.

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Appendix I

Extract Ib)

((Continued after Extract 1a. Lines 38, 39, 40 deleted. B asked G if it is asked in their village what she wore at home))

41. *..naiti* *pindʰ-u* *gʰɔr-ɔt* {*B. o::*}*mekʰela sadɔr* *pindʰ-i* *ba bhal-ei*
nighty wear-1.AGR home-LOC mekhela chadar wear-NF good-EMPH

42. *na-lag-e* {B.o :} *tetija-u* *manuh-e* *ko-isil* *<ki*
NEG-need-1.AGR then-EMPH people-ERG say-PERF that

43. *pindʰ-e* *eigila digʰɔl digʰɔl sola*> {*B. o:*}((G laughs)) ((B laughs))
wear-AGR this long long cloth

44. *@ko-is-e* *ko-is-e*
say-ASP-ERG say-ASP-ERG
'When I wear nighty at home, people used to say what kind of long cloth it is.'

45. *<xahuburi-hɔt-e >@*
mother in law-CL-ERG
'Mother-in-law…'

((Lines 46, 47, 48 deleted. B asked about the G's mother in law whether she stays with them when G mentions about her mother in law. G said that she does not stay with them, but if she comments whenever G wears churidar))

49. *eigila* *pindʰ-il-e* *kɔ-i-e*
this wear-PST-3.AGR say-NF-EMPH
'used to say if I wear…'

50. *<ki* *eigila pindʰ-i* *↓za-i e↑* > ()/()
what this wear-NF go-NF

51. *>moi* ()/() ↑ *"NƆ-HƆ-I <* *ei-tu* *pindʰ-a* *dekʰ-i-tu*
1SG NEG-be-NF this-CL wear-NF see-NF-EMPH
'But I say no, I am wearing this.'

52. *opʰis-ɔt* *@kiman* (.) *hazar* *hazar* *mɔta manuh-ɔr*
office-LOC how many thousand thousand male person-POSS

53. *lɔg-ɔt* *tʰak-u* {*B.hmm*}*@ki* *dʰunia* ↑↓*abur* @ {*B.hmm*}
company-LOC stay-1.AGR what beautiful cover

54. *mane zeneke kam kor-u* {B.*hmm*} *dʰunia* *sefti* *ho-i* *as-e* {B.*hmm*}
means like work do-1.AGR beautiful safety be-NF exist-3.AGR

55. *.hh kintu .hh a mane* *ma-k* *ko-u* *aru*
but means mother-ACC say-1.AGR and

"What are these (kind of clothes) that you wear (to work)? But I say no, "I am wearing this…I stay with thousands of male workers in the office and it is such a good cover; no matter how I work, it is a beautiful safety…'

((G turns to say how she tries to make her mother in law accept the fact that wearing a churidar is much more safe by contrasting the fact that certain body parts such as navel can be visible to anyone by wearing mekehla chadar))

56. "*apunaluk-e etija sa-ok-sun ↓mekʰela-kʰɔn nabʰi-tu-r >tɔl-ɔt*
3.PL-ERG now see- -IMP mekhela-CL naval-CL-POSS below-LOC

57. *pindʰ-is-e* <" {B.*hmm*} .hh *aru eneke ula-i as-e*
wear-ASP-3.AGR and like this out-NF be-3.AGR
'And I tell her now you see; you are wearing mekhela below your navel that can be easily visible.'

58. <*moi aru eneke dekʰ-a-i di-u....* > {B.*o o:*}
1SG and like this see-CAUS-NF give-1.AGR

59. >*dekʰ-a-i di-l-i*<
see-CAUS-NF give-PST-AGR

60. "*zan-a de azikali kɔtʰa kɔ-ba*
know-2.AGR DM now-a-days talk say-FUT

61. *zan-a ho-is-a*" *xeneke ko-i* ((G laughs))((B laughs))
know-2.AGR be-ASP-2.AGR like that say-NF

62. *tetia mone mone tʰak-e* {B. *o::*}
then silent silent stay-3.AGR

'Now you see, you wear the mekhela below the navel…and it is showing… (Then she says) "You know to talk nowadays". Then she keeps quiet'.

Appendix II: Abbreviations and Transcription Symbols

1	1st Person	EMPH	Emphatic marker	NOM	Nominative
2	2nd Person	ERG	Ergative	PERF	Perfective
3	3rd Person	FEM	Feminine	PL	Plural
ACC	Accusative	FUT	Future	POSS	Possessive marker
AGR	Agreement	HON	Honorific	PST	Past tense
ASP	Aspectual	IMP	Imperative marker	RUDPL	Reduplication
CL	Classifier	LOC	Locative marker	SG	Singular
DM	Discourse marker	NEG	Negative marker		

CAPS	Louder word/ speech	Underline	Emphasized/ Stressed word/ speech	0 0	Quieter/Soft Word/ speech
><	Faster speech	<>	Slower speech	@ @	Animated voice
" "	Quotative voice	:/::	Prolonged word	↑	Rise in Pitch
↓	Fall in pitch	'	Syllabic fall in pitch	Word-	cut off sound indicated by a dash
.hh/.hhh	In breath in a speech	(.)	Micropause in a speech	(.2)	Timed pause
( )	Unidentified part	(( ))	Interviewer's comments	→	An utterance of specific interest
{ }	Backchannel	=	No gap within utterances	.	Falling intonation