

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: A STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN SENAPATI DISTRICT OF MANIPUR

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO NAGALAND UNIVERSITY IN FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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NAGALAND UNIVERSITY

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2023

Dedicated
To
My Mom and Dad

*Whose love and prayers remained a constant source of
inspiration and encouragement.*



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Department of Sociology

DECLARATION

I, Th Luckson, hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Women Empowerment and political participation; A Study of Rural Women in Senapati District of Manipur” is my original work, and all secondary sources have been acknowledged, and that the contents of the thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree, and has not been submitted or published in any form for any Research Degree.

This thesis is being submitted to Nagaland University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

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CERTIFICATE

*This is to certify that this Ph.D Thesis entitled, “**Women Empowerment and Political participation; A Study of Rural Women in Senapati District of Manipur**” is an authentic and original work carried out by Mr. **Th Luckson** bearing Regd. No. Ph.D/SOC/00228 with effect from 28th August, 2018, based on his field study conducted under the supervision of **Prof. Temjensosang**, Professor in the Department of Sociology for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Thesis fulfils all the norms of Ph.D Thesis under the rules and regulations of Nagaland University.*

To the best of my knowledge, the Thesis has not been submitted to any university or educational institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

This Thesis may therefore be placed before the External Examiner for evaluation.

(PROF. ATHUNGO OVUNG)

HoD

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Supervisor

Acknowledgment

Undertaking this PhD has been a truly life-changing experience for me and it would not have been possible to do without God and the support and guidance that I received from many people. Taking this opportunity I sincerely extend my heartiest gratitude as I scroll to mention the names of those who help me to realize my long cherish dream of completing my research work and submit the thesis.

First and foremost, I am immensely grateful to my Supervisor, Prof. Temjensosang, Professor, Department of Sociology, Nagaland University, for his unwavering guidance, expertise, and mentorship throughout the entire duration of this course. His profound knowledge, invaluable insights, and continuous encouragement have been instrumental in shaping the direction of my research and enhancing its quality. I am truly fortunate to have had such an exceptional mentor.

I am indebted to the Head of Department (HOD), faculty and staff in the Department of Sociology, Nagaland University for their support, stimulating discussions, and intellectual contributions that have helped shape my research ideas.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my colleagues and friends, both within and outside the university, for their constant support, motivation, and friendship. Their encouragement and willingness to listen have been a source of inspiration during challenging times.

I am grateful to the administrative staff of the Nagaland University for their efficient administrative support and assistance, which have always been available to address any queries or concerns.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by University Grant Commission (UGC) under Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) for funding this research. Their support has been vital in facilitating the data collection, analysis, and dissemination of the research findings.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all the respondents and informants covered under this research. It was through their contribution that I have been able to amass sufficient data to build my research.

Last but not least, I express my deepest gratitude to my family for their unwavering love, understanding, and encouragement throughout this entire academic journey. Their constant belief in me and their sacrifices have been the driving force behind my achievements.

To all those who have contributed to this thesis in various capacities, whether directly or indirectly, I extend my sincerest gratitude. Your support has played an indispensable role in the successful completion of this doctoral research.

Thank you all.

Sincerely,

Th Luckson

Abbreviation

ADC	- Autonomous District Council
AIWC	-All India Women's Conference
ARSH	- Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health
BBBP	- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
BPL	-Below Poverty Line
CD	- Child Development
CEDAW	- Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CLC	-Country Life Commission
DWCRA	- Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
EC	- Election Commission
FCW	- Federation of Cuban Women
MDG	- Millennium Development Goal
MNWWA	- Mao Naga Women Welfare Association
MSK	- Mahila Shakti Kendra
MWU	- Maram Women Union
NAWSA	-National American Women's Suffrage Association
NGOs	-Non-Governmental Organisations
NMWE	-National Mission for Women's Empowermen
PMUY	- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
PNWU	- Poumai Naga Women Union
PPS	- Probability Proportional to Size

PRI	- Panchayati Raj institutions
RMK	- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
RTC	- Round Table Conference
SDG	-Sustainable Development Goals
SC	-Schedule Caste
SDWA	- Senapati District Women Association
SHG	- Self-Help Group
SGSY	- Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana
ST	- Schedule Tribe
STEM	- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
STEP	- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women
TD	-Tribal Development
UN	- United Nation
UNFPA	-United Nation Population Fund
VDB	-Village Development Board

List of Tables

Table No	Name of the Table	Page No.
1.1	Block wise distribution of the sample	21
2.1	Literacy rate of the district	27
2.1	Sex ratio of the district 2011	27
2.3	Sex ratio of population in the age group 0-6 for CD Blocks, 2011	28
2.4	Block wise distribution of respondent	29
2.5	Age distribution of respondents	30
2.6	Sex distribution of the respondent	31
2.7	Marital status of respondent	32
2.8	Qualification of respondents	32
2.9	Religion of the respondents	33
2.10	Occupation of respondent	34
2.11	Income distribution of respondent	35
2.12	Distribution of the respondents by community	36
3.1	Workforce participation in Senapati district	44
3.2	Opinion on employment in organized sector	45
3.3	Opinion on income of women	47
3.4	Financial freedom of the respondent	48
3.5	Ownership of property either alone or jointly by respondent	49
3.6	Opinion on increase of women political participation	54
3.7	Opinion on religious status of women	56
3.8	Opinion on domestic violence	58
3.9	Opinion on socio-economic status of women	61
3.10	Opinion on visibility or rural women Empowerment	63
3.11	Opinion on rural women less exposure as an obstacle for empowerment	65
4.1	Opinion on decision making in family	87
4.2	Opinion on decision making in Society	88
4.3	Opinion on rigidity of tradition and custom	90
4.4	Acceptance of prevailing tradition and custom by women	91
5.1	Essential of women participation in the politics	105
5.2	Percentage distributions of male and female voters from 1972 to 2022 Legislative Assembly Elections of Manipur.	108
5.3	Voter turnout in last 17 th Lok Sabha Election 2019 from Constituency Under Senapati District.	108
5.4	Number of women Participated in Legislative Assembly as candidates from 1972 to 2022	109
5.5	Number of women Participated in Legislative	110

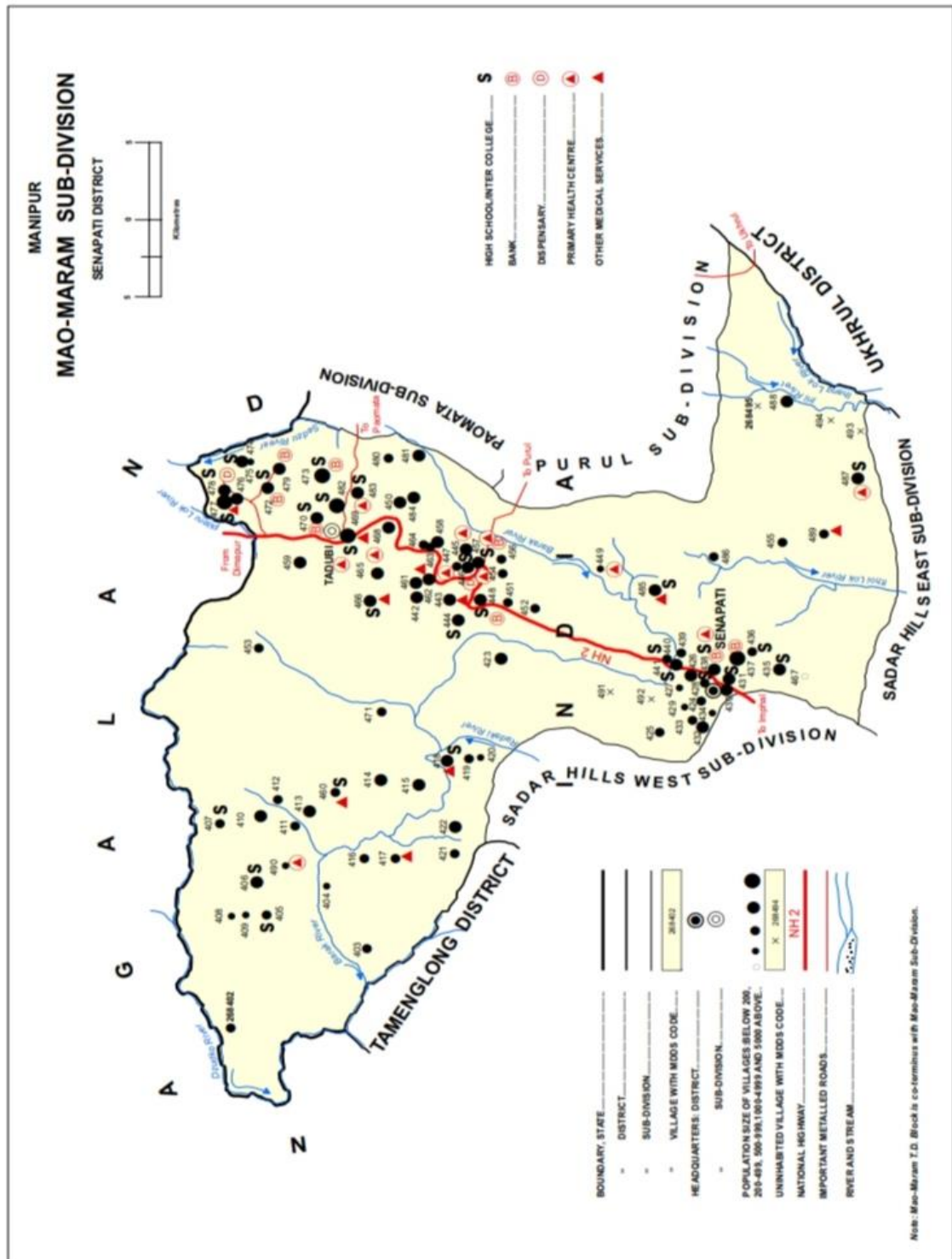
	Assembly as candidates form Senapati District from 1972 to 2022	
5.6	Opinion on influence of women voting behavior through party ideology, party program and manifestoes	112
5.7	Voting right exercise by women	113
5.8	Opinion on women participation in election campaign, demonstration, protest and rallies	115
5.9	Opinion on exercising of constitutional right in women reservation policy	120
5.10	Opinion on gender stereotyping and women political participation	120
5.11	Women participation in village developmental program	123
5.12	Opinion on Women participation in Non - Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	124
5.13	Opinion on electoral political participation	125
6.1	Opinion on women exposures and political participation	133
6.2	Opinion on patriarchy system controlling over women	139
6.3	Opinion on gender stereotyping	140
6.4	Opinion of the on preference of child education	142
6.5	Opinion on low income of women as a barrier in political participation	143
6.6	Opinion on lack of political socialization as a barrier to women's political participation	146
6.7	Opinion on tradition and custom and its hindrance on women political participation	147
6.8	Opinion on the rigidity of tradition and custom	148
6.9	Opinion on acceptance of prevailing tradition and custom by women	148
6.10	Opinion on lack of confidence among women as a hindrance on political empowerment	150
6.11	Essential of women in political participation	152
6.12	Opinion on political role conflict on between male and female	153
6.13	Exercise of constitutional right	159

List of Figure

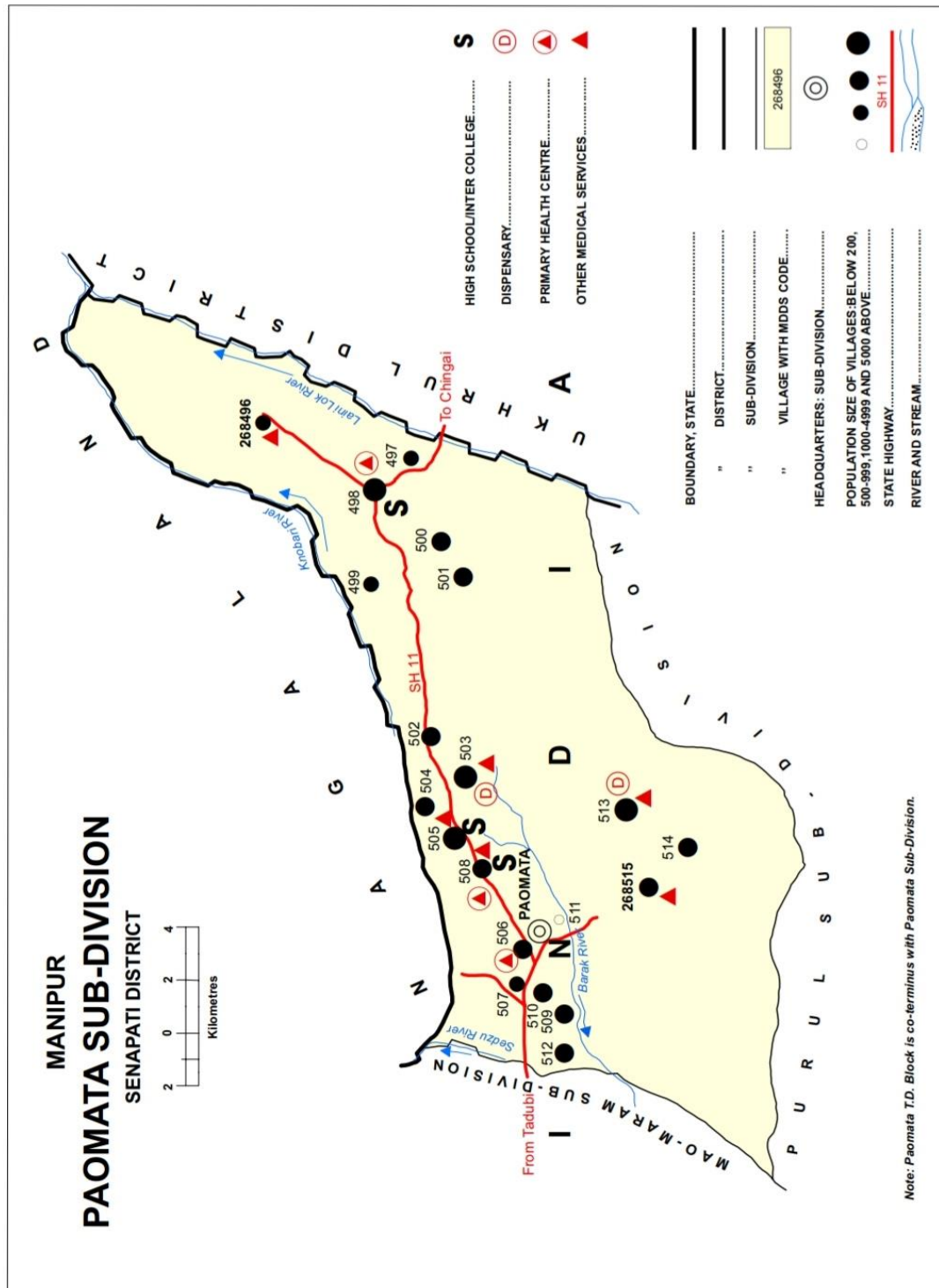
Figure No	Name of the figure	Page No.
3.1	Types of Empowerment	38
3.2	Parameters to assess women empowerment	40

3.3	Preferences of child education between male and female	52
3.4	Opinion of respondent on achievement of gender equality	66

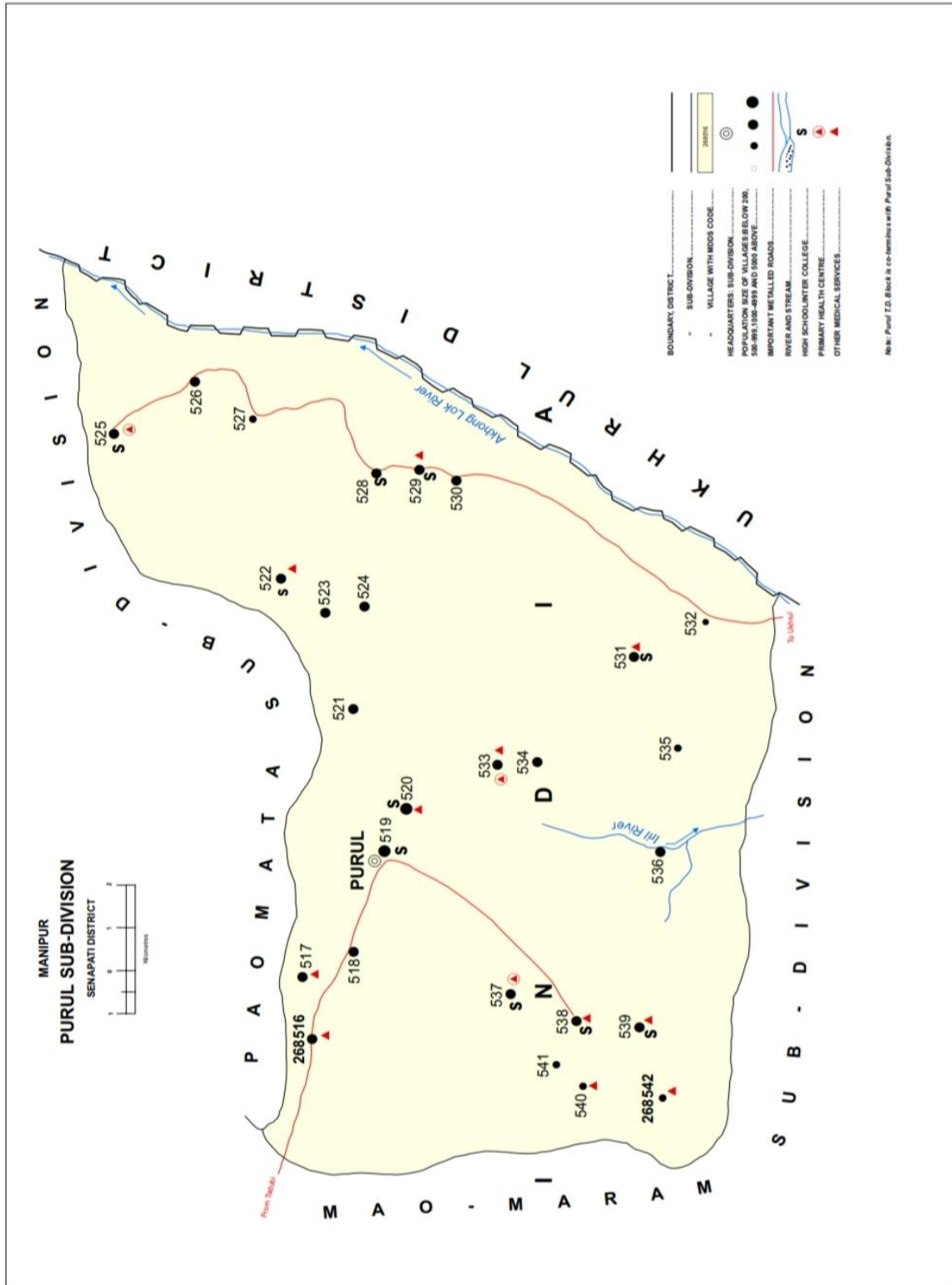
Map of Mao-Maram Block



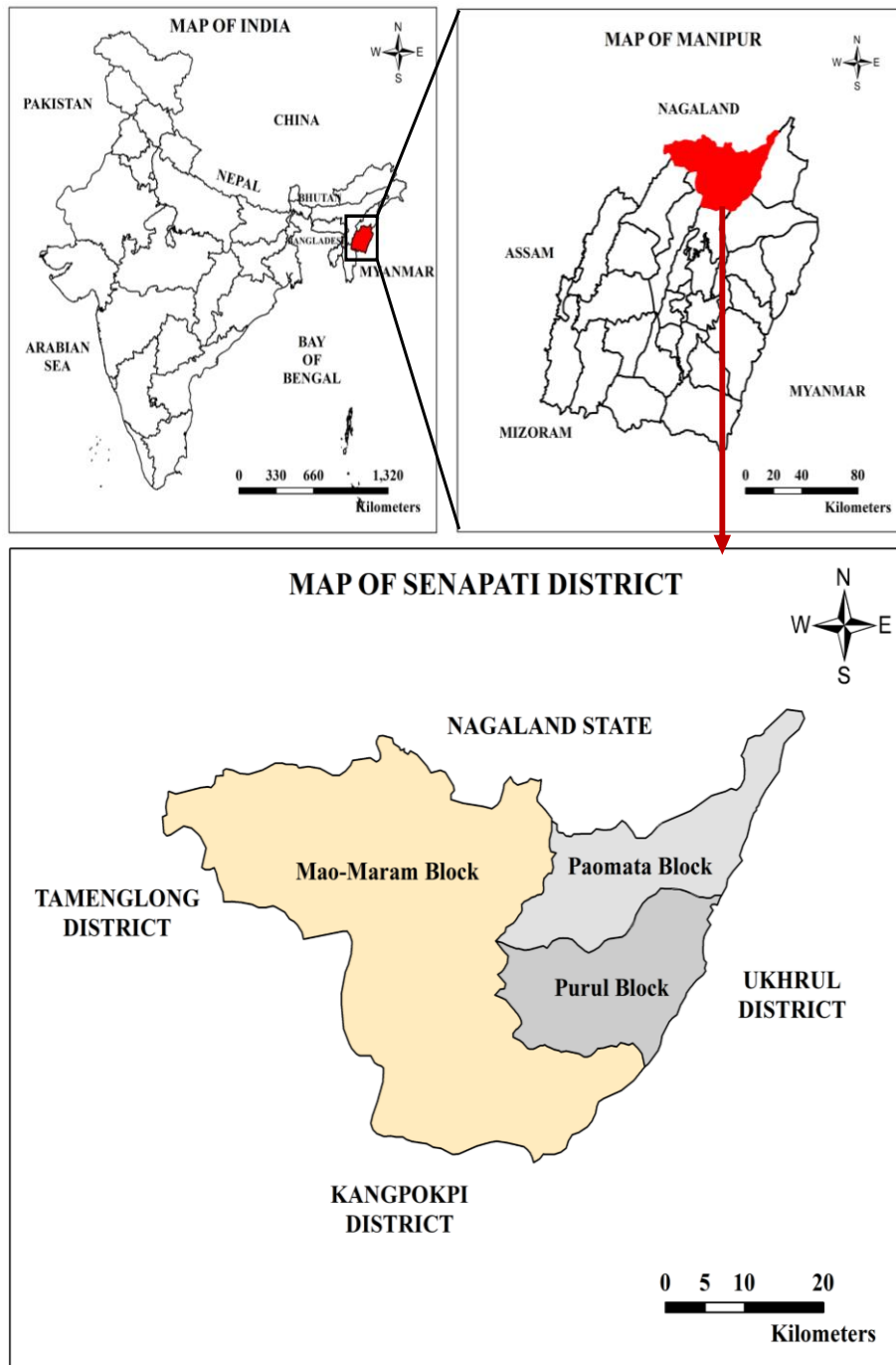
Map of Paomata Block



Map of Purul Block



Map of the Study Area



CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgement	i-ii
Abbreviation	iii-iv
List of table	v-vi
List of figure	vii
Map of study area	vii-xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1- 21
1.1 Women Empowerment and Political Participation: An Introduction	1-4
1.2 Conceptual Framework	4-7
1.3 Review of Literature	7-18
1.4 Statement of the Problem	18-19
1.5 Objectives	19
1.6 Hypothesis of the Study	19
1.7 Methodology	20
1.7.1 Area of Study	20
1.7.2 Sources of Data Collection	20
1.7.3 Sampling Design	20-21
1.7.4 Technique of Data Collection	21
1.7.5 Data Analysis	21
CHAPTER TWO: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SENAPATI DISTRICT	22-36
2.1 Brief History of the District	22-23
2.2 Physical feature of the district	23
2.3 Social and Cultural events	23-26
2.4 Vegetation	26

2.5 Population of the district	26
2.6 Literacy Rate of the district	26-27
2.7 Sex Ratio	27-28
2.8 Profile of the Respondents	29
2.8.1 Age Distribution of Respondents	30
2.8. 2 Sex Distribution of Respondents	31
2.8.3 Marital Status of Respondent	31- 32
2.8.4 Educational Qualification	32-33
2.8.5 Religion Distribution of respondents	33
2.8.6 Occupation Distribution of respondents	34
2.8.7 Income Distribution of respondents	34-35
2.8.8 Community Distribution of Respondents	35-36
CHAPTER THREE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF RURAL WOMEN	37-67
3.1 Introduction	37-38
3.2 Individual Empowerment	38-39
3.3 Group Empowerment	39
3.4 Determinant of Women Empowerment	40
3.4.1 Economic empowerment	40-41
3.4.2 Social empowerment	41
3.4.3 Political Empowerment	42
3.4.4 Religious Empowerment	42-43
3.4.5 Psychological empowerment	43
3.5 Socio-Economic Life of Rural women in Senapati District	43-46
3.6 Income of Women in the District	46-50
3.7 Social Status of wWomen in Senapati District	51

3.8 Health and Nutrition	53
3.9 Political Status of Women in Senapati District of Manipur	54-55
3.10 Status of Women in Religion	55-57
3.11 Psychological Status of Women in Senapati of Manipur	57-59
3.12 Overview of the Position of Women in the District of Senapati	59
3.13 Changing Status of Women through the Ages	59-60
3.14 Changing Status of Women in Senapati District	60-61
3.15 Socio-Economic Empowerment through Self Help Group (SHG)	61-62
CHAPTER FOUR: TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL WOMEN	63-93
4.1 Introduction	63-69
4.2 Traditional Institution	74-76
4.3 Dormitory System	77
4.3.1 Types of Dormitory	77-78
4.3.2 Decline of Dormitory System	78-79
4.4 Chieftainship	79-81
4.5 Village Council	81-82
4.5.1 Function of Village Authority	82-85
4.6 Role of Women in Traditional Institution	85-88
4.7 Women as Peace Initiative	85-93

CHAPTER FIVE: RURAL WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

94-128

5.1 Introduction	94
5.2 Historical Perspective on Feminist Movement and Political Empowerment	94-96
5.2.1 Second Waves of Feminism	96-97
5.2.2 Third Waves	97-99
5.3 Women's Suffrage in India	99-101
5.4 Women political participation in Global Context	101-103
5.5 Women and Political Participation	103-105
5.5.1 Rural Women's Participation in Voting Process	106-110
5.5.2 Voting Behavior of the Rural Women	111-113
5.6 Voting Right Exercise by Women	113-114
5.7 Women Political Participation through Campaign, Demonstration, Protest and Rallies and Other Political Related Activities	114-116
5.8 The 73 rd Amendment Act and Women	116-118
5.9 Autonomous District Council (ADC)	118-121
5.10 Women Participation in Village Developmental Programme	121-124
5.11 Women Political Awareness in the District	124-125
5.12 Relation between Women Empowerment and Women Political Participation	125-128

CHAPTER SIX: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT **129-161**

6.1 Introduction	129-130
6.2 Challenges Face by Women for Empowerment in Senapati District	130
6.2.1 Lack of Education	130-131
6.2.2 Professional Inequality	131-132
6.2.3 Unequal Work Division of Household Chores	132-134
6.2.4 Culture and Societal Norms	134-135

6.2.5 Agricultural Activities	135-136
6.2.6 Gender Inequality and Discrimination	136-137
6.2.7 Political Barriers	137-138
6.2.7(A) Patriarchy system	138-140
6.2.7 (B) Division of Labor	141
6.2.7 (C) Lack of Education	141-142
6.2.7 (D) Financial Constraint	143-144
6.2.7 (E) Stereotypes and Prejudice	144-145
6.2.7 (F) Lack Political socialization	145-146
6.2.7 (G) Tradition and Custom	147-149
6.2.7 (H) Lack of Self-Confidence	149-151
6.3 Political Efficacy and Aspiration of Women in Senapati District of Manipur	151-153
6.4 Government Initiative for Women Empowerment	153-158
6.5 Constitutional Provision for Empowering of Women in India	158-160
6.6 Non-Governmental Organization Initiative for Women's Empowerment	160-161
CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	162-178
Bibliography	179-183
Annexure/Appendix	184-192

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Women Empowerment and Political Participation: An Introduction

Empowerment is a general term, and it is used in different fields of socio-economic, political, and religion Empowerment is relevant to people, organizations and community. From the process, individual empowerment can take the shape of participation in community organizations, where organizational capabilities include shared leadership and communal decision-making and where community capabilities could include group action to obtain public resources Through the over usage of the term empowerment, it appears to be vague and tends to cornered on one particular aspect Empowerment has both individual and group or association aspect. Empowerment is an authority vested upon somebody to act on his or her will. It is the process by which the disempowered or powerless can change their circumstances and begin to have control over their lives Empowering individuals requires more than just granting them access to decision-making; it also requires procedures that help them believe they have the capacity and right to occupy that space (Rowland, 1995) Although some people view a person's empowerment as giving them the right to make decisions and gain self-reliance, it also implies the collective empowerment of marginalized groups.

Women empowerment refers to the ability of women to enjoy the right that has been bestowed upon them; it can be political, social and economic, etc. Women's empowerment has landed an important place in the development, politics, society, and economics discussion. “It has different meanings in different socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. These terms include self-strength, self-control, self-power, self-reliance, personal choice, the capability to fight for one's rights, independence, decision-making power, and freedom. Women's empowerment has become a central point in the programs and activities of the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations” (Keshab Chandra Mandal, vol.9 No.2, 2013). *Women empowerment* is defined as the process of enhancing women's ability to exercise control over their own lives, make independent choices, and participate actively in social, economic, and political spheres. It involves the removal of structural barriers and discriminatory practices that limit women's opportunities and agency and the promotion of gender equality (Kabeer, 1999, pp. 435-465).

According to United Nations Population Information Network, there are five components of Women's empowerment: “women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally”. According to World Bank, “*Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes*”.

The fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) and the Beijing Platform for Action have provided new impetus for government and civil society organizations to address women's empowerment and gender inequalities at all levels. It recognized that without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives in the decision-making process- the goals of equality, development, and peace cannot be maintained (Harendra Sinha, Zorema, 2012. P-6).

The empowerment of women can also be equated with their political participation. Political participation has a broad definition. It is connected not just to the "Right to Vote" but also to involvement in political activism, political consciousness, etc. The most significant forms of female political participation are voting and political activism. Activism is advocating for social and political changes or working for a cause. The women's suffrage movement emerged in the early 1900s in reaction to a national suffrage campaign. However, most men and women in India had no right to vote under British colonial rule before 1947. Only after Indian independence from Britain did the Indian Constitution of India 1950 officially grant women and men suffrage (Ali et al. 1983. P.10-20).

Political participation does refer to involvement in politics. *Politics* is a process that is demonstrated via activities in societies. People perform their acts in different ways. Some actively participate in politics by joining political parties, participating in the electoral process, and demonstrating. They joined as a pressure group to attain their demand, pursue a career, and stand for public office. In contrast, some people have apathy, abstain from political activities, and even abstain from voting. Political participation has gained an important place, especially in political science and sociology, to understand people's behavior and the structure of a particular society.

Women account for over half of a country's population.. The involvement of women in the political arena, like the electoral process and other political activities, can be termed as women's political participation. People are of the opinion that women's participation in politics and decision-making is essential for overall social, economic, and political development. M.K Gandhi (1918), in his lecture to the Bhagini Samaj in Bombay, stated that “women have the right to participate in all aspects of life and, like

men, have equal freedom and liberty rights. She is entitled to the same supremacy in her domain of endeavor as man is in his. He believes that the backwardness of women is a hurdle to the progress of society”.

The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments (1993) of India served as a breakthrough for ensuring equal access and increased participation in the political power structure for women, which laid the strong foundation for their participation in decision-making at the grassroots level (Harendra et al., 2012. p-xix). The amendments stipulated the reservation of seats in proportion to the population for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and reserved seats for women. Article 243D mandated that one-third of all seats in Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) at all levels be reserved for women. By reserving the position of chairperson in PRIs at the village, intermediate, and district levels for women in rotation, the amendment seeks to improve women's representation and leadership responsibilities. This provision meant that women were allowed to assume decision-making positions and participate actively in local government.

The amendment encouraged women's direct participation in decision-making at the grassroots level. They encouraged women to become active members of PRIs, engage in policy creation, and organize and implement development programs. PRIs enhanced women's participation in political activity and gave them more power in local government. Women in rural communities gained social and political awareness due to seat reservations and increased involvement in PRIs. It gave them a forum to express their issues, contribute to community development, and participate in public conversation. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments allowed women to become politically aware and express their rights. These amendments cleared the way for women to be empowered, their representation to be improved, and gender equality to be promoted in local government, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and participatory democracy.

Despite this reservation for women, their involvement in politics is insignificant compared to men. A democratic society like India cannot advance if half of the population's energy is centered solely in the kitchen. The topic of women's political engagement cannot be considered in isolation from the broader status of women in society. Despite their enormous power, women are marginalized in the political system. Women's political position indicates a degree of equality and freedom in sharing power, as well as the priority placed by society on the role of women in the political system.

Rural areas are the remotest and most scheduled and generally inaccessible hilly tracts. Life in rural is full of adventures and susceptible. Rural areas had drawn the particular attention of the administration since the pre-independent era. Village Council plays an integral part in economic planning and implementation of policy programs at

the grass-root levels. This study attempted to study the role of rural women in politics in concurrence with women's empowerment.

The study of women's political engagement assists in identifying the constraints and challenges that prevent women from gaining political power. It enables us to comprehend and address societal norms, cultural prejudices, gender-based violence, and institutional hurdles to women's political participation. We can build solutions to address these obstacles and create a more inclusive political environment by researching them. Women's political engagement is inextricably related to global development initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the SDGs is to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, emphasizing the necessity of women's political engagement for long-term development and social progress.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

The majority of the population of Senapati District belongs to the Nagas tribe of Manipur, consisting of different sub-tribes of the Nagas. The Nagas have their governance institution based on their traditions and practices (Temjensosang, 2013. p.3). The society is governed by customary laws in line with democracy. With waves of globalization, education, and modern politics, a change occurs in the political scenario. In addition, with the government's policies, there is a change taking place within the governance system in the Nagas inhabited regarding the old system of governance.

Moreover, women have realized the value of political participation in ensuring that their voices and concerns are heard in decision-making processes. They work to achieve equality of rights and opportunities in all aspects of life, including politics. Women understand that political participation can help with socioeconomic growth. They may influence resource allocation and push for better healthcare, education, infrastructure, and employment prospects by participating in government, which benefits women and their communities. Social attitudes about women's political engagement have shifted throughout time. Women's representation in decision-making bodies is becoming more important as society recognizes the necessity of gender equality. Women in rural areas came forward to the political front, though less as compared to men counterparts.

The theoretical inspiration of this study has been derived from the liberal feminist theory. Liberal feminists believe in 'equality first,' which means others should not restrict freedom. This approach views the condition of women in society in terms of uneven rights or artificial impediments to their engagement in society outside of the home and family. They asserted that women are not fundamentally different from men but are denied opportunities based on sex. Mary Wollstonecraft fights for women's rights in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), arguing against current societal

norms and expectations that limit women's prospects and confine them to domestic roles. The book questions the prevalent assumptions of the period, which held that women were intellectually inferior to men and that their primary function was to be husbands and mothers. The author argues why women cannot be equal to men and why women should be excluded from civil and political employment.

Wollstonecraft advocates for equal access to education and intellectual development for women. She claims that by educating women properly, they can actively participate in society as logical individuals capable of engaging in intellectual and political conversation. Wollstonecraft argued that women's lack of education and personal development possibilities hindered their potential and perpetuated their subordination. Furthermore, Wollstonecraft criticizes the notion of "feminine virtues" as a constraint on women's behavior and a limitation on their agency. She contends that women should be treated as persons with their rights rather than being defined primarily as females. She advocates for a more fair society where women and men have equal legal, political, and social rights. Wollstonecraft is regarded as a fundamental text of contemporary feminism and has significantly impacted succeeding feminist movements. Wollstonecraft's ideas and arguments set the way for conversations about gender equality, women's education, and women's rights that are still relevant in feminist discourse today.

MacKinnon's work examines the existing legal and social frameworks perpetuating gender-based oppression, and she advocates for revolutionary legal reforms to address these systemic disparities. MacKinnon emphasizes the widespread problem of sexual harassment in numerous settings, including the workplace. She advocates redefining sexual harassment as sex discrimination and exposes how existing legal frameworks fail to handle it appropriately. MacKinnon recommends legal reforms that reclassify sexual harassment as a violation of women's civil rights, intending to hold institutions and individuals accountable for perpetuating gender discrimination. MacKinnon criticizes prevalent legal theories and practices that ignore or marginalize the experiences and views of women. She advocates for a more inclusive legal framework that recognizes and resolves the fundamental disadvantages that women experience. MacKinnon's work pushes for a transformative approach to law that recognizes and actively seeks to achieve gender equality.

Sujata Sen, in her book 'Gender Studies,' gave a clear picture of how the Liberal feminist traditionally regarded differences between women and men as being of entirely private or personal significance. They believe all individuals are entitled to participate in or gain access to public or political life (Sujata Sen. 2012. P.34, 38). Liberal feminists studying women and world politics have described the extent to which women are underrepresented in national and international political involvement, which sought to overcome the barriers.

Liberal feminism is a famous feminist viewpoint focusing on achieving gender equality within current societal structures through legal and political reforms. This point of view emphasizes individual rights, equal opportunity, and women's autonomy. A liberal feminist believes that a just society allows everyone to exercise their freedom to fulfill their will. Liberal feminism emphasizes equal opportunities for everyone, where they can develop their rational and moral capacities to fulfill their goals.

With the influence of modern politics and their policies and also with the feminist movement, women look forward to gender equality. As women feel the need to be in authority to take part in the decision-making, they look for active participation in politics. The perception of women participating in politics also reflects the ideas of Dahrendorf that the conflict in modern society is the struggle for authority. The completely revised edition of *Modern Social Conflict* gives an account of conflict's contribution to democracies and how democracy must change in order to retain their political and social freedom. He believes that order in society can be created by coercion on its member and which is carried out by those who have power. The order of society carries out through force in a social system; power plays a vital role in maintaining order in society. He makes a brilliant contribution from a liberal perspective to study the conflict within a contemporary democratic society. With the new trend emergent of leadership, people look for a good leader with potential, capacity, and efficiency. Through this, women also consider themselves capable of being active political participants in the electoral process and deciding governance. In spite of their participation in politics, women are still underrepresented compared to their male counterparts. The factors contributing to less participation of women in politics are the patriarchy system, culture, tradition, stereotyping, political socialization, etc.

This research has attempted to show how women's empowerment is related to their political participation and vice versa, especially in the election process and decision-making in governance. “Women's political participation in India is less, ranking 148 out of 193 in United Nations member countries released on March 2018 by Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women. India has 64 out of 542 in the Lok Sabha after the 16th Lok Sabha election and 27 out of 245 members in Rajya Sabha. In the 17th Lok Sabha election, it has increased to 78 out of 542”.¹ In the case of Manipur and particularly the study area, i.e., Senapati District, women contesting for the legislative assembly in the last election are under-represented. Moreover, at the grassroots level, governance, where the district is governed by Autonomous District Council (ADC), has no women as members. This trend of under-representation in the political arena is a challenge for gender equality in fulfilling Sustainable Development Goal 2030 as envisaged by United Nations.

¹ ECI 17th Lok Sabha Result

1.3 Review of Literature

A good amount of literature has been written by many scholars on women's participation in politics. A historical study of women in India reveals that women also play a vital role in decision-making. However, there is generally a different stage of women's liberation, called the feminist movement. A glimpse of the literature reviewed for the present study is given below:

Sunita Kishor & Kamla Gupta (2009). *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in India*, discussed gender equality and women's empowerment as two sides of the same coin. They discussed different aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality. Based on their findings, some aspects that bring about gender inequality are liked preference for sons, which leads to underrepresentation in births, and female infanticide. They also found out that the education of females, especially in rural areas, gets disadvantaged with age, leading to dropouts beyond primary school. They also found out that the male percentage of employment between males and females is higher compared to females. Access to resources is another finding that they made when it comes to gender equality and empowerment. However, different social aspects leading to gender equality and women's empowerment are not dealt with where it can be studied in broader prospect in terms of women's empowerment.

Ahmed (2017) wrote an article titled *Women's Empowerment and Gender Inequality in Pakistan: Myth or Reality?*, focuses on women's empowerment and gender inequality in Pakistan. The author investigates if empirical facts substantiate the country's promises of progress toward women's empowerment or if they are rhetoric

with no significant improvements. The article highlights numerous vital issues of women's empowerment in Pakistan. It emphasizes the persistent gender inequality in different domains such as education, employment, political engagement, and resource access. The author uses statistics and facts to highlight existing gender inequities and the obstacles that women confront in these areas.

The article also explores the cultural and societal elements that contribute to gender disparity in Pakistan. It investigates the impact of patriarchal values, conventional norms, and discriminatory practices on women's empowerment. The author explores how these elements affect women's agency, decision-making capacity, and social standing. Ahmed's (2017) article gives a thorough examination of women's empowerment and gender inequality in Pakistan. It provides insights into the issues and realities that women confront in the country and raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of current initiatives. The article adds to our awareness of women's empowerment in Pakistan and urges more efforts to close the gender gap and promote gender equality.

Verba, Burns, & Schlozman (1997). *Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement* discussed the relationship between gender and political engagement. Political interest, political knowledge, and political participation are the three main topics of the article. To assess gender variations in political knowledge, the authors examine current data from surveys and studies. They discovered that women had less political knowledge than men, which can be attributed to less exposure to political debates and lower confidence in their political expertise. However, they acknowledge that the gender disparity has been closing over time.

Regarding political interest, the authors contend that women and men are equally interested in politics. Women's interests, on the other hand, tend to be directed toward various concerns and policy areas. They propose this disparity is due to socialization processes and gendered societal roles.

The paper also looks at gender variations in political participation, such as voting, campaigning, and running for office. The authors discover that women engage in political activities at a lesser rate than men. They contend that the gendered division of labor and the additional obligations that women frequently bear in family and household situations can explain some of the disparity. Overall, the article emphasizes the complicated relationship between gender and political participation. It emphasizes the significance of comprehending the different factors influencing gender inequalities in political knowledge, interest, and participation. The authors contend that closing these gender discrepancies is critical to achieving equal political participation and representation.

Rajeswari M Shettar's (2015) *A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment in India* discusses the issues and challenges women face in their empowerment, like lack of education and a literacy gap between males and females. Thus she points out that the literacy gap is due to the gender bias in higher education. Moreover, she also discussed other factors like professional inequality, morality inequality, and household work distribution inequality. Thus, the author concludes that the gender bias of males and females causes this. However, these are not only to do with gender bias that brings about gender inequality but socio-economic, political, and religious factors apart from the gender bias that can hamper the process of women's empowerment. Therefore, this research will look into all those factors.

M S Gupta (2012), in his book *Women Empowerment and Global Development* discussed women's empowerment and the development of society. It states that customs, beliefs, and practices influence women's lives; moreover, it asserts that society's customs and traditions sometimes affect a person's life. However, the author

believes that the privilege provided by the constitution and legislative provisions through various Acts will empower women.

Robert, Alan, et al. (2003). *Political Ideologies* discussed the emancipation of women. This book states the Marxist view on emancipation, where it says that the subordination of women is an endemic feature of capitalist society and one that would disappear under socialism. On the other hand, it also discussed Lenin's view of women's emancipation. According to Lenin's view, the real emancipation of women is through their full participation in economic and political life. Through Western education, industrialization, and urbanism, women's subordination is more in line with socialism. However, it may not be endemic, as viewed by the Marxists. The study examines factors bringing a liberal outlook regarding women's emancipation.

Moreover, Lenin's view of women's emancipation is discussed full participation in the economic and social sphere. In fact, this is very much true in any society, as the involvement of women in this sphere will lead to their emancipation. However, this alone cannot fully determine as other factors like social and religious participation also impact women's emancipation.

Titty Varghese (2019). *Women Political Participation and Leadership in India. Examining the Challenges* discussed women's political participation and its challenges. The paper looks into women's participation in the line of democracy, emphasizing the importance of women's involvement in decision-making. The study points out certain challenges that women face when it comes to political participation. The paper concludes that cultural barriers and the patriarchal system, which are still stagnant, are hurdles to women's political participation. It also points out that lack of financial instability is another factor for the low participation of women in politics. Moreover, it also analyses the gender stereotyping of men and women, which gives a better position to males, making women underrepresented in politics.

Sama A Afsana (2017). *Women Empowerment; Issues and Challenges* discussed the issues and challenges of women empowerment. The author talks about various issues and challenges, like gender discrimination based on the patriarchy system. Problems of female education in higher education, professional education, and technical education are discussed in the book. The article also talks about the problems of unemployment and harassment in the workplace. Moreover, it also talks about the issues of dowry, where women are ill-treated, leading to domestic violence and the degradation of women's status. However, this article did not examine the overall social setting that hampered women's empowerment.

Mukhtar Bello (2013), in the article *Challenges to Women Participation in Electoral Politics in Nigeria* discussed the challenges of women's participation in

politics in Nigeria. The author brought out certain aspects that act as challenges, like cultural stereotypes, traditional practices, and patriarchal societal structure. It also discussed the socialization process in the form of gender education that brings about the inferiority and superiority between men and women.

Cathy Duong (2012), in her article, *Modernization Theory and Women's Political Participation*, discusses women's political participation in politics. The article analyses how economic growth inevitably leads to social development and gender equality. However, in the case of Vietnam, the less participation of women is the culture which plays a paramount role.

Toshimenla Jamir (2012), in her book *Women and Politics in Nagaland; Challenges and Imperatives*, discussed the social and cultural setting which had an impact on women's political participation in particular and their social status in general. The author explains like other societies, Nagas has a patriarchal structure where there is male superiority, where tradition and culture are still a hindrance for women for equal access to power. The book discussed the unbalance relation between the gender among the tribals of Nagas, making a rigid division between males and females where females are confined to domestic affairs. In contrast, males are involved in the outside world and decision-making. The book points out the barrier that hindered women in political participation, such as male dominance in Naga society, which was a significant factor in the low political participation.

Moreover, lack of education and ignorance were other important factors responsible for the low political participation of women in Naga society. The author concludes that women still lack in transforming political consciousness into political action. However, it emphasizes how the predominantly male still acts as a barrier for women to participate in politics actively.

Satyabrata Chakraborty (2016). Ambarish Mukhopadhyaya, in his article *Political Participation*, explains political participation as taking part in politics. The author further discussed gender participation in politics; where it points out that women possess less political participation as compared to men. The author is of the view that women lack political efficacy. The fact is that women are less socialized from their childhood, making them think that politics is more appropriate for men. The author also explains the traditional role of women, where women are confined to domestic work and less exposed to the outside world, which makes women tend to have less interest in politics. Moreover, the author also views the stereotype of men against women, especially those women in elective office, as another hindrance to the low participation of women in politics. Thus the author concludes that the gender gap in political participation is gradually decreasing, and women are seen shedding traditional roles and taking part in different political arenas, though rather slow.

Simonti Sen, in his work *Gender and Politics* edited by Satyabrata Chakraborty (2016), discussed that patriarchy institutionally creates a gendered consciousness within which man internalizes his domination and women her subjugation. The author believes that the women's movement cannot be separated from that of official politics; if that happens, the concept of politics should be redefined. It further emphasizes that women should not be treated as different persons as gender implies the interrelation between men and women.

Praveen Rai (2017). *Women's Participation in Electoral Politics in India: Silent Feminization* discussed the involvement of women in electoral politics. It talks about how women's political participation indicates gender equality and freedom. Thus, the author points out that there is an imbalance of women's representation not only in legislative bodies at the national level but also in the state legislature as well, making all the crucial portfolios to be handled by men. As a result, the decisions are male-dominated in nature. In spite of the franchise of both men and women, women are still underrepresented. The articles point out that women's under-representation in the election is due to the lack of women's representation in decision-making positions resulting in women's agenda not reflection in the policy discussion.

Further, the article points out that the interests of men and women elected representatives are different, and the agendas vary. Thus, the author concludes that as women are under-represented, the bargaining and negotiating power are less in the cabinet berth, making things slow regarding the upliftment of women.

Pankaj Kumar (2015), in his article, *Participation of Women in Politics: Worldwide Experience*, analyses the worldwide participation of women in politics. The articles point out that the lower participation of women in politics is due to scrutiny of private life, sexual violence, and discrimination.

Deborah J Smith (2005), in her book *Finding Power: Gender and Women's Political Participation in Rural Rajasthan, India* discussed women's participation in politics in Rajasthan. Through the study, the author concludes that family constraints and sexual segregation are factors for women's lower political participation.

UN Women's (2014) *Strategic Guide: Political Empowerment of Women: Framework for Strategic Action in Latin America and the Caribbean* stated that women's political participation could bring about democratic legitimacy, good governance, and sustainable development and can change gender stereotyping. However, gender inequality is one of the constraints to their participation in politics.

Debajana Chakravati (2016). *On Political Representation of Women in India*, The factors which impede women's participation and, thus, their representation in politics are varied and many. They are social, cultural, economic, geographic, political, and others. Our patriarchal familial setups keep women away from political commitments. The triple role of a mother, wife, and political representative becomes too much pressure to handle. They are unable or prevented from making independent decisions affecting their lives. Lack of access to resources places women at disadvantageous positions concerning any form of competition with men folk in the political arena. Even women who earn their livelihood have no control over their earnings. The political parties, in turn, prefer men over women and thus further seal the hopes of generating funds for the female contestants. Often patriarchal values prevent their exposure to public lives. The increasing criminalization of politics, the use of violence, and the fear of malice also keep women away. Often the geographical locations of the constituencies the representatives represent do not enable them to meet up to the demands of the electorate.

The World Development Report (2012) *Gender Equality and Development* by the World Bank is a significant publication that examines the relationship between gender equality and development. The research looks into numerous facets of gender disparity, women's obstacles, and the possible benefits of achieving gender equality in several areas of life. It emphasizes gender inequality's pervasiveness and negative influence on economic growth, poverty alleviation, and overall development. It provides convincing evidence of the economic and social implications of gender inequality. The role of education in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is emphasized in the report. It looks at the problems and opportunities for achieving gender equality in education and the long-term advantages of investing in girls' education.

The report investigates gender disparities in economic opportunities, such as labor force participation, entrepreneurship, and access to credit. It examines the obstacles to women's economic empowerment and proposes methods to achieve gender-inclusive economic growth. The importance of women's voices, agency, and participation in decision-making processes at all levels is emphasized in the report and emphasizes the importance of women's empowerment in achieving inclusive and sustainable development results. The World Development Report (2012) is a significant resource for policymakers, development practitioners, and scholars interested in learning more about the connections between gender equality and development. It offers evidence-based analysis, case studies, and policy recommendations to help move the global agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment forward.

UN Women (2015). *Inclusive Electoral Process: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women Participation* states that "Women's full and equal participation in political and electoral processes can be

considered one of the litmus tests for women's empowerment and gender equality. When women participate in elections – as voters, candidates, electoral administrators, or party supporters – they can express their needs and interests. Decisions better reflect the electorate. Political processes are more inclusive. Democracy is strengthened".

Mason's (1986) article, *The Status of Women: Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Demographic Studies*, explores the conceptual and methodological issues associated with studying women's status in demographic studies. The author examines several conceptualizations of women's status and stresses the difficulties in defining and assessing it. It examines the multifaceted character of women's status, considering factors such as education, employment, health, autonomy, and decision-making ability. The paper examines the factors that influence women's status at the individual and societal levels. It also examines the elements influencing women's status and shaping gender inequalities, such as education, economic development, cultural norms, legal frameworks, and social policies. The article contributes to the broader understanding of women's empowerment, gender inequalities, and the factors that shape women's status in society.

The authors of *Representation, Gender Quotas, and Women's Political Empowerment in Latin America*, Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson (2017) study the relationship between gender quotas, women's political representation, and women's empowerment in Latin America. The article overviews gender quota implementation and its impact in Latin American countries. It explores the differences in the design and effectiveness of quotas across regional nations, including legislative, party, and candidate quotas. The authors examine how gender quotas affect women's political representation. They explore how quotas have considerably increased the number of women holding political office in Latin America. They investigate the elements that have aided the effective implementation of quotas, such as strong women's movements, supporting political elites, and the availability of electoral systems that assist women's elections.

The article also explores the broader implications of female political representation for empowerment. It analyses how the presence of women in positions of political power can lead to policy reforms that address gender inequity, enhance women's rights, and boost social welfare. The writers emphasize the significance of substantive representation for women, in which women elected to government actively advocate for women's interests and concerns. Furthermore, the article discusses the difficulties and limitations of gender quotas. It covers female politicians' challenges, the persistence of gendered norms and stereotypes, and the importance of continued efforts to sustain and deepen women's political strength beyond quota implementation.

Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender (2002) wrote an essay titled *Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development*, focuses on measuring women's empowerment in the context of international development. It covers numerous aspects of conceptualizing and operationalizing women's empowerment as a variable. They define *empowerment* as enhancing women's ability to make choices, exert control over resources and decision-making, and shift societal power dynamics. The paradigm emphasizes three main aspects of empowerment: resources, agency, and accomplishments.

The article delves into the difficulties of evaluating women's empowerment. It examines concerns such as indicator selection, data-gathering methodologies, and the subjective nature of empowerment. The authors emphasize the need for context-specific measures that reflect the multifaceted character of empowerment. The authors explore a variety of quantitative variables used to assess women's empowerment. These factors include education, employment status, credit availability, asset ownership, decision-making participation, and mobility. The paper investigates the strengths and weaknesses of these metrics in reflecting various characteristics of empowerment. The authors also discussed the policy consequences of assessing women's empowerment. They suggest that rigorous measurement can assist in identifying intervention areas, tracking progress, and assessing the effectiveness of development programs promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Dahlerup, D. (2006). *Women, Quotas, and Politics* explores the issue of women's political representation and the usage of gender quotas as a strategy to remedy the underrepresentation of women in politics. The book thoroughly examines the application and effects of gender quotas in many nations. Dahlerup looks at the historical backdrop and rationale for implementing gender quotas. She explains the many sorts of quotas, such as reserved seats, party quotas, and legislative quotas, and how they work to increase women's political representation. Dahlerup also delves into the debates and issues surrounding quotas, including both pro and con views.

Furthermore, the book analyses case studies from several nations where gender quotas have been introduced, analyzing their impact on women's political engagement and representation. The author addresses the difficulties encountered during quota implementation and assesses the long-term impact on political systems, party dynamics, and gender equality. Overall, *Women, Quotas, and Politics* thoroughly examine gender quotas as a mechanism for increasing women's political representation.

Norris, P. (2004). *Women's Representation and Democracies: A Global Analysis* examines the connection between women's political participation and democratic rule across the globe. The book thoroughly analyzes women's political engagement and examines the variables affecting their representation in decision-making

bodies. The author comprehensively examines women's political representation in many nations and areas. She looks at the variances in women's involvement and representation in democracies, emphasizing the elements that influence the degree of political empowerment of women at either a higher or lower level.

The book explores several elements, such as political parties, socio-economic circumstances, cultural norms, and legal frameworks that affect the representation of women. Norris looks at how these variables combine and impact how easily women can obtain political power and how difficult it is for them to get involved in politics. The author also examines the adverse effects and positive outcomes of more excellent female representation for democratic governance. She investigates how the inclusion of women in political decision-making structures impacts political goals, policy outcomes, and the effectiveness of democratic institutions. The possibility of women's representation to advance societal advancement and gender equality is also discussed in the book. The book gives advanced knowledge of women's political engagement and its consequences for democratic regimes by offering a global perspective and employing in-depth data analysis.

Krook, M. L., & O'Brien, D. Z. (ed.). (2011). an edited book titled *Gender, Politics, and Institutions: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism* focuses on how institutions influence women's political engagement. The book aims to provide a feminist institutionalist framework that looks at how official and informal laws, customs, and social mores affect women's participation in and influence over political decision-making. From a feminist viewpoint, the contributors to this volume examine diverse facets of gender, politics, and institutions. They examine how various institutions, including electoral processes, political parties, bureaucracy, and legislative bodies, can facilitate or obstruct women's political participation.

The book examines how gender intersects with other social categories, including race, class, and sexual orientation, and investigates how these intersections affect how women experience political institutions. It also addresses how feminist action and women's movements might influence institutional change and advance the political empowerment of women. The impact of feminist institutional reforms on women's political representation and policy outcomes is also explored in *Gender, Politics, and Institutions*. The authors critically evaluate the methods used to advance gender equality in politics, including institutional design, gender mainstreaming, and gender quotas. The book offers a theoretical and analytical framework to comprehend the intricate relationships between gender, politics, and institutions by creating a feminist institutionalist perspective. It provides insightful information for academics, decision-makers, and activists working to advance gender-responsive governance and increase women's political involvement.

Hughes, M. M., & Paxton, P. (ed.). (2007). the edited book *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective* offers a thorough analysis of women's political engagement and power from a global viewpoint. The book collects essays from numerous academics to examine the obstacles, chances, and successes women face in politics in various nations and areas. The book's authors cover a wide range of women's political participation issues. They look at social and cultural norms, unfair practices, and gendered power dynamics as impediments and challenges to women advancing to political leadership roles. The book also looks at the methods and strategies used by women to get over these restrictions and strengthen their political power. It addresses how to advance gender equality and give women more power in politics through political parties, electoral reforms, and women's movements. The authors examine how women's political participation affects democratic, governmental, and policymaking processes. They look at how including women in political decision-making affects the effectiveness of democratic institutions, social agendas, and policy outcomes.

Krook, M. L. (2014). *Violence against Women in Politics* focuses on the issue of violence against women in politics and its effects on women's political representation and involvement. Krook's paper delves into the numerous forms of violence women face in the political sphere. Physical violence, sexual harassment, threats, intimidation, and online abuse directed at female politicians, candidates, activists, and supporters are discussed by the author. The study also examines the fundamental causes and conditions contributing to political violence against women. It studies the intersections of gender, power, and politics and how patriarchal systems and gender norms perpetuate violence and discrimination against women in political settings. The author also analyses the consequences of political violence against women on democratic processes and gender equality. It also studies how violence inhibits women's political engagement, discourages potential candidates, and restricts their ability to openly express their opinions and participate in policymaking. To protect democracy and foster inclusive government, the article emphasizes the need to address and prevent violence against women in politics.

Tripp, A. M., & Kang, A. (ed.) (2008) an edited book titled *Women and Politics in Uganda* focuses primarily on women's political participation in Uganda. The book thoroughly analyzes the difficulties, chances, and experiences women face in Ugandan politics. This volume's contributors look at many facets of women's political participation in Uganda. They examine the causes that have influenced women's political empowerment in the country and the historical and socio-cultural framework in which women engage in politics. The book also examines the restrictions and obstacles women experience when entering Uganda's political sphere. The obstacle to women's access to political authority and decision-making encompasses cultural norms, traditional gender roles, and institutional barriers. The book studies women's strategies and efforts to

overcome these obstacles and strengthen their political power. The authors debate the role of women's movements, advocacy networks, and grassroots mobilization in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality in Ugandan politics. The book also examines the impact of women's political participation in Uganda on policymaking, governance, and democracy. It investigates how the presence of women in political decision-making bodies affects policy outcomes, social agendas, and the quality of the country's democratic institutions. This edited collection, by focusing on the specific context of Uganda, provides insights into the progress made and the ongoing obstacles women encounter in the country's political scene. It is an invaluable resource for researchers, policymakers, and activists interested in gaining a better knowledge of and supporting women's political empowerment in Uganda.

The article *Empowerment and Political Participation of Marginalized Groups of Women through Women's Groups* by Schild (2016), published in *the Women's Studies International Forum*, dives into the role of women's groups in empowering and encouraging political participation among marginalized women. The importance of women's groups for collective mobilization and empowerment is emphasized in the paper. It studies how these organizations provide a forum for marginalized women to express their concerns, share their experiences, and work together to confront gender inequality and social injustice. The author emphasizes the transformative impact of women's groups in questioning power dynamics and fighting for legislative changes that advance marginalized women's rights and well-being. Schild also studies how women's organizations contribute to political engagement. Women's groups can mobilize marginalized women to engage in various forms of political engagement, such as joining advocacy campaigns, engaging in community decision-making processes, or running for political office through collective action and grassroots organizing. The paper explores how these activities empower marginalized women by allowing them to fight their exclusion from political spheres and contribute to policy agendas representing their needs and ambitions.

Chaudhary, A. (2017). In *Women's Political Participation in India: Prospects and Challenges*, the author explores the historical context of women's political participation in India, emphasizing the efforts of women's movements and political reforms to increase women's political representation. The article delves into the constitutional provisions and legislative frameworks to promote gender equality and women's political empowerment, such as women's reservations in local government organizations. Chaudhary also explores the elements that influence women's political participation in India. Socio-economic differences, cultural norms, gender roles, educational possibilities, and social and political networks are among these influences. The article analyses how these characteristics can help or impede women's political participation and capacity to maintain a political career.

The paper also discusses the difficulties that women confront in Indian politics. These challenges include violence and harassment directed at female politicians, patriarchal attitudes and prejudices inside political parties and organizations, limited access to resources and finance, and a lack of female leadership. The author emphasizes the need for structural and systemic changes to overcome these problems and build a more inclusive and gender-responsive political environment. The paper also explores the impact of women's political participation on policy outcomes and governance. It addresses studies and facts that show how women's representation positively impacts addressing gender-specific concerns, advancing social welfare programs, and improving the overall quality of democracy.

The above-reviewed literature shows that several studies have been done related to women's empowerment and political participation at national and global levels. However, no serious study has been conducted in the case of rural women, especially in the Senapati district of Manipur. The present study attempts to bridge the gap left untouched by the researcher to understand better rural politics and women's role in politics vis-a-vis women empowerment.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The present study tries to delve into the obstacles that hinder women's political participation. There can only be a meaningful explanation of women's empowerment with equal participation by women and men in all spheres of life and at different levels of decision-making. In the present scenario, women's issues are discussed by the government and non-government organizations. Issues related to childcare, women's health, sexual harassment, violence against women, equal employment benefits, etc., are widely discussed. However, the overwhelming truth is that there is less participation by women in politics regarding the electoral process and decision-making.

The Government of India targets the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goal No 5, which discusses gender equality and empowerment. It advocates that women should be given equal opportunity as male in order to attain this feat. However, the underrepresentation of women in policy-making or decision-making still needs to be addressed. The government should break this chain to achieve the goal of gender equality.

The Senapati District has an Autonomous District Council (ADC) system of governance in the intermediate level of administration there are twenty-four elected members and two nominated members. Out of this total of twenty-six members, there is no female representative to the Autonomous District Council of the district, which is a clear fact that there is no equal share of opportunity in decision-making. Moreover, in an overview of religious organizations, women have separate organizations as women in

society, even in the religious sphere but in the congregation of both males and females, they do not occupy the exact status of male as a leader in that religious organization. Men mostly hold the position of pastor and priest in the church. There is an unequal representation of women and men in the district's social, economic, political, and religious spheres. This unequal participation in the legislation and socio-economic sphere or decision-making only jeopardizes women's empowerment as their voices are not heard, or they cannot share their grievances. Democracy is all about equal opportunity and freedom of doing things to achieve his or her goals. It requires equal participation and has the basic necessity and principle means by which a political system generates legitimacy and maintains stability.

While it is observed that in the rural societies of the district, there still exists the domination of traditional customs and beliefs which governed the society, the traditional practices of governance remain a hindrance towards women's participation in politics, particularly in the context of the rural women of Senapati district and the country in general. Unless the hindrance caused by custom and tradition is addressed or taken from the proper perspective, the women's empowerment slogan may not be fulfilled. The study has touch upon those areas such as political socialization, stereotyping, tradition, custom, etc. It has further attempt to understand the level of rural women's participation in politics. Why do women have less participation in politics? What factors hindered their political participation, especially in electoral politics and decision-making bodies like the legislative assembly? How do socio and economic backgrounds influence their participation in politics? These are a few questions that this study has attempted to understand.

1.5 Objectives

The main objectives of the study are-

- i) To examine how women's empowerment and political participation are related.
- ii) To find out the factors that hinder women's political participation.

1.6 Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the study is-

- a) Culture and tradition influence women's empowerment and political participation.
- b) Women empowerment and political participation are related.

1.7 Methodology

This present study is exploratory. The following components comprised the methodology of the study:

1.7.1 Area of Study

The universe of the study covers the Senapati district of Manipur state. The district comprised six blocks before the bifurcation of Kangpokpi District, but after bifurcation, Senapati District has only three TD Blocks, namely; Mao Maram, Paomata, and Purul Block, which are divided for administrative conveniences of the state government. According to the 2011 census, the district has a population of 479,148, of which males 247,323 and females 231,825, respectively, based on the 2011 census. The study map is created with the help of ArcGIS of Nagaland University, locating the three blocks of the district.

1.7.2 Sources of Data Collection

The data relevant to the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through field visits and extensive interaction.

On the other hand, secondary data was collected through published materials such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, official documents, and other relevant sources.

1.7.3 Sampling Design

The present study is conducted in the Senapati district of Manipur. The study was designed carefully to cover the various paradigm of research problems related to challenges of women's political participation leading to women empowerment among the rural women of the Senapati district. The respondents were drawn from three blocks of Senapati district viz Mao Maram, Paomata, and Purul block. The sample selection is based on *Probability Proportional to Size* (PPS) sampling. It further applies multi-stage sampling based on the size of the population. Multi-stage sampling since the entire population of the universe in the study area would be challenging to cover. The few selected villages from each block have represented the selected three blocks of the Senapati district. For the practical purpose of the instant study, the following villages are selected from three blocks. Thus, Willong, Chawanamei, Maram Khullen, Maram centre, Makhel, Pudunamei, Punanamei and Tadubi is selected from the Mao-Maram block. Further, Liyai Khullen, Phuba, Laii, Tungam Khullen, Saranamei, Tungjoy and Maiba from Paomata block and Koide, Phaibung, Lakhamai, Purul, Oinam, Ngari from the Purul block respectively. These villages are selected based on their cultural and historical importance.

Table 1.1 Block wise distribution of the sample

Sl. No	Block	Total Popn.	Total No. of respondent (%)	
1	Mao Maram	163380	228	57%
2	Paomata	53901	76	19%
3	Purul	68123	96	24%
	Total	285404	400	100%

After careful selection of the district blocks and villages, distribution of respondents for three different blocks from the sample size was determined. For the collection of primary data, a total of 400 respondents were targeted. Mao Maram blocks have the highest number of population followed by Purul and Paomata, hence the numbers of respondent for different block distributed are 57 per cent, 24 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. Thus, using purposive sampling, respondents were elected representatives of the general public, policymakers, civil organization leaders, administrators, students, and academicians.

1.7.4 Technique of Data Collection

The technique for comprehensive data collection includes the Questionnaire method, Interview schedule, Focus group discussion, and in-depth interview. The respondent includes both men and women ranging from 18 years and above as they have the voting right in choosing the candidate in politics as their choice. The questionnaire method is mainly used with literate people, and with the illiterate, interview schedule was used.

1.7.5 Data Analysis

The data collected from the field through questionnaires, interviews, interview schedules, group discussions, and in-depth interviews were thoroughly checked, assessed, and tabulated to validate the information. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the data analysis. The tabulation was follow by interpretation and analysis of data with table, illustrations and figure where it is necessary. The analysis of the information obtained for the study and conclusion was drawn from it.

CHAPTER TWO

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SENAPATI DISTRICT

2.1 Brief History of the District

The District called Senapati also known as 'Tahamzan' (the land of butterflies) District was previously known as Manipur North District, created in 1969. "It consisting of Mao East, Mao West and Sadar Hills sub-divisions as one of the 5 (five) districts of Manipur under the district reorganization of the state under Section 3 of the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act of 1960 (Manipur Government Order No.20/39/69-D dated November 12, 1969). Manipur North district's name was changed to Senapati district under the Manipur Gazette Extra Ordinary No.174 of 5th August 1983" (Manipur Government Order No.43/2/81-R (pt) dated 15.7.83). Further reorganization in the sub-division boundaries occurred in 1983, creating the Paomata sub-division (Manipur Gazette Extra Ordinary No.343 dated November 25, 1983). In December 1984 (Manipur Gazette No.37 dated 16.1.85), for public conveniences and administration, some villages/mole hills situated within the valley districts' geographical boundaries were transferred from Senapati District.

In 1993, another sub-division was added to the District by upgrading the sub-deputy collector circle of Purul to a level of a sub-division under Manipur Gazette No.2/16/91-Rev. Dated 29.12.93 by transferring 25 villages from the Paomata sub-division. Again in 1999, under Manipur Extra Ordinary Gazette No.23/16/97-R dated 22.3.1999, subdivision Saitu Gamphazol was created by transferring 161 villages from Sadar Hills West. According to the above reorganization, the Senapati district has 6 sub-divisions. The name of the sub-divisions and their respective headquarters are given below:

Sub-division Headquarter

1. Mao-Maram Tadubi
2. Paomata Paomata
3. Purul Purul
4. Sadar Hills West Kangpokpi
5. Saitu Gamphazol Gamnom-Sapermeina
6. Sadar Hills East Saikul

In 2016 under the Manipur Gazette Extra Ordinary No.408 of December 9, 2016 (Manipur Government Order No.16/20/2016-R dated 8/12/2016), Senapati district was again bifurcated into two District known as Senapati District and Kangpokpi district. Thus, the bifurcation of the District divides the division or tehsils of Mao- Maram, Paomata and Purul to Senapati district and Sadar Hills West, Saitu Gsmphazol and Sadar

Hills East to Kangpokpi district. Further, the Senapati district has been divided into sub-division of Tadubi, Paomata, Purul, Willong, Chilivia Phaibung, Tuijang Waichong, Song Song, and Lairouching.

2.2 Physical feature of the District

Senapati district of Manipur is situated in the Northern part of the state located between 93.29° and 94.15° East Longitude and 24.37° and 25.37° North Latitude. The District is bounded by the Kohima and Phek district of Nagaland state in the North, the Ukhrul district in the east, the Tamenglong district in the west, and the Kangpokpi district in the south. The District's headquarters is at Senapati, 62 km from Imphal, the state capital. The National Highway No.2 passes through the District.

The District's rivers and streams flow towards the south as the terrain slopes. The Barak River, which originated from the northern part of the District from Liyai Khullen village, plays a vital role in the agricultural life of the District. The Irang River flows south, which makes the district boundary between Senapati and Tamenglong District. The river later joins the Barak in Tamenglong district. The Sedzu River forms the state boundary between Manipur and Nagaland near Pudunamei village. The Akhonglok River demarcates the district boundary between the Senapati and Ukhrul districts, covering the portions of the Paomata and Purul subdivisions. The Khobri River also makes the state boundary and meets the Akhonglok River. Another important river originating from this District is the Imphal River. The river originates near Maohing village which has an elevation of 2,332 meters above the sea level near Kangpokpi, and flows south, meeting on its course other tributaries like the Koubru and the Sekmai and joins the Iril River, which originates from Lakhamai village on the northern part of the District¹.

2.3 Social and Cultural Events

Social and cultural events act as an oasis of the economy of today's world. Social and cultural events play a vital role in the district in many ways. Cultural traditions, customs, arts, and practices are preserved and promoted through social and cultural events. They contribute to transmitting cultural knowledge, rituals, and values from generation to generation, ensuring a community's identity and heritage continuity. These gatherings unite individuals, creating a sense of community, belonging, and unity. They facilitate social contact, collaboration, and mutual understanding among people from various backgrounds. Interactions like these create social relationships, encourage tolerance, and foster community. Cultural variety is celebrated through social and cultural events. They provide a gathering place for individuals of diverse races, religions, and communities to share their distinct customs and respect the diversity within a community. The events foster inclusiveness, respect, and harmony.

Cultural events frequently draw tourists and visitors, boosting local economies and providing revenue for businesses and craftspeople. They can help to increase the

¹ District Census handbook, Senapati, 2011

tourism industry, offer job opportunities, and improve the community's economic well-being. Social and cultural gatherings provide educational and learning opportunities. They serve as a forum for sharing knowledge, ideas, and points of view. Participants can learn about many cultures, histories, arts, and customs, which promote cultural awareness and empathy. Music, dance, theatre, visual arts, literature, and crafts are only some artistic and creative expressions featured at cultural events. They provide opportunities for artists and performers to showcase their talents, stimulate innovation, and contribute to society's artistic landscape. Individuals and communities benefit from cultural events in terms of identity and pride. They allow people to express and appreciate their cultural roots, which foster a sense of belonging and self-esteem. Some of the social and cultural events that are observed in the Senapati district are discussed below.

Laonii is the festival of Poumai Nagas, which is celebrated after the completion of paddy transplantation. The festival usually falls in July towards the end of the month. Laonii is a combination of two words '*Lao*' means the month of July, which is referred to as '*Laokhou*' or *the month of July*, and '*Nii*' means festival. Through customary practices, the headmen or the village chief announce the events' date. They make merry-making and showcase their strength through different competitions. The date and style of celebration differ from place to place or village to village. It was also a festival of rituals that asked for the protection of the crops planted from natural calamities to get a bountiful harvest in return for their labor.

The festival is important in the social aspect as it brings bonds to the people. Through this festival, they invite near and dear ones and spend time with their relatives. Moreover, it also helps in the development of society through the invitation of public leaders and politics by showing their rich heritage and asking for government intervention.

Saleni is a traditional festival of Mao Nagas, celebrated in the month of Salekhro (July) on the completion of paddy transplantation. The king or Muvuo announces the date for the festival through the traditional way of counting the calendar. The whole men folk have to purify themselves by taking a bath early in the morning in the pond². The festival is celebrated with pomp and show by showcasing the culture and tradition. It also acts as the peacemaker of a different community. For instant, a peace treaty was made between the Mao tribe Pfosemai and Viswema village in 2001 so that various organizations from Viswema could represent. Also, neighboring villages could be invited to attend the festival (The Morung Express July 30, 2011).

Chiithuni is a six-day annual festival of Mao Nagas celebrated on Chuthunikhro, meaning 'feast of dawn' is an occasion to rejuvenate the cultural heritage of the Mao Nagas. Chiithuni is also known as the post-harvest festival because it is celebrated after the crops (paddy) are safely brought home to be preserved. They celebrate through the hunting of wild animals and birds. Married women are also invited to their parent's homes for the celebration and send off with so much of a gift from parents and brothers,

² Ibid p-58

which express their love and affection for their children. On the last day of the festival and the first day of the month of Chisiilopra (February), men folk in the village dress in traditional attire and march to the western hill carrying traditional weapons to mark the end of the festival. Young ladies in their finest apparel join the males, each carrying a basket with eatable items such as fruits, meats, and drinks. Apart from the celebratory atmosphere, the rationale for the march is usually the symbolic claim that the people own the entire length and width of the country. Upon arrival at the location, a variety of competitive games are played. Such activities allow youngsters to demonstrate their abilities and capabilities. Chithuni is not only the most significant function, but it also demonstrates the significance of the Mao celebration. It is a joyful and thankful celebration of the blessing received through their labors and struggles. They beg forgiveness from Almighty God for wrongdoings committed in the previous year and pray for good health, an abundant crop, and favorable weather in the coming years (The Murung Express, January 6, 2011).

Ponghi is a festival of Maram Nagas celebrated in July on the completion of the paddy plantation. They offer blameless animals as a sacrifice for a good harvest. As per the narration, the blameless animal is usually a cow sprinkled with pure water before slaughtering and other animals for the festival. The festival is also important for the married couple where they exchange gifts with each other.

Kanghi is another traditional festival of Maram Nagas held in the month of Kanghi-kii (December). Traditional style wrestling is played during the festival in Khullakpa's compound stark naked to get shy away from the devils so as to obviate misfortune and injury³.

Lui- Ngai Ni is a festival celebrated annually on 14-15 February by the Nagas of Manipur. The word 'Lui- Ngai-Ni' combines three different naga dialects. 'Lui' is a Tangkhul word for festival, 'Ngai' means festival in the Rongmei dialect, and 'Ni' is a Mao word for festival. It literally means a "seed showing festival. This event was traditionally held before they began their annual seed-sowing chores. In Manipur, the event has now been promoted to the state level. Every year on February 14th and 15th, it is held in one of Manipur's hill districts on a rotating basis. The celebration was significant in the Nagas' lives during their forefathers' time since agriculture was their sole source of income. The "Lui- Ngai- Ni" event signified praying to their deity for good plantation and blessing for a bountiful crop. This ancient event is widely celebrated in Naga villages till today in order to maintain their culture. Thus the Nagas living in the district actively involve by showcasing their rich heritage.

All these social and cultural events play an essential role in the life of the district. It showcases the rich heritage and brings the tie between different people and communities. Through these events and festivals, people recognize one another traditions and culture. It also has an economic importance, especially for the business purpose. They sell their local product and make them popular in the larger market.

³ Ibid P-58

Moreover, it also has a political advantage by inviting the political leaders to grace the function, making them familiar with the people. They also put forward a memorandum for the development of a village or a community or tribe. Thus, this is an important factor in overall social, economic, and political development.

2.4 Vegetation

The Senapati is situated in the northern part of the state. The district altitude varies from 1061 m to 1788 meters above sea level. The hills that run in the north gradually slope south and meet the valley. The District is rich in flora and fauna due to its geographical location. Agriculture is one of the main occupations of the people in the District, and terrace cultivation is generally practiced. Paddy, Maize, Potato, Cabbage, and cereals are the main crops of the District. About 80% of the total area is covered by forest, and the remaining 20 percent is arable land. Jhum⁴ cultivation is also practiced in the District. For the purpose of jhum cultivation, a plot of land is selected, and the trees and vegetation are cut and cleared. These systems are also known as burn and slash cultivation. They shifted from one place to another after a certain period when the land became infertile.

2.5 Population of the District

A population is a group of people living in a particular place. According to the 2011 census, as per the District Census Handbook, the District has a total population of 4,79,147, of which 2,47,323 of male and 2,35,825 female, respectively. Later, the District was bifurcated into Senapati District and Kangpokpi District, as per the Manipur Gazette Extra Ordinary No.408 of 9th December 2016, for administrative convenience. After the bifurcation of the District, the Senapati district has a total population of 2,85,404. The Mao-Maram TD Block, according to the 2011 census it, has a total population of 1,63,380. The Paomata TD Block has a total population of 53,901, and the Purul TD Block has a total population of 68,123. The prominent tribe of the Senapati district is Mao, Maram, and Poumai Naga. These people have a distinct cultural identity as well as rich customs that are unique to their group. They have their language, which is classified as Tibeto-Burman. The village is essential to its social system, and the community is governed by the village council, which a chief or headmen leads along with the village council.

2.6 Literacy Rate of the District

The percentage of a population of a given age group who can read and write is called the literacy rate. It is a crucial indication of educational achievement and a critical factor in determining a country's or region's degree of development and human capital. Literacy rates can differ widely across countries and regions due to educational access, educational quality, socioeconomic situations, gender inequities, and government

⁴ Jhum cultivation is the traditional cultivation technique called shifting cultivation, especially by the indigenous tribal population. It is also called burnt and slashed cultivation.

policies. Higher literacy rates are often correlated with better socioeconomic growth, more possibilities for individuals, and overall well-being. The literacy of the District is shown below.

Table 2.1 Literacy rate of the district

Senapati District	Male	Female	Total
2001	67.9	51.2	59.8
2011	69.21	57.67	63.30
Manipur	Male	Female	Total
2001	80.3	60.5	70.5
2011	83.58	70.26	76.94

Source: Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2017

The table shows the literacy rate of the Senapati district, which had a total literacy rate of 59.8 in 2001, with 67.9 percent for males and 51.2 for females. In 2011 it increased to 63.30 percent, with 69.21 percent for males and 57.67 percent for females. The literacy rate of females is lower than males in both the census. The literacy rate for Manipur is 70.5 percent, with 80.3 percent male and 60.5 percent female in 2001. In 2011 the state's literacy rate increased to 76.94 percent, with 83.58 percent male and 70.26 percent female, respectively. Compared to the state, the district's literacy rate is lower than the state's average literacy rate. Thus, based on the figure, it can be concluded that the district has many illiterate people; however, it has increased from 59.8 percent in 2001 to 63.30 percent in 2011, respectively.

2.7 Sex Ratio

Sex ratio is the differences of male and female in a particular society. The sex ratio is defined as a number of males per 1000 females in a population. It is an important indicator to measure the equity of difference sex in a given point of time.

Table 2.2 Sex ratio of the district 2011

Sl. No	Name of the(TD) Block	Sex ratio
1	Mao Maram	938
2	Purul	881
3	Paomata	931
	Total	917

Source: Census of India 2011

The above table shows the sex ration of the Tribal Development (TD) district (excluded Kangpokpi district). The overall sex ratio of all the three TD Blocks is 917 female per thousand males. Mao Maram recorded the highest sex ratio of 938 followed by Paomata with 931 and Purul with 881 respectively.

Table 2.3. Sex ratio of population in the age group 0-6 for CD Blocks, 2011

Sl. No	Name of the(CD) Block	Total population in 0-6 age group			Sex ration for 0-6 age group
		Persons	Males	Females	
1	Mao Maram	21792	11472	10320	900
2	Paomata	6946	3716	3230	869
3	Purul	8365	4596	3769	820
	Total	37103	19784	19319	863

The above table shows the sex ratio of the population in the age group 0-6 for Child Development (CD) of the district. The overall sex ratio recorded is 863 females per thousand males. Mao-Maram Block recorded the highest among the entire district, with 900 per thousand males, followed by Paomata with 869 and Purul with 820 per thousand males, respectively.

Transport and communication play an essential role in the life of the people for their prosperity and well-being. A means of well-developed road transport and communication is essential for the growth of the state or a district's economy. The lifeline of the state National Highway No. 2 passes through the district. Other important roads connecting the district are Maram-Paren Road, Maram- Oinam- Kachai Road, Maram-Tadubi- Liyai Road, and Senapati- Phaibung (SP) Road. The inter-district road density in 20002 for Senapti is 23.73km per 100 square km. Although all-weather roads connect 47 percent of villages in the district, it was then the state average of 51.2km per 100 square km.⁵

The communication system includes postal, telephone, telegraph, and internet services. According to 1991-92, telephone connections were 140, which increased to 1241 in 2001-02. As per the survey of Manipur 2007-08, the district had ten telephone exchanges, nine combined offices of postal and telegraph, and 2494 telephone connections. Moreover, based on the Statistical Abstract of Manipur2005, the total number of post offices in the district in 2202-03 was 80-with 191 letter boxes and 45 village letter carriers.

⁵ District Census Handbook, Senapati 2011

2.8 Profile of the Respondent

The features and demographic information of individuals or groups participating in a research project are referred to as the respondent profile in research. The respondent profile also reveals social and cultural elements influencing attitudes, behaviors, and experiences. It assists academics in better understanding how cultural norms, beliefs, and socioeconomic circumstances impact the responses and viewpoints of people from various demographic origins. In research, respondent profiles are significant for sample representation, data analysis, understanding context, identifying discrepancies, tailoring interventions, and considering social and cultural aspects. It improves research findings' validity, reliability, and applicability, allowing for a more nuanced and thorough grasp of the research issue.

The study of this research is conducted in the Senapati District of Manipur. The sample selection is based on Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling, and the respondents were distributed in three blocks based on the population size. The size of the population is taken as per the 2011 census after the bifurcation of Kangpokpi District from Senapati District. Before the bifurcation, it had Six (6) Tribal Development (TD) Block, but after the bifurcation, it has left with three, which are taken for the study.

Table 2.4 Block wise Distribution of respondent

Block	Frequency	Percent
Purul	96	24.0
Paomata	76	19.0
Mao- Maram	228	57.0
Total	400	100.0

The table shows the distribution of the respondent of the block. The targeted respondent for this study is 400. Thus the distribution of respondents is as follows- Purul Block has 96 (24.0 %), Paomata has 76 (19%), and Mao- Maram Block has 228 (57.0), respectively. Through the multi-stage sampling and purposive sampling, the villages, as mentioned in chapter one and the respondent were selected respectively.

2.8.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age plays an important role when it comes to politics. The right to exercise the voting in electing the representative and the right to contest any election has a specific limit with age. Before 1988 the voting age was 21, but with the 61st Constitution Amendment, it has been reduced to 18 years of age. To be a member of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, he or she must be not less than 25 years and 30 years, respectively. Also, to be a member of Panchayati Raj, he or she should be not less than 21. To better understand women's political participation, the respondent age was 18 years and above, as they have the franchise to choose their representative. Moreover, youth were targeted as they played a vital role in choosing their representative. Even the government of India emphasizes the empowerment of the youth for socio-economic development.

Table 2.5 Age distribution of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
18-27	144	36.0
28-37	145	36.2
38-47	62	15.5
48-57	36	9.0
58 above	13	3.2
Total	400	100.0

Different age group was categorized into five broad categories for the statistical analyses with the interval of ten years, 18-27 years, 28-37 years, 38- 47 years, 48- 57 years, and lastly, 58 years and above. The percentage of respondents from 18-27 is 36.0 percent, 28-37 with 36.2 percent, 38-47 with 15.5 percent, 48-57 with 9.0 percent, and 58 above with 3.2 percent, respectively. Thus by taking the responses of all the age groups, the data were analyzed and brought to a conclusion about the political behavior of the people in the study area in the following discussion.

2. 8. 2 Sex Distribution of Respondent

Sex refers to the biological traits that differentiate creatures as male or female. Understanding sex is essential in research for a variety of reasons. Understanding sex differences helps explore the patterns in behaviors, cognition, psychology, and social dynamics in social and behavioral sciences research. Researchers can detect gender-specific discrepancies, cultural expectations, and psychological variances by taking sex into account, leading to a more thorough knowledge of human experiences. This study

includes both females and males to compare the responses of different sex as to avoid bias.

Table 2.6 Sex distribution of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Male	150	37.5
Female	250	62.5
Total	400	100.0

The table shows the percentage of male and female respondents taken for the study. Of 100 percent, 37.5 were male, and 62.5 percent were female, respectively. Both the sex was taken into consideration in order to take the views of both sides to validate the information collected. The female percentage is more as the study emphasizes women's empowerment and political participation. The number of females is taken more because the study focuses on women's political participation and empowerment. However, male respondents were also taken to see their perspective on women's political participation leading to women's empowerment.

2.8.3 Marital Status

Marital status refers to an individual's legally recognized or socially defined relationship status concerning marriage. Depending on the specific legal and cultural criteria in a given society, marital status denotes whether a person is currently married, single, divorced, widowed, or in a registered domestic partnership or civil union. Marital status also plays an essential role in making decisions and responsibilities as an individual and for the group. As mothers and fathers of the family, they have a big responsibility to shoulder and represent in society. The marital status of the respondents is shown in the below table.

Table 2.7 Marital status of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Unmarried	217	54.2
Married	173	43.2
Divorced	9	2.2

No Response	1	.2
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the marital status of the respondents. Out of 100 percent, 54.2 are unmarried, 43.2 percent are married, 2.2 percent are divorced, and 0.2 percent with no mention of marital status, respectively.

2.8.4 Educational Qualification

Education is the key that opens the door for an individual in social life. It facilitates a person's development and progressive attitude towards their socio-economic and political life. From the start of an individual life, formal and informal education act as an instrument in shaping a person's personality. Educated leadership is essential for democracy. The representation of the uneducated may fail in certain aspects of administrative function and other development activities. The educational qualification of the respondents is shown below.

Table 2.8 Qualification of respondents

Gender	Qualification					Total
	X & Below (%)	HSSLC (%)	UG (%)	PG (%)	PG Above (%)	
Male	11 (31.4)	36 (48.6%)	78 (35.5%)	20 (32.8%)	5 (50.0%)	150 (37.5%)
female	24 (68.6%)	38 (51.4%)	142 (64.5%)	41 (67.2%)	5 (50.0%)	250 (62.5%)
Total	35 (100%)	74(100%)	220(100%)	61(100%)	10(100%)	400 (100%)

The above table shows the qualification of the respondents. Of the 400 respondents, 150 were male, and 250 were female. It can be observed in the above table that class X and below has a total number of respondents of 35, with 31.4 percent male and 68.6 percent female. The total number of respondents in HSSLC has 74 respondents, 48.6 percent male, and 51.4 percent female. The respondent with the undergraduate is 220, with 35.5 percent male and 64.5 percent female. Of the respondent with the educational qualification of postgraduate, 61 total, 32.8 percent were male, and 67.2 percent were female and above postgraduate, with a total of 10 respondents with 50

percent male and 50 percent female, respectively. During the survey, it has found that the literacy rate of women in rural society is lower for women compared to males.

2.8.5 Religions Distribution of Respondents

Religion plays an essential role in politics, especially in the case of India. Many of the political parties found a ground in religion and used it as a tool to win the hearts of the people. Especially in the case of India, though it is a democracy, caste, race, geographical location, and religion still play an essential role in politics. The majority of the Senapati District of Manipur belongs to Christianity, with small numbers of other Hindu and indigenous religions. The district has a liberal outlook in politics regarding electing its representative. However, it is not totally neglected as people react to it when a party manifesto is based upon religion apart from the religion in practice.

Table 2.9 Religion Distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Hinduism	1	.2
Christianity	395	98.8
Others	4	1.0
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the religion of respondents. Out of 100 percent respondent 98.8 percent belongs to Christianity, 0.02 percent Hinduism and 1.0 percent as others religion including the indigenous religion. Thus, from the figure it shows that majority of the rural areas of Senapati belongs to the Christian religion.

2.8.6 Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Women's economic empowerment and participation in the workforce play a vital role in measuring gender equality. Economics independence helps a person carry out his or her will, leading to effective decision-making.

Table 2.10 Occupation of respondent

Gender	Occupation	Total
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	Student (%)	Teacher (%)	Doctor (%)	Lawyer (%)	Sports person (%)	Business person (%)	Others (%)	(%)
Male	41 (61.5)	14 (21.0)	2 (3.0)	2 (3.0)	3(4.5)	10 (15.0)	78 (52.0)	150 (100)
Female	74 (29.6)	47 (18.8)	4 (1.6)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	10 (4.0)	115 (46.0)	250 (100)
Total	115 (28.75)	61 (15.25)	6 (1.5)	2 (0.5)	3 (0.75)	20 (5.0)	193 (48.3)	400 (100)

The above table shows the occupation of the respondents. The respondents include different professions. Out of 400 respondents, 28.75 percent were Students, and 15.25 percent were teachers, including government and private employees. 1.5 percent with the profession of Doctors, 0.5 lawyers, 0.75 percent belongs to the sports profession, 5.0 percent belongs to business, and 48.3 percent as others like cultivators, housewives, and other allied services. Thus, the figure shows that many people in rural areas do not have a proper job despite being educated. With no proper job, it will also have an impact on the income of the individual.

2.8.7 Income Distribution of Respondents

Income is the amount of money, or financial resources an individual or organization receives over a given period. Wages, salaries, earnings, dividends, interest, rent, and any other monetary gains or advantages obtained from various sources are often included. A person's income is an essential factor that measures the economic status of an individual. With a better income, a person exercises his or her decision-making to fulfill his or her dreams. The income of respondents is shown in the below table.

Table 2.11 Income Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Income			Total
	Below 100000 per year	100000- 200000 per year	200000 and above per year	
Male	76 (50.7%)	57 (38.0%)	17 (11.3%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	169 (67.6%)	67 (26.8%)	14 (5.6%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	245 (61.2%)	124 (31.0%)	31 (7.8%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows the respondent's income out of 150 male respondents; 50.7 percent are below one lakh income per year, 38.0 percent range between one lakh to two lakhs, and 11.3 percent from two lakh and above, respectively. Of female respondents, on the other side, out of 250 respondents, 61.2 percent are below one lakh income per year, 31.0 percent range from one to two lakh, and 7.8 percent are above two lacks, respectively. Taking the ratio of the income of the respondents from the figure, it shows that both males and females whose income is less than one lakh per year respondents are the majority. Those respondents who have a better income are from the better occupation, as shown in Table 2.12, including employers as teachers in the government sector and private in higher education; businessmen and women also have the higher income as per the survey. Those below one lakh are housewives, cultivators, and students. Women's economic status and impact will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

2.8.8 Community Distribution of the Respondents

A *community* is a group with a common characteristic and occupies a common territory. MacIver states, 'Community is an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence'. The community has a 'we feeling', where likeness is more important than differences. In politics, community sentiment plays an essential role despite the democracy system of government. The table below shows the community of respondents.

Table 2.12 Distribution of the respondents by Community

Community	Gender		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Mao	50	100	150	37.5
Poumai	72	88	160	40.0
Maram	18	62	80	20.0
Others	2	8	10	2.5
Total	142	258	400	100.0

The above table shows the distribution of the respondents by the community. Based on the data collected through the questionnaire, the Mao community has a total respondent of 150 (37.5 percent), of which there are 50 male and 100 female respondents. The Poumai Naga community has a total respondent of 160 (40 percent) of the total respondents, with 72 male and 88 female, respectively. The Maram community total respondents are 80 (20.0 percent) of the total respondents, with 18 male and 62 female, respectively. At the same time, the other community has 10 (2.5 percent) total respondents, with two males and eight females, respectively. These 'others' are from Laingmai, Rongmei and Tangkhuls communities.

Thus, to validate the study, the profile of the respondents was taken as it helps to understand how study findings might be helpful to or transferrable to different demographics or circumstances. In addition, it allows researchers to investigate social, economic, or health inequities depending on gender, race, income, or education. Understanding these differences helps in understanding the fact that it helps shape policies, initiatives, and targeted methods to address social inequities.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF RURAL WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

Manipur is famous for her rich culture, martial arts, handloom, handicraft, dance, drama and sports. Women in Manipur are known for their bravery, patience, courage, and hard working. The traditional religious books and other literature of the early period provide us ample information about the exceptional qualities and role played by Manipuri women in consolidation and formation in society. They also play a vital role in the socio-economic in enhancing the condition of the society.

In order to understand the socio economic status of women it has to study in line of empowerment. Empowerment is the process of increasing an individual's or a group's ability to make their own choices and encouraging them to turn those choices into defined actions and outcomes. Empowerment has been defined and used in many ways. The common elements in those definitions are that empowerment (a) is a process, (b) takes place in communities (c) entails active participation, critical reflection, awareness and understanding and (d) entails access to and control over important decisions and resources (Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991). Empowerment has been defined as an intentional ongoing process centered in the local community that involves mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, in which people who do not have an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources.

Barbara Solomon (1976, 1985) emphasized empowerment as a method of working with oppressed Afro-Americans in social work. According to Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus (1977), empowerment was proposed as a means of improving welfare services by mediating social institutions. Julian Rappaport (1981) theoretically developed the concept and presented it as a worldview that includes a social policy and an approach to the solution of social problems caused by powerlessness. These authors emphasized the vital link between individuals and communities, and they advocated for a contextual ecological approach to the treatment of social situations. They discussed the failure of social programmes to provide social solutions, as well as the negative byproduct of these programs—the creation of powerlessness among those who need the programmed. Empowerment can be discussed in three different levels—individual empowerment focuses on what happens on a personal level in the individual's life; community empowerment focuses on collective processes and social change; and empowerment as a professional practice focuses on empowerment as a means of professional intervention for the solution of social problems.

According to Vanessa Griffen (1987), empowerment means having control or gaining more control; having a voice and being taken seriously; having the ability to define and create from a woman's perspective; having the ability to influence social choices and decisions that affect the entire society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place); and being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with valuable contributions to make.

Empowerment is a continuous process and it should start from within the individual. Due to variation in time, culture, and people's lifestyles, the perception of empowerment varies across the nation. Literally, the word "empowerment" means to provide your supply with opportunity, i.e., to enable and enhance the ability that is already within you but has not yet been fully realized. You gain knowledge, develop skills, and adopt an attitude that will help you adapt to the changing environment through the empowerment process. One of the most important concerns of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is the empowerment of women. The United Nations and its agencies have established a global agenda to combat gender stereotypes and strengthen women's status within the family and in society. One of the SDGs' national priorities and goals (Goal 5) is to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; this includes a vision of women's development, upgrading their status, and facilitating their integration into social development'.

In the process of empowerment, it gives a chance to: understand the basics, broaden your vision, widen your thinking, clarify your doubts and enhance your capacity. The empowerment process has both a narrow and broad connotation. In a narrow sense of empowerment is of empowering oneself. In a broader sense, you are empowering the community and contributing to society.

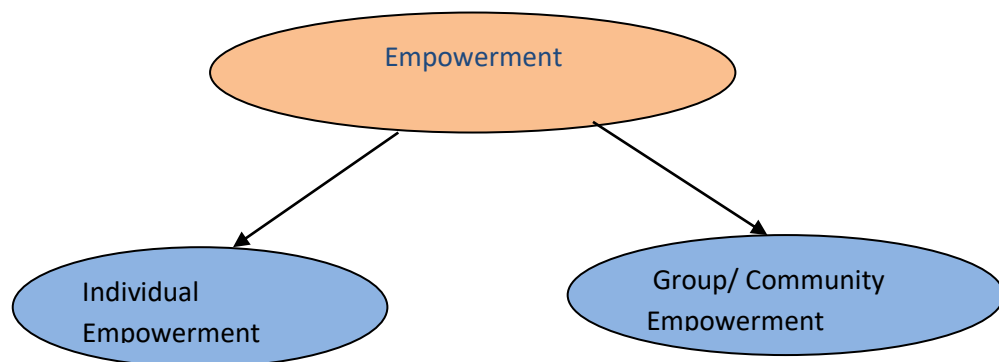


Figure: 3.1 Types of Empowerment

3.2 Individual Empowerment

Individual empowerment is the process of enhancing an individual's capabilities in order to achieve the desired results. Individual empowerment is also referred to as

self-empowerment. The empowered individual has gained the ability to develop confidence, insight, and a better understanding of the real situation. It is micro-level empowerment. A person is formed not only by heredity and growth and care conditions, but also by opportunities and experiences in the world around him or her. It should be the ability to make decisions and to act in order to attain goals. This ability (or lack thereof) shapes a person's character and influences how effective he/she will be as an actor in his/her life (Pinderhughes, 1983). The ability of a person in socio-economic and political sphere shows his or her potential and empowerment of a person.

3.3 Group Empowerment

Group empowerment is the process of improving a group's capabilities in order to achieve their desired results. As they gain power, the groups will be able to build trust, cooperate, and communicate. One important aspect of the group is that there should be room for debate and deliberation. It is empowerment at the macro level because it focuses on a group as a whole.

Empowerment agency has both positive and negative connotations: Its positive sense, the 'power to' – refers to people's ability to make and act on their own life decisions, even when others disagree. Its negative sense, 'power over,' refers to the ability of some actors to override the agency of others, for example, through the exercise of authority or the use of violence and other forms of coercion. Therefore, agency in relation to empowerment entails not only actively exercising choice, but also doing so in ways that challenge power relations. Beliefs and values play such an important role in legitimizing inequality.

What is Women Empowerment? A Woman Empowerment refers empowering women for self-worth, their freedom to make their own decisions, and their right to have an impact on social change for both themselves and other people. Women's empowerment is the process of increasing women's capacity to participate in societal activities other than day-to-day household tasks. The parameters that can assess for women empowerment in broad sense are like economic, social, political, and psychological empowerment. Kate Young (1993) asserts that empowerment helps women to take charge of their own lives, define their own goals, band together to support one another, and make demands of the government for support and of society at large for change. According to Young, empowering women involves completely altering the systems and structures that lead to their subordinate position in society. Based on the necessity to change women's status in order to ensure that the advancement will be sustained, it has transformative potential. Finally, she analyses the idea of empowerment from a variety of political views, giving enough weight to communal action as a means of achieving individual empowerment.

3.4 Determinant of Women Empowerment

Empowerment is a qualitative term and cannot be measured directly but there are certain indicators which can be access the level of empowerment. These indicators are widely accepted in most places. These are analytical ability, communication ability, cooperation, and confidence and information access. Women's empowerment is one solution to the problems of inequality, subordination, and marginalization. The process of empowerment begins from within. It includes not only 'decision making' and other forms of observable action, but also the meaning, motivation, and purpose that women's sense of independence, rather than just meeting survival needs. Thus, to measure women empowerment the following determinants are taken into consideration.

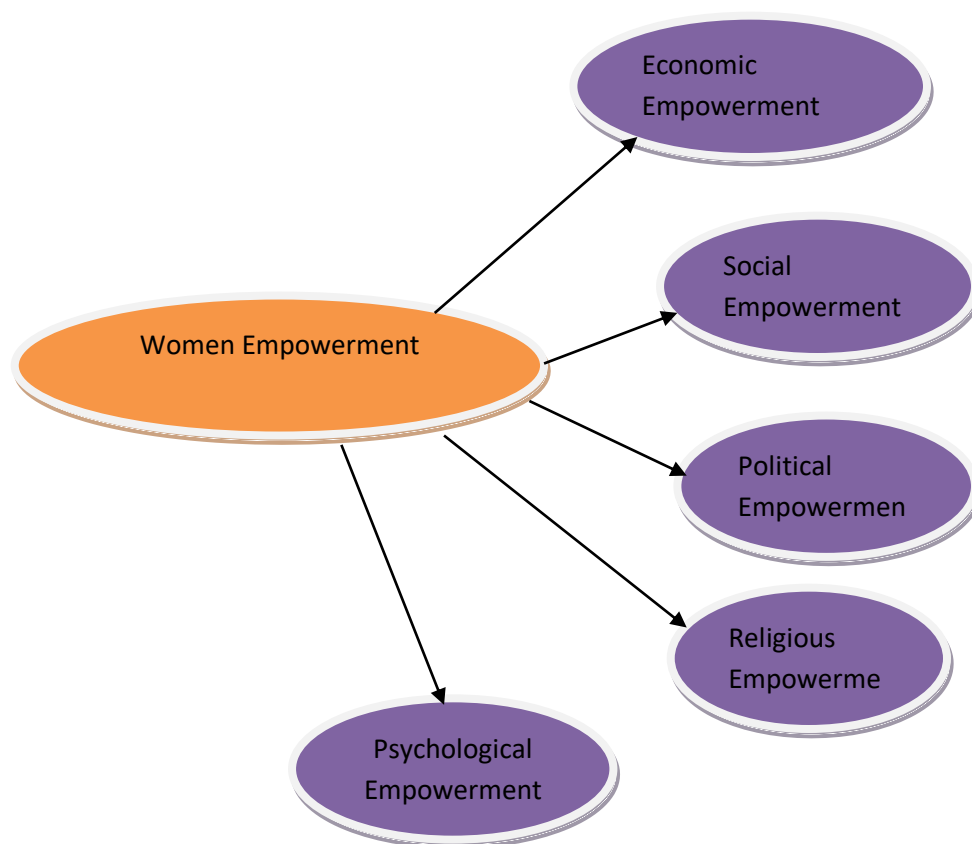


Figure: 3.2 Parameters to assess women Empowerment

3.4.1 Economic empowerment

Economic participation and empowerment of women are critical to strengthening women's rights and allowing women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. Evidence of changes in women's life changes as a result of waged work appears to be more pronounced in the non agricultural sector. This is due in part to the fact that such employment is generally associated with women's migration out of rural areas and away from patriarchal controls of kinship and community. Women's economic empowerment is required for long-term development, pro-poor growth, and achievement of all Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The indicators used in this study to govern women's economic conditions are Employment Status of Women. To what extend women occupied in term of the employment. What are the different professions that they do? In what sector of occupation they are engaged more?

Women's Access to Money, Credit, is also another indicator that can assess the economic empowerment of women. Is there restrict in used with their own earned money? To what extend there is a financial stability among women? Women's freedom of movement is important as women's access to money and credit. Women are often restricted from moving freely in many parts of the world. Freedom of movement is both a human right and an economic necessity. Those with the financial stability they also go to their designated place.

The ownership of property is also another factor that indicates the empowerment of women. Property can be in the form of movable and immovable. When they are able to access to property, they have the right to control over the resources. As they control over the resources, the very idea of decision making is being exercise by the women.

3.4.2 Social empowerment

The extent to which social relationships improve a person's own capabilities and capacity for action is known as their social empowerment. Social empowerment helps individual to express his or her feeling, ideas and correct the society. The social empowerment can be measures by education, living standard and their social activities. There is substantial evidence to support the claim that access to education can lead to changes in cognitive ability, which is critical to women's ability to question, reflect on, and act on the conditions of their lives, as well as gain access to knowledge, information, and new ideas that will assist them in doing so (Jejeebhoy 1995).

Educated women were better able to deal with violent husbands: access to secondary stages of education may have an important contributory role in enhancing women's capacity to exercise control in their lives and exercised their right through a combination of literacy and numeracy skills, and enhanced self-esteem (Sen 1999:12). Moreover, the social empowerment can also be measured through the life expectancy,

sex ration, freedom of movement etc. In short it can be measured in term of quality of life.

3.4.3 Political Empowerment

Political empowerment is the process of giving those who lack it access to various forms of power (such as resources, competencies, and positions). In fact it refers to political participation and involve in decision making process. The process by which people participate in the political process is referred to as political participation. According to Almond and Powell, political participation "can be defined as the involvement of members of society in decision-making processes." Political participation can take many forms, such as involvement in party politics, electoral politics, interest articulation, political communication, political reforms, political socialization, conferences, debates, strikes, demonstrations, and any other activity that has a direct or indirect impact on the political sphere. Thus political empowerment can be assess through freedom of speech, decision making, exercising of the franchised and other activities related to politics.

3.4.5 Religious Empowerment

Law, custom and tradition are not only means to of social control in the society. Religion plays a vital role in shaping those agents of social control and also acts as an effective guide of human behavior. The practices of religion exist in every society. According to MacIver, "Religion implies the relationship not merely between man and man but between man and higher power" According to Durkheim, religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relatives to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden". In fact religion plays an important role in the society. According to Green, religion has three universal functions. Firstly it makes bearable and rationalizes the suffering of individual known to the world. Secondly, it helps in the cohesion of social values of the society. Thirdly, it enhances the self importance.

Green is of the view that man does not live by knowledge alone but an emotional creature as well. Religion serves as antidote when one is suffering and disappointed. Faith in God compensates him or her and sustains his or her interest and makes bearable in life. Religion also assures man a greater reward in life after dead which makes a person's compensate the worldly failures. Moreover, religion creates values of social cohesion. It teaches values for the peaceful coexistence of the society.

Apart from this above function, religion also play vital role in the social welfare as well. They perform social service to humanity and spread education and teaches different morals and values. They also contribute for the well being of the society

through charitable institution like hospital, temple and others facilities to the poor and needy. They also act as agents of social control rewards and punishment follow approval and disapproval actions. Religion also plays an important role when it comes to customs and folkways by the sanction of supernatural power behind them. They consider and make certain offense as not only against the society but also against god as well. Religion help people to become moral disciplined and socialized within the society. Religion also affects the economics life of the people. Max Weber also discussed in his book on “Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism” where he is of the view that the growth of economy and that of capitalism is very much depend on the ethic of religion. Success is a sign of God’s calling which makes people to work hard with the notion of ‘work is worship’. Moreover, there are many religious organization say for example religious hospital, institution etc. that play a vital role in the economy of the society. Thus involvement of women and their role define their status in religion.

3.4.6 Psychological empowerment

Empowerment is the process of increasing individuals' perceptions of their own effectiveness among other members of a group (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Psychological empowerment is a new approach in motivating individual to perform better in their work. Psychological empowerment can be defined as an active motivational orientation with regard to individual’s work role and individual’s feeling of being in control at work (Boudrias, Morin & Lajoie, 2014). Psychological empowerment makes an individual to work with competence, and belief in one’s capability to perform work with skill. In fact competence leads to mastery of behavior and self determination in his or her choice of actions. Moreover, it will also give an individual with self esteem resulting to the better performance in their duty.

Psychological empowerment of women is in fact motivating women for self esteem, competence and confidence with the social course of action she is taking up. The factors that can be taking to assessed psychological empowerment are like freedom of express, free from domestic violent, fraternity and dignity. The women should have the freedom of expression of her ideas and feelings. Psychology of a person can also be affected by stereotype between male and female.

3.5 Socio-Economic Life of Rural women in Senapati District

Base on the different determinant of women empowerment let’s discussed more in details on socio- economic life of rural women in Senapati district. Rig Vedic women have a high social status in India. Women were given the opportunity to reach high intellectual and spiritual levels. There was no sati system or early marriage, and women were free and respected in Rig Vedic society. The status of the women decreases in the

later Vedic period. The child marriage, polygamy, sati worsened the situation of the women.

Women play a vital role to the development of the family and the country. In this regard, the Government of India is undertaking initiatives to empower women economically, socially, and politically. Gone are the days when women were not allowed to leave the house and their participation in public and social programmed was limited. However, many changes have occurred in the direction of women's empowerment, with women now performing in all fields, including strategic and challenging ones equal with men.

Women occupied half of the population of the Senapati district. The main activities of the district and their livelihood depend on the agricultural activities. The economic status of the women in the district can be understood base on the workforce of the women, earning system and other economic activities that they do in everyday life.

Table 3.1 Workforce participation in Senapati District

Category	Person	Male	Female
Total workers	45.9	50.2	41.1
Main workers	31.9	41.0	22.3
Marginal workers	14.1	9.2	19.1
Cultivators	62.3	63.4	60.8
Agricultural labourers	13.3	10.1	17.3
Household Industry workers	4.8	2.3	8.0
Other workers	19.7	24.2	13.9

**Excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions*

Source: Census of India, 2001

The table shows the workforce participation of the district base on the 2001 census. The total workforce of the District is 45.9 percent, with 50.2 percent male and 41.1 percent female. The main worker is 31.9 percent, with 41.0 percent male and 22.3 female, respectively. The marginal worker is 14.1per cent, with 9.2 percent male and 19.1 percent female, respectively. The cultivator of the Senapati district is 62.3 percent, with 63.4 percent male and 60.8 percent female, respectively. The agricultural laborers have 13.3 percent, with 10.1 percent male and 17.3 percent female. The household industry worker is 4.8 percent, 2.3 percent male, and 8.0 percent female. The others worker is 19.7 percent, with 24.2 percent male and 13.9 percent female, respectively. The percentage of total workers of male is more as compared to females. Nevertheless, in the case of marginal workers, agricultural laborers, and household industry workers, the percentage of women is higher than males. The gap shows that men are engaged more in the organized sector while women are more engaged in marginal, unorganized, and household work.

Senapati being a rural society, people mainly depends their livelihood on agriculture. Rural society has a homogenous occupation. Homogeneity of employment refers to simple division of labor where every members of the family perform same occupation. People in the rural area of the district, their main occupation are agricultural. With the passage of time people move out of the village in order to fine job and other source of income. As per the data of the study, it was found that male members of the family go out of the village more as compare to female. On the other hand women continue to engage with agriculture. Thus, this is one of the reasons that women are more in marginal and agricultural laborer. To understand the different between male and female in the organized sector, the opinion of the respondents was collected. The table below shows their response about the engagement of work in organized sector in the study area by male and female.

Table 3. 2 Opinion on employment in organized sector

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Male	326	81.5
Female	10	2.5
Equal	64	16.0
Total	400	100.0

Women's empowerment can also be measured by their engagement and the types of work they perform. Through the survey with the respondent, the study found a considerable gap between males and females engaged in organized sectors. Out of the total 100 percent of the respondent, 81.50 percent believes that males work in the organized sectors, and 16.00 percent says that both males and females are equal in their share of the organized sector. In comparison, 2.50 percent say females are employed more than males in the organized sector. It is clear from the figure that males are more engaged in the organized sector than females. Among the respondents are high-profile women who work as doctors, government employees, etc. Nevertheless, in comparison, women get employed more in the unorganized sector, and other marginal workers are shown in table 4.1.

Through the study, it has been found that there are different factors leading to less participation of women in the organized sector. Education is one of the factors, as

per the study finding, as jobs are recruited based on certain qualification criteria. Despite the increase in the literacy rate of women, many jobs did not fit their education qualifications. As per the World Bank data, girls has on 18 percent of pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) studies compared to 35 percent of boys leading to gaps in the science and technology profession. Many jobs require higher qualifications in the subject, but women lacking knowledge in those areas fail to occupy those jobs. Another reason for women's lower participation in organized sectors is due to sex differentiation. People express their opinion that women are mothers as child bearers, and people have stereotyping thinking that their childbearing stage will disturb the work environment as they have to take leave. The government of India passed an Act called Maternity Benefit Act 1961, which provides women with the benefit, which was further amended in 2017. The Act provides that the woman with two or more surviving children is entitled to maternity benefits for a maximum duration of twelve weeks, not more than six weeks before her projected birth date. A woman who lawfully adopts or commissions a child under three months is eligible for maternity benefits for twelve weeks from the moment the child is given over to the adopting mother or the commissioning mother (Ministry of Law and Justice, 28th March 2017), with the view that by providing the maternity benefit, women can work without stereotyping in jobs and continue with the same jobs once their leave is over. However, as observed in the district through the study, one way or the other way, people still have gender stereotyping leading to less participation of women in the organized sector.

Another reason for less participation of women in the organized sector is the division of labor in the family. Women are more engaged in the household activities and agricultural activities. In the past, women are considered a caretaker of the home, childbearing and nurturing them. Moreover, women in rural society are closely associated with agriculture for their livelihood. The division of labor in the past is homogenous. It has changed its shape from homogenous to heterogeneous as time passage of time. Through the study, it has been found that the stigma of the past still exists despite modern education. It can be seen that many women in rural areas of the district of Senapati depend on their livelihood in agriculture, leading to less participation of women in the organized sector than males.

3.6 Income of women in the District

Another factor that assesses the economic empowerment of women is the earning of an individual. Income is an earning of an individual for saving and sustenance of oneself and family. Income of a person goes hand in hand with the occupation of a person. The table below shows the income of women in the study area.

The table below shows the general opinion on women's income in the district. Based on the response of respondents, 82.2 percent of the respondents believe that

women have an average income, with 82.0 percent male of the total male respondents and 82.4 percent of female of the total female respondent, respectively. On the other hand, 16.2 percent of respondents believe that a woman has a low income, with 14.0 percent male and 17.6 percent female of the total male and female respondents. At the same time, 0.5 percent of the respondents say that women have a high income, and 1.0 percent with no responses. From the figure in the table, it can be concluded that women have an average income. Only 0.5 percent agrees that women have a high income.

Table 3.3 Opinion on income of women

	High	Average	low	No response	Total
Male	2 (1.3%)	123 (82.0%)	21(14.0%)	4 (2.7%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	0 (.0%)	206 (82.4%)	44 (17.6%)	0 (.0%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	2 (.5%)	329 (82.2%)	65 (16.2%)	4 (1.0%)	400 (100.0%)

In fact from the occupation and income of the respondent profile in chapter two, women can be seen less in the organized sector and less income. But is totally not neglect as women with the high profession and qualification they also earn better than men. From the profile of the respondents it shows that women in business also have a good earning with more than 2 lakhs and above.

However, in general women in the district have an average income as compare to male. Through the studies it has found out that male in the society too has less income as their occupation is mainly base on agriculture. In the same way women in the district as their main source of income comes from agricultural their income are rather low. Respondents are of the view that government employed people usually migrated to town and cities. Some villages also say that the government employees of the village are countable and mention that their main source of income is from agricultural. Thus, comparing between male and female as a whole in the rural areas it can be concluded that women have an average income in the society. In fact male members of the society are considered as the bread winner in the family especially the head of the family who take the whole responsibility and the eldest son or the male members in the absent of the

father. Through these it shows that a male member has better income in general as they go out of home to earn.

The economic empowerment can also be assess through the financial freedom of an individual. When they are able to utilize on what they earn, it is financially empowered as this is rooted to economic empowerment.

Table 3.4 Financial freedom of the respondent

	Financial freedom				Total
	Yes	No	Have only Joint account	No Response	
Male	145 (96.7%)	2 (1.3%)	1 (.7%)	2 (1.3%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	244 (97.6%)	3 (1.2%)	2 (.8%)	1(.4%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	389 (97.2%)	5 (1.2%)	3 (.8%)	3 (.8%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows the financial freedom of the respondent. In order to analyses the financial freedom of the different gender, table has been prepared through cross tabulation between male and female. The question was asked, whether they have bank account of his or her own and used them based on their need. Out of the 250 female respondents, 244 said that they have the bank account in her name and used based on their needs. Whereas 5 respondents do not have their own bank account and 3 respondents has a joint account and 3 respondents do not response to it. While out of 150 total respondents of male, 145 have their account and used based on their needs, 2 respondents with no account of their own, 1 respondent with joint account and 2 with no response. As per the survey, the figure shows there is a financial freedom among the respondent where they can utilized their earning as per their needs. However, there are some people where they cannot spend their earning based on their needs. Many respondents are of the view that they have a bank account but their account are left or kept without the balance. In fact this shows that there is a financial freedom but there is no source of income.

Moreover, through the study it has also found out that there is a joint account where the consent of both the spouse is needed to utilize such account. However, through the interview it has also found out that many household incomes are handled by the husband. They express their opinion that men are the earner of the family at the meantime they handle the income of the family as well. On the contrary, some respondent express saying that, men are the earner of the family but women handle the income of the family with the notion that women are better in the management. Thus, it can be concluded that handling of income differs from household to house and person to person. There is a financial freedom of women in the district however; women in the district have less source of income.

Women's asset or ownership is also a positive indicator of women economic empowerment, as higher values of the parameters indicate a rise in women's economic status. Women who do not own property are significantly less likely to take economic risks and realize their full economic potential. The international community and policymakers recognize that ensuring women's property and inheritance rights is an essential component of any women's development agenda.

Table 3.5 Ownership of property either alone or jointly by respondent

	Ownership of property				Total (%)
	Yes (%)	No (%)	I can't say (%)	No response (%)	
Male	79 (52.7)	63 (42.0)	7 (4.7)	1 (0.7)	150 (100)
Female	103 (41.2)	137(54.8)	10 (4.0)	0 (.0)	250 (250)
Total	182 (45.5)	200 (50.0)	17 (4.2)	1 (.2)	400 (100)

The above table shows the ownership of property of the respondent base on the survey. Through the cross-tabulation, the respondent, male, and female, are

differentiated. Out of the 150 respondent of male 52.7 percent says that they own the property while 42.0 percent of respondents say that they do not own the property and 4.7 percent of respondents responded with 'I can't say' and with 0.7 percent with 'no response'. In the case of females, out of 250 respondents, 41.2 percent of respondents said 'Yes' while 54.8 percent of respondents said 'No' and 4.0 percent responded with 'I cannot say.' The table shows that the percentage of ownership of assets or property in the case of males is more. But in the case of female, it is significantly lesser as compare to those who do not own the property. Through the study, it has also been found out that those women who own property are more of joining property. Once they get married, the spouse's property is jointly owned. In the district of Senapati the married couple share the same right on the property, however, the ancestral property are pass down to through male children. In the case of divorce, the share needs to be given to the women as per society's customary law considering the case's genuineness. In the case of deceased of husband the property is own and are taken care by the wife and distribute among the children.

In regards to the property inheritance as a traditional practice, the Poumai society does not give the ancestral immovable property to women. However, immovable acquired by the parents in the course of life is given to daughters if desire so. The land gifted to daughter by the parents at the time of marriage is handed down to the eldest daughter and if there is no daughter it is distributed among male children. Some Poumai Naga villages also practice gifting of property to daughter which they called as *Louhinya*.¹ The immovable property gifted to daughter in time of their marriage and utilized in her life time but to be return to her father's lineage after her death. Those property is does not pass down more than her generation. It will be taken back by the consanguine kin or the nearest kin from the male descendant. Not only among the Poumai Naga tribe, but also among Mao tribe and Maram tribe, the ancestral property is not given to the daughter.

However, base on the status of the family women are not deprive from getting the property from the parents. From the study it has also found out that women themselves has acquire land through their earning. With the modern education women start to explore and venture out in their career leading them to take effective decision in regards to acquiring of property of their own. Through all these finding, it can be concluded that women are not given the ancestral property which is of immovable. In the district, they practice the handing down of property through the male line as they practice the patriarchy system. However, women also do get immovable property from their parents with certain arrangement in regards to holding of property as discussed above. Women are given property mostly of movable as a gift in time of marriage. Thus, the study found out that the preference of given immovable property was given to male

¹ *Louhinya* is a local term of property gifted to daughter in time of their marriage

with the notion behind that men are the bread winner of the family on the other hand women are restricted in obtaining ancestral land but they are not totally deprived from getting property from parents and own for themselves.

3.7 Social Status of women in Senapati District

The position of an individual occupies within a social hierarchy or system of social stratification is referred to as social status. It is a measurement of a person's perceived status, respect, and influence within a specific society or community. Wealth, occupation, education, family history, achievements, and social contacts can all have an impact on one's social position. Social empowerment enables a person to communicate their thoughts and feelings and improve society. The determinant that can measure the social empowerment are like, education, health and nutrition and other social activities.

Traditionally, Morung play an important role in the life of women among in the district. Morung system has been discussed in Chapter 2. In The Morung they follow certain code and routine their activities. It is considered as a place where girls learn different kinds of handicraft, spinning, weaving, music, song and dance. After their marriage they cease to be part of the Morung as they go and live with the husband's family. From the study of the Morung system, it can be seen that women are traditionally imparted education and shape their life.

Education status is one factor that can measure the social empowerment of the society. The education of a society is measure in terms of literacy rate. Comparatively to other districts in the state of Manipur, Senapati has a lower literacy rate. According to the 2001 Census, the district's literacy rate is 59.8 percent, with 67.9 per cent of male literates and 51.2 per cent of female literates. On the other hand, the overall literacy rate in the state is 70.5 per cent, with 80.3 percent of men and 60.5 per cent of women. In 2011 census it has increase to 63.30 per cent with 69.21 per cent male and 57.67 per cent which is lower to the average literacy rate of the state². In both the census the literacy rate of the district is lower as compare to the state as a whole. Moreover, there is also a literacy gap between the male and female in the district.

The respondents have expressed their opinion that the educational level of the girls has increase. However, the literacy rate of female is lesser as compare to male. It may be pointed out that the reason for literacy gap is due to preference of male child in past act as one factor for less female literacy rate. One of the respondents said *“in the past the preference of education is giving to male as compared to female thinking that there education will be carried away to male family while male child will look after their*

² Statistical Handbook of Manipur 2017

parents. This shows that there is a kind of stereotype that people have when it comes to the education of female child.

The below figure shows the preferences for education between male and female children. The figure shows that 79.0 percent believe the child's education equals males and females. While 21.0 percent of the respondents believe that educational preferences are given to males, while education preferences of girl children are 0 percent as per the respondent response. Thus, this shows that some people still believe that male children should be given preference to female children. The study concluded that the low female literacy rate is due to the preferences of male children.

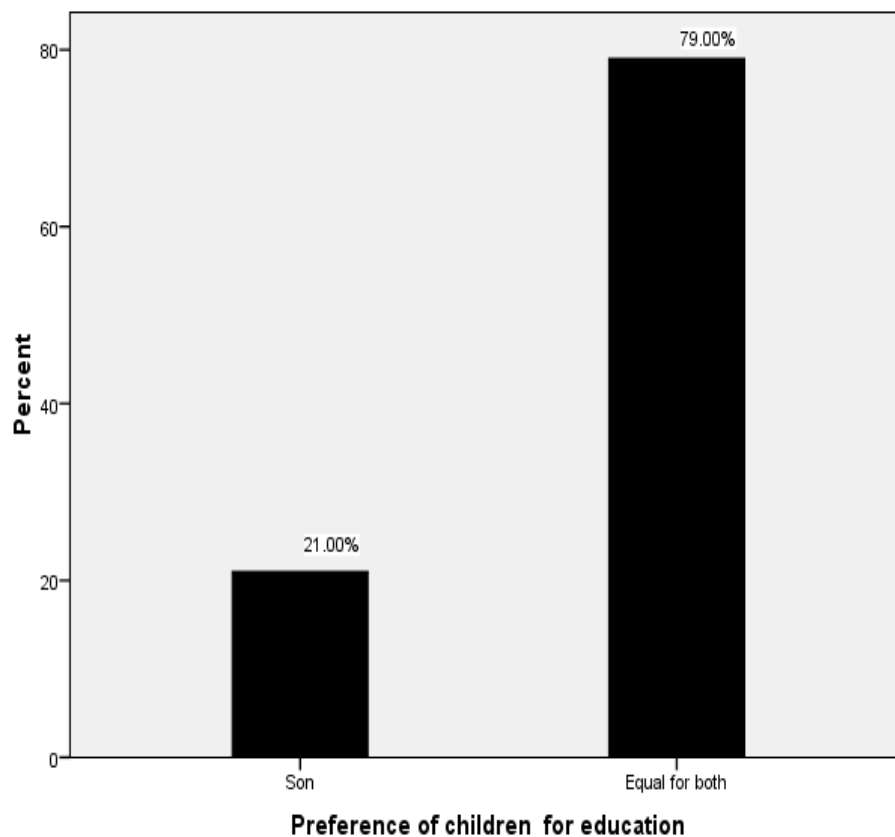


Fig: 3.3 Preferences of child education between male and female

In fact, the majority of respondent have the liberal view in regards to child education. As shown in the figure 79 per cent are of the view that they gave equal preference to both male and female child. But it can be seen that there are few people who still hold on with the stigma of the pass in educational preferences. Through the study it has found out that people who still differentiate educational opportunities between male and female child are mostly from illiterate family and also family with

low income as they find it hard to bear the child educational expenses. By spreading awareness about the importance of female education, changing those mindsets can bring equality in the education between male and female.

3.8 Health and Nutrition

Women's health and nutrition are regarded as critical to the success of women's empowerment. Gender bias works against females before they are born. Though illegal, the use of techniques such as amniocentesis or determining the sex of the fetus in the womb, followed by abortions, is still widespread. There is a notion that males are prioritized in the distribution of resources at the household level, whether it is nutrition, medical care, or the opportunity for education, growth, and development. Women in poor rural communities seek medical help for their sons more frequently and quickly than for their daughters. As a result of a lack of proper nutrition, females' health status deteriorates beginning in childhood. According to National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau data, on average, girls gain 6.8 kg and 5 cm in weight and height during this period. Anemia is the most common deficiency disorder among rural adolescent girls in India. A pregnancy at this stage is considered 'high risk.' Pregnancy in an immature woman with stunted growth results in complications such as abnormal presentation and prolonged labor.

The Marital Fertility Rate, one of the fertility measures, is expressed as the number of live births per thousand married women between the ages of 15 and 45. During pregnancy and lactation, females are expected to consume more calories, protein, and other essential nutrients for the proper growth and development of the child as well as for her own health. Females with poor nutritional status frequently have high rates of infant mortality and maternal mortality.

The average number of years a newborn can be expected to live if current mortality trends continue is expressed as life expectancy at birth. It depicts a population's current health and mortality status. Women's life expectancy can be used to assess their health status. Through the interview schedule of the female respondent they express their concern about their health and their nutrition. They also express that their husband and parents were very supportive and take much care about their health. On being asked, who takes a decision about the treatment regarding her health problem, the respondent said, *"In regards to health treatment I took the decision of my own, however, due to financial constraint I consult my husband"*. In this regard it can be said that women have the freedom in deciding about their health problem and its treatment. Thus,

the better health and nutrition can assess the social empowerment of women in terms of their health.

Through the study it has found out that individuals' capacity to acquire healthcare services is hampered by financial constraints. As the rural people has less source of income, people cannot afford health insurance also with limited financial resources may postpone or avoid critical medical care, exams, or treatments resulting in delayed diagnoses, deteriorating health issues, and higher long-term healthcare expenses. Moreover, due to lack of financial resources people avoid from getting preventative care services such as immunizations, frequent check-ups, or illness screenings.

3.9 Political Status of Women in Senapati District of Manipur

Political status of women is also another determinant of women empowerment. When women participate in political arena and involved in the decision making, it can say that women are politically empowered. Through their political participation they also involved in the decision making. Decision making is an intellectual process, which involves imagination, reasoning, evaluation and judgment. It is a selection process in which best or most suitable course of action is finalized from among several available alternatives. Such a chosen alternative is extremely beneficial in achieving organizational goals.

From the data source of the state there is an increase in the women political participation in the state. Since 1972, when the state got statehood it has only one women contestant with zero seat won in the state legislative Assembly. However, in 2022 legislative Assembly of the state the increase of women participation to electoral process as candidates with 17 totals as a contestant and 5 seats won.

Women political empowerment do not count only with the contesting as an MP, MLAs etc. but also their political consciousness and awareness and their involvement directly or indirectly by influencing the policy maker and bringing about change in the society also speaks volume in their political involvement .

Table 3.6 Opinion on increase of women political participation

Gender	Responses			Total (%)
	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Can't say (%)	
Male	139 (92.7%)	2(1.3%)	9 (6.0%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	231 (92.4%)	3 (1.2%)	16 (6.4%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	370 (92.5%)	5 (1.2%)	25 (6.2%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows the respondents' remarks regarding women's political participation. Of the total 100 percent of respondents, 92.50 percent believe that

women's participation has increased, with 92.7 percent male and 92.4 percent female out of the total male and female respondents. On the other hand, 1.25 percent responded as disagreed, with 1.3 percent male and 1.2 percent female to the total male and female respondents, respectively. In comparison, 6.2 percent cannot say with the percentage of 6.0 percent male and 6.4 percent female, respectively. As per the responses of the respondents, it is clear that there is an increase in the participation of women in politics. Women become more conscious and aware of the political environment leading them to participate at the grassroots level actively, but the district electoral politics are neglectable. Women's political participation in the district will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

3.10 Status of Women in Religion

Religion is the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, insofar as they perceive themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may regard as divine as defined by William James. In fact women participation in the religious sphere is a sign of women religious empowerment. Women can take parts in different fields in religion. There are different portfolio in a religious organization say from clergy i.e. the Priest, Reverence, Pastor, and in catholic tradition like Pope, Archbishop, Father, Mother, Brother, Sister or Nun etc. Through this hierarchy the work division is also being done. The religious role played by the women also defines their religious empowerment.

Time immemorial women do take part in the religious activity. The role of priestess is required in certain rite and rituals and it is consider as incomplete in the absence of women. For example, the feast of merit, Banee (1995: 425) discussed the role of women in feast of merit and says that it is significant in observing *gennas* and other formalities. The woman is the one who bless the vats of wine before the consumption. They have a belief that such observation is not perform well it will lead them to poverty. This make woman of the time to carried out those rituals with care as per customary norms. As per the traditional festival called *Chijiini*³ in Mao Tribe which is held in the month of June for paddy transplantation. On this day women perform the ritual by cutting two tender twigs of tree locally called as *Omosii izii*⁴ and two tender shoot of grass locally known as *Eva izii* and place those about a feet far from the place of transplantation. Small among of rice is placed on the leaves and grass with two pieces of meat that are pack on the leave locally known as *Ole bviilo* and place a small gourd of rice beer. Later on the rice beer in pour on twigs and grass and take home with a prayerful wish of yielding a good harvest of the plantation.

³ *Chijiini* is a traditional of Mao tribe which is held in the month of June for paddy transplantation.

⁴ *Omosii izii* is a local term for wild varnish (rhus) tender twig use in the ritual

After the first harvest it is the wife who perform the ritual by cutting two stalks of paddy that are placed in the threshing ground. Once the threshing is over they filled the barn with a prayer and blessing. Another important ritual that is been perform by the women in Mao is that of *Belu koto* meaning '*Blessing of Prosperity*' which is perform on the first day before they remove paddy from the granary. In fact women participant in the ritual performance are immense and that are practice with care.

Undoubtedly the high position of women in the religious organization is only handful. Majority of the people in the district follow Christianity but in the religious hierarchy it is the man who occupied the higher position in the religious organization of both male and female where women can be seen in lower strata of the religious hierarchy. In the Roman Catholic denomination, women play an important role as a *Mother* and *Nun Sister* also in the Baptist Denomination women can be seeing as a Deaconess that are appointed within the religious body of women religious organization. In fact the Senapati district is a Christian dominated district where they feel that prayer is essential in every walk of life. Women are prayerful and ready to be a part in any meeting relating to fasting and prayer. Base on the respondent almost every village has a prayer cell or group and women seems to be comparatively active than men folk. All this shows that women are conscious about the religion and participate actively though they didn't hold position in the church or other religious organization.

Among the Poumai as mention women are keepers of the wealth of the house where they perform many rites. The rite called *Lousou Mosie* where they belief to be inviting *Rafii and Rapu* (ancestral female and male spirit or deity) before the harvest begins (Tabitha Trumy, 2018:199). The rite is perform with the pieces of meat that is preserve from the festival called *Lounii* (a festival that is celebrated in the month of July every after the completion of paddy plantation. The meat is cooked and brought to the paddy field and place where they will gather the paddy. This is performed by the female usually by the mother of the family. They give thanks to spirits and ask them to bless them with a good harvest.

Numerous feasts, including Mouzii, Zhosou, and Chizho, are held by couples in the Poumai Naga tribe in an effort to advance their social status. Both the wife and the husband participate equally in the rituals of this feast. Two priests and one priestess are required to perform the Zhosou ceremonial rite. As per the survey of the study area reveals that women participation in the religious field is average.

Table: 3.7 Opinion on religious status of women.

	Frequency	Percent
High	140	35.0

Average	252	63.0
Low	8	2.0
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the status of women in religion as per the study. Out of the total 400 respondents, 63.0 percent of the respondent said that the status of women is average, 35.0 responded that the status of women is high, and 2.0 percent of the respondent said that the status of women is low. Many of them those who say that the status of women is high and average are of the opinion that women actively participate in religious activity. In fact, they agreed that in the hierarchy of the religious organization, women hold lower positions. For example, the Priest, Reverence, Pastor, etc., are held chiefly by men. However, in every religious organization, the involvement of women is felt. One respondent opined that *"women's active participation in religious activities is clearly visible through the attendance of the church service."* She means that women's attendance in church service is better than men's attendance. Through this, women also get more information about religious activities and participate accordingly.

Through the study is found that in the religious field women also have the women wings or body of their own that function in parallel to the body of both male and female. Women can also be seen participating in both the organization i.e. is women body as well as the body comprises of both male and female. Therefore it can conclude that in the top hierarchy in the religious organization, women are less but in the grassroots level of religious organization women are not less as compare to men.

3.11 Psychological Status of women in Senapati of Manipur

The psychological stability of a person can also measure the empowerment of the person. When a person has mental stability and it's not distorted by the environment he or she live, they act freely act upon his or her will. The empowerment of women can be assess through their psychological status. The psychology of women can be affect by the factors like domestic violence, stereotypes, over dominance etc. Psychological abuse includes threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression, and constant humiliation.

Domestic violence is referred to by a variety of terms, including wife abuse, marital assault, woman battery, spouse abuse, wife beating, conjugal violence, intimate violence, battering, and partner abuse. Emotional abuse is a control tactic that includes a wide range of verbal attacks and humiliations, such as repeated verbal attacks on the

victim's worth as an individual or role as a parent, family member, friend, coworker, or community member.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community, resulting in or having a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, male development, or deprivation. 'Domestic violence against women refers to any act or conduct that has the potential to injure or harm women physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, or spiritually within the four walls of the home; however, such an act or conduct is usually not committed by strangers'.

Table 3.8 Opinion on Domestic Violence

Gender distribution of respondent			Yes	No	Undecided	No Response	Total
Male	<u>Marital status</u>	Unmarried	3	73	0		76
		Married	3	65	2		70
		Divorced	0	4	0		4
		Total	6	142	2		150
		Percentage	1.5	35.5	0.5		37.5
Female	<u>Marital status</u>	Unmarried	5	132	4		141
		Married	7	93	2	1	103
		Divorced	0	5	0		5
		No Response	0	1	0		1
		Total	12	231	6	1	250
		Percentage	3.0	57.75	1.5	0.25	62.5

The above table shows the number of domestic violence face by the respondents. Through the cross-tabulation the respondent are categorized into male and female. Out of the total 150 male 6 respondent is of the view that they encountered domestic

violence, while 142 says 'No' and 2 respondent as "undecided". On the other hand out of the 250 female, 12 respondents encountered domestic violence, 231 says 'No', 6 respondents as 'undecided' and 1 respondent with 'no response'. From the above figure it shows that there are domestic violence face both by the male and female. In fact there is domestic violence but it is less. Some respondents are of the opinion that domestic violence is face because of intoxicating and because of the financial problem. When there is less domestic violence it also speaks of women fraternity and dignity is maintain in the society.

3.12 Overview of the Position of Women in the District of Senapati

Women constitute half of the population of the country. In order to understand women in the present context it is Important to see the status of women and what roles they play. According to Webster's Dictionary Status is defined as the condition or position law and role of someone. Status of women is affected many factors like economic factors, social factors, religious factors, political factors and ideological factors. According to Majumdar and Madan 'the status of women in all types of societies especially in the patriarchal is determined by various types of taboo which are attached to women. These taboos may be preventive, productive or protective.... (Majumdar and Madan 1986: 147-148). In the context of Senapati district of women the status of women is complex. Since time immemorial women are the keepers and sustainers and preservers of culture and tradition. Women are considered as the transmitter of the culture which is evident with the display of the traditional costumes.

In the inheritance of property women gets less opportunity as compare to male. The passing and tracing of descendant is trace from the male side, the property to be been pass down from the male line as well. Narendra (1995) has also pointed out that women gets their maintenance but have no share in family property. In fact it does not means that women got no share of property but they also get the share of property but they are of movable property. There is also a case that women are given the immovable property but it does not go beyond her generation. Once she died the land will be taken back by the male members of the family.

Economic sphere women play an important role and enjoy the maximum liberty in the management of kitchen affairs. It is more like an obligation in managing resources and maintaining sufficiency. Sometime it happens that there is autonomy in managing the kitchen affairs but decision making become a man's domain. Traditionally, the barter system prevails in the society and it was carried by men. However, in the present day selling of vegetables became a domain of women which is very much visible with the participation of women selling in the District Head quarter market. Today women can be seen not only in business of agriculture products but leading role as an entrepreneur and allied service.

3.13 Changing Status of Women through the Ages

Time immemorial women are considered as an integral part of the society in general and husband in particular. In mythological perspective women highly held and worship them as goddesses. For example, like Sita Ram, Lakshmi Narayan, Siva- Parvati etc. the status of women during the Vedic period was high. During this period there was no caste system; women even have the liberty to choose their husband. Some women were accorded an honored in the society for their education and enlightenment. For example like, Apala, Viswambara Lopamudra etc.

In the history women also actively participate in defense for their motherland and fought for their freedom. To set an example, Rani Lakshmi of Jhansi, Ahalya Bai of Marathas, Rani Durgavati of Bundelkhan, Chandbidi of Ahmednagar, Rani Gaidinliu of Manipur etc. they exhibit unusual strength and courage in spite of feminine in character and fought against their enemies.

With the passage of time and to cite the period from the post Vedic the status of women has degraded. The social evil practice came into existence where women are torture on the ground of sati, dowry, infertility and polygamy. Due to this reason sometime women are considered as a commercial commodity. Especially in the Hindu society dowry became a burden for the family which leads to female infanticide. In India, a society where men predominate, men assert their supremacy over women. However, in the modern India few women again projected high image. For example like, Sarojini Naidu, Nandini Satapathy, Kiran Bedi, Vijay Lakshmi Pandi, Indira Gandhi, Uma Bharati etc.

3.14 Changing Status of Women in Senapati District

Women are considered the keeper of the wealth and consider that her duty is to look after the household, take care of the family needs and look after the children. Being an agricultural society, their main activities revolve around the agriculture. Base on the monsoon they practice their agriculture. The mains crops that they cultivated were, rice, maize, ginger, yam, cabbage, potato etc. One of the respondents said, *“Every women (wife) in the household have their own kitchen garden, with that kitchen they depend less in the market”*. It means to say women really work hard to manage the household chores.

However, the life of the rural women has changes through modern education, industrialization, westernization and urbanization. They not only confined in the household work but start to participation in economic activities outside home, many has started their own entrepreneurship, run a business. One of the examples is that of the

‘*Mao Kheithel*’⁵ market in Imphal, ‘*Afii Saliki*’⁶ in the district headquarter. The market was mainly set up for women of Mao tribe; the sole purpose was to give a place to sell the surplus agriculture products to the markets. With this facilities the womenfolk are enable to participate more in the economic activities. These open a scope for women to increase in their economic independent and also increase their income. As they increase income they also venture out for more business sector. As a result the status of the women increase which can be termed as economic empowerment of women.

Table 3.9 Opinion on socio-economic status of women

	Frequency	Percent
High	23	5.8
Average	318	79.5
Low	57	14.2
No Response	2	.5
Total	400	100.0

The above Table 4.7 shows the overall socioeconomic status of women in the Senapati District. Out of the total 100 percent of respondents, 79.5 percent said that the status of the women is average, and 5.8 percent of respondents believe that the socioeconomic status of women in the district is high. In contrast, 14.2 percent of the respondents said that the status of women in the district is low, and 0.5 percent did not respond. Through the data of the survey, it shows that the overall economic status of the women is average as per the frequency of the respondents. There are women with a high profile in the respondents' profiles, but they are few, which can be seen from the distribution of males and females in the organized sector. The above discussion also shows that males are engaged more in the organized sector; on the other hand, women are engaged more in the unorganized sector, agriculture sector, and household chores.

3.15 Socio-Economic Empowerment through Self-Help Group (SHG)

⁵ *Mao Kheithel* is a market set up in the Imphal city which they called as Mao Market. This gives an opportunity especially to the women of Mao in marketing their product in the state.

⁶ *Afii Saliki* is a local term for which refers to “market place for mother”. The place is constructed with a sole purpose of giving a platform for women in their business.

Self-Help Groups (SHG) are one such success story of women's empowerment. Women are instilled with confidence and independence as a result of self help group. The concept of SHG assumes that an individual is capable of achieving his or her goal. As a member of the group, he or she will gain extra strength, capacity, force, and identity - all of which are necessary to fulfill one's desires.

Self-Help Groups are commonly formed in rural India. They are made up of fifteen to twenty members of a specific community who share similar socioeconomic circumstances. The unregistered groups will operate on mutual trust, cooperation, condition, and interdependence. Self-help groups are essential for overcoming exploitation and instilling confidence in rural people's economic self-sufficiency, particularly among women, who are largely invisible in the social structure. These groups allow them to band together for a common goal and gain strength from one another as they deal with exploitation in various forms. A group serves as the foundation for action and change. Self-help groups play an important role between consumer and production credit, analyzing the credit system for its implications and changes in the target groups' economy, culture, and social position, and assisting group members in gaining access to formal credit institutions. Self-help groups have the following characteristics: a) small size, b) their operations are democratic c) identical interests, social heritage, common occupation, and homogeneity affinity. e) Recognize the knowledge of intrinsically strong members, their needs, and problems.

A self-help group is a voluntary association of people who work together to meet their needs. Self-help groups are one method of empowering both individuals and groups. It is the most effective method of empowerment. The goal of SHGs is to empower women by providing them with financial assistance. They form a group of like-minded people who help each other for mutual benefit and use locally available resources to empower themselves. In recent years, the success of SHGs through self-employment has been widely documented throughout the country. The United Nations has acknowledged their contribution to society as a step toward a more prosperous world. The SHG's motto is "united-we win." Thus, be a part of a team, contribute to one another, and share the fruits of your success. This give the best option especially women in rural society for achieving their goals as a group with financial assistance from banks through SHG-Bank linking programmes.

Members of SHGs are eligible to apply for loans with fixed repayment schedules. Each group organizes regular meetings and discussions to make important decisions. Trainings and awareness campaigns for economic empowerment are also organized based on the needs of the members. As per the Indian NGOs list there are 24 Micro Finance SHGs NGOs in Senapati District as on 2021 Viz; Accords Apex Cluster Community Resource Development Society, Compassion Children Ministry, Dziizhii Tao Neh Welfare Association, Institute of Socio Economic Research and Development,

Integrated Shiitake Producing and Processing Society, Integrated Tribal Welfare Association, Kishan Development Association, Khongnem Pfosemai Development Society, Manipur Hills Areas Resoucre Development Association, Manipur North Economic Development Association, Naotumai Rural Development Association,Peace Music Club,Pk Women Soccity, Rural Development Association, Rural Development Association Senapati, Sadim Lizai Students and Youth Association, Shri Narayan Hindi Mahavidyalaya, Sotomai Rural Development Association, The Integrated Indigenous Tribal Children Ministries of India. All this NGOs are run as SHGs in order to bring the upliftment of the society in the district.

One of the respondent said, *“After I joined in Self-Help Group, I can feel a kind of empowering myself as I am able to lead the group, involve actively in decision making, moreover, financially sound to look after the family”*. These indicate that Self Help group has improve the life of the rural women in decision making, moreover, in term of financial, it give them independent. In short, it can be said that Self Help Group is one of the agent for women empowerment. Thus, in order to know the visibility status of women empowerment the rural areas of the district, the opinion of the respondents were collected.

Table: 3.10 Opinion on visibility or rural women Empowerment

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	342	85.5
No	14	3.5
Can't Say	41	10.2
No Response	3	.8
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the opinion of respondent about the rural women empowerment in Senapati District. The respondents were asked about the visibility of rural women empowerment. Out of the total 400 respondent 85.5 percent is of the view that women empowerment can be seeing in the rural society. On the other hand 3.5 say they didn't see women empowerment in the rural society if the district, while 10.2 percent responded as 'can't say' and 0.8 percent with no response. Through the survey it can be concluded that there is visibility of women empowerment in the rural society of the district. The percentage of saying 'yes' is much greater as compare to those who say

‘No’ which can be seen in the table. This overall visibility of rural women empowerment is determined by different factors that have already been discussed in this chapter.

In fact the life of the rural women is not static but it changes with time. In the past women were considered as the keeper of the wealth, and their duty is to look after the household chores, child bearing and nurturing the children and service to her husband. Also being an agricultural society, their activities revolve around the agricultural system. However, this practice has changed, women no longer confine to house but move out of home in search of education, job and other opportunity. No doubt, there are still women where they find it hard to explore. The status of women has also increased as they move out for jobs and also as they expose to the outside world.

There are different factors that bring about the change in the life of the rural women. Factors like education, urbanization; industrialization has changed the outlook of the rural women. The literacy rate in India shows how the women literacy has increased from 0.7 in 1901 as compared to male with 9.8 to 2021 with 70.30 female and 84.70 male. In Manipur it has the literacy rate of 0.93 percent with 1.86 male and 0.04 female in 1901. It has increased to 76.94 percent in 2011 where literacy rate for male is 83.58 percent and female literacy is 70.26 respectively.

Education empowers a woman to take greater control of her life and obtain inclusion in decision-making processes, unleashing her ability to contribute socially and economically to the well-being of her family and community. Through education women start are aware of their right, they also able to adjust with husband making them to lessen the domestic violence and other harassment. Education has also increased the standard of living, better opportunity in terms of jobs and aware of their health issues and other social problem. Education has also made them to take a better decision and take a greater responsibility in the family and society.

Urbanization is another factor that brings about the change in the life of the rural women. Urbanization does not only change the life of the urban people but also the life of the rural people as well. An urban area offers a number of opportunities with the facilities available in the urban area. There are different facilities like educational institution, job opportunities, better transportation facilities, entertainment facilities and so on. Many rural women move to the urban areas for education, jobs, and also to have a better living standard as urban areas provide better facilities. One of the respondent said, *“Many rural women instead of working in the agricultural sector they prefer to work in the secondary and tertiary sector of production. This is the reason many rural women migrated to town and cities”*. In fact, the study found out that many women move out from the village life for education but many have migrated to the urban areas for jobs either private or government, and other alike service sector. As they migrated it has an

impact on their life. Women are exposed to different arenas in socio and economic life and became aware of their health. They also become self sufficient with their earning making them to be less dependent on husband and parents. In other words they become economically independent.

Industrialization is another factor that brings about the change in the life of the rural women. With industrialization and education many rural women look out for jobs apart from the agricultural activities. They start to engage in secondary sector of production. For example the Barak food procession industry owned by Helen Nishi, where many women are being employed. Many women are also engage in handloom, weaving and other entrepreneurs. By taking all this responsibility they became more self independent economically. They also became aware of the social life and involve in the decision making for the well being of the family and society.

In spite of all this changes that are being taking place among the rural women, still many women life revolved around the agricultural life. Especially the married women have less expose to the outside world and continue with the old traditional life style of child bearing, nurturing and serving the husband.

Table: 3.11 Opinion on rural women less exposure as an obstacle for empowerment

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	120	30.0
Agree	251	62.8
Disagree	8	2.0
Strongly disagree	12	3.0
Cannot decide	9	2.2
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows rural women's exposure to the outside world. The respondent was asked for their opinion with the degree of strongly agree, Agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and cannot decide on rural women being less exposed to the outside world. Out of the total 100 percent of respondents, 30.0 percent strongly agree that rural women are less exposed to the outside world, and 62.8 percent also agree with the statement that rural women are less exposed to the outside world. On the other hand,

3.0 percent strongly disagree, and 2.0 percent disagree with the statement, respectively. At the same time, 2.2 percent could not decide whether rural women are less exposed or not to the outside world. Through the above table, it can be concluded that rural women have started to expose to the outside world through education, industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. However, many of them still could not avail of the facilities. The less exposure is due to factors like- their engagement in agricultural activities, household chores, and financial constraints, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. It also happened due to the insecurity of women to send out women alone. This glass ceiling can be broken by educating everyone equally and spreading other awareness in rural areas. By doing this, the slogan of gender equality can be achieved.

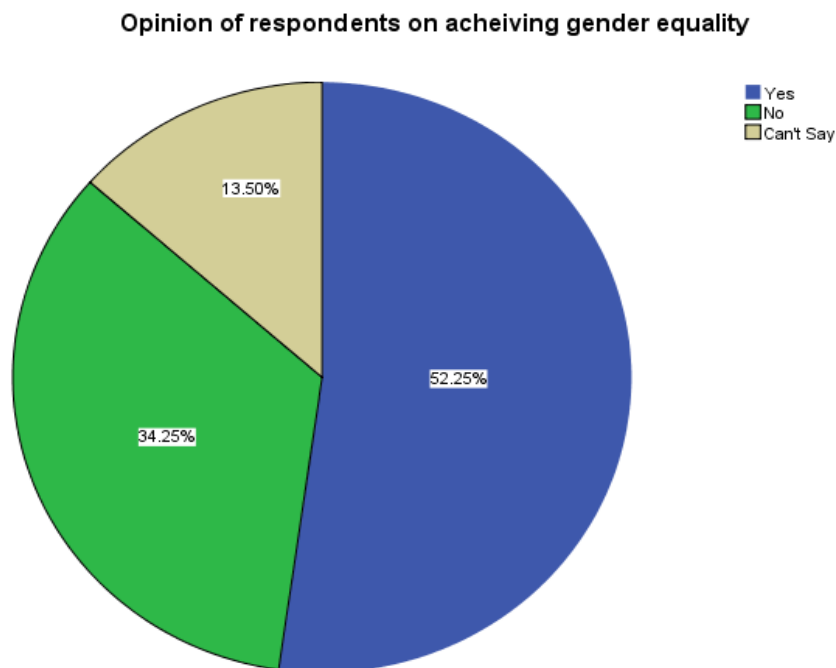


Figure 3.4 Opinion of respondent on achievement of gender equality

The above figure shows the responses of the respondent on achieving gender equality. Out of 100 percent of respondents, 52.25 percent say 'yes'; on the other hand, 34.25 percent say 'no' while 13.50 percent responded as 'cannot say'. From the analysis of the above figure, it can be concluded that gender equality can be achieved, but it will take time. With this progress in women's empowerment, the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030, gender equality may not be attainable. The study shows that 34.25 percent of the respondents feel the women's empowerment rate is slow. In fact, it is relatively slow when it comes to women's empowerment. Moreover, the empowerment of women and their initiatives differs from society to society.

In conclusion, it can be said that education has paved the way for empowering women and altering their position. Numerous studies have also found out that higher levels of education among women are linked to greater economic possibilities, better health outcomes, and more decision-making authority in homes and communities. Education gives women the information, skills, and confidence they need to defy gender stereotypes and engage in all aspects of life (UNESCO, 2016). Grassroots movements, women's organizations, and feminist campaigning have all been significant change agents. Women's rights, gender equality, and social justice movements have increased awareness, mobilized communities, and fought for governmental changes. Thus for the achievement of gender equality and the potential of women's empowerment, it is the duty of every citizen, government, and other non-governmental organization to spread awareness about the importance of women's empowerment and their involvement in decision-making to achieve the target of gender equality with dignity.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRADITIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL WOMEN

4.1 Introduction

India is considered to be the land of rural as nearly 70% of the population lives in rural areas. The term rural does not have a scientific definition but everyone has the presumption meaning of the term. In the broader sense it relate to the country, the agriculture and the country people or life. All over the world the governments define rural in statutory terms. The common observation that is been seen in the rural areas is the immobility of people. In other words they are stagnant; they are born there, live there and die there. David Pocock and Louis Dumont are of the view that there is nothing different between urban and rural life of India as both are part of greater civilisation of Indian Subcontinent. However, Doshi and Jain disagree with their notion and say that the contribution of foreign anthropologists to Indian sociologist is over simplified. They are of the view that the disparity in terms of culture, religion makes the two communities difference.

The study of rural sociology traces back their studies to the origin of society. Doshi and Jain in *Rural Sociology* (2007) express their views on studies of rural sociology, saying that all the advance society whether French, US and any other advance society originated from the village society. They are of the opined that there is a general process of transformation from rural society to town, then shift to city and later transform into big and mega cities. The studies of rural society in India got a boost from the report of Country Life Commission (CLC) of 1907. The report points out the certain social problems of rural society and makes recommendation to improve the rural life. The report also provide a benchmark data for rural sociology which later on the data comes out in different forms of dissertation and monograph given rise to the emergence of rural sociology (Joshi, Jain 2007).

As per the US Bureau of Census, the rural community is defines on the basis of population size and its density. It may be subjected to criticism but it served the purpose of the government. In India rural is defined in term of revenue. It can be one big village or a cluster of village but for Census Commission village is that which is identified by its name having definite boundaries. The Census of India define village as: ‘*The basic*

unit for rural areas is the revenue village which has definite surveyed boundaries. The revenue village may comprise of several hamlets but the entire village has been treated as one unit in census data. In surveyed areas like village, forest area, each habitation area with locally recognized boundaries within the forest range officer's beat is treated as one unit'.¹.

As per 2011 Census the total population of India was 1210.2 million. Out of the total population, the rural population is 833.1 million while the urban population is 377.1 million. Thus in proportion of population in term of percentage rural population from 68.84 percent and the urban population is 31.16 percent respectively.

According to 1991 Census India has the total of 5, 58,088 villages. Thus, do to large number of villages India is also called the 'nation of village' However the size and population defers from place to place. As per the 1991 census the population size less 500 constitute 26.5 percent of the total number of village, from 500 to 2000 constitute 48.8 percent and from 2000 to 5000 constitute 19.4 percent respectively.

What is tradition? According to the dictionary of Sociology 'it is a set of social practice that seeks to celebrate and inculcate certain behavioural norms and values'.² According to Merriam- Webster dictionary, tradition refers to 'an inherited, established or the customary pattern of thought, action or behaviour'. When we talk of the tradition we can go back to the Robert Redfield concept o little and great tradition which he used in his book "Peasant society and Culture" 1956) while conducting his studies in Mexican Communities. For little community is a village that had a smaller size, self sufficient and relatively isolated.³ Singer and Marriott were influence by Redfield studies making them to conduct their intensive studies in Indian village. Thus 'little tradition' is unlettered, unreflective, and the tradition is start at home which is transmitted from one generation to the next generation through the process of socialization. On the hand the 'Great tradition' is lettered, reflective, and the tradition is cultivated from distinct institution and transmitted through rigorous and long learning with the internal specialization of the tradition. Mckim Marriot is of the view that little tradition consist of local custom, dialects, rituals and rites while the great tradition contains legitimate form of the little tradition. He finds out that cultural continuity is the major features of great tradition.

When we talk of the rural or the village it also need to know who are the people usually inhabit the rural areas. In the cases of India the tribal's population mainly occupies the rural areas. The tribal are cluster together based on their culture, identity, dialect and custom which were called as 'tribe' and they are considered to be the indigenous people of the country. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology

¹ S. L Doshi & P C Jain. 2007, Rural Sociology. New Delhi, Rawat Publication p-100

² John Scott and Gordon Marshall, 2009, Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University Press p-767

³ Ibid p 93

'tribe' is defined as "a social group bound together by kin and duly associated with a particular territory". According to Merriam Webster definition, a tribe "is a social group composed chiefly of numerous families, clans or generations having a shared ancestry and language". Thus a 'tribe' is a social division in traditional societies which consist of communities or families who are linked by economic, blood ties, religion, common culture and tradition.

The Senapati district is dominated by the tribal population. Three major tribes of the district are Mao tribe, Poumai tribe and Maram. The main source of income of the people in the district is that of agriculture. The society does not practice the caste system and there is not occupational hereditary except in the case of chief of the village. Moreover, being an agricultural society there is homogeneity in the occupation. Though there is not heredity of occupation people follow more or less the same occupation of the parents. It has changed with the education and industrialization but still in the rural society these practices still exist. Thus, this chapter will discuss how the tradition and custom function in the society and how women take part or involve in the society.

What is Institution? MacIver defines institution as "an established form or condition that is structure in order to carry out group activity". According to Cooley, "An institution is a complete organisation of collective behaviour established in a social heritage in order to meet the need and want of the society". The term institution usage in sociology related to established aspect of society which is close to common English usage. However, over a time it has changed the conceptualisation of the term and its analytical precision. In some ways an institution can be seen as a sort of 'super- custom' a set of 'mores', 'folkways' and pattern of behaviour.⁴ Thus the current concept of institution in sociology is more flexible considering the moral ambivalence of human behaviour as well as the social change.

Institution is social in nature because the institution exists with the collective activities of the people. Moreover, it is universal as it exists in every society and in every stage of social development. The institution can be of oral or written tradition. The primitive societies are largely oral institution while the modern complex societies like political, educational, religious and economic are of written institution. Thus, institution is collective behaviour or social structures that function in order to meet the requirement of the society. It is also a means to control the activities of an individual to maintain order in the society.

Politics is a social institution where the power is acquired by some individuals or groups and exercised upon it. Political institution is organisations that create, enforce and apply laws. They make policies on economy and social system. Those individuals or

⁴ John Scott and Gordon Marshall, 2009, Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University Press p-358

group of people used power and authority in order to govern the society. First let's understand what is power and authority.

Talking of the traditional institution, Max Weber also discussed the 'traditional domination' where he used the term 'patriarchalism' which he refers to the exercised of power of the head of the family. The responsibility of the family members regards to lodging, foods and the use of tools, the physical and mental dependence of the women, the helplessness of the young children and the protection of the family lies with the head.⁵ In political institution power and authority play an important role in its functioning. Thus, in order to have a better understanding of traditional political institution, let's understand the concept of power and authority.

Power is a universal aspect of social interaction which plays an important role in shaping the relations of members in the group. According to M. G. Smith, "Power is the ability to act effectively over people and things using means ranging from persuasion to coercion". In sociology the concept of power is the heart of the subject of social 'stratification'. Weber in his essay '*The Distribution of Power within the Political community: Class, Status and Power*' in *Economy and Society* (1920), Weber defines power as "the ability to control the behavior of others, even in the absence of their consent". He regarded power as a fundamental concept in stratification, and 'class' and 'status' as its two principle dimensions. Weber also held that power can arise in a consensual context where subordinates accept it as being used legitimately. Where power is used over subordinate who attribute genuine legitimacy to superordinates he speaks of authority.⁶

According to Weber's definition of power which implies that those who hold power do so at the expense of others. It suggests that there is a fixed amount of power therefore if some hold power; others do not hold that same power. Sometimes this concept of power is also known as a 'constant-sum' since the amount of power is constant where individual and group hold the power which is not held by others. The functionalists also argue that power is used by the power holder for their interest. They see that that power is used for the exploitation and oppression of the subordinates by the superordinates.⁷

Talcott Parsons on the other hand rejects the concept of 'constant-sum' and the view that the power is used by the sectional interest. Parsons is of the view that power is something that is possessed by the society as a whole. To him the degree of the power is measured in terms of the collective goals to which the society aims to achieve. This concept of power is also known as 'variable-sum' since power in the society is not fixed.

⁵ Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber an intellectual portrait p-330

⁶ Scott and Marshall, 2009, Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University Press.

⁷ Haralambos, 1980. Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press. Page 117-118

Parsons assumed that consensus is essential for the survival of social system. Thus shared values derived collective goals which are shared by the members of the society. To Parson the western societies are more able to realize these goals so as the greater the power exists in the social system. With the growth of the living standard and the economic growth signifies the increase of power in the society.⁸

The Marxian perspective of power rejects the view that power is a societal resource held in trust by the authority for the benefit of all the members of the society. It is a radical alternative to Parsons's functionalist approach of power and the Marxian power is seen to be held by some group at the expense of the other. This concept is a 'constant-sum' concept of power since the power of the dominant group represents the rest of the society. The power is being used by the dominant group for their interest. This interest is in direct conflict with the interest of the subject which is different from the Parsons' view of power. For Marxian the source of power lies in the economic infrastructure. They are of the view that in all stratified societies the forces of production are owned and controlled by the minority i.e. the ruling group of people. They see that these forces of production provide the basis for the dominance. The used of power in the Marxian perspective through the exploitation of others is defined as coercion, which is seen as an illegitimate means to achieve their interest. To them if the ruling class power is accepted as legitimate by the subject class, this is an indication of false consciousness.⁹

Power is the ability to control others or the capacity of the super ordinates to affect the subordinates' action. Thus, power can be mainly classified into three types viz: force, coercion and influence. The types of power mention here are not mutually exclusive as it is not a social agent where it employed only one of these types at times and excludes the others. As Wartenberg writes: Actual power relations between social agents will not exhibit one of these types in separation from all others but will, at a minimum, consist of an array of these types, consolidated into the field that is a concrete power relation'.¹⁰

The first type of power is of 'force' which is used interchangeably with 'coercion' but can be distinguished with the analytical purpose. The exercised of force depend on the physical ability of the former that prevent the later in fulfilling his or her wish or cause something to do the things that he or she do not wish to do. For example 'P' force against 'Q' to do the work for the former in spite of the latter unwillingness. It can also prevent the choice of the latter and carry out with the interest of the former. Force is perhaps the elements that directly alter the action of another person. It can be a negative form of power by exercising this force in altering the action of another person.

⁸ ibid

⁹ Ibid p 121

¹⁰ Chakraborty, 2016, Political Sociology, Trinity Press p 41

However, the use of force does not always involve a direct attack on another person in order to realize his or her choice. But the subordinate is indeed kept in such a situation that he or she is no longer able to act on his or her own wishes.

The second type of power is of 'coercion' where the super ordinates threatens the subordinates and change the action of the other. This is possible when the subordinate recognized the reality and affectivity of the threat and accordingly change the course of his or her action. For example 'P' utilized against 'Q' by putting a threat that if 'Q' does not the wish of 'P' the life of the later is affected which will make the course of action of the latter change, otherwise 'Q' can be harmed by former one.

Wartenberg discuss about the different condition for the establishment of coercive power in the edited work of Chakraborty (2005) 'Political Sociology'. Firstly, a person who is to threaten the other must have the resources at his disposal that can effect some alteration in the action of the other. Secondly, the threatening group or person must be in a position to communicate to the threatened group or person of his ability to affect the later action. Thirdly the threatening group must be convinced not just the threatening group's ability to affect the later situation adversely but also latter's determination to do so if they accede to the threat.¹¹ Thus through the successful exercise of coercive power make the subordinate to compliance with the domination. In short we can say that coercion is more effective than that of the force.

The third type of power is 'influence'. As compare to the other two types of power which are consider being negative but in the case of influence it is a positive form of power. One of the distinctive features of influence is the function is the communicative interaction between the two agents. For example 'P' influences 'Q' to take up certain action through communicative interaction while 'Q' feels that such action will be better for him. In this manner 'P' is able to influence the course of action for 'Q'. We can also illustrate with another example of influence of a manager and a worker of the factory, where the manager advice the worker to take the course of action or to choose the technique and methods of work in the factory of the workers. Thus the latter will compliance with the advice of the manager. All the influence is not of positive form but it can also be negative where it can divert the attention of the other person that can hamper their life with his or her course of action. Say, when the dominant agent influences the subordinate agent to peruse the course of latter action for their interest.

To understand political institution it has to also study in line with the authority exercise in the society. According to Herbert Simon, "authority is the power to make decisions which guide the actions of another; it is a relationship between two- one superior and the other subordinate. The superior frames and transmit decisions that are

¹¹ Ibid p 42

to be obeyed by the subordinate. The subordinate accepts such decision and his conduct are determined by them’.

According to Weber, classify three types of authority viz- the rational legal authority, traditional authority and Charismatic authority. The legal rational authority is a kind of power which is legitimated by explicit rules and procedures. Such rules are deliberated in a written constitution and laws. In this case the authority can exercise power within the legally defined limits. Weber is of the view that “legal authority rests on enactment and which is represented by bureaucracy. The government body is either elected or appointed and function legally”.

The traditional authority is an authority legitimated by custom. The authority is grounded on unwritten laws and base on traditional belief. The traditional authority shared the values and belief that past down from generation to generation mostly base on kinships ties. The kingships or the chieftainship system of many tribal societies can be the example of the traditional authority.

Charismatic authority is a power legitimated by the quality of the person. To say it can be exceptional or having the supernatural qualities that people attributes to political, social and economics leaders. Weber is of the view that “charismatic authority rest on affectual and personal development of the follower to the leader for his or her charisma.”¹²

In 1960, Gabriel Abraham Almond and James Smoot Coleman discussed three core functions of a political system:

- i) To maintain the integration of society by determining norms.
- ii) To adapt and change elements of social, economic, and religious systems necessary for achieving collective (political) goals.
- iii) To protect the integrity of the political system from outside threats.¹³

4.2 Traditional Institution

Traditional political institutions in the context of Senapati District, it plays an important role in governance and decision-making in the society. The District is dominantly inhabited by the Naga and have a rich cultural past as well as a distinct political system that has evolved over time. Senapati district, like other Naga territories, has a traditional political system based on clan and village traditions.

Traditional political institutions have a crucial role in governance and decision-making in Naga society. The Naga people have a rich cultural legacy as well as a distinct

¹² Lewis A Coser, 1964, Master of sociological thought, New Delhi, Rawat Publication, page 226-227.

¹³ <https://www.thoughtco.com/political-institutions-44026> access on 12/14/2021

political structure that has evolved over millennia. The traditional political institution in Senapati district, like other Naga territories, is based on clan and village institutions which include tribal chief, elder council, and young leaders. These positions have varied degrees of authority and are in charge of preserving social order, resolving conflicts, and advocating for the tribe's interests. The Indian government recognises and respects the Naga people's traditional political institutions, and efforts have been made to accommodate their objectives through a shared governance and political representation system.

According to Weber, all forms of domination that occur in the history constitute “mixtures, combinations, adaptation or modification” of the traditional, the legal and charismatic type.¹⁴ Weber analysis begins with the pure types of domination. To him ‘familial charisma plays a role of kingship in Indian society which may be absent in legal domination; institution charisma is significant element in all church organizations, but absent from any priesthood that fails to develop a church organization’.¹⁵

Weber also further discussed traditional domination of the patriarchs and their household. He uses the term “patriachalism” referring to the authority of a master over his household which is a pure type traditional domination to Weber. The personality of household head is decided base on physical and mental dependence of women, child and servant for their need and protection. The familial respect for head of the family is different from that of the obligation of a subordinate of the legally constitute organization. The head of the family has no administrative staff and machinery to enforce his will but it depends on the willingness of the members to respect his authority. The relation of the head of family and household members is entirely personal. It became a duty of the family members to obey him and follow his commands in the belief that his right and their duty are part of and inviolable order that has sanctity of immemorial tradition. Accord to Weber, the belief depended on the fear of magical evils that would befall to the person who breach this custom, gradually superseded by the idea of deities had originated the traditional norms.

The traditional domination occurs wherever the ‘authorities’ claims obedience and the basis of established usage. To Weber traditional domination is a routine of the father’s authority over the family. Problem of organization emerge when the patriarchal head enlarge his property and increase the task of managing it. When these happen, the head usually set up his personal dependents and their families on individuals holdings which in principles all these possession remains his personal property. Thus personal subjection and the filial relations remain intact where the head’s will prevail and the customs oblige the members to help him out all the means at his disposal.

¹⁴ Reinhard, 2016, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait, Rawat Publication p.328

¹⁵ Ibid pp 328-329

Max Weber further discussed that political communities in a great despotic regimes of the West-Asia and in many ancient and medieval regimes of the West adopt the patriarchal authority. The purpose of this adaptation is to provide the needs of the ruler's personal household. The clothing, armaments and food needed by the ruler are among the district for the maintenance of the subject. To get this provision regularly, the patrimonial rulers often control their political subject as much as they control their personal dependent which is similar in all respect to their patriarchal control over their household. Thus he used the concept of 'patrimonialism' which means the governmental offices in the household administrative of the ruler. The government administrators are initially personal servants and personal representative of the ruler. They are recruited among the dependents of serf, slave and others who can comply with the ruler. The patrimonial servants are maintained as a member of the household and later as they get certain position or rank they became socially and economically significant.

In Weber's view patrimonialism is applicable in many varied economic structure, but to have strongly centralized patrimonial rule is often dependent upon trade. He also trade with others through imposition of duties, grant of monopoly, market concessions, fees etc. Thus the ruler extended this patrimonial authority over his own trade and also to avoid exploitation from others trade. His position to land ownership gave him an advantage to exploit economic opportunities.

With the extension and decentralization of patrimonial regime, the duties of the personal dependent may become lessened from the ruler's control. Thus it becomes difficult to distinguish between personal obedience of dependent and the public duties of the political subject. For that he patrimonial rule extension tends to remove the dependent and political subject from the control of the ruler. Moreover the extension of patrimonial rule lead to decentralization of authority and also go together with an increase need for revenue in money and in kind.

Patrimonial ruler used the method of heredity subjection in the broader sense. For example the guilds and occupational association take responsible for the service and contribution to its members of the society.¹⁶ Thus the rule are accompany by granting the members the rights over the production and in this way ruler gain privilege in exchange for the duties he impose. Thus he mentions of ancient Egypt, Orient, and Byzantine and late Roman Empire is in fact of patrimonial rule. Where hereditarily bound to occupation or soil which is liable to compulsory service of the ruler. Ancient Egypt can be one of the most consistent examples of patrimonialism as the population was entirely dependent upon one main river as per the geographical location. The easy travels of waterways facilitate the central political to control over people.

¹⁶ Reinhard, 2016, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait, Rawat Publication pp.337

4.3 Dormitory System

Dormitory is the old form of social institution that is found in the tribal societies. This dormitory is that place where youth came and live together, interact with each other. Thus, in India this dormitory plays an important role in the development of social, culture and religious of the tribes. Roy, (1915) points out in his studies among the Oraons that youth dormitory is an 'effective economic organisation a usual seminary for training young people in their social and other duties'.

Dormitory is derived from the Latin word 'dormitorium' which refers to a communal or collective sleeping quarter. Scholar has different view about the origin of the dormitory system. Some group of people think that they follow the ancient communal houses where the whole village used to live under one roof and have no individual home. Other group of people are of the view that the purpose of youth dormitory is to keep away the boys and girls unaware of the sexual relationship of their parents. Moreover, it is also assumed that the dormitory is set to gather the youth and keep in one place for emergency in time attack by the animals or by the other tribe. In fact the dormitory system is the culture of the tribe that is being practice since time immemorial.

The dormitory system is known by different names in different tribes. The Nagas of Assamese called 'Morung'. Among the Mundas and Ho tribes of Madhya Pradesh it is called 'Gitiora', in Uttar Pradesh it is called 'Rangbang', while the Oraons call it as 'Dhoomkuriya'. The Angami tribe of called it as Kechuki, the Sumi tribe called is Apuki and the Lotha tribe called is as Chumpo, and so on.

4.3.1 Types of Dormitory

There are two types of Dormitory that is found in India.

- i) **Mono-sexual youth Dormitories:** The mono-sexual dormitory is a kind of dormitory that is mean only for boys or girls.
- ii) **Bi-Sexual youth Dormitory:** this is a dormitory that both boys and girls sleep in the same dormitory. For example the Miami tribes of Assam have this type of dormitory where the boys and girls stay in the same dormitory through different arrangement like girls sleep in the ground floor and boys in first floor.

The nature of the youth dormitory differs from tribe to tribe. Some tribe has the separate dormitory for boys and girls while some tribe has the common dormitory for

both. Normally the dormitories are situated outside the village but for some the dormitories are situated in the middle of the village, for example like the Oraons tribe. The dormitories have certain rules and regulation guided by the tradition and customs where the members are obliged to follow. The age of membership for dormitory differs from tribe to tribe but in general it is about four or five years and stay till they get marriage. For some tribe if the girl became widow, she can enter again the dormitory as its member. In the dormitory further it divides into different category as junior and senior. However, they carried out all the works together.

Shibani Roy in his article '*Tribal Youth Dormitory: A Hiatus or Heuristic*' discussed the nine universal behavioural system of the dormitory system. They are- Succorance; that is asking others for help, Nurturance; which is giving help or emotional support to others, Self-reliance; it means doing for oneself, achievement; which refer to the striving in order to meet the standard of excellence, Responsibility; that is performing one's expected role and duties. Obedience; which is to attempt in meeting the demands of others, Dominance; which attempt to change the behaviour of others, Sociability; having a friendly approach to other individual and aggression; which refer to hurting others.¹⁷

In the Senapati district of the study area the three major tribe also have their own system of dormitory or Morung. Among the Poumai Naga tribe they called as Kheloukizii¹⁸ or Reipeiki. While they have the separate dormitory for boys and girls; 'Khekizii' is for the boys and Loukizii¹⁹ is for girls. In Mao tribe they called 'Khruchozü' for boys and 'Lochoü' for girls while in Maram tribe they called 'Rehangki' for boys and 'Rulaki' for girls. These dormitory systems play an important role in the society. Through this institution the youth learned how to be a responsible adult in the society. Various vocational training like art of blacksmith, construction, art of war, folk dance, games, carving, and construction and so on are learned through this institution. Moreover, the morals values are also being taught through this institution. Thus it can be said that this dormitory is a centre of education for the youth to be a responsible adults.

4.3.2 Decline of Dormitory System

With time, the dormitory system has declined or lost its significance. The coming of Christianity is one of the reasons that people started to practice the old traditional value system that the indigenous religious group was practicing. The modern educational system is another factor that leads to the decline of the 'Morung' system. Before the

¹⁷ Shibani Roy, Tribal youth Dormitory: A Hiatus or Heuristic, Anthropological Survey of India, Central Regional Centre, Seminary Hills, p.20

¹⁸ *Kheloukizii* is a local dialect which refers to the sleeping house of the youth.

¹⁹ *Loukizii* is the local term which refers to the sleeping house of girls who are unmarried.

modern educational system, Morung, or the dormitory system, was considered a center of education. However, with the modern education system, people go to schools and colleges without time to spend in the dormitory.

Moreover, they also learned the value system and gained knowledge through the educational institution; they do not want to return to Morung. Thus, slowly, it has lost its significance among the tribes of India. It has played a significant role among the tribe in shaping and molding the youth.

4.4 Chieftainship

The chieftainship system is the oldest form of governance among the tribal of Manipur which is practice till today. Dominantly tribals depend on agricultural for their livelihood. People in small group live and scatters all over the place. Those groups of people form a village with a defined territory. Thus in order to protect the members, cattle, they need a strong person with exceptional quality to lead the village or that group. These essentialities give rise to from a chieftainship and the council of elders. The role and function of the chief differs from village to village, tribe to tribe and society to society.

In Kuki society, they called it 'Housa' (chieftainship), which is still practiced today. Many tribal societies have been replaced by the headman and his village Council; the system of chieftainship still exists as a local self-governance among the Kukis of Manipur.²⁰ In the Khasi society, the king is called 'Syiem.' He is the head of the 'Hima' and is considered the guardian of all the people of Hima. He controls and cares for people like the mother cares for their children. The Syiem presides over the Executive Committee meeting and the Durbar. The Syiem Hima is to be appointed from the Syiem clan, which is considered a royal clan, and the heirship to the Syiem office is done through the female offspring.²¹

The khasi society also has a village headman which is called 'Rangbah Shnong'. He is the person who is a care taker of resources and his village people. Like to Syiem, Rangbah Shnong also presides over the Executive Committee meeting and Rangbah Shnong. With the legal rules and the system of government through the implementation of government schemes, the role of Rangbah Shnong has increase. Moreover the executive members of the Rangbah Shnong play a major role in the implementation of community development and infrastructure developmental schemes.²²

²⁰ Khaikhohauh Gangte et. 2014, Kuki Traditional Institution and Development: role of village chief in Manipur. Social Work Journal.

²¹ Dr. B.K Tiwari. Formerly Professor of Environmental Science, NEHU, Shillong, bktiwarinehu@gmail.com , structure and functioning of traditional institution in Meghalaya.

²² ibid

In the traditional society of Senapati district also has the chieftainship form of governance. The village is under the control of the chief mainly to protect the members of the village and their cattle from outsiders. The major tribes that settled in the Senapati district has their own term of calling the chief of the head. The Poumai Naga Tribe called 'Ve'o' which literally means the king.

The Mao tribe called 'Movuo' which refer to the chief or the king. The administration of the village is taken care by the chief (Movuo) where he is assisted by the council of elders. Particular clan is considered as the royal clan. From this clan an individual is given the title of the king of that particular village. The Maram tribe called the chief or king as the 'Sagong'.

The chief of the village play a vital role in the traditional society. In the past the village has little or no knowledge about the legal rational authority control. They mainly rely on the chief of the village. The respondent says "*in the past it is the chief or king of the village who has all the right in enactment of laws and execute at his discretion*". To say, the village chief plays a vital role in the decision making of the village. He is also the care taker of the whole village. It is said that in the past village to village wage war again each other. Especially the Nagas society they count their prestige through the head count of the enemy. The one who bring more head is consider as the "Men of all the Man" which means he is consider being the hero of that village. This is also want to agent that gives rise to the chieftain system. Another reason for the maintenance of the chief is to protect the village from outsiders and also cattle's from other animals. Not only, there is the need for the organise village to run efficiently; they need a leader for that village. Thus all this functions is played by the chief of the village.

S C Dube, in his book "Indian Village" (1955) discussed the concept of 'Little Republic'. He is of the opinion that Indian village are economically self-sufficient unit and have the simple form of government. The king or the chief of the village governed the village and they are less concerned of higher political authority that is ruling them. Likewise the tribal villages of Manipur, in particular that of the Senapati district is of 'Little Republic'. Even during the colonial ruled they are less bother about the higher authority that is ruling them. They are self-sufficient economically for their sustenance and hardly depend on others. There is also good coordination between the chief of the village and the members of the village.

The chief of the village also play an important role in agricultural activities. The date of plantation is to be decided by the chief of the village. This mainly applies to the paddy transplantation. In the Poumai Naga tribe the day of plantation is still celebrated as 'Paoki'²³. The day of this plantation is fixed by the chief of the village. This 'Paoki'

²³ *Paoki* is a festival of paddy transplantation among the Poumai Naga tribes of Manipur. The date of plantation differs from village to village depending on monsoon and climate.

festival is celebrated since time immemorial. They invite the neighbouring village to join the celebration. The date of the celebration differs from village to village. Certain rituals are being performed before the day of the celebration. All this ritual is being performed by the king or the chief of the village. Thus, mostly this Paoki celebration falls in the month of May and June of the year depending on the climate and arrival of the monsoon. This role of the king that is being practice before the Christianity is still practice even today.

4.5 Village Council

With the passes of time the rigidity of the chieftainship became vague. Many tribal villages now instead of calling the king or chief of the village they prefer to call him as the headman of the village. Certain ritual that is being practice traditionally is still carried out by the headman of the village. Thus, headman along with his village council governed the village.

As per the ‘The Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas Act 1956’ with the Act No. 80 of 1956 on 22nd December, 1956 passed an Act to consolidated and amend the law relating to the constitution and function of the village in the hill areas of the Union Territory of Manipur.

In this act it discussed about the constitution of the village authorities where village having twenty or more tax-paying houses, there shall be a village authorities consisting of-

- i) Five members, where the number of tax-paying houses in the villages is not less than twenty but not more than sixty.
- ii) Seven members, where the number of tax-paying houses in the village is more than sixty but not more than hundred.
- iii) Ten members, where the number of tax- paying houses in the village is more than one hundred but not more than one hundred and fifty.
- iv) Twelve members, where the number of tax- paying houses in the village is more than one hundred and fifty.²⁴

As per the Act (The Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas) 1956, the qualification for the membership of the village authorities are- he should be a citizen of India, and should not be less than twenty-five years of age and in the cases of the elected village authorities should be registered in the electoral roll as a voter for election of village Authorities as a member. Thus a person will be disqualified for a member of the Village Authorities if a member is of any other village, if he is unsound mind and stand so declared by a competent authority. The term of the village authority as per the Act is

²⁴ The Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956.

three years from the date appointed on first meeting. In regards to the removal of the village authority, the Deputy Commissioner may remove any member of the village authority from his office if he is convicted of any non-bailable offence, if he refuses to act or is incapable of acting, or is declared to be insolvent, who is declared to be disqualified for employment in public service, absents himself for consecutive six month meeting of village authority, who is considered as guilty of misconduct in his discharge.

4.5.1 Function of Village Authority

The Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas Act 1956 enact certain function of the village authorities that is to be performed within their jurisdiction-

- i) To maintain law and order and also to exercise and perform the duties conferred and imposed on police under the police Act, 1861.
- ii) It shall cause to be arrested without any order from the magistrate and without any warrant-
- iii) If a person commits a heinous offence or reasonable suspicion of his having been so concerned. Also arrest any person against whom a hue and cry has been raised on the ground of heinous offence.
- iv) To arrest any person against whom the arrest requisition has been received from the police officer.
- v) Arrest any person designing to commit any heinous offence of which the village authority has knowledge and where the commission offence cannot be prevented.
- vi) Arrest any person who obstructs the village authority in the performance of its function under the Act or the rule made by the police officer to carry out his duty.
- vii) To deal or arrest any person who has escaped, or attempts to escape from lawful custody.
- viii) To give immediate information to the sub-division magistrate of every unnatural, suspicious or sudden death which may occur, and of any heinous offence which may be committed within the local limits of its jurisdiction.
- ix) To supply any information which any police officer or sub-divisional magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner may require.²⁵

Thus no person can be detained in the custody without being informed. Every person who is being arrested shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty four hours of such arrest.

The Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas Act 1956 also discussed the administration of justice by the village authorities. Through the notification in the

²⁵ The Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956.

Official Gazette, the Chief Commissioner appoint any two or more members of the village authority to be a village court in their term of village authority. The jurisdiction of village court in criminal cases will not withstand anything contained in the code of Criminal Procedure of 1898, where the village court shall have the jurisdiction of local limits where the village is situated. The complaint of the case in village can be done through oral or in writing to the member of the village court. The village court has the power to demise or refuse to entertain the complaint after throughout examination of the complaint and its relevancy. In case if the complaint fails to appear before the village court on the fixed date, the case can be demises as default for negligence. On the other hand if the case is not demise, the court will summon and asked accuse to answer the compliant. If the accused is not found, the village court will report to the nearest magistrate, who may issue a warrant to arrest the accused.

The village court also can impose fine or award compensation. It may also ask the convicted person to pay a fine which does not exceed two hundred rupees or imprisonment not exceeding one month. When the court imposed fine, it is utilised for payment of compensation for any lose or injury caused by the offence. If the person in default of payment within ten days of the passing of the sentence or within the further date, the court may cause him to be arrested and may put to the nearest jail to serve his sentence. The person who is imprisoned will be released if the fine is paid before the expiry of the imprisonment term. The court has the power to release certain offenders after admonition or on probation. The village court also can transfer the criminal cases from village to another or to any other court through an application written to Deputy Commissioner or to the sub-divisional magistrate.

The jurisdiction of the village court in civil cases will not withstand anything that is contained in the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 (5 of 1908), thus the jurisdiction is limited to the village where it is situated for the suits like- suits for money due to contract, suit for the recovery of movable property or the value of such property, damage done by the cattle, compensation for wrongfully taking or injuring the movable property. The certain suits that cannot be tried in the village court like balance of partnership account, against the government of public officers, against minors or person with unsound mind, and others like reduction, abetment, recovery of rent of immovable property etc. The suits also shall not lie in the village unless one of the defendants resides in the jurisdiction of that village.

The decision of the village court will be final between the parties. When the complaint is heard and the evidence on both side is considered, the village court by written will pass the decree as may seems equitable and just according to good conscience. Thus, in the decree the payable amount may be asked to pay in instalment, or deliver of any movable property. However, the verdict of the village court can also be

retrial through the application of any party through the district judge within thirty days from the decree of the village court.

Moreover, the village authorities also have given the power to make certain rules. The Chief Commissioner may notify through official Gazette to make rule to carry out the Act of Manipur Village Authorities in Hill Areas, 1956. Roles like preparation, revision and final publication of election rolls for the village Authority members. Rules for nomination of candidates, time and manner in which way election to be held and the manner of votes and others matters relating to election dispute are also done by Village Authorities as per the Act. Regulation of conducts for business and numbers of members to form a quorum in the village court and the procedure of execution of decrees, order and sentence of village court is also done by them under the Act. Others like procedure to transfer of criminal cases and civil suits from one village to the other. Thus, this Act gives certain right to village authority to maintain law and order in the particular village.

Thus, in the traditional institution the governing of the society is base on the certain norms, values, mores, and folkways. Most of these elements are passed down from generation to generation orally. People are obliged to obey this norms and values and custom of the society. Let's understand certain concepts that are used in the traditional institution and in their governing of the society.

Custom

Custom according to Merriam- Webster dictionary, custom refers to 'a usage or practice common to many or to a particular place or class or habitual with and individual. According to the dictionary of sociology, "custom are established ways of thinking and acting in societies."²⁶

Folkways

According to the Merriam- Webster definition, 'a folkway is a mode of thinking, feeling or acting that is common to a given group of people. The term is closely associated with the work of William Graham Sumner's 'Folkways' (1906) in which he make a major contribution to sociology with his analysis of the nature and significance of folkways and mores. Sumner is of the view that societies develop a particular way of acting the suited the social environment and by repetitive way of behaving they produce a habit within the individuals and a custom among the group which this habit is called folkways.

Mores

²⁶ Ibid p-154

Mores refers to the moral rules or ways of behaving that most members of the society believe are essential for maintaining standards of decency.²⁷ Thus it is the norms, customs and the behavioral that is socially accepted. The difference between folkways and mores is that, the former do not enforce but the latter is enforced and the defaulter may be punished through group disapproval and sanction.

Norms

Norms is refers to the shared standard of behavior which is considered as appropriate and desirable by the society. According to Young and Mack, norms refer to “group shared expectation”. In fact norms are the set of rules for the people what people should do or should not do. Thus it is a blue print of the behavior and is of universal as no society can perform smoothly without the norms of the society. Sanction of norms varies from society to society. However, norms have a functional importance as it guide the behavior and maintain social order.

Values

The term ‘value’ has different meaning for different subjects and also through its uses. However, in sociology the term ‘value’ represents the part of social structure. In other word, it constitutes the important part of the culture for a society. According to H.M Johnson, “a value refers to a general standard which may be regarded as higher order norms”. Values are simply measures in terms of desirability or goodness. Thus values bring about a kind adjustment within the different sets of rules and bring stability in the society.

4.6 Role of Women in Traditional Institution

Time in memorial women in the Nagas society are not bound to four corner of the wall. We have known that the women also in their youth they have their dormitory system where they learn and educate themselves traditionally. Women are considered to be the keepers of the wealth of a house. However the involvement of women in certain ritual is consider as necessary. In the Poumai Naga tribe there is a feast like *Zhosou*²⁸ which is host by the couple for attaining higher status in the society. In this feast both wife and husband take the equal part in the rituals. In the *Zhosou* ceremonial rite it has to be performed by two priests and one priestess.²⁹

²⁷ John Scott and Gordon Marshall, 2009, Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University Press p-489

²⁸ *Zhosou* is a feast throws by the family to the village for the feat that they have achieved in their lifetime. This is practice in Poumai Naga tribe and the feast is practice in rare case with high respect to the person or family for their achievement.

²⁹ L M Tabitha Trumy, Perspective of Women Leadership in Poumai Community an article in “ The Place of Women in Naga Society” published by Naga Women Union (NWU) International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) p-200

Among the Mao tribe, women are also considered equal to men and given certain respect and honor to take responsibility. One of the instants that we can picture is that of the Punanamei Village. When the Chief or the king (Movuo) Ariijii died in the 1940s, his wife Kaikhra became a caretaker till her grandson H Chakhko is coronated as a chief of the village.³⁰

Another unique feature of the role of women in the traditional institution of governing the society we see in the Maram community. In spite of the patriarchy system of governing the society, the Maram has a unique feature of passing the responsibilities to the wife by giving the title of ‘Queen’ till her son is coronated as king. The king of Maram Karang who died in 1953 so his wife Hinga take up the responsibility taking the title of Queen as served the people for 47 years till her dead on 27th August 2010. Queen Hinga reign is being recognised for her liberal approach to the traditional norms and values. It is said that in the past they strictly followed the lunar calendar in regards to plantation which may delay because the they could not go ahead until the king perform the rituals, but this restriction was make lenient making people to carried out agricultural activities with their conveniences.³¹

The society been a patriarchal society, male dominate the society. In a male-dominated family, patriarchy literally means "rule of the father". It is a social and intellectual construct that holds males (the patriarchs) to be superior to women. In her book ‘*Theorising Patriarchy*’, Sylvia Walby defines it as “a system of social structures and behaviours in which males rule, oppress, and exploit women” (Walby, 1990). Patriarchy is built on a hierarchical and unequal structure of power relations in which men dominate women's productivity, reproduction, and sexuality. It enforces masculine and femininity tropes in society, which strengthens inequitable power relations between men and women. Nevertheless, the form of female domination and subjection varies from civilization to society due to variances in class, caste, religion, area, ethnicity, and socio-cultural traditions.

To have a better understanding of society and their decision making in the family the opinion of respondent were gathered which is shown in below table.

Table 4.1 Opinion on decision making in family

Gender	Decision maker in family				Total
	Father	Mother	Both	No Response	
Male	95 (63.3%)	0 (.0%)	54 (36.0%)	1 (.7%)	150 (100.0%)

³⁰ Dr. Lohro Mary Maheo, Mao/ Ememei Women in Contemporary world article on International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. P-128

³¹ Kanga Dishung, Alcoholism and women in Maram Society an article on ‘The place of Women in Naga Society’ p-145

Female	127 (50.8%)	21 (8.4%)	100 (40.0%)	2 (.8%)	250 (100.%)
Total	222 (55.5%)	21 (5.2%)	154 (38.5%)	3 (.8%)	400 (100.0%)

The table shows the respondents' opinions on who makes the family's decision. Out of 100 percent, 55.5 percent of the respondents believe that the family's father makes the decision, with 63.3 percent male and 50.8 percent female of the total respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 5.2 percent of the respondents believe that the family's mother decides the family, with 8.4 percent female. At the same time, 38.5 percent of the is of view that both parents decide for the family, with 36.0 percent male and 40.0 percent female of the total male and female respondents respectively. Apart from that, 0.8 percent did not respond to the question, with 0.7 percent male and 0.8 percent female of total male and female respondents, respectively.

The above figure shows father is the one who makes more decisions in the family. However, through the figure, it can also be seen that mother of the family also take part in the decision-making. As many as 38.5 percent believe that both parents is involved in the family's decision-making. The district is a patriarchal society; it can be seen that the father, as the head of the family, takes the decision of the family. On the other hand, the mother's participation in decision-making cannot be neglected. In fact, there are families with a father where it becomes an obligation for a mother to take all the family's responsibility. Apart from those widows, women can be seen taking part in the family though it is less compared to their male counterparts. Some people also say a woman has a good sense of approaching things and makes good decisions. Moreover, the figure also shows how both parents collectively decide for the family.

The question was also put forward to understand the involvement of women in the decision making process of the society. The table below shows the opinion of the respondents.

Table 4.2 Opinion on decision making in Society

Gender	Response of respondents				Total
	Male	Female	Both	No response	
Male	77 (51.3%)	4 (2.7%)	67 (44.7%)	2 (1.3%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	152 (60.8%)	9 (3.6%)	89 (35.6%)	0 (.0%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	229 (57.2%)	13 (3.2%)	156 (39.0%)	2 (.5%)	400 (100.0%)

The above shows the responses of the respondents about the decision making in the society. Out of 100 per cent 57.2 per cent is of the opinion that male take a major decision in the society. On the other hand 3.2 per cent of respondents are of the view that women takes decision in the society, while 39.0 per cent have that opinion that both male and female take part in the decision of the society and 0.5 per cent with no responses. From the figure it shows that male are the major decision make of the society. From the above table 4.1 and 4.2 it can be seen that male take the main decision in the family and society. However, in the decision making of family the participation of women can be seen more as compare to the society. This is to say that in village the Village Council take almost every decision of the village.

However, with the interview and group discussion it has also found out that women in spite of not being a part of the meeting the village for the decision making process, women also have women organization who take an active role in taking the decision making for the welfare of the society. It has found out that every village has the women wing or women association that look upon the matters related to the welfare of the society. Women have the parallel body like a village council and function with the set of laws and rules of the organization. The major decision was take in the village council but women organization also adds addition policy for the maintenance of law and order in the village or society. However, the decision taken by the women in certain aspect need the approval of the council of the village for the implementation. Thus, during the meeting of the council women representative table their discussed resolution for the implementation of the discussed matter. This process shows how women also involved in the decision making by voicing their ideas for the welfare of the village.

4.7 Women as Peace Initiative

Women in time immemorial play an important role in maintaining of peace and order of the society. One of the respondent said, “*Women are put in the front during the time of war or conflict in order to bring peace*” which is to say that women play a vital role traditionally. Going to the front line in time of bad situation is a bold step, sacrificing their life for the village or society. Xavier (1998: 39) also mention that ‘ in a battle ground between two warrior groups, if a women come in between with a cloth or a leave and wave, the fight between the two has to be stop’. In the Poumai Naga tribe the act of ‘viidakha’ that is stopping the fight is done by women. When the two village or groups could not settle the dispute, they fixed the date for the fight in which might win the case. In this situation where the either parties refuse to surrendered, and stand face to face for a fight, the women entered in between weaving themselves with a cloths or a leave and stop the fight.

Till today we can see that women play an active role in the peace keeping in the society. Women around the world are actively involved in the campaign for peace. Say

for example “women in black” is an active organization in Israel in order to bring peace between the conflict of Palestine as well as ethnic conflict of former Yugoslavia. Even in the South Africa women organization play a vital role in regards to apartheid struggle. Likewise in the north east India women organization play a vital role in maintaining of peace and order in the society. Nagas Mothers’ Association (NMA) which was form in 14 February 1984 at Kohima with its motto- shed no blood, which is protect and confront insurgency and others problems in the society. There is also Naga Women Union which was founded in 5th October 1994 by the Naga tribal women of Manipur. They work for promoting and defending the right and dignity of women and also deal with the tribal issues in order to bring peace in the society.

In the Senapati district of Manipur there are different women organizations that look for the welfare of the society. The different tribe has their own women organization which they play a vital role in maintaining peace and tranquility in the society. The district as a whole has the Senapati District Women Association (SDWA); also different tribe with different women organization like Poumai Naotumai Me (Poumai Naga Women Union), Mao Naga Women Welfare Association (MNWWA), Maram Women Union (MWU) etc. All these women association are form to look after the well being of the people and to maintain peace and order of the society. People also express their opinion that these women organizations give women with platforms and tools to help them improve their skills, knowledge, and self-confidence. They provide training programmes, workshops, mentoring, and leadership development opportunities to encourage women to actively engage in decision-making and to assume leadership responsibilities. Women's organizations offer assistance and services to women who are facing a variety of issues. Counseling, legal aid, lodging, healthcare, and vocational training may be included. They provide safe locations for women to tell their stories, seek assistance, and gain access to resources. In fact with this organization can be seen actively participating in decision making by raising their voice.

In spite of this participation of women in the traditional institution this research explores the impact of tradition and custom of the society. It has found out that there are certain traditional practices that apply in the society as do’s and don’ts for the women. There are certain traditional taboos which is practices time immemorial like:

- Women are forbidden to climb the tree,

- As warrior tribe women are not allow to touch the bow, arrow and others weapon use by men.

- Prohibit in digging the grave of the dead person,

-Women are not allowed to cross the leg of men.

-It is a taboo for a girl to keep short hair.

To have a better understanding of how tradition and custom impact the life of the women, the opinion of the respondent taken into consideration. The question was put upon them whether the tradition and custom that is in practices in the district is rigid by making them to answer either 'Yes', 'No' and 'Cannot decide'. From the responses of the respondents the below table is drawn.

Table 4.3 Opinion on rigidity of tradition and custom

Gender	Yes (%)	No (%)	Cannot decide (%)	Total (%)
Male	42 (28.0%)	84 (56.0%)	24 (16.0%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	75 (30.0%)	142 (56.8%)	33 (13.2%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	117 (29.2%)	226 (56.5%)	57 (14.2%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows the respondent's opinions on society's rigid traditions and customs. Of the 400 respondents, 250 were female, and 150 were male. Of these, 29.2 percent say "yes," with 28.0 percent male and 30.0 percent female respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 56.5 percent said "no," with 56.0 percent male and 56.8 percent female, while 14.2 percent could not decide with the percentages of 16.0 percent male and 13.2 percent female, respectively. From the above figure, it has been found that the rigidity of tradition and custom has lost its ground in society. Moreover, through the interview and group discussion, it has also been found that the tradition and custom practiced in society in the past has become more liberal in outlook. The respondents believe that education plays a vital role in reducing the rigidity of traditions and customs.

On the other hand, it is not totally neglected. From the figure in the table, one can still conclude that the practices of tradition and custom in the district still have some elements of rigidity despite its liberal outlook. It has also been found that these practices are more enforced in rural societies where is less educated and where they tend to stick to old tradition and custom. Over time, some old traditions and customs started to lose momentum. Through Western education and other socialization processes, people start to change their perspective of things. Respondents' responses clearly show how rigidity is becoming more flexible in society.

In order to understand the approach of women to tradition and custom that is in practices in the society the opinion of the respondents was asked on the prevailing tradition and custom. The researcher through the questionnaire takes the views of the

respondent asking them whether the women accept the prevailing tradition and custom of the society.

Table 4.4 Acceptance of prevailing tradition and custom by women

Gender	Acceptance of prevailing tradition and custom by women			Total
	Yes	No	Cannot decide	
Male	104 (69.3%)	21 (14.0%)	25 (16.7%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	192 (76.8%)	22 (8.8%)	36 (14.4%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	296 (74.0%)	43 (10.8%)	61 (15.2%)	400 (100.0%)

The above figure shows women's approaches toward the prevailing tradition and customs in society. Out of 100 percent of respondents, 74.0 percent believe that women accept the prevailing tradition and customs of the society, with 69.3 percent male and 76.8 percent female. On the other hand, 10 percent of the respondents said 'No' with 14.0 percent male and 8.8 percent female, while 15.2 percent responded as 'cannot say' with 16.7 percent male and 14.4 percent female, respectively. The figure above the table shows the people's outlook toward the tradition and customs prevailing in society. Thus, most male and female respondents believe that women accept society's prevailing traditions and customs. The reason for the acceptance is because of the social setting and environment where they live. Mrs. Lorou (name change for identity purposes), a respondent, says, *"It is more or less as an obligation to accept the prevailing tradition and custom because those who do not abide by it, they become the odd one out"* In fact that is visible in a society where he or she lives when people do things which is contradict to the prevailing practices they become the odd one.

Despite accepting the prevailing tradition and custom of society, it can also be seen that 14.0 percent of males and 8.8 percent of females do not agree with the statement that women accept the prevailing tradition and custom of society. Those respondents who say 'no' are mainly educated males and females. They are of the opinion that there are certain traditions and customs that undermine women. For example, the preference of male to female is due to the patrilineal where the descendent is traced from the male line, and also, the property is passed through the male. In order to continue the generation, people prefer male children to females. Through modern education, people start to have a value judgment on the prevailing tradition and custom practices in society, making them point out certain elements that are difficult to accept by women. On this point, even the educated male is also of the views that which are not applicable and undermine other individuals' lives are not accepted by women. People also express their opinion that everyone is equal before the law and should have equal opportunity

In the traditional system we see that most of the governing system is based on the patriarchy system. Gender roles and expectations are assigned by patriarchy. Men are often linked with characteristics such as strength, aggressiveness, and leadership, whereas women are expected to be nurturing, submissive, and focused on household responsibilities. Individuals' options and possibilities are limited by gender norms, maintaining existing power relations. Patriarchal rules and ideals are instilled in children from an early age. Gender-specific behaviors, attitudes, and expectations are instilled in children through family, education, media, and other social institutions. This socialization promotes traditional gender norms and sustains the patriarchal system down through the generations.

However, modern education has broken this chain where the old traditional practices start to lose their place in the society. Education is viewed as a vital step towards women's empowerment since it allows them to tackle problems, confront their established roles, and transform their lives. Women's education is the most potent weapon for changing their social status. Large numbers of women in the district are still uneducated, backward, vulnerable, and exploited. Education also helps to decrease inequities and improves their standing within the family. As per the survey it has found out that women who do not accept the prevailing tradition and customs are from an educated background. As they start to know the rights of human and the protection of constitution and other laws, their approaches towards those norms, custom and tradition hampering the life of women change.

Values and standards vary as cultures advance and evolve. Traditional ideals such as equality, human rights, and social justice may clash with contemporary values such as these. Traditional practices that perpetuate inequality or injury may lose acceptance and impact when awareness rises and individuals reject outmoded conventions. Moreover, increased access to education has changed the perspective of the people. As people expose to new perspectives and critical thinking, and new ideas through education they start to question and reject particular traditions when they have access to knowledge that calls their validity or relevance into doubt. Globalization and greater cultural interchange have exposed the rural societies to a broader range of cultural practices and ideas from around the world.

Women's empowerment and the battle for gender equality have also called into question established gender norms and practices. Women increasingly challenge and question traditional practices that limit their freedom and possibilities as they achieve more rights, education, and economic independence. This potential has eroded patriarchal norms and customs.

Legal reforms and human rights activism are critical in confronting and eradicating discriminatory practices and behaviors. Gender equality laws or anti-

discrimination legislation substantially impact traditional practices of the society that perpetuate inequality or damage. Human rights campaigns and movements also emphasize the detrimental repercussions of some traditions, leading to their rejection or reform. Moreover, economic and social upheavals such as urbanization, industrialization, and migration have disrupted traditional practices. Some traditional rituals start to lose relevance or face challenges when cultures become more urbanized and people are exposed to new ways of life due to changing social structures and dynamics.

CHAPTER FIVE

RURAL WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

5.1 Introduction

Democracy implies equality for all humans, male and female. The United Nation observed that women constitute “world largest excluded category”. Usha Narayanan is of the opinion that “a better political participation should be ensured for the attainment of democratic spirit. And in struggle for justice “political participation is the first and foremost step to attain it”.¹ Gandhi in 1925 says that “As long as women in India do not participate in public lives; there can be no salvation in the country”. According to the Beijing Declaration (1995) of United Nation, "we are convinced that women's empowerment and full involvement on the basis of equality in all aspects of society, including decision-making and access to power, are the basic for the attainment of equality, development, and peace".

Indian being a democracy country, equal representation or citizen participation, democratic governance, democratic voting system, respect of human rights is essential as it determined the maturity of its democracy. Women's political participation and their involvement in decision-making speak volumes, when it comes to the smooth functioning of the democracy. Before the detail discussion of women's political participation it is pertinent to understand the various stages of the women's movement and struggle towards political empowerment. The political empowerment of women has gone through the different stage which is discussed below.

5.2 Historical perspective on Feminist Movement and Political Empowerment

The first wave of feminism emerged During the World War I with the National Women's Party (NWP) stage a confrontational demonstration outside the White House, accusing the government of undemocratic activities. Women's suffrage had already been given in Germany, but in United States—the proponent of liberty and democracy for all—had yet to enfranchise half of its population. The banner sparked indignation, police were given orders to arrest the picketers, and bystanders destroyed the banner (Campbell, 1989). It was treasonous when they compare Germany to the United States. The marchers understood exactly what they were doing: dressed to their best, they gave no opposition to the police, shocking and appealing to the people. They embodied White, middle-class femininity while engaged in highly unfeminine, less-than-bourgeois behavior. The action was inspired by radical agitator Alice Paul (1885–1977), who

¹ Usha, Narayanan (1999) Women's Political Empowerment: Imperatives and Challenges. Mainstream, April 10, p.7

brought militant methods to the NWP, including parades, marches, picketing (mostly outside the White House), and watch fires to burn President Wilson's speeches (Campbell, 1989). Alice Paul's tactics were combative but also astute, and they irritated President Wilson, who favored the less radical tactics of the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

The first wave of feminism in the United States was intertwined with other reform movements, such as abolition and temperance, and initially involved women from the working classes. It was, however, backed by Black women abolitionists like Maria Stewart (1803–1879), Sojourner Truth (1797–1883), and Frances E. W. Harper (1825–1911), who fought for the rights of women of color. Before any successful attempts to organize female workers, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and many others from the more radical portions of the women's rights movement appeared as delegates to the National Labor Union Convention in 1868 (Firestone, 1968). Women's rights advocates grew resolved to correct this clear injustice after progressively realizing that disenfranchisement impeded reformatory efforts. Furthermore, the American Civil War, as well as World War I and World War II, resulted in a serious backlash for women's rights, as the focus shifted to national unity and patriotism.

Suffragists challenged gender norms, in regards to the correct behavior and speech of female. They began by engaging in public persuasion, which was frowned upon at the time. They said "No 'real women' could be a public persuader", Campbell (1989). Second, their actions defied the "cult of domesticity", which held that a genuine woman's work is to be carried out household chores, tending to the needs of her husband and children. Women were also expected to be modest, have only indirect power, and avoid participating in public events. As a result, when a woman talked in public, she was demonstrating male traits by definition. She was even ignoring her inherent flaws—a smaller intellect and a more vulnerable body—which she was meant to defend in order to maintain her reproductive skills. This argument is based on the premise that men and women are fundamentally different, and that women are naturally oriented to parenting and domesticity.

However, the argument went, enfranchising women would benefit society because they would then enhance politics with their "innately" feminine interests. Furthermore, if women had the right to vote, the reasoning went, they would be better mothers and housewives. Another well-used argument, on the other hand, is fairness (Campbell, 1989). According to this reasoning, women and men are equal in all ways, at least in legal terms; hence, denying women the vote was tantamount to denying them of full citizenship (Campbell, 1989, p. 14). Politically, this point of view led to the idea that both men and women should be treated equally, and that women should not only have equal access to resources and place as men, but also be recognized for their contributions

and abilities. This approach, sometimes known as "equal-opportunities feminism" or "equity feminism", is distinguished for its lack of sex and gender differentiation.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), one of the earliest manifestations of liberal first-wave feminism in Europe, was published in the aftermath of the French Revolution and is still regarded as a foundational classic. Woolf presented the concept of female bisexuality and a distinct female voice and writing, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) *"The woman who improves her body and exercises her intellect will, by managing her household and exercising many virtues, become her husband's companion, rather than his lowly dependant."*

5.2.1 Second Waves of Feminism

Second-wave feminism mostly refers to the radical feminism of the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Miss America Pageants in 1968 and 1969 are linked to feminism's second wave demonstrations (Freeman, 1975). Radical second-wave feminists employed performance (e.g. underground or guerrilla theatre) to draw attention on what was now known as "women's oppression," inspired by the techniques of more aggressive portions of liberal feminism. The Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists, and other major feminist organizations joined the 1969 to express their dissatisfaction where women are made to parade like cattle in the pageant competition and where look is given more important than what they do or they think (Freeman, 1975).

On the other hand, radical second-wave feminism cannot be understood in isolation from other 1960s and 1970s movements. In actuality, it arose from postwar Western cultures' leftist movements, including student demonstrations, the anti-Vietnam War movement, lesbian and homosexual groups, and, in the United States, civil rights and Black power movements. These movements opposed "capitalism" and "imperialism," focusing on the concept and interests of "oppressed" groups such as the working class, African-Americans, and, in theory, women and homosexuals.

Women's liberation arose from the New Left, forming alliances with socialist/Marxist feminisms in areas such as the criticism of women's dual workloads outside and inside the home, the demand for equal pay for equal work, and the dismantling of the gendered divisions of the educational system and the labor market. In her landmark work 'Women, Resistance, and Revolution' (1972), Sheila Rowbotham investigated these problems, while Angela Y. Davis focused on the interconnections of gender, racism, and class in 'Women, Race, and Class' (1981). In response to what they referred to as "the woman question," they concluded that women's liberation would only come with the demise of capitalism and the emergence of socialism, when women

would be emancipated from their dependence on males and the family and able to engage in "productive" labor. However, in areas like criticism of "sex roles" and "the beauty myth", women's liberation was closer to liberal feminism, which remained prominent.

Betty Friedan's seminal book, *'The Feminine Mystique'*, influenced liberal feminists throughout the world (1963). Liberal feminists, influenced by her work were like Rowbotham and Davis, but from a different perspective, they believed that many middle-class women's dissatisfaction in postwar Western cultures was due to their lack of social power and political influence. They argued for a solution that did not necessarily need paid labor outside the home; in fact, one of their requests was money for housewives—a form of citizen's income—along with representation in public institutions and other such things. While both liberal and socialist/Marxist feminists strove to gain access to and influence society's institutions, radical feminists were dubious of, if not openly hostile to, more women being included in what they saw as profit-driven patriarchal organizations.

In Europe, identity feminism took a seemingly different turn with what is now known as *'l'écriture féminine'*, which was coined by authors Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva and introduced to the United States by editors Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron in *New French Feminisms* (1981). French feminists looked at dualisms such as mind/body, man/woman, and White/Black, as well as their hierarchical ordering, in which one element is not only different from but also less than the other. They developed a theory of Western thinking's "phallogocentrism," arguing that it is the basic root of western language(s) through a binary logic that makes the phallus the master sign and the father the source of symbolic law. As a result, French feminists argued for a deconstructive feminine writing and promoted the concept of women's bodies as the producing site of many wants, a plenitude of *jouissance*, and therefore look at semiotic logic.

5.2.2 Third Waves

The Third Wave is inspired by the belief that there will be more chances and less sexism in the future (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 83). Third-wave feminism is also motivated by and linked to a generation of the new global world order, which is defined by the fall of communism, new religious and ethnic extremist threats, and the hazards and potential of new information and biotechnologies all at once. Third-wave feminism is referred to as "grrl feminism" in the United States and "new feminism" in Europe. Young feminists are reclaiming the term "female" in an attempt to appeal to a new generation, while engaging in a new kind of feminism that is more assertive—even aggressive—but also more humorous and less pretentious. The urge to establish a

feminist theory and politics that honours discordant experiences and deconstructs categorical thinking drives third-wave feminists.

Local, national, and international activity in areas such as violence against women, trafficking, body surgery, self-mutilation, and the overall "pornification" of the media define this new 'feminism'. While it is worried about new dangers to women's rights in the aftermath of the new global world order, it critiques previous feminist waves for providing universal answers or definitions of femininity and for turning their specific concerns into relatively stagnant identity politics.

Third-wave feminists advocate for accepting a chaotic environment while also embracing ambiguity and forging new alliances in order to avoid falling into mutually repressive rigid categories. Third-wave feminisms are thus distinguished by the employment of rhetorical methods such as performance, imitation, and subversion, rather than by shared theoretical and political standpoints.

Judith Butler, a feminist thinker, predicted this paradigm shift in her works 'Gender Trouble' (1990) and 'Bodies that Matter' (1993). She sparked new movements like queer and transgender politics, which are concerned with the intersections of gender and sexuality and helped; define "performance third-wave feminism" as a theoretical framework for transgression politics. Gender as a discursive activity that is both a hegemonic, social matrix and a "performative gesture" with the capacity to disrupt the cycle of social repetition and open up new realities is central to this approach.

Third-wave feminism is related to the repercussions of globalization as well as the complex transfer of power, both of which offer challenges to feminist theory and politics. It also reflects the shifting interests and perspectives of women, as well as the deconstruction of oppression and liberation master narratives. For example, postcolonial, third-wave feminism is concerned with developing a new critical global perspective and forging alliances between Black, diasporic, and subaltern feminisms, whereas queer theory and politics provide a platform for the now-divided lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual and transgender movements. Heteronormativity, which they see as the source of the problem, is fought by queer and transgender feminists. They want gays and lesbians to be recognized, as well as drag queens, drag kings, transsexuals, masculine women, and feminine men (Halberstam, 1998).

Third-wave feminism has significant hurdles, according to post-socialist historian Nancy Fraser (1997). She has suggested that in order to avoid the traps of identity politics, a concept of justice must be introduced that both respects and opposes assertions of difference. As a result, Fraser proposes that claims of difference be dealt in two ways: as an issue of acknowledgment in civic society and as a matter of redistribution in the context of the state and the public domain. Her goal is to recast

universalism in order to create a new mix of local social claims on the one hand, and the willingness and ability to expose universalism to a "global" democracy on the other. By asserting that under the new democracy, everyone must accept the particularity of the position from which they speak rather than demanding absolute and given rights, she has provided an alternative to "old" universalism, which sanctioned the particularism inherent in identity politics.

The concept of "transversal politics" is an intriguing and crucial contribution to third-wave feminist philosophy. Nira Yuval-Davis, the author of *'Gender and Nation'* (1997) and a British Jew, pioneered this concept, which is predicated on the possibilities of cross-national, ethnic, and religious discourse amongst women. Gayatri Spivak's theory of strategic essentialism and Patricia Hill Collins' idea of partiality of standpoints, situated and incomplete knowledge have both influenced her work theoretically.

5.3 Women's Suffrage in India

Suffrage is derived from the Latin word 'suffragium', which means "voting tablet". Various types of suffrage have been identified in the current context, depending on the fundamental principles involved, such as universal manhood suffrage, universal suffrage, and women's suffrage, to name a few (A Dictionary of World History, 2000). Suffrage, in short, denotes the right to vote or the civil right to enfranchisement. The term refers to people's democratic rights and liberties, as well as their legal right to vote in their home countries. Suffrage implies not only the legal right to vote but also the opportunity to vote (The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2008), because it is obvious that the legal right to vote cannot be realized unless opportunities to vote exist.

Women Suffrage refers to women's right to vote on the same terms as men. Suffragettes and suffragists are the women who fought for this cause. Women gradually gained the right to vote around the world before 1947, during the pre-independence era. However, Indian women gained the right only after independence, with the adoption of the Indian Constitution, which abolished the discrimination. As Indian women gradually gained their self-esteem, a women's movement began to emerge. Between 1917 and 1937, women began to demand political representation for Indian women. The campaign for women's suffrage took place in the context of the 1919 and 1935 constitutional reforms. The movement for women's suffrage ran concurrently with the struggle for political rights, such as the freedom struggle. In 1917, Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India, and Viceroy Lord Chelmsford toured the country to implement political reforms known as the 'Montague-Chelmsford Scheme of Reforms for India'. Among the reforms proposed were increased representation of Indians on Legislative Councils and a wider electorate. In December 1917, Sarojini Naidu led an all-India women's delegation that informed the imperial representatives (Montague and Chelmsford) of the awakening of Indian women (similar to the West) and registered the demand of women for the

status of "people" (representation in the legislative councils). The delegation's first demand was that "when the terms of the Indian franchise were drawn up, the word 'people' should be understood to include women, and the whole should be 'worded in such terms as will not disqualify our sex, but allow our women the same opportunities of representation as our men" (Tata p.1-2). This was the start of the Indian women's struggle for political and civil rights for all women.

In 1918, spurred on by the country's growing support for women's suffrage, the Provincial Conferences (legislatures) of erstwhile Bombay and Madras (now Mumbai and Chennai) passed resolutions to remove the sex disqualification from the then-proposed reform bill. Sarladevi Chaudhurani presented a resolution in support of women's suffrage at the 33rd session of the Indian National Congress in Delhi in 1918. The goal of all the resolutions was to have the word "people" or "persons" be understood to refer to men and women, rather than just men. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu presented a paper to the Joint Select Committee in London in August 1919 in support of women's suffrage in India. Around the same time, a committee of twenty prominent ladies from various communities in the Bombay Presidency was formed, and it was decided in a public meeting to send their representatives to England to work for women's suffrage. As a result, Mrs. H.A. Tata and her daughter Miss M.A. Tata travelled to England as deputies with Sir Sankaran Nair, and their statement was taken in writing due to time constraints. They expressed their hope that the British people would understand the Indians' hopes and aspirations, which would hasten the realization that in India, as in England, responsible and satisfactory government can only be achieved when men and women both vote for their representatives.

The second phase of women movements in India begins between 1928 and 1937 with the debate about the terms under which women's suffrage should be expanded. The British government advocated for female seat reservations, separate electorates, and less stringent franchise qualifications. However, the majority of women's movement leaders were opposed to separate electorates and the reservation of seats for women, and they demanded adult franchise. The second phase of the fight for female suffrage began ten years after the Montague Chelmsford Reforms, with the establishment of the Simon Commission in 1927 as the first step toward the creation of a new India Act. Many organizations, including the Indian National Congress and the Women's Indian Association, boycotted the Commission because there were no Indians on the team. Members of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), a newly formed organization, were divided, and some of them, led by the Rani of Mandi, met with the Commission and presented their demands for literate women's votes and reserving seats for women. Another significant step was the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931, which committed the Congress to attending the Second Round Table Conference. The AIWC, chaired by Sarojini Naidu, took on the task of preparing a memorandum to be submitted to the

Second RTC's franchise Committee. Eight women were appointed to the Drafting Committee: Hansa Mehta, Taraben Premchand, Margaret Cousins, Faiz Tyabji, Hilla Fardoonji, Shareefa Hamid Ali, Malini Sukhtankar, and Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade. The memorandum called for universal adult suffrage, mixed general elections, and no reservations, nominations, or cooption of women. A fifteen-member AIWC delegation led by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur met with the Viceroy to request adequate women's representation at the RTC. As a result, Sarojini Naidu and two government nominees, Begum Shahnawaz Khan and Mrs. Radhabai Subbarayan, were added as delegates. The demand of the women's movement for equal political rights and women's active participation in the freedom struggle prompted the Indian National Congress to pledge gender equality before the law and universal adult franchise at its Karachi session in 1931. This pledge was honored in the free India Constitution.

As the pace of the nationalist movement quickened in the mid-1930s, the AIWC demanded the right to vote and equal status for women in India's future constitution in its 1933 annual session. In 1934 session, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, acknowledge that the committee has granted greater franchise for women moreover, many demand were ignored. Their discontent grew when the Government of India Act of 1935 was announced, which once again rejected the proposal for universal adult franchise. However, it increases the number of enfranchised Indians and the proportion suffrage right of the women. The numbers of women too increase with the relaxation of the qualification and make all women over 21 years to vote if they fulfilled the qualification of education and property. The new constitution drafted in 1950 eventually fulfilled their dreams of universal adult suffrage, and Indian women received what they had been requesting since 1917. India's democratic constitution guarantees equal political participation to all citizens, regardless of caste, class, color, race, gender, or religious beliefs.

5.4 Women political participation in Global Context

The participation of women in politics is the concern of most countries in the world. Women are underrepresented in all aspect like, as voters, elected offices, civil servants, and academia and so on². "Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes, and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care, and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women", according to a 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation.

As per the report of United Nation Women on 19 September 2022, women in the executive position it has 21 per cent of government ministers with only 14 countries

²www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/12/UN%20WomenLGTThemBriefUSwebrev2%20pdf.pdf

having achieved 50 per cent or more women in cabinets. Through the analyses it has an annual increase of just 0.52 percentage points, which conclude that gender parity in ministerial positions will not be achieved before 2077. In the national parliament only five countries have 50 per cent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses; Rwanda with 61 per cent, Cuba with 53 percent, Nicaragua with 51 per cent, Mexico with 50 per cent and United Arab Emirates with 50 per cent. It has increase from 11 per cent in 1995 to 26 percent in 2022 as an overall participation of women in the parliament and 27 countries have reached 40 per cent, 15 countries in Europe, five in Latin America and the Caribbean, five in Africa, one in Asia and one in the Pacific (UN Women Report). Moreover, data from 136 countries shows that women constitute nearly 3 million (34 per cent) of elected members in local deliberative bodies. With only two countries reached 50 per cent, and an additional 20 countries have more than 40 per cent women in local government³.

As per the study of women political participation by Naleli Morjele in '*Women Political Leaders in Rwanda and South Africa; Narratives of Triumph and Loss*' (2016) discussed how the percentages of women increase in parliament. As per the research, it has found that Rwanda before 1994 it was rule by single party under the dictatorship of president Habyarimana. In 1989 the opposition party demands for liberalization which called for democratization. There is also genocide in 1994 where women in Rwanda face the problems of rape, sexual slavery, fighting as soldier etc. this genocide leads to poverty as more than 68 per cent of women come under poverty line (Kantengwa 2010). As women suffered more in the genocide the people of Rwanda advocate the right of the women and emphasizes on the empowering of women. Thus, with this advocacy women gain strength and in 2003 Rwanda women secure 48.8 per cent in the national parliament in the lower house having the highest women representation the world. In 2008 it increases to 56 per cent and in 2022 with 61 per cent.

The author finds out that the increase representation of women in Rwanda do not occurred in isolation but the international campaign plays a pivotal role to represent women in decision making. As the campaign call for women equality in governance through United Nation Decade for women in 1975, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 which aims to sets a standard national policy to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women. All this factors boost the participation of Women in Rwanda. With the increase in the participation of women in politics, there appears a symbolic representation that has an impact on social and cultural aspect. As more women involves in politics that encourage others women and makes them belief that they can also participate in politics in different ways (Burnet 2011). Rwanda has a 30% seat reservation for women in the national parliament. However, the author concludes that Rwanda being mostly a patriarchal

³ UN Women, Women in Local Government. Data as of 1 January 2022, retrieved 19 September 2022.

society the domination of male continues in the lives of women directly or indirectly. But it the women who have found the ways manage as a mother and as a leader.

Salim Lamrani (2016) in *Women in Cuba: The Emancipatory revolution* discussed the women emancipation in Cuba. In the article the author narrate hoe the Cuba revolution make a turning point in women empowerment. Before 1958 the Cuban was under the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The author describes the women at this point of time women were under the yoke of patriarchy system. With the victory of the revolution in 1959, the state made women empowerment a priority. In 1960, Vilma Espin founded the Federation of Cuban Women (FCW) to advocate equal right and end discrimination. Through the leadership of Vilma women start to occupy the appropriate space in the society to build the new society. It has increase the education of women to 60 per in female country's student and over 65 per cent in higher education at the time of the research. Thus Cuban is place in 2nd in the National parliamentary participation of women with 53 per cent in 2022.

From the above two leading countries in the world in the women participation in politics shows how women came out of the dictatorship rule. The social system is the patriarchy where there is always a male dominant however, in the national parliament there is more women as compare to the male counterpart. The paper shows how women were able to come out through the revolution from the dictatorship. Moreover, the success of women participation in politics is attributed to the women who manage both the household activities as well as the role of the leader. In fact patriarchy system is deep rooted which cannot be change overnight however, the mindset of the women should change to adjudge both the role of the mother as well as the role of a leader.

5.5 Women and Political Participation

Several political sociologists have examined people's behavior in the political system using the idea of political involvement. Political participation refers to the process by which people participate in the political process. Citizens' voluntary participation in the election of rulers and the creation of public policy is known as political involvement. Political participation is widely viewed as the most effective approach to ensuring that one's interests and opinions are heard. It can also be viewed as an individual's endeavor to influence or support government and politics.

India is the world's largest democratic country. Democracy refers to governance that is run by, for, and of the people. Democratic value should be taken into consideration when we study about political participation of the society. Political

participation, according to the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, is "the primary way through which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and rulers are held accountable to the ruled".⁴

Political participation has different connotation. The term is used in defining the peoples' activities at all levels of political system. Sometimes it describe of political orientation rather than that of political activities. The intensity and width of participation can be seen from two perspectives. "The intensity of an issue is determined by how deeply a person is invested in it and how far he or she is willing to go to attain a goal. Width arises as a result of the complicated nature of political activity, which necessitates engagement in a variety of issues ranging from voting to serving on a technical expert committee or becoming a minister".⁵ To the great extend the overall political environment influence the process of political participation. When we say political environment it refers to the electoral system, party system, the means of campaign and propaganda, the extent of modernization, industrialization and urbanization, ideology and the awareness of the people.

This chapter examined not with political participation in general but at the micro-level of political participation of rural women and its political functioning. Political participation at the local self governing institution is essential for women's consciousness and development and as training for wider politics participation. For the social development mass participation is required as this will give new outlook in the system of government. Karl Marx is of the view that "Political participation by the masses is both an educational and a capacity-building process for administering the new society".

In fact, political participation refers to the process by which people participate in the political process. Political participation, according to Almond and Powell, "can be defined as the involvement of members of society in decision-making processes". According to J L Woodward and Elmo Roper there are five activities of political participation. "They are a) voting at polls, b) supporting pressure groups by becoming members, c) personally communicating directly with legislators, d) participating in political party activities and thus acquiring claim over legislators, and e) engaging in habitual dissemination of political opinions through word of mouth communication to other citizens", on the basis of the level of political participation they also categories four type of people as "very active, active, inactive and very in active". Political participation can be of different form like involving in party politics, electoral politics, interest articulation, political communication, political reforms, political socialization, conferences, debates, strike, demonstration and all those activities that has direct and

⁴ International Encyclopedia of Social Science (1968) Vol. 12 New York, P 253.

⁵ Seshadri, K (1976) Political Linkages and Rurla Development, New Delhi, National Publishing House p.175.

indirect impact to the political sphere. Direct political participation can be refers to as people directly involved in election of their rulers, involved in decision making and involvement in the process of policy formulation. It can also be defined as an individual's attempt to influence or support government and politics. In the indirect political participation people elect their representative and through them they involved in the decision making process. The representative is accountable to the people he represent in the decision making and policy formulation.

. When said women political participation it simply means the participation of women in the politic, it can be of direct or indirect form. And the rural women political participation, it simply means the involvement of women of those in the rural areas or village into political process. Everyone feel the need of equal representation. The representation of every section of society is important in sharing their grievances to the government and policy makers to bring about certain change in order to uplift the society. When asked about the importance of women's participation in politics, the respondents' responses are shown in the table below.

Table 5.1 Essential of women participation in the politics

	Frequency	Percent	Percent
Yes	382	95.5	95.5
No	2	0.5	0.5
Cannot decide	16	4.0	4.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0

The above table shows the percentage of the respondent on the important of women participation in the politics. Out of the total 100 per cent respondent 95.5 per cent is of the view that women participation in politics is essential, only 0.5 percent says 'No' and 4.0 percent responded as cannot decide. From the above figure it can be concluded that the participation of women in politics is essential. With the participation of more women in politics the agenda of women's interest can raise in the house and influence the policy maker to bring about changes in certain areas which are needed for the well being of the society in general and women in particular.

5.5.1 Rural Women's Participation in Voting Process

In the Preamble of the Indian Constitution of 1950, all citizens were promised social, economic, and political justice, as well as Equality of position and opportunity (Basu 1991, 21). The term political participation is used in a considerably narrower sense in this study, referring primarily to rural women's participation in official electoral politics at the state and national level in election competitions and in decision making. Women's active participation in electoral competition is a dependable indicator of a country's democracy's effective growth today (Nelson & Chowdhury, 1994, Thomas & Wilcox, 2005). It cuts across genders in terms of sharing political power and providing women with liberty and space inside the democratic framework of electoral politics as an indicator of equality and freedom. As per the report of Inter-Parliamentary Union (2021), India has 21.1 per cent of MPs elected or nominated in 2021. The number of women legislators in most Indian state legislature's remains below the global average, indicating a pan-Indian pattern of gender exclusion in electoral politics, under representation in legislative bodies, and the quests for gender parity in political power sharing with men continue. Women are underrepresented in national and state legislative bodies and the executive branch of government.

The Indian women's suffrage movement, according to Forbes (1979), the demand for organized women to be treated equally to men emerged not from perceptions of women's demands in India, but rather from the influence of the British women. The women's suffrage movements in India in the early twentieth century were copied on the British model and via the work of British women reformers living in India. The earliest demands for suffrage began in 1917, when the Women's Indian Association was founded in Madras with the primary goal of "seeking an expanded role for women in public life" (Nair, 1996: 124). The women's suffrage movement eventually came to terms with nationalist concerns, and suffragist objectives had to be explained in Indian terms and related to the nationalist themes of political rights and colonial status that dominated public discourse in India in the 1920s and 1930s (Southard, 1993). Between 1920 and 1929, as a result of the women's suffrage movement, limited voting rights were provided to few women in various provinces of India, starting from Madras (Nair, 1996: 132). However, these rights were only granted to a relatively small group of Indian women depending on property qualifications. The Government of India Act of 1935 eventually extended suffrage rights to a larger group of women, while criteria still based on such as literacy, property ownership, or marriage with propertied men.

In the post-independence period, there needed to be a more concerted or cohesive effort to build inclusive electoral venues for women. Women were not given legislative seats under the 1950 Constitution. Women's political participation after independence was largely constrained by social norms shaping opportunities and perceptions of women's political involvement. Women's political participation in large numbers

declined following independence. Women's participation in politics and electoral competition centered on familial ties rather than interest and cultural support to participate in politics actively. In the first Lok Sabha Election (1952), women won 22 seats (4.4%) of the total seats 498. In the Eighteenth Lok Sabha Election (2019), a total of 724 women contested all across the country and won 78 seats (17.26%). Thus, we can see that the participation of women has increased from 22 in 1952 to 78 in 2019, respectively.

Despite constitutional guarantees of gender equality, the demand for increased representation of women in political institutions in India was not taken seriously until the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (Government of India, 1974: 283–305). This implied that women's presence in political institutions, particularly at the grassroots level, should be strengthened by a policy of seat reservation for women. Thus, in the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution in 1993, which established a 33% reservation for women in local self government. The issue of affirmative action for women was brought up again, this time with a focus on women's concerns in the Parliament. Several political parties and groups objected to the Bill addressing this issue when it was tabled in the Eleventh Parliament in 1997, citing elitism and overlapping quotas for women in general and women from lower castes. The proposed Bill, submitted in Parliament 25 years ago, is still accumulating dust, with no clear indication of when it will see the light of day.

In the context of Manipur, women are actively involved in politics. Before British rule, Manipur witnessed many outstanding female personalities who played influential and active roles in state political affairs, like Maharani Gomti, Maharani Kumudini, Shija Tampha, etc. Till today we see Manipur women participating in politics but are marginal. Women in Manipur have always been torch bearers of non-violence and peace movements. During the British rule, we see how women involve in politic with the 'Nupi-lan'⁶ movement of 1904 and 1939, respectively, in protest against the British rule. The 'Meira Paibi'⁷ which is a collection of womenfolk's force that emerges in 1980s is also an example of women's participation. From the first general election in 1952 women start to contest elections. The first woman to contest in 1952 was Smt M.K Bonodini Devi, who also won the seat. Some women were nominated to the Territorial

⁶ The Nupi Lan refers to the 'war or fight of women' in which the women of Manipur fought British India against colonial authority. The first Nupi Lan erupted in 1904 in reaction to a colonial order to send Manipuri men to the Kabow Valley to gather lumber for rebuilding the then-Police Agent's home. The second Nupi Lan erupted in 1939 in response to the rice export during WWII.

⁷ Meira Paibi means 'Women Torch Bearers,' a women's social movement in Manipur, India. Meira Paibi, often known as the "guardians of civil society," was founded in 1977 in the present-day Kakching area. It gets its name from the fiery torches the women carry as they march through city streets, frequently at night.

Council (1957-1963) and in Territorial Legislative Assembly (1963-1969) among them were Smt. A Bimola Devi, Smt. Akim Anal, Smt. Lhingjaneng Gante and Smt. R K Mukhara Devi. After the full fledged of Manipur as statehood the number of women participating as a contestant increases. In every general election, we can see women in the fray for the seat in the assembly. Women in Manipur also actively choose their representatives by exercising their voting right.

Table 5.2 Percentage distributions of male and female voters from 1972 to 2022 Legislative Assembly Elections of Manipur.

Year	Male electors voted	Female electors voted	Percentage of electors voted	Total number of electors
1972	49.9	50.1	78.8	588962
1980	49.4	50.6	82.9	909262
1984	49.1	50.9	87.2	1013678
2000	48.7	51.3	90.6	1447772
2002	48.7	51.3	90.2	1418636
2007	48.03	51.65	86.73	1707204
2012	47.65	52.34	79.80	1748399
2017	48.6	51.4	86.63	1914547
2022	47.9	52.1	78.30	1968476

Source: Manipur legislative Assembly Result

The above table shows that female voter participation in the legislative Assembly of the state. The data is from 1972 after the full fledged of the state of Manipur till 2022. Through all this year the turnout of women voters in the state is significantly more as compare to male.

Table 5.3 Voter turnout in last 17th Lok Sabha Election 2019 from Constituency Under Senapati District.

Name of Constituency	No. of Electors			Voter Turnout			% of voter turnout		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Karong	27409	26381	53790	25347	24392	49739	92.48	92.46	92.47
Mao	27101	27286	54387	25045	25668	50713	92.41	94.07	93.24
Tadubi	24281	23656	47937	22477	21923	44400	92.57	92.67	92.62
Total	78791	77323	156114	72869	71983	144852	92.52	93.06	92.77

Source: Lok Sabha Election Result retrieved in <https://ceomanipur.nic.in/lse2019>

The table 5.3 shows the percentage of male and female in the Senapati District in 17th Lok Sabha Election. In the district also see that the percentage of female is significantly more as compare to male with 93.06 percent 92.52 percent respectively.

Table 5.2 and 5.3 above shows the turnout of women participation in the state and the district. Based on the study, the lower turnout of male voters despite the higher number of voters registered in the electoral roll is the out-migration of males from one state to another. The migration is more in males than females because men are considered the family's breadwinners. Thus, they moved out of the state to earn and maintain the family. Even with the state, there is also a migration from village to town. One respondent says, *“People prefer to move from village to town and cities not only for education but for earning and better life as they get a decent income in town and cities.”*

Further, it has been found that as they migrate to outside states, they do not prefer to come back, especially in the time of the election, despite the holiday given on the day of the election. The reason for not turning up in election as they migrate are time factors; they think it is a waste of time, energy, and resource to go to and fro just for election purposes. Another reason is that most unorganized sectors refuse to grant holidays to have more productive working days. As men out migrate more as compared to females leading to less turn out of males compared to females.

There is also migration in the country as a whole. In 2011, 45.36 crore migrants in the country could not cast their vote as they could not travel back to their home constituencies on polling day. In order to address this issue, the Election Commission (EC) announced Remote Electronics Voting Machine (RVM), which will be under pilot test (The Indian Express, 30th December 2022). The machine will handle multiple constituencies from a single remote polling booth. Through this exercise, the Election Commission believes that the migrants need not travel back home to vote but exercise their voting right through this remote voting. By exercising the idea of **“No voter left behind”** by the Election Commission, they believe that RVMs will increase the turnout of the domestic migrants of the country.

Table 5.4 Number of women Participated in Legislative Assembly as candidates from 1972 to 2022

Year	Total contestant of women	Total seat won
1972	1	0
1980	7	0
1984	5	0
2000	14	1
2002	7	1
2007	12	0
2012	14	3

2017	11	2
2022	17	5

Source: Election Report, Manipur Legislative Assembly

The above table shows the number of women contestants and the total number of seats won in the Legislative Assembly from 1972 to 2022. We can see from the table that there is an increase in the women in the electoral process from 1 to 17 as a contestant and 0 to 5 in winning the seat in the assembly.

Table 5.5 Number of women Participated in Legislative Assembly as candidates form Senapati District from 1972 to 2022 (excluded present Kangpokpi District)

Year	Total Contestant	Total Won
1972	0	0
1980	0	0
1984	0	0
2000	1	0
2002	0	0
2007	0	0
2012	0	0
2017	1	0
2022	0	0

Source: Election Report, Manipur Legislative Assembly

The above table shows that women's representation in politics is comparatively much lower than that of males. The Senapati District has three constituencies (excluding Kangpokpi District); from these three constituencies from 1972 to 2022, we have only two women contestants with zero seat winning. The lower representation of women shows that women's representation in the electoral process is still underrepresented compared to their male counterparts in the district.

Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 above show women's performance in the state Legislative Assembly from 1972 to 2022. The overall performance of the state in the electoral process is increasing. However, the performance of the district is underperformance. Through the study, it has been found out that the lower performance of women in the electoral process despite the higher voting exercise and an overall increase in the political participation of the district is due to the patriarchy system, gender stereotyping, lack of political socialization, financial constraint, etc. all this factors will be discussed in details in chapter 6 (six) in pertaining with issues and challenges of women political participation.

5.5.2 Voting Behavior of the Rural Women

Understanding the factors and reasons that influence voting patterns is part of understanding voting behavior, also known as electoral behavior. Samuel S. Eldersveld writes in his article 'Theory and Method of Investigating Electoral Behavior', "The term electoral behavior is not new. However, it has recently been used to describe certain types of research and political phenomena that were not previously thought of or considered inappropriate". J. K. Plano and Riggs also opined that "Behavior in voting is a field of study regarding how people tend to vote in public elections and the reasons why they vote and the way they do". According to Gordon Marshall "The study of voting behavior invariably focuses on the determinants of why people tend to vote in public elections in the ways they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make". India is the world's largest democracy and voting plays a vital role in forming a government.

There are different factors that act as determinants for the voting behavior of the people. They are; a) Educational level of the people; When compared to illiterates, educated people are more interested in voting because they understand the importance of their right to vote and consider exercising this right to be a national duty. They understand that by exercising their right to vote, they can elect the government of their choice. b) Party loyalty; Many people are loyal to their respective political parties, and they always vote for the party rather than the candidate. c) Language; the language also influences voting behavior. Because people have an emotional attachment to their languages, they are easily influenced whenever a language-related issue arises. For example, D.M.K won the votes of Tamil Nadu voters in 1967 and 1971 by spreading anti-Hindi propaganda. d) Influence of Money; In India, money plays a significant role in determining voter behavior. A wealthy candidate or party has a better chance of winning elections. During elections, the poor are enticed by money and their votes are purchased. In this way, the process of 'giving a note and taking a vote' continues in India. e) Performance of the party; A political party runs for office on the basis of an election manifesto, and once elected, it is expected to keep the promises made in the manifesto. The ruling party's performance, based solely on election promises made and fulfilling of the promises has a significant impact on people's basic behavior. f) Political Campaign; Each political party go for a large-scale election campaign in order to sway voters in its favor. To win votes, particularly floating votes, mass gatherings, street gatherings, personal contacts, posters, movie star speeches, TV and radio broadcasts, newspaper advertising, pamphlets, processions, and propaganda are used. g) Quality of the Candidates; A candidate's reputation among constituents, or his known qualities, or contribution to any value-based activity, is always a factor in voting behavior. A positive image of a party's candidate can help the party gain popular support. A voter would rather vote for a candidate who is approachable and can assist him in any way.

As there are various factors that affect the voting behavior of the people, in order to know how it also affect the Senapati district women in their political behavior the question is asked on the influence of individual through political ideology, party programs and manifesto and so on.

Table: 5.6 Opinion on women's voting behavior influenced by party ideology, party program and manifestoes

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	349	87.2
No	43	10.8
I don't know	6	1.5
No Response	2	.5
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows how political ideology, party programs and manifesto influence the behavior of the voting among women. Out of the total 100 per cent respondents 87.2 per cent responded as 'Yes', 10.8 as 'No' and 1.5 per cent as 'I don't know' and 0.5 per cent with no responses respectively. With the increase of education and political awareness people decide the candidate and the party base on the ideology, and program of the party and manifesto of the party and candidates. Apart from the part manifesto, every candidate does have the manifesto of their own that which he or she wishes to achieved. The respondents are of the viewed that, they prefer to vote for a person who really understand the social situation of the society and that are reflected the manifesto. Local issues and concerns unique to the Senapati district can have an impact on voting behavior. Agriculture, rural development, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and law enforcement are among examples. Candidates that effectively address these concerns and suggest solutions are more likely to receive support. Some respondent are also of the opined that they vote a candidates because of the family bond that they have with the candidate. Many voters foresee the development that will be carried out during his or her tenure if they are elected. No doubt, there is an underlying truth with regard to the behavior of women voters where money also plays an important role. Through the interview, the studied found out that people long for immediate reward thinking they are not going to benefit anything from the candidates as there are on narrow sense.

In fact there are different factors that influence the behavior of the people in the district. Voting behavior is influenced by political coalitions and the success of election campaigns. The ability of parties and candidates to mobilize voters, connect with the electorate, and successfully communicate their messages can influence voters' decisions. The political parties and politicians running for office have a substantial influence on voting behavior. People also vote based on factors such as the candidate's reputation, credibility, past performance, party connections, and ideologies.

5.6 Voting Right Exercise by Women

In Colonial India under British rule, the Indian women's suffrage movement fought for their right to political enfranchisement. Between 1919 and 1929, all British provinces and the majority of Princely states granted women the right to vote and in some cases, the right to stand in local elections. When India's Constituent Assembly was elected in 1946, women got 15 seats. They assisted in the drafting of the new constitution, and the Assembly agreed to the principle of universal suffrage in April 1947. The final provisions for franchise and elections were incorporated into the draft constitution in June 1949 and became effective on January 26, 1950, the Constitution of India's enforcement date. In the initial stage the right to vote has given to every citizen who attain the age of 21 years. The Sixty-First Amendment Act of 1989 reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 years for the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

The following table shows how women participate in the voting and exercising their voting right.

Table 5.7 Voting right exercise by women

	Frequency	Percent
Very active	117	29.2
Active	159	39.8
Neutral	114	28.5
Inactive	9	2.2
Very inactive	1	.2
Total	400	100.0

The above figure shows the involvement of women in voting and exercising their franchises. Based on the scaling technique of measuring the level of women's exercise in voting is tabulated. Out of the total 100 respondents, 39.8 per cent is of view that women actively exercise their voting right, 29.2 per cent responded that women exercise very actively, 28.5 per cent responded that women exercising their vote is neutral, and 2.2 per cent responded that women are inactive in exercising their voting right and 0.2 per cent as very inactive respectively. As per the respondent's responses, women are active in political participation. Nevertheless, the data in Table 5.5 shows that the participation of women in the electoral process is almost nil as no elected candidates with only two contestants till 2022. It looks contrasting, but the ground reality is that women actively participate at the base level where their involvement is sometimes not acknowledged. Women in the district have a strong feeling for the tranquility of the society. They act as a vigil in time of election to maintain decorum. Women came forward as a peacemaker when any issues took place during the election. The details of women as a peacemaker has discussed in Chapter 3. Another evidence of women's active participation in politics though not in electoral politics, is the exercise of voting right by women. From 1972 till 2022, the percentage of females is higher though the enrollment of the electoral roll of women is lesser than that of males, shown in tables 5.2 and 5.3. Moreover, women participate actively in campaigns, demonstrations, protests, and rallies, which will be discussed in detail in the following topic.

5.7 Women Political Participation through Campaign, Demonstration, Protest and Rallies and other Political Related Activities

A political campaign is a coordinated effort to influence the progress of decision-making within a specific group. Political campaigns are frequently used in democracies to refer to electoral campaigns in which representatives are elected, or referendums are decided. A political campaign is persuading the voters, which can be carried out in different forms like personal contact with the voters, Advertisements, theme songs, posters of the candidates and slogans with the manifesto, propaganda through different forms of social media like newspapers, Television, Magazines, Facebook, Instagram, tweeter, etc. and also fundraising for the candidates or the party. Moreover, the voters can be persuaded by the candidates' audio or video clips and send them in the form of messages.

A demonstration is an event that attracts the attention of the public. A political demonstration is an action by a large group of people or a collection of groups of people in support of a political or other cause or people protesting against a cause of concern; it frequently consists of walking in a mass march formation and either beginning or meeting at a designated endpoint, or rally, to hear speakers. Demonstrations can be nonviolent or violent, or they can start peacefully and then turn violent, depending on the circumstances. A protest is a statement or action that expresses dissatisfaction with

or opposition to something. Political protest involves individuals or groups attempting to address or stop perceived injustices within a political system without overturning it. Protest is “a public expression of opposition, disapproval, or dissent to an idea or action, usually political”. The difference between political demonstration and protest is that the former can be against or supportive, but the latter is against specific government policies or systems.

Table 5.8 Opinion on women participation in election campaign, demonstration, protest and rallies

	Gender distribution of respondent		Total (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)	
Yes	123 (82.0%)	188 (75.2%)	311(77.8%)
No	3 (2.0%)	3 (1.2%)	6(1.5%)
Cannot ascertain	24 (16.0%)	56 (22.4%)	80(20.0%)
No Response	0 (.0%)	3 (1.2%)	3(.8%)
Total	150(100.0%)	250(100.0%)	400(100.0%)

The cross-tabulation of male and female respondents on participation in election campaigns, demonstrations, protests, and rallies was done to get the percentage of women participating in those activities. The respondents were asked whether they participated in campaigns, rallies, protests, and demonstrations, out of 100 percent of women 75.2 per cent said ‘yes’ while 1.2 per cent say ‘no’, 22.4 per cent with ‘cannot ascertain’ and 1.2 per cent with no response. Based on the above figure, it can be concluded that women actively participate in all those activities. In the political scenario, every political party sets up a Mahila wing (women's Wing) where women are given specific portfolios to bring awareness of the welfare program. Also, it spread the ideology of the party in order to win more members. Thus, in the Senapati district, there are Mahila wings where women are included for the smooth operation of the party.

Women are also seen taking part in rallies, demonstrations, and protests. These activities have a direct and indirect aspect that influences the district, state and county policy makers. This can be social, economic, and political; after all, they are intertwined with each other as the concerned are rising against the district administrators or the state and nation as a whole. The cause of protest, demonstration, and rallies can be of different factors like the government's policy, for the upliftment of the backward or minority, social morality, undemocratic rule, etc. For instant, a protest of women in the Senapati district on social morality took place in the heart of Senapati district because of the rape and brutal murder of Chaniru of Koide Village, where thousands of women participated in the rally. The rally was co-sponsored by Naga Women Union, Manipur, Poumai Naga Women, Senapati Karong Women Association, Nagas People Organisation, and Senapati District Student Association (The Sangai Express). Another

instance of women involvement in the rallies was organized by Senapati District Women Association (SDWA) along with the other Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in 2010. The rallies express the aspiration for peace with the slogan 'Nagas want peace not war' which was carried out in line of Indo- Nagas Peace talk (Hueiyen News Service). Thus, this shows how women influence the policy makers' decisions.

5.8 The 73rd Amendment Act and Women

India's Panchayati Raj system is not a post-independence phenomenon. For centuries, the village Panchayat has been the dominant political institution in rural India. Panchayats were typically elected councils with executive and judicial powers in ancient India. However, prior to independence, the panchayats served as instruments for the upper castes' dominance over the rest of the village, furthering the divide based on socioeconomic status or caste hierarchy. The Indian government set up a number of committees to look into the implementation of self-government in rural areas and make recommendations on how to get there. The following committees have been formed: Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Committee of Ashok Mehta Committee, G V K Rao Committee, L M Singhvi Committee to study about the implementation of local self government.

The constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 came into force on April 24, 1993, giving Panchayati Raj institutions constitutional status.⁸ The Act added Part IX to the Indian Constitution which also added the Eleventh Schedule consisting of 29 functional of the Panchayats. The Act represents a significant step forward in the country's efforts to establish democratic institutions at the grassroots level. Representative democracy has been replaced by participatory democracy as a result of the Act. Thus Panchayat function through three tier system viz; Village level, Block level and District level. Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim have two levels of panchayats, one at the village level and the other at the Zila or District level.

Prior to the enactment of the 73rd Amendment Act, women were not involved in the decision-making process at the grass-roots level. This Amendment gave women seats and offices (ex: Sarpanch) for the first time, allowing them to share political power and exercise administrative power in developing the PRIs. This historical decision needs to be revised in actual practice. It is revealed through the research that Women's names were removed from the voter lists, and they were kidnapped, denied the right to vote, and forced to resign after the election. Elected women candidates were barred from performing their duties as Sarpanches, etc. However, these barriers and practices gradually decrease with the increase of education and awareness of the people.

⁸ Kurukshetra, A Journal on Rural Development, January 2014, Vol. 62 p. 52

The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act contains Article 243D where- Seats will be reserved for (a) Scheduled Castes and (b) Scheduled Tribes. Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women from the Scheduled Castes or, as case may be the Scheduled Tribes. Not less than one-third (including seats reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in each Panchayat shall be reserved for women, and such seats may be allotted to different constituencies in a Panchayat by rotation. The offices of Chairpersons in Panchayats at the village or any other level shall be reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women in the manner provided by law and by the Legislature of a State. Further it also provided a reservation of not less than one-third of the total number of Panchayat Chairpersons at each level shall be reserved for women

In Manipur, the local self government in the grassroots level functions as two different bodies:

- i) Panchayati Raj
- ii) Autonomous District Council (ADC)

The Panchayati Raj Act of Manipur was passed by the houses of Parliament on April 23, 1994 with the Act No. 26 of 1994. It reorganize Panchayats in rural Manipur through a comprehensive enactment to create a two-tier Panchayati Raj system in the State, with elected bodies at the Gram and District levels, in accordance with the Constitutional provisions relating to Panchayats, in order to increase public participation and more effectively implement rural development programmes.

1. This Act may be called the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994.
2. It covers the entire state of Manipur, with the exception of any area covered by the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971 (Manipur Act 76 of 1971.) or the Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act 1956 (Manipur Act 80 of 1956), or any area that has been or may be declared as, or included in, a municipality under any law currently in force, or any area that has been or may be declared as, or included in a canton.
3. It shall take effect on the date specified by the Government in a Notification published in the Official Gazette, and different dates may be specified for different provisions of this Act.

The Manipur Panchayati Raj Act 1994 under clause (19) discussed the reservation of seat as-

- a) Seats shall be reserved in every Gram Panchayat for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and the number of seats so reserved shall bear, as nearly as possible, the same proportion to the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in that Panchayat as the population of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in that Panchayat area bears to the total population of that area, and such seats shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in such Gram Panchayat may be prescribed.
- b) Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under sub-section (1) shall be reserved for women from Scheduled Castes or, as applicable, Scheduled Tribes.
- c) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in each Gram Panchayat shall be reserved for women, and such seats may be allotted to different constituencies in a Gram Panchayat in the manner prescribed.

5.9 Autonomous District Council (ADC)

The districts of Manipur that the Panchayati Raj Institution does not cover are governed by Autonomous District Council (ADC) as local self-government. The Government of India promulgated the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971 under section 4 of subsection 3 Vide Bill No. 76 of 26/12/1971, which provide for the creation of six ADC in Manipur's Hill Areas for eventual conversion to a full-fledged District. Following independence, the Indian government pledged to safeguard the rights and interests of the Hill Tribes by including provisions in the Constitution's Fifth and Sixth Schedules, necessitating the declaration of "Hill Areas" in Manipur. The Indian Parliament passed the Manipur (Hills Areas) District Council Act on December 26, 1971. The purpose of the Act was to create a local self-government organization so that changes in socio-economic trends could be effected from within while still preserving traditional values. Furthermore, Article 371(c) of the Constitution (27th amendment) Act 1971 provides for the formation and operation of a committee comprised of M.L.As elected from Manipur's Hill Areas, as well as all responsibilities to ensure proper functioning in matters relating to Hill affairs and for the purpose for which it was formed.

The functionaries in Hill Areas have been left out of the state government's mercy since Manipur's statehood on January 21, 1972. After the Tribal of Manipur realized that the Autonomous District Council had been rendered ineffective and that it could no longer function as the institution of Local Self-Government, the Hill Area committees adopted a resolution on July 18, 1990, stating that no election to members of the ADC, Manipur would be held until and unless the provisions of the sixth schedule were extended. For the past 21 years, the Hill people of Manipur have boycotted the

ADC election. The Autonomous District Councils were resurrected after a 21-year hiatus in 2010. They successfully participated in the ADC election with faith and trust in the Government of India and the Government of Manipur, which had made an unequivocal commitment to bring development to Manipur's Hill Areas.

As a local self-government institution, the Autonomous District Councils are political and governmental entities that are supposed to perform various developmental functions. They are responsible to the entire population of the Hill Districts at the grass-roots level, not just for small-scale beneficiaries. In the aftermath of democratic decentralization, which took shape as a result of the need for better functionary administration, development, and cooperation of Local people represented by Autonomous District Councils, a legitimate institution of Local self Government that can play vital roles in the process of political legitimization and develop a sense of public participation for the best implementation of the political as well as socio-economic integrity of the Local Government was established. Thus after 21 years of gap it has conducted successfully in 2010 and 2015. The next election was to be held in 2020 but so far no move is done till date. Some of the reason for the delay of the ADC election are-

1. Covid-19 pandemic in Manipur: However, the Covid-19 situation in Manipur is under control, and most activities in the state are returning to normal.
2. New District Creation: The government intends to hold ADC elections alongside the creation of four new districts.
3. Gram Panchayat and Municipality election: The government wishes to hold all municipal, Gram Panchayat, and ADC elections at the same time.
4. Demand of the Constitutional Right of the Tribal in Manipur under Article 371 (C), 1971. Where the Governor as a head of the state is to protect the right of the Hill Areas of the State of Manipur.

There is a need for the participation of women in politics. However, in the context of the Senapati district, from 1972 to 2015, in the Autonomous District Council (ADC), no women contestants for the said election were elected to the ADC Member. From the participation of women in the district council, it can concluded that women are underrepresented in the district council as no women are represented in the grass root level electoral process despite political participation in different forms like campaigns, demonstrations, protests, rallies, etc. Thus, the question was asked to the respondent whether the reservation of seats for women is exercised in the district or not. The respondent's response is shown in the table below.

Table 5.9 Opinion on exercising of constitutional right in women reservation policy

Gender distribution	Yes	No	Cannot decide	Total
Male	31	57	62	150
Female	79	85	86	250
Total	110	142	148	400

The above shows that in the district, the reservation of seats for women is still not fully exercised as the total number of respondents says ‘No’ is greater than that of ‘Yes’. As per the responses, 85 females out of 250 said ‘No’ against 79 ‘Yes,’ and 86 females could not decide whether it was exercised. Moreover, in the opinion of male respondents, 57 males said ‘No’, 31 males of ‘Yes” out of 150 respondents males and 62 males could not decide. From the above figure, it can be concluded that the constitution right that are reserved for women’s seat allotment in the local self governance is still yet to be fulfilled. There is an underrepresentation of women in the Autonomous District Council (ADC), as there are no elected women members till date from the district. The idea of 33% reservation of women in Panchayati Raj is yet to be realized in the Senapati district's ADC. Sometime women less participation in electoral politics is because of the gender stereotype. To understand how gender stereotypes play as a hindrance in politics, the opinion of the respondents were collected.

Table 5.10 Opinion on gender stereotyping and women political participation

Gender	Response				Total
	Yes	No	Can’t Say	No Response	
Male	63 (42.0%)	72 (48.0%)	15 (10.0%)	0 (.0%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	124 (49.6%)	80 (32.0%)	43 (17.2%)	3 (1.2%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	187 (46.8%)	152 (38.0%)	58 (14.5%)	3 (.8%)	400 (100.0%)

The data shows that out of the 100 respondents, 46.8 per cent is of view that there is gender stereotyping, with 42.0 per cent male and 49.6 female of the total respondent of male and female. On the other hand, 38.0 per cent of the respondents say there is no gender stereotyping, with 48.0 per cent male and 32.0 per cent female. Moreover, 14.5 per cent of the respondents say that they can’t say, and 1.2 per cent of

females with no responses. Through the analysis of the above figure, it can be concluded that stereotyping is still in practice within society. It has also been found that in the electoral process, the preference was given to males. Some female respondents also express that they prefer male candidates to female candidates. All this is because of the gender stereotypes leading to the disadvantages of women in politics. When there is gender stereotyping in society, the way people look and give their preferences also differ. When people believe that males should be superior to women, society will consider women inferior. Therefore, gender stereotyping has to break through, consider both men and women as equal creations, and take them on the same pedestal. By doing this, the notion of gender equality can be achieved.

5.10 Women Participation in Village Developmental Programme

About 70% of the total population in India lives in rural areas, according to 2011 census. When we talk of village development, it talks about rural development. In India, we have different rural development schemes like **the Swachhh Bharat Mission**: the Scheme was launched by the then Prime minister on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October 2014. The concept is to give access to sanitation facilities, including toilets, solid and liquid waste disposal, village cleanliness, and a supply of safe and adequate drinking water. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which was launched in 2006 under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005. This Scheme aims to provide the 'right to work' to the people falling below Poverty Line. It guarantees 100 days of employment to the village people in a year and makes 50% of the workers women. National Rural Livelihood Mission was restructured from Swarn Janti Gram Swarajgar Yojna in 2011. This Scheme aims to empower women's self-help groups. Under this Scheme, the government provides loans of up to 3 lakh rupees at a rate of 7%, which can be reduced to 4% if the loan is repaid on time. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was launched in 2015 to provide affordable housing to the weaker section of people, the urban poor and rural poor. There are many other similar schemes for the development of the rural people of the country. Improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas is called rural development (Panda & Majumder, 2013). In the state of Nagaland the Article 371(A) enshrined with the Village Development Board (VDB) as a statutory body functioning under the primary village Authority known as Village Council. The VDBs take up the responsibility in all phase of development in their jurisdiction. Thus women were given one-fourth of the reservation i.e. 25% of seat to the women.

In the case of Manipur, the overall development of the hill areas falls under the ADC within their jurisdiction under the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971. It gives specific functions and responsibilities like maintenance and management of property, movable and immovable; construction and repairing of roads, bridge, and

channels; establishment of schools, repair of schools; establishment and maintenance of dispensaries, supply of drinking water, construction and embankment and supply of water for irrigation, preservation and reclamation of soil, etc. Apart from the ADC, the Village Council plays a vital role in the development of the village. The Manipur Village Authorities in Hills Areas Act was passed in 1956. Section 16 of the Village Authorities Act gives the ruled-out specific function of the village authorities and gives judicial power to deal within their jurisdiction. The village authorities, whom they called the village council, consisting of the village headmen, chairman, and secretary of the village, and selected elders of the village form the council. All the development programs, like Integrated Rural Development Program, Community Development Program, etc., are implemented through h the village council. They took overall charge of the implemented development program and scheme. They sort out the beneficiaries of the scheme and other grants in aid and dully report all the developmental information to the government.

In the village council, women are not represented as council members. However, women also formed a general body of the women folk, discussed their matters, and brought them before the village council for approval and implementation. The developments of the village are taken up under the umbrella of the village council; however, it does not mean that women are not part of it; they also discuss the matter in the women's organization which they call 'women society' and share their opinion regarding the well being of the village.

The women association is formed at different levels and carries out their responsibilities in their capacity accordingly. The district as a whole has the Senapati District Women Association (SDWA) and other women's organizations like Poumai Naotumai Me (Poumai Naga Women Union), Mao Naga Women Welfare Association (MNWWA), Maram Women Union (MWU), etc. All these women's associations are formed to look after the well-being of the people and to maintain peace and order in society. At the village level, women association is formed, which they categorized as general women's body and religious women's body. Thus both association works for the well-being of the village and to bring peace and tranquility. Moreover, it is also actively involved in the development process of the village.

The below table shows that women also actively participate in the development process of the village. While taking the opinion of the respondent about the women participants of the women in the village development program, out of 400 respondents, 69.8 percent said that women participate in the village development program, 21.5 percent responded with 'No', and 8.8 responded with 'I do not know' respectively.

Table.5.11 Women Participation in Village Developmental program

Gender	Response				Total
	Yes	No	I can't say	No response	
Male	128 (85.3%)	14 (9.3%)	8 (5.3%)	0 (.0%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	219 (87.6%)	18 (7.2%)	12 (4.8%)	1 (.4%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	347 (86.8%)	32 (8.0%)	20 (5.0%)	1 (.2%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows the participation of women in the village development program. Out of 100 per cent, 86.8 per cent says that women participate in village development program, with 85.3 per cent male and 87.6 per cent female of the total population male and female. On the other hand 8.0 per cent who says that women do not participate in village development with 9.3 per cent male and 7.2 per cent female, respectively. While 5.0 per cent responded as 'I cannot say', with 5.3 per cent male and 4.8 per cent female of the total respondents of male and female. Moreover, there is 0.4 per cent respondent of females with no response. Based on the above figure, it can be concluded that women participate in the village development program. Through the study, it has been found that women are not part of the village council and in making decisions of the village in the council meeting; however, women have an organization called a women association or women's society and discuss important matters related to the development in the village. It has also been found that women are active in the maintenance of law and order in the village and society. They discuss within their organization and put forward their resolution or discussed agendas for the implementation in the village. The parallel organization of women shows that women are not part of the village council, but their involvement in the village development is seen in the district.

Moreover, women also played their role in a peace initiative during the dispute of the village, which we already discussed in chapter two. The involvement of women in village development can also be seen in the different schemes of rural development like MGNREGA and other self Help Groups (SHGs). One of the respondents said, *"When it comes to work through MGNREGA, I see more women heads in the workplace than that of men."* It means to say that women's participation in the village development program women is more active as compared to that of males. No doubt, women participate in the political process in the electoral as well as at the grassroots level. However, women's representation is less in certain areas of politics as compared to male counterparts. These barriers to women's participation will discuss in the subsequent chapter.

Table 5.12 Opinion on Women Participation in Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Gender	Response				Total
	Yes	No	I don't know	No Response	
Male	139 (92.7%)	2 (1.3%)	9 (6.0%)	0 (.0%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	214 (85.6%)	17 (6.8%)	18 (7.2%)	1 (.4%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	353 (88.2%)	19 (4.8%)	27 (6.8%)	1 (.2%)	400 (100.0%)

The table shows the participation of women in Non Governmental organizations (NGOs) in the district. Out of 100 per cent female, 88.2 per cent says women participate in NGOs, with 92.7 per cent male and 85.6 per cent female. On the other hand 4.8 per cent says that women do not participate, with 1.3 per cent male and 6.8 per cent female. Moreover, 6.8 percent responded as 'I do not know' with 6.0 per cent male and 7.2 per cent female while 0.2 per cent with no response from female. The figure above shows that women are active in the NGOs. The reason for the active participation of women in NGOs, as per the study, is that, as women engage in agricultural activity, they get support from the NGOs for agricultural productivity. Women in rural areas form a group enrolled in the NGOs for financial aid in the form of a Self-help Group (SHG). It also found that many respondents are part of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Through these, they get a financial add that helps in agricultural productivity. Another reason for their participation in NGOs is due to less employment in the organized sector. Many organized sectors select candidates based on specific qualification criteria. As women are less in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), they compete with the lower position in the job where the number of candidates is large. With the increase of unemployment among the youth, many take up jobs in the NGOs sector. This is true of the fact that women are less in the organized sector, which is already discussed in Chapter 3, where it shows that males are more in the organized sector than females, leading them to engage more in the unorganized sector.

5.11 Women Political Awareness in the District

A standard definition of *political awareness* is "the degree to which a person pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered" (1992, Zaller, 21). Political awareness involves the individual and several sources of political messaging disseminated in the public sphere, exchanging political information. There are many different conceptualizations of political awareness, even though considerable agreement exists on how we should define it. The role of political values, such as the

standards that lead people to favor particular policies, individuals' outcomes, or ideologies, equality, freedom, respect, and tolerance, as well as the role of emotions, such as how contempt, indignation, liking, pride, envy, or admiration affect rationality, are all important questions that serve as prerequisites in the politically aware. The state or capacity to observe, feel, or be cognizant of events, objects, or a sensory pattern is known as awareness. Because of this, an observer can affirm the level of consciousness without necessarily assuming comprehension (Temjensosang & Luckson, 2023). As women become more aware of things happening around them, make them participate in politics. Thus, political awareness refers to the political knowledge that a person acquires as they encounter the political activities and workings of the government, shaping their opinion and influencing their political participation. The opinion of the respondent was taken about how they considered political participation.

Table 5.13 Opinion on Electoral Political Participation

Gender	Responses				Total
	Career	Part time	Others	No Response	
Male	135 (90.0%)	6 (4.0%)	9 (6.0%)	0(.0%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	205 (82.0%)	23 (9.2%)	20 (8.0%)	2 (.8%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	340 (85.0%)	29 (7.2%)	29 (7.2%)	2 (.5%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows the respondents' opinions on their electoral political participation. Out of 100 per cent 85.5 percent is of the view that participation in electoral politics is a career, with 90.0 percent male and 82.0 percent female of the total male and female respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 7.2 percent is of the view that participation in electoral politics is part-time, with 4.0 per cent male and 9.2 percent female, respectively. While 7.2 percent responded as others, 6.0 percent male and 0.8 percent female. Moreover, 0.5 per cent gave no response with 0.8 per cent from females. The majority of the respondents are of the view that participation in electoral politics is a career. They also express that people with aspirations of changing society actively participated in electoral politics. However, a small group of people also think that participation in electoral politics is a part-time job. They also express that many consider political careers only for politicians and the public involved during the election.

5.12 Relation between Women Empowerment and Women Political Participation

The relation is the mutual connection between two things. The change in one variable is accompanied by the change in other variables. The correlation can be either positive or negative. A positive is when there is an increase in one variable; there is also

an increase in another variable. On the other hand, a negative correlation is when an increase in one variable leads to a decrease in another variable. Negative correlation is sometimes termed as 'inverse correlation' and positive correlation as 'direct correlation' (Scott & Gordon, 2009). The study has found a positive correlation between women's empowerment and Political participation. Through different factors like education, industrialization, and westernization, there is an increase in women's income, property holding, and literacy rate and so on. Apart from that, the above factors also have a positive impact by giving more awareness leading women to participate more in other activities outside the home instead of confining themselves to the four corners of the wall.

There is a strong relationship between women's empowerment and political participation. Women's empowerment enables women to control their lives and make decisions that affect them. On the other hand, political participation refers to individuals' involvement in the political process, such as voting, running for office, or participating in political campaigns. Empowering women can lead to greater political participation because it allows women to have more influence over the decision that affects their lives. When women have a voice in the political process, they can advocate for policies and programs that promote gender equality, women's rights, and social justice. Women's political participation can also lead to more excellent representation of women in political institutions, which can help to create more gender-sensitive policies and laws.

In addition, women's empowerment and political participation are often mutually reinforcing. Women who participate in politics can gain the skills and knowledge needed to advocate for their own empowerment. Similarly, when women are empowered, they are more likely to participate in the political process. The relationship between women's empowerment and political participation is essential for promoting gender equality, social justice, and democratic governance.

When women are empowered, they are more likely to participate in political processes, and when a woman is given opportunities to participate in politics, it can lead to greater empowerment. Studies have shown that when more women are involved in politics, there are positive outcomes for both women and society. Women politicians are more likely to prioritize issues that affect women, such as gender-based violence and reproductive rights. Knowing the loopholes can lead to policies that promote gender equality and empowerment. Greater political participation by women can lead to their empowerment, while greater empowerment can encourage more women to participate in politics. Both are essential for achieving gender equality and creating more just and inclusive societies. Empowering women means providing them with the resources, tools, and opportunities to make decisions and take action in their own lives. It includes access to education, healthcare, financial resources, and legal protections.

Through the study, it has been found that woman in the district has become more aware of politics. They became more aware of political structures, processes, beliefs, and values regarding political ideologies and systems. Through their political awareness and consciousness, women start involving in voting, demonstration, protest, rallies, etc. All this has an impact on the government and policymakers.

Empowerment, as discussed in chapter four, makes a detailed analysis of the socioeconomic condition of the rural women in the district that there is financial freedom among women, there is also property right given to the women with specific restrictions on ancestral property. The resources and opportunities for women in the district have increased. The data shows the income of the women in the district. Women's income has increased with the increase in education among women as they look out for different professions apart from agriculture activities. Moreover, it also found that women also play active societal roles as peacemakers. They also decide to lead their own organization and bring out new ideas that enable society's smooth functioning. Many respondents also express their opinion that women's social and economic status in the district has increased.

The study shows that women's political awareness and decision-making at the district's grassroots level have increased. The factors that lead to women's political awareness and consciousness are women's rights movements and gender equality advocacy, which have been critical in raising knowledge about women's political rights and empowering women to participate in politics. These movements have emphasized the importance of women's views in decision-making. Education is a critical aspect of increasing women's political knowledge and participation. Education equips women with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to comprehend political issues, advocate for their rights, and participate effectively in political processes. Legislative reforms and implementing gender quotas or affirmative action policies might boost women's political engagement. These policies seek to boost women's representation in elected offices and decision-making bodies, allowing women to participate in politics. As women become more conscious of gender-based discrimination and their unique obstacles, they are more driven to address these concerns through political participation. Women frequently bring diverse viewpoints and goals to the political table, creating a more inclusive and representative political system.

In the Senapati district of Manipur, women have become more aware of the political situation and become more conscious, leading them to participate actively in politics, which we see as discussed above. Women's exercise of voting and participation in the demonstration, rallies, protests, etc., is the impact of their political consciousness and political awareness. However, despite women's increased political participation, they are still underrepresented compared to males in electoral politics. The above data shows that from 1972 till 2022, there was no elected women candidate from the district,

with only two contestants. Moreover, in the district's Autonomous District Council (ADC), the governing body at the grass root level, there is not a single woman elected representative, as stated in the above discussion. Some hurdles play behind fewer women's participation in electoral politics despite their overall increase in awareness and participation in other arenas apart from electoral politics. Societal norms and cultural practices can influence the factors like gender roles and expectations. Traditional beliefs and customs in some cultures may hinder women from actively participating in politics or occupying positions of power. Engaging in politics often requires financial resources, social connections, and support from political parties or influential individuals. Women in certain regions face barriers to accessing these resources, limiting their ability to participate in politics effectively. The challenges women face in political participation are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The study aims to investigate the relation between women empowerment and political participation, as hypothesized at the outset. The finding presented a strong support of the initial hypothesis. Through the rigorous data collection and analysis of the collected data it has observed that there is a strong relationship between women empowerment and political participation. From the above discussion it has found out that women in the Senapati district, their socio-economic status are average with 79.5 percent as shown in table 3.9. However, it is observed that the percentage of women low socio-economic status is significantly more than high with 14.2 percent low and 5.8 percent high respectively. From the statistic of the study it shows that women empowerment has increased in the district overall, but it also found that there are certain elements that act as challenges to women's empowerment as discussed in chapter six. With the analysis of women's political participation, women in the district have increased in their participation in the grassroots level as discussed above. They have become more conscious and aware of the politics in the district leading to raise their voice. However, in the electoral politics women in district are underrepresented. Thus, the study provides compelling evidence of the initial hypothesis and objective how women empowerment and political participation go hand in hand as political empowerment of women is an exponent part of women empowerment as a whole.

CHAPTER SIX

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

6.1 Introduction

Empowerment of women becomes the topic of discussion in every organization meeting. Everyone believes that unless women participate and play their roles, gender equality cannot be achieved. By empowering women, they can exercise their will and make their own decisions. By doing this, there will be overall development in the society. In other words, empowering women allows women for self-esteem and independently exercise their will to make effective decisions. It has also become a core issue of discussion because of the change in women's roles compared to the past, the recognition of gender equality, and discrimination. In the past, women were deprived of the right to vote, education, and employment. Moreover, the human rights issue empowers women with the idea that males and females are equal before the law. They feel that there should not be discrimination between men and women in all aspects of society.

The United Nations has recognized gender equality as a factor that can enhance the status of women. It recognized that women's empowerment is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Welfare needs to be seen in all aspects of society and considered. Women's empowerment and autonomy, as well as their political, social, economic, and health status, are all essential goals in and of themselves. Furthermore, it is necessary for achieving sustainable development. Full participation and partnership of both men and women are required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for child care, nurturing, and household maintenance. Policy and program actions must be taken to improve women's access to secure livelihoods and economic resources, alleviate their extreme housework responsibilities, remove legal barriers to their participation in public life, and raise social awareness through effective education and mass communication programs. It is also believed that improving women's status improves their decision-making capacity at all levels and spheres of life, particularly in sexuality and reproduction. In turn, this is critical for the long-term success of population programs. Experience has shown that population and development programs are most effective when steps to improve women's status are taken concurrently (UNFPA, 1994).

There has been ample evidence of women being considered inferior to men since the dawn of civilization. Regardless of how progressive, almost every country has a history of oppressing women. The gender stereotype eventually prompted women to reconsider their social standing, leading to women worldwide becoming rebellious to

achieve the status they now enjoy. Since then, women have been vocal about gender equality and have worked tirelessly to empower themselves to achieve it. Many advocates for full participation and partnership of both men and women are required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for child care, nurturing, and household maintenance. Women worldwide face threats to their lives, health, and well-being due to being overburdened with work and lacking power and influence.

Despite the growing demands for women's empowerment and political participation, women are still underrepresented in the district. The study found that women in the district have become more aware of the political situation and have become more conscious that they are still underrepresented in the electoral process. The participation of women in general politics, like voting, political campaign, demonstration, protest, rallies, etc., which influence the government and policy-making, has increased as per the study. It has also shown that women in the village and society have their organization which they call 'women association' or 'women society,' which play a vital role in the smooth governance of the village. Through this organization, they make decisions and put them forward before the Village Council for implementation. These show that women are part of decision-making in the village though they are not in the village council. However, regarding electoral politics and decisions making in the government, women are underrepresented in the district.

6.2 Challenges face by women for empowerment in Senapati District

Different factors constrain the process of women's empowerment. The social norms and the cultural and social setting make it difficult to break the glass ceiling for women to see and explore what empowerment is. The district of Senapati is a male-dominated society, and the superiority exercise still exists. Thus, in every walk of life, gender stereotypes of male over female creep in one way or another. The overall challenges that women face in the empowerment process are discussed below.

6.2.1 Lack of Education

Education plays a vital role in realizing the dreams of an individual. Brigham Young once said, "If you educate a man, you educate a man. You educate women, you educate a generation". According to the United Nations, 130 million girls are out of school worldwide, and women account for two-thirds of the 758 million adults who lack basic literacy skills. Women's ability to secure well-paying jobs, make informed health decisions, and participate fully in civic life is hampered by a lack of education. Women who lack education may lack the skills required to secure a job that pays a living wage, or they may be forced to work in the informal sector, where they are more likely to be exploited and have fewer legal protections. Women's access to information about their

health and rights is also hampered by a lack of education, making them more vulnerable to domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse.

Women with limited education are frequently excluded from political and civic life, limiting their ability to influence decision-making and advocate for their rights. Women are less likely to be aware of their legal rights or how to exercise them if they lack education, and they may be more vulnerable to discrimination and marginalization.

As per the census of 2011, the literacy rate of India is 72.98 per cent, with 80.88 per cent male and 64.63 per cent female, while the state of Manipur has 76.94 per cent, with 83.58 per cent male and 70.26 per cent female, respectively. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in Senapati District is 63.60 per cent, with 69.21 per cent male and 57.67 per cent female¹. Thus, the education percentage of women is less as compared to males. As per the survey, lack of education is caused by the education preferences of children. From Chapter 4, figure 4.4 shows that there are preferences of male children over female children for education. Out of 100 respondents, 79 per cent believe that educational opportunity is given to both males and females, whereas 21 per cent said there is still a male preference for child education. With the above figure, it can be concluded that a male child's preferences are still present in society.

A lack of education hampers women's empowerment, and addressing this issue is critical for achieving gender equality and promoting women's rights. Equal opportunity in education will bring males and females on the same pedestal. Having this opportunity, they can effectively participate in decision-making and exercise their right. Awareness needs to spread to eliminate the old tradition of male preferences. This will give women equal access to equal opportunities for education and know their rights.

6.2.2 Professional Inequality

Professional inequality is the term used to describe the unfair treatment of people in the workplace due to their gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or handicap. It can appear in various ways, including discrepancies in pay, barriers to job progression, biased recruiting procedures, and harassment. Professional inequality is another challenge that women face in the process of empowerment. Professions play an essential role when it comes to decision-making. In every organization, there is a hierarchy in the work allotment. The higher the profession's position, the more exercised in the decision-making process. Figure 4.3 of Chapter Four shows that the percentage of males is more as compared to females when it comes to the organized sector. Out of the 100 respondents, 81.50 per cent responded that males engaged more in the organized sectors, while 2.50 responded that females are more in the organized sector. From the given figure, it can be concluded that males are more in the organized sector when it comes to

¹ Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2017

the occupation. The higher percentage of males in the organized sector can be concluded that there is professional inequality between males and females.

It has also been found through the study that as women in the district are less in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) studies; women are less in the occupation of those areas where subject specialization is required. Many respondents also express that women in the district prefer to opt for social science instead of science. The reason for choosing the subject of social science over science, as per the study, has concluded that science subjects are considered more challenging for the people in the district than social science. Another reason is due to the expenses as those students opting for science spend more fees and also spend more in getting money the study material and equipment. The family with a low income could not afford the expense leading them to choose the subject with fewer expenses. However, this mindset has changed with the increase in education, and female child has started opting for science, mathematics, technology, and other engineering courses. However, they are less as compared to males. It has also been shown through World Bank data that girls have 18 per cent of pursuing STEM studies compared to 35 per cent of boys leading to gaps in the science and technology profession.

In society, a person with a high profession and status is respected more than a low-status person. People tend to obey or follow what a wealthy-to-do person says. Sometimes people act according to their advice; after all, they know it is wrong. Systemic changes such as promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives, implementing fair and transparent hiring and promotion practices, and enforcing anti-discrimination laws are required to address professional inequalities. Furthermore, raising awareness and educating people about unconscious biases and stereotyping can help them recognize and challenge discriminatory behaviors and attitudes.

6.2.3 Unequal Work Division of Household Chores

A situation, in which different individuals or groups are assigned varying amounts of work or responsibilities, with some individuals or groups receiving a disproportionate share of the workload, is referred to as an unequal division of labor. The division of labor can happen in various settings, including the workplace, the home, or a group project.

Unequal work division between men and women in household chores is another challenge women face in the empowerment process. Men are usually considered the family's breadwinners, while females are the household caretakers and do other work, like nurturing the children. In the same way, the male child of the family is expected to do the things that the father does, while a female child of the family is expected to help the mother with household duties.

Through the study, it has been found that due to women's continuous engagement in household chores like preparation of meals, cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping, nurturing and caring for children, and so on. Especially rural women, as they are involved in all these activities, they have very little time to attend social functions and other activities that will enhance their personalities. Therefore, it becomes a big challenge for women to empower themselves. One of the respondents said, *"A responsible mother is one of the busiest people in the world because her work is endless, starting from morning till late night; however, no work progress can be seen with this busy schedule. Thus by doing all this work, women find it hard to take others' societal roles"*. These explain about the work of women done in home and how their engagement in the household duties makes them difficult to engage with the work outside the home.

Moreover, other respondents also express that women are occupied with household work, so they have less time to explore and take up responsibilities outside the home. When they have less exposure, they are less aware of the environment.

Table 6.1 Opinion on women exposures and political participation

Gender	Responses					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Cannot decide	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Male	38 (25.3%)	105 (70.0%)	2 (1.3%)	0 (.0%)	5 (3.3%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	82 (32.8%)	146 (58.4%)	7 (2.8%)	8 (3.2%)	7 (2.8%)	250(100.0%)
Total	120(30.0%)	251(62.8%)	9 (2.2%)	8 (2.0%)	12 (3.0%)	400(100.0%)

The above figure shows the extent of the respondent's response on how women's exposures affect their personal development, especially in the political arena. Out of 100 percent 30.0 percent of the respondents strongly agree that a woman's less exposure is a challenge for women's empowerment, with 25.3 percent male and 32.8 percent female. Moreover, 62.8 percent agree to the statement that a woman's less exposure is a barrier to women's empowerment, with 70.0 percent male and 58.4 percent female, respectively. At the same time, 2.2 percent responded as 'cannot decide' with 1.3 percent male and 2.8 percent female. On the other hand, 3.2 percent of female respondents disagree with the statement that woman's less exposure is a barrier to women's empowerment.

Moreover, 3.0 percent of the respondents strongly disagree, with 3.3 per cent male and 2.8 percent female of the total percentage of male and female respectively. From the above figure, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents agree and strongly agree with the statement that women's less exposure is one of the reasons or

challenges to women's empowerment. However, with the increase in education, women in the Senapati district have started to get more exposure leading them to have a better position in society. Some respondents said that it has changed, and women do not confine to the rural areas alone but have taken a role in many aspects of society. Women in the district do not confine to agriculture alone but take on different professions like entrepreneurs, teachers, businesswomen, and others, as seen from the profile of the respondents.

Despite advances in gender equality in many parts of the world, women continue to bear a disproportionate share of unpaid work, such as domestic and care work. This unequal division of labor restricts women's opportunities for education, employment, and civic participation, reinforcing gender inequalities.

It is critical to encourage men and women to share household and care responsibilities equally to avoid division of labor. With less division of household work, it can be accomplished through work-life balance policies and programs such as parental leave, flexible working hours, and affordable childcare. It is also critical to challenge gender stereotypes and encourage women's participation in non-traditional fields and positions of leadership. To address this issue, governments, civil society, and individuals must work together to promote gender equality, challenge gender norms, and support women's access to education, employment, and leadership positions.

6.2.4 Culture and Societal Norms

Culture is the shared attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices defining a group or society. It encompasses a particular group of people's way of life, including their language, religion, customs, art, music, and food, among other things. "Culture," according to Hofstede & Hofstede (2005), "is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from others." Culture is not static; it evolves due to historical, social, economic, and political influences. It shapes people's identities by influencing how they view and interact with the world around them. On the other hand, Norms are socially accepted rules or expectations that guide behavior in a specific culture or community. Examples are unwritten norms, informal customs, and ceremonial laws that guide behavior within a society.

Culture and norms have frequently hampered women's empowerment by reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting women's opportunities and rights. Women, for example, are expected in many societies to choose their duties as wives and mothers over their jobs or personal desires. The stigma can result in women having less access to school and job prospects, poorer earnings, and fewer leadership roles. Mihalache and Socol (2017) researched the impact of culture on women's entrepreneurship in Romania, where traditional gender norms are still firmly embedded.

According to the study, societal norms around gender roles and family responsibilities frequently hinder women's entrepreneurship since they are expected to prioritize their family obligations over their commercial efforts.

Another study by Jayachandran et al. (2017) looked at the impact of a gender norm intervention in India to challenge the prevalent view that women should prioritize home roles over vocations. The intervention raised female labor market participation and lowered gender wage inequalities, showing the potential benefit of questioning established norms on women's empowerment, according to the study

Through the study, it has been found that out of the total 100 respondents, 38.25 per cent said that tradition and customs act as a hindrance to women's empowerment in the district. On the other hand, 51.25 per cent say that culture and customs do not act as a barrier to women's empowerment, while 10.50 per cent responded as 'cannot say'. According to the data, the number of respondents who said 'No' is higher than the percentage of respondents who said 'Yes,' implying that tradition and custom have less influence on women's empowerment but are still a barrier to women's empowerment. However, it is not totally agreed that tradition and custom do not act as a hindrance in women's empowerment. Through modern education, the outlook of the people has changed but, it can be seen that tradition and custom still holds true that in some area of women's empowerment, it act as a barrier in the district.

6.2.5 Agricultural Activities

In several ways, agriculture can be a barrier to women's empowerment. Historically, agriculture has been regarded as a male-dominated industry, with women denied access to land, credit, and other resources required for agricultural production. Women's economic opportunities and ability to control their own lives have been hampered as a result. Women in agricultural activities are frequently viewed as "helpers" or "supporters" rather than decision-makers or entrepreneurs. As a result, they cannot take on leadership roles or benefit from their efforts and innovations.

The rural society, especially in the district of Senapati, their main livelihood depends on agriculture. The whole life of women revolved around agricultural activities. It is the men who go out for secondary and tertiary activities to earn for livelihood. As they are confined to agricultural activities, the women's income is less than the men's. A respondent for a study said, *"In a rural society, women have no other occupation apart from agriculture activities; through the continuous labor for good productivity, they are engaged throughout the year. Through this process, women have less time to perform outside activities"* This shows that as women involved in continuous agricultural activities, they have less time to perform outside activities.

Moreover, the old practices of agricultural activities make the women engage the whole year and have less time for exposure to outside activities for self-empowerment through involvement apart from agricultural activities. A recent Supreme Court verdict also said that man must earn even physical labor to give maintenance to his wife and kids despite having no jobs and source of income. A bench of Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Bela M Trivedi said, ‘provision for maintenance under CrPC sec 125 is a measure of social justice that was enacted to protect women and children’². This kind of obligation makes a man go out and earned to look after the family. However, such narrow obligations should be looked at differently by giving both men and women responsibility for their potential and capacity. It has also been found through this study that with modern education, women do not confine to agriculture alone but have started to take different occupations leading to an increase in their socio-economic status in society.

6.2.6 Gender Inequality and Discrimination

Gender inequality is the unequal treatment of people based on their gender, which frequently results in disadvantageous outcomes for one gender over the other. Gender equality can take many forms, including unequal pay, limited access to education, employment discrimination, lack of representation in leadership roles, and unequal opportunities in many areas of life. Gender discrimination is the unfair treatment of people based on their gender. Gender discrimination can manifest itself in various ways, such as denying individuals opportunities or benefits because of their gender or maltreating them because of their gender. Gender discrimination frequently affects women, but it can also affect men. Thus gender inequality and discrimination are an outcome of stereotyping.

A stereotype is a state of one’s idea about a particular thing or person. Gender stereotyping is another challenge that women face in the process of empowerment. Gender stereotyping leads to gender bias. Gender stereotypes lead to fetus determination of child for female infanticide. It also gave the superiority of males over females. People think that males should be superior and females subordinate.

Table 5.8 in Chapter Five shows that out of the 100 respondents, 46.8 percent is of view that there is gender stereotyping, with 42.0 percent male and 49.6 percent female of the total respondent of males and females. On the other hand, 38.0 percent of the respondents say there is no gender stereotyping, with 48.0 percent male and 32.0 percent female. Moreover, 14.5 percent of the respondents said that they could not say, and 1.2 per cent females with no responses. Based on the analysis of the above figure, it is possible to conclude that stereotyping is still prevalent in society. It was also discovered

² Times of India, October 6, 2022

that males were given preference during the electoral process. Some female respondents also state that they prefer male candidates over female candidates. All of this is due to gender stereotypes that disadvantage women in politics. When there is gender stereotyping in society, people's appearance and preferences differ. When people believe that men should be superior to women, society views women as inferior.

6.2.7 Political Barriers

A *political barrier* is an impediment or challenge caused by political considerations such as government policies, laws, regulations, or political instability. These hurdles might make it difficult or impossible for individuals or groups to achieve their political aims or exercise their political rights. Mwambari and Mogere's (2021) study "Engendering Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women's Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa" looked at political impediments to women's political engagement. According to the study, political barriers to women's political participation in Sub-Saharan Africa include discriminatory legal and institutional frameworks, cultural and social norms that limit women's political aspirations, and limited access to political resources such as education, information, and funding.

Women's political participation has increased overall in any society. Women can be seen increasingly participating in all spheres. Their ideas, concepts, and perspectives have changed through modern education, globalization, westernization, science, technology, etc. Due to all these factors, women's status has increased, affecting not only urban women but also rural women. The improvement of the status of women can be accorded to different determinants like; economic empowerment, social empowerment, religious empowerment, political empowerment, and psychological empowerment, which were discussed in chapter four. Through this overall empowerment, the participation of women in politics has also increased. Looking at the representation of women in the State of Manipur's legislative assembly reveals a rise in the number of elected women from 0 elected with one woman contender in 1972 to 5 elected women with 17 contestants in 2022. This figure shows that women's political participation has increased.

However, rural women's political participation, especially in the Senapati district in the electoral process, still needs to catch up as there have been only two contestants from 1972 till 2022 with no elected members to the Legislative Assembly. Even in the Autonomous District Council (ADC), which is the grass root governing the district, from 1972 till 2015, the last ADC election, there was not even a member who contested as well as who won the election, which shows that women are still underrepresented.

Their political participation in the political arena has increased, as the study shows in Chapter Five. Women in the district have become more aware of the political situation and become more conscious, leading them to exercise their voting right and raise their voices. However, in the electoral process, the law-making body still needs to be represented compared to its male counterpart. The underrepresentation of women has to do with many factors like tradition and custom, the patriarchy system, economic constraint, socialization, the nature of work division, etc.

Their political participation in the political arena has increased as Women's political participation becomes a pre-requisite and hot talk for the political empowerment of women. The Nairobi conference (1985) outlined four categories in which the advancement of women's equality might be evaluated: decision-making, political involvement, social participation, and constitutional and legal measures. Additionally, the conference recognized that women should engage in all aspects of human activity, not simply those that are related to gender.³ Moreover, the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) emphasizes on women's political participation by saying that "Equality in political decision-making serves as a lever, without which genuine integration of the equality factor in government policy-making is exceedingly unlikely." Many also consider that the under-representation of women in politics is because of the unequal division of labor between the sex, and they advocate equal representation in the electoral process and in its decision-making.

Through the study, it has been found that there are certain factors that act as a barrier to women's political participation in the district. Major obstacles that are found through the study are male dominance, household duties, lack of education, financial constraint, tradition and custom, lack of political socialization, ignorance, etc., which are discussed in detail below.

6.2.7(A) Patriarchy system

The concept of patriarchy is not unique to feminist perspectives. Carole Pateman explains, 'The patriarchal construction of the distinction between masculine and femininity is the political difference between freedom and servitude.'⁴ According to the dictionary of sociology, the term patriarchy describes the social system which is based on the authority of male heads of household or the rule of the father. In the second part of the twentieth century, feminist theories updated and broadened our knowledge of patriarchy. For them, patriarchy is much more than ancient civilizations and extends beyond the unequal distribution of power between men and women in some aspects of contemporary cultures. Both feminist and non-feminist thinkers acknowledge that patriarchy has its historical origins in the family, with the father exercising leadership

³ https://World_Conference_on_Women,_1995 (accessed on 8/23/2022)

⁴ Pateman, Carole (1988) *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 207

and projecting it to the entire social order maintained and reinforced by various mechanisms/institutions, including the Institution of Male Solidarity. Through this institution, men oppress women individually and collectively and also control their bodies, minds, sexuality, and spirituality through peaceful means such as law and religion. Political scientist and feminist researcher Anne Phillips makes the case in her book, "Women, Power, and Politics," that patriarchy inhibits women's political participation by establishing a system that places men's interests above those of women. According to Phillips, men dominate political institutions, which maintain a system that prioritizes men's demands and interests and ignores women's needs and concerns.

Patriarchal societies spread the idea of motherhood, which limits women's mobility and places the task of caring for and raising children. The biological factor of bearing children is related to the social obligations of motherhood, which include nurturing, raising children, and educating them while devoting oneself to the family. The respondents' opinions were collected to analyze how the patriarchy system impacts women and acts as a barrier to women's political participation.

Table: 6.2 Opinion on patriarchy system controlling over women

Gender	Responses			Total
	Yes	No	Cannot decide	
Male	52 (34.7%)	84 (56.0%)	14 (9.3%)	150 (100.0%)
Female	101 (40.4%)	124 (49.6%)	25 (10.0%)	250 (100.0%)
Total	153 (38.2%)	208 (52.0%)	39 (9.8%)	400 (100.0%)

The above table shows respondents' responses on the patriarchy system and its impact on women's life. Out of 100 percent of respondents, 38.2 percent say it acts as a barrier to women's empowerment, with 34.7 percent male and 40.4 percent female of the total male and female respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 52.0 percent of the respondents said it does not act as a barrier to women's political participation, with 56.0 percent male and 49.6 percent female, respectively, while 9.8 percent could not decide whether it is a barrier or not with 9.3 percent male and 10.0 percent female respectively. Based on the observation of the above table, it can be concluded that in spite of the majority view, it is not a barrier. However, it can hold that it is a barrier to societal male domination. However, it can be seen that the strict domination of the past has become more liberal as per the percentage of the respondent.

Patriarchal society is male-dominated, as the father or the male members of the family are the head of the family. Sometimes male domination puts many restrictions on women on their freedom of expression and liberty. Many sections of the Naga society do not accept the leadership of women. Some of the respondents also believe that males

should be the decision male and should be superior to women. Thus, despite the women's groundwork in the political parties, women are not being recognized.

Male dominance also sometimes puts pressure on women regarding domestic duties. Naga women have a significant share of responsibilities regarding domestic activities. In the words of Haimendorf, “Women in a more civilized part of India may envy with the high of the women in Naga Hills...”⁵ Sometime, this Anthropological observation may lack the ground reality and may have a gap with the modern society. The women, especially in the Senapati District of Manipur, engaged in a different profession, but still, the old age gender stereotype exists in society.

Table 6.3 Opinion on gender stereotyping

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	187	46.8
No	152	38.0
Can't Say	58	14.5
No Response	3	.8
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondent's responses on the gender stereotype in the district. Out of the total 100 per cent respondents, 46.8 percent said 'Yes', 38.0 percent said 'No', 14.5 percent said 'Cannot say,' and 0.8 percent with no response, respectively. Through the above analyses, it can be concluded that there is still gender stereotyping between males and females. Respondents who agree that there is gender stereotyping 46.8 percent, against those who said 'No' 38.0 percent, which means the opinion of respondents who said 'Yes' on gender stereotyping in society is more significant than those who said 'No.' Despite modern education, westernization, and urbanization, which have changed people's outlook, there is still gender stereotyping in the rural society in the study area. Thus, this gender stereotyping is one of the barriers for women in the political empowerment process.

⁵ Haimendorf, Von Christoph, *the Naked Nagas*, London, p.101.

6.2.7 (B) Division of Labor

A household chore refers to the activities that are performed in the house. The activities include cleaning, house repairing, grocery shopping, and laundry, nurturing children or child care, cooking, and so on. This household chore becomes a daily routine for the mother and female members of the house. Moreover, a female member of the family is expected to help out with the work of the mother, while male members of the family go along with the father.

It is usually held that men were considered the family's breadwinners and females were to manage household work. One of the respondents said, *"A responsible mother is one of the busiest people in the world because her work is endless, starting from morning till late night; however, no work progress can be seen with this busy schedule. Thus by doing all this work, women find it hard to take others' societal roles"*. These explain women's work at home and how their engagement in household duties makes it challenging to engage with the work outside the home. This system has changed with the education and the responsibility shared by both men and women. Based on the work nature, the husband and wife and children share the household responsibility. Many modern families also keep a housemaid to lighten their household work burden. However, in the rural society in the district of Senapati, women are still expected to do all the household work while men go out to earn their livelihood. Tighted schedule of household chores schedule is one reason women are less exposed to the outside world.

6.2.7 (C) Lack of Education

Education is derived from the Latin word 'Educare' and 'Educere.' 'Educare' implies 'to bring up' or 'to nurture,' and 'Educere' means 'to bring forth' or 'to draw out.' 'Educare' or 'Educere' refers to developing a child's latent faculties. However, the child is unaware of these possibilities. It is the educator or teacher's responsibility to be aware of these and to use proper ways to develop such abilities. Education aims to develop the physical, emotional, mental, social, moral, and spiritual components of life. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "education" means "bringing out the best in a child's and man's body, intellect, and spirit." In other words, education is an 'all-round development.' Aristotle defined *education* as 'forming a sound mind in a sound body. It cultivates man's faculties, particularly his mind, so that he might experience contemplation of supreme truth, kindness, and beauty. Education can be considered a deliberate, conscious, or unconscious social, scientific, psychological, and philosophical process that promotes the total growth of the person in society to achieve maximum happiness and prosperity.

As shown in Table 2.1 in Chapter Two, the district of Senapati had a total literacy rate of 59.8 in 2001, with 51.2 percent of females and 67.9 percent of males being literate. It rose to 63.30 percent in 2011, with a 69.21 percent male and a 57.67 percent female breakdown. In both censuses, women's literacy rate is lower than men's. The district's literacy rate is lower than the state's average compared to the entire state. Therefore, based on the data, the district has a high illiteracy rate; nonetheless, it increased from 59.8 percent in 2001 to 63.30 percent in 2011 accordingly.

As per the study, it has been found that lack of education among women is one of the challenges to women's empowerment. The respondents' opinions were collected to analyze how male preferences for education affect the literacy of women in the district.

Table: 6.4 Opinion on preference of child education

	Frequency	Percent
Son	84	21.0
Equal for both	316	79.0
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the preference for a child's education in the study area. Out of the total 100 percent of respondents, 21.0 percent said preference is given to male children, while 79.0 said that it is equal for both the child. The table shows that most respondents responded that education preference is equally given to both male and female children. However, from the above figure, it can be concluded that there are still people that prefer male children, as 21.0 percent responded that the preference is given to male children and preference for female children with no respondents. Through this, it can say that preference is given to males still practice, which is also the cause for the lack of education on women. Through the study, it has been found that illiterate families give more preference to male children over female children.

Moreover, families with less income prefer males when they cannot bear the expense of both males and females. With the increase in modern education, the preference of males and females started to lose its place in society, which can be seen in the figure about the educational preference of male and female children. However, there are still practices in some families, mainly illiterate and low-income families in the district.

6.2.7 (D) Financial Constraint

A financial constraint is a limitation or restriction on an individual's or organization's capacity to obtain or use financial resources to fulfill their goals or objectives. The financial constraint also refers to instability or lack of financial resources. Financial problems can be caused by not owning property, lack of skill, lack of efficiency, no jobs, etc. As per the study, it has been found that financial problem is also one of the barriers to women's participation in politics in the district.

Politics has become a business where they sell and buy votes through money. It is an undeniable fact, and it is an open secret. Money is used intensively, balancing and deciding the party's future to lose or win the election based on the leader's potential, capacity, acceptance of the people, caste, and community consideration. A. P. K. Singh, in his book 'Election Politics in Manipur,' also discussed how 'money power' plays during the Sixth Assembly Election. Where money is involved directly or indirectly by bribing the voters, which is an open secret.⁶ The expenses in the election depend on various factors, which can be political as well as non-political. It also varied from constituency to constituency and from region to region.

Table: 6.5 Opinion on low income of women as a barrier in political participation

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	32	8.0
Agree	256	64.0
Neutral	44	11.0
Disagree	61	15.2
Strongly disagree	4	1.0
No Response	3	.8
Total	400	100.0

⁶ A.P.K Singh (2009). Election Politics in Manipur, New Delhi, Mittal Publication p.190

The above table shows the respondents' opinion that less women's income is a barrier to political participation, especially in the electoral process. Out of 100 per cent of respondents, 8.0 percent strongly agree, 64.0 percent agree, 11.0 percent as neutral, 15.2 percent as disagree, 1.0 percent as strongly disagree, and 0.8 per cent with no response, respectively. Through the analysis of the above table, women's income has a vital role in women's participation in politics. The voting behavior of an individual can alter through the use of money. The election has become more or less like a game of the rich, where the poor and needy are lured by it. Many voters look for genuine and suitable candidates, but everyone is different. Many voters look at candidates based on their wealth and status. Considering all this, an income or asset of a person becomes essential when it comes to the electoral process. Many have expressed their views on how money makes voters choose the wrong candidates despite knowing that they have done little for the good of society. One reason people are lured by money is due to less income of the individual and family. As expressed by many respondents, many voters look for short-term income forgetting the long-term prospect of society. These factors make the wealth of candidates' impact people's voting behavior. Women with less income, though capable, find it difficult to join the mainstream of the electoral process.

6.2.7 (E) Stereotypes and Prejudice

Traditional gender role patterns continue, internalized, and passed down by women, even in nations where a culture of equality appears to be firmly established (Canada et al., etc.). Most respondents mentioned that the traditional gender role is predominant in rural social structures. These stereotypes and prejudice make males superior and females subordinate. Many people hold that men should always be above. Even in the Senapati District of Manipur, gender stereotypes do exist. From the table 6.3 shows that Out of the total respondents who gave a response, 100 per cent, 46.8 percent said "Yes," 38.0 percent said "No," 14.5 percent stated "Cannot say," and 0.8 percent did not respond. The figure shows that gender stereotyping still exists in the district. Thus, gender stereotypes in politics make female contenders inferior. When voter chooses candidates between male and female, they prefer male candidates due to gender stereotypes. Even the women themselves prefer male candidates as compared to females. All these factors make women insecure about standing against women though they want to bring changes in society. These gender stereotypes in politics should break through, making women actively exercise their rights and contest the election if they are capable.

With the increase in modern education, women have become aware and gained political consciousness. Moreover, the need for women in the electoral process has increased, leading to decreased gender stereotyping in the district. It has been relatively slow, but it can be seen that women's awareness and consciousness have increased, and their participation in voting, campaigning, and protest, as found by the study, shows that

participation in politics has increased. However, women representation in electoral politics is still under-represented compared to male counterparts.

6.2.7 (F) Lack Political socialization

Political socialization is how political principles, ideas, and attitudes are internalized. According to Almond and Powell, "Political socialization is the process of sustaining and changing political cultures. Individuals are inducted into the political culture, and their orientations toward political objects are developed due to the performance of this function." Political socialization makes people more conscious of politics, judging, appreciating, and comprehending political events. An individual can learn the fundamental orientations required to maintain the democratic system when they become politically socialized, which involves acquiring political orientations and behavioral patterns.

From a sociological standpoint, political socialization is an essential process by which interdependence between the political system and society is developed, and individuals get active in the political process. 'It is a long-term process by which a society's political culture is transferred. It is how people learn political ideas and orientations and absorb certain political ideals and views.'⁷ Political socialization continues throughout a person's lifetime. Political views and ideas formed in youth may change as people age due to exposure to new information, a changing social environment, new experiences, and the performance of all political parties.

There are different agencies of political socialization, like family, peer groups, mass media, educational institutions, government, political parties, etc. Family is considered a primary agency of political socialization. Parents and other family members transmit attitude, feeling, and loyalty. According to Allan R. Ball, the family is a child's first window onto the outside world; it is his first point of contact with authority. Children have a natural proclivity to mimic their parents. The mother and father is a model for good behavior for their daughters and sons, respectively. The family members listen to the same preacher and other local commentary, read the same newspapers, and watches the same radio and television shows.

Consequently, family members naturally have the same political views. A peer group comprises members of the same age. Through informal means, they discussed and raised political consciousness and experience and helped individuals to be politically socialized. Mass media also act as an agent of political socialization by giving all the information about the political system- parties, ideology, etc. The mass media act as

⁷ Sullivan, E. Larry. (2009), The Sage Glossary of Social and Behavioral Sciences, California, Sage Publication p 390

socializing agents by providing direct access to the media and contents crucial for forming political values. They also help shape the social context in which adolescents can practice these value orientations and strengthen ties with the main socializing agents.⁸ Social media also help shape public opinion.

Table: 6.6 Opinion on lack of political socialization as a barrier to women's political participation

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	72	18.0
Agree	314	78.5
Cannot decide	3	.8
Disagree	3	.8
Strongly disagree	8	2.0
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondent's opinion on the lack of political socialization of women as a barrier to political empowerment. The question was put upon the respondent to rank how lack of socialization among women is a barrier to women's participation in politics. The respondent was made to answer with the scaling technique strongly agree, agree, cannot decide, disagree, and strongly disagree. Out of the total 100 percent of respondents, 18.0 percent answered strongly agree, 78.5 percent with agree, 0.8 percent could not decide, 0.8 percent disagreed, and 2.0 percent strongly disagreed, respectively. Through the analysis of the above table, it can be concluded that women still lack political socialization. Women are less interested in politics, making them less exposed to the political arena for political socialization. Another reason for the less political socialization is the household work, making it difficult to attend the political program. Less exposure to the outside world is another reason for less political socialization. Moreover, the difficulty in accessing newspapers, Television, and other social media in shaping public opinion is another factor for fewer women's political socialization.

⁸ Adoni, H, (1994), Media and Social Construction of Reality, New Delhi, Sage Publications, P 34.

6.2.7 (G) Tradition and Custom

Tradition and custom are long-established norms and values. Tradition and custom have been passed down since time immemorial. The customary laws are a tradition and custom that prevails in rural society. Customary laws are essential to the identities of indigenous peoples and local communities, outlining members' rights, obligations, and responsibilities in crucial elements of their lives, cultures, and world views. Customary law is a system of norms, practices, and beliefs accepted as enforceable rules of conduct by indigenous peoples and small groups. Customary law is an essential component of their social, economic, and cultural systems and their way of life.

Through tradition and custom, many taboos are put upon women. For example, women are not allowed to touch the bow, arrow, or other weapons used by men; they also are not allowed to climb the tree. It is against the law for women to dig up a deceased person's grave, to wear their hair short, and to cross men's legs. Sometimes all these taboos curtail the right of women if not enforced appropriately.

Table: 6.7 Opinion on tradition and custom and its hindrance on women political participation

Opinion	Gender distribution of respondent			
	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Yes	62	91	153	38.25
No	71	134	205	51.25
Can't Say	17	25	42	10.50
Total	150	250	400	100.00

The above table shows the respondents' opinion on tradition and custom as a hindrance to women's political participation. Of the 100 respondents, 38.25 percent said 'Yes'; however, 51.25 percent said 'No' while 10.50 percent responded as 'cannot say.' From the table, it shows that the percentage of respondents saying 'No' is more significant as compared to the percentage of respondents saying 'Yes'; therefore, it can be concluded that tradition and custom have less influence on women's political participation but not totally exception from a hurdle for women political participation.

Though tradition and custom have less influence, through the respondents, there are some aspects where it still acts as a barrier to women's political participation in the rural society of the Senapati district.

In order to know the rigidity of the tradition and custom, the respondents' opinions were taken and analyzed in the table below.

Table 6.8 Opinion on the rigidity of tradition and custom

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	117	29.2
No	226	56.5
Cannot decide	57	14.2
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondents' opinions on the rigidity of tradition and custom in the study area. Of the total 100 per cent of respondents, 29.2 percent says that the tradition and custom are still rigid in the study area. On the other hand, 56.5 percent of the respondents said 'No' while 14.2 percent could not decide whether it is rigid. Based on the survey, it can be concluded that there is some rigidity in the tradition and custom, but it has gone to more flexibility as the percentage who say 'no' is more significant than those who say 'yes.' However, rigidity still exists in society and is a barrier to some extent regarding women's political participation. Based on the study, it has been found that those who are illiterate and hold the hereditary post favor the rigidity of tradition and custom.

Another exciting finding through the study regarding the tradition and custom of the society is that most women in the study area do accept the prevailing tradition and custom despite its rigidity.

Table 6.9 Opinion on Acceptance of prevailing tradition and custom by women

Gender distribution of respondent					
Male	%	Female	%	Total	Total %

Yes	104	69.3	192	76.8	296	74.0
No	21	14.0	22	8.8	43	10.7
Cannot decide	25	16.7	36	14.4	61	15.3
Total	150	100.0	250	100.0	400	100.0

The above table shows respondents' opinions on accepting the prevailing traditions and customs of the society. Through the survey of 400 respondents, 74.0 percent say that women accept the prevailing tradition and customs of the society, with 69.3 per cent male and 76.8 percent of the total male and female respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 10.7 percent say 'no' with 14.0 percent male and 8.8 percent female, respectively. At the same time, 15.3 percent could not say either 'yes' or 'no,' with 16.7 percent male and 14.4 percent female, respectively. From the above analyses, women accept society's prevailing traditions and customs. However, some believe that traditions and customs that are too rigid and obstruct the right by making women inferior are against women. For instance, taboos like women are not allowed to touch the weapon of men, restriction on keeping short hair, restriction in climbing trees, etc., which they consider a roadblock to gender equality.

The study found that respondents who do not accept the prevailing tradition and customs of the society are primarily from literate groups with better educational qualifications and economic backgrounds. Mrs. Lily (name changed), a respondent, said, *"Women do accept the prevailing tradition and custom of the society in general, but there are few norms in the society that is against the right of women are not acceptable. With modern education, the approach towards women has become more liberal, and tradition and custom's rigidity start to lose its place in society"*. It has been found that women do not accept gender stereotyping and the differentiation of work division despite women being capable of doing the same things as males can do. Nevertheless, with the increase in modern education, people have become more aware of the prevailing tradition and customs and advocated for gender equality.

The study aims at understanding how culture and tradition influence women's empowerment and political participation as hypothesized for the research. Through the rigorous data collection and analysis, it is observed that there is still the element of culture and tradition that influence women in their political empowerment. As shown from the statistic that 38.25 percent respondents agree to the statement that tradition and custom downplay in women. However, it is observed that with the modern education the rigidity of tradition and custom has change and the outlook of the people towards gender

equality has change with liberalism in perspective. Moreover, with increase of modern education people start to voice those tradition and custom undermining women status leading to lose its place in the modern society.

6.2.7 (H) Lack of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is the belief in one's skills and self-esteem; it represents an internal state of how we think and feel about ourselves. Lack of self-confidence is the opposite of self-confidence. When people lack self-confidence, they lack competence, low self-esteem, less courage, shyness, and timidity. Factors like environment, family, peer groups, and other inspirational thoughts affect a person's confidence. The study found that lack of confidence and their mentality set up women is also one of the factors for the low participation of rural women, especially in the Senapati district of Manipur. Due to this inferior outlook of women themselves, it became a hurdle for women to participate in politics, especially in electoral politics.

Table: 6.10 Opinion on lack of confidence among women as a hindrance on political empowerment.

	Gender distribution of respondent					
	Male	%	Female		Total	%
Strongly Agree	2	1.3	8	3.2	10	2.5
Agree	71	47.3	109	43.6	180	45.0
Cannot decide	13	8.6	29	11.6	42	10.5
Disagree	54	36.0	76	30.4	130	32.5
Strongly disagree	10	6.6	28	11.2	38	9.5
Total	150	100.0	250	100.0	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondents' opinion on the lack of confidence among women as a hindrance to their political participation. Out of the total 100 per cent respondent, 2.5 percent said strongly agreed, with 1.3 percent male and 3.2 percent

female, 45.0 percent said to agree with 47.3 percent male and 43.6 percent female, respectively. On the other hand, 32.5 percent of the respondents said to disagree, with 36.0 percent male and 30.4 percent female, while 9.5 percent said strongly disagreed 6.6 percent male and 11.2 percent female, and 9.5 percent of respondents could not decide with 8.6 per cent male and 11.6 percent female respectively. From the above table with the cross-tabulation between male and female respondents, it can be concluded that the mentality and outlook of women are also one of the barriers to low political participation, especially in the electoral process. The study also found that women themselves favor male candidate more than female candidate. Women also feel that men are more capable and efficient than female candidates. With all these feelings and thoughts, women feel insecure, thinking that it is a waste of time, money, and other resources to participate in the electoral process, making them prefer the male candidates.

The objective of the study is to find out the factors that hinder women's political participation in Senapati District of Manipur. The findings presented herein provide the strong support of the second objective of the study. Through the analysis of the data, above discussed factors hinders women's political participation in Senapati district of Manipur.

6.3 Political Efficacy and Aspiration of Women in Senapati District of Manipur

The setting of the society plays a vital role concerning the interest and efficacy of women in political participation. Political efficacy is the ability of a person to carry out a political task effectively to achieve its objective and goal. Political efficacy is the subjective to political competence leading women to participate in politics effectively.⁹ Political efficacy depends on many factors like individual interest in politics, confidence, education, and also the environment of a person like family, urban setting, media exposure, and overall social set up of a person where he or she lives. When a person has confidence, political competence stimulates participation in political affairs. As per the study, it has been found that the rural women of the Senapati District have a low sense of political efficacy.

Moreover, rural women in the district have less political aspiration, especially regarding the electoral process—they act as a backbone for males but do not want to stand as candidates. The political right of women is being demanded by women all over the world. The feminist movement also aims to achieve women's political rights and decision-making parallel to men's. The overview of the district through the study shows that women have less aspiration compared to men. Instead, women feel that politics is a

⁹ Jamir, Toshimenla (2012), Women and politics in Nagaland; Challenges and Imperatives, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd p.67

career of men. This mindset and attitude of the rural women need to break through so that they can explore and energize their talent.

Despite less political aspiration, people need women's participation in politics. Many educated women believe that to bring justice on gender, women candidates need to raise their voices in the parliament and legislature instead of sending male candidates as their representatives.

Table: 6.11 Essential of women in political participation

Response	Gender distribution of respondent					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Yes	146	97.3	244	97.6	390	97.5
No	1	0.6	0	0	1	0.25
Can't say	3	2.0	5	2.0	8	2.0
No Response	0	0	1	0.4	1	0.25
Total	150	100.0	250	100.0	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondents' opinions on the essentiality of women's participation in politics. The cross-tabulation of male and female respondents shows the opinion on the essentiality of women in political participation. Out of the total 100 percent of respondents, 97.5 percent said that women's participation in politics is essential. On the other hand, 0.25 percent said 'No' while 2.0 percent said 'Cannot say' and 0.25 percent with no response, respectively. The respondents favor women's participation in politics, which can be seen from the table that out of the total 150 male respondents, 97.3 percent, and women out of 250 respondents, 97.6 percent favor women's participation in politics. Some of the respondents are of the view that women were less in corruption and nepotism as compared to male.

Women also feel that having women in the legislature will draw attention to discuss fundamental women's issues. The increase in women's participation in politics and decision-making can also make them tabled and discuss that are expected to be biased against women, such as traditional law, property rights, divorce, etc. Many women support the increased participation of women in politics on the ground that it

will open a new outlook for women as they come forward and take part in the decision-making. C. K Gariyali's study of Commonwealth countries describes as 'the politics of care' on women's politics¹⁰. She opined that taking part in politics is not for getting power but rather to bring changes to the existing system and areas where negligence is made upon women. Her study also found that women are not interested in confrontational politics of winning or losing but in politics of consensus on issues and bringing solutions. In the practical sense, the women in Senapati District work for the solution. When there is a need for a solution to the social unrest, women's social organizations can be seen actively involved in the forefront. Moreover, it has also been discussed in Chapter 3 how women have played an active role as peacemakers since time immemorial and that zeal as a peace imitative still exists within the women of the district.

In order to determine whether there is a political role conflict between males and females in the study, the respondent's opinions were collected. Based on the data collected, it is analyzed in the below table.

Table 6. 12 Opinion on political role conflict on between male and female

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	220	55.0
No	48	12.0
Cannot decide	132	33.0
Total	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondents' opinions on the political role conflict between males and females. Out of the total 400 respondents, 55.0 percent say 'yes' while 12.0 percent say 'no' and 33.0 respondents as 'cannot decide' respectively. From the above figure, it can be concluded that there is a political role conflict between males and females in the study area. The study found that role conflict arises because of the stereotype, where people think that politics is for men. On the other side, they also think that women fail to perform household duties when they are involved in politics. The role conflict due to stereotyping is one reason women are given fewer political roles in society. However, through modern education, women can be seen actively in political

¹⁰ Gariyali, C.K.(1999). Inching Forward: Political Empowerment of Women in Commonwealth Countries, New Delhi, p167

mobilization by joining a political group as a Mahila or women's wing and spreading awareness about political empowerment leading to more awareness and consciousness about politics in society.

6.4 Government Initiative for Women Empowerment

Women's empowerment is one of the topics of discussion at every table of the parliament. The government needs women to be politically, socially, economically, and psychologically empowered. Thus, several schemes are taken up by the government in order to empower women. Some of the major schemes for the empowerment of women are discussed below.

- i) **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK):** Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was established as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development by the Government of India in March 1993. The scheme was established for the socio-economic empowerment of women. The scheme's mission is to assist women in the unorganized sector by providing financial services with backward and forward linkages through Intermediary Micro Finance Organizations (IMOs) and Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), as well as to augment their capacities through multi-pronged efforts.¹¹
- ii) **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** In 1986-87, the Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) was launched as a Central Sector Scheme. STEP's program aims to significantly impact women by improving self-employment and wage employment skills. The scheme aims to mobilize women in small viable groups and make facilities available through training, credit, and other inputs, train employees to improve their skills and provide opportunities for groups of women to develop their employment-cum-income generation programs or seek wage employment. Moreover, assist in improving women's employment conditions and access to health care, literacy, legal literacy, and other information.
- iii) **Mahila Samridhi Yojana:** is a scheme of skill development linked with micro-credit for women who belong to minority groups. The scheme includes; capacity-building skill for women through imparting income-generating skills or activities, providing women with microcredit support, and encouraging them to form Self Help Groups.¹²
- iv) **National Mission for Empowerment of Women:** The National Mission for Women's Empowerment (NMEW) was launched in 2011-12 to achieve

¹¹ www. <https://rmk.nic.in/> (accessed on 1 October 2022)

¹² www.efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.jsmfcd.com/admin_panel/Uploads/press/Mahila%20Samirdhi%20Yojana%20Guideline.pdf (accessed on 1 October 2022)

holistic women's empowerment. NMEW aims to strengthen processes that promote women's holistic development, gender equality, and gender justice through cross-sectoral convergence of programs affecting women, forging synergy among various stakeholders and creating an enabling environment conducive to social change. It focuses on poverty alleviation and economic empowerment, health and nutrition, gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming, gender rights, gender-based violence, and law enforcement at the national level. Vulnerable and marginalized groups empowerment, social empowerment and education, media and advocacy, information technology, Gender equality, gender violence, and law enforcement Empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups, Education and social empowerment Information technology, media and advocacy.¹³

- v) **Ujjawala:** It is a comprehensive scheme for the Prevention of Trafficking and Retaining, Rehabilitating, and Reintegrating Trafficking Victims for Commercial Sexual Exploitation.
- vi) **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY:** The Scheme was launched by the government of India in 2016 to provide deposit-free LPG connection to 5 crores to women belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL), especially to the rural poor. The Scheme has now been enhanced to 8 crore. The salient feature of the Scheme is; the release of the LPG connection in the name of the adult female member of the BPL. Family is contingent upon no LPG connections in the names of any other household members. The Central Government provides cash assistance covered by the Scheme, up to Rs. 1600, for a new LPG connection. The customer is responsible for paying for the hot plate and the initial refill. Customers can purchase a hot plate with their first refill or both on a loan basis with zero interest, which is covered by the beneficiary's subsidy. For the first six refills, there is no loan recovery in effect.
- vii) **Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG):** To address the multidimensional problems of adolescent girls, the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (Sabla) combines the former Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) schemes. The Scheme's objectives are to: a) enable AGs' self-development and empowerment; (b) improve their nutrition and health status; (c) raise awareness among them about health, hygiene, nutrition, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH), and family and child care; (d) improve their home-based skills, life skills, and vocational

¹³ <https://www.indiascienceandtechnology.gov.in/st-visions/national-mission/national-mission-empowerment-women-nmew> (accessed on 1 October 2022)

skills; (e) mainstream out of school AGs into formal/non-formal education; and (f) inform and guide them about existing public service¹⁴.

- viii) **Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA):** The Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) Program aims to improve the socioeconomic status of poor women in rural areas by forming groups of women to engage in self-sustaining income-generating activities. DWCRA, which focuses solely on women's economic empowerment, provides all of these inputs by viewing women as critical to development. This intervention aims not only to raise rural women's incomes in poor households but also to enable organized participation of groups of women in credit, skill training, and infrastructure support for self-employment programs. From April 1999, the Scheme was merged into the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY) and IRDP, TRYSEM, and other programs. It encouraged poor rural women to practice thrift and credit to become self-sufficient.
- ix) **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** The then Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme on 22 January 2015. It is a national initiative led by the ministries of girls and child development, health and family welfare, and human resource development to address the issue of declining child sex ratios. The Scheme's objectives are as follows: Prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination, Ensure girl child survival and protection, and Ensure girl child education and participation.¹⁵
- x) **Hostel for working women:** Concerned about the difficulties faced by such working women, the Government of India introduced a scheme in 1972-73 of grant-in-aid for the construction of new/expansion of existing buildings for providing hostel facilities to working women in cities, smaller towns, and rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist. Based on an evaluation, the current Scheme has been revised to promote the availability of safe and conveniently located housing for working women who must live away from their families due to professional obligations.

The Scheme's goal is to promote the availability of safe and conveniently located housing for working women, with daycare facilities for their children, in urban, semi-urban, and even rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist. The Scheme provides financial assistance for projects involving the construction of new hostel buildings, the expansion of existing hostel buildings, and the establishment of hostels in rented premises.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India, New Delhi

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ <https://wcd.nic.in/schemes/working-women-hostel> (accessed on 3rd October 2022)

- xi) **One Stop Centre Scheme:** Through a single uniform number, the Scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline aims to provide 24-hour immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral and information about women-related government schemes programs nationwide. States/UTs must use the shortcode 181 as the Women Helpline under this Scheme (WHL). This number is intended to be compatible with all existing telecommunication channels, whether providing postpaid mobile or landline services via any public or private network.¹⁷
- xii) **Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs):** The Ministry of Women and Child Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, launched the Mahila Police Volunteers program in all states and union territories. This Scheme, sponsored by the central government, aims to establish a link between police authorities and local communities to ensure police outreach on crime cases. This program creates a safe environment for women and encourages them to join the police force.

The objective was to combat crime against women; an MPV would act as a public-police interface. MPVs have a broad mandate to report cases of violence against women, such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment, and violence against women in public places. She will serve as a role model for the rest of the community.¹⁸

- xiii) **The Mahila Shakti Kendra:** The "Mahila Shakti Kendra" is intended to provide "convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health, and nutrition." The Scheme will serve as a conduit for rural women to approach the government to claim their entitlements and be empowered through awareness raising, training, and capacity building. The new MSK scheme is intended to operate at various levels. While the National level (domain-based knowledge support) and State level (State Resource Centre for Women) structures will provide technical support to their respective governments on women's issues, the District level Centres will provide support to MSK as well as a foothold for women empowerment schemes such as BBBP.

Through the introduction of all these schemes for women's empowerment, women have gained social security. They can increase their earning potential by receiving advanced training in skills development and others. Women can discuss their concerns with the government or local authorities more freely and quickly. Working mothers can ensure their children's proper care by enrolling them in daycare facilities. As a result, they do not have to give up their jobs or careers to care for their families. It also enables them to provide dignified living conditions (in government hostels) away from home. Thus all these schemes create a space for women to develop and exercise their rights.

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ ibid

Government programs for women strongly support gender equality and women's overall advancement and empowerment. Government initiatives emphasize giving women and girls access to high-quality education. Equipping women with knowledge and skills aids in ending the cycle of illiteracy and promotes their economic independence and decision-making capabilities. Women's economic empowerment programs attempt to improve their financial capabilities by offering financial aid, training, and tools for starting enterprises, obtaining loans, and acquiring occupational skills. The program enables women to become self-sufficient, contribute to the economy, and raise their level of living. Government initiatives address women's health issues by providing healthcare, reproductive health care, and education. These programs seek to lower maternal and newborn mortality rates, increase access to contraception, encourage safe practices, and improve general health and well-being. Women's legal rights and protection programs focus on preventing and responding to various forms of gender-based violence, such as domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and trafficking. They offer legal aid, set up helplines, and organize awareness campaigns to safeguard women's safety and access to justice. Government programs encourage women's engagement in political processes by increasing their presence in decision-making bodies and positions of leadership. Women can express their concerns, influence policy, and fight for gender-responsive governance as a result. The government intends to question and modify societal conventions and attitudes toward women by implementing these programs. These results in a shift in thinking, dismantling outdated gender roles and stereotypes, and building a more inclusive and equal society.

6.5 Constitutional Provision for Empowering of Women in India

The constitution of India enshrined different articles in order to empower women. Some of these articles are- Article 14 of the Indian constitution provides equality before the law. Article 15(I) prohibits discrimination based on caste, race, religion, sex, or birth of place. Article 15(3) of the constitution gives a special provision that the state can make in favor of women and children. Article 16 of the Indian constitution gives all citizens equal opportunities in employment and appointment in any office. Article 39(a) directs the state policy for securing equal rights to livelihood for men and women, and Article 39(d) gives equal pay for work to both men and women. Article 42 provide for just and humane condition of work and maternity relief.

Article 51A (e) of the constitution is to promote the harmony of the citizens of India and to renounce all those practices that put down the dignity of women. Moreover, India's constitution also provides at least one-third reservation of total seats to women in the local bodies' election of Panchayati raj and Municipalities under Articles 343(d) and 343(T).

After having all those constitutional rights that promote and give special provisions to women and protect them under the law, the respondents were asked to

what extent women's constitutional rights are exercised in the district. The below table shows the opinion of the respondents.

Table 6.13 Exercise of constitutional right

	Gender distribution of respondent					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Yes	31	20.7	79	31.6	110	27.5
No	57	38.0	85	34.0	142	35.5
Cannot decide	62	41.3	86	34.4	148	37.0
Total	150	100.0	250	100.0	400	100.0

The above table shows the respondent's opinions on women exercising their constitutional rights. Out of 100 per cent of respondents, 27.5 per cent says that women exercise a constitutional right, with 20.7 per cent male and 31.1 per cent female, respectively. On the other hand, 35.5 per cent of the respondents said 'No', with 38.0 per cent of males and 34.0 per cent female of the total male and female respondents, respectively. While 37.0 per cent of the respondents, with 41.3 per cent and 34.4 per cent could not ascertain whether women exercise their constitutional right. From the above table, through the analysis of the figure given, it can be concluded that despite women exercising constitutional rights, women still lack full exercise of the constitutional right. The 33% of women reservation in the Panchayati Raj and municipalities is still a dream in the district. The district's grass root level of governance in place of Panchayati Raj and municipalities is through the Autonomous District Council (ADC), where no woman can be seen as a member or contesting the district election. The factors like customary laws, gender stereotyping, the social setting, lack of confidence of women, and financial constraints, as studied above, make women underrepresented and exercise their constitutional rights, especially in the electoral process and reservation in the governance.

Constitutional measures for women's empowerment are critical because they create a robust legal framework while ensuring the protection of women's rights and equitable participation in all aspects of society. Constitutional provisions establish women's legal protection and rights. They expressly ban gender discrimination and ensure equal chances in areas like education, work, and civic involvement. These

principles are the foundation for legislation and policies that promote gender equality and protect women from discrimination, assault, and exploitation. Gender equality is emphasized as a fundamental principle of governance in constitutional requirements. They affirm women's equal position and dignity, ensuring their right to participate in decision-making processes and equal legal protection. These regulations support establishing an equal society by challenging patriarchal norms and practices perpetuating gender disparities. Many constitutions reserve seats in legislative bodies for women, assuring their political representation and active participation in the government process. Reserved seats or quotas raise women's political visibility, address past underrepresentation, and allow for the inclusion of women's viewpoints in policymaking. Specific safeguards and protective measures for women are frequently included in constitutional provisions. Laws against gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and domestic abuse may be included, as well as provisions for support services, shelters, and legal help. They contribute to creating a safe atmosphere for women and safeguarding their access to justice.

Constitutional elements promoting women's empowerment coincide with international conventions and treaties promoting gender equality. These provisions reflect a country's commitment to global norms and serve as a foundation for tracking and evaluating progress toward women's empowerment. Constitutional provisions for women's empowerment provide a solid framework for legal, social, and policy changes that promote gender equality. They give women the legal protection, rights, and opportunities to fully participate in society, challenge discriminatory practices, and create a more inclusive and equitable future.

6.6 Non-Governmental Organization Initiative for Women's Empowerment

Apart from the governmental schemes and constitutional provisions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) take the initiative to empower women from a different perspective. For instance, ActionAid India is a full affiliate of ActionAid International and a member of a global federation. Domestic and sexual violence victims of any age, including minor boys, are served by the center. They offer counseling and also run a women's shelter. Donations to this program will assist women in overcoming trauma through counseling.¹⁹ The Majlis Manch offers victims of sexual abuse socio-legal support. The all-female lawyers and social workers meet with victims to explain the legal process and procedures. They are also informed of all the legal, public, and private schemes to which they have access.

Sayodhya Home for Women in Need is another initiative taken by the NGOs to cater to the need of women. Sayodhya operates a short-stay home for women and young

¹⁹ <https://www.actionaidindia.org> (accessed on 4 October 2022)

girls in distress and a 24-hour telephone helpline. In critical cases, they assist women in obtaining legal justice by transporting them to women's protection cells, explaining the process, and assisting women in filing cases. The shelter collaborates closely with police and judicial officials to ensure survivors have access to protection, entitlements, and other legal measures to help them find work and skill development support as needed.

Shikshan Ane Samaj Kalyan Kendra is committed to assisting women through health, education, and empowerment. It holds workshops on the causes and consequences of domestic violence and brings violence issues to district-level authorities and lower courts. They also encourage victims to come forward and discourage men from engaging in activities that will endanger their wives.

The International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care is another initiative founded in response to the need for a domestic violence support organization. This women's NGO offers essential services such as crisis management, legal advocacy, support, and resource services. PCVC established a national domestic violence hotline to assist women who are victims of various forms of abuse. Through referrals, the organization also provides victims with legal representation and support.

Prerana is also an NGO initiative that works to rescue, protect, and rehabilitate victims of human trafficking. They collaborate with various state governments to develop anti-human trafficking schemes and policies to rescue and rehabilitate victims. They also assist in legal proceedings to reclaim their rights. It also offers survivors psychological counseling.

Sakhya Women's Guidance Cells is another example of the NGOS initiative for women's empowerment. Its main goal is to promote gender equality and gender justice through women's empowerment. Through sensitization and awareness, they hope to give women more autonomy. The organization provides victims of sexual abuse with case counseling, referrals, legal aid, shelter, rehabilitation, and transportation to hospitals and legal institutes. In addition, the Prajnya Trust of NGOs worked to prevent gender and sex-based violence against women. This women's NGO holds workshops, facilitates discussions, offers legal advice, and educates service providers who may encounter cases of sexual violence at work. Thus, for women's empowerment, NGOs also play a vital role by taking all the initiative and meeting all the needs of women.

Therefore, it is the duty of the citizens, government, and other non-governmental organizations to spread awareness about the importance of women's empowerment and their involvement in decision-making to achieve the target of gender equality with dignity.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The focus of this research is to examine the level of women's empowerment and the participation of rural women in the Senapati district of Manipur. Also, understand how women's empowerment and political participation are interrelated. A democratic country like India should emphasize all democratic principles like egalitarianism, individualism, secularism, responsible government, and representative government. In order to achieve this, there should be a reduction of economic inequalities, rationalization of social life, and a consensus of fundamental values and norms stability. The study was carried out in the Senapati District, taking all the block and sub-division blocks for the research. The study comes out attractive with fact revealing regarding women's empowerment and participation in politics.

Women empowerment and political participation are two sides of the coin. In fact, in a democratic country like India, the full participation of women in the decision-making will depict the maturity of democracy as it reflects the equality and freedom of speech and expression of the people. On the other hand, the participation of women in politics also reflects women's empowerment. Thus, women's empowerment and political participation go hand in hand with each other. Political participation by women is critical to achieving inclusive and representative democratic governance. When women have a say in decision-making, their opinions, experiences, and concerns are more likely to be considered.

Examining women's political participation allows us to understand better the constraints and problems they encounter in gaining political power and decision-making responsibilities. It draws attention to current gender inequities and emphasizes strengthening women in political arenas. It also examines how women are represented in political institutions and processes by researching women's political engagement. It reveals if women's viewpoints, experiences, and interests are considered in policymaking and government. Political participation by women is critical for fostering a dynamic and inclusive democracy. This research helps identify the elements that impede or assist women's political participation. It can educate policymakers and stakeholders on the steps that must be taken to increase women's involvement and strengthen democratic government. Understanding women's political participation level in the Senapati District can aid in the development of evidence-based policies. The findings can be used to establish targeted policies and actions to address the issues women encounter in the region, ultimately increasing their political engagement and leadership. It also helps to investigate the impact of women's political participation on

social norms, gender roles, and community dynamics. Increased female participation can challenge old prejudices and contribute to broader social reforms toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

Women's political engagement is inextricably tied to long-term development. Women's viewpoints and priorities frequently differ from men's, and their active participation in decision-making processes can result in more comprehensive and equitable policies that reflect the entire population's needs, promoting social growth and development. Political engagement is a critical component of gender equality. Women who have political clout can fight discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and campaign for the advancement of women's rights. It promotes a more equal and inclusive society by breaking gender barriers and prejudices. Women's political participation is an example and source of motivation for other women and girls. When they witness women in positions of power, it disrupts established gender norms and assumptions and inspires them to pursue positions of power themselves. Women's political representation encourages future generations and contributes to a positive women empowerment cycle. We acquire insights into the constraints and opportunities for women's political participation by studying women's empowerment and political participation. It assists us in creating an enabling climate that promotes gender equality and contributes to more inclusive and effective governance. Studying women's political participation in Manipur's Senapati District contributes to knowledge generation, informs policy interventions, and promotes gender equality, democratic governance, and inclusive development.

The struggle for women's empowerment started worldwide in the 18th century, which they called the 'feminist movement' or 'wave of feminism.' *Feminism* is a social and political movement that advocates men's and women's equality. It seeks equal opportunity in the social, economic, and political spheres. The growth of feminism has different phases. The first phase of feminism as a social movement took place in the 18th century, and in fact, it enabled women to attain voting rights. The second wave of feminism emerged around the 1960s, which challenged the notion of gender differences based on 'masculinity' and 'femininity.' Then came the third wave, which has a general outlook and challenges all forms of societal inequality. It covers all the aspects of local, national, and international such as violence against women, trafficking, pornification, etc. Thus, these movements create a consciousness that protests against the sexes' roles imposed by traditional sex roles and male dominance.

To better understand the study, the background of the district and the respondent's profile are discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, it also discussed the political institutions of the district and the role of rural women. How traditional institutions like chieftainships, dormitory systems, village councils, etc., play a role in the governance of society. In order to have a better understanding of traditional politics, the power and

authority of Weber have been discussed. Weber classified authority into three categories: traditional authority, charismatic authority, and legal-rational authority.

The chieftainship's authority is based on traditional authority, where the right of leadership is passed down from the ancestral line to the next generation through hereditary. The village Council runs in the line of rational-legal authority along with the traditional authority as the chief or the village headmen is part of it. Moreover, the members of the Village Council in most of the villages are the representative of the clan members. The exciting finding on the political institution of the rural society is that the rural social elite plays a vital role in the governance of the rural society. Based on the study, the society of rural communities of Senapati District can be classified as a rural social elite, clan elite, and masses. These rural social elite overall look at the well-being of the village; they also have a link with the government and put forward the scheme needed to implement in the village for development.

Nevertheless, sometimes the self-interest motive of the rural social elite curtails an individual's right when they use coercive methods by not allowing the individual to carry his or her will through the implementation of norms and rules of the village or society. For instance, the exercise of the franchise of an individual is curtailed, with the leader looking only for his or her political gain, thus making the public vote for the candidates they favor. Thus in a democracy like India, it hampered the smooth functioning of the democratic system.

Chapter 3 also discussed the role of women in the traditional political institution. Through the dormitory system, women are taught and disciplined in their youth. It also found out that women in the district are responsible for looking after society. The responsibility shared by the women has already been illustrated in Chapter 3. Moreover, it also found out that since time immemorial, women have been used as a peacemaker, and still, this trend of peacemaking by women is followed.

Historically women are considered as a weaker section. Women are considered as a homemaker who is good at household chores. The extension of voting right to women at the beginning of the 20th century brought about changes in Western societies. The term women empowerment has become popular in the 1980s. Moreover, women's empowerment is shifting from women's welfare to women's development. The factors facilitating women's empowerment are recognizing women's rights, access to education and employment, political participation, and decision-making.

In a democratic country like India, women's political participation in politics is indispensable for the smooth functioning of the country. Women constitute half the country's population, and males dominate it. The need for women's participation in politics became important. The general view is that when women are independent of

socio and economic, it will increase their political participation. However, the finding of this research proved otherwise. It is not only the socio-economic factors that determine the greater participation of women in politics, as has analysis from the preceding chapters. The constitution and the government have taken a progressive step for the empowerment of women by enacting the concept of equality, social justice, equal opportunity in employment, etc. moreover, in 73rd and 74th amendment give 33% reservation of seats for women to make them take part in the decision making.

However, in a state like Manipur, despite the democratic establishment, there still exists a gender disparity, especially in the electoral process. Women are underrepresented both at the local and national levels. Compared to other societies, women are more liberal in the Senapati district, and their involvement in economic activities is high though not in the organized sector. Thus, not only the socio and economic independence decide women's empowerment and active political participation. Many other factors, like the societal setup, interest of a person, education, tradition and custom, political environment, etc., impact women's political participation.

With the increase in education, industrialization, and modernization, women look at welfare and development. A large number of women become aware of gender stereotyping and the attitude of men towards women. A feeling of unity and solidarity grows among women as propounded by Dahrendorf on his *Modern social conflict*, which he contributed to democracies where democracies must change in order to retain power and social freedom. He gave a liberal perspective in order to study the conflict in society. With the spread of democratic ideas, women feel they have every right to be equal with men socially, politically, and economically. Women have realized that only political and full participation in decision-making can change government policies. Thus, by realizing this right, women even start competing with men in the electoral process. The same case is with the Senapati district of Manipur, where women realize their potential and feels the need for women's representation is essential. They feel that representation of men alone is insufficient as the interest between men and women differs.

People also feel that with more participation of women in politics, especially in the electoral process, they can bargain with the other members and bring about change where women feel the need to change but are neglected. Women empowerment is still rather slow in the district compared to the state or the national level, as the district has zero representation in the state legislative assembly. However, women's empowerment at the ground level can be seen even in politics with voting rights and decision-making. No history can be seen that women are treated like men, which means men are always superior to women. However, with the initiative of the government, NGOs, and other civil organizations urging the need for women's empowerment, it has taken a new turn in empowering women. To say women empowerment is not a magic pot where it will

suddenly achieve, but it will gradually move towards its goal. However, with this pace of empowering women in the district, it will not be able to fulfill the target by 2030, which aims to fulfill Sustainable Development Goal 5. It also mentions in the gender snapshot 2022 that the progress toward gender equality is relatively slow and may not be achieved by 2030 (UN Women).

A Nagas society has had more liberal approaches towards women since time immemorial. However, society is male-dominated, where women are considered a weaker section. Chapter 3 discusses how the traditional institution plays a vital role in women's life, especially in the 'Morung.' Through the study, it has also been found that women are also being given responsibility in order to look after society. For instance, in Punanamei Village, when Movuo (king) Ariijii died in the 1940s, his wife Kaikhra took the responsibility as a caretaker till her grandson H.Chakhko is coronated as a village chief. Another example of a woman taking responsibility is that of Queen Hinga from the Maram tribe, who took responsibility after the death of her husband in 1953 and served the people till August 2010. However, women taking responsibility is exceptional to few.

Moreover, women in the district have been seen as a peacemaker from time immemorial. It was discussed in Chapter 3. Whenever an issue arises between two groups of people and both sides are not in a position to retreat, women's involvement plays an important role. They came in between by waving cloth or leaves to bring an amicable solution between the two parties. Women today continue to play a significant role in the district as peacemakers.

Chapter 3 discussed the different determinants of empowerment, such as economic, social, religious, psychological, and political.

Economic factors: Economic empowerment assists women in overcoming different hurdles to political engagement. Financial freedom enables women to get an education, healthcare, and other resources necessary for active participation in political activities. Economic empowerment helps to address gender inequality in politics. It removes structural impediments to women's political engagement, such as unequal access to financial resources, a lack of economic possibilities, and gender discrimination. Countries can establish a more fair playing field for women's political participation by economically empowering women.

As per the findings, women's income is less than their male counterparts. The lower income of women is because women are less engaged in the organized sector than men. Table 3.1 shows that 81.50 percent responded that males are engaged in the organized sector, while 2.50 percent of females are more in the organized sector, with 16.0 percent as equal. The figure shows that males are more in the organized sector than

females. The lesser number of women participating in the organized sector is also shown in the district census of 2001 that the District's overall workforce is 45.9 percent, with 50.2 percent male and 41.1 percent female. The primary worker is 31.9 percent, with 41.0 percent male and 22.3 percent female. The marginal worker percentage is 14.1 percent, with 9.2 percent male and 19.1 percent female workers. Senapati district cultivators account for 62.3 percent of the total, with 63.4 percent male and 60.8 percent female. Agricultural laborers account for 13.3 percent of the workforce, with 10.1 percent male and 17.3 percent female. The household industry worker population is 4.8 percent, 2.3 percent male, and 8.0% female. Other workers account for 19.7 percent of the workforce, with males accounting for 24.2 percent and females accounting for 13.9 percent.

Moreover, the economic factors are also determined by the factors like access to money and its utilization. The study found that 41.2 percent of women own property jointly or alone, 54.8 percent as 'no,' and 4.0 percent could not decide. Those women who own property are mostly of joint property along with their husbands. Moreover, the study finds out that women also own property given by their parents as *Louhinya*. There is a practice of giving immovable property to a daughter, but it has to be given back after the wife's death to the wife clan. Thus, through the study, it has been found out that most of the properties given to the women are movable property; however, the women as a spouse enjoy equal property right with their husband that the husband is inheriting from the family.

The respondents believe that both males and females have less income, as some respondents pointed out in the preceding chapter that the rural inhabitants of the Senapati district have fewer workforces in the organized sector. They also mention that the government employee of some villages was handful and countable. However, compared with male women, they have lesser income as they are mainly in agriculture, where men are considered breadwinners and look for jobs outside the village and state.

Through the study, it has been found that different factors lead to less participation of women in the organized sector. Education is one of the factors, as per the study, as jobs are recruited based on specific qualification criteria. Despite the increase in the literacy rate of women, many jobs did not fit their education qualifications. According to World Bank data, girls have 18 percent of pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) studies compared to 35 percent of boys leading to gaps in the science and technology profession. Many jobs require higher qualifications in the specific subject, but women lacking knowledge in those areas fail to occupy those jobs. Another reason for women's lower participation in organized sectors is sex differentiation. People express their opinion that women are mothers as child bearers, and people have stereotyping thinking that their childbearing stage will disturb the work environment as they have to take leave. Another reason for less participation of

women in the organized sector is the division of labor in the family. Women are more engaged in the household activities and agricultural activities.

Social Empowerment: Another determinant to assess women's empowerment is social empowerment. Social empowerment includes social security, education, the standard of living, etc. Women have been socialized through the 'Morung' system since that time. Health is taken as one of the components of social empowerment. Thus, there are few cases that preferences in dieting exist between males and females, as per the study discussed in the preceding chapter. However, regarding health, women are free to make decisions, as responded by the respondents. One respondent said, *"Regarding health treatment, I decided on my own; however, due to financial constraints, I consulted my husband."*

The literacy rate also reveals the social status of the people. The district's literacy rate is 59.8 percent, with 67.9 percent of male literates and 51.2 percent of female literates, according to the 2001 Census. The general literacy rate in the state, on the other hand, is 70.5 percent, with 80.3 percent of men and 60.5 percent of women. It increased to 63.30 percent in the 2011 census, with 69.21 percent male and 57.67 percent female, which is lower than the state's average literacy rate. One of the factors for the lower literacy gap is the child preference in the past, and still, some poor and illiterate families practice to date. Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3 shows that 79.00 percent believes that the child's education is given equally to both male and female. 21.00 percent of the respondents view that educational preferences are given to males while the education preferences of girl children are 0 percent, as per the respondent response. However, with modern education and urbanization, gender stereotyping has also started to lose its ground in the district.

Religious Empowerment: Religious empowerment is another factor that has a look upon concerning women's empowerment. As per the study, it has been found that the religious status of the women is average. Women are active in religious activities. It has also been seen that attendance, especially in the church service, are more in number by female as compared to male. Nevertheless, female leadership is negligible when it comes to the role of leadership in the religious organization of both men and women. Despite the active participation of women in religious activities, the role of pastor, reverend, priest, catechist, etc., are insignificantly represented. The study found that out of the total 100 percent of the respondent, 63.0 percent of the respondent said that the status of women is average, and 35.0 responded that the status of women is high.

In comparison, 2.0 percent of the respondent says that the status of women is low. Many respondents express their opinion based on the awareness of women about religion; as

said by a respondent, *"Women's active participation in religious activities is visible through the attendance of the church service."* However, in the hierarchy of the religious organization of both men and women, women see the lower strata in the portfolio. On the other hand, the study also found that women have religious organizations where they also take their leadership and maintain their organization.

Psychological empowerment: Psychology and the emotional feeling of women also determine the empowerment of women. When they are mentally sound, and the dignity of women is respected, they can freely express their feeling; as per the study, domestic violence and other harassment are less though they cannot be totally neglected. It also found that in the family, women participate in the family's decision-making. However, in a patriarchal society, men dominate though both are involved in the decision-making.

Out of the total 150 male respondents, six believe they encountered domestic violence, while 142 say 'No' and two are "undecided." On the other hand, out of the 250 females, 12 respondents' encountered domestic violence, 231 said 'No,' six respondents as 'undecided' and one respondent with 'no response.' The above figure shows that there is domestic violence faced both by the male and females. There is domestic violence, but it is less in the district. Some respondents believe that domestic violence is faced because of intoxication and because of financial problems.

Political Empowerment: Political empowerment is another factor of women's empowerment, also discussed in Chapter 5 of this research. The study finds that women's participation in electoral politics is significantly less than their male counterparts. From 1972 when Manipur got statehood, till the 2022 assembly, the number of elected women to the legislative Assembly has increased slowly, from 0 in 1972 to 5 in 2022. However, in the district of Senapati, the elected women to the state's Legislative Assembly should be addressed. Pointing out the negligence in electoral politics does not mean that women do not participate in politics. The study, on the other hand, found out that the voter turnout of women is more than that of males despite the less registered in the state's electoral roll. The figure in Tables 5.2 and 5.3 depict that the participation of women in voting is higher in every election than males. As per the finding, it has been found out that the fewer voters turn out male is also due to the out-migration of male workers to the outside state who did not return to their homes to vote. Despite the holidays, they are reluctant to return due to factors like the refusal of the boss to grant holidays, especially in the unorganized sector. Many of them also felt that it is a waste of money, energy, and time. However, it can be concluded that women exercise their political rights, especially when voting and choosing their candidates.

The study found that in the district, despite more women voters' turnout, women are less represented in the electoral process. It has also been seen from Chapter 5 that in the Autonomous District Council (ADC), women have yet to be represented as a member even once. The challenges women face in the political participation in the district as per the study is as follows-

Lack of Education: As per the study, it has been found that lack of education is one-factor hindering women's political participation. As per the 2011 census, the District's literacy is 63.60 percent, with 69.21 percent male and 57.67 percent female. The figure shows that the female literacy rate percentage is lower than males. One of the reasons for the low female literacy rate is due to the child preference in the past. The gender preference for education has reduced with the advancement of education, urbanization, and industrialization; however, in the rural areas of the Senapati, there is still a male-child preference in some families. Chapter 3 shows that 79.00 percent believes that the child's education is given equally to both male and female. 21.00 percent of the respondents view that educational preferences are given to males. The literacy rate of females has increased from 51.2 in 2001 to 57.67 in 2011. The preferences for child education in the past still affect the District's literacy rate. Also, they can be considered one of the impediments to women's political participation in the electoral process.

Professional Inequality: The study found that there is a professional inequality between males and females. The higher the person's position, the more influence the society. People's respect and honor go along with the position of a person. By virtue, it is known that people in the organized sector have a better position in society.

Chapter 4 discusses the workforce of the women in the district. In the workforce, it can be seen that males participate more in the organized sector than females. As shown in Table 4.1, it has a total of 45.9 percent, with 50.2 percent male and 41.1 percent female, respectively. The percentage of main workers is 31.9 percent, with 41.0 percent male and 22.3 percent female. A marginal worker in the district is 14.1 percent, with 9.2 males and 19.1 females, respectively. Through this figure, it can be concluded that male workers are more compared to female main workers. With more participation of males in the organized sector, males earned better positions in society, leading to the low participation of women in politics. Another reason for professional inequality is the qualification discussed in the girls' education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), where women considered this subject challenging. However, some jobs require this qualification, where women still need to acquire the criteria. Nevertheless, the increase in women's literacy and outperformance of women in every field has started to narrow this gap. However, in the Senapati District, the choice of the subject still exists among the student.

Patriarchy System: The study also found that the patriarchy system is another factor that challenges women's participation in politics. The patriarchy system is viewed from the feminist perspective; it is a male-dominated society where the head of the family is a husband or a male. The study found that out of 100, 38.2 percent of the respondents believe that the patriarchy system influences women's low participation in politics. In contrast, 52.0 percent is of the view that it has become more liberal and did not act as a hindrance to women's political participation. At the same time, 9.8 percent could not decide whether it impacts women's political participation. Through the figure, it can be seen that the patriarchy system is becoming more liberal in outlook. The liberal outlooks are due to increased education, urbanization, and industrialization. However, the impact of the patriarchy system on women cannot be totally neglected, which shows in the figure that 38.2 percent of the respondent believes that the patriarchy system acts as an obstacle to women's political participation. Sometimes with the indirect patriarchy mindsets, even the party is reluctant to give the ticket to female candidates (India Today). Moreover, the voters have a gender stereotype that male candidates should be given more preference to women. In fact, these indirect aspects hindered women from participating in politics, especially in electoral politics

Lack of Finance: Lack of finance is another factor that is an obstacle to the underrepresentation of women in politics. Through the study, it has been found that financial constraints are one of the factors that obstruct women's political participation in electoral politics. Out of 100 percent, 64.0 percent agree that financial constraints obstruct women's political participation, as shown in Table 6.4. As discussed in Chapter 6, money plays a vital role in politics, and it is an open secret as to how votes are bought by money. Moreover, many voters look at the status and wealth of the candidates when it comes to elections.

Many respondents have spoken out about how money influences voters to vote for the wrong candidates, even though they have done little for society. People are drawn to money because they need more income for themselves and their families. Numerous voters, as mentioned by numerous respondents, seek short-term income while overlooking society's long-term prospects. Because of these variables, the wealth of candidates influence people's voting behavior. Women with lower incomes, notwithstanding their ability, find it challenging to participate in the electoral process.

Tradition and Custom: The study also found that tradition and custom also have some impact on women's in their political participation. Women continue to internalize and pass on traditional gender role patterns, even in countries where a culture of equality appears to be firmly established. The traditional gender role is prevalent in rural social institutions, according to most respondents. Table 6.3 shows that out of 100 percent of the total respondents, 46.8 percent said gender stereotyping hinders women's political participation, and 38.0 percent said gender stereotyping does not hinder women's

political participation. In comparison, 14.5 percent stated that they cannot say whether it hinders women's political participation, and 0.8 percent did not respond. Due to traditional conventions and practices, women are frequently excluded from decision-making areas, such as community meetings, councils, or political parties. This marginalization denies women the ability to express their concerns, participate in policymaking, and shape political agendas. Some old norms and legal systems may prejudice women in politics, either directly or implicitly. Examples are Laws restricting women, inheriting property, or holding specific political posts. Legislative impediments might hamper women's political engagement and representation.

Lack of Political Socialization: Another factor that challenges women's political participation is the need for more political socialization. Political socialization is a long-term process where a person is affected by family, friends, society, and the environment where he or she lives. As per the study, it has been found that women lack political participation due to a lack of political socialization. Based on the scaling technique, respondents' opinions on how lack of political socialization hinders women's political participation was measured, taking the scale from strongly agrees to strongly disagree on the lack of women's political was caused by lack of political socialization. Out of 100 percent, 78.5 and 18.0 responded with agree and strongly agree, respectively, as shown in Table 6.5 of Chapter 6. As women were less socialized from childhood politically makes, they had to hold back from standing and going front, especially in electoral politics. For instance, to elect a class representative in the school, though girls can take the post of class representative, they give preferences to male students, and women hold the lower post as vice or assistant class representative. It can also be seen in any student union and organization that people have the preconception that the king post should be given to males and the vice or the secretary should be for women. Women's socialization from their childhood has an impact on politics by giving preference to males despite the females being capable people.

Lack of self-Confident by Women herself: Another vital determinant that women face the challenges of political participation is the challenges that they possess. Lack of confidence is the latent obstacle many women face in the district. Through the scaling technique, respondents' opinions were drawn based on strongly agree to strongly disagree on the state that 'women themselves make themselves inferior.' Based on the findings, both men and women agree with the percentage of 2.5 percent and 45.0 percent strongly agree and agree, respectively. On the other hand, 32.5 and 9.5 responded as disagree and strongly disagree, respectively, and 10.5 percent with uncertainty. The above figure shows that most people agree with the statement. Women's lack of confidence is also linked with the old tradition and practices as women are considered weaker and more protective and depend on most physical work with men.

Moreover, in the customary laws, certain restrictions are put upon women from the past, and they are not permitted to attend the village meeting regarding decision-making. With the coming of modern education, this has become more liberal. However, that old tradition and oral narration fill the people's minds to a certain extent, acting as an obstacle for women to participate in a higher order of politics.

Women empowerment and political participation are two sides of the coin. The empowerment of women will have an impact on the political participation of women directly or indirectly. On the other, the lack of women's empowerment will have the inverse effect on women's participation in politics. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, women's political participation is one of the determinants of women's empowerment. As women participate more in politics, the roles of women in decision-making increase, especially when they are in electoral politics. Vice versa, women's empowerment leads to more participation in politics. The determinants such as financial or economic independence, psychological empowerment, and the respect or upholding of the dignity of women have an impact on greater responsibility and involvement in decision-making. Thus it can bring the relation between the two variables like variable A and variables B. If variable A is present, then variable B is present, too; on the other hand, if variable A is absent, then variable B is absent too.

Similarly, if there is women's empowerment, there is higher women's political participation. If there is higher women's political participation, it will prove women's empowerment. The relation between women's empowerment and political participation also applies in the other direction; if there fewer women empowerment, there will be fewer women's political participation, and vice versa.

The study found that women in the Senapati district has become aware and become more conscious politically, as seen while discussing their involvement in voting, campaigning, rallies, protest, etc. However, when it comes to electoral politics, women still lack behind men, as shown from the above discussion that there have been no women representatives in the State Legislative Assembly from 1972 till 2022; also, in the Autonomous District Council (ADC), there is no women representative till date. The lack of women's participation directly impacts women's empowerment. In the discussion on other determinants of women's empowerment, the respondents expressed their opinion that the status of women has improved, and there is financial freedom. Moreover, the study found that the old rigid tradition and customs have lost their place in modern society and are given equal opportunities to both male and female children in their education despite some few orthodox practices the preferential. Through modern education, the outlook toward women has become more liberal, but when there is less political empowerment, the idea of women's empowerment is incomplete. As one of the factors of women's empowerment, political empowerment should also go hand in hand with women's empowerment.

Government initiative in women empowerment

To improve women's status and empowerment, the government has taken several measures that the paper has discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Several schemes like Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) for the socioeconomic empowerment of women, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) that aims to have a significant impact on women by improving self-employment and wage employment skills, National Mission for Women's Empowerment (NMEW) to strengthen processes that promote women's holistic development, gender equality, and gender justice through cross-sectoral convergence of programs affecting women, helping among various stakeholders, and creating an enabling environment conducive to social change. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) to provide deposit-free LPG connection to 5 crores to women belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL), especially the rural poor. Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) to improve the socio-economic status of poor women in rural areas by forming groups of women to engage in self-sustaining income-generating activities. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme to prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination, Ensure girl child survival and protection, and Ensure girl child education and participation. The Mahila Police Volunteers program aims to establish a link between police authorities and local communities to ensure police outreach on crime cases.

Moreover, the constitution of India also gave specific rights to empower women; for instance, Article 14 of the Indian constitution provides equality before the law. Article 15(I) prohibits discrimination based on caste, race, religion, sex, or the birth of place, and Article 15(3) of the constitution gives a special provision that the state can make in favor of women and children.

Article 16 of the Indian constitution gives all citizens equal opportunities in employment and appointment in any office. Article 39(a) directs the state policy for securing equal rights to livelihood for men and women, and Article 39(d) gives equal pay for work to both men and women. Article 42 provide for just and humane condition of work and maternity relief.

Article 51A (e) of the constitution is to promote the harmony of the citizens of India and to renounce all those practices that put down the dignity of women. Moreover, India's constitution also provides at least one-third reservation of total seats to women in the local bodies' election of Panchayati raj and Municipalities under Articles 343(d) and 343(T). The government and constitution take up all these initiatives to empower women.

Sociological Observation

Women's empowerment is the need of the hour. The women's empowerment slogan is under discussion in every walk of life. Women's empowerment is a key to gender equality with dignity. Moreover, it will account for social development as it directly or indirectly affects the Human Development Index, which measures all aspects of human life.

When it comes to women's empowerment and political participation, the nature of women's empowerment and political participation is relatively slow overall. The old tradition and customs still affect the process of women's empowerment and political participation, which we have discussed in the preceding chapter, and also with women's outlook in the line of demeaning themselves. The overall scenario of women's participation in the electoral process in the district is underperforming as there are no active members from women to represent the State Legislative Assembly. However, looking only at electoral politics is a narrow perspective of women's political participation. No doubt, the study has found that women also participate actively in the ground level of politics through the exercise of voting right and electing their representatives, involvement in campaigns, demonstrations, and the rallies that have been discussed in Chapter 5, where the elements of women participation cannot be ignored.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that the overall view of women's empowerment and political participation can be seen as increasing. However, the equal participation of men and women in decision-making in the higher is still at a slow pace; it will still take time to realize the dream of gender equality, which is also a target of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). The Gender Snap Shot Report 2022 also mentions that the rate of gender equality is relatively slow, which may take 286 years if it goes with this rate of progress (UN Women).

Women continue to be underrepresented in positions of political power in the district. Despite accounting for over half of the global population, women in the district occupy no parliamentary seats or leadership positions in politics. This lack of representation undermines the core tenet of inclusivity in democracy and restricts the range of viewpoints and experiences in governance.

Women's political participation is critical for addressing gender inequalities and lobbying for legislation that improves gender equality. Policies may fail to appropriately address women's rights, reproductive health, and violence against women, equitable pay, and other crucial gender-related concerns if women's views are not heard at the decision-making table. Political participation by women contributes to policies that are more inclusive and sensitive to the interests of all citizens.

Increased political participation of women gives role models and inspiration for future generations of female leaders. When women witness other women in positions of power and influence, it inspires them to pursue leadership positions, broadens their views, and dispels the myth that politics is primarily a male domain. More women representation also calls into question social conventions and preconceptions, paving the path for cultural and behavioral shifts.

Recommendation

The following are the short-term and long-term recommendations that are needed to be addressed along with the action plan.

Short-term terms for women's empowerment are:

1. Improve access to economic resources, credit, and microfinance
2. Create policies and regulations to promote gender equality.
3. Increase representation of women in decision-making.
4. Expansion of health access to health services.
5. Strengthen the property and inheritance rights of women
6. Improve the social safety and security of women.
7. Advocate removing gender biases and stereotypes.

Short-term for women's political empowerment:

1. To implement the 85th Constitutional Amendment Bill that is still pending in parliament for the reservation of women to involve women in decision-making.
2. Countrywide campaign on 1/3 reservation of women
3. Networking with the women's group and association
4. Initiate dialogue through political parties of the state as well as national levels.
5. Introduces several measures to stop corruption and criminalization of politics
6. Train women in activist research in documenting and fact-finding.
7. Setting up of Women's right Commission in the district and acting as a watchdog at all levels
8. Gender sensitization of men and women in politics.
9. Spreading awareness of the importance of women's participation in electoral politics
10. Support women's involvement by highlighting the success stories to every village through media and newspapers.

Long term

Long-term women empowerment includes like:

1. Providing a space for women to realize their full potential through favorable social and economic policies
2. Strengthen the legal system to eliminate gender discrimination
3. Changing the attitudes of society and community with the active participation of both men and women.
4. Eliminating discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girl child.

Long-term that needs to be done for women's political participation:

1. To facilitates the formation of women's association and cooperatives to strengthen and support women's political participation.
2. Increase women's awareness among school and colleges student on the importance of women's participation in politics, especially in electoral politics.
3. Enhance the existing training for elected women representatives regarding content to have practical, functional responsibilities.
4. To create awareness of the importance of grass root governing by ensuring transparency and accountability.
5. Eliminate all the vice of tradition and custom that hindered women's political participation.

Thus, spreading awareness about their right, as mentioned above and improving education among women can break the glass ceiling to obtain gender equality with dignity. The modifications were critical in empowering women by improving their sociopolitical standing. Women gained confidence, developed leadership abilities, and learned about governance and decision-making processes as their participation expanded. This empowerment at the local level has significantly impacted women's participation in politics at the national and international levels. Women's active political participation inspires other women and girls, encouraging them to participate in public life and seek leadership positions. Women leaders who are visible serve as role models, breaking down gender boundaries and challenging conventional norms.

The global women's movement and international treaties and initiatives have been critical in campaigning for women's political participation. Campaigns, awareness programs, and lobbying activities have increased public understanding of the value of women's voices in political processes. Encourage women in the community with leadership characteristics and a desire to serve the public to run for political office. Increase public understanding of the necessity of gender equality in political representation. Discuss the need for equal representation and the benefits of having various voices in decision-making with friends, family, and colleagues. Participate in grassroots campaigns for gender equality and women's rights. Join protests, write petitions, and participate in nonviolent demonstrations to advocate for increased female political representation.

Therefore gender equality should be of dignity. Dignity implies the absence of discrimination, aggression, and other forms of harm. Gender-based discrimination, such as unequal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making authority, is addressed through women's empowerment. It aspires to abolish all forms of violence against women, including domestic abuse, sexual assault, and harassment, and to provide women with a safe and secure environment. Women's empowerment with dignity entails recognizing and appreciating women's accomplishments and contributions in many areas of life, such as politics, academics, business, and community leadership. It requires cultivating an inclusive environment that honors and

appreciates varied perspectives, experiences, and abilities. We establish a society where women may thrive, engage fully, and enjoy equal rights and opportunities by assuring women's empowerment with dignity. It is a necessary step towards gender equality and creating a just and inclusive society.

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Appendex-I
QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: (i) Please put a tick mark (✓) against the right choice(s) wherever applicable.
(ii) Strike out if not applicable.
(iii) Specify against “others” option and whenever necessary.
(iv) Kindly fill the question as comprehensive as possible.

Personal Information

- a) Name
(Optional).....
- b) Name of the block.....
- c) E-mail
.....
- d) Age: ☐ (16-25), ☐ (26-35), ☐ (36-45), ☐ (46-55), ☐ Above
- e) Designation/occupation.....
- f) Sex : ☐ Male ☐ Female
- g) Income
☐ Below 1, 00000 per year ☐ 100000-200000 per year ☐ 200000 and above per year
- h) Marital Status: ☐ Unmarried ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Others
- i) Education Qualification.....
- j) Community.....
- k) Religion.....
- l) Mobile No.....

1. According to you what is women empowerment?
.....
.....
2. Is rural women empowerment visible in your locality?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Cannot Decide
3. Which gender is more engaged in organized sector?
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Equal

4. In your opinion what is the general income of women in your society?
- ☐ High
 - ☐ Average
 - ☐ Low
5. Do you have the bank account of your own and used when needed?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I have only joint account
6. Do you own any house or land either alone or jointly?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I can't say
7. How often women participate in the village meeting?
- ☐ Always
 - ☐ Sometime
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ I do not know
8. Do you take part in the Village Development Programmed?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I cannot decide
9. Do women participate in the Non Governmental Organization?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I do not know
10. Do you agree that low income women are less influential in politics?
- ☐ Strongly disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Strongly agree
11. What is the status of women in religious role in your society?
- ☐ High
 - ☐ Average
 - ☐ Low

12. Please do rate the socio-economic status of women from high to low:
- ☐ High
 - ☐ Average
 - ☐ Low
 - ☐ I cannot decide
13. Do you think that women participation in politics is essential?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Cannot decide
14. In recent years the women participation in politics has increased
- ☐ Agreed
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Cannot decide
15. Do women participate in political campaign/ demonstration/ protest/rallies in your locality?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I do not know
16. From which source do you update about the political news?
- ☐ Newspaper
 - ☐ Radio
 - ☐ Television
 - ☐ Magazine
 - ☐ Social Media
 - ☐ Friends
 - ☐ Others
17. According to you participation in politics is considered as a-
- ☐ Career
 - ☐ Part time job
 - ☐ Others
- If 'others' please do specify.....
.....
18. How do women exercise their voting right in your village?
- ☐ Very Active ☐ Active ☐ Neutral ☐ Inactive ☐ Very inactive

19. Which category of gender participate more in politics especially relating to voting?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Equal
- ☐ I do not know

20. Do you agree that there is certain group of people that who took a major decision in your locality?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Cannot decide

21. Do you think that with this rate of women participation in decision making can they achieved the slogan so called 'gender equality'?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Can't say

22. Do you think that the factors like party ideology, party programs, and manifestoes influence the women voting behaviour?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know

23. Is there any women candidate contesting for MPs/MLAs/ADC from your locality?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know

If 'No' according to you what are the reasons why women don't contest in election?

.....
.....
.....

24. Do you agree that political socialization too influenced the women towards political participation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Cannot decide

25. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following by putting a tick mark (✓) in the appropriate box:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Cannot decide
Male should be decision maker always					
Lack of confidence among Women					
Economic independent is an empowerment					
Women are less active in political socialization as compared to men					
Women especially in rural areas are less exposed to outside environment					
Lesser participation of women in electoral process can be considered as less empowered					

26. Which type of society do you belong to?

- ☐ Patriarchal
☐ Matriarchal

27. Is stereotyping of male dominance still prevalent with regards to women participation in politics?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Cannot say

28. Do you face any ill treatment in the family which is against your will?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Undecided

29. Do you freely express your opinion in your family?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I Can't Decide

30. Do you agree that through education attainment the participation of rural women has increased?

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Can't say

31. Which category of women is more active in political sphere? Please do rank them from most active **i.e 1 (one)** to least active;

Sl. No	Category of people	Remark of respondent
1	Teachers	
2	Social workers	
3	Sportsperson	
4	Active household workers	
5	Business women	
6	Medical practitioner	
7	Senior citizen	
8	Others	

If 'others' specify.....

32. Who take a main decision in the family?

☐ Father ☐ Mother ☐ Both

33. According to you who will take a decision in the society?

☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Both

34. Is the patriarchy system having influence in the participation of rural women in politics?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Cannot say

35. In your family who of the children is given more preference in their education?

☐ Son
☐ Daughter
☐ Equal for both

36. Is the practice of tradition and custom still rigid in your society?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Cannot say

37. Do women accept the prevailing tradition and custom of the society?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Cannot say

38. Do you feel that tradition and custom hinder women from participating in politics?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If 'Yes' please do elaborate something about it.

.....
.....

39. Which category of people are more influence by the tradition and custom?
Please do rank them from most influence **i.e 1 (one)** to least influence;

Sl.No	Category	Remark
1	Educated	
2	Illiterate	
3	Religious	
4	Who hold heredity post	
5	Others	

If 'others' specify.....
.....

40. Do the constitutions of India give any restriction on women in contesting election?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not know

41. Is the reservation given in the constitution is exercised in the rural areas of Senapati District?

☐ Yes
☐ Not
☐ Cannot decide

42. In your opinion what are the factors that act as a barriers to women political participation

.....
.....

43. Do women have the conflicting ideas with men about their roles in politics?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Cannot Decide

44. Give any suggestion that will make rural women of Senapati to participate actively in politics especially in decision making.

.....
.....
.....

Appendix- II

Interview schedule

1. According to you what is women empowerment?
.....
.....
2. In your opinion can a women empowerment achievable? If 'yes' how? If 'no' why?
.....
.....
3. Explain something about the status of women in rural society with special reference to Senapati District.
.....
.....
4. What are the main activities of women in day to day life?
.....
.....
5. What are the factors that bring about changes in the rural society?
.....
.....
.....
6. Do women enjoy the liberty in exercising their political right?
.....
.....
.....
7. Do you agree that those women who are economically independent are empowered?
.....
.....
8. What are the other professions of women outside home?
.....
.....
9. Who take the decision for the treatment of your sickness?
.....
.....
10. Are there women candidates in MPs/ MLAs or ADC in your village or locality?
.....
(If 'No' In your opinion what is the reason behind for women not contesting in the election).

.....
.....
11. Do you think that women participation in decision making can achieved so called 'gender equality'.

.....
.....
12. It says that women who are in the field of politics face different kind of problems and harassment. Do you agree with this notion? If yes what are the problem according to you.

.....
.....
.....
13. Is the patriarchy system still influence the participation of rural women in politics?

.....
.....
.....
14. In your opinion what is/are the main reason behind for less participation of women in politics?

.....
.....
15. In your opinion do women accept the prevailing tradition and custom of the society?

.....
.....
.....
16. What are the traditional beliefs and custom that women still cannot overcome in order express what they want?

.....
.....
.....
17. What do you expect if women and men equally participate in decision making?

.....
.....