

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:  
A CASE STUDY OF SÜMI WOMEN IN NAGALAND**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO NAGALAND  
UNIVERSITY  
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**2020**

**The Ph. D Thesis**

**is**

**Dedicated to**

**My Parents**

**Late. Khakhu Chishi**

**Late. Nigholi Wotsa Chishi**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**NAGALAND UNIVERSITY**

**HQ: LUMAMI**

***Declaration of Candidate***

I, K. Kalito Chishi, do hereby declare that this thesis for the Ph. D Degree entitled “**Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Sümi Women in Nagaland**” is an original research work and it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any university, and all the sources I have quoted or used for the thesis have been acknowledged by complete references.

This thesis is being submitted to the Department of Political Science, Nagaland University, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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***CERTIFICATE***

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**“Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Sümi Women in Nagaland”** for the award  
of Ph. D Degree is a research work done by her during the period of study under me.  
The subject on which the thesis has been prepared as her original work has not been  
previously formed the basis for the award of any candidate. This thesis is an  
independent and original research work of the candidate.

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Date

(K. Kalito Chishi)

Research Scholar

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**ABBREVIATIONS:**

A.D.C.	: ADDITIONAL DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
A.F.S.P.A.	: ARMED FORCES SPECIAL POWER ACT
A.I.D.S.	: ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME
A.I.T.C.	: ALL INDIA TRINAMOOOL CONGRESS
A.S.M.	: ANCHAL SAMITI MEMBERS
A.P.O.	: ANGAMI PUBLIC ORGANISATION
A.W.P.O.	: ANGAMI WOMEN PUBLIC ORGANISATION
A.Y.O.	: ANGAMI YOUTH ORGANISATION
B.Sc.	: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
B.Th.	: BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY
B.A.	: BACHELOR OF ARTS
BDS	: BACHELOR OF DENTAL SURGERY
B.E.	: BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING
B.J.P.	: BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY
C.F.O.	: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
C.M.	: CHIEF MINISTER
C.M.R.	: CHILD MORTALITY RATE
C.N.T.C.	: CENTRAL NAGALAND TRIBES COUNCIL
C.P.	: COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
C.P.R.W.	: CONVENTION ON POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN
Cr.P. C.	: CRIMINAL PENAL CODE
D.A.N.	: DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF NAGALAND
D.C.	: DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
D.M.C.	: DIMAPUR MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

D.N.Y.F.	: DIMAPUR NAGA YOUTH FORUM
D.P.E.P.	: DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME
D.U.C.C.F.	: DIMAPUR URBAN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN FEDERATION
D.W.C.R.A.	: DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS
E.A.	: ENTREPRENEURS ASSOCIATION
E.A.C	: EXTRA ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
E.N.P.O.	: EASTERN NAGA PEOPLES ORGANISATION
E.N.W.O	: EASTERN NAGA WOMEN ORGANISATION
F.A.D.W	: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DESTITUTE WOMEN
F.W.P.R	: FEMALE WORK PARTICIPATION RATE
G.B	: GAON BURA / VILLAGE CHIEF
G.G.G.I	: GLOBAL GREEN GROWTH INSTITUTE
G.O.I	: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
G.P.M	: GRAM PANCHAYAT MEMBER
H.I.V	: HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS
HoD	: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
H.S.L.C	: HIGH SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE
I.A.F	: INDIAN AIR FORCE
I.A.S	: INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE
I.C.D.S	: INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES
I.D.C.R.C.	: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT CUM RESOURCE CENTER DIMAPUR
I.D.R.C.	: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT CUM RESEARCH CENTRE
I.F.L.P	: INTEREST FREE LOAN PROGRAMMES

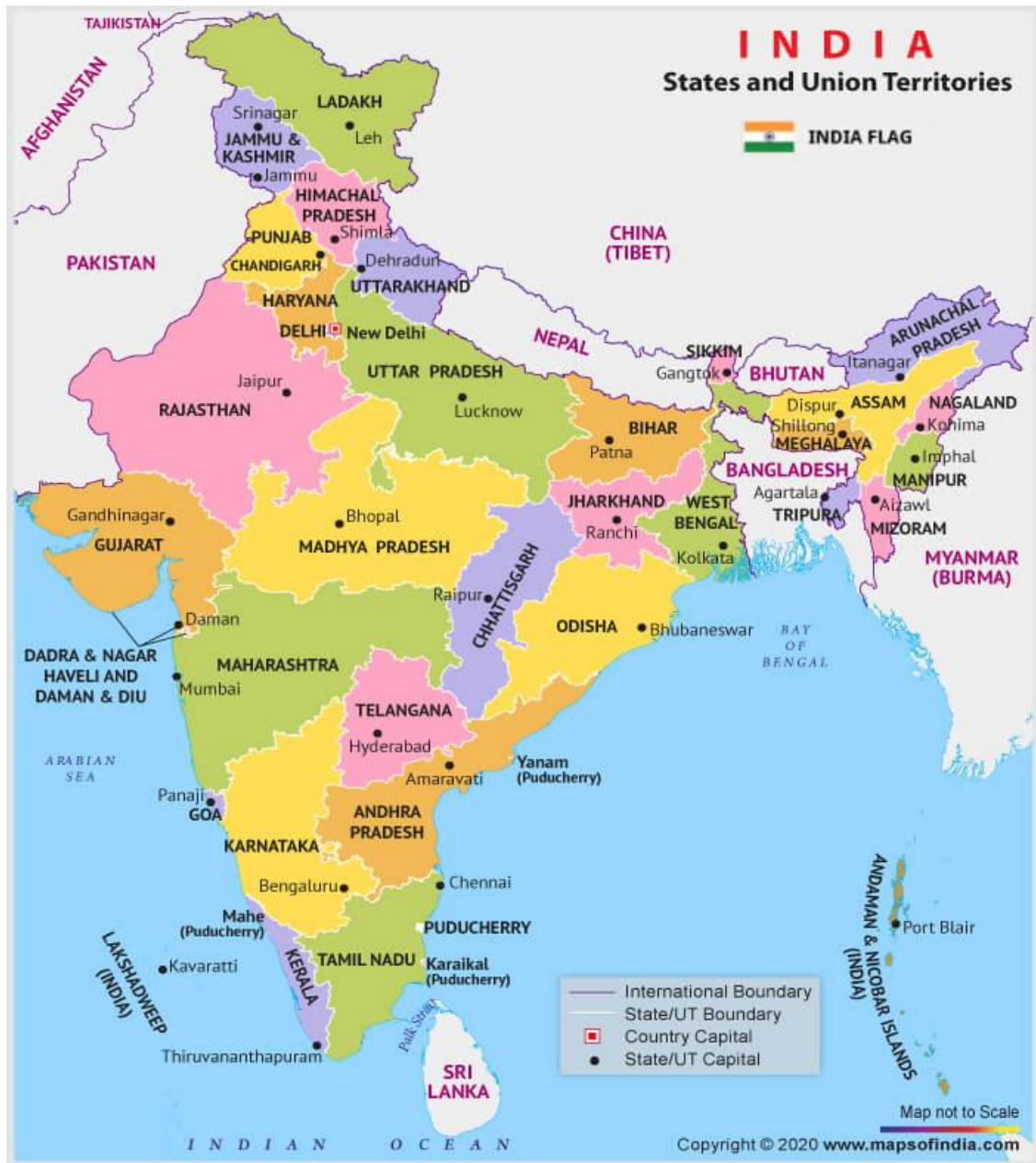
I.F.S.	: INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE
I.M.R.	: INFANT MORTALITY RATE
I.N.C	: INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
I.N.D.P.	: INDEPENDENT
I.P.C	: INDIAN PENAL CODE
I.P.L.	: INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE
I.R.B.	: INDIAN RESERVED BATTALION
I.R.C.S.	: INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY
I.R.D.P.	: INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
J.A.C	: JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE
J.A.C.W.R.	: JOINT ACTION COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN RESERVATION
J.C.C	: JOINT CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE
J.V.S.N.	: JAYANTI VIKAS SAMITI NAGALAND
K.M.C	: KOHIMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
L.E.H	: LOTH A ELOE HOHO
LL.B.	: BACHELOR OF LAWS
M.A	: MASTER OF ARTS
M.A.E.	: MASTER OF ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEERING
M.B.B.S	: BACHELOR OF MEDICINE & BACHELOR OF SURGERY
M.C.D	: MATERNAL AND CHILD DEATH
M.D.	: MANAGING DIRECTOR
M.D.Gs	: MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS
M.H.R.D	: MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
M.L.A	: MEMBER OF LEGISLATURE
M.M.R.	: MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE

M.N.F	: MIZO NATIONAL FRONT
M.N.R.E.G.S	: MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME
M.P	: MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
M.Sc	: MASTER OF SCIENCE
M.S.	: MAHILA SAMAKHYA PROGRAMME
M.Th	: MASTER OF THEOLOGY
N.A.B.A.R.D	: NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT
N.B.C.C	: NAGALAND BAPTIST CHURCH COUNCIL
N.B.S.E	: NAGALAND BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION
N.C.D	: NAGA COUNCIL DIMAPUR
N.C.S	: NAGALAND CIVIL SERVICE
N.D.P.S	: NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES
N.E	: NORTH EAST
N.E.E.T	: NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CUM ENTRANCE TEST
N.E.F.A	: NORTH EASTERN FRONTIER AGENCY
N.G.O	: NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION
N.H	: NAGA HOHO
N.H.M	: NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION
N.L.A.	: NAGALAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
N.L.M	: NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION
N.M.A	: NAGA MOTHERS ASSOCIATION
N.P.F	: NAGA PEOPLES FRONT
N.P.S	: NAGALAND POLICE SERVICE

N.P.S.C	: NAGALAND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
N.R.E.G.A	: NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT
N.S.C.N (IM)	: NATIONAL SOCIALIST COUNCIL OF NAGALIM
N.S.C.W	: NAGALAND STATE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
N.S.E.E	: NAGALAND STATE ELIGIBILITY EXAMINATION
N.S.R.L.M	: NAGALAND STATE RURAL LIVELIHOOD MISSION
N.T.A.C	: NAGALAND TRIBAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE
N.T.C	: NAGALAND TRIBES COUNCIL
N.W.H	: NAGA WOMEN HOHO
Ph. D	: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
P.H.E.D	: PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
P.R.I	: PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS
P.H.F.I	: PUBLIC HEALTH FOUNDATION OF INDIA
P.W.I.E.P	: PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN INNOVATIVE ENTREPRISES PROGRAMME
R.D	: RURAL DEVELOPMENT
R.S.P	: RURAL SANITATION PROGRAMME
S.B.C.Z	: SÜMI BAPTIST CHURCH ZÜNHEBOTO
S.D.O (C)	: SUB DIVISIONAL OFFICER (CIVIL)
S.E.C	: STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
S.E.W.A	: SELF EMPLOYED WOMEN ASSOCIATION
S.H	: SÜMI HOHO
S.H.G	: SELF HELP GROUP
S.L.L	: SPECIAL AND LOCAL LAWS
S.L.P	: SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION

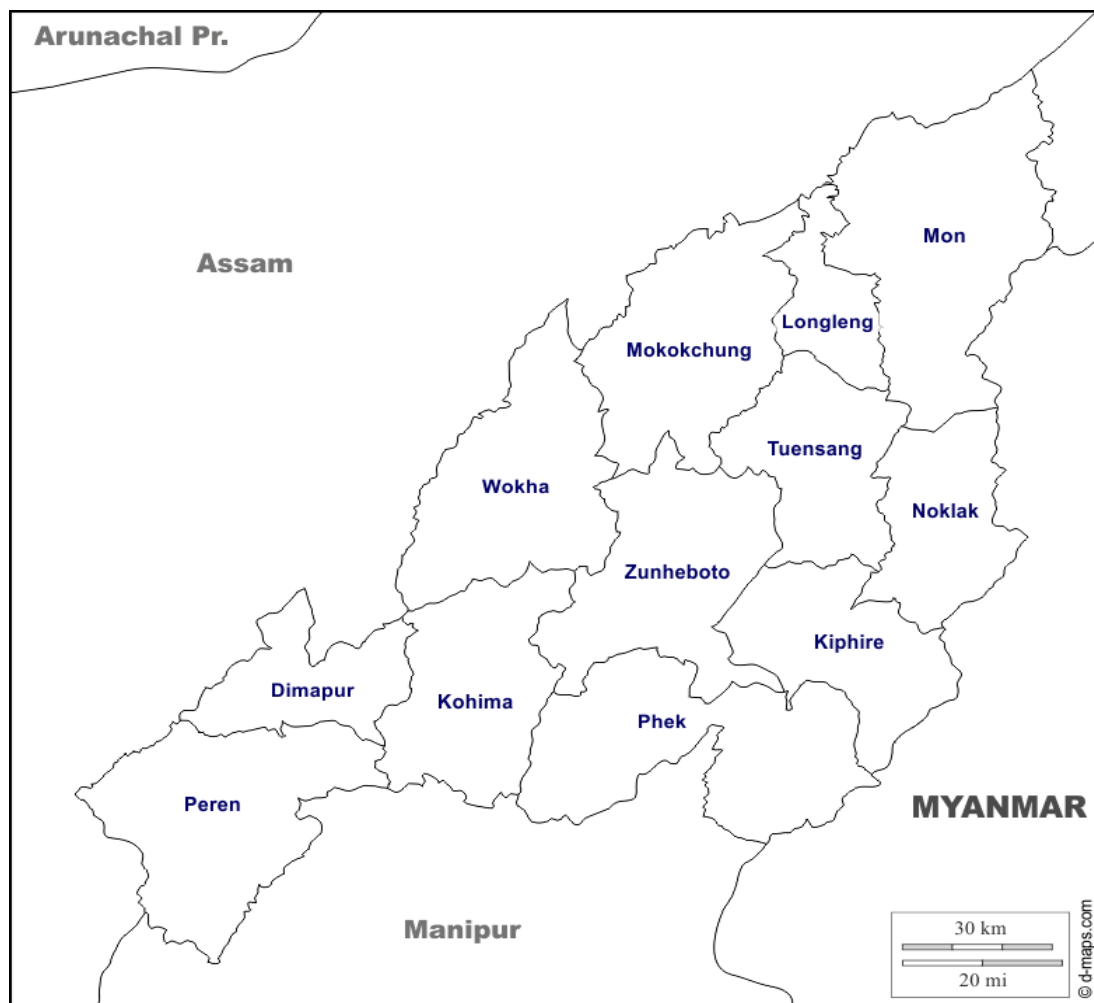
S.S.N	: SRI SIVASUBRAMANIYA NADAR
S.T.D	: SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE
S.T.H	: SÜMI TOTIMI HOHO
S.T.H.Z	: SÜMI TOTIMI HOHO ZÜNHEBOTO
T.C.P.C	: TRAINING CUM PRODUCTION CENTRE
T.L.C	: TOTAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN
T.M.C	: TRINAMOOOL CONGRESS
U.B.I	: UNION BANK OF INDIA
U.D.F	: UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT
U.L.B	: URBAN LOCAL BODY
U.N.D.P	: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
U.N.O	: UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION
V.C	: VILLAGE COUNCIL
V.D.B	: VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
W.C.H	: WESTERN CHAKHESANG HOHO
W.E.D.I	: WOMEN ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
W.P.R	: WORK PARTICIPATION RATE
W.R.C	: WOMEN RESOURCE CENTER
Z.P.M	: ZILLA PARISHAD MEMBER

## Political Map of India



Source: worldmapwithcountries.net

## Nagaland Map



Source: d-maps.com

## Zünheboto District Map



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# **CHAPTER - 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER - 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction:

Women's issues and rights have become a matter of serious concern of academicians and policy makers and have derived immense attention in the planning, discussions and platforms at national and global level in the developing and developed nations. According to Kabeer, "empowerment is the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". To her, women empowerment is undoubtedly bound with certain condition of disempowerment referring to the processes and denying the opportunity to make choices. In order to make empowerment a reality, the agent of change must be women themselves.<sup>1</sup> As per Jakarta Declaration, "Empowerment of women is not only on equality consideration; but also, for sustainable economic and social development. Involvement of women in political arena and in the decision-making role is important for empowerment as well as monitoring standards of political performance."<sup>2</sup>

The term empowerment is broad in nature which encompasses all kinds of empowerment such as education, economic, social, political, legal, and cultural empowerment. Women empowerment refers to the system in which women receive recognition in order to bring about gender equality in the society. Harendra (ed.) (2012), rightly comments that "the empowerment, equality and autonomy of women are

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1. N. Kabeer N, '*Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment*'. *Development and Change*, 1999, Vol. 30 (3), in Anupam Hazra, *The Challenge of Empowering Women in India* cited in Harendra Sinha, J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p.3

2. United Nation's *Document on Women's Development*, 1986, p.1

globally recognised as a key factor to achieve progress in socio-economic and political sphere. It is one of the 8 millennium development goals to which world leaders agreed at the millennium summit held in New York in 2000. Women empowerment leads to awareness, development of skill and creativity in making the decision to shape them as able citizens. In this way, purpose of security and dignity of life for women can be arrived at in their family as well as the entire community; political empowerment is valued as the most important one of all empowerments. It is regarded as the driver for the economic and social empowerment. Their enhanced participation in governance structure is viewed as key to redress the inherent gender inequalities in different societies.”<sup>3</sup>

Empowerment has been defined by many writers and researchers, which covers the different aspects, for instance, women gaining significant command over the materials and intellectual challenges. It also relates to scrapping of gender based discrimination in the society and inclusion of women in policy and decision making in the domestic front and social structure. Women empowerment can be described as a process in which a congenial atmosphere is created for a woman to understand her rights and perform with greater responsibility. It is also a system where both men and women understand the meaning of living harmoniously pertaining to their values and adjusting with each other.

Empowerment of women is a process of creating awareness to achieve measureable and sustainable results. It is to give reasonable power to women so as to enable her to enjoy self confidence and independence as equal partner with men. Empowerment of women is not only a system of allowing women to be aware of their

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3. Harendra Sinha, Zorema. J, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p. xi

rights but also a means to discharge her responsibility confidently in the existing male dominated society. It also means equal rights over material assets, ideology and intellectual resources. Women need to be empowered to bring about gender equality to the next level in decision making at domestic and in public life. Empowerment of women means overcoming the complexity of existing male dominated area of functions in various fields and assuring them to make use of their potentialities.

According to Gafar T. Ijaiya, empowerment has different dimensions. “In the context of economic empowerment, a woman is said to be economically empowered when she gains access to finance, abilities to make decisions regarding the utilization of money and credit, etc. In the political dimensions, the means of achieving political empowerment are political awareness, participation in political activity, membership in political parties and positions of power. In the socio-cultural dimension empowerment could be achieved through mingling with others, access to various organisations, social involvement, participation in cultural activities, seminars and different kinds of competitions. In the personal and familial aspects women are personally empowered when she has power to increase her own self reliance, improvement in health, knowledge and self esteem. With respect to familial aspect, empowerment implies improvement in family relationship, educating children and improvement in the basic amenities and facilities.”<sup>4</sup> The word ‘empowerment’ has its relevance because there are some people who are yet to be empowered in the society. Women folks felt marginalized due to want of power and authority in the socio-political structure. These

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4. Gafar, T. Ijaiya, *Women's Health Care Burdens and Ill-Beings in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence of Cross Country Analysis*, Indian Journal of Social Development, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2005, pp. 267-279. in P. Arunachalam, (ed.), *Economic Impact of Political Empowerment of Women in India*, Global Research Publication, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 286 – 287

irregularities of power and authority deficit can be straightened only when women are empowered at par with men in the light of policy and decision making.

Empowerment also refers to avoidance of crimes and atrocities towards women, improvement in education and health care system. One of the most important functions of empowerment is to protect the rights of women, fight against discrimination and exploitation, imparting knowledge, skills and confidence as partners in the development activities. Women empowerment and gender equality is globally recognised element to achieve progress in all aspects of life.

Empowerment can help gain opportunity and self confidence enabling women to have access to information, share ideas and taking responsibility in making decision and taking risks at the same time. Empowerment of women can be attained through the process of enhancing the capacity of individual and groups thereby ensuring them to forge ahead with their innovative ideas. Empowerment of women means to prepare them to be more aware as individuals so that they can emerge as economically productive and socio-politically well informed. Empowerment of women can help the individuals to be more aware of their rights in socio-economic and political arena; this is how power sharing can be brought about for better understanding and developments in the society. This is a way forward to address the complexity of gender issues pertaining to sharing of equal opportunity in domestic and social life. Around the world, community and home are not secure place for women. Due to poverty and exclusion, some women are pushed to involve in flesh trade, almost always the last choice for survival, and systematic rape which has left many girls and women impregnated and traumatized forcibly, making them vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STD) including HIV/AIDS thereby endangering their lives.

Of all aspects of empowerment with importance, political empowerment is considered as the most essential dimension. The political empowerment is meant for participating in political decision-making process. Bilal Ahmed rightly narrates that “the political empowerment for women is regarded as the key driver for their economic and social empowerment. Their enhanced participation in governance structures is viewed as the key to redress the gender inequalities in societies.”<sup>5</sup> Mahatma Gandhi said, “Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he ... By sheer force of vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have”.<sup>6</sup>

According to S.N. Shankar Rao, “women cannot be empowered in a magical manner. It is not an automatic or a spontaneous process but requires deliberate and consistent efforts. It is through the combined and co-ordinated effort of the government, people and the women, the task can be fulfilled. Women cannot be effectively empowered by statutory provisions or governmental effort alone. Women are empowered through women emancipation movement, education, communication, media, political parties and general awakening.”<sup>7</sup> The main idea of empowerment is the act of empowering women, that is, to allow them to perform with authority and dignity

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5. Bilal Ahmed, *Political Empowerment of Women in Mizoram: Barriers and strategies* in Harendra Sinha and J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India Socio-Economic Perspectives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012. pp. 221-222

6. Gandhiji, *Young India*, 1918 quoted in Rashmi Agarwal and B.V.L.N.Rao, *Gender Issues; a Road Map to Empowerment*, New Delhi, Shippra Publication, 2004, p.xii in K. Zohra, *Barriers to women's Empowerment in the Mizo Society*, cited in Harendra Sinha and J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India Socio-Economic Perspective*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012. p.229

7. S.N. Shankar Rao, *Sociology Principles of Sociology with An Introduction to Social Thought*, S. Chand and Company Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint, 2006, p. 844, in K. Zohra, *Barriers to Women's Empowerment in the Mizo Society* cited in Harendra Sinha and J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India Socio-Economic Perspectives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, pp.229-230

without any gender preferences. The empowerment is not necessarily meant for domestic affairs but, matters relating to socio-economic and in decision making bodies as well. Real empowerment also indicates delineation from the chains of human restrictions in order to repose the confidence of the individual so as to enhance the management of personal life and to upgrade the self image. Empowerment in this context means over all aspects of women's life which will improve the living and over all condition of being a woman.

As Kamla Bhasin rightly comments, "women in the past, and even today, were not given enough freedom to act according to their choice and capacity. Their participation was primarily confined within the private sphere of the home and the family. History, on the other hand, has largely remained a record of public events and personae to the exclusion of the private sphere of the home and the family. It is often argued that history is 'HIS STORY'; without her 'HER STORY'."<sup>8</sup> Empowerment of women appears to be one of the most important issues of the political leaders and the policy makers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through various platforms. But, the reality of its application still remains a distant dream. In any decision-making body, it is felt that equal representative of women can be the way forward to function at par with men.

Rantu Gohain (2008) quoted Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "to awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves". Empowerment is a process of creating awareness and capacity building leading to self confidence and playing greater role at home and

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8. Kamla Bhasin, *Understanding Gender*, Delhi, 2000 quoted in Debasish Paul, *Religion and Political Empowerment: A Study on the Impact of Christianity on the Empowerment of the Tribal Women of Mizoram* in Harendra Sinha and J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India Socio-Economic Perspectives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012. p.101

beyond in the larger interest of the society.”<sup>9</sup>

To Manoranjan Pal et. al (2008), “empowerment of women is a process where women can gain access, have space and scope to examine and extricate their lives and gender relations critically and collectively. This is a collective effort as individual endeavour is not often likely to meet with success. Moreover, the term women’s empowerment has come to be associated with women’s struggle for social justice and equality. The year 2001 was declared as the Year of International Women’s Empowerment by United Nations. Simultaneously, the Government of India has also recognised the same year as Women’s Empowerment Year.”<sup>10</sup> Empowerment in brief is a way of defining personal life, challenging and overcoming the obstacles and enabling the individual to increase and enhance the ability to build positive outlook, confidence and values of life in the environment in which she lives. Empowering also means to uplift the general status of women and society as well.

A. Henia (2008) states that “gender equality and empowerment to women is recognised globally as an element to achieve progress in all areas. The charter of the United Nations signed in 1945 is the first international agreement that proclaimed gender equality was fundamental right.”<sup>11</sup> Empowerment of women means enabling them to make best use of their potentialities and bring about positive changes in the society as equal partners of men. Therefore, the concept of women empowerment may

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9. Rantu Gohain, *Academic qualification of Mothers and Its Influence on Empowering their girl Child* in L.S. Gassah, (ed.), *Women Empowerment Movement in North East India*, Omsons Publications, 2008, New delhi, p.140

10. Manoranjan Pal ‘et al’, *Women in Decision Making* in L.S. Gassah (ed.), *Women Empowerment Movement in North East India* Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 2008. p. 200

11. A. Henia, *Education and Women’s Empowerment* in L.S. Gassah, (ed.), *Women Empowerment movement in North East India*, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 2008. p.82

be emphasised as the development of talent, potentialities as well as helping them in generating self confidence.

According to Nishikant Jha (2008), “generally speaking, empowerment refers to a greater access to power for the underprivileged or vulnerable segments of the populations. To empower is to give somebody the power or authority to do something. The concept of empowerment received momentum after the Bangladesh experiments of the 1980s led by Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen (village) Bank, and it got worldwide acclamation. Following the example, various countries including India, introduced empowerment models as a strategy for women’s empowerment. As a result of this, various micro-level or grass roots level women-led organisations were formed which include Self-Help Groups, micro-credit, kudumbasree (a special programme in Kerala which received global attention) and activities of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). All these programmes are structurally and organisationally different, but have the dual and common focus of poverty reduction and empowerment of women.”<sup>12</sup> Women Empowerment aims to achieve a broader scope and perspective. Empowerment can bring economic viability and independence, social transformation and political participation which can have a tremendous impact in the society, and fight against social injustice.

## **1.2 Concept of Women Empowerment:**

Different scholars hold different definitions of empowerment according to the need of their work. There are a variety of understandings of the term ‘empowerment’ due to its widespread usage. Many researchers agree that element of empowerment

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12. Nishikant Jha, *New Dimensions of Women Empowerment* in Ajit Kumar Sinha, (ed.), Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2008. p.56

involves control and choice in the context of power structures which exist in the family, community, nations and beyond. In the case of empowerment of women, power structures are often referred to 'patriarchal system' that subordinate women.

“According to Business Dictionary, empowerment is defined as ‘a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can make initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance.’”<sup>13</sup> The concept of women empowerment is to help them fight against insecure position, inferiority complex and to create self confidence. Empowerment also means economic independence and enabling them to have control over the resources at par with men. Empowerment can be complete only when women are equipped with knowledge leading to a dignified life.

Empowerment is about removal of social roles based on the gender of the person or personal identification of one's own sex. Women empowerment is a compelling challenge to make a difference in the society once unbalanced or discriminatory practice of existing social structure is done away with. In the light of the aforementioned statement, it may be understood that 'women's right is a human right' and therefore, women in the society deserve the empowerment which will elevate self esteem, knowledge, awareness and greater responsibility to participate at both domestic level and public domain.

Empowerment is the “expansion of the assets and capabilities of individuals to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.”<sup>14</sup> Bali-Swain states that in the feminist paradigm empowerment goes

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13. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/empowerment.html>

14. World Development Report, “*Building Institutions for Markets*”, 1, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002.

beyond economic betterment and well-being to strategic gender interests.<sup>15</sup>

The term empowerment is widely used in relation to women for the purpose of women's welfare, upliftment, development, awareness and reservation. The term 'empowerment' also may be referred to as bringing development of the socio-economic and political status amongst women. According to Collins Dictionary the term empowerment is defined as 'to give ability to,' 'to enable.'<sup>16</sup> Empowerment according to the Oxford Learner's Advanced Dictionary, is 'to give power or authority to do something'.<sup>17</sup> The Macmillan Dictionary definition of empowerment is 'to give some one more control over their life or power to do something'.<sup>18</sup> Bennett (2002) defines empowerment as the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and group to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affects them.<sup>19</sup>

To M.P. Boraian (2008), empowerment means "acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercising choice and fulfil their potential as full and equal members of the society."<sup>20</sup>

The concept of empowerment is basically a transition from enforced powerless position to a better status. Empowering women does not mean men have to give women more power to dominate, abuse, exploit or to have a sense of superiority over men, but to forge ahead as equal partner and share equal responsibility. Women's empowerment

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15. Bali-Swain R, *Microfinance and Women's Empowerment. SIDA working Paper*. Stockholm: Division of Market Development, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2006, in Gunindra Nath Sarmah, *Women Empowerment and Microfinance* cited in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli, (ed.), *women Empowerment in North-East India*, EPH Publishers, Guwahati-1, p.83

16. <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/empower>

17. *The Oxford Learner's Advanced Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, p.498 (New 8<sup>th</sup> Edition)

18. <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/empower>

19. Lynn Bennett, 'Using Empowerment and Social Inclusion for Pro-Poor Growth: A Theory of Social Change', *Working Draft of Background Paper* for the Social Development Strategy Paper. World Bank Washington DC, 2002 in Debajit Chakraborty, *Empowerment of Women: A Note on Concept, Measurement and Issues Involved* cited in Kiran Sankar Chakraborty, (ed.), *Empowerment and Status of Women in Tripura*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2008, p.3

20. M.P. Boraian, *Empowerment of Rural Women-The Deterrent and Determinants*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2008, p.21

deserves to have their valued contribution recognized in the society. Empowering also means gaining self-confidence, ability to contribute creatively and to participate in all developmental activities thereby attaining greater heights with regard to living standards of community people. When we examine the definition of women empowerment in broader sense, it is obvious that women hold a very limited role in controlling over resources. Therefore, empowerment is not only in respect of political and social position, but also economic perspective as well.

For similar reasons the governmental agencies have also picked up this term to establish that programmes such as the National Literacy Mission or the Women's Development Schemes or the Panchayati Raj aimed at 'empowering' the people, especially women, poor peasants etc. In fact several models of empowerment are being popularized, for instance, the "UN Summit on Social Development India Country Paper", which has a section on 'Empowering the people-models of mobilization'. It discusses about the poor being empowered to be able to help themselves and breaking cultural, socio-economic and psychological barriers, and to convert them from being "passive recipients of government programmes" to that of "active participants and managers of their own affairs". <sup>21</sup>

Empowerment is the vital issue to solve many restrictions faced by women in the society due to disproportionate power sharing in the male dominated social structure. Empowerment is to give liberty to individuals or groups of women and enabling them to take control of challenges and achieve their goals, and subsequently leading to maximizing the horizon in the area of socio-economic freedom and political participation. Empowerment may also be translated as 'becoming powerful', allowing

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21. "UN Summit on Social Development India Country Paper", Government of India, New Delhi, 1994, Chapter 9, section 3, para 11, p.57.

them to develop self-confidence and self-reliance. Empowerment of women in other words is 'transference / delegation of power or authority' thereby allowing them to involve equally in all spheres of life.

Therefore, the term 'empowerment' is more relevant to the underprivileged groups, the poor, the uneducated, indigenous communities and of course, cutting across these categories of women in both urban and rural areas. The intention of empowerment of women is relatively new especially in the areas pertaining to sharing of opportunities both in the domestic front and beyond. This is a process to make a difference from the existing power sharing and elevate the living standard of the poor and marginalized women. It is a long-term process essentially requiring awareness, changes in attitude and behaviour of not only women, but also men and the society in general so as to make women empowerment a reality. Empowerment of women in general and poor women in particular, is the key issue for all round development in the individuals' lives and in the society.

Since it is difficult to measure empowerment, it should be understood through indicator which encompasses personal, economic, socio-political aspects. Empowerment is described as a process by which powerless people become conscious of their own situation and gain greater access to benefits. Batliwala (1994) says, 'Empowerment is a combination of different courses of action to be taken by individuals or groups'. It is viewed in terms of how much influence individuals or groups possess or can exert over actions taken by external forces in the matter of welfare of such individuals or groups.<sup>22</sup> Empowerment is a basic need of everyone

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22. Srilatha, Batliwala, 'The Meaning of Women's Empowerment: New Concepts from Action'. G. Sen, A. Germain and L.C. Chen (eds.), in *Population Policies Reconsidered: Health, Empowerment and Rights*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1994, in Debajit Chakraborty, *Empowerment of Women: A Note on Concept, Measurement and Issues Involved* cited in Kiran Sankar Chakraborty, (ed.), *Empowerment and Status of Women in Tripura*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2008, p.3

which is a pre-requisite condition of human rights, and letting the individuals gain confidence to express their opinion, access to information and venturing to new ideas. To make empowerment a reality, capacity building training, networking, developing positive role models and hand-holding support should be ensured.

“A common characteristic uniting the major international conference of the 1990s is empowerment of women. Furthermore, the international community is now responsible for fulfilling the commitments in making empowerment a reality in women’s lives. According to the United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN), empowerment of women has five components: -

1. Women’s sense of self-respect,
2. Their right to determine and have choices
3. Their right to have accessibility to resources and opportunities,
4. Their right to have the power over their own lives, within and outside their homes.
5. Their ability to influence another in the right direction for social change and to create a more just society and economic orders, nationally and internationally.”<sup>23</sup>

According to Kabeer, “empowerment is a process by which those who have been denied the opportunity to make choices acquire such ability. The elements required in enabling one to gain power, authority and influence over others, institutions or society may be mentioned accordingly:

1. Decision making power of one’s own.
2. Access to information and resources for taking proper decision.
3. Availability of range of options, from which choices can be made.
4. Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making.

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23. <http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.ht>

5. Positive thinking and the ability to make a change.
6. The ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
7. Ability to change others perceptions by democratic means.
8. Involvement in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated.
9. Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma.
10. Increasing one's ability in discreet thinking to sort out right and wrong.”<sup>24</sup>

The concept of empowerment is to bring about changes in the balance of power aiming at the nature and direction of forces which marginalize women in a given situation. The expected outcome of empowerment is to review the existing system thereby bringing about structural and functional changes in the society. Empowerment means breaking free from the bondage of inferiority and to recognize her inner strength, knowledge, intelligence and to have the dignity by realising that the women must uphold the right and claim what is due to her. The whole idea of empowerment is to challenge the domination by men in the society, and transform the age-old practice which is noticeably depriving the intellectuality and capability of women.

The difficulty in finding a specific definition of empowerment is that the concept of empowerment is changeable. It varies depending on the researchers and the situation. While several researchers have tried to connote the meaning of empowerment, the researcher attempts to study women empowerment in the context of Sümi society.

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24. Kabeer, Naila, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal*, *Gender and Development*, Vol. 13, No.13, No. 1, Millennium Development Goals, 2005, pp.13-24, cited in Sujit Kumar Sonowal, *Political Empowerment and Rural Women in Assam: With special reference to Grassroots Politics in Dibrugarh District*, 2014, p.17

### 1.3 Statement of Problem:

In recent times, the study on the empowerment of women has become a major issue in the society. Although sociological survey and research covers a broad range of topics on empowerment of women, yet the extent of sex based discrimination against women has not been explored in great detail in Sümi context. The Naga society practising the patrilineal system, follow the usages and attitude of patriarchy which affects the status of Sümi women. Institution and traditional system are inspired by the belief in male dominance in the society.

As mentioned by Toshimenla Jamir (2012), women in Naga society have made great strides in almost every field; their traditional role in the formal arena of governance has however, remained largely unchanged. Despite the differences in lifestyle of the Nagas sharing a common heritage of customary law that encompasses the critical areas of inheritance and the system of governance which continues to determine the roles of men and women at all levels. In spite of manifold changes taking place in Naga society particularly due to the influences of Christianity, western education and the process of globalization at large, the patriarchal ethos and principles of the Nagas are still firmly rooted and strictly adhered to.<sup>25</sup>

In Nagaland women are visible in-service sector such as universities, colleges, schools, offices, cottage industries, business shops and agriculture, etc. Out of 19 lakhs population in the state almost 50 per cent of the population are women. It is observed that external performances of women are visible everywhere but economically, socially, politically and culturally women do not enjoy equal status, so there is a need to take step to empower. The outward appearance of women is visible but the truth is different.

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25. Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland, Challenges and Imperatives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p.31.

To develop positive attitudes towards women, there is an urgent need to alter the ways of thinking, acting and behaviour of men towards women. A change has to be brought about in the mindset and psyche of present and future parents, teachers, community leaders, politicians, etc. towards the girl child and women. The half hearted implementation of constitutional provisions will not lead to empowerment of women who are supposed to be playing a pivotal role. Entries into the grassroot bodies and the visibility, equality and justice are still a far cry in Nagaland. The traditions, customs, practices, rituals, dogmas, beliefs, ideologies, social structures and institutions which are oppressive to women and snatch away their freedom and rights should be outrightly opposed. Hence, the researcher proposes to study the above mentioned problem which confronts the Sümi women in Nagaland.

#### **1.4 Review of Literature:**

This section deals with some of the existing literature and its relevance in the following books and articles in journals for review of the present research work. Although a few researchers have done some works on women empowerment in Nagaland, sufficient research works on empowerment of Sümi women are still scanty. Therefore, this study is a modest attempt to fill this gap. Some of the works of different writers have been studied as mentioned below.

M.R. Biju (2006: 215) states that there is nothing new in the use of the term empowerment, but what we can see as a new development is its increasing coming out in public, having been shifted and re-shaped from women's welfare to women's empowerment. Equal participation of women in decision making is not only a demand for simple justice and democratic form of functioning, but it can also be seen as a

necessary criterion through which women's interest is taken into account. It urges government commitment to gender balance in all areas of life.

G. Sreeramulu (2008: 101) narrates that the Government of Andhra Pradesh passed a Cooperative Act called Mutually Aided Co-operative Societies Act (MACS, Act 1995). The concern of the Act is to help women engage in income generating activities by forming groups into a federation of mutually aided co-operative thrift societies (MACTS), which will empower and generate income to the poor and downtrodden women. The objectives of MACTS are – providing credit without security to poor women; reducing interest at a lower rate; enhancing economic status and asset creation of women; avoiding the delay in long loan sanction procedure, and undertaking employment generation activities for women.

S.C. Joshi (2004: preface, viii) states that a kind of awakening started in the west decades ago though it was aggressive in nature, regarding 'feminism' which gradually spread all over the world in one form or the other. In true spirit of the term "Women Empowerment", women's emancipation can be visibly achieved when enough opportunities are given for employment at all levels. It is also believed that economically sound women can have a final say in decision making.

K. Kalito Chishi (2019:74-75) discusses handicrafts and economic empowerment of Sümi Naga women of Nagaland, the art of yarning cotton and making different kinds of cloths according to the status of the persons. She also mentions about 24 different types of shawls and mekhehas of Sümi women. Weaving and selling of finished products is one of the important sources for generating income in the family in particular and society in general thereby leading to economic empowerment.

V. Mohini Giri (1998:174) affirms that during the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in encouraging and bringing hundreds of thousands of women

out of their homes to participate. He believed that both men and women were complimentary to each other as both are equal in the eye of law. Apart from working for their emancipation, he asserted that since women are not inferior to men their involvement to free the nation from the clutches of foreign rule was strongly felt.

Haridoss and J. Fredrick, (2009:1&7) observe that in India entrepreneurship is a men's world. But it is noticeable that women have inherent qualities of dedication and managerial skill in the entrepreneurship lines. To ensure that the skill and talent acquired by them do not go waste, self employment schemes and organizations urges the women to step into the field of entrepreneurship. The Government has, therefore, come out with schemes and programmes for promoting women entrepreneurial knowledge and to empower them in the economic front.

Shweta Prasad (2011: 100) explains that the failure of the trickledown effect of the macro-economic policies in resolving the gender inequality needs expanding of networking support services to freed the women from the bondages that bind them. The barriers that women face in different sectors of education, health, employment etc. need removal while provision for additional channels to train them, help in availing the credit and managerial skills is required for ensuring social security and empowerment.

According to Shamim Asmat and Chanda Devi (2012: preface, xi), women empowerment is an important issue in our society and polity; the constitution enshrines equality of opportunities, equal pay for equal work, no discrimination by the state etc. and hence reveals that women now participate in activities such as, education, politics, media, art and culture, service sector, science, technology and sports etc. But empowerment of women should imply the power to participate in the decision- making in all areas and providing the space of political participation which is a necessary agenda to cut through the intact of patriarchal system to redefine women empowerment.

G. Palanithurai (2012: 111-113) narrates that a giant leap was achieved on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010 as a Bill of 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in both parliament and State Legislative Assemblies was introduced in Rajya Sabha. It was a great move after the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act which enabled women to contest in the Panchayati Raj system. Some of the indicators mentioned are: a positive self image and confidence, equal participation, think critically and creatively, courage to garner decision making etc. The components of empowerment such as psychological, cognitive, economic and political must surface and be implemented so as to encourage women to come out of the shackle of traditional bondage.

Kasim Ali Ahmed (2010: 71) observes that women constitute 48 per cent of population in India; where in 72 per cent reside in rural areas. These women living in the rural areas lack adequate knowledge in respect of capital assets, techniques and the impact of modernization is still new to them. It must be understood that the women in rural areas have deep reservoir of untapped potentials, once they are empowered the society can be stepped up to greater heights socially, economically and culturally too.

V. Geeta (2006: 136-137) states that subjectivity of women which we tried to grapple continuously of their existence in the patriarchal society brings to the realization that, whether women are collaborators of patriarchal system or victims of such dominations, with the marks of subordination and the veil of inferiority worn with pride by women. The unequal return though unfortunately is a world which the women have helped to make. The book enables us to evaluate and interpret the choices we make as men and women.

Talwar Sabanna (2007: 2) emphasizes that the sex status of women did not emerge on its own but by weakening the culture, economic and political institution for the convenience of another. In this process the women became the first victim, she not

only unwittingly deprives her status but also psychologically accepts a subordinate role. The engagement of women outside their home in manual labour varies according to their position in society; women belonging to the higher socio-economic sections of the society are restricted from manual labour outside their homes.

Kumkum Roy (1999: 1) says that it is important to remember that by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the women's suffrage movement provided both visible and vocal contestation of the divide between history and the 'women question' as women were claiming access to political rights. Thus, space for investigating women's history was opened up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For Shobana Nelasco (2010: 2), empowerment of women is particularly to bring a change from unjust traditional practices to a just society. The reference of empowerment is to bring about questioning and restructuring social, economic and political discrepancies in the society. The empowerment of women is particularly to address women's struggle for social justice and equality without any bias. Empowerment of women is to encourage the element which deals to bring about the acceptable practicability where the subordination of women is replaced by gender equality, and the attitude towards women is changed psychologically to enhance and to boost the morale of women thereby to upgrade their involvement in socio-economic arena and political life with confidence.

Mini Thakur (2010: 1) states that constitution provides sufficient avenues for the development and empowerment of women economically, socially and in the field of political life as well. The provision in the constitution of India for women empowerment is meant to create enough space to accommodate 48.9 per cent women population in India. The government and non-governmental agencies are working for the development of women but, practically a wide gap is still prevalent between the stated

objective and achievement. The national and state averages indicated significant improvement in literacy and political participation of women, but women empowerment/gender equality in its actuality is still questionable. The trend shows the success achieved by a very small group of women, whereas the scenario of majority is still unsatisfactory. During India's freedom movement, women played a significant role under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi believes that women have a positive role to bring changes in the society and that the recognition of their equality is an important step to bring about social justice. According to the observation, women's participation in different political organisations in the post independence is still not more than 10 per cent. Women should not be seen as an 'outside the model', but they should be considered as an integral part of development by properly tapping their potentials and capabilities.

Moamenla Amer (2012: 108-110), talks about low participatory norm among women and having moderate level of political awareness. The women NGOs should organise advocacy campaigns to promote participation of women in politics and women should overcome the psychology of subordination in politics, and develop favourable attitude towards politics.

Madhumati Chakraborty (2010: 110) acknowledges that a number of positive changes have been achieved by Indian women. To benefit women in India, the Amendment of the Hindu succession Act and the Bill against domestic violence were enacted by the Government of India. The major breakthrough to empower women politically was initiated during the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1989). With the introduction of 33 per cent reservation of seats in the Panchayati Raj system a good number of women were elected at the grassroot level. But, the real power was controlled by men and women remained a mere rubber stamp. An important enactment

of legislation by Rajiv Gandhi was lowering the voting age to 18 years for both male and female.

S. Sharan (1995: 1-2) states that feminist emphasized the related idea of getting accessibility and control over material resources. She laments that, it was the women who were more affected by the duality in society, and ultimately compelling them to become unequal partners in every sphere of life in male dominated world by circumstances. Feminists today, embraced the term 'partnership' among men and women, and conjured up image of equal role and participation in education, socio-economic, cultural and in political institutions. Biologically, men and women could be different, but together they can play a better role as equal partners in all spheres of social life.

Amalesh Banerjee (2008: 26) describes the inferior status of women in political matters. Women are not encouraged to participate in the village council, public meetings and they are not well represented. To establish equality for women and protecting human rights the intervention of the citizen becomes necessary.

D. Narayan's (2005:4) collection correctly states that in 2003 the proceedings of International workshop of interdiscipline on empowerment and its measurement by the World Banks Reduction of Poverty and Economic Measurement Network contain the work of important scholars. The research experiences the different levels from family, society and in different parts of the globe. Measuring empowerment is an important approach to reduce poverty which addresses the issue that is inequitable.

T.P. Bhatnagar (2011:15) discusses about women empowerment in the light of employment and their engagement. The author tries to reveal the inter-related relationship, the empowerment and the works of women. The interaction between performance of work by women and indicator of empowerment was holistically

explored. Due importance is attributed to the programmes and policies of the government for the empowerment of women and their works.

H.D. Dwarakanath (2006:141-143) discusses about the women's participation and empowerment under the Self Help Groups in Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh. The implementation of schemes such as Development of Women and Children in rural Areas (DWCRA) encourages many self help groups to involve actively in promoting economic empowerment and employment avenues. Z. Banu, (2011: 3), the study here is confined to tribal women with special reference to 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act. The deep-rooted problem of gender which envelops the society must be earnestly examined in all walks of life. The book deals with the problem of different categories in terms of gender relations.

R.P. Joshi and G.S.Narwani (2003:42) delve into the philosophy of Panchayati Raj on the one hand and the development and growth of Panchayati Raj on the other. A great deal of work with the issue of 33 per cent reservation is discussed in their book.

According to M.Modi (2003:120), the evolution of the Kebang of Adis and the socio- cultural details are discussed here. The problem of due share under 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment for the scheduled castes is described. It also mentions about the rectification of Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1997 and its implementation.

Despite the available literature in the field, so far, there has not been any study done on the Sümi by any scholar, hence the researcher embarks upon studying and examining the problem by identifying the gaps and taking appropriate measure.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study:**

1. To examine the factors that generally influence the political awareness and involvement of women in the political process in Nagaland.

2. To examine and investigate the constraints of political status of women in Nagaland.
3. To analyse the social, cultural, economic and political empowerment of women in Nagaland and Sümi women in particular;
4. To suggest measures to improve the political status of women in Nagaland.

#### **1.6 Hypotheses of the Study:**

1. Reservation of seat will improve the political status of women in Nagaland.
2. Rigidity of customary law is the main obstacle for women empowerment in Nagaland.

#### **1.7 Relevance of the Study:**

As more evidence of links is seen between gender equality, economic growth and sustainable development, the interest in investigating women's empowerment has grown. No in-depth study on the issue has been undertaken in the context of Sümi women. The relevance of the research is manifold. The fact that there is a paucity of research relating to Sümi women makes this research a worthwhile enterprise and specifically contribute to new knowledge by addressing the significant gap in the knowledge and experiences of Sümi Naga women. The study may find further significance and readership in helping people, policy makers and researchers. The findings may be used as an instrument through which others can have the opportunity to reconsider the role of women in the broader society and examine its future working with women. It is anticipated that the research will contribute to the creation of relevant and effective points for intervention targeting change for Sümi Naga women, their families and their communities and understand the process that facilitate empowerment of women from micro to macro level.

1. The study will provide information about the political status of Sümi women in Nagaland;
2. Whether the women enjoy high or low status, measures to be taken to improve challenges, constraints, bottleneck so that decision makers or policy makers can take appropriate steps to improve the political status of Sümi women.

There is a need for an in-depth research into the status of Sümi women in Nagaland. It should throw light not only on the unequal participation of women but also provide insight into the basic issues and problems attached to the emergence of women's rightful position in the contemporary society. Such an exploration should also provide an understanding of the nature and characteristics of the ongoing changes in the status of women.

### **1.8 Universe of the Study:**

Naga women who are 18 years and above were identified for the purpose of research work. The universe of the study covers urban areas such as Zünheboto town, Akuluto town and Pughoboto town. Under each urban station two rural areas were identified: they are Lizümi village and Asükhomi village, Phishumi village and Lumami village, Chishilimi and Lazami village respectively. The sample size includes 180 respondents which enabled the researcher to add to a degree of process into the random selection of subjects. The study also examines the responses of men and women from different walks of life through interview, direct observation and participation by the researcher. Zünheboto District has 1,255 areas in sq. km with a 112 density of population per. Sq. km. It has a total population of 141,014, comprising 113,409 rural population and 27,605 urban populations. Rural population consists of 56,762 males and

56, 647 females further urban population consists of 14,407 males and 13,198 females. The sex-ratio of female per 1000 male is 981 with the literacy rate at 87.85 per cent male and 82.62 per cent female respectively as per 2011 census.

Zünheboto District is bordered by Mokokchung district in the North, Tuensang district and Kiphire district in the East, Phek district and Kohima district in the South and the Wokha district and Tseminyu subdivision to the West. In fact, the Sümi tribe is largely scattered in different places within and outside Nagaland and can be found in Zünheboto, Kiphire, Mokokchung, Wokha and Dimapur Districts and some villages are located in the state of Assam

### **1.9 Sampling and Study Area:**

The study covers almost the entire state of Nagaland but special emphasis is focussed in Zünheboto District. The District comprises seven constituencies but intensive study is delimited to three constituencies of Zünheboto District and sample is drawn randomly from the urban and the rural areas such as Akuluto, Zünheboto and Pughoboto to generate the target sample for the study.

### **1.10 Methodology and Data Collection:**

The study adopted both primary and secondary methods which helped to identify relevant dimensions of women's empowerment. The qualitative data are collected from the field through field survey, observation and questionnaires. The interview enabled the researcher for a fuller understanding of the interviewees' perspective on the investigated topic. The secondary sources were derived from relevant books, journals, articles, Census, Statistical Handbooks, Government records, News papers, website, published and unpublished works.

### **1.11 Data Analysis:**

Quantitative data from survey is analyzed using simple calculation. Descriptive statistics such as percentage were calculated to characterise the surveyed population. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews is transcribed, translated into English wherever needed and analyzed.

### **1.12 Chapterisation:**

The thesis is presented in six chapters.

**Chapter 1:** - Introduction: - This includes an introduction of the study, conceptual framework as well as the significance of the study.

Review of literature: – Details on extensive review of books, journals and articles related to the study is incorporated in this chapter.

**Chapter 2:** - Women empowerment: Historical background, Global, National and Regional perspectives.

**Chapter 3:** - Determinants of women empowerment: Social, economic, and cultural aspect in Nagaland.

**Chapter 4:-** Women empowerment in perspective of Sümi women.

**Chapter 5:-** Women empowerment: This chapter analyses political empowerment of women in the context of electoral process. It also includes the challenges, constraints and measures.

**Chapter 6:** - Summary and Findings.

# **C H A P T E R - 2**

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL  
AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

## CHAPTER - 2

### Historical Background of Women Empowerment in India

#### 2.1 Women in Ancient India:

Women in ancient India enjoyed equal status in all areas of life which can be defined as a period of feminine glory. Nirmala Jeyaraj (ed.), (2005): states that during the Vedic period women enjoyed the same status as men, they were educated, had property rights and received gifts at the time of marriage. In this era women had the right to select their life partners. During this time there were two types of women: the 'Sadyodavadinis'- those who would get married and take care of homes, and 'Brahmavadinis'- those who would pursue studies and remained unmarried. The former category gets married and takes care of home and children but the later remains unmarried and they were entitled to have the 'Upanayanam' (the ceremony of wearing the sacred thread), they also utter mantras. But in the later part of the Vedic period, many women preferred 'Sadyodavadinis' and to get married. In course of time, the concept of 'Dampati' (couple) replaced the idea of the lord of the house, this also enhances the participation of a wife in all the rituals.<sup>26</sup> There were some kingdoms in ancient India such as 'Nagar vadhu' (bride of the city) where women competed to win this coveted title of Nagar vadhu. This also signifies the equality of both husband and wife, women enjoyed liberty, freedom and rights and were empowered during the Vedic period.

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26. Nirmala Jeyaraj (ed.), *Women and Society*, Cambridge Press Delhi, 2005, pp. 284-285.

## **2.2 Women in Medieval India:**

The status of women in the post-Vedic period suffered a setback. Education which had been an accepted norm for women was neglected, and later on girls were totally denied access to education. During the third century BC the foreign invasion made the Hindu society prefer the masculine management. Pulak Chandra Devnath (2012) correctly pointed out that the practice of Sati (burning of widow), the ban on widow remarriage and child marriage practice became part of social life in India. It was during this period the practice of Purdah system also came into existence with the conquest of the Muslims. A daughter was dowried and married; therefore, she did not have the right to inheritance from her father. All financial control was curbed. In other term, a man could easily become a 'Sanyasin'-hermit, but not a woman. All the mentioned factors contributed to the suppression of women in the medieval age. In spite of all these hurdles some women were exceptional in the field of literature, education, religion and politics. It may be mentioned that the only woman to who have ever ruled in Delhi, the seat of power, was Razia Sultana. Mirabai, a female saint-poet, was one of the important figures during the Bhakti movement.<sup>27</sup> In the Southern part of India, the villages and towns were administered by women, which also signifies changes in social and religious institutions.

## **2.3 Women in British India:**

Dr. Shobana Nelasco (2010) discusses that the movement for civil liberties and human rights in modern India is said to have gained momentum in India at the time of British rule. During the British period, a reformer like Raja Ram Mohan Roy can be

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27. Pulak Chandra Devnath, *Women in India: A Historical Perspective* in Harendra Sinha & J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in Northeast India Socio-Economic Perspectives*, Concept Publishing Company, Delhi, 2012, pp 20-21.

considered as the father of modern India. Roy made a notable contribution in abolition of Sati under the Governor-General Lord William Bentinck in 1829 that declared practice of Sati illegal and punishable. It was due to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's moral crusade and initiative that the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was passed for improving the condition of the widows. Women reformers such as Pandita Ramabai also involved actively in the cause of upliftment of women. In 1857 the Queen of Jhansi, Rani Lakshmi Bai, led the Indian rebellion against the British. Some of the early prominent Indian women who obtained educational degrees and qualifications are Chandramukhi Basu, Kadambini Ganguli and Anandi Gopal Joshi.

Women have played an important role in the struggle for independence from British colonial rule; some of the famous freedom fighters include Annie Besant, Bhikaji Cama, Kasturba Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, an eminent poet and freedom fighter who later became the first woman in India to become the Governor of a state. In 1917, supported by the Indian National Congress, the first women's delegation met the Secretary of the state to demand political rights for women. In Pune, 1927, the All India Women's Education conference was held.<sup>28</sup> The bold and strong legacy has been inherited by women in modern India. Hence women in India have understood that unless they compel and pressurize the government, there is hardly any avenue to protect their policies and the law to guard their interest.

#### **2.4 Women's Status in Independent India:**

The post-independent India witnessed the improvement of women's status. Pulak Chandra Devnath (2012) further went on to say that women today participate in all activities such as education, politics, social, cultural and religious dimensions. The

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28. Dr. Shobana Nelasco, *Status of Women in India*, Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2012, pp.10-11.

Constitution of India guarantees equality to women in India (Article 14), no discrimination by the state (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunities (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition, a special provision to be made by the state in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women [(Article 51(A) (e)], it also allows provision to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42). The year 2001 was declared as the year of women empowerment by the Government of India. The national policy for empowerment of women 2001 focussed on the policy to bring advancement, development and empowerment of women. In 1990s, grants from foreign donor agencies enabled the formation of self-help group (SHG), NGOs and Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). Many women have emerged as leaders of local movements. For example, Medha Patkar of Narmada Bachao Andolan. On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010, a day after the International Women's Day, Rajya Sabha passed the Women's Reservation Bill to ensure 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislative Bodies.<sup>29</sup>

National Commission for Women was set up in 1992 which is a statutory body to monitor the constitutional and legal safeguards for women. Through the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1993 women were given 33 per cent reservation of seats in Panchayat, Municipality and local governments. The national plan of action for girl child 1991-2000 ensured protection, development and survival of the girl child and to build up a better future for the girl child. India had witnessed the longest serving women Prime Minister of the country in the person of Indira Gandhi. In spite of the

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29. Pulak Chandra Devnath, *Women in India: A Historical Perspective* in Harendra Sinha & J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in Northeast India Socio-Economic Perspectives*, Concept Publishing Company, Delhi, 2012, pp.23

legislations passed in favour of women, how far it has been effective in enhancing women's position in the male dominated society. It may be mentioned that women are still victimised on the grounds of customs, greed, tradition and religion. The exploitation and marginalization in decision making process need redefining in the male dominated sphere. Today we still come across women facing the fear of rejection which needs a total change in the social, psychological and political values to enhance the path for women to be an independent decision maker.

## **2.5 International:**

Coming to the global context with regard to women empowerment there are many reasons why women need to be empowered. In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, development organisations agreed that women's empowerment is necessary for important development outcomes: "the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economical and health status constitute an important end in themselves and one that is essential for achieving sustainable development".<sup>30</sup> Many prominent global agencies, including the United Nations and the World Bank, have incorporated women's empowerment and gender equity into programme policies and goals, citing women's empowerment as vital to poverty reduction and economic growth.<sup>31</sup> The UN adopted the Convention on Political Rights of Women (CPRW) in 1952. Since 1975, four women's International conferences have been held under its aegis such as Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. All the above conferences

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30. *Guidelines on Women's Empowerment* UNITED POPULATION INFORMATION NETWORK (POPIN) UN Population DIVISION, Department of Economic and Social affairs, with support from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

31. World Bank, *Engendering Development: Through gender equality in rights, resources, and voice*. World Bank Policy research Report. USA, Oxford University Press. Retrieved from [http://publications.worldbank.org/index.php?main\\_page=product-info & Products=21657](http://publications.worldbank.org/index.php?main_page=product-info&Products=21657), 2001.

have emphasized women's political empowerment as a key concern. Women's political participation came to the forefront of the global debate for women's right at the time of the Fourth World Conference on women's right held at Beijing in 1995.

This imperative was also acknowledged and accorded importance in the declaration of Affirmative Action by the UN Conference on Women (1995) in Beijing, where it decided that 30 percent of all positions in government owned concerns and agencies should be given to women. Other international instruments adopted in this regard include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1979, followed by conferences held on women in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and New York (2000). One theme ran through all these conferences, namely, the overall desire to improve the lot of women and address the problem of gender inequality and social injustice that most women are subjected to and the fact that all the segments of the population be included and represented in the power structure and indeed the governance process. The 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a remarkable change for the global agenda for gender equality. This Conference adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is considered the key policy on gender equality. The main objectives and actions for the women and its advancement focus on actions for the achievement of gender equality and 12 critical areas of concern such as:

1. Women and poverty
2. Education and training of women
3. Women and health
4. Violence against women
5. Women and armed conflict
6. Women and the economy

7. Women in power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women
9. Human rights of women
10. Women and the media
11. Women and the environment
12. The girl child.<sup>32</sup>

## **2.6 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):**

The next Millennium Development Goals was more specific and focussed for an attempt to diminish all sources of inequality between men and women in the society for making development process a sustainable and better one. The UN Millennium Declaration took shape with the consent of 147 government heads of 191 countries in the UN Millennium Summit held in September 2000. MDGs consist of eight goals which have been defined by 18 targets and 48 indicators with the aim to end global inequality by 2015. The goal also covers 12 Critical Areas of Concerns which is identified in the Beijing Declaration.

But according to experts, gender equality is not the only goal, but it is a vital element for achieving all the MDGs. Achieving MDGs without gender concern will make the effort unsustainable. The importance of gender equality may be explained considering its goals.

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32. <http://www.unwomen.org>, accessed on – 20/10/19, time 02:07 PM

### **Goal - 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:**

An investment towards women's health is required to eradicate poverty, reduce chronic hunger and malnourishment which increases productivity and wellbeing. Statistical evidence shows that women comprise a majority of the world's poor. Three out of four of the poorest billion people of the world are women.<sup>33</sup>

### **Goal - 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education:**

Providing education facilities would allow women to have greater control over their fertility and attainment of their health and nutrition outcomes. To achieve this goal, proper attention should be given towards the problem with regard to non-attendance of boys and girls at the primary schools. To reduce poverty, the most effective way is to improve gender equality.

### **Goal - 3: Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:**

Though women empowerment is not a sufficient condition yet it is still necessary to stabilize and have sustainability of the development process. A time bound target was set for achieving the goal. The target for achieving the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women, eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education was set at 2005 while for all other levels of education, 2015 was given the ultimatum time.<sup>34</sup>

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33. [www.worldmapper.org](http://www.worldmapper.org) quoted in Dalia Dey (2007), *Women Empowerment and the Third Millenium Development Goal*, in Dalia Dey and Asis Kumar Pain, (eds.), *Women Empowerment New Dimensions and Experiences*, Hyderabad, ICFAI, p.15

34. *Millenium Development Goals Indicators- The Official United Nations Site for the MDG indicators* in Dalia Dey, *Women Empowerment and the Third Millenium Development Goal* in Dalia Dey and Asis Kumar Pain, (eds.), *Women Empowerment New Dimensions and Experiences*, ICFAI University Press, Hyderabad, 2007, pp. 15-16

## **Goal - 4, 5, and 6: Reduce Child Mortality; Improve Maternal Health; Combat**

### **HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases:**

Reduction of maternal mortality rate (MMR) is possible only when health awareness is created in relation to pregnancy, essential health care services made accessible to all the expectant mothers that include regular ante natal checkups (ANC), immunisation, food supplements and administration of Iron Tablets etc. On the other hand, lowering of Child Mortality Rate (CMR) starts right from the time the child is conceived. The child mortality rate is also indirectly related to household income. Educating the community people in general as to how different types of diseases are transmitted and, how good socio-economic practices leads to improvement of health conditions which is the basic requirement for achieving health goal.

### **Goal - 7: Ensure environmental sustainability:**

Men and women act in different ways when it comes to the question of roles and responsibility towards environmental sustainability. Generally speaking, natural resources are essential not only for the existence of women, but also for the entire community as it is mostly handled by women. Bulk agricultural activities, handling of non-agricultural products and domestic activities are taken care of mostly by women.<sup>35</sup>

### **Goal - 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development:**

It is to be understood that the performance of goal-8 has an impact of the achievements under goal 1-7. The performance is again subjected to the roles of different institutions at different levels like UN, national governments, international trade, different financial institutions. However, the targets do not directly point out the

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35. Dalia Dey, *Women Empowerment and the Third Millenium Development Goal* in Dalia Dey and Asis Kumar Pain, (eds.), *Women Empowerment New Dimensions and Experiences*, ICFAI University Press, Hyderabad, 2007, pp.16-17

effect of existing worldwide imbalances which are hindering the progress towards the achievement of the goal. Presently, the focus is more on the poor nations as to what they should do to achieve these goals. There is less accountability on the powerful global actors like rich developed countries, international financial and trade institutions etc. This goal aid can be used as an agent which will make the international institutes responsible for creating an impact thereby enabling environment to help achieve the target of increasing gender equality through the achievement of goal, 1-7 <sup>36</sup>

However, the most positive and welcoming feature in this era of globalisation is the recruitment of women in labour market on a large number in various media and large-scale production units. The reason behind this success is the increased non-traditional agricultural export units, subsequently leading to a considerable effect on the women's empowerment, particularly in their decision-making power. Similar trends have been observed in the case of non-agricultural wage earners. Women prefer to work in non-agricultural sector, mainly because of greater independence. To quote Malala's powerful speech in UN General Assembly New York 2013, Talibans are scared of the power of education of women. Pen is mightier than sword, one pen, one teacher, one book, education first. We don't ask men to stand aside but the (we) women will stand for ourselves. <sup>37</sup>

"It should be understood that the economic independence is not the ultimate word. If the women representative in the parliament is proportionate, that can rightly reflect the perfect state of women empowerment and step for transformation. Today, women make up 24 per cent of members of national legislative bodies around the world,

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36. *Millenium Development Goals Indicators- The Official United Nations Site for the MDG indicators* in Dalia Dey, *Women Empowerment and the Third Millenium Development Goal* in Dalia Dey and Asis Kumar Pain, (eds.), *Women Empowerment New Dimensions and Experiences*, ICFAI University Press, Hyderabad, 2007, p. 17

37. Malala, 16 years old education activist in Pakistan, speech in UN General Assembly, New York, 2.22 PM, 2013.

a share that has increased over the past decade but which is far smaller than their share of the overall world population, as shown in the Inter-Parliamentary Data Analysis. Coming to the total number of legislative seats in each country, only three nations- Rwanda, Cuba and Bolivia could reach the gender parity. However, less than half of the seats in the upper chambers in Bolivia and Rwanda are occupied by women. Region wise, the Nordic countries- Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden have the highest number of 43 per cent of women parliamentary members. Sweden is the highest with 47 per cent of women holding the legislative seats followed by Denmark ranking at 37 per cent of seats occupied by women and the remaining Nordic countries comprise 40 per cent. In the Caribbean nations 42 per cent of parliament members are held by women. About a quarter of 27 per cent is women in the North American legislatures, in the US women account for 24 per cent of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. The smallest share of women legislators is in South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa having 17 per cent. From 2008-2019 five countries saw no change in the share of women in the Legislature such as Finland (42 per cent of 200 Legislators in both years), United Arab Emirates (23 per cent of 40), Eritrea (22 per cent of 150), Belize (11 per cent of 45) and Lebanon (5 per cent of 128).”<sup>38</sup>

While studying the position of women in legislative bodies, the change in makeup and size with the availability of data vary annually particularly in the countries afflicted by political unrest which makes the analytical study challenging. Despite the growth, there are fewer women than men holding legislative seats collectively in every region of the world. As such gender parity cannot be reached by any region in the share of women in its legislatures in different countries.

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38. Women in Politics (2019): *The share of Women in Legislatures around the World is growing, but they are still underrepresented*, Source: <http://www.unwomen.org>, accessed on 4/10/2019, time 12:49 PM.

## 2.7 National:

In India there is a wide gender gap with regard to equity and equality, thus the issue of women's empowerment is raised several times in recent decades to reduce the gender gap. Therefore, gender equality and empowerment is necessary for the improvement of women's well-being, for social justice, and to meet the development goals. Mithilesh Kumar Sinha (2019) points out that "gender inequality can arise due to gaps in economic participation and opportunities, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment as per the estimates of GGGI, India ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in terms of the gender gap in political empowerment. The progress in gender equality has been slow in all structures of power and types of decision-making, with power still remaining firmly in men's hands." <sup>39</sup> In the Indian context, illiteracy, lack of exposure, fear of character assassination, high election costs deter women from entering politics. Most of the women enter politics as wives, daughters, and sisters of some powerful and influential men.

Political empowerment is one of the most important factors as it gives women the capacity to influence the decision-making process. In the political arena, some of the prominent women politicians are: iron lady Indira Gandhi, Shrimati Mayavati, Jaya Lalitha, Pratibha Patil, Meira Kumar, Sonia Gandhi, Sheila Dixit, Mamata Banerjee, Sushma Swaraj, Vasundhara Raje Scindia, Uma Bharti, Nirmala Sitharaman, Smriti Irani and Harsimrat Kaur Badal. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was an Indian diplomat and politician who had been elected in 1953 as the United Nations' General Assembly first female president. The Indian Parliament passed the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Bill providing 33 per cent reservation of seat for women in 1993 in the

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39. Prof. Mithilesh Kumar Sinha, NU, Lumami, Nagaland Post, Dimapur, VOL. XXIX NO. 90 FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019

Panchayati Raj at the grassroot level, Municipal Council and Municipal Corporations in the towns and cities which empowered the women in political participation. In 1992 the National Commission for Women was set up as a statutory body to monitor the constitutional and legal safeguards for women.

Presently India saw the highest number of women MPs elected in 2019 polls. 78 women make their way to the Parliament in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election. In comparison, the last election data shows that in 2014, 11.23 per cent of women won the election but in 2019 it is around 14.58 per cent. The 2019 election saw 8,049 candidates of which 724 were women. For the first time in decades, a 25-year-old woman engineering graduate from Odisha became the youngest Member of Parliament to the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election. Smti Chandrani Murmu was elected as BJD candidate representing tribal-dominated Keonjhar. yourstory.com reveals that the 78 women who won include celebrities such as Nusrat Jahan, Hema Malini, Smriti Irani, Mimi Chakraborty, and Kirron Kher. A newcomer, Mimi Chakraborty fielded by AITC, a well-known model and actor from West Bengal defeated Anupam Hazra of BJP in Jadavpur. India saw a new face in 29-year-old Nusrat Jahan, a model and prominent actor in the Bengali film industry from Basirhat, West Bengal. Smriti Irani, a former actor, who had joined the BJP in 2003 defeated Rahul Gandhi in Amethi Constituency in the election in 2019, although she lost to him in 2014. She managed to beat the three-time MP from the Congress stronghold, Amethi Constituency. Kirron Kher, a well-known actress, became a Lok Sabha member in 2014 from Chandigarh for the second time. Seasoned politician and BJP national spokesperson Meenakshi Lekhi won retaining her seat from New Delhi. A Veteran of the Shiromani Akali Dal party, Harsimrat Kaur Badal won from Bathinda, Punjab. The 52-year-old had started her political career in 2009. The Acting President of Indian National Congress (INC), Sonia Gandhi, won from Rae Bareilly in

Uttar Pradesh, while Maneka Gandhi who is a strong animal activist and the Union Cabinet Minister for Women & Child Development in the Narendra Modi government, won from Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh. A renowned author, Maneka Gandhi is known for her work on maternity benefits. But sadly, majority of the above mentioned women are celebrities and wives of famous husbands. While “hoping for better representation in the coming years”, the Indian citizens hope to see 33 per cent reservation for women in the government being implemented for the benefit of the nation.<sup>40</sup>

As stated by Mrinali Goswami Puzari (2014), another area that needs to be given greater importance is that of economic and social empowerment. Education can become an important agent of empowerment, which enhances awareness and the role of women in the society and awareness of their rights. It facilitates women to get a job, generates additional income of the family and enhances an equal role as men in nation building. In fact, education is an important vehicle to bring about a change in society and improve women’s status. The government has adopted measures to increase literacy among women with the strategies such as free education for girls and Navodya Vidyalayas, etc. Other programmes introduced by the government specifically are Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC), National Literacy Mission (NLM), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), and Mahila Samakhya Programme (MSP).<sup>41</sup> It can be observed that there is a rise in literacy rate of women which is 65.46 per cent in 2011 compared to 54.16 per cent in 2001 according to census India.

Today women are holding prestigious jobs in different fields as administrators, police officers, army personnel, bankers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, air force officers

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40. *Here are the 78 women MPs who are going to be the political face of India*, Source – <http://yourstory.com>, accessed on – 04/10/2019, time – 12:49 PM

41. Mrinali Goswami Puzari, *Empowerment of Women through Education* in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli Women (ed.), *Empowerment in North-East India*, EBH Publisher, Guwahati-1, 2014, pp.250-251

and have gained popularity in sports worthy to be mentioned who brought laurels to their motherland such as P.T Usha, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, Mary Kom, Deepa Malik and many more who have been conferred with the prestigious national award. One needs to know that women are spreading their wings as air force officer by the name of Shaliza Dhami, who is the first woman air force officer to become Flight Commander. She was serving for 15 years and has been flying chopper, she became the first woman flying instructor of the Air Force and is also the first woman officer to get permanent commission of the flying branch.<sup>42</sup>

Smti. Hina Jaiswal is another outstanding example of woman flight engineer in Indian Air Force (IAF) in the engineering wing commissioned on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2015. She served as the battery commander and chief of firing team in a frontline surface to air missile squadron, before being selected for the prestigious flight engineer's course. She underwent rigorous training at par with male counterparts and on 15 February 2019 earned her flight engineer's wing. In the last few decades, "the Indian Defence Forces have taken long strides to become more gender inclusive. The Indian Air Force since 1993 has commissioned women in the officer cadre and they have also been successfully inducted as pilot in various streams of the IAF".<sup>43</sup>

A very important and prominent woman in the banking sector is Smti. Anshula Kant, the Managing Director of the State Bank of India (SBI). She has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer of the World Bank. Kant is assigned responsibility for financial and risk management of the World Bank group. She

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42. Shaliza Dhami is *First Woman Air Force Officer to Become Flight Commander*, Source – <http://www.ndtv.com> accessed on – 28/08/2019, time – 03:54 AM

43. Meet the *First Woman Flight Engineer of IAF*, Source – <http://m.economictimes.com>, accessed on – 28/02/2019, time – 12:27 AM

possess the past experiences of holding various positions across the organization, helped navigate many leadership challenges that has helped elevate her responsibility to the higher position. <sup>44</sup>

India is a home to many wealthy people and it stands 3<sup>rd</sup> in the list of countries by the number of billionaires. In 2018 India is home to 131 billionaires, only behind the US and China, and rich businessmen are no less than Bollywood celebrity. Nita Ambani, who is wife of Mukesh Ambani, is the founder and chairperson of Reliance Foundation, chairperson of Dhirubhai Ambani International School and also owns the Mumbai Indian team in the IPL. She is one of the most powerful women in India. Her net worth stands at Rs. 7,983 crore, and her annual income is estimated at around Rs. 72 crore. The wives of billionaires by Forbes 2017 mentioned Usha Mittal as one of the richest women who owns the famous Usha Mittal Institute of Technology as is known for promoting women education in India. Kiran Nadar is another on the list who runs the SSN Trust, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). She also works with the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation towards empowering Muslim women in the villages of Uttar Pradesh. Priti Adani, wife of Gautam Shantilal Adani whose net worth is \$7.09 billion (October 2018) is a dentist by profession and heads Adani Foundation as a Managing Trustee takes it as a privilege to serve the people of rural India. Recently nearly 20,000 women benefitted from their skill development and sustainable livelihood initiatives. As matriarch of the Jindal Group, 69-year-old Savitri Jindal is the richest woman in India whose net worth is \$5.9 billion. In March 2019, she was placed by Forbes at 14th

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44. Who is Anshula Kant – *Indian Banker Appointed as MD and CFO of World Bank*, Source – <http://www.financialexpress.com>, accessed on – 13/07/2019, time – 04:36 AM

position in terms of personal wealth in India. <sup>45</sup>

A ‘women specific’ trade union in India i.e. the Self Employment Women’s Association (SEWA), has two million members working in the informal economy sectors. The ongoing project at SEWA has been to explore ways and means in which its members can overcome extreme form of financial insecurity. With regard to this, three pilot projects were carried out in which thousands of men, women and children received a modest basic income transferred directly. The SEWA started its experimental operation in Delhi starting with rations for poor families with cash transferred into the account of the eldest women. During this exercise, it was found that the women managed the money carefully than the men folks, putting their family needs on priority. Here, a group of women procure food items from the wholesale markets. They could manage to afford better quality of food grains than before, in addition to pulses, milk and eggs were added to their diet. The outcome of the direct benefit transfer of money yielded positive effect such as nutritional status and improvement of health among girl children within the age group of two to five years. The registration and attendance of teenage girls in schools also improved significantly. Women not only gained in welfare and household but also improved in basic income noticeably. With an increase in their own account activities and transactions, especially in the agricultural farming, livestock and small business, the activities of women multiplied. It is noteworthy that in tribal areas covered by the pilot project, 30 per cent of women received the basic income from wage labour to own account work like farming and livestock and, 73 per cent reduced their debt burdens. The evidence from this pilot project clearly shows that an unconditional

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45. Billionaires of India and their Spouses *Who are the Richest Indian Couples in the World*, Source – <http://www.bollywoodshaadis.com>, accessed on – 27/05/2019, time – 03:39 AM

basic minimum income ensured women gain voice in their relationships, families and community. Last, but not the least, the direct benefit transfer had a positive impact on social evils, that over 18 months of the pilot project there was no increase in alcohol consumption and drinking comparatively decreased in some villages, at the same time women became more assertive. The SEWA, in 2017, organised a major conference in Delhi to promote the idea of Universal Basic Income (UBI) to Indian policy makers. After the conference, the Indian network for basic income was set up in the same year and was recommended by the Indian Economic Survey that UBI be made accessible to all women in India. In the run up of the 2019 general election in India, a change was seen in which political parties announced their unconditional support for transfer of cash as a new forward in poverty reduction and income security programming at the same time.<sup>46</sup>

In spite of the entire stride that the women have achieved, the opportunities opened to women have remained limited. The weak law enforcement and insensitivity to various gender functionaries have failed to check the growing violence against women especially committing rape and eliminating the lives of the victims. A striking example of discrimination which prevails in Gujarat amongst the Thakor Community is banning inter-caste marriages and use of mobile by girls “in 12 villages of Dantewada Taluka in Banaskantha district”. A resolution to ban inter-caste marriages was adopted and also a penalty for families that if a “Thakori girl falls in love with and marry a boy from another community, the family will have to pay a fine of Rs. 1.5 lakh. If a Thakor boy marries a girl from another community, the fine is Rs. 2 lakh”. The diktat also resolves that “unmarried girls will not be allowed to use mobile phones and the parents

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46. *Basic Income Can Transform Women's Lives*, Source – <http://www.easternmirrornagaland.com>, accessed on – 20/09/2019

of those found carrying the devices will be held responsible”. Liberty is given to boys to possess mobile phones but restricted for the girls by the community. This is a total gender suppression pronounced against women.<sup>47</sup>

Another gruesome evil is the system of dowry which is an important part of marriages in India and still continues to be highly institutionalized which still remains the major reason of discrimination. In India, the disparity in gender manifests itself in many forms as is evident in the declining sex ratio in the population, violence against women both at the domestic front and societal sphere. Quite often the attitude towards women does not change. It may be recollected that the occurrence of sexual harassment, sexual abuse of women, rape and eve teasing are on the rise and the most vulnerable species are women. But the question arises whether an empowered woman is in a far better status than a helpless woman. Therefore, empowerment calls for a new dimension so as to create a new reality in different aspects.

## **2.8 North East India:**

Coming to the North-East scenario with regard to women empowerment, the north-eastern region can boast of treating women better than in other regions of the country. Women are accorded special social status and play a big role in economic activities; the women in these states are visible in the public spaces. In the political scanty which is true for all the states of this region. There is lack of participation of women from grassroot level and political marginalization of the women at the village, state and national level has always been prevailing in the region.

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47. Gujarat: *Thakor Community Bans Inter-caste Marriages*, Mobile Use by Girls in 12 Villages, Source – <http://indianexpress.com>, accessed on – 18/07/2019, time – 5:7 A.M.

Lalrinchhani (2011) narrates that Mizo society, although they follow patriarchal system right from the beginning, has a history of few female chiefs in the village such as Mangchini Nu, Pi Dari, Darbilhi, Ropuiliani and others. When the chief dies, and his son is too young to take over the reign, his wife is made as the regent chief till their son is matured enough to occupy the throne.<sup>48</sup> Despite all these precedence, it may be noted that till today, there has never been a female Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha member from the state of Mizoram. In 2018, 16 Mizo women contested in the General Assembly election, but unfortunately none could win. Out of 16 female candidates none were given Mizo National Front (MNF) ticket with the justification that women candidates were not strong enough to win any seat.

Manipur has made a remarkable history with regard to social movements which were led by women. The two women organization, '*nupi lan*' loosely translated to women's war were led by women in Manipur, *Meira Paibis*. Women organization staged a protest in which naked- procession was carried out against the murder of a woman - Thangjam Manorama by Assam Rifles personnels.

On the overall scenario of Manipuri women in the area of economic independence, it may be said that women have an exclusive market for them and enjoy a better status as they are the bread winner of the family and controller of the economy to a certain extent. On the contrary, when it comes to the question of domestic violence, women do suffer for want of justice in the society. Sometimes, it is felt that economic independence does not provide enough immunity to women from male violence and suppression. In some cases, the condition gets even worse when men folks enjoy hard-

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48. Lalrinchhani, *Mizo Migration and Gender Relations, Historical Analysis*, Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, Department of History, NEHU, 2008 in B. Lalrinchhani, *Political Empowerment in Patriarchal Society: A Study in Mizoram* cited in Harendra Sinha and J. Zorema, (eds.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India Socio-Economic Perspective*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2011 p.118

earned money of their women for their consumption and pleasure and not respecting them in return. In the field of political sphere in 60 seats Assembly, a total of 266 candidates contested in which 10 women candidates contested, but only 2 women could win the election. In 2017 General election Irom Sharmila, who undertook 16 years long hunger strike protesting against Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), contested but failed to secure even 100 votes although she used to be addressed as 'Iron Lady of Manipur' and who enjoyed extensive public and social support. Despite overwhelming public support for social cause, the acceptance in political arena was very poor. It is believed that in Manipur, violence and insurgency is also one of the factors that keep the women away from electoral politics.

On the other hand, inhabitants of Meghalaya state follow the matrilineal system by tradition. In their custom, the system of marriage and family lineage are particularly centred on women. The important role of a Khasi woman as motherhood is that of a care provider and is highly regarded in Khasi customs. "Women's claim over her child has been an important feature of Khasi society which sets it apart from many other communities and tribes in other parts of India." <sup>49</sup>

"This comes up in a paradoxical way in case of Khasi society that though women own the property in the name of her clan yet do not actually control it. Most of the important decisions regarding handling and management of property, sale and purchase of land etc. are taken by the male relatives of the women. The lack of actual power of the Khasi woman becomes clearer in the domain of politics. There are both modern and customary institutions of power in the Khasi Hills. The customary issues

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49. T. Nongbri, *Gender and the Khasi Family Structure*, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 37 (1&2), 1988, pp. 71-81 in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli, (ed.), *Empowerment of Women in North-East India*, EBH Publishers, Guwahati, 2014, p.163

are generally settled by the village level Dorbars. Khasi political system is symbolised by the Dorbars which are a system of local governance among the Khasis. Patricia Mukhim notes four stages of Dorbars-Dorbar iing (family Dorbar), Dorbar Kur (clan Dorbar), Dorbar Shnong (village Dorbar) and Dorbar Raid (Dorbar of a cluster of villages). In recent times what have survived in a strong form are Dorbar Shnong and Dorbar Raid.<sup>50</sup>

As stated by Mawrie, (2012), the differentiation of social role among the Khasis is noticeable in that women are more concerned with domestic and economic responsibility and men with political-administrative sphere even today. Till today, only a handful of women have been able to make it to the state legislative assembly. It is observed that there has been a steady growth of voting turn out among Khasi women even though women representation in the state legislative assembly remains low. Some Khasi scholars attribute this to the traditional role of women in Khasi society.<sup>51</sup>

Although North-Eastern state like Meghalaya is proud of being a matrilineal society, yet empowerment of women continues to be superficial across the state, the representation being as low as 7.6 per cent with Haryana topping with 14.4 per cent in the country. Most of the women candidates in the North-eastern states contest in the election as independent candidates probably due to lack of winning prospect of the party candidates.

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50. P. Mukhim, *Land Ownership among the Khasis of Meghalaya*, 2008 in W. Fernandes, *Land, People and Politics*, NESRC, pp. 38-52, cited in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli, (ed.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India*, EBH Publishers, Guwahati, 2014, p.165.

51. I. Mawrie, *Tradition hinders women's active participation in politics*. Shillong Times, 29 June 2012 in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli, (ed.), *Empowerment of Women in North East India*, EBH Publishers, Guwahati, 2014, p. 166.

According to Rama Krishna Mandal (2011), Arunachal Pradesh is a tribal state, where women participation in the village council is limited. Tribal people do not easily consider women to be a member in the village council. And if a woman becomes a member in the council, it is always in male dominated institutions. Thus, women are literally excluded from the governing body even at the grassroot level.

People in the state come together, to accelerate and speed up the process of social change in the state. The statutory Panchayati Raj was made functional during the period 1969 to 1997 in Arunachal Pradesh wherein some 24,000 incumbents were elected / selected as Gram Panchayat Members (GPMs), Anchal Samiti Members (ASMs) and Zilla Parishad Members (ZPMs) respectively. Out of which only 4 women could become members at Anchal Samiti or Gram Panchayat. In 1987, there was only one woman at Anchal Samiti level, and in 1992 there were 3 female representatives.

However, the ratio of female representatives did not make any significant change, and it almost remained the same as in the traditional village council institutions. Women in Galo community enjoy high status in the society, but when it comes to corporate decision-making forum, they are never a part of the forum or least represented. Thus, it may be assumed that the message of reservation was received with mixed response by the community people. The tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh had their own system of local self governance. "Age old traditional system of self governance in Arunachal Pradesh was replaced by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in 1968. With the coming into force of the Constitution (Seventy Third Amendment) Act 1992 with effect from April 1993, it was incumbent upon the state government to enact the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj legislation. Reservation for women in the Panchayati institution has a stronger case because they can lead to empowerment at the level of local society. Through such empowerment social change is possible on broad

scale. The system ordained through the NEFA Panchayati Raj Regulation 1967 continued with regular elections till 1992. The Constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1992) paved the way for restoring Panchayati Raj system in the state. It would suffice to mention here that several interactions across various levels were held to ensure maintenance of the relevance and applicability of the act in the context of Arunachal Pradesh.”<sup>52</sup> The participation of women in PRIs in Arunachal Pradesh as on August 29, 2003 shows a figure of 38.5 per cent only. In 1978 the voting to Legislative Assembly was started in Arunachal Pradesh which is very less. While women comfortably cross the 33 per cent reservation at the grassroot level, in the last election in 2019 only three women managed to win a total of 60 seats in the Assembly election. Women are not represented proportionately in spite of their immense contribution to the society particularly in the area of socio-economic front.

S.L. Baruah (1992) discusses the patriarchal nature of civil society in Assam, and that women in the past hardly got any chance to participate in active politics. It is a fact, that till the close of the fourteenth century there was no significant women’s participation inspite of it glorious history in the past. It is only after the establishment of Ahom Kingdom in Assam that women got a remarkable advantage. It is to be understood that the chief queen of the Ahom king Tao-Khamthi (1380-89) played an important part in the kingdom’s politics. It is recorded in the history that Mula Gabharu, is a case portraying the courage of Assamese women, died while fighting the Muslim general Turbak Khan of Bengal in 1532 AD to avenge the death of her husband.

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52. Source: Department of Panchayat Raj, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar in Ramakrishna Mandal, *Gender Discrimination: A Holistic Approach Towards Intervention in Frontier State of Arunachal Pradesh in India* quoted in P. Arunachalam, (ed.), *Economic Impact of Political Empowerment of Women in India*, Global Research Publication, New Delhi, 2011. pp. 236-238.

During the colonial period many leading Assamese women emerged, among them Queen Kamaleswari Devi, widow of King Gaurinath Singha (1780-95) who in 1806 met Lord Wellesly, the Governor General of India, to make an effort for restoration of peace and good government in Assam. During freedom movement under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, Assamese women played a remarkable role in the field of indigenous handicraft like spinning and weaving. The Quit India Movement is another area where Assamese women were respected for their active participation. They sacrificed their lives for common cause. Women who gave their lives for the movements are, Abali Kochuni, Golapi Chutiyani, Khahuli Nath, Kanaklata Barua, Bhogeswari Phukanani, Rabati Lahon, Kon Chutiyani, Thuniki Das and others.<sup>53</sup>

The status of women in Assam is high comparing to other states in India. One of the salient features of the Assamese society, unlike other Indian society, was the absence of dowry system. But in the post independence era, the evil of dowry system changed the society of Assamese people for the worst with the incidence of dowry related death. The "State of Indian women report 2001-2002" as released by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, showed that the crime rate against women in Assam is surprisingly higher than the all India average. "Rape, molestation, sexual harassment, abduction, dowry deaths and cruelty at home" against women were 127 cases per million persons at the all India level in 1999 where Assam, in comparison had 138 cases per million persons. Incidence of domestic violence, murder, molestation and trafficking have also gone up in the present times.<sup>54</sup>

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53. S.L. Baruah, (ed.), *Status of Women in Assam*, Omson Publications, New Delhi, 1992, quoted in Sujit Kumar Sonowal, *Political Empowerment and Rural Women in Assam: With Special Reference to Grass Roots Politics in Dibrugarh District*, M. Phil Dissertation, Assam, 2014. p. 24.

54. Sujit Kumar Sonowal, *Political Empowerment and Rural Women in Assam: With Special Reference to Grass Roots Politics in Dibrugarh District*, M. Phil Dissertation Assam, 2014. pp.24-25.

As Tineshowri (2013) rightly elaborates, when it comes to education, average dropout rate for girls “has increased from 5.0 per cent in 2009-2010 to 11.9 per cent in 2011-2012 at primary level and from 13.5 per cent in 2009-2010 to 14.3 per cent at upper primary level”. The 2011 census witnessed a rise in female literacy rate from 54.61 per cent in 2001 to 67.27 per cent, which is an increase of 31 per cent. The overall literacy rate of the “state stands at 73.18 per cent” showing a noticeable gender gap which is below the all India average.<sup>55</sup>

In Assam women are not given enough encouragement to enter into political fray. Women in Assam comprise 48.42 per cent of the population, but there is only 1 M.P in Rajya Sabha and 1 M.P. in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. In 2016 assembly election, only 8 women could win in the election. In fact, there were 8.6 per cent of women candidates in 2016 Assembly election.<sup>56</sup> Tickets to contest election are issued to women where the probability of winning is already slim. And no party is far behind in this gender discrimination. Rural women in Assam are engaged in many of the economic aspects of life like agriculture, weaving, poultry farming and tea garden etc., but they enjoy no property rights to have an independent economic standing. As a result, they are always at the mercy of their husbands or the in-laws. This depicts the roles they are given by the society and the status they enjoy.

North East India comprising 8 states could send only 3 women MP for the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election. The women representative from North Eastern states to the upper house is just a meagre number of 3 women from Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. Throughout the present study it can be concluded that the rural women employment

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55. Dr. M. Tineshowri Devi, *Women Status in Assam, Journal of Business Management and Social Sciences Research (JBM & SSR)*, ISSN, No: 2319-5614, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2013. p.66

56. india.gov.in The national portal of India, accessed on 07.08.2020 at 5.55 P.M.

opportunities are dependent on the sociological as well as environmental effect, the socio-economic condition of the rural household and the educational level. The women who are considered better off are engaged in gainful activities while women who belong to the worst condition suffers from unemployment and underemployment. Meagre representation of women such as women from Muslim community, women from smaller tribes and Adivasis are marginalized sections. A society proclaiming to stand up for gender equality cannot keep the political area out of reach of women. In 2018 elections were held in Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya. A high voter turnout was seen in all these states. The states like Meghalaya and Tripura elected only 3 women each as Member of Legislative Assembly. The women candidates in these states were also very few in number. In the state of Tripura, a total of 297 candidates, there were only 23 women to contest the election. In Nagaland out of 196 candidates for the assembly election, only 5 women candidates contested. The gender equality in the region will continue to be superficial if women are kept outside the purview of decision-making process. It is required to introduce separate employment generation programme for women so that the rural women can get employment opportunities. Moreover, productive technical training should be expanded among the rural women. A fundamental change is required in the attitude of planners, policy makers, family members, public and women at large for forwarding the status of women in a better way. It is therefore, pertinent to suggest that unless we look very critically, we shall not be able to understand what status the women enjoyed in the past and present as well as in different geographical social context.

# **CHAPTER - 3**

## **DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

**Social, Economic and Cultural Aspect in Nagaland**

## **CHAPTER - 3**

### **DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

#### **Social, Economic and Cultural Aspect in Nagaland**

### **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN NAGALAND:**

Far in the North-Eastern corner of India, in the mountain tracts bordering India and Myanmar is Nagaland – the land of the Nagas. Nagaland is located at 26.1584° N longitude and 94.5624° E latitude, spreading over an area of 16,579 Sq. Km. with altitude ranging from 194m to 3048m above sea level. Nagaland is one of the most beautiful states of the Indian Union, bounded by the States of Arunachal Pradesh on the North, Manipur on the South, Myanmar in the East and Assam on the west. The Nagas are dispersed in different states of the North East India and in north western Myanmar. Some Naga tribes are found in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Nagaland is predominantly a tribal state with a population of 1,980,602 as per 2011 census.

The terrain of Nagaland is mountainous and filled with hilly ranges, which break into a wide chaos of spurs and ridges giving it a wild kind of beauty. With the climatic condition ranging from the alpine in the higher ridges of its mountains to moist tropical condition in the foot hills adjoining the plains of Assam, it is an ideal repository of rich bio-diversity.

Nagaland is inhabited by 16 major tribes and a few other minor tribes. Each tribe has its own culture and tradition, making the state culturally as colourful as its natural scenic beauty and as varied as its flora and fauna. Till the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Naga Hills was a district of Assam under the erstwhile name of Naga Hills Tuensang Area. After a long and convoluted history of Armed conflict, Nagaland as the

16<sup>th</sup> state of India was declared on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1963 by the second president of India, Dr .S. Radhakrishnan. Today, the state of Nagaland encompasses the areas inhabited by the Angami, Ao, Chang, Chakhesang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sümi, Yimchunger, Kuki, Kachari and Zeliang tribes. The state has 11 districts, namely Kohima, Mokokchung, Wokha, Zünheboto Mon, Phek, Dimapur, Kiphire, Peren, and Longleng, with Kohima as the capital of the state. <sup>57</sup> Noklak is the 12<sup>th</sup> district in Nagaland which was created on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

“The word ‘Naga’ as a generic term of the tribes under discussion gave rise to many interpretations and suppositions. ‘The first mention of the Nagas as a people inhabiting their present land was made by Claudius Ptolemy, the Greek Geographer and historian in 150 A.D. In his book *Geographia*, Claudius Ptolemy mentioned the Nagas as *Nagaloï*. Nagaloï means the realm of the Naked”. <sup>58</sup>

The Nagas have a wide belief that the word ‘Naga’ is from the Burmese word Na-ka, meaning ‘pierced-ear’. The Naga tribes had a common practice of piercing their ear-lobes for the purpose of decoration, corroborating the age-old practice of the Nagas (hence, a derivative Naka). It is established historically that the Nagas at one time had lived together with the Burmese while the former had spent the last part of their sojourn spent with the latter while migrating towards the present place. It is probable that the Burmese must have used the term Naka or Noga was first used to refer to the present Nagas. Isak Swu, by virtue of his prolonged interaction with the Burmese, claims that, “The term Naga or name Naga originated from the Burmese word Naka, which means

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57. Zhekugha Assumi, *The Sumi Ahuna*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2009. pp. 1-2

58. Naga Hoho, *White paper on Integration*.2002, p.6. quoted in K. Nishena Nekha, *The Nagas Culture and Education*, Heritage publishing House, Dimapur, 2015. p. 2

people who have holes in their ears. In Burmese language *Na* means ear *Ka* means pierced or perforated. Differing with other theories of the term Naga, he says the Nagas of Yore loved wearing earrings to decorate themselves to appear beautiful or grandeur.”<sup>59</sup> The Nagas by nature are status conscious which is reflected in the various aspects of their social and cultural life. The Nagas share close affinity with other ethnic groups in North-East India with regard to their physique and appearance. The Nagas belong to the Mongoloid stock speaking the Tibeto-Burman language.

Coming to sex ratio of the state, K. Nishena Nekha (2015) states that “male-female ratio of 1000:931 indicates an imbalance growth of population in the state. This imbalance may be attributed to mass immigration of males from other states that come for various occupations. Another factor was the need for technical personnel from outside to cope with the task of systematic implementation of various developmental programmes. Other immigrants include the executives, technicians, teachers, businessmen, construction workers, labourers and hawkers etc.”<sup>60</sup> Naga tribes have a common feature and that is, patriarchal in nature where male dominate the society. Entry into the grassroot bodies and the visibility, equality and justice is still far from reality. All such traditions, customs, practices, rituals, beliefs, ideologies and social institutions which are oppressive to women and deprive their freedom and rights should be strongly opposed. In the background of the concern for status of women in Nagaland an indepth study is required whether there exists any discrimination against women in the Naga society. Hence, the researcher proposes to study the above-mentioned problem which challenges women in Naga society.

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59. Isak Swu, *The Origin and the Migration of the Nagas* (unpublished), p.13 quoted in K. Nishena Nekha, *The Nagas Culture and Education*, Heritage publishing House, Dimapur, 2015.p.3

60. K. Nishena Nekha, *The Nagas Culture and Education*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2015. p.6

### **3.1 Determinants of Social Empowerment of Women in Nagaland:**

The Nagas follow a system of patrilineal and the patriarchal norms since time immemorial without the slightest feeling of gender inequality and discrimination. But in reality, it has enough reasons to believe that there is definitely gender inequality and discrimination in all aspects of life due to male dominance.

In a Naga society (family) the father is the head, and the tradition being patriarchal system allows only male members of the family to inherit ancestral property. Father can be the sole owner over the self-acquired properties. The sons in the family can inherit the immovable property like plot of land for cultivation which their father received from the grandfather as inheritance in addition to their father's self-acquired property. All the children born to him and his wife are entitled to enjoy the property both the ancestral property he inherited and the self-acquired except daughters. When his sons get married and established their own family, they are entitled to own the property which he inherited and acquired, till such time immovable properties like cultivable lands are considered as common property and operated jointly.

It is observed that there are remarkable changes in Naga society in many areas. However, participation of women in governance and decision-making body still remains same or are poorly represented. The influence of the new faith has played a great and significant role in stepping up the standard of living acquiring western education, but the belief and practice of patriarchal importance among Nagas is still deeply rooted and does not seem to die out that soon even with the popular slogan of 'gender equality and women empowerment'. It is undeniable that the Naga society still adheres to patriarchal system in many ways.

It is regarded as a matter of prestige for a man to have more than one wife, but for women no such practice is allowed. In the traditional Naga society it is expected of a

woman to be meek and quiet as a feminine quality. When divorce takes place due to the infidelity and extramarital affairs on the part of either wife or husband, the property and children are retained by husband. The wife is debarred of the custody of the children and from the possession of the property which depicts the picture of unequal treatment of women among Nagas.

The chasteness of Angami girls was expected which is symbolised by their clean shaven heads. Some writers say that it was a symbol of purity, virginity and innocence. But it was a custom certainly not liked by girls. According to Aphuno Chase (2014), young Angami girls would wear wigs made of plantain leaves during play time because growing the hair was *kemetho* (meaningless) for them due to traditional and customary restrictions imposed on them when they are not ready for marriage. Some people opined that this restriction of growing hair perhaps explains the reason why early marriages and divorces were common. Fidelity was another much emphasised traditional value related to Naga women of the past. Women were expected to be faithful and devoted to her husband besides maintaining good relations with the husband's family members. In the case of confirmed adultery stern action is taken. If a woman is caught cheating her husband, she is disowned and she walks out of her marital home with nothing except the clothes on her back in addition to non entitlement of any property.<sup>61</sup> Although men were allowed to keep more than one wife, complete fidelity was expected of women in many Naga tribes.

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61. Aphuno R. Chase, *Women in Transition: Angami Women from 1878 to the present*. Mission Compound Kohima, Nagaland, ACLS Press, 2004 quoted in Benjongkumba, (ed.), *Naga society, Culture, Education and Emerging Trends*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2014, p.82

An important traditional institution found in many Naga tribes was the institution of bachelors' dormitory commonly known as Morung, this dormitory is known variously in different local dialects such as *Arju* in Ao, *Kichuki* in Angami, *chumpo* in Lotha, *Baan* in Konyak, *Apuki* in Sümi, *Renshe* in Rengma, *Haku* in Chang, *Pang* in Phom, *Awikhuh* in Pochury, *Khiangyam* in Yimchungru, *Pon* in Khiamniungan, *Sinstang* in Sangtam, *Chethiche* in Chakhesang, etc. which accommodates young people till they are matured enough to get married. The rule of discipline that governs this institution is to inculcate a sense of responsibilities in the young people. Accordingly, the most important training institutions in Naga society were the youth dormitories. The *Iliki* (girls' dormitory) of Sümi tribe is considered as an institute where girls learn social etiquette and art of living and not merely social and cultural training. The girls in the past believed that their responsibilities lie only within certain parameters which include cooking, washing, cleaning, collecting water and fire wood, looking after the children and sick persons at home, gardening and agricultural farming etc. On the other hand the process of traditional education moulds the young adult males in *Apuki* (boys' dormitory) to prepare them as independent and responsible members of village administration. This is a clear indication that there was complete lack of political culture and socialization of the Naga girls in their traditional institution such as *Iliki* revealing their limited role with regard to political sphere. Generally, the Naga tribes hold a similar belief. Mr. Xavier Mao (1998) states, "women are prohibited from having any say in both social and family affairs for the simple reason that the Zeliangrong Nagas believe that the presence of women in such affairs is a bad omen for the whole society. It is a taboo for a warrior to sleep with his wife before going to war or hunting. They believe that the violation will bring undesirable consequences to the group he belongs to. However, the position of women within the family was found to be better off. In all

important decision making, wife's opinion was highly respected. In other words, she was a guide to her husband, and her decision was respected by her husband.”<sup>62</sup> Naga women are catching up with their male counterpart academically and professionally, yet a closer analysis shows the fact that when it comes to the question of leadership roles, the visibility of women is rather less represented. The issue of women's poor participation in public life is to understand whether it is due to lack of requisite eligibility criteria or due to society's non acceptance of their leadership role. The perception of Naga women on this issue and the complexity of the present Naga society are to some extent still remaining inconclusive.

Temsula Ao (2014) argued that the Naga society depended on a male for the past many centuries with the practice of giving first priority or opportunity to male child. Female child in the family was allowed to go to school up to primary school level only to enable her to read their own script. But her brothers could go to towns to continue their studies. The girls stayed back to help their parents in cultivating their lands in order to support the brothers pursuing further study in towns. Even if the girl child is good at studies, it is never the merit that decides but it is duty bound for her to stay back and support her brothers. The pastor was a male so also the deacon board members. A separate worship day on Thursday is set aside exclusively for women besides other worship days. Any decision adopted by women committee requires approval of deacon board for implementation. Till today, in almost all the Churches the posts of pastors are manned by men and women are given the posts of Associate Pastors and Assistant Pastors, signifying her subordination to the pastors.

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62. Xavier Mao, *The Status of Women in Mao Society* in Lucy Zehol, (ed.), *Women in Naga Society*, New Delhi, Regency Publication, 1998, p.44 quoted in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2014, p.43

In the early days, men were compelled to protect themselves from the periodic raids from hostile neighbours, and also to make sure that they are well protected from wild animals. The clearing of thick woods used to be carried out by men because women lacked the physical strength to do so. It is evident that women did not have any say in the matters pertaining to the village defence and selection of forest area to be cultivated the following year which subsequently led to their exclusion and it seemed logical even to the women themselves. In the case of any outstanding achievement by a woman, the remark always goes as “she has been able to do it in spite of her being just a woman”, as though success is meant for men only.<sup>63</sup> The rights of women, their intellectual and productive contribution to the society needs to be recognised as it is done to the men folks and should not be misconstrued with the traditional concept of subordination only.

Today, there had been a kind of breakthrough by some determined women where traditional practice of restrictions and limitations of women’s participation in the social structure and governance was proved otherwise. Their achievements and contributions in the society have created a tremendous positive impact in uplifting the morale of Naga women which is worth mentioning in the history of Naga women.

**The following are some of the first among the Naga women who took job outside the domestic work:-**

Dr. Khrielieu Kire (1918-2013) was the first Naga woman of Nagaland to qualify MBBS degree. She also held the post of Chairperson in the Department of Nagaland State Social Welfare Board in 1978, Convener of the first Naga Mothers’

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63. Temsula Ao, *On Being a Naga Essays*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2014, pp. 46-51

Association and later on became the first Honorary Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Nagaland State Branch.

Neichulieu Nikki Haralu born in 1922 is the first Naga woman from Nagaland to join Indian Foreign Service (IFS). She represented India as Ambassador of Panama and Costa Rica.

Rano Mese Shaiza (1928- 2015) is the first Naga woman to have been an elected representative of the people of Nagaland to the Lok Sabha of the Indian Parliament in 1977. To date, she holds the record of being the only woman MP from Nagaland. Despite the numerous struggles and challenges she faced in life, Rano often maintained an attitude of hope.

Sano Vamuzo (Born- 27<sup>th</sup> March 1940) along with some concerned mothers, started the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) in 1984 with the motto "*Humanity, Integrity*", in order to fight social evils and uplift the status of women. She became its first President and served for seven years. In 2007 she was appointed by the Government of Nagaland as the first Chairperson of the Nagaland State Commission for Women (NSCW). Sano Vamuzo's resolve has always been to "*Rise to the occasion*".

Dr. P. Kilemsungla (Born- 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1952) is an eminent educationist from Mokokchung, Nagaland. She is the first Naga to be appointed as a member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). She is also the first woman member in the Nagaland Public Service Commission (2007- 2013). She has been decorated Padma Shree in the field of education and literature in 2014.

Banuo Z. Jamir (Born- 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1954), is the first Naga woman to be inducted in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 1977 (Nagaland Cadre). She also became the first Naga Woman from Nagaland to occupy the highest position in the state's bureaucracy in February 2014, when she was appointed as the Chief Secretary of

Nagaland. She has been exemplary in her leadership and has served the people of Nagaland with integrity and utmost dedication.<sup>64</sup>

Some prominent women achievers in Nagaland in various fields are Smti. Chubalemla Ao, a Padmashree Awardee; Smti. Amongla Aier, first Indian Police Service (IPS); Lt. Col. N. Linyu, VSM scaled the Mt. Everest; Smti. Chekrovolü Swüro who participated in the World Outdoor Target Archery Championship; Smti. Monalisa Changkija, Editor of Daily News Paper and Dr. Imti Temsula First Ph.D. Degree holder. Although there are some clear differences between men and women in respect of nature of roles at home and in the society, the status of women cannot be said to be low or inferior in any aspect.

For the first time, the under 15 Girls Football Team from Nagaland represented India at the International Tournament Gothia Cup in Sweden. The Gothia Cup is the world's largest International Youth Football Tournament scheduled from 14-20<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at Gothenburg in Sweden. This shows that women in Nagaland are stepping out from the traditional and domestic enclosure to the wider spectrum of competition.

Frederick S Dawn commented, "it was as a matter of fact, originally intended for girls that, the purpose of educating the Naga girls by the Missionaries was that the Naga converts can have Christian wives who can build Christian homes. Therefore, the initial objective for the girls' education in Nagaland by the western missionaries was not so much for its own sake, but with the agenda of proselytizing the Christian faith. However, it was not a task easily achieved. Ethel May Stevenson, the Head of the Girls School at Impur in Mokokchung District of Nagaland reported in 1917 that it was still

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64. *Nagaland Calendar- A tribute to Naga Women Pioneers* 2016. Nagaland State Social Welfare Board (NSSWB) Nodal Agency. Below New Secretariat Complex, Nagaland: Kohima- 797001, Post Box-229.

very difficult to persuade Naga parents to send their daughters for schooling.”<sup>65</sup> It is a well-known fact that today many girls are pursuing higher education with a desire to seek employment and a career leading to relatively late marriages.

The modernisation of the Naga society in general was undoubtedly brought about by embracing Christianity as their religion, the religion which replaced head hunting culture of the Naga people. The entire scenario of head-hunting culture and invading the neighbour's villages was transformed into a sense of ‘loving and caring’ one another through the preaching of American Christian Missionaries in our land. The prevalence of congenial atmosphere and cordial relations in the neighbouring villages paved the way for women folks to come out from their traditionally assigned domestic and farming arena thereby enabling them to venture out into new dimensions of life where they could acquire education and live a civilized life.

Geo Suplee (1940) discusses “in due course Naga women became enthusiastic about education and despite all the obstacles put in their way a number of them did become highly educated by 1930s. In support of this view here is a report of women's work of Kohima field 1940: we are justly proud of Rosalind Sokhrienuo, who is believed to be the first Naga girl ever to receive a Bachelor of Arts Degree.”<sup>66</sup> K. Meru (1978) mentions that “in 1948, when the first matriculation examination was conducted in Nagaland, six girls appeared; four from Kohima and two from Mokokchung.”<sup>67</sup> Narola (2001) states that, as for the Ao Nagas the question of ordination of women

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65. Fredrick S. Downs, *The Christian Impact on the Status of women in North East India*, Shillong, 1996, p.48 quoted in Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland Challenges and Imperatives*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 2012, p.21.

66. Geo Suplee, *Kohima Women's Report, 1940* in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Private Limited, New Delhi 2014, p.124.

67. K. Meru, *The Role of Women Before and Now*, Highlander, (1978), p.22 in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Private Limited, New Delhi, 2014, p. 124.

began to be raised in the 1980s. This led to a lot of debate and objection, and finally after long struggle, Miss. Noksangla was ordained on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1992. She was the first woman to be ordained as Reverend in the whole of North East India. <sup>68</sup>

The state of Nagaland has one of the highest women's literacy rate in the country at 76.11 per cent, which is much higher than the national average of 64.6 per cent according to the 2011 Census. This may be an indication that the gender disparity in educational opportunities in Nagaland is not very prominent. In Nagaland while women have made notable advances in recent years, they continue to be constrained by patriarchal in economic, socio-cultural and traditional norms.

Table - 3.1.1: Sex-Wise Progress Literacy Rate in Nagaland from 1981 to 2011  
Census. <sup>69</sup>

Sl.No.	Year	Percentage of Literates to Total Population		
		Female	Male	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1	1981	33.89	50.06	42.57
2	1991	54.51	66.27	60.59
3	2001	61.5	71.2	66.6
4	2011	76.11	82.75	79.55

Source: Directorate of Census Operation, Nagaland, Kohima.in *Gender Statistics Nagaland*, 2016, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Nagaland.

68. Narola, *Women and Society Jorhat Assam, 2001*, pp.122-23 in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Private Limited, New Delhi 2014, p.131

69. Directorate of Census Operation, Nagaland, Kohima.in *Gender Statistics Nagaland*, 2016, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Nagaland. pp. 46-49.

As per 2011 Census, the female Literacy Rate in Nagaland stands at 76.11 per cent against the 33.89 per cent in 1981 Census, showing significant increase of female literacy rate in Nagaland as shown in Table-3.1.1

During the early days women in Naga society were not given proper formal education. Education is the most important means for personal empowerment, improve the capability and to transcend constraints for an individual to expand their opportunities and choices for sustainable improvement. Realising the significance of education, India has enacted the 'Right to Education', to promote compulsory and free education for children of 6-14 years.

Table - 3.1.2: Number of Girls per hundred boys enrolled in Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools in Nagaland from 2005-06 to 2015-16.<sup>70</sup>

Sl. No.	Year	Primary (in percentage)	Middle (in percentage)	Secondary (in percentage)
		Classes I-V	Classes VI-VIII	Classes IX-X
1	2	3	4	5
1	2005-2006	93	98	-
2	2006-2007	96	95	-
3	2007-2008	96	95	-
4	2008-2009	96	95	-
5	2009-2010	95	96	-
6	2010-2011	96	98	-
7	2011-2012	97	98	-
8	2012-2013	97	99	99
9	2013-2014	96	98	99
10	2014-2015	104	112	117
11	2015-2016	104	114	119

GPI (Gender Parity Index) = Total Girls/Total boys.

70. Directorate of School Education, Kohima, in *Gender Statistics Nagaland 2016*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Nagaland, Nagaland, Kohima. p.60

Number of girls per 100 boys enrolled in Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools in Nagaland have increased over the years. In 2012-13, “there were 97 girls per 100 boys in Primary Class, 99 in Middle Class, 99 in Secondary Class” which have increased to 104 in Primary Class, 114 in Middle Class, 119 in Secondary Class during 2015-16, Table-3.1.2

On the education front young women are increasingly yielding good results in their academic performance in various disciplines. It is encouraging to see that the female literacy rate in Nagaland has seen a 22 percent growth in the past two decades as compared to 16 percent growth in the male literacy rate. An increase in female literacy rate should be a key factor in improving the female labour market outcomes. The increase in female work force such as medicine, computer science, engineering, and higher education has been very significant during the past decade in the state of Nagaland which is about 24.4 per cent “during 2011 against 14.9 per cent in 2001”. The data shows that absorption of female in other works is highest in Dimapur (63.9 percent), followed by Kohima district (41 percent) and Mokokchung district (28.8 percent).<sup>71</sup>

An important element of present-day Naga society is the presence of respective tribal Hohos. Likewise, every tribe has a women organisation with the purpose of safe guarding women’s right both at home and beyond and also fighting against social evils from Naga society. Some of the women’s organizations in Nagaland are the Angami Women Public Organization (AWPO), Lotha Elohe Hoho (LEH), the Naga Mothers Association (NMA), Naga Women Hoho (NWH), Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH), and Watsu Mungdang. The NMA and NWH are not tribe-based organizations but inclusive of all

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71. *Women’s success: The ingredient for a balanced growth of society* (Nagaland Post, Vol. XXVII NO. 264, August 29, 2017, pp.1&5).

tribal women of Nagaland. The NMA came into existence on February 14, 1984 with its Head Office at Kohima. The preamble of the NMA states “Naga Mothers of Nagaland shall express the need of conscientizing citizens towards more responsible living and human development through voluntary organisation of the Naga Mothers Association.” The NMA’s membership is made open to all Naga women irrespective of whether she is married or single. The NMA puts an emphasis to improve human development and gives importance to eradicate social evils and end economic exploitations and foster long lasting peace. The peace movement in Nagaland are led by women, and they support it enthusiastically. Women in the peace movements negotiate with both the army and the insurgents and are able to carve out an independent space for their actions. In fact, women spearhead the peace movement in large numbers. Most notably the NMA in October 1994 formed the peace team to address the deteriorating political situation under the theme “shed no more blood”. The NMA spoke against the army atrocities and the interfactional killings. Releasing a pamphlet on 25 May 1995 the NMA’s representative wrote that “the way in which our society is being run whether by the over ground government or the underground government has become simply intolerable”. Every year the NMA celebrates 12<sup>th</sup> May as the Mothers’ Day making an appeal for peace. The NMA has worked tirelessly for peace and social improvement. The abuse of alcohol and drugs is rampant in Nagaland. The NMA realising this situation has provided de-addiction centres and in collaboration with the NGOs like the Kripa Foundation of Mumbai. It has also provided HIV testing centre, which is arguably the first women organisation in the North-East to test pregnant women for HIV, thereby providing care for patients afflicted with HIV/AIDS.

A recent development of women’s organisation in the state is the emergence of Eastern Naga Women Organization (ENWO) representing women from Eastern

Nagaland districts of Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, Noklak and Tuensang. The women's organizations in Nagaland were formed with different aims and objectives, for example, Watsu Mungdang came into existence primarily as a women's socio organization with the Church's support, where as others were formed as a response to a certain social exigencies. For example, in 1983 the Sümi Totimi Hoho was formed following a rape incident with the aim of tackling crimes of sexual nature and to safe-guard women's right. The women's organizations in the state are also engaged in an effort to fight against social evils in the society like alcoholism, drug addiction to safe guarding of women's interest. In fact, the different women organizations in the state under the auspices of the NMA were pro active in pressurising the state government into passing the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition Bill in 1994 while working together with the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC).

In spite of the privileged position that Naga women hold, many a time women are vulnerable and at the receiving end. Women have been made victims of rape and molestation, abuse, murder, killing, unwed mothers, abortion, abandoned children, wives, the spread of HIV/ AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD) among women, increased prostitution among Naga women, suicide, accusations of witch-craft, discrimination against women, lack of respect for women, trafficking of women which indicate personal and social disorganization and unrest in society. It may be mentioned, in a shocking revelation, that Kohima and Dimapur have become one of the most risky places for women as the highest number of crimes in the state against women was reported from these two districts. The report according to "gender statistics 2017-18" which was released by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics on the occasion of National Statistics Day on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019 mentions that the crime against women in Nagaland witnesses especially cases like harassment, rape, abduction, murder and

outraging modesty. In 2017, there were three cases each of harassment and murder, 15 cases of rape, 3 cases of kidnapping and abduction and 10 cases of outraging of modesty. Women in the age group of 18-50 years were also arrested for crime related activities under special and local laws (SLL), including Immoral Traffic Act, Excise Act, NDPS Act and Explosives Act. In another incident 24 women were arrested in 2017 under SLL, 2 were arrested under Excise Act and 19 for other crimes. Further, there were 52 female prisoners in 2017, of which 47 were released the same year. The report also shows that 19 women were arrested under different sections of IPC, of which 6 cases were related to cheating, one case to murder, one to robbery and six for other crimes.<sup>72</sup>

In Nagaland women comprise 30.35 per cent of the total government employees, whereas the men comprise the remaining number of 69.65 per cent. It may be mentioned that women in government jobs in various categories shows Class I - 37 per cent, Class II-31 per cent, Class III- 26 per cent and Class IV- 36 per cent. In the employment exchange report it is mentioned that 34.19 per cent of the total registration was women in 2011, which decreased to 34.09 per cent in 2017. The district of Dimapur has the highest number of women registered in employment exchange. In 2014-15, female employment constituted 25.54 per cent of the total employment. It is reported that Phek district has the highest percentage of female employees in the public sector, while in the private sector Mon district has the highest female employees. In the health sector, Nagaland has the lowest Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), comparing to National IMR. IMR had reduced substantially from 1.58 in 2011 to 0.17 in 2014; this indicates improvement in health mechanism for infants.

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72. *Gender Statistics Nagaland*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland 2019.

In Nagaland women's empowerment and initiatives for the state such as the Nagaland State Commission for Women which is a statutory body, constituted by the state Government under the Nagaland Women Commission Act 2006 were adopted "to investigate and examine all matters relating to women issues and also to safeguard the women provisions" under the constitution and other laws. The state Government created the department of Women Resource Development to give special focus on women's socio-economic development and their resources and empowerment of women through various activities. The state resource center for women (SRCW) provides institutional support to implement the activities and "to facilitate government and other stakeholders involved in women centric issues" so as to implement gender sensitive programmes, laws and schemes through effectual coordination. The state Government through an office memorandum, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2017 has enhanced the existing ceiling of 90 days of Maternity Leave under CSS (Leave) Rules, 1792 to 180 days for the female state Government employees. In the vision 2030 document, gender mainstreaming has been included to highlight gender-based issues and disadvantages suggesting various steps for ensuring participation of women in leadership roles and decision-making.<sup>73</sup>

"In a study conducted by the centre for North East Studies and Heinrich Boll Foundation (2009 - 2010), it was found that women were the worst sufferers. There are hundreds of widowed women, even many half widows (women whose husbands have gone missing, their whereabouts not known and having no confirmation of their death although it may be suspected that the deceased have been killed/ murdered); women who turned into sole bread earners overnight taking on the men's role due to

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73. *Gender statistics Nagaland*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland, 2016, pp.4&5

insurgency; women who have lost their whole life and happiness to bullets.”<sup>74</sup>

“In the history of Naga Women Movement, the conference called by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), Department of Women under the theme ‘Arise and Shine’, is one of the greatest gatherings of Naga women in the beginning of this new era. It was a significant landmark in the history of Naga women. It was held at Kohima from 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October 2001. The conference enlightens the scope and vision of the women opening a new direction of change. Through this conference, their roles and status were redefined in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was coincided with the year of women empowerment 2001 in India. They have deliberated on the need for a total women based on biblical perspectives. They re-affirmed themselves that women of the new century should be ready to shoulder greater responsibilities towards bringing a total change in the land, which will be possible through education and self-understanding. This was the thrust area of deliberation during the conference. This conference has paved the way towards wider understanding of Naga women as they have realised their responsibilities and the unchangeable dignity of women.”<sup>75</sup>

### **3.2 Economic Empowerment of Women in Nagaland:**

In the light of Economic Empowerment, women play an important role to bring about positive changes in Naga society. In Nagaland, women still face wage disparity in doing any type of manual work outside the public sector. A female daily wage earner is paid a lesser amount than the adult male worker both in the urban and rural areas. In Nagaland, local bodies like Village Development Board (VDB) is one area where

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74. Dr. Lungsang Zeliang, *Naga Women in Traditional Values and Practices and their Relevance in Modern Context*, in Benjongkumba, (ed.), *Naga Society, Education and Emerging Trends*, HPH, Dimapur, 2014, pp.85-86.

75. N. Tali Temjen Jamir and A. Lanunungsang (eds), *Naga Society and Culture, Nagaland*, NU Tribal Research Center, Lumami, 2005, p-227

women can participate in economic policy making activities, but the level of awareness and representation among women still stands low. In Naga society, there are instances that married women are often compelled to quit her job in order to take care of their small children and domestic work. This is done so when both the husband and wife are employed and suffer from want of man-power to look after the children when they are away for work. This is also one of the factors that prevent women's participation in social life.

In traditional Naga society, women were bound to be confined within four walls of the home and farming, where as men were engaged in various activities outside their homes. This was how the economic role of men and women and its outcome appeared to be directly disproportionate in the family in particular and in the society in general. However, in modern Naga society, women's contribution in the segment of economy at home as well as in the society is coming up with commendable results. Women's contribution in the economic front is not insignificant comparing to their male counterpart. Certain occupations are dominantly in the hands of women especially, weaving, selling of finished products, and vegetable vendors etc. Agriculture being the primary occupation of people in rural places, thus both women and men share equal responsibility in cultivating their lands such as clearing the jungle as in the case of jhum cultivation, tilling, sowing, transplanting of seedlings and harvesting the crops.

Another important activity that boosts the economy of the womenfolk living in the village is handicraft and weaving, women both young and old can be seen weaving. This particular activity is one of the main sources of income of not only the women themselves but their family as a whole. The outcome of this activity has made women more independent economically and even socially. Economically, because they need not depend on their husbands to buy or spend on cloths and other articles, they also support

their children by sending them to study outside the village. In spite of all these, women are still not free from the disparity emerging out of traditions and custom, which puts them at a disadvantage in all walks of life. In terms of inheritance, the first priority is given to the sons. Houses, lands, fields are always inherited by males whether rich or poor. When women get married they are not given land properties because once married they belong to their husbands' clans and things owned by them would also belong to the husbands. Once married, the properties of the husband also belong to the wife as long as they stay married but once divorced the woman cannot claim any property.

“According to *Zounuo-Keyhonuo*, a woman's position in the jural context of the society cannot be understood without discussing the *pozuopu* land transaction. A *pozuopu* land is essentially a matrilineally inherited property which is transmitted only in the female line, that is, a mother to her daughter on her marriage. At marriage a woman brings not only her *pozuopu* land but also a lot of other articles such as cow and pig, ornaments, cloths and paddy. All these articles are called *tenumi-shiephro*. Such land is not evenly distributed among the daughters, the eldest daughter is entitled to a larger share of land. The daughters are generally also given a part of father's owned property and land. Such land is called *tepumi-kitsa*. If the couple dies without any child and no male or female child is adopted by them the land which has been inherited from the father by the women goes back to the patrilineage core group of such women and the *pozuopu* land goes back to the affinal kins. Though the proceedings and forms of Christian marriage have changed considerably, it still involves observance of the traditional customs such as the rule of exogamy, incest taboo, community feast, exchange of gifts, matrilineal inheritance, bride price etc. Christianity has not

completely taken away the traditional customs and culture from the *Zounuo-Keyhonus*.”<sup>76</sup>

There is wider participation of women in most occupations and also at the helm of country’s administration. Statistics shows that female employment participation has shown a gradual increase and gender gap in labour force participation narrowed. Even in Nagaland, the number of females clearing competitive examinations such as state civil service examinations under Nagaland Public Service Commission (NPSC) and Nagaland State Entrance Examination (NSEE) is on the rise. These show an increase in female candidates clearing these examinations. These statistics are shown in the tables 3.2.1 & 3.2.2 below:

Table- 3.2.1:<sup>77</sup>

Selection of female candidates for State Civil Service (Administration) in the past three decades (in percentage).		
1980 –1989 (in percentage)	1990 – 1999 (in percentage)	2000 – 2009 (in percentage)
18	33	31

Source: *Women’s success: The ingredient for a balanced growth of society* (2017) (Nagaland Post, Vol. XXVII NO. 264, Tuesday, August 29, 2017 pp.1&5).

76. Kedilezo Kikhi, *Educated Unemployed Youth in Nagaland-A Sociological Study*, New Delhi, Akansha Publishing House, 2006 in Kedilezo Kikhi, *Changes and Continuity in Naga Marriage: Case Study of Zounuo-Keyhono Group of Angami-Naga* cited in T.B. Subba et al, (eds.), *Christianity and Change in North East India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 267-268.

77. *Women’s success: The ingredient for a balanced growth of society* (Nagaland Post, Vol. XXVII NO. 264, Tuesday, August 29, 2017 pp.1&5).

Table- 3.2.2 <sup>78</sup>

Percentage selection of female candidates for MBBS/ BDS through NSEE/NEET					
2014 -2015 (in percentage)	2015 – 2016 (in percentage)	2016 – 2017 (in percentage)	2017-2018 (in percentage)	2018-2019 (in percentage)	2019-2020 (in percentage)
32	52	51	55.17	59.4	60.65

Source: *Women's success: The ingredient for a balanced growth of society* (2017) (Nagaland Post, Vol. XXVII NO. 264, Tuesday, August 29, 2017 pp.1&5).

On the entrepreneurship front, there are fewer women than men at the National level. However, in Nagaland there has been an increasing number of female entrepreneurs in different sectors. One important factor needing highlight in the context of Nagaland is that females in music industry have shown a remarkable growth and success not only at the state but also in the national level. So to ensure continued rise of the upcoming and talented women, there is need to plan a comprehensive support programme that targets female owned enterprises. There is also need to ensure that policies for female-owned business and enterprises are not only directed towards start-ups and small enterprises, but encourage and support their participation and involvement of all existing enterprises so as to ensure equal access for all the entrepreneurs irrespective of gender. According to the 2011 census, the female work participation rate (WPR) of Nagaland stood at 44.7 per cent which is much higher WPR than the National female work participation rate of 26 percent. However, women often work part time as it is more conducive for combining career and family, which comes at the cost of their long career and opportunities. Also the gender gap in work life increases with the arrival of children. All said and done, the statistical figures provided

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78. *Women's success: The ingredient for a balanced growth of society* (Nagaland Post, Vol. XXVII NO. 264, Tuesday, August 29, 2017 pp.1&5).

in Table 3.2.2, should be an eye opener and an inspiration to all females in Nagaland making a remarkable progress. It is, therefore, very encouraging that growing success of women will lead to equal participation of men and women in every walk of life ensuring a successful, strong, sustainable and balanced growth of our society.<sup>79</sup>

Launching of Self Help Group (SHG) plays an important role in women's empowerment providing a desired access to resources and control over factors leading to women empowerment, particularly in the fields of health, including maternal and child health, education, information, self-employment, and building confidence in generating income opportunities. It also allows their respective members to avail loan of a certain amount with terms and conditions so as to benefit the members in question and the group at the same time.

The nature in which SHGs are functioning is noteworthy as it is women-friendly in its activities. It enables women to become creative in the jobs they are taking up and moving towards the right direction in which they can enjoy economic independence through entrepreneurial venture. Many women belonging to the economically weaker sections who joined SHGs have yielded good result with regard to their economic position. The SHG has made a positive impact on the empowerment of women in terms of their potentiality in increasing economic stability to some extent.

As many as 3368 women in Nagaland have enjoyed economic independence through different Self Help Groups (SHG) under the Scheme of Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission as per Financial and Physical Achievement Report NSRLM with effect from 2013-2016 as shown in Table-3.2.3

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79. Nagaland Post, Tuesday August 29, 2017, Dimapur, Nagaland, Vol. XXVII No. 264; and Directorate of Technical Education 2019.

## Financial and Physical Achievement Report under Nagaland State Livelihood

### Mission (NSRLM) 2013-2016:

Table-3.2.3: <sup>80</sup>

(Rs. In Lakh)

Sl No	Year	Opening Balance	Allocation		Releases		Bank Interest	Total Fund	Total Expenditure	Closing Balance	Total Assisted SHGs		
			Centre	State	Centre	State					Women	Dis- abled	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	2013-2014	-	114.00	-	114.00	-	-	114.00	47.25	66.75	335	-	335
2	2014-2015	11874428	-	-	48166781	-	702788	60743997	59204395	1539602	1345	-	1345
3	2015-2016	1543727	16627500	1847500	16627500	1847500	145422	20164149	19715872	448277	1688	-	1688
Grand Total		13418155	16627614	1847500	64794395	1847500	848210	80905260	68920314.25	1987945.75	3368	-	3368

Source: Directorate of Rural Development in Statistical Handbook of Nagaland 2016, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland, Kohima, pp.234-236

80. Directorate of Rural Development in Statistical Handbook of Nagaland 2016, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland Kohima, pp. 234-236.

In Sikhamoni Borgohain (2014), the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) passed by the Indian Parliament in 2005 guaranteeing hundred days of unskilled work of every household has been encapsulated as a ‘gender sensitive scheme’. The scheme’s envisaging of social protection suggests that women must comprise a certain percentage of beneficiaries, as enshrined in the Act; the Act sees to it that ‘while providing employment, priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under the scheme (NREGA, schedule 11, section 6: 19)’. The NREGA also provides some special benefits for women to encourage their full participation, and that equal wages shall be paid to both men and women workers and the provision of equal remuneration Act 1976 to be complied with NREGA is a programme that has begun to make a difference in the lives of women. The impact of NREGA on the lives of the women is notable in many ways, which has contributed to food security, help to reduce distress migration, or fostering better awareness of the wages. The NREGA’s role as a tool of women’s empowerment, deserves much more attention than it has received so far: <sup>81</sup>

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81. Sikhamoni Borgohain, *Role of NREGA in Women Empowerment* in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli, (ed.), *Women Empowerment in North East India*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers Guwahati-1, 2014, pp.137-141.

Table-3.2.4:<sup>82</sup>

Sl. No.	Year	Cumulative No. of Household Issued Job Card			Cumulative No. of Household demanded Employment	Cumulative No. of Household provided Employment	Cumulative No. of Household working under NREGA	Cumulative person days generated (in Lakhs)				Cumulative No. of Household Completed 100 days	No. of Household which are beneficiary of Land Reforms/IAY	No. of Disabled Beneficiary individual
		SC	ST	Others				SC	ST	Others	Women			
1	2012-2013	3512	357668	21862	377514	375740	375740	132446	12195394	861340	3318081	35	228	84
2	2013-2014	3614	386449	22324	408269	407712	407712	104977	17284227	903983	5277301	983	229	102
3	2014-1015	3632	397529	22412	407431	405729	99696	51221	8506883	440354	2808798	7	138	108
4	2015-2016	3627	406364	15150	425141	418268	417353	41	20386283	686553	6634276	1468	267	124

Sources: Directorate of Rural Development in Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, 2016, Kohima, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Govt. of Nagaland Kohima, pp.222-227

Table-3.2.4 indicates that, in MNREGS compilation of all the Districts in Nagaland State, there is an increase in the number of women participations from 3318081 in 2012 – 2013 and 6634276 in 2015 – 2016, which shows a considerable improvement in economic empowerment of rural women in Nagaland.

82. Directorate of Rural Development in Statistical Hand Book of Nagaland, 2016, Kohima, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Govt. of Nagaland, Kohima, pp.222-227

The Government of India grants financial assistance to women in different categories, the gender responsive budget allocated are tabled for reference: Table – 3.2.5 <sup>83</sup>

Table-3.2.5: Year-Wise Pensions Distributed to Women in Nagaland.

Sl. No.	Year	Widow Pensions	Old Age Pensions		Physically Handicapped Pensions	
			Total	Female	Total	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2010-2011	2551	39779	23191	1374	447
2	2011-2012	1961	44908	24998	1276	434
3	2012-2013	1961	44528	27288	1276	466
4	2013-2014	3720	44527	28366	1276	473
5	2014-2015	4464	51750	30896	1276	548

Source: Directorate of Social Welfare, Nagaland: Kohima in Gender Statistics Nagaland 2016, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland, pp.99-101

The rural women are privileged to experience economic empowerment under various central schemes through State Government. Some of the major activities and programmes under Women Resource Development in the state of Nagaland are:-

- 1. Training-Cum-Production Centre (TCPC):** provides ten months training courses for unemployed women and school drop out girls in the trades of tailoring, weaving and knitting.
- 2. Financial Assistance to Destitute Women (FADW):** provides a monthly allowance of Rs.200/-per month to destitute women who are widowed, separated, divorced, single or abandoned.

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83. Directorate of Social Welfare, Nagaland: Kohima in *Gender Statistics Nagaland 2016*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Government of Nagaland, pp.99-101

3. **Women Resource Centres (WRC):** at Mokokchung and Chazouba. Three centres are under construction in Zünheboto, Wokha and Peren.
4. **Interest Free Loan Programmes (IFLP):** Three separate interest free loan programmes initiated under the Chief Minister's self-employment programme are being provided for promotion of women entrepreneurs:
  - (a) **Promotion of Women in Innovative Enterprises Programme (PWIEP):** interest free loan up to Rs.500,000/- given to women undertaking innovative enterprises and who are in need of funds to expand their business.
  - (b) **Women Entrepreneurial Development Initiative (WEDI):** targets the more rural populace to promote women undertaking any private enterprise for their livelihood. An amount of Rs. 200,000/- per beneficiary is being provided.
  - (c) **Micro-Enterprises Development Scheme:** to enable self employment for destitute women and girls who are widowed, separated, divorced, single, abandoned or orphaned victims of war. An amount ranging from Rs. 10,000/- Rs. 30,000/- is being provided per beneficiary.
5. **Integrated Development-Cum-Resource Centre (IDCRC), Dimapur:**
  - (a) Short duration vocational training programmes including tailoring, embroidery, paper-crafts, soft doll making etc. are being taken up.
  - (b) A Myki Training Centre has been set up in the IDRC for imparting free training to women and girls in and around Dimapur in these trades.
  - (c) Has entered into partnership with three women-based enterprises namely Rolongs Collection, Quirky Qrafts and Precious Me Love to implement the above activities.

**6. Gender Responsive Budget (GRB):** Construction for Market Complex at Chumukedima Town, Construction of Market at Medziphema Town, construction of Shopping Complex for the unemployed and poor women at Tobu Town and Market Complex at Chiephobozou are women specific projects and the main aim is to uplift womenfolk towards self sustenance. A careful research on demand for financing and savings behaviour of the potential borrowers and in determining the multipurpose loans are essential in improving women's economic empowerment in Nagaland.

“The International Day of Rural Women was observed along with the rest of the world on October 15, 2014 at the Hut Conference Hall Kohima, Nagaland, organised by Jayanti Vikas Samiti Nagaland (JVSN) to honour rural women who courageously venture out from their comfort zone to improve their livelihood. The significance of the day was to recognize and celebrate the efforts and hard work of young women striving to improve their rural livelihood. International Day of Rural Women was first officially held as a UN observance on October 15, 2008. This day recognizes the role of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty. On this occasion three young women were identified and felicitated. They are Zakielhounuo from Mima village who drives a Zonal Taxi and plies passenger from the state capital to her village, and Mhasivinu from Pfuchama village and Diezeneinu from Kigwema village, who work as Municipal Bus Conductor.”<sup>84</sup>

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84. Eastern Mirror, October 15, 2014 (EMN) [WWW.EASTERNMIRRORNAGALAND.COM](http://WWW.EASTERNMIRRORNAGALAND.COM).

“Three Naga women have been conferred the Vasundhara North East woman entrepreneur of the year’ award on April 26, 2018 in Delhi. The three awardees are Temsusenla Kichu, Karen Yepthomi and Jasmina Zeliang. Karen Yepthomi of Dzukou Kitchen bagged the ‘Vasundhara Women Entrepreneur Award for 2015-16’, while Temsusenla Kichu of the Fusion Store was conferred the ‘Vasundhara Women Entrepreneur Award for 2016-17’. Jasmina Zeliang from Nagaland, who promoted handicraft items from the North East at International markets, was named for the ‘Vasundhara Hall of Fame’.”<sup>85</sup>

Recently two ladies namely Pongam N Konyak, 18 years of age, of Wangti village and W. Nginlei, 17 years of age, of Phuktong village from the remote part of Mon district came to Kohima to be trained as professional bike mechanics. The Nagaland Motorcycle Club (NMC) brought them to give them proper training at the Gear Heads garage. The duo expressed that they faced hardship and insult from some people in the village being a girl. They also added that they were both Taekwando players. They both dream to go back and open a garage in the village, they also expressed that the youth should take up the challenge and explore, as money comes and goes but learning and being trained will last forever.

In Nagaland just recently 230 women street vendors attended the meeting of the Entrepreneurs Associates (EA) at Tenyiphe village on 29.7.2019. The Entrepreneurs Associates’ initiative was to support the women vendors of the state for better access to their rights and educate them on basic skills in business, health and finance. They also deliberated on the areas lacking in proper toilets, transportation and short shelf life of many of their products due to non availability of cold storage facility, etc. In this

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85. Eastern Mirror, April 27, 2018 (EMN) [WWW.EASTERNMIRRORNAGALAND.COM](http://WWW.EASTERNMIRRORNAGALAND.COM)

meeting the cheques for women vendors were distributed for those who have saved more than Rs 10,000. To safeguard the interest of the women street vendors, EA project was initiated and officially launched on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2017. Based on the street vendors 2014 Parliament Act, the EA expressed its aspiration that the Nagaland Government adopt and implement the Street vendors Act at the earliest to upgrade economic empowerment of Naga women.

A unique initiative taken by Chakhesang Women Welfare Society in establishing Vekuhu SHG Rural Mart at Mission Compound Pfutsero under Phek district is the first Rural Mart in the state, run by Self Help Group sponsored by NABARD. It is to be known that women in Nagaland have the quest to learn the skill of entrepreneurial knowledge not only for their sustenance but also to step out into the competitive world to have strong footing in the sphere of economic empowerment.

Coming to imparting training to the women folks in Nagaland, the Directorate of Women Resources Development imparted free training for the female candidates in and around Dimapur at the Integrated Development cum Resources Centre, Purana Bazar, Dimapur, Nagaland under the following programmes: Soft Doll making (Preciousmelove), Papercrafts (QuirkyQrafts), cutting and tailoring (Rolong's Creations). The seats were also reserved for the differently-abled candidates, the duration of the training period, which is for two months, is to inculcate the skill to the unemployed women.

Philip Mody et al, (2014) assert, "In the modern world, woman is no longer confined to the role of home maker. Today, she whole heartedly contributes to the home and leads the work place as well as into business regime, making incredible headways especially in micro, small and medium enterprises. They also enjoy economic liberty over their business and spend much of the income for family members. The movement

is more intense in developing economies and they enjoy financial empowerment.”<sup>86</sup>

### 3.3 Cultural Empowerment of Women in Nagaland:

To M. Amaladoss (1998), “the word culture has been derived from the Latin word “cool-ere” that literally means, “to inhabit”, “to cultivate”, or “to honour” referring to the whole aspect of human activity. Thus to understand it wholly, we may define that culture is the way in which people humanise nature. Humans look at the world around them and make it a meaningful place to live in. The meaning comes from the particular way they look at God, humans and the universe. They organise their community and their life in accordance with the meaning they give to the world. Meaning and values find expression myths and symbols, in literature and art, in rituals and attitudes that structure social relationships, in festivals and other cultural products that celebrate life and relationships.”<sup>87</sup>

Inato Yekhetto Shikhu (2007) mentions that “tattooing was the form of decorating body parts like thigh, breast and face. The most important handicrafts of the Nagas were wood curving, bamboo works, pottery and blacksmith. These carvings and arts were seen mostly on the village gate, in the morung, and in front of a rich man’s or warrior’s house.”<sup>88</sup>

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86. Philip Mody et al, *Women in Retail Business: A Case Study on Capital Region of Arunachal Pradesh* in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli, (ed.), *Women Empowerment in North East India*, Guwahati, EBH Publishers Guwahati-1, 2014, pp. 70-71.

87. M. Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, Delhi, ISPCK, 1998, in Inato Yekhetto Shikhu, *A Re-Discovery and Re-Building of Naga Cultural Values, An analytical Approach with Special Reference to Maori as a Colonised and Minority Group of People In New Zealand*, Regency Publication, New Delhi, 2007, p.25.

88. Inato Yekhetto Shikhu, *A Re-Discovery and Re-Building of Naga Cultural Values (An Analytical Approach With Special Reference to Maori as a Colonised and Minority Group of People in New Zealand)*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2007, p.22.

P. Imchen (1993) states, “poetry was a prominent feature of most of the tribes’ literature. Through it, they expressed and professed their love affairs, marriages, tributes, cultural and moral values, religious value, reformation, enthronement, and contextual message. The other forms of literatures that were used by the early Nagas were lyrics, music forms and speeches. The Nagas also had a tradition of pictographic expression of history, philosophy and social events. This is evident in the artistry of their dress, ornaments and shawl, worn both by men and women, morung building, village gates found prominent expression in architecture of their houses.”<sup>89</sup>

M. Atsongchanger (1995) narrates, “Naga society both in the past and today is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal in structure. For many tribes, the payment of bride price as a custom was not essential, like the Lothas and the Sümis. As for Sümis, marriage within the same clan was strictly forbidden. It was a serious offence against his/her clan and the whole village. The commission of such a crime resulted in banishment from the village with a huge fine. Such a couple never returned to the village.”<sup>90</sup> The Nagas were self-sufficient, self-dependent people with agriculture as their main occupation. They cultivated their own lands and produced sufficient food grains to sustain them for years. They also grow vegetables alongside the paddy cultivations. They rear domesticated animals like mithun, cattle, goats, pigs, dogs and chickens for their consumption as well as to generate income.

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89. P. Imchen, *Ancient Ao Naga Religion and Culture*, Delhi, Har-Anand Pub, 1993, p.129 in Inato Yekhetto Shikhu, *A Re-Discovery and Re-Building of Naga Cultural Values (An Analytical Approach with Special Reference to Maori as a Colonised and Minority Group of People in New Zealand)*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2007, p.35.

90. M. Atsongchanger, *Christian Education and Social Change*, S O Press, Guwahati, 1995 in Inato Yekhetto Shikhu, *A Re-Discovery and Re-Building of Naga Cultural Values, An analytical Approach with Special Reference to Maori as a Colonised and Minority Group of People In New Zealand*, Regency Publication, New Delhi, 2007, p.32.

In Naga society women were greatly respected for their wisdom, skill in management of their respective home affairs and also possessing reconciliatory attitude towards other family or clans. In the past, during war, women would play the role of peace-maker. In Naga society, a clear distinction is maintained between men and women. However, Naga women enjoyed a fairly high status when compared to other societies. Even after marriage, women always get support not only from family members but also from her clans at times of crisis. Women in Naga society never felt neglected in terms of support and their well-being is taken care of accordingly. The Naga women had high respect for men and they would not like their husbands to be disrespected in any manner. In Naga society, elders are highly respected irrespective of gender and they are also given priorities and preferences as and when such situation arises. Young Naga people would automatically offer seats to elders. Food and drinks are served to elders first, and they are allowed to speak first in the meeting. Opinion of the elders was always solicited first in decision making. In Naga society, elder brothers, elder sisters, spouses, uncle, aunt are never called by name but they are addressed in a respectful manner that is the reason why a healthy and respectful culture still prevails in the Naga society. The Nagas in general were compassionate in nature, maintained strong social bond; they would always support each other at times of need such as calamities, war and conflict.

The Naga women play pro active role to upkeep the traditional values and culture alive. They inculcate the age old values and traditions among the younger generation by way of taking up the responsibility to teach their language to their children. Losing one's own culture and language is an ultimate evidence of losing self identity. Traditional skills like weaving, dyeing, bead works, handicrafts are taught to younger generation, and also about the 'dignity of labour'. In the past there was no

knowledge about the modern medicine being scientifically tested and proven, manufactured and sold in the market for the purpose of diagnosis, preventive and curative to save lives as and when such situation arises. They used to depend on traditional way of healing for different types of illnesses. They would use traditional herbs and plants to cure different kinds of sicknesses with or without rituals depending on the presenting signs and symptoms of the patient. The traditional herbs and plants are still used in certain remote areas with positive results: the potency, efficacy and acceptability of which needs to be analysed by medical scientists for documentation. Women especially in the rural areas still depend on such herbs for minor wounds and different types of ailments.

The Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) of different women groups can organize workshops and seminars and discuss the traditional values and practices of the Nagas involving women's significant roles and also modern concept of women empowerment in different ways.

According to Zano Mozhui (2004), the Lotha Naga had a strong taboo practices like any other Naga tribes strongly connected to their religious beliefs. Same clan marriage was considered a taboo, for a belief that one would lose his generation etc. Men were tabooed to weave cloths and winnow rice. The observance of taboos was believed to be strictly for the benefit of individuals, clans and for the entire community. Violation of traditional norms would lead to misfortune to the individuals, clans as well as to the community. Although modern Nagas are Christians, when it comes to traditions and custom, people are still strongly attached to it, and therefore some age-old traditional practices and beliefs are still not completely done away with.<sup>91</sup>

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91. Zano Mozhui, *The Impact of Christianity on the Naga People*, Dimapur, New Screen Printers, 2004, p.10 in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Private Limited, New Delhi, 2014, p. 29

Imtila Longchar (1999) explains that in traditional Lotha Naga society, “dance was an important component in the life of Lotha women. Women do not dance with men but they do separately. The most important dance of the women was a dance for bringing down rain. At the time of drought, womenfolks would gather, go around the village singing and dancing at night asking god to send down rain, which was considered as a kind of sacred dance to induce rain.”<sup>92</sup> The rain dance related to womenfolk is to avert drought, which shows that they were more concerned and worried about the crop failure than men in the society. Arguably women work harder than men in the fields and at home.

“The Lotha Naga women can never be treated as a chattel. She is to be treated well by her husband failing which he is to face angry remonstrations given by her clan people who are invariably at her side. Prostitution has never been a custom among the Nagas as noted by the eminent Ethnographers like J.P. Mills and W.C. Smith.”<sup>93</sup>

According to Lucy Zehol, the Khezha women also follow certain traditional norms like any other ceremony, the rituals relating to agriculture too strictly observed before sowing of seeds. Women would fast before sowing of seeds in the fields. This is done so for fear of the spirit whose anger may destroy the crops sown. Sowing of seeds is done early in the morning, after which they enjoy rice beer called *zuso*. When the harvest is brought home, the mother of the family offers prayer to the spirit; she then performs another ritual for taking out paddy for cooking. To complete the ritual, cooking has to be done in a new hearth. If there is no surviving mother in the family, the

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92. Imtila Longchar, *Portrayal of Women in Drama*, Jorhat, Assam, 1999, pp. 32-36 in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Private Limited, New Delhi, 2014, p.37.

93. J.P.Mills, *The Lotha Naga*, p.96 in Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, Astral International Private Limited, New Delhi, 2014, p.42.

eldest daughter would perform the rituals and ceremonies. Thus, it is observed that the women enjoyed a respectable place and played a significant role in the area of economic activities.<sup>94</sup>

The Naga tribes have their own traditional dresses which are highly valued for their beautiful designs and blend of colours. Shawls for men and women are different and they are found in many varieties. Men and women have different designs of dresses. Every tribe has different colours and designs of their own. The Sümi women have about twenty four shawls and mekheles; each type having its own meaning and significance.

The artistic and aesthetic work of Naga women is displayed in making different types of traditional attires. In Naga society, women are bound to learn the art of weaving. Some of the traditional wear are in the form of ornamental pieces and are known as ‘cultural dresses’ which are traditionally worn during important occasion.

Adani Ngullie (2014) states, “a closer examination of Naga women’s activities in the past reveals the womanly virtues in a society well known for its insularity, illiteracy, economic subsistence level and, animistic belief and practices. In Naga society, there was no question of purdah system, but free movement and free participation in agricultural activities. Generally speaking, in olden time hill dwelling women did not bother much about their physical appearance after the birth of a child. Such women care for the good image primarily by becoming a proud mother of a healthy child, and their lasting hard work towards home keeping including strenuous agricultural labour to assist her husband. During those days, the highest asset of women

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94. Lucy Zehol, *Changing Khezha Culture, Christianity and Women: Some Observations* in T. B. Subba et al. (eds.), *Christianity and Change in North East India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2009, p.337

was expressed in terms of physical capability of executing manual labour rather than physical beauty.”<sup>95</sup>

The customary law with regard to marriage and divorce shows that both men and women played an equally important role and, therefore, one cannot be said to be superior or inferior to the other. However, when it comes to the principles regarding the relationship between the men and women, it shows that the rules were more in favour of men as husbands than women as wives, especially in the matters pertaining to divorce and inheritance of ancestral property. Some customary laws and practices were more biased against women in case of elopement and pregnancy before marriage when other tribes or villages were involved. Fines / punishments were imposed on women only for such acts. No such rules as fines or punishment were imposed on men for the same kind of offence. According to Naga customary laws, women had no equal rights with men in the political or administrative aspects though their role was seen to be very essential for the proper functioning of the society. It is known from the role played by women in the traditional society during war times in bringing about peace or in other words, negotiating between two warring factions. Even in the present society, women are known to have skill to influence the administration of the village to a great extent. However, in spite of the contributions and supportive role played by womenfolk to ensure smooth functioning of the administration, they are not considered as equal partner of the system. Almost all the Naga tribes have similar traditional practices towards women till today.

According to Mr. Kelengol Neikha and Mr. Vizapo Kikhi (2019), in addition to other festivals like any other Naga tribes, the Viswema village of Southern Angami tribe

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95. Adani Ngullie, *Christianization and Empowerment of Lotha Naga Women in North East India*, New Delhi, Astral International Privat Limited, New Delhi, 2014, p. 43.

celebrates a festival called *Te-l-khukhu*. *Te-l-khukhu* festival is considered as an important festival for damsels which is celebrated somewhere in the month of July to August. The name of the festival carries two words, '*Te-l*' (toad) and '*khukhu*' (to share). Therefore, *Te-l-khukhu* means "toad's share". According to the legend, there were three bosom friends, a man, a mouse and a toad who found rice which they distributed among themselves. But the mouse finding it difficult to carry her share requested the man that she may be allowed to consume the same in the corner of his field. The toad also prayed to the man that some rice be offered in its name once a year, hence the festival of giving the toad its share of rice.

In another legend it is said that, one day a lady saw fully ripened '*othsü-bo*' (millet plant) in the middle of the pond. The lady asked a squirrel to pluck an ear of the millet plant for her, but the squirrel did not return. Then the lady sent a parrot, but the bird too started eating and never returned. Finally, the lady sent a toad and the toad brought her an ear of millet. The lady gratefully received the millet and told the toad that she would give a portion of the millet harvest. On this special festival of damsels, women folks are given privilege to wear brand new cloths and enjoy special delicacies with their peer group. On this special event, creativity of womenfolks is seen in decorating their '*chokrwu*' (eaves at the entrance of a house) with wild flowers and locally available decorative items. With the coming of modernisation, the closely knitted fabric of the community is gradually fading away. However, the civic bodies organise the festival as part of their annual activity and distribute food to the girl child. The status of women is raised through this celebration and it also reminds menfolks to respect and honour fairer sex.<sup>96</sup>

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96. Kelengol Neikha and Vizapo Kikhi, *Te-l khukhu, A Festival of Falcity: A Case Study with Special Reference to Viswema Village* in Dr. Joy Thomas SVD and George Keduolhou Angami, (eds.), *India's North East: A Celebration of Cultures*, Saurabh Printers, Delhi, Noida, 2019, pp. 275-278

Despite all these constructive roles played by women, women had no equal rights with men in the political or administrative sphere though their role was seen to be very essential for the proper functioning of the society. However, it is wrong to assume that women are completely inferior to men. But there are clear differences between gender roles in some cases. Women also have an important place in the society but where the actual principle of the workings of the customary law is concerned, the rights of women are always under threat. It can be summed up that women do not enjoy equal status with men in respect of customary law.

# **CHAPTER - 4**

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN PERSPECTIVE OF SÜMI WOMEN**

## CHAPTER - 4

### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN PERSPECTIVE OF SÜMI WOMEN

#### 4.1 The Origin of Sümi Tribe:

In this chapter an attempt is made to study women empowerment in the perspective of Sümi women.

The Sümi Nagas do not have a written record like any other Nagas to trace their history. However, according to stories passed down posterity, it is told that the Nagas migrated from a place called ‘Samsok’ in Myanmar to Maikhel in Mao area from where they moved to Khezakhonoma village in Chakhesang area.<sup>97</sup> As stated by Hokishe Sema, the Sümis migrated from Khezakhonoma in two directions towards ‘Swemi’ and ‘Cheseswezumi’ and then to ‘Ighanumi’ and ‘Hebolimi’ villages. It is from these two villages that the Sümi Naga tribe moved to many other places in Zünheboto district, which constitute the present Sümi area.<sup>98</sup> The Sümi, like any other Naga tribes thrived on oral tradition for better part of their history. Therefore, there are divergent and competing claims concerning their origin and migration. It said that the Sümi belong to the Tibeto-Burman family widespread over South-East Asia. It is generally believed that the direction from which the Sümis came is South, ie., through Manipur to Phek (erstwhile Kohima District) then to the present habitat. Khezhakhenoma in Phek District is believed to be the ancestral home to most of the southern tribes of Nagaland including

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97. Huskha Yeptomhi, Former Sümi Hoho President, interviewed on 04.11.2008 cited in Zhekugha Assumi, *The Sumi Ahuna*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2009, p.4 in K. Kalito Chishi, *Handicraft and Economic Empowerment of Sümi Naga Women of Nagaland* in C. Periasamy and K. Kalito Chishi (eds.), *Research Methodologies: Concepts Trends and Developmental Issues*, IQAC and Research Committee, Zunheboto Government College, Erode 2019, p.74

98. Hokishe Sema, *Emergence of Nagaland*, p.6 in Zhekugha Assumi, *The Sumi Ahuna*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2009 p.5 in K. Kalito Chishi, *Handicraft and Economic Empowerment of Sümi Naga Women of Nagaland* in C. Periasamy and K. Kalito Chishi (eds.), *Research Methodologies: Concepts Trends and Developmental Issues*, IQAC and Research Committee, Zunheboto Government College, Erode 2019

Note: the letter ‘ü’ and ‘u’ used in Zünheboto/ Zunheboto; Sümi and Sumi connotes the same usage.

the Sümi and the Lotha. Ethnographers and linguists of the British era also asserted that the affinities between the Angami, the Chakhesang and the Sümi in terms of language suggest that the tribes might have at one point of time been more intimately connected than they are now.<sup>99</sup>

H. John Sema (2013) mentions that there is a belief that the forefathers of the Sümis came out of the bowels of the earth where the thatched grass grew, that is why, it has been said that the Sümis have got physical enduring capacity. This belief may be based on certain facts that they migrated to places covered by thick jungles braving different hurdles and difficulties like mosquito bites and encountering ferocious animals. Many of the elderly Sümis contended that the instinct of the adventure was in the blood which prompted them to migrate from one place to another. Another reason may be that the Sümis have got the instinct to be the leader.<sup>100</sup> It is to be noted here that till 30 September 1995, the term ‘Sema’ was used, but under the initiative of the apex body of Sümi tribe, the Sümi Hoho, the state government issued an administrative order to replace the term ‘Sema’ with Sümi, vide order No. Home/SCTA-16/94, Dated Kohima, the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1995.<sup>101</sup>

#### **4.2 Background of Zünheboto District:**

The name ‘Zünheboto’ is derived from two sets of words, “Zünhebo” and “to” in Sümi dialect. “Zünhebo” is the name of a flowering shrub with smooth green leaves and white spongy flower and, “to” means a hill top. After its establishment in 1942 primarily for opening an Upper Primary School, Zünheboto town was subsequently

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99. J.H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, Oxford University Press, 1921, pp.4 & 375 cited in *District Human Development Report*, Zünheboto, Nagaland, GOI-UNDP Project, 2013 pp.7-8

100. H. John Sema, *Traditional and Modern Political Institutions of the Nagas*, Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 2013, p.11,

101. Government Notification vide order No. Home/SCTA-16/94, Dated Kohima, the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1995.

declared as sub-division on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1958. Later, Zünheboto town became the ultimate choice for the district administrative head quarter since then Zünheboto was declared as a full- fledged district in 1973.

Geographically located on the 94.52° East Longitude and 25.97° North Latitude, the district is situated in the very heart of Nagaland covering geographical area of 1259 Sq.Km. at an altitude of 1000-2500 meters above sea level with a population of 141,014 as per 2011 Census. The sex ratio stands at 981 females against 1000 males with female literacy rate at 83.61 against 88.52 male literacy rate. As the centrally located district of Nagaland, it has a unique distinction of having its boundary with all the districts except Mon, Longleng, Noklak, Peren and Dimapur. Prior to the creation of the four new districts, Mon was the only district which did not have a common boundary with Zünheboto.<sup>102</sup>

The entire district is inhabited by the Sümis only. Like any other district in Nagaland, Zünheboto too has its rural population outnumbering the urban with a ratio of 4:1. However, recently the universal phenomenon of urbanisation is taking place at a very fast pace. Easy access to communication, job prospects and better education facilities in the urban areas are the factors stimulating this trend.

The dawn of twentieth century marked by a series of radical changes has left an indelible imprint on every aspect of life of the Sümis. The British annexation paved ways for American missionaries to penetrate the interior Sümi land with the gospel. The people in turn embraced the new faith and renounced head hunting and pagan beliefs as well. Most of all, access to formal education enabled them to broaden their world view.

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102. *District Human Development Report*, Zünheboto Nagaland, GOI-UNDP Project, 2013, p.7

### **4.3 Sümi and Patriarchal Society:**

The Sümi tribe like any other Nagas is patriarchal in nature where women have no say regarding the ancestral property. Men are regarded as the head of the family and the protector and provider. The basis of a Sümi society is the village that is indisputably controlled by a village chief. But as women become more informed of their rights and demand their rights, there is a kind of resistance by some menfolks. This clearly shows that there are still some section of men who believe that whatever role played by women are less significant in the society. When we examine the status of women in Sümi society taking the historical facts into consideration about the birth of children in their family, it becomes obvious that the birth of a male child was a kind of an auspicious one, which is clearly understood to be simply for the continuation of the family lineages and inheritance. Although a male child was most desired to carry on the age old tradition of Sümi people, yet it is not an unwelcome moment when a girl child is born.

The Sümis are traditionally governed by customary laws in both social and religious lives. It is observed that the customary law is highly respected by Sümis thereby protecting their culture intact. However, it is now apparent that there are certain changes in the system during the last few decades in an attempt to strengthen the rights of women. The changes have been taking place for good in social and economic life of Sümi women. Unlike the forefathers' time, they are now free to pursue any profession as per the requisite qualification each one of them possesses. They are no more mere 'home makers' or 'house wife' but there are many achievers as well in different fields. The changes in the system allowing women to participate in social fabrics without any restriction have enabled them to take up salaried jobs in public and private sectors as well. The changes in the Sümi society with regard to women empowerment appears to be moving towards the right direction. However, in spite of the changes taking place in

the society, it is still felt that more awareness activities need to be created so as to make them fully understand about the rights and empowerment of women.

#### **4.4 Uniqueness of Sümi Women:**

The uniqueness of Sümi women is that, they are faithful to their husband and so the divorce cases are very rare. After the demise of husband Sümi women rarely remarry again to look after her orphaned children. The Sümi women are regarded to be strong and warrior type; they would even accompany men folks in tribal feuds and they also involve themselves in constructing their dwelling houses in the absence of men. Some of the Sümi villages were given the name of a woman. For instance, Shesülimi village under Pughoboto Sub Division was named after a generous and witty woman whose name was Shesü. Another unique role of Sümi women is played by Mrs. Teli Kiba, believed to be the first lady from Sümi community, who was appointed as G.B. (Gaon Bura/Village Chief) from Ighanumi village under Pughoboto Sub Division, by Sir Charles Pawsey, the Deputy Commissioner of Kohima *Elakha* (District) after the demise of her husband, Ghopfuna in 1936.

A Sümi woman by the name Mrs. Shovili Sheqi, daughter of Mixikha Sheqi of Mishilimi village under Pughoboto Sub-Division was the first Sümi woman, who was gifted in weaving different types of indigenous shawls and mekhalas. In 1921, the then Deputy Commissioner of Kohima *Elakha* (district), J.H. Hutton, gave an order which assigned her to train Sümi women the art of weaving for six months at Inspection Bungalow (IB), located at Ghukiye village. In the cold region of the Sümi area, villagers did not allow her to travel on foot but carry her in a bamboo basket called *Japha Kho*. She was paid wages by the British Government. She stationed herself at Sükomi village and for three months at Philimi village to impart weaving training to the villagers. She not only taught the art of weaving but also demonstrated how to dye clothes or threads

in different colours with herbs available in their respective native villages. This is how Sümi women learnt the art of weaving which is another source of income in the family setup.

Another unique quality found among Sümi women is that Mrs. Mineli Swunetho, wife of late Rev. Yemhi Swunetho of Lazami village used to receive preachers and visitors from other churches. She encouraged women believers to take out a handful of rice and keep it separately when they prepare to cook rice, and to bring the same to the altar during women's fellowship of Thursday service. Since then, the practice of collecting handful of rice came into being in Sümi churches which generates monetary benefits and inculcates in helping the poor and the needy in the church ministry. The collection of handful of rice has been utilised for a noble cause even in the past by the women believers in supporting the individuals/ families at times of crises where foodgrains were in short supply for sustenance. Even in the recent out break of COVID-19, women believers are independently making use of a handful of rice collection and distributing it to the poor and needy families in their respective jurisdiction which may be understood as empowering women for social cause.

The Sümis were strongly attached to animism and social norms which have governed their lives for centuries. But after the spread of Christianity a big breakthrough came when they witnessed their own people being converted and baptised; it ushered in a tremendous period of change among the Sümi which helped them not only to change their religious faith but also to make them alter their whole outlook and way of life completely. After embracing Christianity as their religion, many things/ rituals which were traditionally considered appropriate have been changed for good. In Chishilimi village under Pughoboto Sub-Division, one of the first converts, Mr. Ghüshepu Wotsa, married off his only daughter, Nigholi Wotsa to Khakhu Chishi son of Pükhashe Chishi

of Chishilimi village in a Christian marriage norm without bride price/dowry which was first of its kind, that is, against the traditional type of marriage during that period of time with lots of opposition from the community. Mr. Ghüshepu Wotsa was summoned by a government agent who was in charge of Customary Law Enforcement, Mr. K.D and slapped Wotsa on his face. Wotsa who was more stout and stronger than the assailant did not protest but said “it is written in the Bible, if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also – (Matthew 5:39)”. Even after hearing that K.D slapped the other side of his face again. The onlookers stopped K.D and told him that Ghüshepu is not resisting, otherwise you are no match to him if he fights back. Thus, further assault and accusation was prevented by a group of thoughtful onlookers. Wotsa did not use his might or power to fight back, but acted according to the word of God and succeeded by His spirit. And now, with the acceptance of Christianity as their religion, traditional practice of bride price/dowry system is a thing of the past in Chishilimi village. It is observed that not only in Chishilimi village but now, the practice of paying bride price is a rarity, if not completely done away with in Sümi community. As the Sümis have converted to Christianity, the marriage is now solemnised by the Licentiate Pastors or Reverends.

#### **4.5 Sümi Women and Family:**

In Sümi dialect, women in general are called ‘*totimi*’, ‘*ilimi*’ denotes a girl who attains maturity and has developed self consciousness and ‘*ilimi lhothe/ ili lhothe*’ means teenagers. Sümi girls remain with their parents till the time the marriage takes place. After marriage, the woman is called ‘*anipu*’ (wife). After becoming the mother, they are called *aza* (mother). In the case of whether the husband is deceased or she becomes a divorcee, she is called *chimemi* (widow). In Sümi society mother is the primary care - taker of the children. It is observed that women appear to be more

concerned about the health of their children than their husbands although both husband and wife shoulder equal responsibilities in determining their children's education. Sümi women are hard workers and majority of domestic tasks such as cleaning, fetching water, washing clothes, buying groceries and vegetables, cooking, rearing domestic animals and helping children with their home works are being done by them. The duties and responsibilities of Sümi women do not confine to domestic front only, but they are also as skilled as their husbands in cultivating their lands. In olden days men might be considered as the primary 'bread winner', but now women also generate income from different sources such as, working as government servants, engaging in different businesses and continuing to grapple with the multi task as earners and at the same time holding the status of 'care-givers' in the family.

#### **4.6 Sümi women and life in the Dormitory:**

When a Sümi woman has given at least five years of service to her parents in the form of exchange of labour from her '*Alojimi*' (working team / group), she is said to have reached marriageable age. Sümi women learn the art of weaving, dancing, singing etc., from home through her mother and at the *Iliki* (girls' dormitory), and also from the elders and *alojimi* in the fields. This period of learning' is called *kighili* (let play). During this time she not only learns but gets freedom to enjoy her life in the 'Girls Dormitory' and working group. *Iliki* is usually located at the centre of the village, which has a big space and contains a cubical and a hearth. The girls sleep on the elevated place where beds are prepared in order to avoid or keep away from enemies and trouble makers. This is an important institute for socialising and learning. They also learn the etiquette of social behaviour, respect, obedience and manners from the girls' dormitory. Once in the *Iliki*, the worries, domestic problems and tensions are relieved by sharing

with inmates. She is allowed the freedom to enjoy her maidenhood though restricted in certain areas unlike her male counterpart. By mixing up with other girls in the dormitory, they also get ample opportunity to develop their talents and personalities.

#### **4.7 Position of Women in Sümi Society:**

The practice of polygamy among village chiefs and well-to-do individuals during pre-Christian era has been replaced by monogamy. In the past some Sümi men had a record of having more than 10 wives. The reason behind having several wives is also to have more work-force in the agricultural farming and to have more children. The first wife used to be second in command in the family and the rest maintain lower status than the first wife. In olden days, when a difference or discord arises between the husband and wife, the husband used to place *awolakha* (a bamboo plank placed at the bottom of the main entrance to shut out domestic animals) on top of his wife who is already lying flat on the ground, and jump over the *awolakha* in order to torture his erring wife. But such degrading practices are no longer heard after embracing Christianity.

Sümi women are generally believed to enjoy better position in terms of mobility and participation in the process of decision making in the family when compared to the societies in other parts of India. The practice of childhood betrothal has been replaced by love marriage and arranged marriage is a case of rarity. Bride burning is never heard of in Sümi community. Although, there is no dress restriction for Sümi women, they are expected to wear decent clothes. In the past, many Sümi women faced hardship during the time of animism, but the changes for good was brought about by Christian faith, and now Sümi women are in a better position at home and in the society.

#### 4.8 Culture and Customary Practices of Sümi Women:

Culture according to the Oxford Dictionary is “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively, customs, civilization and achievements of a particular time or people”. Culture is thus the sum total of customs, traditions, institutions etc. inherited by a person or a group of people.

The term culture is opened to a various interpretations. Culture has two important dimensions: material and non-material. The aspect of material culture includes implements, costumes, household objects, buildings, and ornaments, etc. while the non-material culture is referred to “a system of ideas, polity, beliefs, rituals, taboos, value system and morals. Therefore, culture is both concrete and conceptual that is expressed in tangible objects as well as in ideas and philosophy”.<sup>103</sup>

Avitoli (2011) expresses that most of the educated men and women are of the opinion that preservation and promotion of cultural heritage is the need of the hour in spite of the initial restrictions and discouragement enforced by foreign missionaries. Like other Naga tribes, the Sümi people continue to celebrate festivals like Tuluni and Ahuna. Should there be enmity, friendship is extended through sharing of the feast. It is a matter of concern that the Sümi dialect is fast being diluted with English and Nagamese. Should the dialect be taken lightly it is likely that within a few decades the dialect might just disappear. If the present society is to reinstate past cultural elements, it would be those that are rational and sensible.<sup>104</sup>

M. Horam (1988) cites that until the advent of Christianity and education among the Nagas in the late nineteenth century, customs and traditions played the most

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103. K. Nishena Nekha, *The Naga Culture and Education*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2005, p.10

104. Avitoli G. Zhimo, *Culture, Identity and Change: The Case of the Sümi of Nagaland*, 2011, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, p. 46, (<https://about.jstor.org/terms>), E mail: [agzhimo@anthro.du.ac.in](mailto:agzhimo@anthro.du.ac.in)

important role in the Naga society. People who come to Nagaland with an eye of aesthetics appreciate the exquisite designs of the Naga crafts and arts; and those with an ear of music get enchanted with music and songs. Very recently, several young people partly disenchanted with modern norms and partly awakened by education to values of all forms of culture are making earnest efforts to re-verify their traditions and half-forgotten cultural heritage. This means that new generation of concerned Naga youths have started realizing their valuable cultural heritage.<sup>105</sup>

Santosh Kumar (ed.), (2016) views that a Naga woman is traditionally expected to be humble, obedient and faithful in whatever she does. She plays multiple roles as a wife, mother and food producer in addition to caring of her child. She also generates household income through handicrafts such as weaving and selling of different types of shawls and mekkelas which are exclusively done by women.

However, traditionally women are not included in decision-making process in the matters pertaining to the affairs of the clan and the village administration. The Naga society is patriarchal, but women do enjoy freedom considerably when it comes to the social life and the domestic responsibility. Women in Naga society have greater responsibilities ranging from household work to agricultural activities. In Naga society, men's responsibility in the household activities seems to be shrinking where as women's responsibilities keep expanding. The roles and responsibilities of modern women are much more significant than what it used to be in the past. Customary laws which restricted women from coming out of the domestic work in the past were nothing

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105. M. Horam, *Nagas Old Ways New Trends*, New Delhi, Cosmos Publications, Ansari Road Daryagang. 1988, cited in K. Nishena Nekha, *The Nagas Culture and Education*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2015 p.15, quoted in K. Kalito Chishi, *Traditional Customary Laws, Socio-Economic and Political Life of Sümi Women: Changing Dimensions* Article Published, in Dr. T. Jothiramalingam (ed.), *Women Empowerment: Key to National Development*, Villupuram, Kailayanadhar Pathippagam, 2017, p.242, Article Published, p.240

less than gender bias which narrowed the chances for women's participation in the decision-making body.<sup>106</sup>

When it comes to political empowerment of women, the general public who strongly believe in Traditional system of social structure opposed the concept of 33 per cent reservation of seat for women. On the pretext of Article 371(A) the people who are not in favour of giving 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in Urban Local Bodies (ULB) are interpreting that it will make Article 371(A) redundant. While the protection and safeguarding of the customary law did promote the preservation of the Naga culture, it gave a stronger bond to patriarchal characteristics which resulted in the subordination of women especially in the political front.

In the context of Sümi society women are not allowed to perform religious rites and sacrifices. She is not allowed to be the member of village council. As such, she is not eligible to participate and discuss in the affairs of the village. Women are excluded from activities like warfare, hunting, and war dances. According to Sümi customary law, women do not inherit ancestral land. Like many other Naga tribes, land is inherited only by men. Immovable property such as land and community land are inherited by sons only.

#### **4.9 Traditional Beliefs and Practices of Sümis:**

Some of the important beliefs depicting women as inferior in Sümi traditional practices are: -

1. If a woman walks over the spear and dao, that particular item is regarded as "unclean and unfortunate."

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106. Santosh Kumar (ed.), *Impact of Socio-Economic Background of the Rural Naga Women Entrepreneurs in Nagaland: with Special Reference to Dimapur District* in IJISSET-INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, VOL.3 ISSUE I, JANUARY 2016, p.1. [www.ijiset.com.ISSN-2348-7968](http://www.ijiset.com.ISSN-2348-7968).

2. If a woman enters the hunting area, the group does not get any catch.
3. When women folks perform war dance, men coming closer to that area is considered as “taboo”.
4. It is believed that if a man sleeps with his wife/ woman night before going out for hunting or fishing, he does not have any catch.
5. If a man sleeps with a woman in the field it is said “the harvest is poor.”
6. It is believed that if a man conducts the ritual and sleeps with his wife the following night, it is said to be “unclean” and considered “unfortunate”.
7. If a man sleeps with a woman when the rice is fetched for the first time from the granary, it is said that yield does not last long.
8. Sleeping with a woman during menstruation is considered “unclean.”
9. A woman making important announcement in the village is a taboo as it is believed that men folks would become spiritually weak and cannot compete with their rivals and therefore considered ‘unfortunate’.
10. When a pregnant woman suffers from morning sickness and craving for a particular type of fruits, failing to provide the same would lead to excessive secretion of saliva by the baby after birth.
11. When an animal is killed, a woman’s kin share the stomach of the animal, which signifies that they are progeny of the same parents.
12. A pregnant woman stealing others goods will bear the child stealing like the mother when the child grows up.

#### **4.10 Sümi Women and Matrimonial Practices:**

It is the groom and his parents who normally make the first move. At their interest a man skilled in talking and having ability to convince other people called *Anisüu* is entrusted to meet the bride and her parents to propose the marriage. *Anisüu* is

a person who is trustworthy and possessing the confidence of the bride's parents and their relatives. After the acceptance of the proposal by the girl's parents, boy's parents would enquire from *Anisiuu* about the response of the girl's mother, as to whether she reciprocated with a positive note or with a mixed feeling. After receiving positive response, the boy's parents go to the girl's parents' house to fix the date for engagement ceremony. After the engagement ceremony is complete, the parents of both the parties and their close relatives would stay back to fix the date for marriage. They would also discuss the gifts to their daughter at the time of marriage and in accordance approximation of bride price is also made known to the boy's parents. After the engagement formalities are over, the boy's parents invite their would-be daughter-in-law for dinner which is called *Kughulhu* / *Alukho* (post engagement special dinner offered to the boy and the girl). The traditional norm of *Kughulhu* takes place during *Tuluni* Festival which is celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> of July every year. A big healthy pig is killed for hosting a dinner for their would-be son-in-law. During *kughulhu* (hosting) by the boy's parents, the girl would come with one of her close friends for dinner. For this occasion, they would cook big pieces of meat i.e. approximately a Kilo of meat would make 3-4 pieces, for the dinner. Serving of meal is done in a big *asikhhu* (wooden plate). After the dinner, the boy's parents would send along with the girl a big chunk of meat i.e. half of the pig with head intact through the bearer arranged by the boy's parents. As the girl goes back home, she shares the meat with all her relatives and her group or team workers in the fields called *aloji mi*, saying that it is sent to her by her would-be in-laws. If the boy or the girl is from same village, freshly killed meat is sent as one big chunk in addition to cooked one, but if they are from different villages, the meat is cut into smaller pieces, half-cooked and sent, in order to make the meat stiff. Likewise, girl's parents also invite their would-be son-in-law for *kughulhu* (dinner). The boy also goes

to the girl's parents' house with one of his close friends. Dinner is served in a big wooden plate. The first person to taste the food during engagement feast is by the boy. The boy while entering the house of the girl's parents must be careful so that misfortune will not befall. The boy must be careful not to stumble. When the boy partake the rice beer and food he must be careful not to choke (*choke-küpüha/ kipithi*). He should not fart nor be drunk. If any of these acts takes place on his arrival at the girl's place, it is said that the couple will either divorce or their life will not be lengthy enough as it is predicted that the sign of ritual is not good. The boy also takes home big chunks of meat like the former one and shares it in the same manner. Sharing of meat with other people signifies that they are officially engaged. Inviting their would-be daughter-in-law is done during *Saghini* Festival which is celebrated in the month of August, that is, before harvesting starts. After hosting *Kughulhu / Alukho* (dinner) by both the parties there is no question of calling-off their engagement in Sümi tradition. Even in the present practice after embracing Christianity, if the boy and the girl break the engagement vow both are liable to be suspended from the church membership for a certain period of time.

In Sümi context marriages are made with the consent of the bride. When the bride and the parents have agreed to the proposal, the messenger with the groom's relatives arrive at the brides home to fix the date of the *Amekükügha* (settlement of bride price). The bride price is usually not same for all; it varies from the daughter of the chief to that of the common men. In this settlement of bride price, all the important family members and the negotiator along with the active village folks attend the price settlement discussion where a big feast is served. Some daughters of the Chiefs and rich display their bounty and ornaments during this period. Sümi women getting married too early was rare, this may be because to get settled in life she also had to prepare gifts for her in-laws and to gather her '*Asana*' (a treasure) which the bride gathers during the

period of *kighili* (let play). The bride makes money, ornaments, weaves clothes with the help of her mother to be taken to her husband's home. This *Asana* is displayed by spreading them over the bamboo and cane mat during *Amekükügha*.

In modern times, customary practices in the case of matrimonial system appear to have changed significantly with the conversion to Christianity. There is no hard and fast rule regarding exogamy and endogamy but marrying one's own community boys and girls are most preferred. Traditionally, Sümis practise bride price called *ame* (dowry / bride price) which is still in practice in some cases. In case the groom's family is unable to provide the required bride price, the village elders can come in the picture and settle the matter amicably between the two parties. Another important practice is the *aphi-atho me* (price of physical being) which is a mandatory gift to the bride's family from the groom. This may be a big male mithun (*avi tsü*) in healthy condition, and never female mithun (*avi qu / avi ali*). In-lieu of this the bride's family would give the best materials when she leaves for her matrimonial home.

As per traditional belief and practice, the same blood stock remains up to seven pedigrees and thus marriage is not permitted within seven generations. The person who is entrusted to go to the girl's family to ask for her hand in marriage is called *anisüu* which means messenger as mentioned earlier. The same person will lead the bride to her matrimonial home after the marriage rituals.

While stepping out from her parents home the bride must first step out with the right foot and proclaim, I will not return to my parents home due to marital discord and divorce, and she will not look back but head straight to her husband's home. There are four types of marriage according to Sümi tradition such as:-

**4.10.1.        *Amini Kimiji Xe*** – Inavi Jimo (2018) narrates that ‘*Amini Kimiji Xe*’ means every item to be presented to their daughter must be of two pairs / sets. This type of price settlement is considered the highest bride price in Sümi marriages. The daughter whose mother is married in the *Aminikimiji* tradition can only practise this system of marriage. This type of marriage was found to be practised mostly by the *Yepthomi* clan during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This kind of present or gift is exceptional and only rich and powerful parents can afford to present to their daughters at the time of her marriage.<sup>107</sup>

**4.10.2.        *Ashoghi Xe*** – In this type of marriage, groom’s parents must give ten to fifteen mithuns to the bride’s parents as dowry. A big fat pig is given to bride’s parents by groom’s parents which is called ‘*azanu jula wo*’. One day prior to the nuptial day, that pig is killed and a big chunk of meat which is called ‘*azanu jula shi*’ (*shi*-meat) is given to bride’s paternal uncles and cousins that she and her children may not be forgotten by her father’s clan for Sümis are patriarchal. This is done so to pave the way for mother and child. This extra ordinary dowry used to be practiced both in *Amini Kimiji Xe* and *Ashoghi Xe*. It is another class of marriage, in which *Achiku Xe* is equal with *Amini-Kimiji Xe*, except that in *Achiku Xe* the ritual of using shells and giving pairs of every ornament, utensils and domesticated animals given is not practised. In *Ashoghi Xe*, the highest category of marriage known as *Achiku Xe*, the Bride’s parents give *Achikula* along with other utensils in addition to *asana*, meaning ‘bride’s treasure’. *Achiku* is a highly valued neck-lace made of selected beads which are graded as number one of all the neck-lace worn in Sümi tradition. Out of three precious and highly valued

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107. Inavi Jimomi, *Sumi Naga, The Origin and Migration of The Sumi Naga*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2018, pp.192-196

neck-laces, *Achiku* is the most expensive and most sought after neck-lace, followed by *Achipu* and *Achi-xathi* respectively.

**4.10.3.        *Latha-Xe*** – In this case also, the process of engagement is the same as that of *Amini- Kimiji Xe* and *Ashoghi Xe*. However, the marriage is settled in which both the parties prepare whatever they can afford. In this category of marriage, bride's parents prepare *achixathi* necklace, cloths and all Sümi women ornament wear for their daughter as gift. The groom's parents give 3 to 7 cows or just one Cow or Mithun as custom bound called *Aphi-atho me* or replacement of another body for a body taken, to the bride's parents for the wedding feast.

**4.10.4.        *Topunasho-Xe*** – means remarriage of a widow to her husband's relative after the death of her husband. Some marriage genna such as *amini kimiji xe* and *ashoghi xe* are difficult but *latha xe* and *topunasho xe* follow easy procedure of marriage. It is in fact, a marriage of convenience. A day is fixed in which guests are invited and a feast is given and pronounced that the woman is married and now the wife of a man. In such kind of marriage, no *azanulashi* / *aza-anu jula shi* or gifts are given. If the man happens to be the Chief or a rich man, some gifts are given to the woman's parents, relatives or on whom the woman depends.

#### **4.11    Child Bearing Cost of the Mother:**

*Azanu julame*, which is practised in Sümi marriage, signifies the burden and the pain that the mother has endured in bringing up the child and so, the groom must arrange a male pig which is called *aza-anu jula wo* and gift it to the would-be-bride's family, the number of pig may be one or more depending on the size of the bride's family. Traditionally this pig is killed after the settlement of bride price and the meat is

distributed among bride's relatives only. However, if the bride price could not be settled mutually, the village elders would come to the picture and passed the verdict pronouncing that the *aza-anu jula wo* (pig) should be killed, which signifies that the bride price is automatically considered settled. This traditional system of marriage has been in practice not only in the early days but even today in the Christian era. A woman who does not enter into a marriage vows but lives with the partner or would be husband without the consent of her parents must reconcile with her parents for the wrong she has committed. Also, if *aza po küssi lame* (child bearing cost of the mother) is not materialized as per the traditional norm, the spirit of the mother would be unhappy and the consequence of which is misfortune to her and her offsprings, and they will not become wealthy no matter how hard they strive to become one.

#### **4.12 Beliefs and Rituals in Sümi Marriages:**

According to Yevukhu Assümi, (age 80 years), married couples traditionally start their life in a newly constructed house. In those days, they used to construct a new thatched house. When the construction work is over, the groom makes fire in a traditional way of making, signifying that it is a new fire in a new house. After that, the would-be-groom sleeps there expecting a good and significant dream pertaining to their post-marital life. In a freshly constructed house for newly wedded couple, some specific group of firewoods are forbidden to burn when fire is made for the first time in that house. These three groups of fire woods are believed to be carrying bad omen when burnt in a newly married couple's new home. They are:-

1. *Michhisü*- itching tree, the inner bark of which has got skin irritating fiber: with the premonition that other people may hate them because of their irritating nature.

2. *Thüümüsi- Naga tenga*, sour seed-bearing tree which when burnt gives rise to non stop bursting or popping sound: with the premonition that the couple would quarrel at all times.
3. *Khunithi süi*-wild sour fruit bearing tree which exudes milky fluid called latex when cut: with the premonition of becoming debtors.<sup>108</sup>

Sümi marriage has a bride wealth system where the groom's family pay to the bride's parents in cash or in kind already settled by both the parties with or without movable and immovable properties. Live stocks like mithuns, cattle and immovable properties like a plot / plots of land for jhum and terrace cultivation in addition to cash payment. On the other hand, settlement of dowry is most of the time directly proportionate to the gifts that the bride is bringing from her parents. Parents gifts to bride includes valuables like ornaments of high value, costly necklace, bracelets, armlets, precious beads decorated around the neck and waist, things required in the kitchen in pairs, agricultural implements in pairs, paddy/rice which should sustain them till the forthcoming harvest. Girl's parents may give all other things as gifts to her as *asana*, but if they do not/cannot give '*akichhelo chi*', girl's parents cannot demand/ask for mithun or cattle as a part of dowry. '*akichhelo chi*' is a precious bead threaded, joining all the lines together in a horizontal arrangement, making it look like a mini skirt embedded with beads, and worn by women from waist downwards up to the level of mid thigh.

After the marriage the girl should go to the husband's house and only after the completion of three days she can go to her parents' house, as it is a bad omen if she visits her parents before the completion of the said period. Even in the husband's home,

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108. Yevukhu Assümi (age 80, Rtd. Superintendent), *Taboos, Omens and Superstitions of Sümi Naga*, City Press, Kohima, 2016, p.71

the bride and the groom are to have physical contact at the completion of three days otherwise the bride is projected as a lady whose hands will bring poverty (*chumiipa-shomiipa*). When a girl gets married to the boy from another village the father should not accompany the daughter to her new home as it is regarded as bad luck. The father must instead proclaim on his daughter's departure in such a manner like hei-hei... may your life prosper and flourish over the land, may your entry as a stranger to the village be a blessed and a blissful life; may you have a long life.

Traditionally, marriages used to take place at night following amicable settlement of bride price. Family members, relatives, friends and well-wishers accompany the bride to her husband's newly constructed house on the same night with all her belongings and *asana*. The marriage ceremony and the process of shifting to a new house takes place only at night and therefore, they use locally made *akulu* (torch) for the journey, the torch of which is made of dried bamboo sticks or dried reeds split into two halves, making bundles with the size of approximately eight inches in circumference and five to six feet length. The bride, on reaching her husband's house, would first step across the door with her right foot and enters into her husband's house which is now their house as a family.

Then, on the following morning, the bride must cut a cock which she brought the previous night, prepare and share with her grandfather and grandmother who will in return shower a blessing to the girl through prayers, saying:

1. He...hei... May your engagement and marriage be a blessed one.
2. May you shine like the sun and the moon.
3. May you become father and mother of many Livestock.
4. May you have a long life.

5. May your children and their generation be multiplied like the offsprings of spiders and crabs.
6. May your toe nails and finger nails grow and expand: meaning their generation be multiplied without limit.

After the marriage, it is a bad omen if the bride falters or stumbles or falls down on her journey to a new home to live with her husband. It is also a taboo if consummation of marriage takes place before completion of three days, and in such case the bride is projected as a lady whose hand will bring poverty called '*chumiüpa-shomiüpa*' (whatever food items these women lay their hands on, quantity of that item tends to decrease).

In Sümi tradition, the bride must come and live with her husband, but the husband never leaves his house and lives with his wife in her house. An individual cannot enter into a marriage with himself, likewise entering into a marriage institution with another individual is called "marriage". Therefore, a woman getting married to a man in Sümi is called *nhiuve* or *külaue* (married off). Marriages take place in the month of December and January so that they also can start cultivating their lands along with the rest of their villagers. The villagers mostly practise shifting type of cultivation. They are strong believers of superstition and therefore offer certain type of ritual before they start clearing jungles for cultivation. As a part of jungle clearing rituals, men are forbidden to touch women's clothing; touching even the edges of women's clothing is considered a taboo and regarded as unlucky.

#### **4.13 Women of Bountiful in Management:**

On the other hand, there are some women, who, in spite of poor harvest in their paddy fields in a particular year because of various reasons and circumstances, still manage to feed the family members the whole year. These women are called '*totimi a-u*

*la kivimi'* (a woman of bountiful in management). In a family, mother shoulders the responsibility of serving food to all the members by tradition. Children are forbidden to serve themselves from rice bowl, curry bowl and rice beer from the jar. It is believed that the spirit of wealth would flee if other members of the family forego traditional norm and start handling the same.

#### **4.14 Divorce and Annulment of Sümi Marriage:**

According to L.K.Achumi (1990), since bride price, or in other words, dowry system is practised, the dissolution of marriage is not permitted. But if the relationship between the couple is strained to the extent that it cannot be reconciled, dissolution of marriage may be allowed which is difficult and treated very seriously. In a situation like poverty, sickness, infertility and miscarriage, dissolving marriage in the Sümi tradition was not easily done. However, if adultery has been committed thereby creating extreme misunderstanding and quarrels, or the wife has been subjected to ill-treatment, or the wife has been incompetent in looking after the welfare of the husband and thereby unable to manage family affairs, a marriage can be dissolved. Cases of such nature are settled by village authority.<sup>109</sup>

#### **4.15 Sümi Women and Inheritance:**

The Sümi women have no right to inherit the ancestral property till today as per the customary law, however, any property acquired by the parents can be gifted to their children irrespective of gender classification. A girl child can inherit her deceased father's properties and if he has no children, male members in his family or relatives can

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109. L.K. Achumi, *Sümi Lho Yeza (Sümi Customary Practices and Usages)*, New A.V. Printing Press, Dimapur, 1990, p.89, quoted in K. Kalito Chishi, *Traditional Customary Laws, Socio-Economic and Political Life of Sümi Women: Changing Dimensions*, Article Published, in Dr. T. Jothiramalingam (ed.), *Women Empowerment: Key to National Development*, Villupuram, Kailayanadhar Pathippagam, 2017, p.242

inherit, and if there is no close relatives to claim, his clan can inherit, but the illegitimate child cannot claim inheritance.

If neither his natural born male nor his relative is available but his biological daughter is present and the father has pronounced that she can inherit his property, then the pronounced property belongs to her. In the past, 'verbal will' used to be commonly in practice, but in modern days, many have started adopting 'written will'. Even if there is an inheritor the daughters can inherit the father's property except the ancestral property. In the absence of those mentioned above, the person who takes care of him in his last days can claim his property. On the death of a mother a daughter can claim the personal ornaments and possession of a deceased mother. In case of a widow, she can claim her share if she does not leave the matrimonial home on the death of her husband, apart from ancestral property she can utilise all the properties as long as she is alive. In the event of her husband's death, the widow can adopt a child and she can also benefit from the care and earnings of the adopted child.<sup>110</sup>

#### **4.16 Sümi Women and Occupational Roles:**

Agriculture in rural areas continues to be women's main occupation. Most of them perform more than fifty per cent of the agricultural work. Rice, maize, millet and jobstear cultivation is popular among the Sümi women in Nagaland. The cultivation of different varieties of vegetables like potato, ginger, beans, soyabean, yam, sweet potatoes, tapioca, pumpkin, cucumber, green chilly and tomatoes etc. are common. Women make handsome profits with the sale of these agricultural produce supplementing their domestic consumption and they sell these vegetables in the locality

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110. L.K. Achumi, *Sümi Lho Yeza (Sümi Customary Practices and Usages)*, New A.V. Printing Press, Dimapur, 1990, p.87, quoted in K. Kalito Chishi, *Traditional Customary Laws, Socio-Economic and Political Life of Sümi Women: Changing Dimensions*, Article Published, in Dr. T. Jothiramalingam (ed.), *Women Empowerment: Key to National Development*, Villupuram, Kailayanadhar Pathippagam, 2017, p. 242

and even to some other districts. In recent times, Sümi women are rearing different types of shrubs, succulents, cactus and ornamental flowers etc. which fetches good return. In Sümi context, rearing and selling of domesticated animals was an important income source, and women play a major role in rearing cows, goats, pigs and poultry farming. Although most of the women in the rural sector remain unemployed, some of them are engaged in public sector at different categories and generate additional income in the family. Despite high level of education among Sümi women, patriarchy is still getting stronger and the customary law is interpreted in favour of men. There are still some areas of inequality in the field of political arena where there are no women representatives. Again in the case of inheritance of ancestral property, women are being deprived, but changes have occurred that daughters of well-to do parents are given parents property as gifts. However, there may be some variation in socio-economic opportunities for women from different backgrounds.

Nirmala Jeyarai (2005) mentions that in the primitive life of women especially during the head hunting period, menfolk used to go out for head hunting or inter village fighting invading each other's territory. In this kind of situation, Sümi women had to bear the child, struggle and support the family. She often must do extra work of pounding, cleaning the rice, fetching water from the spring well, fetching firewood from the jungles, rearing domestic animals to keep the family going. In the villages the expectant mothers work outside either in the field or in the jungle until the time of delivery. There are cases where some women deliver even in the jungle or while working in the field. After some few days of rest, she resumes her regular work. Some times if the mother comes home late from the field, the baby sitter would take the baby

to another nursing mother for breast feeding.<sup>111</sup>

Sümi women are gifted with the talent in culinary skills and preparation which today is the boon for their economy. A speciality of Sümi preparation is *axone*, a Sümi delicacy made out of fermented soyabeans, is worth mentioning as this item has penetrated into the national and international market. There is a high demand of *axone* and smoked pork which is a mouth-watering cuisine not only among Sümi, but the Nagas and beyond. It will not be uncommon to find a stall in Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, selling steamed rice with generous helping of smoked pork cooked with *axone*, a Sümi delicacy. Sale of *axone* in the market and *axone* curry with smoked pork in the restaurants and hotels fetch a good margin of profit which enhances the economic stability in the family in particular and achieving economic empowerment of Sümi women in general.

Of late, majority of Sümi women are self employed or work as unpaid labourer in agriculture, agro-based enterprises and commerce by preparing local food items such as ‘*axone*’ (boiled, fermented, mashed and dried soya bean), arranging beads, cowrie shells, head gear, floriculture product for sale in the market in the informal sector. This may not yield a high income but is making a remarkable leap in the economic front. The recent introduction of Self Help Group (SHG) in the delivery of extension services during local and state festivals like Horn Bill Festival could generate and reap a large return in the productivity of women’s own account. Women’s informal manufacturing activities are traditional, small-scale owner operated occupations depending on local technology. The setback of Sümi women is the inability to expand operation due to resource and monetary constraints, lack of requisite qualification and standard skills and

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111. Nirmala Jeyaraj (ed.), *Women and Society*, Cambridge Press, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 336 -339.

ignorance of accessibility to productivity enhancing technology. Sümi women engage in petty trading comprising a small number but gain a substantial market power. With the increase of new entrant competitors and inability to subscribe to other form of engagement, there is the possibility of a lower income. At this juncture, requirement of special support and sensitive measures to upgrade better productivity may be considered.

#### **4.17 Sümi Women and Handicraft:**

In addition to agriculture, handicraft plays an important role which is intricately tied with Sümi identity. Handicraft, which is often produced to supplement as an additional income to the household is actively participated and shared by women. The women weave different varieties of *hekimini* (wrap-around), and shawls, each having its own meaning and significance. Sümi women are very innovative and creative to mix and match different colours of the yarn. Among so many shawls and mekheles there are some cloths like half-jackets and coats for men, scarves with beads which have high demands in the market fetching profits.

According to the practice of the day, it was the responsibility of a woman to keep her family warm. As such, a girl is made to acquaint and be trained at *iliki* (girls' dormitory) at a tender age. That is how a Sümi woman gets into the traditional structure of professional textile work by weaving and selling the product in the local market. One important factor of understanding the position of women in the family economy is the power in the production of handicrafts in the Sümi context. Presently, handicrafts have gone beyond the traditional form of exchange, but the selling of the product directly to the customer is the normal procedure. The picture shows that Sümi women have some economic power and partial control over the income through the sale of the handicrafts.

Therefore, they have a larger involvement in the production process and hence are in a better position economically.<sup>112</sup>

#### 4.18 Practice of Genna and Sümi Women:

Vinito (2014) expresses that “the traditional Sümi religion is animism. The invisible force of nature and spirits was very much prevalent. In the primitive days, women, married or unmarried, are not allowed to come near *apuki* (bachelors dormitory) while under construction, she should not even touch the materials of the house. The chief of the village announces “tomorrow we are going to construct *apuki* and that no men should even touch the thread of a woman’s cloth, because it is believed to be impure or it brings bad luck during those head-hunting days”. When the construction of *apuki* is completed, a big pig is killed and eaten by only menfolks; women are not allowed to partake.”<sup>113</sup>

Sümi women are debarred from participating in the war dance (*aphilo kuwo*); the *aghükiyile* is a victory song after the war when the trophy in the form of enemy head is brought home; *Angushuu kuqo le* is a song sung at the time of hunting tigers after it is rounded up; *Avikuqo le* is a song at the time of dragging and pulling the mithun and *Ayichi küvü le* is a song sung at the time of community fishing. There are also songs which are sung exclusively by women – *Thihe le* is a song sung at the time of harvest where womenfolks sing and thresh the paddy in the fields; *Thigha le* is a song sung at the time of beating and disintegrating mounds of earth in the fields after ploughing with

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112. K. Kalito Chishi, *Handicraft and Economic Empowerment of Sümi Naga Women of Nagaland* in C. Periasamy and K. Kalito Chishi, (eds.), *Research Methodologies: Concepts Trends and Developmental Issues*, IQAC and Research Committee, Zunheboto Government College, Erode 2019, p.77

113. Vinito Sema, unpublished article, the *Origin of Sumi Naga*, Zunheboto, Retired Head Assisstant, Department of Art and Culture. 2014, p.6.

hoes; *Liphi le* (straw pulling and weeding song) is sung at the time of pulling out straws from the soil and separating its roots from the soil after the harvest and clearing of weeds for subsequent farming; *Aye küzü le* is sung at the time of yarning the cotton; *Toti kighilhe le* ( songs for women folk dance) is sung during folk dance performed by women only decorated with different types of women specific ornaments such as :- *Akütsü kükha* which is a circle of cane covered with orchid stalk and short red hair and patterned like flower and worn as head gear; *Tsükoli* is an earring with a tuft of red hair of about two inches or more; *Achixathi* is a small size bead neck-lace of three or five strings; *Achipu* is a medium size bead neck-lace of one string; *Achiku* is a cornelian bead necklace of one string which is bigger in size; *Aküsa* is a metal armlet; *Asapu* is a bangle and bracelet worn on the wrist *by women to defend themselves against the persons who try to defile their modesty*; according to Huskha yeptho (79 years), *Akichhelo chi* is a kind of bead girdle wrapped around the waist of a woman in which *Amüqü chi*, a tiny bell made of silver that makes enticing sound is threaded at the lower border of *Akichhelo chi*. Women adorn with this outfit is regarded as status symbol revealing that they came from a well-to-do family background.<sup>114</sup>

According to Zhekiho Swu (59 years), Head Dobashi, Customary Court Zünheboto Diatrict: in the past Sümi women were not allowed to participate in many rituals, they were not allowed to share the food prepared for the rituals. After the completion of rituals, the husband would fast for thirty days, and the wife for fifteen days, during which they would not speak to each other, but they communicate through body language and actions. During this period if they feel hungry or thirsty beyond tolerance, they would go to a neighbouring field to quench their thirst in their spring

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114. Huskha Yeptho, Former Sümi Hoho President, interviewed on 07.04.2020 at 2.45 P.M.

well, and to satiate their hunger they would eat *ajichi* (precursor of rice beer).<sup>115</sup>

After the harvest is over and the crops and grains of the field are brought to the granary, the porch or veranda of the house is temporarily encircled using *atozï* (a bamboo wall) or *ayephu* (bamboo mat mainly used to dry grains in the sun). The entire malefolks of the household with the exception of infants and children move into the mat enclosure led by the eldest male of the house. Women are not allowed inside this enclosure for fear of injury in the new agricultural year. During this whole period the men sleep separately from the women and abstain even from touching the hem of a woman's cloth. It is believed that the members of the family would face accident in jhum cultivation if any woman enters the enclosed area. This period of separation of the male from the female during the *ahuna* (post harvest festival) festival and the seclusion of the former within the mat enclosure is known as *ahuvï* or *abosïhu*.<sup>116</sup> This period of seclusion usually stretches for three days, in some cases this preparatory period for the feast in seclusion is reported to have stretched up to seven days.<sup>117</sup> In the Sümi context, it is to be understood that a woman is debarred from performing religious rites and sacrifices.

In the past traditional Sümi society, women were debarred from participating in many rituals, but with the advent of Christianity, its impact was seen not only in the change of socio-cultural values, but material culture as well. People gradually began to realize that human lives are more significant than rituals and taboos. The new Christian

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115. Zhekiho Swu, 59 years old, Zünheboto, Head Dubashi *Sümi Customary Court*, interviewed on 26.01.2015.

116. Dr. N. Khashito Aye, *Ahuna kuchu pineh ghili*, Iza tsa Ahuna qhi (November 1-5, 2008). as cited in the *Sumi Ahuna* by Zhekugha Assümi, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, First ed. 2009, p.19.

117. Huskha Yephthomi, Former Sümi Hoho President, cited from interview in *The Sumi Ahuna* by Zhekugha Assümi, Dimapur, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2009, p.19.

converts adopted a better way of life and slowly became detached from their kin members. Christianity restricted them from taking part in the practices and ceremonies which were associated with the spirit. Today in Sümi society a part of the father's property like land and house is gifted to the daughters by the well-to-do parents. These practices gave socio-economic status to women, which gave them security and economic independence. In the present context, Sümi women are mostly educated, they are aware of their social and political rights, yet they relatively remain voiceless, their inability to penetrate the male dominated political sphere must be deliberated diligently. This is mainly because the tribal customary laws are biased in favour of man which is no exception to Sümi society. Thus, unless the tribal customary laws in some parts which are biased against women are modified, women will not be able to come up at par with menfolks.

#### **4.19 Sümi Women and Origin of Folk Dance:**

The Sümi traditional beliefs, customs and stories passed through generations to the present age by oral history. Hundreds of years ago, once at Chisholimi village, (one of the oldest Sümi villages situated under Pughoboto Sub-Division, in Zünheboto District, Nagaland) there lived a man and a wife who had one girl child, and they named her Ali. One day, the father took his daughter along with him into the dense forest to set up snare for catching birds. While the father was preparing bird trap, Ali was sitting and watching her father from a certain distance. After a short time, there came a thunder storm with no visibility, and soon after a huge tree was uprooted which fell down between the father and daughter. After the storm was over the father came to the spot where Ali was sitting but she was nowhere to be found.

Many years after the disappearance of their daughter Ali, the parents heard the knocking sound of the door saying "Father, Mother open the door and let me come in".

On hearing this, the mother said, “That is my daughter’s voice”. So she lit up the house with *akulu* (a bundle of small and dried pieces of bamboo for burning and used as torch) and allowed her to come in. When she came in, it was really their daughter Ali. The father asked Ali where she had gone that day. Ali replied “I was taken away by a host of angels and I have been living with them happily since then. And today, I came here to ask you to prepare a Grand Feast of Merit for a host of angels”<sup>118</sup>

After the preparation was complete, on the fourth day, the spirits appeared singing and Ali’s parents and helpers laid the food, liquor and meat on the plantain leaves separately. The food was consumed and noise was heard yet they were not visible to the parents and villagers. After the feast, the spirits started to sing and dance again. The villagers could hear the song and see the movements of limbs, but could not see other parts of the body. However, it is said that they learnt many of their songs and dance as well. At the end of the day, the spirits moved towards the western side following the setting beam of the sun. Ali waved good-bye and said, “sing and dance in my memory as shown today” and she too faded away into the setting sun along with her people never to appear again. Since then, Sümi people learnt to sing folk songs the way spirits sang and dancing with similar stepping they saw that day. Till today in every festival Sümi folk dance learnt from Ali and the spirit is presented in a grand manner celebrating a joyous occasion.

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118. Inavi Jimomi, *Sumi Naga The Origin And Migration of The Sumi Naga*, Heritage Publishing House, Dimapur, 2018, pp.202-206

#### 4.20 Sümi Women in Education and Religion:

In the early days young Sümi girls were given training in the *iliki* (girls dormitory). The girls were brought up in such a manner to believe that they are purely responsible for household work which includes washing and cleaning, cooking, taking care of the children, collecting and gathering fire-wood from the jungle, fetching water from the spring and ponds, cultivation and gardening, caring for the old and sick people at home, etc.

But with the advent of Christianity, Sümi women began to enrol in schools and started to embrace the value of education. In due course of time, she could read and learn about the life and condition of women which instills in them that change is necessary in every individual, home and society. It is through the improvement in educational status, Sümi women leapt ahead in the employment area generating gradual income for the family. The educated women also became aware of the importance of health and hygiene and the educated mothers could take better care of her self and the baby. Notable improvement in the field of medicine, engineering, nursing, teaching, law and administration also began to have a progressive increase. Rohit Sehgal (2015) observes that “until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, women were educated only for traditional household work. Now, the society is witnessing changes in the role-status of women. There is greater emphasis on educating women in the same way as we educate boys and men. Today the modern-day parents want to fulfil the aspiration of the children without gender parity”<sup>119</sup> In spite of this, exclusion of women is still noticeable in religious organization as well. The female subordination is apparent even in the

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119. Rohit Sehgal, *Women Education: Its Meaning and Importance*, Category: Essays, Paragraphs and Articles. 2.7.2015, <http://www.importantindia.com/17061/women-education-its-meaning-and-importance/17-08-2017>, pp.1-2

church administration as women are often not found holding high position in decision making despite fulfilment of requisite qualification. So far there is only one Sümi women Reverend, Ms. Hutoli Achumi who was ordained on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in the Church Ministry, but the rest is appointed and installed at the rank of Associate and Assistant Pastors only. In terms of education, the state saw decadal literacy rate increase of 13.5 per cent from 66.59 per cent in 2001 to 79.55 per cent in 2011. Zünheboto registered an increase of 16.98 per cent which was previously 68.28 per cent in 2001 census, rose to 86.29 per cent in the district literacy rate in 2011 census. Today in the Government set up Sümi women are employed notably as teacher, professor, lawyer, Doctor, engineer, administrator, armed and unarmed police force, in the nursing sector and are employed in state and central services.

#### **4.21 Sümi Women in Political Sphere:**

At least at a first glance it is evident that the Sümi women in Naga society relatively have more freedom and are not systematically suppressed by men. With regards to political life, women however, seem to have less space for participation. Since the formation of the first legislative assembly in February 1964, no woman has been elected to the house. After the statehood in 1963, there have been 20 women who have contested the state election and has never won a seat. The main reasons for these abysmal performances by women in state assembly election are due to time honoured custom and practices. This is the reason why women are discouraged from participating in governance and decision-making: rarely is a woman's voice or position treated with seriousness. In the Naga society patriarchy is deeply rooted, thereby translating in the

low participation of women in politics, which is a “sheer reflection of this sad reality”.

<sup>120</sup> Though Naga women can be counted amongst one of the most educated lot in the country as far as literacy goes, yet they lack the political education.

It is not a surprise to know that there is no equal representation for men and women in traditional and modern political organization in the Sümi context. So far, there is no woman member in the village council, and therefore women do not have any authority in the village administration. Sümi women have no say in the development plans of the village. The political institution is not gender inclusive in Sümi society, especially in the Village Development Board (VDB). In the municipal council, one-third reservation for women is not executed so far. In the case of Nagaland, customary practices of the Nagas are protected by the Indian Constitution under Art. 371 (A) with special provisions for Nagaland, that ensures the protection of the religious or social practices of the Nagas, their customary practices, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources. In this connection, the Nagaland Municipal Act 2001 on the 33 per cent reservation for women in Municipal and Town Council passed by Nagaland State Assembly (under the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act of Indian Constitution) was met with strong opposition by the Naga Hoho as they interpreted it against the Naga Customary Practices. There was a verbal articulation by the former Home Minister of Nagaland in 2013 that reservation may be given for 15 per cent to 20 per cent if the Sümi Women Organization and other NGOs are willing to come forward but so far it is not implemented. Hence, various Naga Women Bodies formed a Joint Action Committee on Women Reservation (JACWR) and contested the matter in the Apex Court to pursue for 33 per cent reservation for women, but this also could not yield any positive

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120. [www.the.citizen.in](http://www.the.citizen.in), Ranju Dodum, 14.02.2018

outcome in the political context. Simultaneously, capacity-building measures for women must also be undertaken in order to equip them with skills and to encourage more women to participate in the political process at every level. Toshimenla Jamir (2012) states, “therefore, what becomes apparent is that the traditional mode of governance had been simply carried over and juxtaposed to the modern democratic political system without much alteration in spite of constitutional provisions for all irrespective of sex. This is a clear indication that traditional forces over-ride the modern democratic values of equal participation in many societies like that of the Naga society where male hegemony over politics continues to persevere backed by the Customary Laws.”<sup>121</sup>

#### **4.22 Formation of Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH) (Sümi Women Organisation):**

The formation of Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH), the apex body of Sümi Naga women, came into being following a certain unpleasant incidence in the month of March 1983, where a young girl was forcefully taken to the jungle and raped by two men. On the same day, after hearing about the incidence, all women, married and unmarried, from Zünheboto town gathered in protest against the crime committed to the innocent girl and reported the matter to the district authority urging the government to take appropriate action against the two accused. Following which the duo were expelled from Zünheboto district. But the matter did not rest there.

On March 30, 1983 a Women Society was formed comprising seven members. The case became so severe that it needed the involvement and participation of all Sümi women in Sümi inhabited areas, hence prior to the meeting a team was selected comprising 5 members to tackle the matter. But the problem became more complex and

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121. Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland, Challenges and Imperatives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p. 83

needed the consultation of all Sümi women, therefore, on 8<sup>th</sup> June a meeting was conducted and a team of office bearers was formed with seven members. Based on the resolution passed in the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1983, the Sümi Totimi Hoho, apolitical body was officially formed. Subsequently, on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1983 Sümi Totimi Baghi Hoho (STH General Conference) was hosted and it was decided that a constitution of Sümi Totimi Hoho was to be drafted, to which it received the approval of the Sümi Hoho. It is worth noting that the STH as a women organization decided to function side by side with the Sümi Hoho, the apex body of Sümi tribe.

**Aims and Objectives of Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH):**

- (a) to stand for the Rights of Sümi women, and for the welfare of young generation.
- (b) to protect and safeguard the interest of women.
- (c) to check growing social evils in the society.
- (d) to help the helpless and needy women.
- (e) to acknowledge and encourage women achievers in the society.
- (f) to use and preserve the traditional costumes of Sümi women.
- (g) any other activities pertaining to the protection, welfare of Sümi women.

**Resolution of Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH):**

The STH, also resolved the followings in the General Body meeting: -

1. To assist the authority in rescuing rape victim so that justice is delivered. To act as peer pressure group so that appropriate action may be taken as per the law of the land against the offender if not proven otherwise.
2. To encourage the growth and development of Sümi women.
3. To encourage and mobilize the continuity of learning and speaking Sümi dialect.

4. To encourage Sümi women to wear the traditional attire when attending the church.
5. To encourage the use of traditional dress as wedding dress, but willfully and not by coercion. The wedding stage should not be constructed if the couple do not qualify moral adequacy.
6. Every first day of the month will be observed as “prayer day” for Sümi women and to pray for people who are treading the wrong path.
7. For Sümi women every year the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May will be set aside for tree plantation.
8. Sümi attire ie. *Chhekütha qhumi* and *Lotosü* (shawl and mekhela) must be in possession by every Sümi woman, as it has been adopted as official uniform. <sup>122</sup>

**Some of the Achievements and Contribution of STH in Social Upliftment Activities:**

1. Organised seminar on “Food and Nutrition for better health” on 30.01.2006.
2. Sponsored World Tourism Day on 27.09.2005.
3. The STH organized “Miss Sümi 2005” in commemoration of the “Year of Youth Empowerment”, along with Fashion Parade and Beat Contest. Now, Miss. Sümi Contest is organised every year during *Ahuna* festival.
4. Assisted in “Girl Child Education” Seminar.
5. Visiting of District Hospital and Sub Jail during the National Days like Republic Day and Independence Day.
6. Sümi Totimi Hoho declares 1st September as “Cleaning Day”. Cleaning of Drainage in their respective areas and cutting of over grown grasses around the residential areas.

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122. Sümi Totimi Hoho *Yezabo (Constitution)*, Part- 4, 1998, pp.3-11

7. On 25.09.2005, the STH intercepted a Zünheboto bound vehicle carrying Liquor and seized 836 bottles of IMFL which was later on destroyed in full public view.
8. On 27.04.2005, the house of a lady “Addictive Drug Whole Seller” was raided and corrective measure was taken against the offender.
9. At the demise of prominent Sümi leaders, a wreath is placed on the grave as a token of respect and appreciation to the departed soul.
10. Sümi women adorn themselves with traditional attire at the funeral service of their fellow woman whose contribution to the society is praise worthy.
11. The Sümi Hoho (SH) and Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH) went to Mon and Dimapur to appeal NSCN (K) and NSCN (IM) leadership to refrain from confrontation that would lead to bloodshed and restore peace and normalcy at Zünheboto town in particular and district in general. Together with Sümi Hoho and other Frontal Organisations, a coordination meeting with two Naga Political Groups was held at Zünheboto in 2006 followed by a joint declaration of Zünheboto as “peace zone” in letter and spirit although it could not last long for the reasons best known to them.

As recorded in the Book ‘Operation - Flush Out Mission (2013)’, in December 2013, a young Sümi girl working as a missionary outside the state was coming back home to spend Christmas with her family members at Zünheboto. She along with ten other co-passengers including the driver boarded Tata Sumo on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 evening. The vehicle could not depart at usual time in the morning due to mechanical defects which required repair and replacement in the workshop. The ill-fated vehicle took the left turn towards Aghüyito village, around 2:30 A.M. in the wee hours of a cold and chilly December 21, 2013 morning. The three NSCN (IM) cadres came in a Maruti Van and one of the cadres told the driver and the passengers that they were carrying out

orders from Sümi Totimi Hoho (the apex body of Sümi Women Organization) to frisk vehicle during the festive season for illegal transportation of alcohol, the order of which was not actually given by the STH at any point of time. One of the cadres asked the girl what her profession was and demanded to produce valid Identity Card, to which she replied that she is a missionary and showed her I.D. Card. She was then asked how many souls has she sent to heaven through her preaching and how many souls has she brought to deliverance to God. “What type of missionary you are?” you are a *rendi* (prostitute) missionary, the cadre rebuked her. The missionary was ordered by the cadres “remove your clothes or else I will kick you and throw you down the road”, and she was asked to remove her entire cloths. Then again she was told to remove her inner wear to which she protested. But the cadre warned them (including the minor girl) saying that if they do not cooperate, they would apply chilli powder on their private parts. When they objected, they were beaten up with an iron rod on the knees and thighs. The girls were then asked to remove their upper clothing as well but they refused to do so. Then the same cadre rebuked them saying that he will check out if they had committed any immoral activities and they started to molest them. The ordeal lasted for over one and a half hours. They were then asked to board the vehicle to proceed towards Zünheboto along with the shell-shocked and injured passengers.

In the afternoon of December 21, 2013 members of Sümi Totimi Hoho met the victims and recorded the statements. This was followed by filing of FIR with the Zünheboto Police Station substantiated with the copies of the statements from the driver of the vehicle and the lady missionary. A molestation and rape case was registered so as to book them as per the law of the land. Words about the incident spread like wild fire and sparked off a massive resentment among the Sümi public which demanded that the NSCN (IM) be held responsible and the errant cadres be handed over to the district

administration, to which the NSCN (IM) leadership also agreed and assured in writing on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2013, which was never complied with. The demand for protest rally rang the air and the Sümi frontal organizations led by Sümi Hoho took the initiative to organize a protest rally at Zünheboto town. The crowd turned up in thousands to voice protest against the barbaric act. Announcements were made at every sector Churches in Zünheboto town about the rally and women folks were asked to come to the rally in traditional dresses. The deadline to hand over the culprits to the district administration was at 12 noon December 26, 2013. But by 10 A.M., the same day, the public started to gather in groups and by 12 Noon, it grew enormously well over thousands. The public armed with daos and spears reiterated their demand to produce the cadres at the rally and warned the Sümi Hoho leaders of serious consequences if concrete action against the NSCN (IM) was not taken. The Hoho announced that as per the assurance given by the NSCN (IM) delegation, they would wait till 5 P.M. for any positive response. The most significant of all was the public unanimous demand to flush out NSCN (IM) camp at Mükalimi village, their only camp in the district. Efforts to reason with the public on this demand yielded no result and then the Sümi frontal organizations finally conceded to this demand.

Towards this end, an operation under the name of “Operation-Flush Out Mission” was declared. It was made known to the volunteers that the Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH), carrying banners and placards will be the ones in the front leading from the source of boarding till the destination. Then at 12:15 P.M, the historic ride from Zünheboto to Mükalimi began which was a hair-raising moment and a sight to behold. The general secretary of STH told the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command (2 i/c) at the Mükalimi camp that mothers did not come with the intention to wage war but suggested that there were other measures that could be sorted out through talks. The STH leaders were briefed about the

ribbon and the two red flags that would greet the delegations near the camp. They were warned that be it any men, women, elderly or for that matter any individual who trespass the barrier would be shot at. However, the Sümi frontal organizations made a consensus decision to head to the camp with placards and with efforts to spread the words of reconciliation. But to the utter dismay of the STH members numbering around thirty members present there, the cadres positioned outside the road leading to the main entrance stopped them from proceeding any further. A thin ribbon was tied across the road and two red flags marked “X” was placed in between the two ends of the ribbon. The cadres shouted from where they were positioned warning the STH members not to cross that barrier. Then one of the women in the crowd of thirty odd STH members told the cadres that they have come to meet and talk to them. But one of the cadres in the camp shouted back in Nagamese, “it doesn’t matter if you are a woman, we will do ghastly things with you”. The STH president made a declaration in Nagamese that the members had come with good intention but if the cadres were reluctant to accede to this request, then they would leave the place. She then suggested that the women present there have a mass prayer before their departure. The traditionally clad Sümi women who went only to broker peace by pleading with the NSCN (IM) cadres had to evict peacefully as decided upon by the Sümi public, as the cadres in the camp did not come forward for amicable dialogue and therefore, the STH delegates retreated unhappily. The good intention of STH delegates as “Peace Broker” was undermined by the Mükalimi campers which infuriated the general public. Thus, the firing from both the parties started at around 5:30 P.M. which claimed lives of several civilians and injured many.

Even at the time of factional clashes in the past, STH had been working tirelessly to restore peace which had been fruitful at several instances, but unfortunately,

this time around “Peace Brokers” were not given a chance but, rather they were humiliated in the most disrespectful manner. The failed peace initiative efforts undertaken by Sümi Totimi Hoho ultimately led to public hue and cry followed by loss of precious lives, casualties and forceful eviction of the NSCN (IM) camp.<sup>123</sup>

In the economic front STH has been playing pro active role as Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with the concerned Department to channelise financial benefit to the destitute and disabled women, through *upay na thaka* (helpless) scheme, to provide relief and rehabilitation to economically weaker section of women from ‘revolving fund’ sanctioned by the Government. In the social context the organisation plays an active part with the Government agencies in controlling drug dependent persons and peddlers. The STH also strongly supports the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition Act (NLTPA) 1989. “Women affected with domestic violence, women facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, irrespective of age, class, caste, educational status, marital status, race and culture will be facilitated with support and redressal. Aggrieved women facing any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, trafficking, honour related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting, and those who have reached out are identified by STH and referred to ‘One Stop Centre’ Scheme (OSC) popularly known as ‘Sakhi’ under Ministry of Women and Child, where they are provided with specialised services.”<sup>124</sup> Knowing the importance of women’s participation in the decision-making body, the organisation shows immense eagerness in implementing 33 per cent reservation of seats in the ULB and other elected positions which could not be attained till today. But the vision to achieve political

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123. Khetoho V Nurumi, *Operation-Flush Out Mission*, Printed at N.V. Press, Kohima, 2013.

124. <http://Sakhirangareddydistrict.org>, accessed on 07.04.2020 at 3:40 P.M.

empowerment is still in the minds of the organisation.

It can be observed that Sümi women have improved their stride in the sphere of education, job opportunities, and better marketing facilities thereby making additional income. But there are some areas where equality of both men and women need to be strengthened.

#### **4.23 Profile of the Respondents is shown in Table 4.23.1- 4.23.6.**

**Table - 4.23.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Gender	Total No. of Respondents (figure)	Total No. of Respondents (in percentage)
Male	90	50.00
Female	90	50.00
Total	180	100.00

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The total number of respondents is 180 persons as shown in Table 4.23.1 consisting of 90 men and 90 women. This is done in order to extract information from both the genders with equal number of respondents. The above table shows that 90 (50 per cent) men and 90 (50 per cent) women each from different social, economical and political background have been identified from three Blocks in the district of Zünheboto in which Sümi tribe is the sole inhabitants. The selection of Blocks is made in such a way that the district in question is fairly covered for the purpose of carrying out quality survey. Each Block consists of one Urban, and two villages representing rural areas. In this exercise Akuluto Block represents northern part of the district, Zünheboto Block and Pughoboto Block as central and southern part of the district. The areas surveyed under urban are Akuluto town, Zünheboto town, the district Headquarter and Pughoboto town. Under each urban station two rural areas have been identified: they are –

Phishumi village, Lumami village, Asükhomi village, Lizümi village, Chishilimi village and Lazami village respectively. The study also examines the response of men and women from different walks of life regarding the empowerment of Sümi women.

**Table - 4.23.2: Respondents Marital Status**

Marital status	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)	Total No. of Respondents (in percentage)
Married	145	80.88
Unmarried	35	19.44
Total	180	100.00

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Out of 180 respondents, 80.66 per cent are married and 19.44 per cent are unmarried. The marital status is important as the married people shoulder greater responsibility in the society than the unmarried ones. Married people are more exposed to different kinds of challenges that surround them and they are expected to possess the ability to tackle the issues appropriately. Hence, more married people were picked as respondents than the unmarried ones as indicated in Table 4.23.2.

**Table - 4.23.3: Age Group Distribution of the Respondents**

Age (years)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)	Total No. of Respondents (in percentage)
21-30	30	16.6
31-40	50	27.77
41-50	49	27.22
51-60 & above	51	28.33
Total	180	100.00

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The age group of the respondents are displayed in Table 4.23.3. Out of 180 respondents, age group of 21-30 years constitutes 16.66 per cent. This group is considered as aspiring and prospective leaders of tomorrow. Age group of 50-60 years and above which has the highest percentage at 28.33 were taken as elderly and matured persons who enjoy social standing in all major decisions than the younger ones, their opinions and views are well accepted and has advisory role in the society.

**Table - 4.23.4: Respondents Educational Qualifications**

Educational Qualification	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)	Total No. of Respondents (in percentage)
Matric Standard	63	35.00
Matriculate	46	25.55
Higher Secondary	1	0.55
Graduate	55	30.55
Post Graduate	14	7.44
Professional Qualification	1	0.55
Total	180	100.00

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The educational background of the respondents as recorded in Table 4.23.4 indicates that out of 180 persons surveyed, 35 per cent represents the category of Matric standard, respondents who graduated stands at 30.55 per cent. Most of the graduate respondents are employed either in public or private sectors and the remaining are educated unemployed youths at the time of collecting the information from them. The opinion of post graduates and professionals stands at 7.77, and 0.55 per cent respectively.

**Table - 4.23.5: Respondents' Occupational Backgrounds**

Occupational Background	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)	Total No. of Respondents (in percentage)
Church Leaders/ GBs/ VCs/ VDBs	40	22.22
Students/ Unemployed Youths	22	12.22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	15	8.33
Government Employees	62	34.44
Farmer	16	8.89
NGOs	15	8.33
Home Maker	10	5.56
Total	180	100.00

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Table 4.23.5 shows that out of 180 respondents, 34.44 per cent are Government employees engaged in different professions. On the other hand, 22.22 per cent are Church Leaders, Gaon Buras, and from Village Councils and Village Development Board who are considered to be the guardians of the society and their role and impact can not be overlooked. It also indicates that 5.55 per cent in the survey are home-makers so as to study their concept about women empowerment in their respective families which is considered as structural and functional unit of the society.

**Table - 4.23.6: Income of the Respondents**

Annual Income of the Respondents (Rs. in Lakhs)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)	Total No. of Respondents (in percentage)
Below 1 Lakh	70	38.88
Up to 1 Lakhs	9	5.00
1-2 Lakhs	21	11.66
2-4 Lakhs	43	23.88
4-6 Lakhs	31	17.22
6-8 Lakhs	4	2.22
8-10 Lakhs	1	0.55
Above 10 Lakhs	1	0.55
Total	180	100.00

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The respondents belong to different income categories as shown in Table 4.23.6 indicating that 38.88 per cent earn less than Rs. 100,000 (Rupees one Lac) annually. Majority of the respondents state that they earn between Rs. 200,000 -400,000 (Rupees Two Lacs- four Lacs) per annum which is 23.88 per cent, and only 0.55 per cent among the respondents earn more than Rs. 10,000,000 (Rupees Ten Lacs.) It is a fact that economic income of a person depicts the status of the individual in the society.

**Table - 4.23.7: Have you heard about Women Empowerment?**

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents (in percentage)		Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
	Yes	No	
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	20.00	2.22	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed	12.22	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	8.33	-	15
Govt. Employees	34.44	-	62
Farmer	8.89	-	16
NGO	8.33	-	15
Home Maker	5.56	-	10
Total	97.77	2.22	180

Source: Field Study (2016-2017)

The above Table 4.23.7 shows that out of 180 respondents 97.77 per cent have heard about women empowerment, and a small margin of 2.22 per cent responded that they have not heard about women empowerment. It is understood that the majority of people interviewed are well aware about the women empowerment. A small number of respondents constituting less than 3 per cent who say 'no' are either not interested in the topic or they are simply ignorant about the concept of women empowerment.

**Table - 4.23.8: Whether Sümi Men and Women are equally empowered.**

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents (in percentage)				Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
	Yes	No	To some extend	Never	
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	3.33	6.11	11.67	1.11	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed	2.78	2.78	6.67	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	2.22	1.67	4.44	-	15
Govt. Employees	3.89	8.33	21.11	1.11	62
Farmer	0.56	2.22	5.56	0.56	16
NGO	1.67	1.67	4.44	0.56	15
Home Maker	0.56	2.22	2.22	0.56	10
Total	15.01	25.00	56.11	3.9	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Table 4.23.8 indicates that out of 180 respondents, less than 16 per cent believe or think that men and women are equally empowered whereas 25 per cent of respondents think that men and women are not equally empowered. Majority of men and women consisting of 56.11 per cent said that both men and women are equally empowered to some extent which signifies men and women share the responsibility and enjoy the same status in professional areas, economic engagements and educational qualifications. But in certain areas because of imposition of strict customary laws, the male dominance becomes evident even in the family structure which hampers equal

empowerment. Respondents comprising 3.9 per cent said that Sümi women are never empowered equally at par with men.

**Table - 4.23.9: Respondents understanding on the term Empowerment.**

Category of Respondents	An economic self reliance (in percentage)	Social empowerment (in percentage)	Educational empowerment (in percentage)	Political empowerment (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	0.56	9.44	11.67	0.56	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed	1.11	3.89	6.67	0.56	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	1.11	2.22	9.5	-	15
Govt. Employees	0.56	14.44	18.33	1.11	62
Farmer	-	1.11	7.78	-	16
NGO	-	3.89	3.89	0.56	15
Home Maker	0.56	1.67	3.33	-	10
Total	3.9	36.66	56.67	2.79	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The Table 4.23.9 shows that out of 180 respondents less than 3 per cent responded that empowerment signifies political empowerment. Another small group of people comprising less than 4 per cent understand empowerment as economic empowerment. More than 36 per cent of respondents understand the term empowerment as ‘social empowerment’ because of their zealous participation in social activities for the betterment of the society. The survey reveals that the majority of respondents

constituting more than 56 per cent agree that the term is understood in the educational strata which they believe is a way forward for empowerment.

**Table - 4.23.10: Main obstacles to Women Empowerment.**

Category of Respondents	Rigid Customary Laws (in percentage)	Community opposing to changes (in percentage)	Patriarchal system (in percentage)	Acceptance of inferior position by women (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	15.56	1.67	3.33	1.67	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed	7.22	0.56	3.33	1.11	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	3.89	2.22	1.11	1.11	15
Govt. Employees	28.89	1.11	1.67	2.78	62
Farmer	3.89	0.56	0.56	3.89	16
NGO	4.44	1.11	0.56	2.22	15
Home Maker	5.56	-	-	-	10
Total	69.45	7.23	10.56	12.78	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The Table 4.23.10 reveals that out of 180 respondents less than 8 per cent of the respondents think that community opposing to changes is the main obstacle to women empowerment where as 10 per cent opined that patriarchal system is the main obstacle

to women empowerment, and 12 per cent believe that acceptance of inferior position by women is the main obstacle to women empowerment. However, more than 69 per cent of the respondents say that main obstacles to women empowerment are due to practice of 'rigid customary law' in one way or the other.

**Table - 4.23.11: Whether empowering women disempowers men.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	3.33	18.89	-	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	0.56	11.67	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	1.67	6.67	-	15
Govt. Employees	5.56	27.78	1.11	62
Farmer	1.67	6.67	0.56	16
NGO	1.11	7.22	-	15
Home Maker	0.56	4.44	0.56	10
Total	14.46	83.34	2.23	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The above Table 4.23.11 reflects that out of 180 respondents 14 per cent think that empowering women may destabilize and disempower men, and 2 per cent of the respondents say that they do not know. It is not clearly known whether they are ignorant about the subject matter or not interested or do not want to share their thoughts.

However, 83 per cent of the respondents do not believe that empowering women will in no way disempower men. Rather they hold an opinion that empowering women can bring about societal changes by elevating the status of women and making both the gender as an equal partner in every sphere of life.

**Table - 4.23.12: Whether Sümi women are empowered to take part in decision making particularly in social and political field.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	8.33	13.33	0.56	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	1.67	10.56	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	2.78	5.56	-	15
Govt. Employees	15.00	18.33	1.11	62
Farmer	3.89	5.00	-	16
NGO	2.78	3.89	1.67	15
Home Maker	2.22	2.22	1.11	10
Total	36.67	58.89	4.45	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Table 4.23.12 above indicates that out of 180 respondents a margin of less than 37 per cent of people interviewed think that Sümi women are empowered enough to take part in decision-making process in the matter particularly in the area of social and political field. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents comprising more than

58 per cent are of the view that Sümi women are not at all empowered to take active part in the decision-making process, particularly in the social and political field. Even if they participate it is just a mere nominal presence. Here, only 4 per cent of respondents say that they do not know, the reason of which may be due to their ignorance or lack of interest.

**Table - 4.23.13: Whether Traditional Customary Law should be rectified to empower women.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	14.44	5.00	2.78	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	7.78	3.33	1.11	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	3.89	3.89	0.56	15
Govt. Employees	28.33	3.89	2.22	62
Farmer	5.56	2.78	0.56	16
NGO	4.44	2.22	1.67	15
Home Maker	5.56	-	-	10
Total	70.00	21.11	8.9	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

As seen in the Table 4.23.13, out of 180 respondents a majority of 70 per cent respondents are of the view that Traditional Customary Law should be rectified so as to empower women in the society and ensure that women too play important roles at par with men so that equal opportunity is created without any gender specific prejudice. It is

also observed that 21 per cent of the respondents support that Traditional Customary Law should remain as it is and should not be changed or rectified. They also believe that it is an age-old tradition and practice of Sümi tribe and therefore, Traditional Customary Law should be preserved. A small group of people comprising 9 per cent do not know whether it should or should not be rectified.

**Table - 4.23.14: If a woman candidate emerges in your constituency, would you support her.**

Category of Respondents	Male Respondents (in percentage)			Female Respondents (in percentage)			Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know	
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	7.22	3.33	6.67	3.33	-	1.67	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	2.78	0.56	2.78	2.22	0.56	3.33	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	3.33	0.56	2.22	1.67	0.56	-	15
Govt. Employees	4.44	4.44	3.89	2.22	3.33	16.11	62
Farmer	0.56	1.11	3.33	0.56	-	3.33	16
NGO	0.56	0.56	1.67	2.22	-	3.33	15
Home Maker	-	-	-	2.22	1.67	1.67	10
Total	18.89	10.56	20.56	14.44	6.12	29.44	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Table 4.23.14 shows that out of 180 respondents, 18.89 per cent male and 14.44 per cent female, a total 33 per cent are willing to support women candidate if they contest in the election, but 10 per cent male and 6 per cent female, that is 16 per cent in total do not want to support women candidate the reason of which is best known to them. While, 50 per cent of the respondents say that they do not know. It is observed from among 50 per cent of respondents, who said that they do not know, admitted that they would either vote for their relative or known contestant or party candidate. Some say that they would cast their votes for any influential candidate having the prospect of winning.

**Table - 4.23.15: Whether empowerment will open the door of opportunity for Sümi women.**

Category of Respondents	Social Strata (in percentage)	Political Arena (in percentage)	Economic Front (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	8.89	-	-	13.33	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	3.89	-	-	8.33	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	2.78	-	-	5.56	15
Govt. Employees	9.44	4.44	10.56	10.00	62
Farmer	3.33	-	2.78	2.78	16
NGO	2.78	0.56	2.22	2.78	15
Home Maker	1.67	-	1.67	2.22	10
Total	32.78	5.00	17.23	45.00	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

As shown in the Table 4.23.15, out of 180 respondents, less than 33 per cent are of the view that empowerment will open the door of opportunity for Sümi women in social strata, 17 per cent of the respondents think that it will open the door for improvement in the economic front. It is observed that only 5 per cent of the respondents think that it will pave the way for political empowerment. The majority of the respondents, that is, 45 per cent belongs to the category of ‘Don’t know’. It may be assumed that respondents are either not very sure whether or not empowerment of Sümi women will bring in significant changes in the area of social, political and economic front, or they are not interested.

**Table - 4.23.16: Whether Nagaland should implement 33 per cent women reservation.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Women are not ready to participate (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	10.56	7.78	3.89	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	6.67	2.78	2.78	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	3.33	4.44	0.56	15
Govt. Employees	15.00	8.33	11.11	62
Farmer	2.78	4.44	1.67	16
NGO	4.44	1.67	2.22	15
Home Maker	3.33	1.11	1.11	10
Total	46.11	30.55	23.34	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

From the above Table 4.23.16, it is shown that out of 180 respondents, 23 per cent are of the opinion that women are not ready to participate even if 33 per cent seats reservation for women is implemented in the state, where as 31 per cent of respondents say that they do not agree with the policy of 33 per cent seats reservation for women. But on the whole, a majority consisting of 46 per cent of the respondents are found to be in favour of 33 per cent seats reservation policy. It may be mentioned here that if the state of Nagaland wishes to have urban government in the form of a municipality with an elected civic body there in, then it needs to ensure that the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 1992 of the Indian Constitution is made applicable.

**Table- 4.23.17: Whether Sümi women are empowered at the grassroot level like – Village Development Board (VDB) and Village Council (VC).**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	17.22	4.44	0.56	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	5.56	4.44	2.22	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	3.33	3.33	1.67	15
Govt. Employees	17.78	8.89	7.78	62
Farmer	7.22	1.11	0.56	16
NGO	5.56	2.78	-	15
Home Maker	0.56	2.22	2.78	10
Total	57.23	27.21	15.57	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The figure in the Table 4.23.17 shows that out of 180 respondents 16 per cent are saying that they do not know whether empowerment at the grassroot is actually taking place or not, and 27 per cent of the respondents answered that women are not empowered at the grassroot in reality. However, 57 per cent of the respondents are of the view that women are fairly represented at the grassroot like in the formation of Village Development Board (VDB) and the Village Council (VC)

**Table - 4.23.18: Whether Education is a tool to empower Sümi Women.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Do not know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	20.56	1.11	0.56	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	11.67	-	0.56	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	7.78	-	0.56	15
Govt. Employees	29.44	1.11	3.89	62
Farmer	8.89	-	-	16
NGO	7.22	0.56	0.56	15
Home Maker	5.00	0.56	-	10
Total	90.56	3.34	6.13	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

As shown in the above Table 4.23.18, out of 180 respondents 3 per cent of the respondents do not believe that education is a tool to empower Sümi women, and 6 per cent simply said that they do not know. The response of the later may be either they are ignorant or not interested to share their thoughts. However, a majority of respondents which is more than 90 per cent believe that education is the best tool to empower Sümi women. They also agree that the society will be benefitted and will march ahead if the womenfolks are educated.

**Table - 4.23.19: Whether Self Help Group (SHG) contributes to economic empowerment in the family and the society.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	22.22	-	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	12.22	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	8.33	-	15
Govt. Employees	34.44	-	62
Farmer	8.89	-	16
NGO	8.33	-	15
Home Maker	5.56	-	10
Total	100.00	-	180

Source: Field work: (2016-2017)

An analysis of the Table 4.23.19 shows that out of 180 persons interviewed 100 per cent of the respondents are saying that Self Help Group (SHG) in the respective locality contributes to the economic growth in the family. It shows that women are more akin to set up SHG and hence they feel that economic contribution is felt more in the women group but not to the society at large.

**Table - 4.23.20: Whether career women are more empowered and command more respect than non-working women.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Often (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	6.11	6.67	8.33	1.11	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	2.78	4.44	4.44	0.56	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	2.22	3.33	2.22	0.56	15
Govt. Employees	8.33	10.00	11.11	5.00	62
Farmer	4.44	1.11	2.22	1.11	16
NGO	2.78	2.78	2.78	-	15
Home Maker	2.78	1.11	1.11	0.56	10
Total	29.44	29.44	32.21	8.9	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The data of the Table 4.23.20 indicates that out of 180 respondents 29.44 per cent respondents concur that career women are more empowered and commands respect than non-working women or home maker. On the other hand, an equal number of respondents, that is 29.44 per cent, say that empowerment and respect does not have anything to do with whether they are career women or not. However, the above Table's analysis shows that the majority of the respondents which constitutes 32 per cent do believe that career women are often found to be more empowered and commands respect than non-working women.

**Table - 4.23.21: Status of Sümi women vis-a-vis other members of the family.**

Category of Respondents	We reside together as equal members of the family (in percentage)	Brothers are given better chances (in per centage)	Female members have a better status (in per centage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	20.56	1.67	-	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	10.00	1.67	0.56	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	8.33	-	-	15
Govt. Employees	32.22	1.11	1.11	62
Farmer	8.33	0.56	-	16
NGO	7.78	0.56	-	15
Home Maker	4.44	1.11	-	10
Total	91.66	6.68	1.67	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Table 4.23.21 reveals that out of 180 respondents more than 91 per cent believe that both male and female members reside together as equal members of the family. According to the response, all the children irrespective of gender receive undivided love and care from their parents without any bias.

**Table - 4.23.22: Choice of Marriage regarding Traditional bride price marriage and Modern type of marriage.**

Category of Respondents	Traditional (in percentage)	Modern (in percentage)	Individuals choice (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	7.78	7.22	7.22	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	2.22	3.89	6.11	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	1.67	2.22	4.44	15
Govt. Employees	5.00	11.67	17.78	62
Farmer	1.11	1.67	6.11	16
NGO	1.11	6.11	1.11	15
Home Maker	0.56	1.67	3.33	10
Total	19.45	34.45	46.1	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

After surveying the data imparted in the Table 4.23.22, it is understood that 19 per cent of the respondents are still in favour of traditional system of marriage where bride price is practised with utmost respect and pride, but 34 per cent of the respondents support modern type of marriage where the question of dowry / bride price does not arise. Conversely, a greater portion of the respondents comprising 46 per cent out of 180 persons surveyed advocate that it should be left to the individuals' choice. In Sümi wedding irrespective of the type of marriage they follow, the choice of dress is purely at the liberty of the bride and groom concerned either to go for white wedding gown or traditional dress.

**Table - 4.23.23: Should husbands / spouses have better status and higher educational qualification than wives?**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in per centage)	No (in per centage)	To some extent (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	1.67	9.44	11.11	-	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	1.11	7.22	3.33	0.56	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	-	5.56	2.78	-	15
Govt. Employees	3.33	16.11	15.00	-	62
Farmer	0.56	3.33	5.00	-	16
NGO	2.22	4.44	1.67	-	15
Home Maker	1.11	2.22	2.22	-	10
Total	10.00	48.32	41.11	0.56	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The analysis of the Table 4.23.23 above shows that out of 180 respondents, only 10 per cent believe that husbands / spouses should have better status and higher educational qualification than their wives. In addition to that another group of respondents comprising 41 per cent also agree that to a certain extent the husbands should have better status and higher educational qualification than their wives. However, a majority of 48 per cent of the respondents reject the idea that the husbands / spouses should have better status and higher educational qualification than their wives. The study of the above Table shows that there are still a significant number of people among men and women who believe in the traditional concept of family norm where wives are considered as the subordinate.

**Table - 4.23.24: Whether there are jobs which cannot be handled by women.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders / GB/ Village Council/ VDB	8.33	8.33	5.56	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	5.00	3.89	3.33	22
Political Party Worker/Contractor/ Business	3.89	1.11	3.33	15
Govt. Employees	11.11	17.22	6.11	62
Farmer	6.11	0.56	2.22	16
NGO	2.78	3.33	2.22	15
Home Maker	1.67	2.78	1.11	10
Total	38.89	37.22	23.88	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

Table 4.23.24 shows that out of 180 respondents surveyed, 37 per cent feel that there is no job which women cannot handle. This statement indicates that both men and women have equal calibre in performing any type of job. On the other hand, more than 38 per cent believe that there are certainly some types of manual works which can not be handled by womenfolks due to want of more muscular / physical force, for example, in butcher shop, carpentry work, masonry and blacksmith etc. This group of respondents are also of the view that certainly women can not handle all types of tasks during the period of gestation. However, it is a known fact that women are actively involved in the labour work force as equal partner with men in agriculture and farming etc. Here, 23 per cent of the respondents are either not interested in the topic or ignorant. According to the survey, most of the respondents cling to the idea that certainly women cannot handle all types of tasks that menfolks handle. It could be not because of mental capacity but of biological reason.

**Table - 4.23.25: Whether Sümi women should have equal inheritance with men?**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Do not know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	5.00	17.22	-	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	5.00	7.22	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	2.22	6.11	-	15
Govt. Employees	15.56	18.33	0.56	62
Farmer	3.33	5	0.56	16
NGO	4.44	2.22	1.67	15
Home Maker	1.11	4.44	-	10
Total	36.66	60.54	2.79	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

From the study of the Table 4.23.25, it is obvious that out of 180 respondents less than 37 per cent believes that women have equal inheritance with men. In Sümi society both sons and daughters get their shares when it comes to the inheritance of their parent's property but the major share goes to the sons. More than 60 per cent of the respondents held a view that women do not have equal inheritance with men. It may be true that traditionally women are not entitled to inherit ancestral property especially immovable ones.

**Table - 4.23.26: Whether Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH) and other NGOs help in promoting empowerment of Sümi women?**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Don't know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	8.33	1.11	12.78	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	6.67	-	5.56	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	5.56	-	2.78	15
Govt. Employees	12.22	0.56	21.67	62
Farmer	3.33	0.56	5.00	16
NGO	4.44	-	3.89	15
Home Maker	2.22	-	3.33	10
Total	42.77	2.23	55.01	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The over all data of the Table 4.23.26 indicates that out of 180 respondents around 43 per cent agree that other NGOs and the STH play a constructive role in empowering Sümi women, but 2 per cent of men and women say that they do not see any significant outcome. The remaining 55 per cent of respondents are not very sure whether STH and NGOs really help in promoting empowerment of Sümi women. This may be due to the inadequate effort in generating effective mobilization and lack of interest from among the peer group in the matter related to performance of STH towards promoting empowerment of Sümi women.

**Table - 4.23.27: Whether Sümi women are at par with men in taking roles in the Church set-up.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Do not know (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	14.44	6.11	1.67	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	6.11	4.44	1.67	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	6.11	2.22	-	15
Govt. Employees	19.44	11.67	3.33	62
Farmer	5.56	2.78	0.56	16
NGO	5.00	1.67	1.67	15
Home Maker	2.22	2.22	1.11	10
Total	58.88	31.11	10.01	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The overall view of the Table 4.23.27 shows that out of 180 respondents 10 per cent says that they are not sure whether Sümi women take an active role at par with men in the church set up. Less than 32 per cent of persons surveyed believe that equal participation of women at par with men is limited to certain areas only. Reasons are, the space in the top leadership position in the church are occupied by men, women are not given opportunity to be a pastor in the church wherein only Associate and Assistant posts are allotted to them. The decision-making body comprising Deacons and Deaconesses, which is the back-bone of the church administration, does not allow space for women to become Deacon Board Chairman. It may not be very easy for the church members to pose their confidence in the female leadership. But more than 58 per cent responded that women take an active role equally as men in the church set-up. It may be understood that women are involved equally in conducting worship services, home visitation, giving sermon, outreach programme and evangelism etc. Women do dedicate their full time for the job they are allotted and to fulfil the consecrated assignment to promote the growth of church ministry. Hence, according to the findings, women play an active role in the church set-up.

**Table - 4.23.28: Whether patriarchal system should continue.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Do not know (in percentage)	Total No. Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	17.22	5.00	-	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	6.67	5.56	-	22
Political Party Worker/ Contractor/ Business	6.11	2.22	-	15
Govt. Employees	22.22	12.22	-	62
Farmer	7.22	1.11	0.56	16
NGO	4.44	3.89	-	15
Home Maker	2.78	2.78	-	10
Total	66.66	32.78	0.56	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The analysis of the Table 4.23.28 shows that out of 180 respondents interviewed, less than 33 per cent reveal that patriarchal system should not continue. However, a major group of respondents comprising more than 66 per cent are of the opinion that patriarchal system should continue as it used to be since time immemorial. This shows that there is no change in the perception of the people with regard to traditional patriarchal social system. Presently, the discontinuation of patriarchal system in the Sümi context at this stage can not be conveniently accorded a warm welcome note.

**Table - 4.23.29: Whether election should be dominated by male members only.**

Category of Respondents	Yes (in percentage)	No (in percentage)	Partially true (in percentage)	Total No. of Respondents (in figure)
Church Leaders/ GB/ Village Council/ VDB	1.67	7.22	13.33	40
Students Leader/ Unemployed youth	-	4.44	7.78	22
Political Worker/ Contractor/ Business	1.11	5.00	2.22	15
Govt. Employees	2.22	5.56	26.67	62
Farmer	0.56	2.22	6.11	16
NGO	0.56	1.11	6.67	15
Home Maker	-	1.11	4.44	10
Total	6.12	26.66	67.22	180

Source: Field work (2016-2017)

The overall data of the Table 4.23.29 comprising 180 respondents shows that only 6 per cent support that election should be dominated by male members only. However, more than 26 per cent advocate that election should not be the affair of male members only. The above picture shows that 67 per cent concluded that it is partially true that the election should be the affair of male members only. This Table indicates that the respondents do not want to share their opinion clearly on this point.

It is observed that Sümi women have improved their stride in the sphere of education, job opportunities, better marketing facilities and additional income. But there are some areas where equality of both men and women need to be strengthened. Hotoni Yeptho (2017) went on to say that what Nagas need today is that we should not focus in fighting the old traditional ways but strengthen ourselves in building the new changes in our society. It is about opening our mindset in accepting each other, to compliment each other and not to compete with one other. It is to realise that empowering women is empowering the entire community.<sup>125</sup>

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125. Y. Hotoni Yeptho, *Gender Construction in Naga Society*, 17.02.2017, p.3 in *Gender Construction in Naga Society*- The Morung Express. <http://morungexpress.com/gender-construction-naga-society/17-08-2017>.

# **CHAPTER - 5**

**Political Empowerment of Women in the context of Electoral Process**

## CHAPTER 5

### Political Empowerment of Women in the context of Electoral process

Naga society is predominantly a village society. Toshimenla (2012) states that a bulk of the Naga population still lives in the rural areas. Every Naga, including the urban dwellers, traced their ancestral roots back to their respective villages. Hence, for every single Naga the village played an integral role in their life, regardless of the modern facade of the towns. Within every village, the Village Council is the administrative seat which was the highest decision-making body in the villages since time immemorial. The Village Council takes every major decision concerning the administration of the village, and the Village Council settles any disputes within the village jurisdiction. They are in every way the legally recognised custodians of customary laws and usages. The most striking aspect of the Village Council in this modern era is the absence of women members. The Village and Area Council Act 1978 (Amended in 1985, 1990), is a village based administration system developed upon traditional institutions of the Nagas, on the basis of customary laws and procedures.<sup>126</sup> According to the Act, “A Village Council shall consist of members, chosen by villagers in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages, the same being approved by the state Government, provided that hereditary Village Chiefs, GBs and Anghs shall be Ex-Officio members of such council and shall have voting right”.<sup>127</sup> Although it is supposed to be practically in place, yet the age old traditional system of administration still exists and literally there is no question of women’s role in the

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126. Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland Challenges and Imperatives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p.96

127. *The Nagaland Village and Area Councils Act 1978*, quoted in Z. Angami, *Nagaland Village Empowering Laws*, Novelty Printing Press, Kohima, 2008, p.2

Village Councils and inclusion in the governance.

The only singular provision which allows Naga women to be part of the developmental activity is through the Village Development Board (VDB) in the village that functions under the Village Development Model Rules 1980. Nagaland government formally launched the VDB in the state under “clause 12 of Section 12 of the Nagaland Village and Area Council Act 1978”. The VDBs operate under the direction of the Village Councils. According to the VDB Model Rules, under Art.4 (B) it states, “the number of women members to be included in the Management Committee of the VDB should not be less than one-fourth of the total number of members of Management of the VDBs”.<sup>128</sup> Toshimenla (2012) observes that women were allotted twenty-five per cent of the funds from the Grant-in-Aid that comes for the village development. This fund was meant to be used for the welfare and developmental schemes of the village women. Officially, it is mandatory for the VDB to submit the names of just two women to the concerned Department. Accordingly, each village worked out their own modalities of appointing women members. Therefore, while some villages in Nagaland have as many as nineteen women VDB members, the number of women VDB members in other villages ranges from two to seven. Women VDB members were required to implement and monitor schemes for women in coordination with the general VDB. Women members in most VDBs felt constraint because their accounts, under the present system did not have the autonomy to function independently. Everything they did was amenable to the scrutiny of the general male dominated VDB and the Village Councils. Till date the involvement of women is confined only to the development

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128. *Village Development Model Rules 1980* (Revised), Government of Nagaland, Department of Rural Development, 1997, quoted in Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland Challenges and Imperatives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p.97

scheme of women. Moreover, the functioning of the VDB is made amenable to the approval of the Village Council, where again there was no female representation. Hence, women VDB members' role in the governance of the villages remains limited, and since they face various constraints due to the gender barrier to influence the decision making process.<sup>129</sup>

Kumble (2008) wrote that the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment is viewed as a watershed moment in Panchayati Raj's history. So far as it is considered, it is one of the most distinguished acts ever introduced by the law maker. The act is directly related to women's empowerment by introducing 33 per cent reservation for women. Before the implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institution as delineated in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, women did not relatively have political access to these important local governance bodies. Earlier, only few women were getting entry into this institution mostly through co-opted or nominations.<sup>130</sup> This Constitutional Amendment became effective from 1993, following which, different states adopted their own system of rules to strengthen the local bodies according to the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act. Thus the post 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act resulted in strengthening of Panchayati Raj system in India. Dubey (2001), however, mentions that the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 has provided a special constitutional arrangement

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129. Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland Challenges and Imperatives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p. 97-99

130. Kumble, A and Salunkhe, S., *Factor Influencing Women's Participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions*, in Barik, B.C and Sahoo, U.C. (eds.), op. cit., 2008, p. 74 in Ajay Kumar Yadav *Empowerment of Women Through Panchayati Raj Institution, A Study on East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh*, A Thesis Submitted to Rajiv Gandhi University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, 2016, pp.21- 25

under Article 244 that Act shall not be applicable upon the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.<sup>131</sup>

In Nagaland each village has its own traditional self-governing institution in the form of village council. It is a sovereign body within its territory. Hence, the need for implementing Panchayati Raj system of local self governance in the state was not a necessity. Now the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 gave Constitutional recognition to the Municipalities. The administration in the urban sectors was exercised through town council which paved the way for Municipal Councils based on the Nagaland Municipal Act 2001. The Act was implemented by conducting election in 2004 in the entire state of Nagaland except for Mokokchung, and the elections were conducted without 33 per cent Women Reservation since the provision was not inserted in the 2001 Municipal Act. It was passed without the provision of the Part IXA in Nagaland Legislative Assembly. The Honourable Guwahati High court in 2005 passed a judgement directing the state government to implement the 33 per cent Women Reservation over a petition filed by a women candidate in Dimapur (East) Town Council. The State Government did not go for appeal and instead took up the Act for Amendment in 2006 inserting 33 per cent reservation for women in the “Municipal and Town Council Act 2001”.

The High Court in 2005 then directed the State Government to include Part IXA amended by Municipal Act 2006 by inserting section 23A and 23 B that the Governor gave his assent on 30.08.2006. The Nagaland Municipal Act which was passed in 2006 is as follows:

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131. Dubey, Sanjay, *Dynamic of Tribal Local Polity and Panchayat Raj Arunachal Pradesh*, Premier Publishing House, New Delhi, 2001, p. 10.2. in Ajay Kumar Yadav, *Empowerment of Women Through Panchayati Raj Institution, A Study on East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh*, A Thesis Submitted to Rajiv Gandhi University for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, 2016. p. 26

**Section 23 (A):** - Insertion of new sections 23 (A) and 23 (B), after the existing section 23 in the Principle Act, the following shall be inserted:

23 (A) Reservation of seats in Municipalities: Seats in every Municipality shall be reserved for the SC, ST and women, including women from the SC and ST, in accordance with the provision contained in clauses (1) to (3) of Act 243 T of the Constitution.

**Section 23 (B):-** Reservation of offices of chairpersons in Municipalities for SC, ST and women. The chairperson's office shall be reserved for the SCs, STs and women, as nearly as may be, in proportion to the number of seats reserved for them in the Municipalities and the allotment of such offices shall be made by rotation.<sup>132</sup> Toshimenla (2012) went on to say that "after much lobbying by concerned Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and women groups in the state, the provision for one-third reservation for women at the Municipal Councils was finally incorporated into the legislation through the Nagaland Municipal (Amendment) Act 2006. While this move was welcomed by women's organisation across the State, it also opened a pandora's box in the state with certain section of Naga society, mostly men, vociferously opposed to its implementation."<sup>133</sup>

The state government on September 22, 2012 passed a resolution in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly not to apply Women Reservation in the Act as it would infringe on Article 371 (A), so for a proper understanding of the said Article, the relevant portion is quoted hereunder.

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132. Source: Nagaland Municipality Act 2001.

133. Toshimenla Jamir, *Women and Politics in Nagaland Challenges and Imperatives*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2012, p. 91

“[371 (A). Special Provision with respect to the State of Nagaland:-

(1) Notwithstanding anything in this constitution:-

a) No Act of Parliament in respect of-

i) Religious or social practices of Nagas.

ii) Naga customary law and procedure.

iii) Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga Customary Law, ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides]”.<sup>134</sup>

In Nagaland it may be cited that the state had implemented Assam Tribal Areas Act 1950 but Nagas did not react. It may be mentioned that in the VDBs and village councils, the state agreed to the guidelines of 25 per cent fund reservation for women and development with 25 per cent women participation in VDB but there was no reaction.<sup>135</sup> The Naga Mothers Association under the aegis of Joint Action Committee for Women Reservation (JACWR) approached the Guwahati High Court in 2011, and the Court while disposing of the Writ Petition on October 21, 2011, directed to hold elections to ULBs and to complete the entire process on or before January 2012. But the time for conducting elections was extended till March, 2012.

The State Government under Mr. Rio, appealed against the judgement of the single judge order before the Division Bench which directed the State to re survey the Act and to examine the applicability of Part IXA of the Indian Constitution to the State of Nagaland. The High Court granted a period of six weeks for completion of the

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134. Source: *Article 371A of the Constitution of India with Special provision to the State of Nagaland*.

135. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Friday, November 25, 2016, Vol. XXVI

exercise. Thus, the Article 371 (A) Committee of the Assembly examined the Part IXA of the Constitution of India and recommended for a resolution to be adopted by the Assembly stopping application of Part IXA of Constitution to Nagaland. Hence, the Assembly adopted the resolution on September 22, 2012 in view of the exception granted in Article 243 (M) which says that Part IX of the constitution will not apply to Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Hill Areas of Manipur. That is how the elections to the Municipal bodies could not be conducted in Nagaland.

In 2012, the JACWR then made a special leave petition in the Supreme Court and got a ruling on 20 April 2016. The Supreme Court upheld the single Judge ruling of the Guwahati High Court of October 2011. The order of the Division Bench of the Guwahati High Court as aforesaid was challenged by the JACWR in the Supreme Court by a Special Leave Petition. Later through a Writ Petition, the JACWR also challenged the validity of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly's resolution exempting the State from Part IXA of the Constitution. The State Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2016 decided to conduct polls to ULB with women reservation. The 12<sup>th</sup> Nagaland Legislative Assembly revoked the resolution passed by the 11<sup>th</sup> NLA on September 22, 2012 under Article 371 (A) (1) (a) of the Constitution of India which exempted Nagaland from the application of Article 243T Part IXA of the Indian Constitution on November 24, 2016. This move paved the way for holding the elections to towns and municipal councils in Nagaland with 33 per cent women reservation. It was speculated that the ULBs elections would be conducted in a month's time.

Accordingly, the Municipal Affairs Department informed that women's reservation be made in various wards in the upcoming urban body elections. The

notification was issued on December 21, 2016. <sup>136</sup> (See Table-5.1).

**Table - 5.1: ULB elections: Wards reserved for women**

Sl. No.	Name of the District	Name of the Town for ULB elections.	Ward No. Reserved for Women Candidates.
1	Kohima	Kohima Municipal Council	3 , 6, 9, 12, 15 & 18
		Tseminyu Town Council	3, 6 & 9
2	Dimapur	Dimapur Municipal Council	1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 & 21
		East Dimapur Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
		Chumukedima Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
		Medziphema Town Council	3, 6 & 9
3	Mokokchung	Mokokchung Town Council	3, 6, 9, 12, 15 & 18
		Tuli Town Council	3, 6 & 9
		Changtongya Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
4	Mon	Mon Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
		Tobu Town Council	3, 6 & 9
		Tizit Town Council	3, 6 & 9
		Aboi Town Council	3, 6 & 9
		Naginimora Town Council	3, 6 & 9
5	Tuensang	Tuensang Town Council	3, 6, 9 & 12
		Longkhim	3, 6 & 9
		Shamator	1,3,6 & 9
		Noklak	3,6 & 9
6	Zunheboto	Zunheboto Town Council	3, 6, 9 & 12
7	Wokha	Wokha Town Council	3, 6, 9, 12 & 15
		Bhandari	3, 6 & 9
8	Kiphire	Kiphire Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
		Pungro	3, 6 & 9
9	Phek	Phek Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
		Pfutsero Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9
		Meluri Town Council	3, 6 & 9
		Chozuba Town Council	3, 6 & 9
10	Peren	Peren Town Council	3, 6 & 9
		Tening Town Council	3. 6 & 9
11	Longleng	Longleng Town Council	1, 3, 6 & 9

Source: The Morung Express, December 21, 2016

136. The Morung Express, Dimapur, Wednesday, December 21, 2016, Vol. XI No. 350

The Naga Hoho reacted to the possible election of the ULBs with 33 per cent reservation for women. The Hoho appealed to all legislators to seriously consider all aspects before revoking the September 22, 2012 NLA resolution, and that Nagaland be exempted from application of Part IXA of the Constitution of India in ULB elections. The Hoho stated that the exercise to revoke the resolution was nothing less than “undermining the voice of the people of the state.” The Hoho said a revocation of 2012 resolution was bound to invite severe social unrest and disharmony among different Naga tribes.

Against the backdrop of strong opposition to the ultimatum to hold civic polls with 33 per cent reservation for women, the state government through the state election commission (SEC), notified that on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 municipal councils and town councils be scheduled by the state. The state government in its notifications dated October 4, 2016 and November 18, 2016 directed that along with 33 per cent reservation for women the SEC should hold general election to the municipal councils and town councils in the state. Tentative dates for election is shown in Table-5.2.

**Table-5.2: The schedule of election programme issued by the State Election Commission.**<sup>137</sup>

Sl.No	Specifications Information	Month, Date & Year	Time
1	Period of filing nomination papers	January 03-07, 2017	-
2	Consolidated list of nomination to be posted	January 09, 2017	-
3	Scrutiny of nomination papers	January 10, 2017	-
4	List of validly nominated candidate to be posted	January 11, 2017	-
5	Application for revision of the order of the authority scrutinizing the nomination	January 12-14, 2017	up to 3 P.M.
6	Revision application filed to be decided	January 16, 2017	-
7	Last date of withdrawal of candidature	January 17, 2017	up to 3 P.M.
8	List of contesting candidates and list of polling station to be posted	January 17, 2017	after 3 P.M.
9	Date of polling	February 01, 2017	7 A.M. – 3 P.M.
10	Date of re-poll (if any)	February 03, 2017	-
11	Counting and declaration of results	February 04, 2017	-

Source: Nagaland Post, Dimapur, December 21, 2016.

It may be recalled that on December 10, 2016, Naga Hoho and ENPO jointly served a 15-day ultimatum on chief minister T.R. Zeliang after concluding that the state government “should not issue the election notification as of now”. Both NH and ENPO said even if the state went ahead to implement conduct of polls, the government would

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137. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Wednesday, December 21, 2016, Vol.XXVII No. 19

be embarrassed due to people's non-participation.

The JACWR agreed to the appeal made by the Chief Minister to withdraw the SLP filed by the Supreme Court's members in order to reciprocate the state government's gesture, and to encourage the ongoing process of elections to the ULBs as notified by the State Government. The JACWR also appealed to all tribe organisations to refrain from using threats and intimidations to banish, expel, excommunicate any one, and to allow the process of election to the ULBs be conducted without any untoward incident.

During the period of filing nomination papers, a total of 549 nominations were filed, of which 535 nominations were declared as valid, as shown in Table-5.3. All nominations filed across 26 towns and municipal councils in Nagaland for upcoming Urban Local Body (ULB) polls was scrutinised by the State Election Commission. The nominations of 535 candidates were declared validly nominated. Of the 32 towns / municipal councils in the state, Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Mon, Medziphema and Changtongya registered nil nominations, as apex tribal bodies prevented intending candidates from doing so. The number of women from across the 26 towns/ municipal councils consists of 188 candidates whose nominations were accepted as valid by the State Election Commission.

**Table - 5.3: Nagaland ULB polls: 535 valid nominations.** <sup>138</sup>

Town/Municipal Council	No. of valid candidates	NPF		INC		BJP		Independent		Women candidates
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Dimapur	60	15	8	2	2	8	2	16	7	19
Jalukie	17	6	3	2	0	1	0	3	2	5
Kiphire	20	6	4	1	0	1	0	6	2	6
Peren	15	5	2	2	1	0	0	3	2	5
Phek	21	7	4	2	0	0	0	5	3	7
Tseminyu	21	6	3	0	0	3	1	5	3	7
Zunheboto	21	9	4	0	1	0	0	5	2	7
Longleng	24	7	4	2	1	1	0	6	3	8
Pfutsero	27	5	4	4	3	0	0	5	6	13
Chumukedima	14	5	6	0	0	0	0	2	1	7
Naginimora	14	6	3	0	0	2	2	1	0	5
Tuli	14	6	3	0	0	1	0	3	1	4
Wokha	33	7	5	0	0	8	5	5	3	13
Mongkolemba	13	5	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	5
Longkhim	22	4	2	0	0	6	3	3	4	9
Bhandari	22	6	2	1	2	5	3	1	2	9
Tobu	16	6	3	0	0	2	0	3	2	5
Tizit	20	5	4	0	0	6	3	2	0	7
East Dimapur	15	7	4	0	0	2	1	1	0	5
Tening	13	6	3	0	1	0	0	1	2	6
Pungro	18	6	3	0	0	1	0	4	4	7
Chozuba	21	6	3	0	0	0	0	9	3	6
Shamator	18	7	4	0	0	2	1	2	2	7
Aboi	18	6	3	1	0	5	1	1	1	5
Noklak	19	5	2	0	0	0	0	9	3	5
Meluri	19	6	3	0	0	0	0	7	3	6
Total	535	165	90	17	11	55	24	110	63	188

Source: The Morung Express, Thursday, January 12, 2017, Vol. XII, issue 10, p.1

138. The Morung Express, Dimapur, Thursday, January 12, 2017, Vol. XII, No.10, p.1

Meanwhile, total withdrawals across the state were 140 candidates which left 395 valid candidates in the ULB elections in Nagaland, according to the DIPR report on January 17, 2017.

**Table – 5.4: Withdrawal of Nomination Report.** <sup>139</sup>

Sl. No.	NAME OF MUNICIPAL/ TOWN COUNCIL	WITHDRAWAL REPORT AS ON 12.01.2017
1	Kiphire Town Council	1 (W 11-INDP)
2	Pfutsero Town Council	27 (ALL CANDIDATES)
3	Meluri Town Council	2 (W 7-INDP, W 3- INDP)
4	Phek Town Council	4 (W 1-INDP, W 7- INC, W 10- INDP, W 11-INC)
5	Chozuba Town Council	1 (W 4-INDP)
6	Dimapur Municipal Council	1 (W 22- NPF)
7	Tobu Town Council	1 (W 5- INDP)
8	Total	37

Source: Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report on January 17, 2017

**Table – 5.5: Withdrawal of Nomination Report.** <sup>140</sup>

Sl. No.	NAME OF MUNICIPAL/ TOWN COUNCIL	WITHDRAWAL REPORT AS ON 13.01.2017
1	Phek Town Council	2 (W 6-NPF, W 9- INDP)
2	Chumukedima Town Council	4 (W 4-INDP, W 8-INDP, W 10- INDP, W 11-NPF)
3	Kiphire Town Council	1 (W 4-INDP)
4	Chozuba Town Council	9 (W 1-2 INDP, W 2- INDP, W 3- INDP, W 4- INDP, W 5-INDP, W 6-INDP, W 8-INDP, W 9- INDP)
5	Total	16

Source: Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report, January 17, 2017, Kohima, Nagaland.

139. Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report, January 17, 2017 Kohima, Nagaland.

140. Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report on January 17, 2017

**Table – 5.6: Withdrawal of Nomination Report.**<sup>141</sup>

Sl. No.	NAME OF MUNICIPAL/ TOWN COUNCIL	WITHDRAWAL REPORT AS ON 16.01.2017
1	Meluri Town Council	4 (W1-INDP, W7-INDP, W8-INDP, W9-INDP)
2	Dimapur Municipal Council	3 (W5-INDP, W10-INDP, W15-INDP)
3	Chumukedima Town Council	4 (W3-NPF, W6-NPF, W7-NPF, W9-NPF)
4	Tening Town Council	1 (W9-INDP)
5	Chozuba Town Council	1 (W4-INDP)
6	East Dimapur Town Council	1 (W10-INDP)
7	Zunheboto Town Council	1 (W5-INDP)
8	Total	15

Source: Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report on January 17, 2017

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141. Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report on January 17, 2017

**Table – 5.7: Withdrawal of Nomination Report.**<sup>142</sup>

Sl. No.	NAME OF MUNICIPAL/ TOWN COUNCIL	WITHDRAWAL REPORT AS ON 17.01.2017
1	Dimapur Municipal Council	10 (W2-INDP, W19-INDP, W16-INDP, W1-INC, W11-1 INC & 1 BJP, W13-1INC & 1INDP, w14-INC, W21-INDP )
2	Phek Town Council	7 (W3-INDP, W4-1 INDP & 1 NPF, W2-INDP, W10-INDP, W8-INDP, W11-NPF )
3	Chumukedima Town Council	6 (W1-NPF, W2-NPF, W4-NPF, W5-NPF, W8-NPF, W10-NPF) ALL WITHDRAWN
4	Mangkolemba Town Council	(13 Candidates) ALL WITHDRAWN
5	Meluri Town Council	4 (W2-1 NPF & 1 INDP, W3-INDP, W4-INDP)
6	Tuli Town Council	6 (W8-INDP, w1-NPF, W2-2 INDP & 1 BJP, W3-INDP)
7	Shamator Town Council	1 (W4-INDP)
8	Noklak Town Council	1 (W8-INDP)
9	Bhandari Town Council	3 (W3-INC, W6-1 INDP & 1 INC)
10	Zunheboto Town Council	2 (W6-1 INC & 1 NPF)
11	Chozuba Town Council	(12 as on 17.01.2017) ALL WITHDRAWN
12	Aboi Town Council	1 (W6-BJP)
13	Wokha Town Council	6 (W5-2 INDP, W6-INDP, W7-1 INDP & 1 BJP, W11-INDP)
14	Total	72
15	GRAND TOTAL	140

Source: Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report, January 17, 2017, Kohima, Nagaland.

142. Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Report, January 17, 2017, Kohima, Nagaland.

**Table – 5.8: Town Council with no Withdrawals.** <sup>143</sup>

1	Longkhim Town Council
2	Pungro Town Council
3	Tizit Town Council
4	Naginimora Town Council
5	Longleng Town Council
6	Tseminyu Town Council
7	Peren Town Council
8	Jalukie Town Council

Source: Eastern Mirror, Dimapur, Wednesday, January 18, 2017. Vol. XVI No. 16, p.1

Amidst the ongoing call to withdraw nominations by various tribes' organisations, the Central Nagaland Tribes Council (CNTC) demanded immediate postponement of the ULB elections asking all candidates to withdraw their nominations. The CNTC said that the hard earned rights and provisions of Article 371 (A) cannot be compromised under any circumstances. In spite of strong opposition to hold ULB elections by the civil societies, the Naga Peoples Front (NPF) decided to initiate stern disciplinary action against candidates who withdraw their nomination papers. It also appealed to all the tribal Hoho, the ENPO, and the Naga Hoho and the citizens of Nagaland to cooperate and support the government decision to conduct the elections announced by the State Election Commission (SEC).

In this regard, Naga Council Dimapur at an emergency meeting on January 16 at NCD office, unanimously reaffirmed the resolution adopted by the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) on January 15 at Lotha Hoho Ki, Dimapur (near DC Court Junction)

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143. Eastern Mirror, Dimapur, Wednesday, January 18, 2017. Vol. XVI No. 16, p.1

with regard to the ULB election crisis. “The Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of the Central Nagaland Tribes Council (CNTC), which was formed on January 5, 2017 to take up issues pertaining to ULB election and ongoing nomination of intending candidates comprised of Ao Senso Telongjem Dimapur, Lotha Hoho Dimapur, Western Sumi Hoho, Western Chakhesang Hoho and Chakhroma Public Organisation. It resolved that it would insist on the candidates to withdraw their candidature with immediate effect. Another resolution passed by JCC was to constitute a Joint Action Committee (JAC) wherein youth organisation of the five tribes would play a primary role to accomplish the demand of the Nagas. Meanwhile, JCC made its stand clear that they were not acting as “protestors” but “protectors” of the rights of the Nagas”.<sup>144</sup> Joint Co-ordination Committee (JCC) on Friday upped the ante to reaffirm its stand against the conduct of ULB elections by calling for a mass public rally “against the State Government for conduct of ULB elections” on January 23 at 11 a.m. at State Stadium Dimapur.

The decision to call for the mass rally was made during a consultative meeting on Friday at Lotha Hoho Ki Dimapur, attended by the apex tribal bodies of JCC, Eastern Nagaland Peoples Organisation (ENPO), Angami Public Organisation (APO), Central Nagaland Tribes Council (CNTC), Naga Council Dimapur (NCD), GBs Union, Dimapur Urban Council Chairman Federation (DUCCF) and those candidates who had withdrawn their nominations. In this regard, the committee requisitioned a minimum of 5000 members each from the Angami, Sümi, and Ao Community, 3000 from Lotha tribe, 1000 from Chakhesang tribe, and 1000 from ENPO to assemble at the State Stadium on January 23 by 11 a.m. in traditional attire. JCC also extended invitation to

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144. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Thursday, January 19, 2017, Vol. XXXVII No. 43

all non-Nagas and other public in support of the cause to attend the proposed rally. At the meeting, the JCC members came down heavily on candidates who were yet to withdraw the nomination papers and accused them of fighting the elections “for personal and political gain”.

The committee once again fervently appealed to the candidates to back out from contesting the elections. JCC warned that “due course of action would be initiated against them” if they defy the appeal. In this regard, the Senden made it known that the 17 individuals have been “stripped off their social and customary rights / status and excommunicated from Ao citizenship for 30 (thirty) years”. Out of the 17 individuals excommunicated, 8 candidates were for the Tuli Town Council polls and 9 candidates for DMC.<sup>145</sup>

It was the biggest ever gathering of people from various tribes and communities in Dimapur, achieved without imposing shut down or compulsory attendance by students, when thousands of people, (50,000 as per the estimates of the organisers – Joint Coordination Committee) thronged the State Stadium on Tuesday to send a strong message to the state government that Naga public through their apex tribe organisations will not give up their demand to defer the civic body elections with 33 per cent women reservation and to hold immediate consultations with them. Thousands of women in traditional dress also showed up to send a strong message that they stood in solidarity with their menfolk in upholding the larger interest of all and beyond political ambitions.

Joint Action Committee on Women Reservation reiterated that the February 1 election to town and municipal councils was not “a hasty decision of the government” but that it was “the directive of an interim relief order” by the Supreme Court on April

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145. Nagaland Post, Saturday, January 21, 2017. Vol. XXVII No. 45

5, 2016 to the petitioners (NMA). “JACWR in a press statement accused lawyers of misinterpreting that the case was yet to be heard by the court by pointing out that the outcome was after a series of hearings. JACWR urged upon the lawyers to check with the Supreme Court’s list of April 5, 2016 and found that it was listed as ‘final hearing’ and therefore, the interim order to hold elections and implement women reservation”.<sup>146</sup>

State Election Commission (SEC) having examined the memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister by JCC, informed the Chief Minister’s office that there was no alternative but to complete the electoral process as announced. In a letter addressed to the Commissioner and Secretary to the Chief Minister, the State Election Commissioner informed that the Commission after examining the memorandum referred to the SEC concluded that the election process which got underway since December 21 consequent to the issuance of a notification cannot be stopped / postponed / deferred. It further stated that the entire election process once set in motion has to be taken to its logical conclusion. On January 23, JCC, after the public rally, in a memorandum to Chief Minister, demanded deferment of civic polls on or before January 26, 2017 failing which it said an indefinite state-wide bandh would be imposed. JCC calls upon citizens to be ready for any outcome and in this regard appealed to all citizens not to undertake any journey programme, official engagements, parties, meetings etc. with effect from January 27 to February 1, 2017.

The entire Nagaland came to a grinding halt on Saturday January 28 during the day-long state wide bandh called by all apex tribe organisations in several districts. The JCC, also announced to resume bandh on January 30 and continue up to February 1, the latter date being scheduled for polling. The state Government outrightly rejected the

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146. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Tuesday, January 24, 2017. Vol. XXVII No. 48

appeals by various tribes organisations to defer the election in order to resolve certain aspects of Nagaland Municipal Act including 33 per cent women reservation.

Joint Action Committee on Women Reservation (JACWR) convener Abeiu Meru and co-convener, Dr. Rosemary Dzuvichu informed that the committee decided 'to take up necessary measures to withdraw the special leave petition filed in the Supreme Court, after it received an 'assurance letter' from the Chief Minister, TR Zeliang on January 28, that the civic polls will be held as scheduled on February 1. JACWR said that the decision was also made after taking due cognizance of appeals by various Naga Organisations and in the interest of peace in the society. Accordingly, the petitioners decided to leave for Delhi for necessary legal preparation to withdraw the SLP, before the election. The members further appealed to the state Government to consider for an early second phase of polls for those towns and candidates who were unable to file / had withdrawn nominations.

The Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) came to the picture and appealed to the church for dedicating Sunday, January 29, as a Prayer Day for 'our land', it expressed concern over the 'unfolding ULB electoral crisis' and appealed to all stake holders to exercise restraint, patience and understanding for the larger interest of the people. In a surprise development, a tripartite agreement was signed at Chumukedima Police Complex between Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) and the state Government with the NBCC as mediator. The NBCC initiated the meeting between the JCC team led by its convenor and NBCC's General Secretary and the state government delegation led by the Chief Minister. According to NBCC it is said that the Government agreed to postpone the elections to ULB and in return, the JCC also agreed to call off the bandh.

The following is the full text of agreement: “In the NBCC’s presence (third party), the JCC understand and appreciate every Naga voters’ Fundamental Rights to participate in the ULB election (subject to SEC and Cabinet decision). As a body representing the rights and historical aspirations of the Naga people, the JCC needs 2 months time with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 to negotiate and have mutual dialogue with various tribal bodies. It is with this understanding that the JCC request the State Commission to postpone the upcoming ULB election in order to help the JCC to educate the public toward conducting well-informed election which will promote development and common good of all the Nagas.

At the end of the two months time, the JCC ensured people’s participation in the state’s ULB election in a peaceful manner as stated above (with 33 per cent reservation). The JCC would call off the bandh taking into confidence the Nagaland State Election Commission’s final decision. This we signed in the presence of the NBCC (the third party) this day the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2017. The Agreement was jointly signed by:-

1. Convenor, Joint Coordination Committee (JCC)
2. General Secretary, Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) and
3. Home Minister, Representing Nagaland Government”<sup>147</sup>

State Election Commission (SEC) notified that after due consideration it announced the postponement of election process in seven municipal and town councils for two months. The State Election Commission in a notification stated that the election process was postponed after the commission received a letter from Home department on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 and also as per the January 31 Cabinet’s decision.

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147. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Tuesday, January 31, 2017. Vol. XXVII No. 55

The following details were issued by the State Election Commission where elections had been postponed: - 1. Dimapur Municipal Council, 2. East Dimapur Town Council, 3. Kiphire Town Council, 4. Tseminyu Town Council, 5. Bhandari Town Council, 6. Wokha Town Council, and 7. Zünheboto Town Council.

On the other hand, elections in 12 town councils were set to be held on February 1, 2017 as scheduled: 1. Peren, 2. Jalukie, 3. Tening, 4. Aboi, 5. Tobu, 6. Naginimora, 7. Tizit, 8. Shamator, 9. Noklak, 10. Pungro, 11. Longkhim, and 12. Longleng. The candidates were elected unopposed in the following three Town Councils – Meluri, Phek and Tuli, the candidates were declared elected, and hence no polling was necessary. No polls in 10 councils: Nominations to the following ten Municipalities and Town Councils could not take place, and hence no election was conducted—1. Kohima, 2. Mokokchung, 3. Pfutsero, 4. Chozuba, 5. Changtongya, 6. Mangkolemba, 7. Mon, 8. Tuensang, 9. Medziphema, and 10. Chumukedima.

Eastern Nagaland People’s Organisation (ENPO) strongly voiced out against government’s decision to go forward with the plan of the ULB election in selected ENPO areas. The Eastern Nagaland People’s Organisation (ENPO) stated that the state government’s decision was “nothing but a deliberate policy to disturb the unity of Eastern Nagaland”. It stated that the state government should have used the same yardstick all over Nagaland. In view of what it described as “divisive role being applied to Eastern Nagaland by the state government”, the ENPO urged its entire populace to voice against the “indifferent attitude” of the state government. The ENPO claimed that the state government “outrightly violated the covenant” that was agreed to withhold the elections for two months.

In view of the volatile situation in Dimapur district, Dimapur Commissioner of Police (CP) promulgated 144 Cr. PC prohibiting assembly of five or more persons in

public places with effect from January 31, 8 p.m. until further notice. This was in addition to the earlier order (Section 144 A) put in place in Dimapur restricting individuals moving about with any kind of arms / lethal weapons. In an order the Commissioner of Police Dimapur said the “situation has arisen which justifies and calls for immediate action to be taken to prevent breach of peace”.

It was a ‘Bloody Tuesday’ in Nagaland on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2017 when two youths were killed in police firing and injuring three protestors in Dimapur in a massive strike against the state government. The deceased youth was among a few thousand who had assembled at the chief minister’s private residence at 3<sup>rd</sup> Mile around 9 pm. The armed police fired on the crowd when some protestors attempted to enter the CM’s residence. In Longleng town, seven were injured on Tuesday evening after police resorted to firing in order to prevent them from entering the office of the DC Longleng. Meanwhile, it was reported that the irate public damaged polling materials of all the 11 polling stations.

Several parts of Nagaland were under bandhs in protest against the government’s decision to conduct the civic polls. What had infuriated public was the government reneging on its agreement signed with the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) in Chumukedima on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 with NBCC as mediator. As per the tripartite agreement, the government agreed “in principle” to defer civic polls by two months with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017 (the polling day). However, the government went ahead in ordering polls in several towns and district head quarters. Public resentment rose to anger over the government’s “double speak” in ordering polls in those towns. The agreement to defer polls for two months was supposed to apply to all towns and municipalities of Nagaland.

Dimapur Naga Youth Organisation (DNYO) imposed lightning bandh throughout Dimapur city where shops downed shutters by 4:30 p.m. Tuesday to ventilate anger against the state government for going back on its assurance to Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) and NBCC, that it would defer civic polls throughout Nagaland for two months but instead ordered elections in several districts on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017.

The bandh was called suddenly while a meeting of the JCC was underway at the Tourist Lodge Dimapur. In the meeting, JCC hit out at state chief minister for going not only against the wishes of the Nagas but also against the NBCC by breaking away from the January 30 tripartite agreement signed at Chumukedima between JCC, NBCC and the state government. The members also demanded the resignation of chief minister for creating division among Nagas.<sup>148</sup> The various tribe organisations and the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) vowed to continue with the indefinite state wide bandh till the resignation of the DAN government headed by chief minister T.R. Zeliang. During the memorial service held at Dimapur for the two youths, a three-point resolution containing the demands of the public was read out by JCC Co-convenor that “the public demand the immediate step down of the present government, immediate suspension of IRB personnels for indiscriminate firinf at youths and suspension of the commissioner of Police, Dimapur, and also nullification of the ULB elections held on February 1, 2017 at 12 town councils against the will of the people.”

Joint Action Committee on Women Reservation (JACWR) represented by Mrs. Abeiu Meru and Co Convenor Dr. Rosemary Dzuvichu informed that it had withdrawned the Special Leave Petition (Civil appeal and Writ Petition) in the Supreme

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148. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Wednesday. February 1, 2017, Vol. XXVII No. 56

Court and resolved to dissolve the JACWR with effect from February 1, 2017. The JACWR had the two petitions for withdrawal from the same – the Civil Appeal and the Writ Petition. Henceforth, JACWR said, all respective organisations from now on would function independently on the issue of women reservation. JACWR expressed gratitude to the committed support for the last six years from all apex women organisations.

While lauding NBCC for taking a bold step and playing the role of the mediator to break the impasse, the CNTC slammed the chief minister of betraying the people and the Church for the lust for power and money. In the light of the above, CNTC directed its apex constituent units to recall their women bodies – Lotha Elae Hoho, Sümi Totimi Hoho and Watsu Mundang to immediately withdraw from Naga Mothers Association and JACWR immediately, since it was the main “initiator and fomentor” of all this fiasco.<sup>149</sup>

Kohima burnt when mobs torched the more than 50-year-old complex which housed the office of the Kohima Municipal Council (KMC) and flame spread and engulfed the nearby Superintendent of Excise Office and Regional Transport Office within no time. The mobs stoned the DC office but were prevented from doing further damage due to intervention by some people. The crowd also stone pelted the PHED office. However, the State Information Office and Old Secretariat were burnt down while NPF office was reportedly vandalised and set on fire. Rampaging mobs literally took over the streets in Kohima in the face of total law and order breakdown. The state government machinery in the state capital was totally paralysed and the Assam Rifles

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149. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Thursday, February 2, 2017: Vol. XXVII No. 57

had to be called in to aid the civil administration in containing further worsening of the situation.

In view of the prevailing tense situation in Kohima, deputy commissioner (DC) Kohima and district magistrate, Rajesh Soudararajan, ordered imposition of Section 144 CrPC in four colonies – Old Ministers’ Hill area, Jail Colony, Police Headquarter junction and Raj Bhavan area starting February 2 from 9.30 p.m. until further notice. Mobile services—SMS and internet continues to be cut off across Nagaland since January 30 except calls. The state government snapped the services in order to avoid spread of rumours in view of the protests against the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) election in Nagaland. Meanwhile, in Kohima all internet services both mobile and broadband including SMS was shut down.

The newly floated Nagaland Tribes Action Committee (comprising representatives of all the apex Naga tribes in Kohima) proposed to place the following demands before the Governor when he arrives Thursday evening; declaring null and void the ULB elections and suspension of erring police personnel involved in the firing incident on February 1. “All apex tribe organisations of Nagaland through the initiative of the NTAC and JCC demanded the resignation of T.R. Zeliang as chief minister within a period of three (3) days with effect from February 8, 2017.”<sup>150</sup>

“In a notification, the state Election Commissioner said that the state election commission (SEC) has now therefore, declared the election scheduled for the ULBs announced vide/ MTC-1/2004-05/164 dated December 21, 2016, and which had been further postponed and withheld, as null and void.”<sup>151</sup>

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150. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Wednesday, February 8, 2017, Vol. XXVII No. 63

151. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Friday, February 10, 2017, Vol. XXVII No. 65

JCC informed the citizens of the state that starting from February 13 it would intensify an indefinite bandh indefinitely if the CM fails to resign within the 3-day deadline that expires on February 10 midnight. JCC appealed to all to be prepared for the bandh. The committee also advised the public to stock up on essential commodities. NTAC and JCC has appealed to all the citizens of Nagaland to be prepared in case the CM fails to step down by mid night February 10. With the three-day deadline issued by the apex tribe organisation on T.R. Zeliang to resign on moral ground ending on midnight of February 10, but with the chief minister remaining adamant, the stalemate of which could put the state into the brink of mass civil unrest with grave consequences.

The Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) cautioned that if any untoward incident or violence befell any member of the association, those organisations blaming the NMA would be held solely responsible. In a press note, NMA also cautioned those organisations, besides blaming NMA, for the threats and intimidation being given to NMA leaders. NMA also directed all its units not to withdraw from NMA, to stand firm in their principle and to withstand against any pressure. However, NMA also stated that those units under threats and pressure could take their own decision. Meanwhile, NMA said its central body would continue to function and promote the rights of Naga women. NMA reiterated that no outside body could dissolve or pressure the NMA to dissolve.

The JCC and the NTAC made a clarion call for a total state wide bandh starting from Monday, the 13th February. The bandh in Dimapur was enforced by Dimapur Naga Youth Front (DNYF) while in Kohima Angami Youth organisation (AYO) enforced the bandh from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. According to JCC co-convenor, the bandh would be enforced on the district administration and police in addition to the ongoing shut down on all government offices and prohibiting the plying of government registered vehicles. It also reiterated that there would be no relaxation whatsoever for

those not exempted from the purview of the bandh. NTAC and JCC's clarion call was to intensify the agitation in view of the chief minister, T.R. Zeliang's failure to own moral responsibility and to step down for the event that led to the death of innocent Naga youths.

Paradoxically, the womenfolks, instead of supporting women reservation which the NPF government was trying to conduct for the women, went against the government and went along with menfolks at Dimapur and played an active role for the phase-II bandh. In almost all the strategic junctions across the district, enthusiastic womenfolk clad in traditional attires gathered from 8 am to 5 pm. Meanwhile, women volunteers stationed at Chumukedima, 5<sup>th</sup> mile, Diphupar, Deluxe point, ADC court junction and DC office reportedly echoed the same message that they would stand firm until chief minister, T.R. Zeliang stepped down. A woman volunteer at Diphupar junction said "we women will not remain silent since the state government had failed to terminate the IRBs and the officer in-charge who had ordered to fire at our sons, killing two of them on January 31". She accused chief minister that under his leadership, he allowed such crisis to take place, and also for being adamant and not listening to the people's demand.

Another woman protestor near DC court junction said, as daughters, mothers, wives, sisters and grandmothers, it was absolutely right and necessary to voice out "our concerns for our future generations", and not to fight for the vested interest who wanted reservation. Further, an emotionally charged up woman group in anger said "if chief minister fails to step down, he should bring to life those killed in Dimapur and Longleng, who became victims due to his short-sightedness." The group further pointed out that 33 per cent women reservation had only brought bloodshed and chaos in the society, allaying fear that it would only be a curse for the generations.

The Nagaland Tribes Action Committee postponed the proposed statewide rally and ‘fast unto death’ in Kohima scheduled on February 7. This decision came as the chief minister T.R. Zeliang assured that he was ready to step down, but appealed for 2-3 days time period in order to ensure handing over of responsibility for the greater good. Based on Zeliang’s letter dated February 16, NTAC decided to suspend the rally until further notice.<sup>152</sup>

The second wave of indefinite state-wide bandh entered its fourth consecutive day on Thursday, the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The statewide bandh went largely peaceful. Nevertheless, in districts like Tuensang, Wokha and Kohima, the curfew and the bandh was relaxed for the public, however, the state government was disallowed from functioning. The bandh called by the Joint Co-ordination Committee (JCC) and Nagaland Tribes Action Committee (NTAC) entered its sixth-day on Saturday, the 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2017. However, JCC had decided to relax the bandh on February 19 being Sunday but to continue its agitation till Mr. Zeliang ultimately resigned from Chief Minister’s post.

T.R. Zeliang, the CM of Nagaland, along with his Council of Ministers resigned and sent resignation letter to Governor of Nagaland P.B. Acharya on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2017. The Governor accepted Zeliang’s letter of resignation.<sup>153</sup> In the event of Chief Minister’s resignation, Dr. Shürhozelie Liezietsü, the president of the Naga People’s Front (NPF), was raised to the position as the new leader of the NPF and ruling Democratic Alliance (DAN), and was touted to become the next chief minister of Nagaland. Later, Dr. Shürhozelie called on Nagaland Governor, P.B. Acharya and

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152. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Friday, February 17, 2017, Vol. XXVII No. 72

153. Eastern Mirror, Dimapur, Monday, February 20, 2017, Vol. XVI No. 48

formally put a claim to form the new government. The Governor then appointed Dr. Shürhozelie, the new leader of DAN, as chief minister designate. On 22 February, Dr. Shürhozelie was sworn in as the 17<sup>th</sup> chief minister of Nagaland.

With the resignation of Chief Minister on February 19, 2017, the NTAC and JCC on Monday decided to stop the agitation against the state government machineries starting from February 20. Accordingly, the authority decided to restore mobile and internet services that had been stopped since January 30. The JCC convenor said that following the CM's decision to step down it has called off the mass protest and agitation. He, however, said JCC would pursue the other demands soon after government offices start to function.<sup>154</sup> Thus, such negativity makes many capable women in Nagaland to shy away from politics. Ever since the 1st General election of Nagaland's Legislative Assembly in 1964 till the 13<sup>th</sup> General election held in February 2018, twenty women candidates have contested. But, so far, not a single woman could make it through to the state legislature.

Mrs. Rano M. Shaiza, was the first woman to have become United Democratic Front (UDF) Party President (1973-1975), and also the first woman to have won the Lok Sabha election in 1977.

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154. Nagaland Post, Dimapur, Tuesday, February 21, 2017 Vol. XXVII No. 76

**Table – 5.9: Nagaland State Assembly Election 1964-2018 (Women Candidates).**<sup>155</sup>

Sl. No.	Year of Election	Name of Women candidate	Party	Name of Constituency	Result
1	1964 (1 <sup>st</sup> )	NIL	-	-	-
2	1969 (2nd)	(1). Rovele-ü (2). R.L.Kinghen	UNF IND	6 A/C Western Angami 40 A/C Bhandari	Lost Lost
3	1974 (3rd)	NIL	-	-	-
4	1977 (4th)	NIL	-	-	-
5	1982 (5th)	(1). Rano M. Shaiza	IND	8 A/C Western Angami	Lost
6	1987 (6th)	(1). Sebule (2). Chubalemla (3). Lochumlo Yanthan	IND NND P IND	7 A/C Peren 22 A/C Arkong 40 A/C Bhandari	Lost Lost Lost
7	1989 (7th)	NIL	-	-	-
8	1993 (8th)	(1). R.L.Kinghen	INC	7 A/C Tyui	Lost
9	1998 (9th)	NIL	-	-	-
10	2003 (10th)	(1). Anupama Mach (2). Akheli (3). Chubalemla	IND INC NPF	3 A/C Dimapur-III 5 A/C Ghaspani-II 26 A/C Aonglenden	Lost Lost Lost
11	2008 (11th)	(1). Akheli Achumi (2). Rhakila (3). Soly Sangtam	IND NCP BJP	3 A/C Dimapur-III 54 A/C Tuensang Sadar-II 60 A/C Pungro	Lost Lost Lost
12	2013 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	(1). Dr. Yangerla (2). Rhakila	IND BJP	27 A/C Mokokchung Town. 54 A/C Tuensang Sadar-II	Lost Lost
13	2018 (13th)	(1). Wedie-ü Kronu (2). Rekha Rose Dukru (3). Awan Konyak (4). Dr.K. Mangyangpula Chang (5). Rhakila	NPP IND NDPP  NPP BJP	3 A/C Dimapur-III 17 A/C Chizami 47 A/C Aboi  51 A/C Noksen 54 A/C Tuensang Sadar-II	Lost Lost Lost  Lost Lost

Source: Report on the General Elections to Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 1964 -2018.

The above table 5.9 reflects that women in Nagaland are still struggling to gain position in power politics in the state even after the completion of 55 years of statehood.

155. Report on the General Elections to Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 1964 -2018.

**Table- 5.10: General Election 2018 in Nagaland State.** <sup>156</sup>

1	Total Voters	11,76,432
2	Total number of Male	5,97,281
3	Total number of Female	5,79,151
4	Total number of Female Candidates	5 (five)
5	Total Vote cast	10,07,249 (including Postal Ballot)
6	Total Vote casted by Female	4,98,561
7	Postal Ballot Total	20,856

Source: Report on the General Elections to Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 1964 -2018.

The table 5.10 indicates that women voters consists nearly half of the electorate number, but no women could be elected to NLA. It may be interpreted that whether women were allowed to cast their vote freely or they have been forced to vote for a particular candidate by their male counterpart or somebody have cast their vote on their behalf by proxy, or the women themselves are not politically conscious of their rights.

Despite the evidence of modernisation, there is almost no presence of women in the decision making at either the village or state level. The perception prevailing in Nagaland's political sphere is the prerogative of the Naga men, and not women. Unfortunately, the Naga electorate does not vote in favour of women candidates. In Nagaland, during election, money plays a primary role. Hence, without sound financial backing by the political party, it is difficult for women candidate to meet the increasing expenses of election. The decision to set up female candidate is decided by the male politicians. Women candidates are denied of party tickets on the pretext of winnability prospect in the election.

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156. Report on the General Elections to Nagaland Legislative Assembly, 1964 -2018.

Thus, women's participation in political life is confined to mere voting which does not have any impact on gender equality when it comes to the matter pertaining to policy making. When it comes to women candidature in the Assembly election their involvement is low and passive. It is evident that not only in the assembly election in the state, but even in the village council also women are not included. The tribal organisations in Nagaland spearheaded by Naga Hoho have no women representatives and which vehemently opposed the 33 per cent women reservation under the pretext that it impinges on the Naga customary law. Naga society is still basking on Article 371(A) and on this ground they do not want to give reservation to women in any elective post. The 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act is a land mark leading to empowerment of women for political representation in the assembly and parliament and training them at the grassroot level. Democracy means participatory, so if half of the population, which is women, are not allowed to participate in the democratic process in the village council (local level), it means that women are not participating.

Nagas have to decide whether Article 371(A) accommodates socio-cultural, political and economic empowerment which is the first pillar of women empowerment for developing human resource. If so, empowerment will be hollow and narratives only. Nagas need to give a serious thought to Article 371(A) with regard to 33 per cent women reservation. So far, more than 100 amendments have taken place in the Indian Constitution, which means Indian Constitution is vibrant. Any document that is not dynamic and do not change with time becomes a 'dead letter'. This indicates that women are not aware of their collective strength, neither is this source tapped by the political party. It is noticeable that womenfolk are without a voice and are unable to transcend the dominance of male in the political spheres. It must be understood that the changing of mindset begins at home, as patriarchy exists in the mindset; the reality is

that the mind is not ready to change. If women are in the decision-making body it will reveal transparency, participatory and governance which will be more sensitive; when they are in power it will have much compassion, care and love in the area of malnutrition, sexual harassment and improve the deplorable condition of women. Women have a role of commanding everywhere but their life is controlled by men. Thus, the above analysis shows that the Naga women enjoy freedom superficially in appearance but in reality they do not enjoy political freedom. The Naga women can enjoy political freedom only when menfolk change their attitude towards women and willing to acknowledge their contribution and treat them as equal partner. Also womenfolk themselves should be bold enough to come forward in one voice and convince the menfolk that through their participation in the political field our society can move forward and progress in every field.

# **CHAPTER - 6**

## **SUMMARY AND FINDINGS**

## **CHAPTER – 6**

### **SUMMARY AND FINDINGS**

#### **6.1 Summary:**

The final chapter is a summary of the study, as the very objective is to examine the empowerment of women. A careful survey and observation has been taken to understand the problems that encompass in their ways to attain empowerment. An effort has also been made to explain the opinion of different groups of people to understand the perceptions about women empowerment. The chapter is an attempt to summarize the main findings of the study for better understanding of the concept. The study is designed in six chapters.

#### **Chapter- 1: Women Empowerment: An Introduction:**

This chapter includes introduction with definitions and explanation of different terms and concepts relevant to the subject matter of this research. In a nutshell, empowerment is a person's ability to define, challenge and overcome barriers so as to increase one's ability to shape his or her life and environment. It also means strengthening or building positive outlook, confidence and values in an individual. Empowerment also means the power or authority invested in a person to change their condition. This chapter emphasises the statement of the problem, the hypothesis, the review of literature, objective of study, and the research methodology that has been adopted.

#### **Chapter- 2: Women Empowerment: Historical background, a Global, National and Regional Perspective:**

In this chapter, the historical background shows that women in Ancient India relatively enjoyed equal status in some areas of life which can be defined as a feminine

glory. But as argued, women in the post-Vedic period began to suffer a setback. Education which was accessible for women began to decline. The practice of sati, child marriage and practice of purdah were imposed during this period. In British India some reformers like, Raja Ram Mohan Roy whose persistent crusade against Sati led to its abolition. It was under the initiative of Ishwar Vidyasagar that The Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was passed so as to improve the condition of the widows. The post independent India witnessed the improvement in the status of women. The Constitution of India guarantees gender equality and rights of women in India. The national policy for women empowerment came in 2001 to focus on the policy changes so as to secure the rights of women. Coming to the Global context there are many reasons why women need to be empowered. In this context four International Conferences on women have been held since 1975 that includes Mexico City 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985 and Beijing 1995 to eliminate discrimination against women in all forms. The UN Millennium Declaration took a shape with the consent of 147 Government heads of 191 countries in September 2000. It consists of 8 goals defined by 18 targets, 48 indicators and 12 critical areas of concern, with the aim to end global inequality by 2015. In the National context, there is a wide gender disparity, and so the issue of women empowerment has become a pressing concern feeling the need to reduce the gender gap. In the political sphere the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments are viewed as a landmark since the creation of the Panchayati Raj at the grass root and Municipal Council. So far it is considered as one of the most distinguished acts ever introduced by the law makers. The act and women empowerment are directly related, which aims at providing 33 per cent women reservation. Coming to the North East scenario, though Meghalaya state follows the pattern of matrilineal system yet it is the male relative of a woman who takes important decision regarding handling and management of property, sale and purchase

of land, etc. The North East India comprising 8 states could send only 3 women MPs for the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election. The women representatives from NE states to the upper house is just a meagre number of 3 women from Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.

### **Chapter-3: Determinants of Women Empowerment: Social, Economic and Cultural Aspect in Nagaland:**

This chapter highlights the determinants of women empowerment in the context of social, economic and cultural aspects in Nagaland. Nagaland is inhabited by 16 major tribes. Each tribe has its own culture and traditions. In Nagaland women occupy an important place in the society, but where customary law is concerned, rights of women are always under threat. Girls were taught to believe and trained that they are solely responsible for housework. In Naga society top leadership positions in public life always go to men undisputedly. It penetrates even in religious institutions like association and Church setup. The top most positions are held by men only. When it comes to educational context, the early practices enable the male child to go to towns and continue their studies as much as he desires, whereas the female child in the family was allowed to go to school up to primary school level only to enable her to read and write her own script. But there has been a breakthrough in the educational field that girls are given the opportunity to pursue higher studies and even literacy rate has grown up to 76.11 per cent according to 2011 census, which was previously 33.11 per cent as per 1981 census. There are growing numbers of women who have climbed up the ladder of success purely on merit and proved that they are empowered enough to take leadership roles. In Nagaland the rural women are privileged to experience economic empowerment under various central schemes through state government. Some of the major activities and programmes under Women Resource Development in the state are

also mentioned here. The Naga tribes of Nagaland celebrate different festivals throughout the year with feasting, dancing and folk song. Naga tribes have their own traditional dresses, each having its own significance. Sümi women have 24 shawls and mekhalas depicting different meanings and significance. The economy is also boosted by selling these handicrafts woven by women. Some of the Naga women who first took job outside the domestic work are also listed in this chapter.

#### **Chapter- 4: Women Empowerment in Perspective of Sümi Women**

This chapter traces brief account of historical background, customary practices and the present habitate of the Sümi tribe today. The chapter deals with the issue of women empowerment in the context of the Sümi Naga women.

Sümi like any other Nagas is a patriarchal society and by virtue of which women have little or no say in the ancestral property. It is always men who are regarded as the head of the family and the protector. The structural and functional Sümi society is the village that is under the firm control of the village chief. Sümi women are first trained and groomed in '*Iliki*' (girls' dormitory), from where they learn folksong, traditional dance, spinning, weaving, dyeing different designs and patterns of embroidery work. With regard to Sümi women and matrimonial practices, it is the groom and his parents who usually make the first move. The dowry is paid to the bride's parents by the groom's family which may be in cash or in kind or both and can be inclusive of movable and immovable property. Another important practice is the *aphi-atho me* (price of physical being) which is traditionally given to the bride's family. The different types of marriage practised in Sümi tradition are *Amini Kimiji-Xe*, *Ashoghi-Xe*, *Latha-Xe* and *Topunasho-Xe*.

In the divorce settlement of Sümi marriage, since bride price or in other words, dowry system is practised, the dissolution of marriage is not permitted. But if the relationship between the couple is strained to the extent that it cannot be reconciled, dissolution of marriage may be allowed which is difficult and treated very seriously. If divorce takes place purely in the interest of husband there is no need to return *aphi atho me* which is the price of her physical being. In this case *achiku* (cornelian bead) which is gifted by girl's parents is taken out from the wife's neck. The authorized member takes out the necklace '*achiku*' from the woman's neck and the string is cut into two halves. The string on his right hand side is given to the husband, and the other half on the left side is given to the wife. But if the divorce is due to the fault of the wife, *aphi atho me* which was given to the bride's family during the marriage is returned to the groom's family. The uniqueness of Sümi women is that, they are faithful to their husbands and so the divorce cases are very rare. Field survey report and tables are shown and discussed about the empowerment of women among the Sümi society.

## **Chapter-5: Women Empowerment: An Analysis of Political Empowerment of**

### **Women in the Context of Electoral process in Nagaland:**

This chapter deals with empowerment of women and political participation in the context of electoral process in Nagaland. Every Naga, including the urban dwellers, traced their ancestral roots back to their respective villages. Hence, for every single Naga the village played an integral role in their life, regardless of the modern facade of the towns. Within every village, the Village Council is the authorised administrative body and is regarded as the village's highest decision-making forum since time immemorial. It is the Village Council that decides any major decision concerning the administration of the villages. Any disputes within the village jurisdiction are settled by

the Village Council. They are in every way the legally recognised custodians of customary laws and usages. The most striking aspect of the Village Council in this modern era is the absence of women members.

The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 gave Constitutional recognition to the Municipalities. The administration in the urban sectors was exercised through town council which paved the way for Municipal Councils through the Nagaland Municipal Act 2001. The Act was implemented by conducting election in 2004 in the entire State of Nagaland except for Mokokchung, and the elections were conducted without 33 per cent Women Reservation. Since the provision was not inserted in the 2001 Municipal Act, it was passed without the provision of the Part IXA in Nagaland Legislative Assembly. The High Court in 2005 directed the State Government to include Part IXA amended by Municipal Act 2006 by inserting section 23A and 23B that the Governor gave his assent on 30.08.2006. The state assembly passed the Nagaland Municipal (First Amendment) Act in 2006 that provided for 33 per cent women reservation. However, the state government did not hold elections due to opposition from male dominated tribal Hohos. The Naga Mothers' Association then filed a writ petition in the Kohima Bench of the Guwahati High Court on June 26, 2011, putting a stiff challenge on the state government's indecision to hold municipal elections. In October 2011, presided by a single Judge, the high court upheld the petition and directed Nagaland government to initiate the process of election in municipal councils and town councils before 20 January 2012. However, the state government filed an appeal before a division bench of the Guwahati High Court. The previous ruling was stayed. The petitioners (JACWR) then moved a special leave petition in the Supreme Court in September 2012 and finally got a ruling on April 20,

2016. The Supreme Court upheld the single Judge ruling of the Guwahati High Court of October 2011.

The state cabinet ministers on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2016 decided to conduct polls to ULB with women reservation. This move paved the way for holding the election to towns and municipals in Nagaland. The notification for conducting the election was issued on December 21, 2016. Altogether 188 women filed their nominations which were accepted as valid. Amidst the ongoing call to withdraw nominations by various tribe organisations, the Central Tribes Council (CNTC) demanded immediate postponement of the ULB election asking all the candidates to withdraw their nominations. Accordingly, tripartite agreement was signed between Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) and the state government through the involvement and goodwill of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) and agreed upon to defer ULB election for 2 months to have dialogue and seek the goodwill of all the tribal bodies with reference to holding of ULB election in Nagaland. However, the government did not keep its commitment as per the agreement and went ahead in ordering polls in several district headquarters and towns. Public resentment over the government doublespeak in ordering poll in those towns resulted in imposition of lightening bandh at Dimapur and subsequently throughout the state. Ultimately, on the pressure of the protesting public, T.R. Zeliang was made to resign as Chief Minister of Nagaland on 19.02.2017 and ULB election was declared null and void. Ever since the first general election that was conducted in 1964 till the 13<sup>th</sup> general election of the state legislative assembly held in February 2018, twenty women candidates have contested. But, so far, not a single woman could make it through to the state legislature. In Nagaland, till today Mrs. Rano M. Shaiza, was the first woman to have become United Democratic Front (UDF) Party

President (1973-1975), and also the first and only woman to have won the Lok Sabha election in 1977.

## **6.2 Findings:**

This chapter gives the researcher's findings that are arrived at through various interviews, field survey, data collected from government reports, newspaper and census report. The secondary source, both published and unpublished works, were used wherever necessary. Sources of data were also collected from structured and unstructured questionnaire and case study were also applied.

The size of the sample for the study is drawn from 90 male and 90 female respondents to derive an unbiased response from both the gender. Hence the gender distribution out of 180 respondents is 90 male and 90 female. The research was carried out from different social, economic and political background from three blocks in Zünheboto district in which Sümi tribe is the sole inhabitant. The selection of blocks is made in such a way that the district in question is fairly covered for the purpose of carrying out quality survey. Each block consists of 1 urban and 2 villages. Akuluto Block representing north of the district, Zünheboto Block and Pughoboto Block as central and southern part of the district. The areas surveyed under urban are Akuluto town, Zünheboto town and Pughoboto town. Under each urban station 2 rural areas have been identified for field work: they are Phishumi Village, Lumami Village, Asükhomi Village, Lizümi Village, Chishilimi Village and Lazami Village respectively.

### **The major findings are as follows:**

1. The response to having knowledge about constitutional provision for empowerment of women received a positive reply of more than 97 per cent for both men and

women. This shows that the term empowerment is familiar to almost all the persons surveyed.

2. The finding shows that both gender share equal responsibility in the areas of profession and economic engagement, but where women empowerment is concerned the rigidity of the customary law is the main hindrance in empowering women in Sümi society.
3. On the issue of customary law which is the main obstacle for women empowerment, majority of 70 per cent of the respondents opined that customary law needs rectification which is a positive way to move forward to accommodate and maintain gender equality.
4. In the matter pertaining to women candidature in the election, out of 180 respondents, only 18.89 per cent male and 14.44 per cent female respondents are willing to support women candidate if they contest in the election. 50 per cent of the respondents give reasons on the basis of capability, winnability of the candidate and their affinity with the candidate. So, majority of the respondents are not committed to vote for women candidates.
5. The findings that women are empowered at the grassroot level like Village Development Board (VDB) and Village Council (VC) was responded by 180 people surveyed, of which more than 57 per cent said that women are empowered at the grass root level. It is to be understood that the receipt of money through different schemes like MNREGS which enables payment to every member in the villages irrespective of gender seems to have satisfactory effect as discussed with Village Development Board. But the findings indicate that women are not allowed to be members of Village Council and so it may be assumed that the question of empowerment at the grass-roots does not arise.

6. When asked whether education is a tool to empower women, the response out of 180 people surveyed indicates that more than 90 per cent believe that education is a tool to empower Sümi women. According to the findings there is no hesitation on the part of the parents to give same privileges to their sons and daughters with regard to education.
7. Regarding the contribution of Self-Help Group (SHG) in the household and society, the finding shows that 100 per cent out of 180 respondents in the survey affirmed that they have SHG which is one of the contributing factors towards economic empowerment. It clearly shows that women are more akin to set up SHG and hence they feel that economic contribution is felt more in the women group but not overall growth of the community.
8. The question was asked to the respondent as to whether they would prefer traditional bride price marriage or modern type of marriage. The answer from this survey depicts that 19.45 per cent of both genders prefers traditional way of marriage and, 34.45 per cent of women and men and supports modern type of marriage. However, a majority of respondents comprising 46 per cent out of 180 individuals opined that it should be left to the individual's choice. In these manner Sümi women are at liberty to choose their personal pattern of marriage. Unlike the early days, the dowry system/ bride price practices in the Sümi community is slowly decreasing.
9. When asked about different types of jobs which cannot be handled by women, more than 38 per cent of men and women believe that there are certain types of jobs which cannot be handled by women, but 37 per cent of respondents felt that there is no job which cannot be handled by women. The difference between the two is because of biological and not mental capacity. Therefore, according to the survey

the physical ability cannot be compared to men, it could not be because of mental capacity but of biological reasons.

10. On the issue of Church Administration, although women are not given top position in the church set-up, 58 per cent of the respondents felt that there is equal participation of women at par with men, and 32 per cent of the respondents felt that women also should be given opportunity to hold important position in the church organisational set-up.
11. On the issue of inheritance, 37 per cent respondents agree that daughters inherit their share when it comes to parents' property but major share goes to the sons. Still majority of 60 per cent of the respondents are of the view that women do not have equal inheritance with men. It may be true that traditionally women are not entitled to inherit forefathers' property especially immovable ones.
12. Regarding the 33 per cent women reservation in the ULB, it may be stated that despite the Governor giving his assent Act on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006, the Naga people opposed women reservation in the ULB election in 2017 leading to cancellation of ULB election on the pretext that it will dilute Article 371(A) whereas the main intention was not willing to give reservation to women in any elective post. In October 2016 when the election to the ULB was announced, there was a vehement opposition from the men folks leading to the loss of life during the exercise of election process and leading to the stepping down of the Chief Minister of Nagaland.

Naga society is still basking on Article 371(A) and on this ground, they do not want to give reservation to women in any elected post. Nagas have to decide whether Article 371(A) accommodates socio-cultural, political and economic empowerment

which is the first pillar of empowerment for capacity building for women. If so empowerment will be hollow and narratives only. So far, more than 100 amendments have taken place in the Indian Constitution, which means Indian Constitution is vibrant. Any document that is not dynamic and do not change with time becomes a 'dead letter'. It must be understood that the changing of mindset begins at home, as patriarchy exists in the mindset; the reality is that the mind is not ready to change.

Therefore, the hypothesis of the study posed by the researcher has come to the relevance of the findings that the reservation of seats will improve the women's political participation and status in Nagaland which is still remaining a distant dream. As per the research carried out it is found that the rigidity of the customary law appears to be the primary hurdle to make women empowerment a reality in Nagaland. Thus the above analysis shows that the Naga women enjoy freedom superficially in appearance but in reality they do not enjoy political freedom. The Naga women can enjoy political freedom only when menfolk change their attitude towards women and willing to acknowledge their contribution and treat them as equal partner. Also womenfolk themselves should be bold enough to come forward in one voice and convince the menfolk that through their participation in the political field our society can move forward and progress in every field.

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## **Annexure-I**

### **List of the prominent personalities that the researcher had interviewed.**

1. Boholi Hokiye Awomi Boholi, President, STH Zünheboto (STHZ), interviewed on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2020, at Zünheboto, time-2.30 P.M.
2. Bokali Akato Yephtho, Thahekhu Block-5, interviewed on 25. 01.2019 at 3.30 P.M.
3. Dr. G. Hokishe Sema, Addl. Director, Health & Family Welfare, Nagaland, interviewed on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018, at Kohima, time – 05 P.M.
4. Enatoli Sema, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi, interviewed on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014, at 11.15 A.M.
5. Ghosheli Nihokhe Yepthomi age 70 years (Rtd. Head Assistant), Purana Bazar Dimapur, interviewed on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 6 P.M.
6. G. Hekuto Sema, District Evaluation Officer, Zunheboto, interviewed on 22.07.2018 at 4.30 P.M.
7. Hotovi Chishi G.B. Shitsümi Village, interviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014, at Akuluto Town, time – 02 P.M.
8. Hukheli Wotsa, President, Naga Women Organization interviewed on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016, at Dimapur, time – 11 A.M.
9. Huskha Yepthomi, Former Sümi Hoho President, interviewed on 07.04.2020, at 2.45 P.M.
10. Khevitoli Yepthomi, Lecturer, District Institute for Education and Training (DIET), Zunheboto, on 09.10.2018.
11. Kitoli Naje, President, Sümi Totimi Hoho, interviewed on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016, at Dimapur, time-11 A.M.
12. K. Nihoto Chishi, Secretary, Law & Justice, Govt. of Nagaland, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015, at Kohima.

13. K. K Chishi (IPS), Deputy Inspector General of Police, Nagaland, interviewed on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 at Kohima.
14. L. Akato Sema (IAS), Commissioner & Secretary, Govt. of Nagaland, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019, at Kohima.
15. Noghipu Swu, Cultural Secretary Lazami Village, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014, at Lazami Village, time – 9 A.M.
16. Pukhaje Yephthomi, Member Sümi Cultural Committee, interviewed on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018, at Zünheboto, time – 11 A.M.
17. Rev. Pikuto Futhena, Pastor Lazami Village Baptist church, interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014, at Lazami Village, time – 9 A.M.
18. Tokihe Chishi, Executive Member Western Sümi Hoho, interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2019, at Medziphema, time – 02 P.M.
19. Tosheli V. Chishi, member of Cultural Society, Old Town Zünheboto, interviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017, at 1.30 P.M.
20. Vitoli Hoky, Advisor, Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH) interviewed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016, at Dimapur, time 03 P.M.
21. Yevukhu Assümi, (age 80 years, Superintendent Rtd.) interviewed on 26.10.2019, at Pughoboto, time - 6:30 A.M.
22. Zhekiho Swu (59 years), Head Dobashi, Sümi Customary Court, Zünheboto, interviewed on 26.01.2015.

## **Annexure - II**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

#### **A CASE STUDY OF SÜMI WOMEN IN NAGALAND**

**Please note:** - Your valuable answers will be used exclusively for Ph.D Research purpose only and the identity of the respondents will remain strictly confidential.

#### **PART-A (Profile).**

- 1) Name: Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss.....Signature with date .....
- 2) Gender.....
- 3) Age 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 years.
- 4) Address.....
- 5) Qualification class 1-5/5-10/10-12 standard, graduate, post graduate, Doctorate.
- 6) Occupation/Profession.....
- 7) Monthly income.....
- 8) Place of Residence Rural/Urban/Village/Town.....
- 9) Marital Status Married/Separated/Unmarried/Widow.....

#### **PART-B. (Research Questionnaire for Respondents).**

(Kindly tick in the appropriate box below)

##### **1) Have you heard about Women Empowerment?**

- |    |     |        |
|----|-----|--------|
| a) | Yes | (    ) |
| b) | No  | (    ) |

**2) Do you think Sümi Men and Women are equally Empowered?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) To some extend ( )
- d) Never ( )

**3) What do you understand by the term ‘Empowerment’? Is it ...?**

- a) An economic self reliance ( )
- b) Social empowerment ( )
- c) Educational empowerment ( )
- d) Political empowerment ( )

**4) What are the main obstacles in Empowering Women?**

- a) Rigid Customary Laws ( )
- b) Community opposing to changes ( )
- c) Patriarchal system ( )
- d) Acceptance of inferior position by women ( )

**5) Do you think empowering women disempowers men?**

- i) Yes ( )
- ii) No ( )
- iii) Don't know ( )

**6) Do you think Sümi women are empowered enough to take part in decision making particularly in social and political field?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Do not know ( )

**7) Do you think Traditional Customary Law should be rectified to empower women?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Don't know ( )

**8) If a woman candidate emerges in your constituency, would you support her?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Do not know ( )

**9) Do you think empowerment will open door of opportunity for Sümi women in:-**

- a) Social strata ( )
- b) Political arena ( )
- c) Economic front ( )
- d) Don't know ( )

**10) Do you think Nagaland Government should implement 33 per cent seat reservation for women?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Women are not ready to participate ( )

**11) Do you think Sümi women are empowered at the grass root level like-Village Development Board (VDB) and Village Council (VC)?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Don't know ( )

**12) Do you think education is a tool to empower Sümi women?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Don't know ( )

**13) Do you think Self Help Groups (SHGs) contribute to economic empowerment in the family and the society?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )

**14) Do you think career women are more empowered and command more respect than non- working women?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Often ( )
- d) Don't know ( )

**15) In your opinion, what is the status of Sümi women vis-a-vis other members of the family?**

- a) We reside together as equal family members ( )
- b) Male members are given better chances ( )
- c) Female members have a better status ( )

**16) What type of marriage would you prefer - traditional bride price marriage, modern type of marriage or leave it to individual's choice?**

- a) Traditional ( )
- b) Modern ( )
- c) Individual's choice ( )

**17) Should husbands/ spouses have better status and higher educational qualification than wives?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) To some extend ( )
- d) Don't know ( )

**18) Do you think there are jobs which cannot be handled by women?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Don't know ( )

**19) Do you think Sümi women should have equal inheritance with men?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Do not know ( )

**20) Do you think Sümi Totimi Hoho (STH) and other NGOs help in promoting empowerment of Sümi women?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Do not know ( )

**21) Do you think Sümi women play an active role at par with men in the church set- up?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Don't know ( )

**22) Do you think patriarchal system should continue?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Don't know ( )

**23) Should election be dominated by male members only?**

- a) Yes ( )
- b) No ( )
- c) Partially true ( )

Thank you for your kind cooperation

**Sd/-**

**K.Kalito Chishi**

**Research Scholar, Deptt. of Political Science,  
Nagaland University.**

## Glossary:

- *abosühü/ahüvü* - a small enclosure temporarily constructed with bamboo walls or bamboo mats for performing rituals by male members of the family.
- *achiku* – big-size cornelian bead
- *achiku xe* – the bride's parents give *achikula* along with other utensils in addition to *asana*.
- *achikula* – big-size cornelian bead neck-lace of one string
- *achipu* – medium size bead neck-lace of one string
- *achixathi* – small size bead neck-lace of 3 or 5 stringss
- *achuzathi* – here, bride price is lesser than *achiku xe*
- *aghikugho*- weaving
- *ahuna* – post harvest festival
- *ajichi* – precursor of rice beer
- *akichhelo chi* – bead girdle wrapped around the waist of a woman
- *akulu* – torch
- *akuwu*- ginger
- *alojimi* – working group/ team
- *ame* – dowry/ bride price
- *ame kükügha* – settlement of bride price
- *amighiu*- that orphan
- *amini* – mekhela/ sarong/ wrap around (by women)

- *amini kimiji mini* – It is worn by the daughters of the rich on the wedding. A daughter whose mother had Amini Kimiji alone could have the same, provided she lived a virtuous life. Her parents must have given Feast of Merit. It is decorated with varieties of ‘Sümi Chi’ (*Sümi Chi- a kind of beads worn by sümi women*) in five strings
- *aminikimiji xe* – the daughter whose mother is married in the *amini kimiji* tradition can only practice this system of marriage. This is a ritual of giving pairs of every ornament, utensils in addition to *asana*.
- *angushuu kuqo le-* is a song sung at the time of hunting tigers
- *anipu* – wife
- *anisüu* – a person who is trustworthy and possessing the confidence of the bride’s parents and their relatives
- *aphi atho me* – replacement of another body taken to the bride’s parents
- *apuki* – bachelors’ dormitory
- *asana* – gift collected by the bride
- *ashoghi xe* – In this type of marriage, groom’s parents must give 10-15 mithuns to the bride’s parents as dowry.
- *asükiüda mini* - This mekhela was worn by wives and daughters of warriors who killed enemies during the times of head hunting.
- *asükiüda phi*: This is a valuable shawl of Sümi women. The shawl is decorated with shells. The design depicts the moon which signifies the high social status of a wearer. Today, it is worn by all women on important occasions. It is originated from the southern part of Sümi tribe.
- *atozüi* – bamboo wall
- *a-u la kivimi-* a women of bountiful in management

- *a-u lampa*- whatever food items these women lay their hands on, quantity of that item tend to decrease which is purely of bad luck and not by choice.
- *avi tsii*- male mithun
- *avi qu*- female mithun already given birth
- *avi ali*- female mithun not ready for reproduction/ not produced offspring yet
- *awolakha*- a bamboo plank placed at the bottom of the main entrance to shut out domestic animals
- *awusu*- a ginger family with stronger smell and taste
- *awuti mini* – awuti means chicks. This mekhela is called so as believing that just as some chick manage to survive even if their mothers abandon them. So, also children even if their parents leave them, they would manage to survive just like the chicks. It used to be the mekhela of orphans.
- *axone*- processed, fermented and dried soyabean
- *ayephu* – bamboo mat
- *ayichi* - fish catching with poisoning substance of a short tree with many roots crushed to produce juice to intoxicate fish
- *ayilo*- herbal plant leaf used by forefathers for treating wounds.
- *aza*-mother
- *aza po küsülame* – child bearing cost of the mother
- *azanu jula shi* – meat of *azanu jula wo* is given to bride's paternal uncles and cousins that she and her children may not be forgotten by her father's clan. This is to pave the way for the bride and her offspring.
- *azanu jula wo* – a big healthy pig is given to the bride's parents by groom's parents.

- *chhekiütha qhumi*- women's shawl worn as official uniform
- *chimemi* – widow
- *chumiipa-shomiipa* - hands that bring poverty
- *elakha*-district
- *ghabo* – implying a hot climatic area in Zünheboto district
- *hekimini*- wrap around
- *Hoho* - Organization
- *iliki* – girls' dormitory
- *ilimi* – unmarried women
- *ilimi lhothe* – young girl/ teenage girl
- *japakho*- traditional bamboo basket with lid
- *khunithisü* – wild sour fruit bearing tree which exudes milky fluid called latex when cut/sliced.
- *kihili* – let play
- *kughulhu*- post engagement dinner offered to the boy and the girl
- *külauve/ nhiuve*- married off
- *küpüha / kipithi* – choke
- *latha xe* – affordable or agreeable bride settlement by both the parties
- *lotosü* – a mekhela worn by wives and daughters of the rich men who had given the feast of merit to the villagers.
- *machhizü* – a deserted place in Atoizü area
- *michhisü* – schima wallichii, itching tree, inner bark of which has got irritating fibre
- *mighimi* – orphan
- *nhiuve / külauve*- married off

- *saghini*- a festival which is celebrated in the month of August before harvesting starts, inviting their would-be son in-law for dinner is done during this festival.
- *thüümüsi* – *rhus semialata* murr/ Naga tenga, sour seed-bearing tree when burn gives rise to non-stop bursting or popping sound.
- *topunasho xe* – remarriage of a widow to her husband's kin/ relatives after the death of her husband
- *totimi* – women in general
- *tuluni*- a festival celebrated by Sümi tribe on 8<sup>th</sup> July every year mark by prayers and offerings for abundance and fruitful season.