

# Telling Stories and Searching for an Ideal Listener: North-Eastern Women in Modernity

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## Abstract:

Storytelling presupposes a listener. A search for it in the conventional sense of the term, and one in which the listener matches the teller's wavelength is what distinguishes most relationships in this ambit. The paper is an attempt to draw attention to women's search for a listener in a postcolonial world, in addition to a reading and questioning of the myths and legends that characterise the unique landscape of North East India. For the purpose, the text selected is Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* (2006). The writer, hailing from Arunachal Pradesh, is subjected to a reading that scrutinizes the work from the yardsticks of storytelling. The intertexts include: essays on storytelling, conversations ("politics of voice" and "erotics of talk"), feminism and Bijoya Sawain's collection of *Khasi Myths, Legends and Folk Tales* (2014). The paper devotes a sustained attention to women's experiences in an Adi community, and how these experiences are related in the hands of a woman writer from the land. The geographical and cultural matrices of these stories are the vital locations not just for the exchange of knowledge, but the formation of new epistemologies. It is also incumbent on the reader to develop reading strategies in consonance with the experiences that are chronicled in the narrative.

**Key words:** listener, women's experience, north-east literature, postcolonial, storytelling.