

**WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL ANGAMI VILLAGE ECONOMY:
A SUBALTERN APPROACH**

Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

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DECLARATION

I Ms. Metepienuo Ngukha, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else. The thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

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

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the research data presented in this accompanying dissertation titled “**Women in Traditional Angami Village Economy: A Subaltern Approach**” has been carried out by Ms. Metepienuo Ngukha bearing Regd. No. Ph.D/HAR/00021 Dated: 17/08/2016 under my guidance and supervision. The present work is original in its content and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other degree or diploma in any other University/ Institute.

It is further certified that the candidate has fulfilled all the conditions necessary for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy award under Nagaland University.

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Introduction

Angami women play a multifarious socio-economic role both inside and outside of their homes. Women are one of the most productive populations in Angami village economy. Almost all religious and agricultural activities revolved around them. While women were considered the primary workers in agriculture, they were naturally placed as subordinate entities in the patriarchal society. It has become accustomed to the practices of the people that by birth Angami women were attributed with the status of inferior beings. As such, their status has never improved despite the multiple achievements and contributions women have made in society. Women population being the most productive sector has been ignored in all historical studies conducted by scholars and intellectuals. The gender roles followed in Angami society have put women in an inferior position to men. In Angami society women were marginalized and their labour unrecognized.

The present study investigates gender relations in the traditional Angami village economy from a subaltern perspective. The goal of historical subaltern perspectives is to highlight the role played by marginalized or minority groups as agents of social and economic transformation. Subalternity, in simple terms, can be understood as a state of being a subordinate. It can be defined as a condition brought about by colonization or other forms of economic, social, racial, linguistic, and/or cultural dominance. Spivak has discussed gender subalternity where in male-dominated societies, women are reduced to the equivalence of an object that exists only to support men and there is no autonomous existence of women without a man (Spivak, 2007). This statement cannot be entirely compared with the status of Angami women, however, in the light of this remark, the role and position of Angami women in society is observed. Historically speaking, the status of Angami women in the family and society is defined by the patriarchal values of male domination. As a daughter, Angami women live in submission and obedience to her brothers and father, and as a wife and mother, she is

subordinate to her husband. The status of *liedepfü* (the first reaper) is ordained upon a virtuous and trustworthy woman and her role in agriculture is very crucial. Similarly, the role of women occupies a central place in the religious ceremonies and festivals of the Angami society. However, Angami women were always considered as the inferior gender. Therefore, the subaltern approach of this research is to attempt to trace the voice of the unheard and to focus on the roles of the unrepresented groups of people i.e., women in Angami society, which will provide new perspectives. The narratives of women in their own words would also reshape the misrepresentation and distorted accounts of the past.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the rugged hilly terrain, the dominant economy of the people was agriculture blended with handicrafts and livestock rearing. These features continue till the present age and still uphold traditional practices with cultural values and beliefs. In a village economy, the condition of the families largely depends upon agriculture and livestock they own. The determination of the economic growth of a society is based on the quality of human resources. Women consist of one of the major segments of society and their contributions towards economic development cannot be undermined. Agriculture is the backbone of the village economy, Angami women from their childhood were being trained or taught to perform agricultural or domestic activities for the welfare of the family. However, to date, very few studies have been carried out regarding the role played by women in the Angami village economy. The productive inputs made by women in terms of work hours or income generated in the family have never been recorded. Women's social and economic contribution to the welfare of the family and society continues to be inadequately addressed. Therefore, this research seeks to measure the economic contribution of women to household income and its impact on society concomitant to the status of women and their participation in decision-making.

Study area

The study is based on the “Role of Women in Traditional Angami Village Economy”. A total of 20 villages formed as the field of study. Five villages each from the four Angami areas are selected using the random sampling method. The villages under study are Mima, Kidima, Phesama, Viswema, Kezoma, Khonoma, Mezoma, Jotsoma, Sechüma, Kiruphema, Zhadima, Meriema, Gariphema, Chedema, Tsiesema, Rüzaphema, Chümukedima, Tsiepama, Piphema, and Sovima.

Significance of the study

- The study sheds light on how the Angami women supported the family through various combinations of subsistence production engaging side by side in small-scale entrepreneurial activities.
- The study provides information on the neglected history of female work participation rates in agricultural and other economic activities.
- The study is foundational for the inclusion of women’s experiences and perspectives in the historical record of the village economy of the Angamis.
- The trajectory of economic changes and the transformation in the village brought about by women’s active participation in agriculture and its related pursuits from the earliest times to the present day is put forth through this research.

Objectives of the research

- Critical examination of the division of labour between men and women
- Identification of the different roles engaged by women and investigating the nature and extent of their participation in income-generating activities

- Explore the social and economic position of women in a traditional Angami village and find out whether there are any structural changes in society as a result of the participation of women in the economy.

Research hypothesis

- In the village's economic basis, all members of the village community are equal
- The structure of masculine hegemony places women at the receiving end in many aspects of socio-economic life in Angami society.
- Angami women supported the family through various combinations of subsistence production, small scale commodity production and were also engaged in all activities related to income-generating sources.

Methodology

The researcher has employed a qualitative approach in data collection. Primary data are collected through personal interviews with open structured questions, and observation. Five villages each from the four Angami areas are selected as the study area using the random sampling method. Secondary data were collected by visiting various libraries, archives, and museums. Books, reports, journals, magazines, and both published and unpublished documents are consulted.

Chapterization

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Framework

This chapter gives an introduction to the study area. It elucidates the conceptual framework of the research by examining the gender roles in Angami society. Review of literature related to the study is discussed in the chapter.

Chapter 2: Economic Setting of the Village

This chapter explores the economic structure of the village and the driving factors contributing to the village's economic development. It deals on the discussion of the wide range of activities that encompass food production and emphasizes the cultural factors leading to the development of intensive agriculture. The process of food production and the varied activities undertaken in jhum and terrace cultivation is discussed.

Chapter 3: Role of Women in the Village Economy

This chapter makes an inquiry into the factors contributing to village economic development. The structure of the village economy of the Angamis is characterized by the process of producing goods through various activities such as agriculture, weaving, poultry farming piggery, etc. Looking into the income generation aspect, an in-depth investigation has been made by assessing the mobility of rural products, entrepreneurship, and bottom-up partnerships to how the rural economy produces agricultural products for urban consumption and how in the process creates income for the rural society. Further, emphasis has been laid on the productive role of women in the upliftment of the household economy through home-based entrepreneurship.

Chapter 4: Status of Women

This chapter examines how women's roles and status are being determined by social situations, religious beliefs, and taboos and delve into the interlinked exclusion of women from the framework of men's domain. It focuses on analysing the structure of masculine hegemony that places women at the receiving end in many aspects of socio-economic life.

Chapter 5: Changing Position of Women

This chapter emphasizes on the different factors and mechanism contributing to the changing position of women in rural areas. It also discusses on how every patriarchal society, traditions and culture support male domination and superiority in all facets of life even in the present age.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter summarizes insights and findings of the field study thereby drawing a conclusion to the research

Chapter 1

Introduction and Research Framework

Fig 1

Map of Nagaland



Nagaland is a mountainous state situated in the North-Eastern part of India. It is bordered by Assam in the North and West, Myanmar and Arunachal Pradesh in the East, and Manipur in the South. Nagaland was integrated into the Indian political map by becoming the 16th State of the Indian Union, attaining statehood on 1st December 1963. Presently, there are 16

administrative districts in Nagaland. There are 17 major tribes with some other sub tribes existing in the state. The population stood at 1978502 according to the 2011 census. Christianity is the dominant religion of the people. Nagaland is a place with a peaceful environment, and astounding tourist destinations with views of enchanting valleys, peaks, lakes, and varied species of flora and fauna. The Nagas were globally known for varied reasons. The headhunting legacy, unique and vibrant culture, traditions, ethnic cuisines, etc., have introduced Nagas to the rest of the world. The Hornbill festival which is annually celebrated from 1st-10th of December attracts thousands of tourists from different parts of the world to the state. The Battle of Kohima which is also regarded as one of the fiercest battles fought during the Second World War took place in the state's capital Kohima, making its mark in world history.

1.2 The Angami Naga Tribe

The Angami Naga tribe is one of the major tribes of Nagaland. According to the 2011 census the total population of the Angamis stood at 141,732. The majority of the people reside in Kohima district, Chümoukedima district, and Dimapur district. The Angamis are further divided into four regions i.e. Southern Angami, Western Angami, Northern Angami, and Chakhro Angami. The name of these four Angami regions was coined on the establishment of the Naga National Council in 1946 (*APO Jubilee Seweda*, 2022). In total, there are 106 Angami villages. Most of the terrain of the Angami villages is hilly, ranging from gentle slopes to steep and rugged hillsides. The hills are covered with rich forestland, sheltering various species of flora and fauna. The Angamis are known to themselves as *Tenyimia* (the common name given to the tribes of Angami, Chakhesang, Impui, Mao, Maram, Pochury, Poumai, Rengma, Thangal, and Zeliangrong) and were identified with this nomenclature in earlier times (Yhokha, 2022). They were given the name “Angami” by the British; before them, there was no such designation. (Zetsuvi, 2014). *Tenyidie* which is the common

language of the *Tenyimia* people, is spoken or understood by most individuals from all the regions of the Angamis.

It is estimated that 98.22% of the people follow Christianity while 0.71% still practice *pfutsana* (the religion of the Angami animists). Before the introduction of Christianity, *pfutsana* was the dominant religion of the Angamis. All the agricultural activities, festivals, and lifestyle are based on the traditions and beliefs of *pfutsana*. Each village is headed by the *seikriiu/ phichiiu* (The eldest male member of the village) whose role is to seek blessings and provide protection to the village community. The *seikriiu* is assisted by the male and female elders of the village, who are eligible to perform rituals, guard the village gates, and are proficient in counting and marking the days and months according to the *pfutsana* calendar of the year. In Angami society, elders are respected and obeyed in every aspect of life. Taboos related to different activities, eating habits, clothing, moral code of conduct, etc., are to be strictly followed by each member of the village.

1.3 A brief description of the Study Area:

Chakhro Angami:

The term *Chakhroma* was in use before the entry of the Britishers in Nagaland. The Chakhro Angamis are bounded by the Rengmas and Assam in the North, Northern Angami in the East, Western Angami and Zeliang in the South, and Zeliang and Assam in the West. There are 47 villages in the Chakhro Angami area. Currently, there are three districts: 1. Chümoukedima, 2. Dimapur, 3. Niuland, under the jurisdiction of the Chakhro area. The climatic conditions of the Chakhro area are moderately humid and dry. Shifting cultivation is practiced for growing rice and a wide variety of vegetables.

Northern Angami:

In earlier times, the Northern Angami areas were called *Chazouchamia*. (APO Jubilee Seweda, 2022). The Northern Angami areas were bounded by the Rengmas in the North, Zunheboto, and Phek districts in the east, Southern Angami in the south, and Niuland and Rengma in the West. There are 32 villages established under the Northern Angami area. Kohima, the capital of Nagaland is situated in the Northern Angami area. The Northern Angamis practice both shifting and terrace cultivation.

Southern Angami

The Southern Angami areas are also called the *Japfüphiki* area. The region is bounded by the Mao Nagas on the south and Maram Nagas on the southwest, on the west by Zeliang and Western Angami, Northern Angami on the North, and Chakhesang Nagas on the east. Mt. *Japfü*, the fourth-highest mountain in Nagaland and the highest in the Barail Range is located in the Southern Angami Area. The Southern Angami area is also richly blessed with the mesmerizing scenic *Dzüikou* Valley. The *Kisama* Heritage Village is also situated in the Southern Angami area. There are 13 villages in the Southern Angami area. Terrace cultivation is suitable in the Southern Angami villages owing to the availability of water sources. Shifting cultivation is also practiced for the cultivation of vegetables and rice. Organic potato farming is very common in the Southern Angami area.

Western Angami:

There are 14 villages under the jurisdiction of the Western Angami area. The Western Angami areas are blessed with a rich bio-diversity and most of the regions are covered with lush green forests. The Western Angamis practiced both shifting and terrace cultivation. Khonoma, the first green village in India is situated in this region.

1.4 The Conceptual Framework

In the rugged hilly terrain, the dominant economy of the people was agriculture blended with handicrafts and livestock rearing. These features continue till the present age and still uphold traditional practices with cultural values and beliefs. In a village economy, the condition of the families largely depends upon agriculture and livestock they own. The determination of the economic growth of a society is based on the quality of human resources. Women consist of one of the major segments of society and their contributions towards economic development cannot be undermined. Agriculture is the backbone of the village economy, Angami women from their childhood were being trained or taught to perform agricultural or domestic activities for the welfare of the family. However, to date, very few studies have been carried out regarding the role played by women in the Angami village economy. The productive inputs made by women in terms of work hours or income generated in the family have never been recorded. Women's social and economic contribution to the welfare of the family and society continues to be inadequately addressed. Therefore, this research seeks to measure the economic contribution of women to household income and its impact on society concomitant to the status of women and their participation in decision-making.

The present study investigates gender relations in the traditional Angami village economy from a subaltern perspective. The goal of historical subaltern perspectives is to highlight the role played by marginalized or minority groups as agents of social and economic transformation. The term "subaltern", meaning "inferior rank", was first used by Gramsci which he used to describe those groups who are subject to the dominance of a ruling class (Chakrabarty, 2000). Subalternity, in simple terms, can be understood as a state of being a subordinate. It can be defined as a condition brought about by colonization or other forms of economic, social, racial, linguistic, and/or cultural dominance. Spivak has discussed gender subalternity where in male-dominated societies, women are reduced to the

equivalence of an object that exists only to support men and there is no autonomous existence of women without a man (Spivak, 2007). This statement cannot be entirely compared with the status of Angami women, however, in the light of this remark, the role and position of Angami women in society is observed. Further, Spivak contends that if in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as a female is even more deeply in shadow (Spivak, 1988)

Gender subalternity is apparent in Angami society. Historically speaking, the status of Angami women in the family and society is defined by the patriarchal values of male domination. As a daughter, Angami women live in submission and obedience to her brothers and father, and as a wife and mother, she is subordinate to her husband. Though women's contribution and role in socio-economic activities are very significant in Angami society, the status and position of women are contradictory. While women were considered the primary workers in agriculture, they were naturally placed as subordinate entities in the patriarchal society. It has become accustomed to the practices of the people that by birth Angami women were attributed with the status of inferior beings. As such, their status has never improved despite the multiple achievements and contributions women have made in society. Women population being the most productive sector has been ignored in all historical studies conducted by scholars and intellectuals. Therefore, the subaltern approach of this research is to attempt to trace the voice of the unheard and to focus on the roles of the unrepresented groups of people i.e., women in Angami society, which will provide new perspectives. The narratives of women in their own words would also reshape the misrepresentation and distorted accounts of the past.

Emphasizing the significant role of the *liedepfü* (female priestess, the first reaper) in agriculture, this study is an attempt to give due recognition of the important role of Angami women in agriculture and their contribution to the village economy. According to the

pfutsana tradition, every agricultural activity begins with the performance of rituals by the designated individual who is entitled to carry out the task. In every village, the *liedepfü* is selected among the elder female members who have a modest and honorable character to hold such a title. During the festival of *Khoupfhünyi/ Khukhunyi/ Liedenyi*, the *liedepfü* would perform the ritual for the commencement of harvest. Before the fulfillment of this ritual, any members of the village are forbidden to reap the harvest. It is stated that women prefer to be given the title of *liedepfü* as it symbolizes fertility and the multiplication of one's wealth. Similarly, the role of women occupies a central place in the religious ceremonies and festivals of the Angami society. In Angami tradition, every festival begins with a ceremony known as "*kizhie*" or "*kidie*", (sanctification of the house), and the execution of this ritual is accomplished by women. The ritual performed in this ceremony is related to the invoking of good fortunes and harvest for the household. Therefore, women's significant and prominent role in performing religious rituals deserves proper attention and acknowledgment.

1.5 Gender Roles in Angami society

Gender may be defined as a network of beliefs, personality traits, attitudes, feelings, values, behavior, and activities that differentiate men from women (Krishnaraj and Kanchi, 2011). Gender has often been used as an essential variable for analyzing the roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities, incentives, costs, and benefits in agriculture. In Angami household, gender roles are conceptualized in the division of labor in agricultural activities with the male as the head of the household. Compared to other social groups, women play a more significant and vital role in tribal communities, since they put in more effort and are essential to the family's administration and economy. One important indicator of the degree of social fairness in a society is the status of its women. The status of women is frequently defined in terms of their job, income, education, health, fertility as well as their roles in the home and society (Awais, Et.al. 2009). In addition to placing women in the home and giving them little

to no standing in social, political, and religious organizations, traditional Angami culture also gave women significant roles in the economy (Yano & Pande, 2012). Angami women's identity is based not on the satisfaction of their own needs and desires, but on altruism and sacrifice for their family and menfolk of the village. In Angami culture, a virtuous woman should be polite and hospitable in greeting and welcoming guests. In the past, serving *zu* (local rice beer) to every guest was a rich tradition practiced by the Angamis, where the responsibility of serving rests with the womenfolk in the family. Women who took longer than expected to receive visitors were labeled as impolite and caused embarrassment to their husbands.

Angami women play a multifarious socio-economic role both inside and outside their homes. All economic and domestic activities revolved around them. In the household, women perform the tasks of fetching water, carrying firewood, pounding rice, cooking, cleaning, and nursing of a child, etc. A woman is considered to possess the values and essence of femininity by judging her ability to effectively complete her duties. In the past, women had to rise before the break of dawn to complete household duties so that they could tend to the agricultural works during the day. Roy put forth the view that Angami women maintained a strong sense of "*mhosho*" (pride and prestige) that was carried over to every aspect of life be it work, domestic chores, community activities, or women's personal bearing (Roy, 2004).

Gender roles to a certain extent are distinguished with regard to economic activities in a tribal society. The economic function in an Angami village is related to the process of production, consumption, distribution, and exchange. Studies have shown that "the development of an economy can be measured not only in terms of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), per capita income and wage but also in terms of effective participation and utilization of the capabilities of both men women as an effective human resource potential" (Lalhriatpuii, 2010, p. 2). Angami women were always burdened with majority of the

agricultural works by engaging in activities such as weeding, sowing, clearing fields, winnowing, reaping etc., as such their roles in feasts stands as recognition of female contribution to production. While men usually dominate in areas of distribution and exchange, women are vital in production (Jacobs, 1998). A traditional division of labor existed between the gender in the Angami society where men concentrated on hunting and safeguarding the village in times of conflict, while the women carry the responsibility of growing or collecting food for the family. In Angami society, production, processing and distribution of food have always been the primary responsibility of women. Yet, women's substantial contribution continues to be marginalized in traditional agricultural and economic analyses, while men's contribution remains the central, often the sole, focus of attention.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Bharghav, Dr. Kapil. (2009). *Marketing Strategies of Women Entrepreneurs*, In this book, the author has stated that, given equitable opportunities in all areas of life, women, who are the backbone of the hill economy, have the potential to positively impact the national economy. He also illustrated that the primary objective of establishing Self Help Groups (SHGs) was to foster a sense of unity among women, which in turn would encourage them to enhance their economic circumstances by expanding their access to credit and saving options. The establishment of SHGs has aided in developing viewpoints on group microenterprises based on regional agricultural resources.

Desai, Neera and Thakkar, Usha. (2001) *Women in Indian Society*, In this book Desai and Thakkar argued that the under appreciation of women's economic contributions, particularly in the unorganized sector and agriculture, stems from the classification of women's labor as non-productive because it is typically performed for free.

Kiran, Mishra (1991) in the book, *Women in a tribal community: A Study of Arunachal Pradesh*, has observed that in a shifting economy, land and human labor were the most

valuable assets. It also opined that in tribal communities women form the highest productive unit in terms of labor. From a young age, women are engaged in hard labor which is integral for production activities, be it agricultural, gathering from forests, or household crafts.

Kapur, Dr.Radhika. (2019). *Understanding the Relationship between Women and the Economy*. In this article, the author has made an emphasis on the role and contribution of women in promoting economic development. She further claimed that women have been able to improve their social position and expand their future economic benefits by getting access to educational and career resources.

Khala, Khatoli. (2012) *Women and Agriculture in Nagaland: A Gender Study of Sumi Customary Law and Custom*, explored the impact of agrarian structure on women and she argued that women are exploited economically under the social structure and hierarchy in tribal societies. Due to their lack of inheritance rights and lack of ownership over its resources, women are mostly perceived as landless agricultural laborers and invisible farmers.

Konwar, Kritanjali, and Das (2009) in the book, *Role of Women in the Socio-Economic Upliftment of Assam*, have expressed that apart from domestic work women have always worked alongside men in fields and extended their help in related pursuits. It also mentioned that women have played an important role in income-generating activities to raise their economic position i.e., the economic condition of the family, such as income, standards of living, etc.

Lalhriatpuii, (2010) in the book, *Economic Participation of Women in Mizoram*, asserted that women constitute a significant part of the workforce in India. The majority of the women workforce is employed in the rural areas and of the total rural women workers, 87% of them are employed in agriculture as laborers and cultivators. She also stressed that the productivity

of a woman to generate income is closely related to the amount of space allocated to her to operate independently as an economic agent.

Mignonette, Momin, and Mawlong, Cecile A (2004) in the book, *Society and Economy in North-East India*, expressed that the Khasi and Jaintia women were economically independent. They played path breaking roles, not only in agriculture, the manufacture of various items of crafts, but also in trade. Mention was also made regarding the division of labor based on gender and they noted that since menfolk concentrated on hunting and defense the womenfolk were left to take care of domestic work, agricultural activities, crafts, and carrying products to weekly markets and trade and commerce.

Phadke, Sindhu (2008) *Women's status in North Eastern India*, here, the author observed that in patriarchal societies women are not permitted to serve in village councils as these bodies are in charge of social, political, and judicial issues pertaining to the community or village. It is further assumed that the low status of women is partly because of the way male members of the community view women's personalities and responsibilities within the home.

Samita Sen (1999) *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India*. In this book, Samita Sen expressed that wider social activism on women's role and status in the home must be considered to comprehend how social constructions of gender influenced the lives and work of women wage laborers. Women are perceived as secondary workers even though they take on additional paid labor for the family when men's earnings are insufficient or irregular. Consequently, women's labor is undervalued and their constructive function is sidelined.

Sircar. Manjusri Chaki. (1984) *Feminism in a Traditional Society: Women of the Manipur Valley*, has mentioned that in addition to agriculture, weaving is the most important economic activity. She observes that weaving is the sole activity of womenfolk. In addition, agricultural activities are performed by both men and women. Although both women and men work as hired labor, women usually outnumber men in the labor force.

Ranade S.N and Ramachandran P (1970) *Women and Employment*. Here the different attitude towards labor and employment between married and unmarried women is viewed. Married women expressed that their participation in income-generating activities outside their homes is necessitated out of their poor economic and living conditions at home. Unmarried women on the other hand expressed that the desire to have an independent income motivated them to seek employment or engage in income-generating activities.

Syiemlieh, David K, and Sharma (2008) in the book *Society and Economy in North-east India Vol.3*, explored the nature of contribution by women in income-generating activities in the village economy and opined that women's roles are not only restricted to agricultural works. Rather, their contributions towards kinship and community development have been substantial in tribal societies.

Tomar, Priyanka. (2011). *Indian Women*. In this book, the author asserts that though women bear the primary responsibility to look after the well-being of their families, they are, however, denied access to the resources they need to fulfill their responsibility, which includes education, health care services, job training, and access and freedom to make decisions. She further describes that women's ability to improve their production efficiency is constrained due to a lack of control over resources such as land. Though several efforts have been made to empower women, ignorance and poverty prove to be the main cause of hindrance for women to get access to the facilities provided.

Varma, Shashi Kanta (1992) *Women in Agriculture*, has viewed rural women as a flexible labor category whereby they perform both agricultural and domestic activities and there is hardly any activity in agricultural production in which women are not actively involved.

Vitso. Adino (2003) *Customary Law and Women: The Chakhesang Nagas*, claimed that in many instances, women's roles and status were determined by social institutions and norms, ideologies, and taboos. She also mentioned that in the traditional society, the economic roles

of men and women were sharply distinguished because men generally engaged in warfare and hunting while women were engaged in domestic and agricultural activities.

Zehol, Lucy (1998) in her book titled *Women in Naga Society*, stressed that in a patriarchal society, institutions and traditions are inspired by the belief in male dominance and female inferiority. In traditional societies, the status of a woman usually concerns her family as a daughter wife, sister, and mother.

1.7 Study Area

The study is based on the “Role of Women in Traditional Angami Village Economy”. Five villages each from the four Angami areas are selected using the random sampling method.

The villages selected as the study area are presented in the following table.

Table: 1 Name of the Villages, Area, and District of the Study Area

Sl.No.	Name of the Village	Area	District
1.	Mima	Southern Angami	Kohima
2.	Kidima	Southern Angami	Kohima
3.	Phesama	Southern Angami	Kohima
4.	Viswema	Southern Angami	Kohima
5.	Kezoma	Southern Angami	Kohima
6.	Mezoma	Western Angami	Kohima
7.	Khonoma	Western Angami	Kohima
8.	Jotsoma	Western Angami	Kohima
9.	Sechiima	Western Angami	Kohima

10.	Kiruphema	Western Angami	Kohima
11.	Tsiesema	Northern Angami	Kohima
12.	Zhadima	Northern Angami	Kohima
13.	Meriema	Northern Angami	Kohima
14.	Gariphema	Northern Angami	Kohima
15.	Chedema	Northern Angami	Kohima
16.	Chumukedima	Chakhro Angami	Chumukedima
17.	Tsiepama	Chakhro Angami	Chumukedima
18.	Ruzaphema	Chakhro Angami	Chumukedima
19.	Piphema	Chakhro Angami	Chumukedima
20.	Sovima	Chakhro Angami	Chumukedima

1.8 Research Methodology

The researcher has employed the qualitative method in data collection. Primary data are collected through personal interviews with open structured questions, and observation. Five villages each from the four Angami areas are selected as the study area using the random sampling method. Secondary data were collected by visiting various libraries, archives, and museums. Books, reports, journals, magazines, and both published and unpublished documents are consulted.

The research looks into the structure of masculine hegemony that places women at the receiving end in many aspects of socio-economic life. Generally, in the village's economic

basis, all members of the village community are equal co-workers and major production tasks are accomplished through cooperative institutions of labor. However, beyond the superficial layer, the research is conducted with a critical examination of the division of labor between men and women. The study will bring to light how the Angami women supported the family through various combinations of subsistence production engaging side by side in small-scale entrepreneurial activities. While analyzing about women's roles and status as being determined by social situations, religious beliefs, and taboos, the study looks into the interlinked exclusion of women from the framework of men's domain. Identification of the different roles engaged by women and investigating the nature and extent of their participation in income-generating activities will give insight into women's contribution to the village's economic infrastructure. It is also targeted to explore the social and economic position of women in a traditional Angami village and find out whether there are any structural changes in society as a result of the participation of women in the economy.

The research will provide information on the neglected history of female work participation rates in agricultural and other economic activities. It will be foundational for the inclusion of women's experiences and perspectives in the historical record of the village economy of the Angamis. The trajectory of economic changes and the transformation in the village brought about by women's active participation in agriculture and its related pursuits from the earliest times to the present day will be brought forth through this research.

Chapter 2

Economic Setting of the Village

The research explores the economic structure of the village and the driving factors contributing to the village's economic development. Among the Nagas in general, the dominant economy is agriculture. Both jhum and terraced field cultivation are practiced. The development of agriculture involves an intensification of the processes used to extract resources from the environment. Cultivation of different crops has been raised at scales ranging from the household to massive commercial operations. The research recognizes the wide range of activities that encompass food production and emphasizes the cultural factors leading to the development of intensive agriculture. Among the Angamis, the driving force of the rural economy is structured upon the traditional concept of the peer group organization of labor called *pehli*. It studies how this mode of labor organization was a major influence in instilling a sense of communal spirit and continued to be an enduring tradition in various forms.

The Angami society, like any other tribal society, is dependent upon land and livestock rearing for livelihood. Agriculture is part and parcel of the lifestyle of the Angami people in rural areas. Plant and animal management was a familiar concept to the tribal societies. With the accumulated knowledge from experience, the Angami people applied indigenous technology in the production of food. Land is the most important source of both economic value and social standing (Khala, 2012). People take pride in flaunting the number of cultivable lands they own. The Angami villages are adorned by beautifully carved terrace fields. All the activities related to agriculture are performed through a communal labor force. The Angamis practice terrace cultivation as well as jhum cultivation. Rice has been the staple food for the people, and the wealth of a person in the traditional Angami village is recognized

from the amount of rice he owns. Another indicator of wealth in the traditional Angami society was the number of cattle a person possessed.

It was a practice of the Angamis both in hunting and terrace cultivation that the communal effort was utilized to achieve the maximum benefit and efficiency in the practice of these tasks. The economy of the village was structured on a communal labor system in which the young and abled members of the village formed a social group based on age division to perform various agricultural activities on a reciprocal basis whilst building a strong network of social interaction and connection with one another. A communal labor force is an informal action group whose sole purpose is to maintain and improve life together (Kavito, 2012). “The system of communal labor was on an organized level, called the “*pele*” (peer group) where a group of young people would work in each other’s fields in rotation” (Sanyu, 1996, p.54). The *pele* is formed by both men and women of the same age group. In all the Angami villages, there exists a peer group that is formed by dividing the people into different categories based on age. Today, the function of the *pele* is transformed into social interactions and building community feeling through participation in sports and other leisure activities. With the change in the living practices and occupation of the people, the traditional roles and significance of the *pele* are transformed to suit the needs of the time.

2.1 Agriculture-Related Festivals in Angami Society

Most of the Angami villages observed at least six festivals annually. Apart from *Sekrenyi*, all the other festivals are related to agricultural activities. Every celebration revolves around the agricultural cycle to sustain the farmer, and religious rites are performed to guarantee the safety of a person and their harvest (Zetsuvi, 2014). The activities and rituals executed during each festival assisted the people in keeping track of the cultivation cycle. Signaling the

completion or commencement of a particular agricultural activity, each festival has its significance and meaning attached to it.

Sekrenyi, celebrated in the month of *Kezei* (February) is one of the major festivals of the Angamis. This festival is observed for ten days after the harvest season. This festival is also called *Phousanyi* because it has a deep and spiritual impact on the individual's life. The rituals performed in this festival are directed towards the purification of one's sin and the sanctification of the soul.

Ngonyi is celebrated in the month of *Kera/ Ketshü* (March/April). After the celebration of this festival, weeding takes place in the shifting cultivation fields. It also marks the beginning of sowing seeds for wet terrace cultivation. During this festival, women embark on the task of carrying firewood (Lorhen, personal communication, March 21, 2020). Zetsuvi postulates about the activity undertaken during this festival, which excursions are arranged and young people go hunting and fishing (Zetsuvi, 2014). However, in the context of gender roles practiced in Angami society, hunting and fishing was the domain of menfolk and women had no participation in such activities. This suggests the distinct functions and roles of men and women in Angami society.

Kerunyi, celebrated in the month of *Cacü* (May) marks the onset of plantation season. It is during this festival the *tsiakrau/ tekhusekhriüpfü* will perform the ritual of transplanting. It is forbidden for any members of the village to transplant paddy before this ritual is fulfilled.

Hiedanyi is celebrated in the month of *Cadi* (June). During this festival, all the male members of the village participate in cleaning and repairing the village commuting paths.

Chadanyi is celebrated in the months of *Mvüsa/ Tsiarie* (July/ August) after the completion of the transplanting activity in terraced fields. During this festival, the entire village community helps to clean and clear the paths that lead to the fields.

Khoupfhiünyi/ Khukhunyi is also called *liedenyi* and it marks the beginning of the harvest season. This festival is celebrated during the month of *Rüyo* (September). “The festival lasts for two days, during which it is strictly forbidden for anybody to go to the field except the *liedepfü*” (the first reaper), (Zetsuvi, 2014, p. 50). On the first day of the festival, the *liedepfü* (the first reaper) will perform the first act of harvest for a particular year. This is a festival of sharing and giving food to each other. In some villages like Viswema, this festival is especially dedicated to the girl child.

Terhiünyi also known as *Terhuonyi* is celebrated in the month of *Rüde* (December). This festival is celebrated after the harvest season. It also marks the end of one cycle of cultivation in the year. This festival is also called *terhuonyi* as it is also a time to make peace with *terhuomia* (Spirit), (APO Jubilee Seweda, 2022).

2.2 Shifting Cultivation

In the history of human civilization, the first step in the transition from food gathering and hunting to the food production stage is marked by the practice of shifting cultivation (Singha, 2011). Shifting/jhum cultivation also known as the slash-and-burn method of cultivation is widely practiced by the Angamis. The maximum period of cultivation in jhum fields is 2-3 years. The first year of cultivation is considered to be the most productive. In the second year of cultivation, fewer varieties of crops are grown. The cultivation of large varieties of crops has sustained the Angami village economy since time immemorial. In earlier times, the cultivation of crops fulfilled the purpose of meeting the needs of the family. The excess produce was either consumed by sharing among the neighbors or bartered with other produce.

The preparation of jhum fields involves a lengthy process. Firstly, the site to be used in the following year for jhum cultivation is selected by taking note of the fertility of the land. Thenutsile (Personal communication, March 11, 2021) stated that the selection of jhum fields

is also made based on the outcome of the dreams they had on the day a site is chosen. According to the interpretation of their dreams, the land is either rejected or selected. This indicates the magnitude of supernatural influence commanding the actions of the people. Once the site for the jhum field is chosen, the clearing of land takes place usually in the months of October and November. The jhum fields are cleared by the slash-and-burn method. The trees, bushes, and forests are cleared by slashing. The logs and trunks of trees are kept to dry and after a few weeks; the land is cleared by burning the vegetation into ashes.

The ploughing of the jhum fields takes place in the months of January and February. Small twigs are collected and burnt along with some soil making it into a tiny heap at several places which is then spread out after a few days to the entire field to provide more fertility to the land in use. In view of utilizing the entire piece of land, the sloping parts of the field are arranged in rows by using a piece of long wood to support the soil (Fig.2). These sections of the field are mostly used for growing vegetables. The sowing of seeds takes place in the month of March. The various Angami regions do not follow a uniform cropping pattern. The topography and varying altitudes interfere with productivity, whereby crop varieties suited for low altitudes do not perform well in high altitudes and vice versa (Swami, 2018). For instance, the cultivation of pineapple is very suitable in sandy and loamy soils rich in humus and the laterite soils on the hill slopes of the *Chakhro* Angami areas. Whereas the growth and production of the same crop is not favorable in the low-temperature regions of the Southern Angami areas and some regions of Western Angami areas. However, there are some vegetables and crops that have high-yield results in most of the regions. These vegetables include rice, pumpkin, cucumber, bitter gourd, brinjal, chilly, jobs tear, maize, beans, yam, tomato, spring onion, ginger, sweet potato, etc.

In the traditional Angami household, seeds of all varieties of crops are selected carefully and stored after each harvest to continue their cultivation. All the different types of

crop seeds are sown together. To ensure the sprouting of the seeds the large pieces of soil will be pulled out. When the crops attain a desired length, the unwanted varieties with low growth rates are pulled out. In view of balancing the proportionate amount of soil nutrients, the crops are kept at least half a foot apart from each other. Before the onset of monsoon season, the first session of weeding starts during the month of May. During this period the unwanted crops can be taken out or the space of the field be sown with new seeds. The second phase of weeding is performed in the month of July and August. The harvest of rice in jhum fields takes place before the harvesting season of terrace fields.

The Angamis practice a mixed cropping pattern in jhum cultivation. As stated by Kruvinuo, (Personal communication, October 16, 2023) the varied vegetables and crops are grown according to the needs and choices of the family. Until harvest, the jhum fields are frequently cleaned because of the increased growth rate of weeds and plants caused by the soil's fertility. In a village economy land is a very prominent asset; therefore, its management is extremely important. When the two years of cultivation are completed, the land is used for planting tree saplings. This ensures the growth of vegetation enabling the land to be utilized for cultivation after a period of 10- 20 years by regaining fertility. Gradually, due to the increased human activity and population pressure on land, the cycle of cultivation is getting reduced to 5- 6 years in many areas. In many places, due to the loss of nutrients in the soil and the frequent use of a particular plot of land, productivity in jhum fields is adversely affected.

In the present age, the practice of shifting cultivation is not encouraged due to its negative environmental impact. The excessive use of forest lands for cultivation has led to the loss of varied species of flora and fauna. Excessive deforestation is adversely affecting the climatic conditions. However, this age-old habit of producing food could not be discontinued quickly due to its characteristics of available labor and capital from the households. The

majority of the local vegetable products available in the markets are produced from jhum fields. Thus, the rural economy is largely supported by jhum cultivation.

Table: 2 Area and Production of Principal Crops in Jhum Fields (Area in hectare, Production in metric tonnes) (Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2023)

Sl.No.	District	Area	Production
1.	Kohima	2108	4176
2.	Dimapur	288	568
3.	Chümoukedima	4381	8641

The size of land cultivated varies in the different Angami areas. As presented in the data (Table. 2), the Chakhro Angami villages which fall under the Chümoukedima district depend heavily on jhum cultivation to produce crops. Jhum cultivation is also suitable for areas where there is less source of water. According to the report on the annual average rainfall in Kohima, Dimapur, and Chümoukedima districts, it is given that Kohima receives a higher amount of rainfall than the other two districts (Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2023). This indicates that while terrace farming is more suitable to the Southern Angami, Western Angami, and some regions of the Northern Angami areas, shifting or jhum cultivation has suited the Chakhro Angami areas in production.

2.3 Terrace Farming:

Terrace farming is a method of agricultural landscaping where sloped lands are successively cut into flat steps and leveled platforms (Fig.3). The majority of the rice produced in the

village is derived from terrace farming. Terrace farming is more convenient and simpler to manage than jhum cultivation. This is because in terrace farming a particular plot of land is used for cultivation for long periods whereas, a particular plot of jhum field can be used only for two years. The fertility of the soil in terrace fields can be upgraded and refined by adding manure such as cow dung, dried leaves of trees such as “*riipo*” also known as alder tree (*Alnus nepalensis*, Fig. 4), and marigold (*Tagetes*, Fig. 5) during the transplanting seasons. The leaves and flowers get buried during the process of ploughing and undergo the process of decomposition. Under the pressure of high temperatures, the decomposition takes place effectively within 5-7 days, allowing the soil to achieve nutrients. Siesonuo (Personal communication, October 19, 2018) expressed that the marigold flower has a great impact in keeping the soil fertile and the use of this particular flower as a type of manure has been carried on for many generations by the Angamis. Earlier research conducted by (Umashankar, Et. al, 2019) on the effect of marigolds on soil fertility reveals that marigolds contain 90% moisture and the water drained from the fermented flowers used as a source of manure for crop production resulted in high yield for crop production. This reflects the rich traditional knowledge and its scientific implications in agricultural activities practiced by the Angamis.

The crop rotation method is also applied in some Angami villages which also enhances the fertility of soil in terrace fields. A study conducted on the role of legumes in cropping systems for soil ecosystem improvement has also provided results in which legume crops fix the atmospheric nitrogen in the soil and also restrict soil erosion and nutrient loss from the topsoil (Jagadish, Et. al. 2022). Based on the result of the inquiry made regarding legume crop cultivation, it is also found that Angami villages such as Viswema, Khuzama, Jakhama, Kigwema, Chümoukedima, Kidima, Mima, Kigwema, Medziphema, etc., cultivates leguminous plant such as soybeans, peas, etc., and starchy root vegetables such as potato. It is

also observed that soybeans and mungbeans are produced in the sowing beds of paddy after the transplantation season. Cultivation of these crops not only improves soil fertility but also helps rural women to increase their income by selling the produce.

A unique feature of terrace farming is observed in some Angami villages where terrace fields can be kept wet throughout the year with sufficient provision of water. Many farmers use these plots for paddy-fish integrated farming. Paddy-fish farming can also be considered one of the most useful integrated farming methods to judiciously utilize land, water resources, and labor. A study conducted on the paddy-fish integrated farming system for the North-Western Himalayas proposed that fishes in paddy fields improve crop health and yield by reducing insect or pest attacks on crops since the fishes eat or kill live stem borers, leaf folders and snails and fertilize crops by their excreta (Muruganamdham, Et.al. 2019).

The Angamis maintain a strict schedule for the performance of each agricultural task. There is a competitive spirit among the people to fulfill the agricultural activities in each season. It is considered shameful to delay the agricultural tasks. As mentioned by Kereivile, (Personal communication, January 16, 2019) women were labelled as lazy and would be held accountable for incomplete work. As such women work harder to preserve their reputations by conforming to social standards and expectations placed upon them. In all agricultural activity, women invest more hours in working than men. Due to the nature of these jobs and the skills required to complete them, many agricultural duties are considered to be the domain of women (Lorheno, personal communication, March 21, 2020). Activities such as weeding, and *telhakhro* (tying of crop plants in small bundles) are specifically carried out by women in terrace cultivation. Angami women sacrifice their emotional, physical, and mental well-being to achieve the status of a responsible and virtuous woman.

The ploughing of the field is mostly carried out during the months of January and February. This activity is performed by both men and women, old and young. In every agricultural society, land and water are the two most important factors for determining the quality and quantity of any produce. In terrace farming, the Angamis carve the fields through careful inspection of water irrigation sources that could pass through their respective fields. The monsoon season is a significant period for the Angamis. It is during this season, the transplanting of paddy in terraced fields is carried out. Most farmers depend on the monsoon rains for cultivation due to the lack of other reliable water sources. On rare occasions of the late arrival of rain, the people set a particular day for the *seikriüu* to ask for rain by performing rituals. In addition, a religious ritual called *teichü* was observed to infer the protection of the crops from natural calamities. On the days this ritual is observed, it is forbidden to dry paddy and dry washed clothes in the sun within the village boundary. Travelers are also forbidden to bring goods and other items inside the village.

Before the arrival of the rains, through communal labor, the people cleaned and repaired the canals that would carry water to their respective fields. The transplanting season begins in the later part of May and stretches till the early part of August. During this season, the process of preparing the soil is extremely important as the outcome of the produce depends on it. When water is available in the field the land would be ploughed to soften the soil. The soil is then soaked in water for a week or more according to personal preferences. During this process, the decomposition of hay takes place thereby contributing to the improvement of the fertility of the soil which is also a factor that adds to the high yield of harvest. In the months of August to October, the process of weeding takes place. The activity of weeding is strenuous as the workers have to carefully balance their movements and maneuver along the tiny gaps between transplanted paddies. Due to the nature of the soft skills demanded in such tasks, womenfolk are entrusted to perform them.

The harvest season begins during the month of October and continues till the latter part of November. Both men and women take an active role in harvesting. While women reap the paddy, menfolk are engaged in threshing the paddy to separate the rice and the hay. The harvest season marks the end of one cycle of cultivation in a year.

In the past, transportation of rice to the village is carried by human labor. As workers proceed to go home in the evening, men and women carry rice on their *khori* (An article made of polished bamboo or cane). Married women carry their children in the front or on the side and *khori* on their backs. However, on other seasons, it is a common scene to witness men holding a *zhie* (dao) while women carry their child and the *khori* on their way to the field.

2.4 Indigenous Knowledge and Technology in Agriculture

Indigenous knowledge of carving agricultural tools has been an integral factor in enabling tribal societies to produce food in different environmental conditions. The Angamis acquired a wealth of knowledge about the natural resources needed and the skills required to craft their tools through accumulated experience coupled with a firm awareness of their environment. The implements and tools are made by skilled local artisans with careful selection of the materials to be used. The tools used for cultivation are simple, yet, effective. Most farmers use traditional tools such as wooden plough, hoes, *zhiepfhinuo* (sickle), *dzü* (spade), *zhie* (dao), etc. The use of natural products for designing and preparing the tools is the most common method. From ploughing, threshing, and winnowing to carrying and storing grains, each tool and implement is made by the use of polished wood, bamboo and cane. The iron-tipped tools are mostly purchased from markets. The article is sharpened by local blacksmiths who would heat the iron in a fire and strike the metal to give the desired shape and size.

In the present age, modern technology is applied for the work of ploughing, threshing, and weeding. In many villages, cows, and mithuns are also used to perform the task of ploughing. Farmers of Mima village hugely depend on the use of power tillers for ploughing both during the dry and the transplantation seasons. The use of power tillers considerably cut the cost of human labor. It is noted that within 2 working hours, power tillers can perform the task of two workers. In comparison with the wages, it is also observed that human labor wages cost more than the charges of the power tillers (Kropole, personal communication, February 25, 2019). In addition, the hikes in wages of human labor also forced farmers prefer the application of technology particularly in terrace cultivation. The low cost and efficiency in production have increased the usage of machines. This could be one reason for the increased demand for the application of technology. Although technology has aided in the process of production, human labor and the use of traditional tools are incorporated into every agricultural activity

In the past, the use of chemicals and fertilizers was non-existent. Ashes collected from the kitchen hearth were used as a solution for controlling the infestations of pests and insects. Based on the discussions with the participants in the research, it has been discovered that during the mature growth stages of cereal crops such as maize, millets, and rice particularly in jhum fields, birds were the main pests causing enormous damage (Vikehele, personal communication, February 25, 2019). The most common method of protection widely employed is putting up scarecrows, especially in the jhum fields. Being an agricultural society, the Angamis also display an ingenious technique of storing their harvests. Rice is stored in *chü* (storage made of bamboo), while other varieties of pulses and rice are stored in earthen pots and *chiünuo* (small-size bamboo baskets).

2.5 Cash Crops:

The Oxford Dictionary defines a cash crop as a crop that is sold for money as opposed to one that is consumed by the producer. It is also called a profit crop or a subsistence crop. In farming communities, the cultivation of cash crops has a significant impact on the economy. The mixed cropping system practiced in the jhum fields enables low-income farmers to produce self-sufficient subsistent crops as well as cash crops. The Angamis are known to have locally produced their food by cultivating varieties of vegetables. The cultivation of crops is based on the suitability of climatic conditions. Farmers cultivate multiple types of crops that have varying periods of maturity which suit their farming and socio-economic environment (Mishra, 2009). The areas inhabited by the Angamis are richly blessed with a decent amount of rainfall and suitable humidity levels which is suitable for the high produce of many market-oriented crops.

The Angami villages situated near urban areas have witnessed a transformation in agricultural production from a subsistence economy to market- oriented cash crop cultivation. This paved the way to the commercialization of agriculture leading to the economic growth in rural areas. Different varieties of cash crops can be grown in most cultivated areas of the Angamis. Rice, cucumber, chilly, pumpkin, potato etc., are some crops that are consumed locally and produced to enhance household income. These crops also fulfill the daily nutritional needs of the people. The cultivation of cash crops is enhanced by identifying the types of crops that would produce better yields. Angami women being trained to produce food from a young age, they possess the ability to understand the different environment needs for the production of a crop (Visetono, personal communication, February 09, 2018). In most farms, quality measures such are strictly maintained which adds value to the produce. This enables the people of different areas to generate steady income and manage their production plans.

Rice, which has served as the staple food continues to remain as the main item in the diet of the Angami people. In a typical Angami household rice is consumed three times a day, during breakfast, lunch, and dinner. As such, the value of rice is Unlike the olden days, the cultivation of rice also has high potential in the household economy. Of all the rice variations cultivated by the Angamis, the rice species of *kemenya* (sticky rice), and *rüluo*, (a type of aromatic rice) have the highest demand in the market. The use of these two types of rice in the brewing of *zutho* (rice beer) is very popular and considered best the quality even in the past. Presently, *kemenya* and *rüluo* are used in the preparation of many local delicacies such as *kemenya niekhrüda* (Sticky rice cake), *nierhüko* (rice puff), etc., which escalated its market values. Many women in rural areas from low-income households depend on the sale of these items prepared in home-based enterprises to boost their income. The sale of these rice products is available in the markets throughout the year.

According to the statistics provided for the year 2022- 2023, it is observed that the production of pineapple was the highest in Dimapur district with a total production of 36000 metric tonnes cultivated against Nagaland's total production of 114238.24 metric tonnes (Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2003). This indicates that the production of pineapple in Dimapur district alone provides 31.51% of the total production of Nagaland. It is also found that Kohima district, out of all the other districts of Nagaland, emerged as the best producer of crops such as capsicum with 35.7 metric tonnes, red chilly with a produce of 480.42 metric tonnes, garlic with 370.26 metric tonnes, green chilly with 4855.8 metric tonnes. Other notable high-yield crop production includes potato, cabbage, tomato, limes, lemons, ginger, cucumber, pumpkin, etc., (Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2023). The high yield of such crops with commercial value has an enormous impact on the household economy of the Angamis. It also reflects the level of impact on the state's gross production value.

Table. 3 Area and Production of Crops for the year 2022-2023 (A= area in hectare, P= production in Metric tonnes). (Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2023, p. 29- 31)

Sl.No	Types of Crops	Area and Production	Kohima	Dimapur	Chümoukedima
1.	Cereals	A	15018	6927	21511
		P	40303	20309	60118
2.	Pulses	A	1662	581	1128
		P	1906	675	1282
3.	Oilseeds	A	1304	1135	2239
		P	1329	1049	2213
4.	Commercial	A	1999	1628	2429
		P	22173	14398	26049

Fig 2

Shifting/ Jhum Cultivation



Fig 3

Terrace Farming



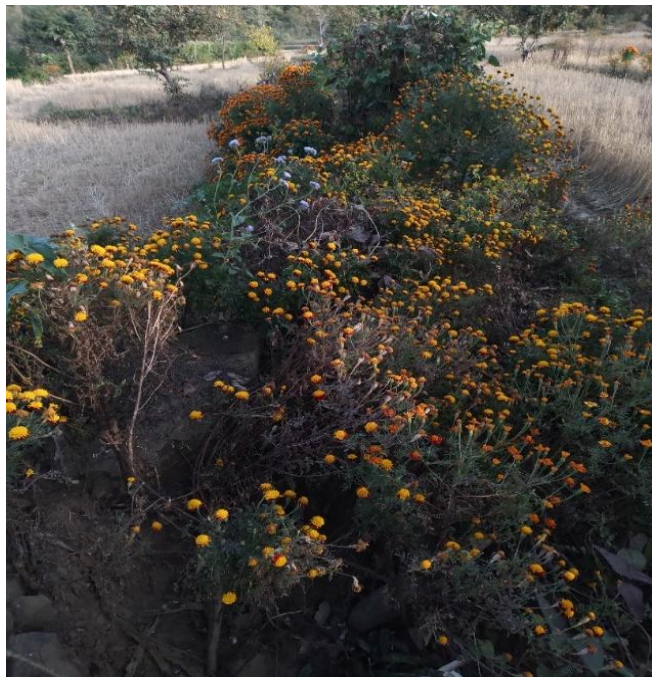
Fig 4

Rüpo (Alnus nepalensis)



Fig 5

Marigold (*Tagetes*) planted in terrace fields



Chapter: 3

Role of Women in the Village Economy

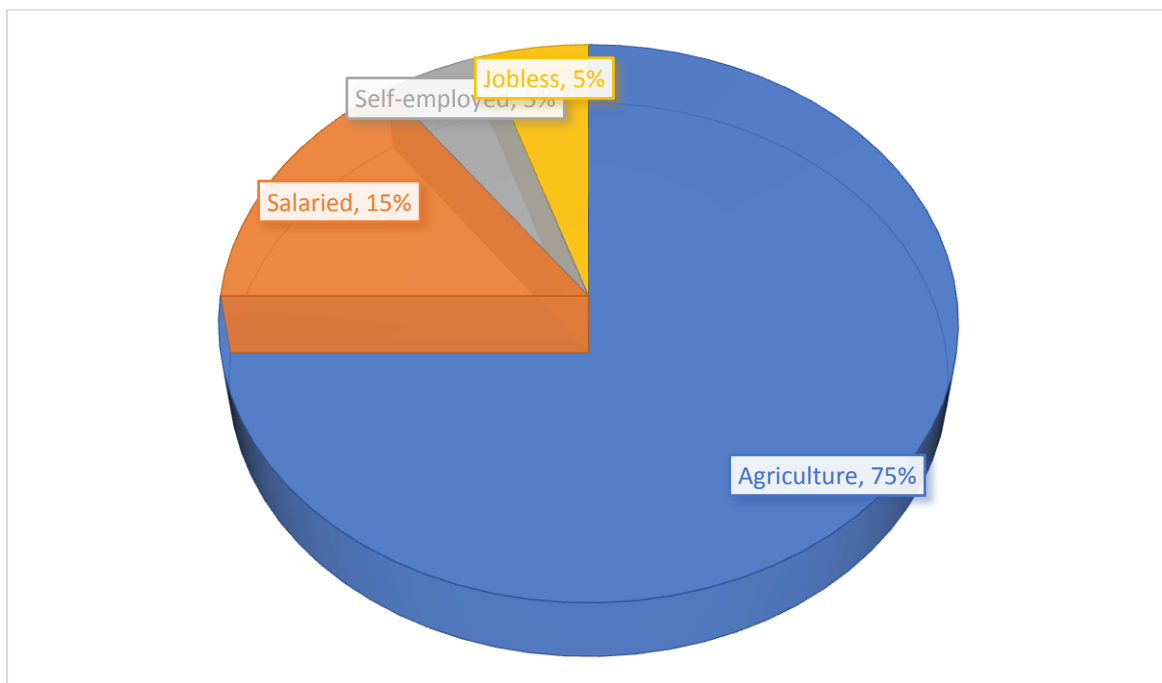
The factors contributing to village economic development have been mainly drawn from theories in regional economics and economic development. Villages are homes for most rural residents and powerhouses of the rural economy, with a vital role in reducing rural-urban disparity. The structure of the village economy of the Angamis is characterized by the process of producing goods through various activities such as agriculture, weaving, poultry farming piggery, etc. Looking into the income generation aspect, an in-depth investigation has been made by assessing the mobility of rural products, entrepreneurship, and bottom-up partnerships to how the rural economy produces agricultural products for urban consumption and how in the process creates income for the rural society. Further, emphasis has been laid on the productive role of women in the upliftment of the household economy through home-based entrepreneurship.

The economy of any human society whether primitive or modern has been sustained and developed with the contribution and support of women. In most of the Angami villages, women emerged as the highest population engaged in agricultural activities. Women being gifted with indigenous knowledge to produce food and clothing for the members of the family and village community exhibit enormous potential for entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is essential to the economic development of any society. Angami women have dominated the organic vegetable markets in urban areas by harnessing the benefits of natural resources. The research explores the driving forces of village economic development which in turn sheds light on strategies to secure rural revitalization. The successful implementation of profitable economic activities such as agricultural and livestock production, handicrafts, and small business establishment through female labor acted as agents of change in the village economy.

3.1 Women in Agriculture:

The influence of gender supremacy is reflected in the preference of the birth of a child, which is usually a male, while the birth of a daughter is received with remarks such as “*chalienuo puo nguliete*”, meaning, addition of a helper in the household (Neizeü, personal communication, March 06, 2019). Such perceptions suggest the notion that by birth women inherits the role of a domestic helper, producer and a caregiver. Angami women from their childhood were being trained or taught to perform agricultural or domestic activities for the welfare of the family. From a young age, girls are taught to perform household chores such as fetching water, carrying firewood, pounding rice, cleaning etc. Whereas there is no obligation of household chores for young boys to perform. Young girls get trained in various agricultural tasks by accompanying their parents to the field.

Fig 6: Female occupational structure in the village



Based on the results of the data gathered during the research, it is found that 75% of the workforce in agricultural pursuits consists of women in the Angami villages (Fig. 6). In the rural agrarian structure, women not only contribute by way of producing food in their

fields but they also form the majority population as paid agricultural workers. In agriculture, women contribute as wage laborers, farmers, co-farmers, and unpaid family laborers (Krishnaraj and Kanchi, 2011). Women are becoming the dominant workers in agriculture leading to the feminization of agriculture in many Angami villages. Feminization of agriculture refers to the rise in female labor force participation and a relative, if not absolute fall in men's employment (Mathew E.T, 2006). This phenomenon is observed with reference to the division of roles between men and women in Angami society where women are naturally entrusted to take the productive role thus, they are more hardworking and are willing to accept low-paid work. One factor that may contribute to the increase of the female labor force in rural areas is the migration of male members to urban areas in search of better-paid jobs. In Angami society, there is very little freedom in the mobility of women due to social constraints and family's dependency on their household roles. As such women are tied to agriculture and small-scale enterprises to meet their needs and earn a livelihood.

Angami women are occupied with agricultural activities all through the year. They spent the majority of their working hours in agriculture. Preparation of seeds and seedbeds, ploughing, transplanting, weeding, and harvesting are the major activities in which women are engaged. The Angamis, like any other agricultural society, have commendable knowledge about the management and preservation of seeds. Seed saving is one of the most crucial and pre-requisite elements in any agricultural society. Every farmer depends on their own saved seeds for cultivation. In Angami society, womenfolk are entrusted with the task of selecting the best plant/ cob/ spike /head according to the crop type before the mass harvest. For seed preservation, farmers gather samples from robust, fat, and disease-free plants.

The most labor-intensive manual operations such as ploughing are mostly performed by women. Although men also contribute to ploughing, their participation can be terminated in the event of getting alternate paid work as such the responsibility of completing the work is

placed on women. With a majority of the household in rural areas practicing both jhum and terrace farming, the work of ploughing is doubled, inferring the huge number of working hours spent on the particular task. Similarly, during the transplantation season female labor is in high demand. Transplantation is the most important agricultural activity as its proper performance ensures the food security of the family. The work of transplantation is done manually and it is physically taxing since workers have to bend and transplant the saplings. While men are believed and accepted to be physically stronger and more zealous, the work of transplantation is seldom performed by them. Women's tolerant nature and acquaintances to such tough situations helped them to effectively work for long hours. The extent of women's participation in the village economic production process will be fairly understood by documenting and meticulously examining the types of work women perform in jhum and terrace farming.

Table 4: Types of Work Performed by Angami Women in Jhum and Terrace Farming.

Sl. No	Jhum	Terrace
1.	Clearing of the field by burning	Clearing of the seedbed,
2.	Collecting the unburnt debris and ploughing	Ploughing the terrace field and seedbed
3.	Soften the soil, collect small branches and twigs to burn along with the soil, and spread out once cooled.	Soften the tilled terrace lands, prepare the seedbed by burning and softening the soil
4.	Sowing of the summer and winter crops	Sowing of seeds in the seedbed
5.	Weeding thrice or four times during the cropping period	Clearing the contours of the terrace, adding manure to the fields
6.	Reaping	Transplanting, weeding
7.	Select seeds	Reaping, winnowing, drying, transporting
8.	Transport the harvest, storing	Select seeds, storing

As presented in Table 4, the multiple activities performed by women in the jhum and terrace fields are reflected. It reveals the smallest detail of agricultural activity that is viable for crop production. By looking into the nature of work and the skills, and patience required to complete these tasks, it can be understood that Angami women by virtue of being a caring entity, has projected the same care to accomplish the agricultural works. It also clearly shows the indispensable contribution of women toward the management of land and productivity.

In every patriarchal society, women have always experienced challenges or mistreatment. In Angami society, traditions and culture support male domination and superiority in all facets of life. Such traditions have an impact on promoting gender-based discrimination in agricultural occupations. There exists a wide disparity in wages between male and female workers. The unequal payment of wages has been an accepted trend, particularly in rural areas. Women agricultural workers continue to receive lower wages than men. There is not a single agricultural activity where women enjoy a higher wage than male workers. The age-old prejudices seem to persist even today in the matter of labor wages. In most villages, female workers population is higher than male workers. As such there is a greater availability of female workers for all types of work throughout the year. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that female labor is exploited and abused. Female workers are paid relatively less than their male counterparts. Although women invest an equal number of working hours for the same nature of work as male workers, they are paid approximately 20% less. For instance, if a male worker is paid Rs 500/- per day for the work of ploughing, a female worker is paid Rs 400/- only, which is 20% less than the wages of their male counterparts. In Angami society, the output of male labor is perceived to be a greater amount than female output, the assumption being manifested on reasons of the dominant physical build of men.

The productivity of Angami women in agriculture is limited due to the lack of access to finance, technology, and training in agricultural practices. Another factor that deters women from utilizing their full potential was the daily workloads entrusted upon them which also demands their time and energy. To ensure economic growth, the issues that hinder the progress of production need to be addressed. One of the biggest threats to the female labor population in agriculture is gender-based discrimination in the Angami society. Promoting equal wages irrespective of gender can elevate the economic standing of women.

Table 5: Distribution of Main Workers by Category According to the 2011 Census
(Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2023)

Sl.No	District	Gender	Cultivator	Agricultural Laborers	Workers in household Industries	Other Workers	Total
1.	Kohima	Male	16525	507	622	43,815	61,525
		Female	21492	404	509	16164	38569
2.	Dimapur	Male	12140	2743	1190	71982	88055
		Female	8451	1763	1148	22941	34303

The data presented in the table indicates a higher female population in the sector of cultivation particularly in Kohima district. This significantly implies that women play a key role in ensuring food and nutrition security of the household and the community as a whole. However, in terms of agricultural laborers and other activities, women's workforce participation is presented at a very low rate. Whereas in agricultural economies, women dominate the production process and constitute the highest labor force which corroborates

with the findings from the surveys conducted by the researcher. It prompts the question of whether women's work has been properly examined. In most of the economic surveys, women's output in the agricultural sector is categorized as a subsistence farmer negating the value of women's labor and its impact on the village economy. Women are typically characterized as economically inactive as they were assumed to be playing the part of the supportive role in agriculture.

3.2 Weaving

Nagas are strikingly known for their colourful traditional attires and costumes which is one of the core identity markers. The practice of weaving was a common feature of all the Naga tribes. The traditional attires are adorned with distinct motifs shows the versatile creativity of womenfolk who are the creators of the unique pieces of cloth. Today, Naga women are keepers and custodians of traditions, as they weave the rich cultural legacy.

Weaving is generally defined as making fabric by crossing threads horizontally and vertically using a loom. Handloom weaving is one of the finest traditional arts of the Angamis. Weaving and spinning were a common household activity for women. The practice and knowledge of weaving have been passed on from generation to generation and serve as a way of preserving one's culture and identity. Weaving serves as a symbol of self-reliance and expression of the rich cultural values. The traditional Angami society was deeply religious, and therefore, each woven cloth embodies diverse meanings attached to the cultural beliefs and ideals of the society. The use of handwoven cloth is a tradition and a way of life. The large variety of traditional cloth pieces reflects the rich material culture of the Angamis. One of the main appeals of the traditional woven cloth of the Angamis is its unique blending of colors in rows and columns and the careful attention given to the smallest detail in each piece. Most of the traditional cloth pieces of the Angamis have intricate designs with tassels on one side and the other side interlaced intricately.

In the traditional Angami society, there is a sharp distinction between gender roles. The hierarchical arrangement in the family placed women in a subordinate position to menfolk. Women were, therefore, assigned the role of taking charge of all domestic and agricultural activities and other vocational activities, such as weaving, which were considered less important to the family's male members. Weaving is an activity that is solely performed by womenfolk in Angami culture. This role may have been entrusted upon women due to the societal beliefs and norms where women have been attributed with the characteristics of a nurturing and caring entity who cater to the needs of the family members. From childhood, women were taught to serve and look after the needs of their family members. As such, women are taught how to weave at a very young age to get trained and acquainted with the strokes and designs. In olden times, when the market of Western clothes was not easily accessible in rural areas, women took upon themselves the responsibility of providing woven clothes to meet the needs of their family members. Women maintain a strong sense of pride that they can provide woven clothes to their family members and extended relatives. Dezole (Personal communication, February 25, 2019) claimed that women spent less time in weaving cloth for themselves; rather, they take priority in the clothing of the male members.

Method of Traditional Cloth weaving of the Angamis

The Angamis were known to have led a sustainable and self-sufficient lifestyle. Every female member of the household has the knowledge to provide for their daily needs, such as food, housing, and clothing. The traditional hand-weaving method has been an integral aspect of the culture of the Angami Nagas. In the olden days, due to the non-availability of modern industrial-produced yarns, weavers had to spin cotton and prepare the thread using traditional wooden and bamboo tools. Cotton crops are grown locally for personal use. In preparing the thread, cotton is picked and collected and slowly and carefully rolled into a single thread

using a small wooden stick to wrap it. A weaver generally takes five days minimum to prepare the thread. To achieve a different shade of thread colors, naturally processed dyes made from the bark of trees, roots, fruits, and leaves are applied to the thread. Crushed gooseberries are steeped in water and left for at least five days. To get a dark greyish/black color, the cotton thread would be soaked in this water. Additionally, the bark of a tree known locally known as *Seiütha* (*Archidendron Monadelphum*, Fig 8) is extracted and cooked for a few hours. Cotton thread is immersed in this solution which would make the thread turn blackish in color. The thread would be dried in the sun making it ready for use. The use of naturally extracted dyes is more environmentally friendly. The duration of preparing the roll of cotton into a thread depends on the time spent by the weaver. When the thread is ready, it is warped between two sticks placed at a desirable distance from one end to the other in a vertical pattern until the desired size is achieved.

Traditionally, the back strap loom (Fig 20) is the method employed to weave the cloth. This loin loom weaving method uses *Jüdo/ Jüba* (wooden frame, Fig.11) which is made of timber on which a warp beam is held. This holds one end of the warp and is stationery so as to balance weaving. The *jübe* (cloth beam, Fig 15) holds the other end. Threads are warped in alternate patterns on the extra warp beam and *Jürü* (heald stick, Fig 16). *Jübo* (lease rod, Fig 13) is placed in between the extra warp beam and *jürü* separating the two into upper and lower portions, and a *chiepfü* (belt Fig, 14) tied around the weaver's waist, enabling the weaver to control the tension on the warp by leaning backward or forward. In this method, the weavers can also move and carry the loom to any space, allowing them to work indoors and outdoors. Designs and patterns can be incorporated into the fabric as it is woven. The traditional shawls and *chiecha* (mekhela) generally consist of four sides, which are to be woven separately. It is then stitched together manually at the same length, followed

by the tying and interlacing of the unwoven threads at the rear ends, which adds to the beauty of the cloth.

In the present era, the spinning of thread is done more effectively and at a faster pace with the application of simple technology (Fig 18). The use of this machine has effectively decreased the amount of time consumed in spinning. In the traditional method, the spinning of a single roll of thread takes an hour; therefore, it takes at least a day for weavers to get the required amount of thread for warping of one side of the cloth piece. In comparison, weavers can complete the task of spinning and warping one side of cloth within a day. There is also the innovative introduction of a loom that does not require the strap to be tied around the waist of the weaver but is tied to the loom itself (Fig 21). This is stated to relieve the weavers, unlike the back strap loom method. Vakranuo, a 72-year-old woman who is actively weaving expressed that this new loin loom enables her to weave continuously (Personal communication, October 18, 2023). She prefers the use of two-ply textile which is mostly used to weave male cloth pieces.

The Impact of Industrially Produced Yarn on Weaving:

The impact of globalization is visibly felt in the weaving industry, even in rural areas. Modern networks of trade and commerce have changed the production and consumption patterns of woven clothes. Markets are flooded with textiles of different textures, superior quality, and colors, posing a direct threat to locally produced textiles. At the present age, weavers have had the option to choose the type of yarn to be used based on their preferences due to the availability of industrial-produced yarn. The most commonly used types of thread are polyester, thylane, two-ply, and four-ply. There is a higher demand for products made of polyester as it is considered to produce polished and fine cloth. There is a huge selection of colors to enhance the aesthetic aspect of the cloth. The shift from manually prepared yarn to

factory-produced yarn has also changed and affected the production pace of woven clothes. The duration for the preparation of thread is minimal since weavers have the opportunity to get access to industrial textiles. The time invested in the preparation of yarn is minimized, enabling the weavers to complete the production at a faster pace. It is noted that industrial-produced yarns are easier to work with and more durable, enabling the weavers to accelerate the weaving process.

The weaving process has undergone a significant change and development by introducing simple tools to aid the production. However, the traditional method still has a substantial impact on weaving. The weaving process demands enormous time investment and skills as it goes through different stages of thread preparation, warping, designing, and stitching. Each stage needs to be carefully tackled and completed to get good results. The weavers continue to adopt the traditional hand-weaving method as it produces the best quality with smooth weft and fetches a higher price than the factory-produced clothes. However, the pace of production of cloth can be affected and manipulated for those weavers who have other social obligations, particularly those within their household.

Weaving as a Source of Livelihood:

Weaving is emerging as an activity that provides entrepreneurial opportunities for women in rural areas. The demand of the traditional cloth pieces is increasing. In Angami society, gifting of traditional cloth pieces in weddings is considered as a gesture of *therhu* (respect/honor) (Neibuno, personal communication, June 23, 2022). This may be one factor, the weaving enterprise is enabling women to earn a steady income all through the year. The product's pricing depends on the quality, fabric used, complexity of the designs, and patterns on the cloth. It also generates employment in rural sectors and manifests the economic development of rural areas. Older women who are not able to weave can earn by tying the

tassels on the side of the shawls and *chiecha* (mekhela). Tying and interlacing of the tassels for a shawl can generate an amount of Rs 200- Rs 300/- based on the negotiations (Kuolemenuo, personal communication, October 20, 2023). Women not only enjoy the freedom to express their artistry in weaving, but they also view it as an opportunity to earn and contribute to the household economy. It is mentioned that a suit comprising of a shawl and *chiecha* (mekhela) can be woven within 20-25 days enabling weavers to earn an average of Rs 15000/--20000/- per month (Khrievozonuo, personal communication, February 02, 2024). Although hand-woven clothes are not worn daily in the modern age, the demand for these products continues to rise. Beautiful woven motifs, traditional production processes, and philosophical meanings in each woven cloth have become distinguishing features sought by buyers, who use them for fashion collections and investments (Naro, Et. al., 2022). In contrast to the olden times, weavers now earn and derive steady income by selling and marketing their hand-woven clothes. Thus, it has become a sustainable activity in many Angami villages. The knowledge of age-old practices has now garnered tremendous attention and the adoration of the traditional cloth pieces has revived its prestige.

Weaving has become a professional career for many rural women. Young women who have secured good education have shown interest in weaving as a source of earning as the demand is increasing. The income from weaving is dictated by the amount of time invested and utilized to complete it. The young weavers who are more energetic can weave the cloth within short durations of time, thereby enabling them to earn better. It is observed that the age-old tradition and practice allow the weavers to utilize their skills to make a living.

Vizokhole (Personal communication, October 18, 2023) implies that women not only produce the goods, but also enjoy authority in the management of their business by marketing, negotiating, and pricing of the goods. The price variation of different cloth pieces

is determined by the number of designs incorporated, size, and the type of wool used for its weave. It is also observed that male cloth pieces are fetches higher price than those of females due to their bigger size.

Table 6: Price of Different Types of Male Shawls

Sl.No	Type of shawl	Type of wool	Price
1.	<i>Lopa</i>	Polyester	8000
2.	<i>Lopa</i>	Thylane	6000
3.	<i>Lopa</i>	Two-ply	4500
4.	<i>Lohe</i>	Polyester	6000
5.	<i>Lohe</i>	Thylane	5000
6.	<i>Lohe</i>	Two-ply	4500
7.	<i>Pfhese</i>	Polyester	17000

Table 7: Price Variation of Female Shawls

Sl. No	Type of shawl	Type of wool	Prices
1.	<i>Lopa</i>	Polyester	6500
2.	<i>Lopa</i>	Thylane	5000
3.	<i>Lopa</i>	Two-ply	4000
4.	<i>Lohe</i>	Polyester	5000
5.	<i>Lohe</i>	Thylane	4000
6.	<i>Lohe</i>	Two-ply	3500
7.	<i>Pfhemhou</i>	Polyester	6500
8.	<i>Pfhemhou</i>	Thylane	5000
9.	<i>Pfhemhou</i>	Two-ply	4000

Table 8: Price Variation of a Two-piece Set of Female Cloth

Sl.No.	Type of shawl	Type of wool	Price
1.	<i>Pfhemhou</i> / lopa suit	Polyester	14000
2.	<i>Pfhemhou</i> / lopa suit	Thylane	12000
3.	<i>Pfhemhou</i> / lopa suit	Two-ply	11000
4.	<i>Lohe</i> suit	Polyester	9500
5.	<i>Lohe</i> suit	Thylane	8500
6.	<i>Lohe</i> suit	Two-ply	7500

The prices mentioned in the table represent the selling price in retail. The wholesale price may vary depending on the negotiations between the weaver and the dealer. Besides the cited types of shawls, *chiecha* (mekhela) is another item which has high market demand and value. In the past, women wear *chiecha* both as an ordinary piece to be used at home and also as formal wear. The ordinary *chiecha* weaves are incorporated with fewer designs whereas, the formal *chiecha* are woven with the best thread and colors. *Teha*, *bipra*, *biso*, *chiepha*, etc, are some male traditional attires that are small in size but involve meticulous skills to weave.

Since the weaving process involves a lot of concentration, one should have sound health. Many women have expressed their income being affected when they cannot work due to health complications. Another factor that hampers the weavers' ability is the obligation that arises within their household. Women have permanently been assigned the household chores such as cooking, carrying water, cleaning, washing, etc. Therefore, it can be understood that productive ability is primarily affected by those weavers who have no substitute for taking care of the household chores. These issues and problems can be checked with the efforts of the government or the NGOs by arranging collective marketing and trading activities that would enable the weavers to get incentives over some time. This would also enable the

weavers to maintain a production plan and generate and distribute orders. The considerable variation in prices between the machine woven cloth and the handloom threatens the traditional weaving entrepreneurs as they cannot compete with the pace of production. As such, the government can create and set up markets for traditional weavers, promoting the products through exhibitions and connecting the local weavers with international buyers.

3.3 Poultry Farming & Piggery

In earlier times, the circulation of money and cash transactions in business was not popular in rural areas. The use of money is limited; the small businesses that operate in villages use other forms of transactions such as barter. Most of the transactions are done through the exchange of one goods with another or for human labor and service. The knowledge of trade in meat products was not familiar. In rural areas, the sale of meat products daily was almost non-existent. Each household owns and rears poultry, pigs, and cows for their consumption.

“If all activities- such as maintenance of kitchen garden, poultry rearing, grinding food grains, collecting water and firewood, etc. are taken into account, then 88 percent of rural housewives and 66 percent of urban housewives can be considered economically productive” (Tomar, 2011). Livestock rearing and home gardening provide an essential source of income for Angami women. Angami women played a multi-dimensional role in the rural economy by setting up their home-based enterprises. The livelihood systems and food habits of the Angami people evolved around a system of rearing livestock which is part of the local cultural heritage. Agriculture is extensively practiced its produce is mainly focused on feeding the people and its livestock such as pigs, chickens, and cattle. This situation therefore manifested the increased rearing of poultry and pigs at commercial values. In addition, the need to generate income has prompted rural women to use locally available resources to sustain their household economy.

Poultry farming refers to the raising of birds domestically or commercially, for meat and eggs. It is a powerful enterprise impacting the socio-economic and nutritional status of the rural areas. Poultry applies to chicken, turkeys, ducks, geese, swans, guinea, fowl, pings, peafowl, ostrich, pheasants, quails, and other game birds (Banerjee, 1986). Around 80% of the households in rural areas rear poultry particularly local chickens through the traditional production system. Most birds are kept in a free environment with feed generally derived from household waste and crop residues. As observed from the markets, the sale of local chickens is more profitable than other varied chickens reared under a controlled environment. It is noted that the price of local chicken is not measured based on weighing scales of kilograms rather, the maturity of the product is taken under consideration for the pricing of the goods. The local dealers have the independence to decide the rate charges as there are no regulations made by the municipals or traders' organizations in the pricing of these locally produced chickens (Rokoseno, personal communication, March 03, 2020).

In rural areas, farming the kroiler breed of chickens has enabled low-income households to meet the nutrition needs of the family through their meat production. Poultry farming is also very suitable and applicable for Angami women particularly to those who have no land holdings as the rearing of poultry requires minimum land, less capital, and skills for its production. Women in rural areas have initiated small-scale poultry production to increase their income and support their livelihood. The level of impact of women's earnings through poultry farming is calculated based on the unit, price, and number of seasons. It is observed that the number of units preferably reared in one season is 10-15 for chickens and 10-20 for ducks. The majority of the home-based farms rear chickens for two seasons annually, a duration of 4 months for each season.

Table 9: The Types and Price Variation of Poultry Based on Local Market

Sl. No	Type of Poultry	Price per kg/unit	Earning (one season)	Annual earnings (2 seasons)
1.	Local chicken	Rs 1500/- per unit	15x 15= 22500	Rs 45000/-
2.	Kroiler Chicken	Rs 350/- per kg	15x350= 21000	Rs 42000/-
3.	Duck	Rs 450/- per unit	15x450= 6750	Rs 13500/-
4.	Turkey	Rs 600/- per kg	5 x = 15000	Rs 30000/-

Based on the data collected from interviews with small-scale poultry farm owners, the above table (Table 9) is presented to show the average earnings of women in poultry business. It is found that in a span of four months (one season) women can rear atleast 15 chickens (kroiler) which can mature and weigh upto 4 kgs enabling them to earn Rs 21000/-. Similarly, local chicken farms can achieve an earning of Rs 22500/- with the sale of 15 units. The sale of 15 ducks can derive an earning of Rs15000/- in one season, whereas the rearing and sale of turkey at mature age can bring an earning of Rs 15000. Evidently, women who have invested in their business in a full-time basis have made substantial earnings.

Piggery is another vital farming component that plays an important socio-economic role in the livelihood of the Angami tribes. Piggery is an environmentally friendly enterprise and suitable for agricultural societies due to its production of manure for farming. Pig manure is very suitable for terrace farming and also home- gardening. Thus, piggery serves the purpose of fulfilling meat production for consumption and manure for the improvement in agricultural production. A study on the problems and prospects of traditional pig farming in Nagaland shows that the small-scale pig sector has a seemingly greater potential to reduce

poverty (Patr, 2014). Most rural households rear pigs on a small scale in the backyard of their homes for their consumption. In Angami society, it has evolved as a tradition to slaughter pigs during festivals, particularly during *sekrenyi*. It is also a sign of prosperity for a person to own pigs to be slaughtered during such festivals.

According to the consumption patterns and diet of the Nagas in general, pork remains one of the favorites and most sought in the markets. The majority of the people are non-vegetarians and pork has been a central item in many traditional cuisines. As per the information gathered during the study, each household consumes at least 2kg of pork once a week which amounts to 104 kgs annually. As per the data provided in the Nagaland Statistical Handbook, 2023, the meat production for pigs in the state is at 12626.70 ('000mt) in the year 2022- 2023. The total number of pigs slaughtered from the year 2021-2022 is 156799 and from 2022-2023 is 159197. The total number of pigs slaughtered in the state in 3 years is 315996, thus, implying the imbalance between the meat production and consumption patterns. It also indicates that a huge amount of meat production of pigs is being imported into Nagaland from other parts of India. This shows the profitable aspect of the piggery enterprise. As per the observations made in the study area, 70% of the households in the village rear at least one pig for family consumption. Out of which 30% are engaged in piggery for commercial purposes.

Women in rural areas express a greater zeal to commercialize their small-scale piggery and poultry farming with the support of financial assistance by joining Self-help groups. Women from low-income households can support their children's education, and also get access to better health facilities. The earning capabilities have also empowered women to become financially independent which boosts their morale and pride in society.

3.4 Vegetable vendors

The Angamis are quite knowledgeable about what is palatable and nourishing. This knowledge is manifested by the rich biodiversity area they are placed in. The sale of vegetable products was not very common in earlier times due to the absence of good networks of communication and transportation to connect rural farmers with the markets in urban areas. The lack of development in infrastructure has separated rural areas from urban areas. The initiation of women in entrepreneurial avenues differs in the Angami regions. Language barriers and lack of education have severely hindered the business potential of women in many villages, particularly in Southern Angami areas. Due to their prolonged confinement in their homes, the majority of women in rural areas do not have knowledge of other languages than their dialect. Therefore, women were apprehensive to explore the unknown territory and remained complacent within their comfort zones i.e., the village.

The Angamis are well known for their boiled vegetable cuisines. The food culture of the Angamis was simple, yet, it was enriched by varieties of forest produce, herbs, and garden vegetables. Women in groups often venture out into forests to collect edible leaves, mushrooms, herbs, etc., as a part of leisure activity. Maintaining a home garden is also very popular among Angami women. Based on the results of inquiry made regarding the engagement of Angami women in vocational enterprise, it is found that at least 80% of women in rural areas manage a home garden, out of which 45% can grow surplus produce for commercial purposes. However, the business probability of vegetable products was not known. Womenfolk exchange their produce in the form of barter. Now, with the infrastructure improvement, and the rise in demand for organic products, locally-grown vegetables have achieved excellent market value. Forest produce which was considered to have no market value in the past, is gaining demand because of their medicinal value. Forest

produce such as *mezusi* (*Spondias mombin*) has gained market value and demand due to its medicinal properties in controlling sugar levels and diabetes.

The entrepreneurial set-up of women vegetable vendors has been influenced and characterized by a score of predictor variables which are socio-economic in nature and agro-managerial in nature. In places like Khonoma village, garlic is cultivated on a large scale in the terrace fields leading to high-yield production of the crop. This fulfills the correlation of demand and supply between the farmers and the sellers. Women establish business partnerships through direct communication and an effective chain of supply of goods. There is a mutual bond of understanding and trust between growers and the sellers which has positively influenced and improved their enterprises. Without any supervision, women transport their produce to the storage shed, and the sellers would come and collect the goods at their convenience (Thejaseno, personal communication, October 23, 2021). Whereas in towns, vendors have to rise early and wait for goods to be transported where they also have to inspect the goods which consumes a lot of their time. As such a steady flow of capital without restrictions practiced among the Khonoma women can also serve as a model of marketing strategies for women in other Angami villages.

In urban areas, two types of vendors are observed: i) permanent vendors, 2) temporary vendors. Permanent vendors are those who occupy the sheltered structures, for example, Mao Market, whereas the temporary vendors are those who occupy the sideways of roads. Women engaged in the sale of various types of commodities managing from local forest produce, wild animals, livestock and vegetables. Vegetable goods supplied to the vendors are produced from jhum fields, terrace fields and home garden. Based on the season of cultivation, the most common crops locally produced and marketed by women are presented in (Table 10).

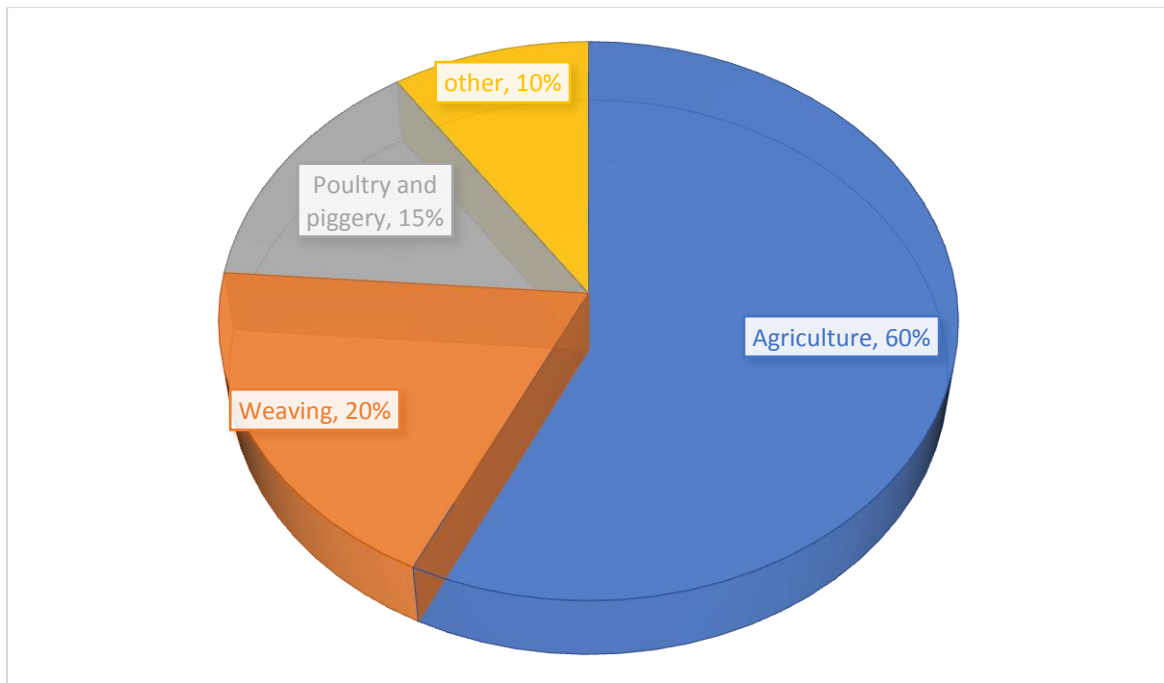
Table 10: Major vegetable crops produced and marketed by women

Sl. No	Season of Cultivation	Name of the crops
1.	June- September	Cucumber, bitter gourd, pumpkin, okra, chilli, jobs tear, small millet, beans, spring onion
2.	October- February	Sweet potato, potato, rice, mung beans, peas, Mustard, cabbage, lettuce, garlic, perilla, pumpkin
3.	February- March	Potato, maize, beans, mustard, cabbage, lettuce, garlic, onion

Based on the data provided in Table10, it is found that the goods dominating the production and supply in the markets comprised of those which are mostly included in the daily dietary habits of the majority of people in urban as well as rural areas.

Today, as we observe the scenario of the marketplaces in urban areas, the majority of the organic vegetable vendors are women. The trade in essential commodities which facilitates the daily economic transactions through the chain supply of goods is managed by women. The most consumed crops are produced and marketed by women in various rural setups. It indicates the important contribution of rural women in reducing hunger and also alleviating poverty by deriving extra income. The results of the study have shown that women in rural areas have been able to sustain their families by providing food, shelter, healthcare, and even support the education of their children.

Fig. 7. Women's Economic Impact on Household



In the Angami villages, out of the 75% of the female workforce in agriculture, 15 % are subsistence farmers while 60% work both as family labor and commercial farmers. The female labor demand is highest during the sowing, transplanting, weeding, and harvesting seasons. The number of activities women are involved in agriculture indicates that rural household economy is largely supported by women. Women oversees the agricultural activities all-round the year and, therefore, they are responsible for the village economy (Vitso, 2003). In rural areas, agriculture is the dominant occupation of the female population among the Angamis. Livestock rearing and home gardening provide an essential source of income for Angami women. According to the statistics provided in the chart, at least 5 % of rural women earn their livelihood by engaging in animal husbandry and maintaining a home garden.

Looking into the role of women in the economy, the study shows amazing and impressive knowledge and skills possessed by women which are essential for sustainable development. In fact, the study reveals a very dynamic aspect of the Angami women's socio-

economic life which is generally overlooked. The experiences of women in entrepreneurship varied in different Angami areas. During a personal interview conducted with Kereivile of Kidima Village of Southern Angami area, it was mentioned that her first business startup was the sale of *zu* (local rice beer) which was sold at 25 paise- per cup. Kidima village is situated at a far distance from the state's capital and lack infrastructural development such as roads for decades, thus it limited the entrepreneurial prospects. Whereas, women from Chakhro areas have early engagement with trade and commerce. Women from Medziphema and Rüzaphema village under Chakhro Angami area, were successfully conducting trade in pineapple. Lorheno cited that at a young age she started selling pineapples at 50-65 paise during the 1970's. She also mentions that in the year 1983 she profited Rs 40000/- and continued her business till marriage.

Types of Trees, Creepers, Fruits used for Dyeing the Thread: (Fig 8- 10)

Fig 8

Seütha (Archidendron Monadelphum)

Tree



Bark

Fig 9

Khuiimhelü, (Rubia Sikkimensis Kurz)

Creeper



Roots

Fig 10

Gooseberry, (*Phyllanthus Emblica*)

Tree



Fruit

Traditional Weaving Implements and Tools: (Fig 11- 16)

Fig 11

Jüdo/Jüba (Wooden frame)



Fig 12

Jükrie (Beating sword)



Fig 13

Jübo (Lease rod)



Fig 14

Chiepfü (Belt)



Fig 15

Jübe (Cloth Beams)



Fig 16

Jürü/ Jünyü (Heald stick)



Methods of Weaving: (Fig 17- 21)

Fig 17

Traditional method of spinning yarn



Fig 18

Simple Machine for spinning yarn



Fig 19

Warping of thread



Fig 20

Backstrap Loom



Fig 21

Weave attached to the Loom



Chapter 4

Status of Women

The role of women is prominent in the process of reproduction, which contains biological, material, and cultural aspects. The physiological fact of female reproductive capacity has been culturally translated into primary responsibility for socialization, family, culture, and tradition (Sen, 2007). Women were stereotyped and restricted to the status of a reproductive role. This notion has reduced the accessibility of women to resources that could eventually enhance their social and economic position in society. Those societies bound by age-old traditions and beliefs face serious constraints that militate against the promotion of an effective role for women in development. There is no equitable sharing of status among members of a family; status inequality between man and woman is acquired through patriarchy and institutions such as division of labor, marriage, dowry, inheritance, and subordination are gendered (Bodra, 2008)

Angami women have always put the needs of the family or community first as they are taught and guided to render their support towards taking care of their siblings and the older members of their family. The idea of Angami women enjoying a privilege and equal position as men is often expressed in society. However, in reality, women are subjugated and controlled by men in every aspect of life. In patriarchal societies, women undertake the daunting task of looking after the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of their families. When a girl child attains the age of 8-9 years, it is expected of her to help in basic domestic activities such as carrying water and firewood and taking charge of nursing their siblings in the absence of their parents. And as she attained the age of 13-14 years, the child ultimately began to accompany her parents to the fields not as an agricultural laborer, but as a caretaker whilst also being trained in different agricultural activities.

4.1 Land Ownership and Inheritance Rights

Land is a critical asset for agricultural production, yet women often face significant barriers to land ownership and control. The subordinate position of Angami women is visibly understood through the land ownership system and inheritance rights practiced by the Angamis. In patriarchal societies such as the Angamis, cultural norms prioritize male inheritance and ownership. The laws and conventions, which have their roots in religious law, are implicitly biased against women's roles and status (Khala, 2012). According to Angami tradition, the land belongs to the clan, and the males have the exclusive right to inherit and determine their line of succession (Pienyü, 2017). Every male member of a family gets access to land through inheritance. In Angami society, women are not given due recognition or included in the distribution of land. Women are not given any share in the immovable properties of their parents. All the landed properties are divided among the male members of the family. In rare cases, a rich father may want to offer his daughter some lands, in such a situation; lands purchased by the father are given. However, ancestral lands are not permitted to be gifted to women. Unmarried women are allowed to cultivate ancestral lands, but they do not have ownership rights over those lands.

The meager property that is bestowed upon her is the moveable objects which are gifted to her during marriage. Household items such as baskets, utensils, jewelry and traditional cloth are the most common items gifted to women. Amongst the items, *Kelo The* (Walking Stick) is a priced item for a woman to carry to her husband's house. This article, made of iron, is a gift by a rich parent to the daughter to serve as her walking stick (SAWO *Pfhemenei Leshüda*, 2022). Such traditions exhibit and reflect the socio-economic and cultural identity of the people. Other priced items for women include *Khosie/Khoshe/Khola* (woven baskets made of fine polished bamboo splits and cane) which is considered one of the

finest baskets is often gifted to a girl by her parents before marriage or by her beloved as a sign of his love and affection.

4.2 Marriage

In Angami culture, marriage is a very sacred union between a man and a woman, confirmed by the rituals and ceremonies accompanying it. It is forbidden to establish marital relationships between members of the same clan bearing the same surname which shows the exogamous nature of the society. “In Angami society, marriage is not permitted within the prohibited degrees of relationship based on consanguinity... marriage among close relatives especially kins and same clan is prohibited” (Lasuh, Ed, 2020, p. 42). Marriage rituals and ceremonies are conducted based on customary laws and religious beliefs. According to Angami tradition, girls keep their heads shaved before marriage. This tradition is followed to exhibit the characteristics of innocence and purity of a child. A woman has to earn the right and privilege to keep long hair only through marriage. It is common for Angami women to get married at an early age. Women being endowed with the role of a reproductive entity are encouraged to enter into marriage whilst they are young and fertile. It is generally accepted and believed that the ideal age for marriage for girls is 18 – 30 years.

A unique practice could be discerned in the marriage custom among the Angami people. Those women who are unable to find a compatible partner would resort to fulfilling the marriage rituals with the *kharu* (Village gate). This is done to acknowledge the woman to a married status thereby meeting the required standards set to keep her hair long. This practice also reflects the social milieu where unmarried women were looked down upon and caused scandal in society and, in fact, a disgrace to the family. In the past, women do not enjoy the right to choose their husbands. In some cases, women were not even consulted or informed about the fixation of marriage for them (Vinguü, personal communication, March

06, 2019). It seems unimportant and irrelevant to listen to or enquire about their opinions. The elderly womenfolk in the village take an active role in corresponding with the different families whose children have attained the appropriate age for marriage. More than 90% of marriages take place through arrangement. Nonetheless, women take pride in the privilege of keeping long hair.

Instances of women having a child out of wedlock are also prevalent in the society. In such cases, the pregnant woman has to spend a night at her partner's house to fulfill the act of marriage thereby purifying her body which is believed to be defiled. By the end of each year, before the commencement of the *Sekrenyi* festival and men's sports such as *kene* (wrestling), the *Seikriiu* would inform all the womenfolk in the village to identify their status of chastity. This announcement is received with great respect by womenfolk and they are subjected to obedience in fear of invoking bad omen towards one's fate and the entire village community. Those women who could not identify the father of their child were chased out of the village boundary and were not allowed to come till the rituals of the festivals were completed. Such women would receive disdainful scorn and contempt from the entire village community (Pelhouviü, personal communication, March 06, 2019). Their image in the family and society would remain tarnished due to this one single act. It is unfortunate for the child as well because such children are often faced with rejection and discrimination in society.

In the past, marriage between members of different villages is quite unheard of. Inter-marriage between different villages may have been avoided due to the fear of mistreatment from the spouse's family. Moreover, the frequent occurrences of raids and enmity between different village communities have affected forging a path to establish friendly connections such as marriage. In recent times, inter-marriage has become a normal tradition. The peaceful relationship among the different villages, the advent of modern

civilization, the exposure of people to different cultures, and the new set of values and ideals brought into the society have helped in building ties through marriage.

In the traditional Angami society, married women who gave birth to more children were appreciated, and those who were able to give birth to sons were praised and given more affection as well as recognition. The idea of family planning was obscure. Women were expected to bear a child as soon as they got married. If any woman is unable to produce offspring, her fertility is questioned and judgements are placed on her past. Married women who were not fortunate in childbearing were considered failures as a woman and as a wife (Yano & Pande, 2012). Although infertility affects both men and women, in Angami society women are held responsible due to ignorance of the people and lack of knowledge about physiological and scientific factors that regulate the child-bearing process. The stigma and guilt imposed on women have led many women to suffer from low self-esteem and severe mental illness. It is also undeniable that the insecurity posed by the inheritance of one's property has aggravated the unfair treatment of women. The inability to conceive has scarred the image of many women whose husbands chose to divorce them with the intent to remarry. The continuation of one's lineage and legacy occupy a central place in reflecting masculinity as well as the status of the male members of society. In Angami society, the female line of succession is not recognized. This factor may have been attributed to the extreme preference of male members to have offspring in a patriarchal society. It may also have been a considering factor for male members to divorce and remarry.

In patriarchal societies, violence and discrimination against women are deeply rooted in the power imbalance between men and women. The dominant role expectation of married women is to serve their husbands and raise children which negate the value of women as individuals. Under the control of such strict and vicious environment, it is challenging for women to acknowledge their self-worth and their identity as an individual.

4.3 Taboo

Taboos are deeply rooted in all the activities in the social, economic, and political aspects of the Angami society. It occupies a central position in dictating social behavior. For the Angamis, the word “*Kenyü*” (Forbidden) invokes a strong sense of fear and it regulates an individual’s action in the family as well as in the society. Taboos are orally transmitted and passed through generations in social gatherings or as part of family discussions. In the past, taboos served to shield women from being defiled while they performed sacred rites for their families, communities, and villages (Pienyü, 2017). Women observe multiple taboos in social and religious aspects. The taboos associated with the social, and religious aspects of women's code of conduct give a relative view on the status of women in Angami society.

Taboos served as a way of maintaining a sense of law and order in society. In Angami society, there is a strong reverence for supernatural influences and beliefs in almost all activities, whether in agriculture, domestic, or other vocational fields. There is a deep sensation of fear in invoking evil luck towards one’s destiny. Womenfolk are expected to carefully examine and follow the right course of action in all facets of life. Some taboos observed by women in weaving and other social aspects are mentioned below.

- i) It is forbidden to feed or nurse a child while sitting on the weaver's seat.
- ii) The food consumed by the weaver whilst sitting on the weaver's seat should not be served to the male members.
- iii) A weave not completed before the *Sekrenyi* festival should not be kept inside the village boundary. The unfinished looms must be kept outside of the village gate till the rituals of the festival are fulfilled.
- iv) Weaving is not allowed on the day of *Kene* (wrestling).

An in-depth observation and critical analysis are essential to understanding the implications of different taboos imposed on Angami women. Although women manage to meet the basic requirements of clothing for family members through weaving, the taboos associated to the implements and tools of weaving reflect the physical and psychological subordination of women. Kereivile (Personal communication, January 16, 2019) states that it is forbidden for male members to touch the tools and implements of weaving as it is believed that they would not be able to defeat their opponents in sports and also not fare well in *Chüwhuo/ nhariüwhuo* (hunting), the irony lies in the fact that the cloth that they wore and the belt that bind their abdomen during *kene* (wrestling) have been produced through these weaving implements. Thus, suggesting the weaker and inferior nature of the roles that are associated with women. Women were forbidden to wash their hair or draw water from the well before the *Kenemiako* (Wrestlers) departed from the village. While women religiously control their actions by preventing themselves from committing any wrongdoing, they are not the beneficiaries of the results of their righteous deeds. Most of these taboos are observed for the benefit of the male members of the family and the village community.

Role of Women in Society

The traditional gender ideologies lie in this concept of the weak and strong which manifests in the formulation and perpetuation of masculine power. In the history of patriarchal society, leadership and politics were masculine endeavors. Women are marginalized in decision-making and leadership in the public arena because girls, in contrast to boys, are socialized to play passive roles and given little opportunity to make decisions or develop leadership skills outside the family context. In most patriarchal societies such as the Angami society, from birth women are kept within the confines of the household and family where they are protected and taught to accept the decisions of their parents and brothers on their behalf.

There is no representation of the self or individual by women in every facet of life. In a patriarchal society, women rarely take part in the political and judicial matters of the village (Sindhu, 2008). As stated by Lekhonuo (Personal conversation, 03-10-2019) the participation of women in the decision-making process is very low because women were rarely invited to the Village Council meetings. Similar responses were found in most villages, women expressed that they were invited during council meetings to render their service in managing the food preparation for the other members rather than to take an active part in the discussion of matters on the village welfare.

The male domination in decision-making is extremely strong to the extent that even in the exercise of franchise women are subjected to obey and follow the choice of the male head of the family (Aliva, 2006). Angami women are submissive in nature and give utmost respect to the male members of the family and society. As such, the decision made by the head of the family is always respected and obeyed. Women were not permitted to participate in the election of elders or chiefs or the decision-making process. Even in gatherings intended for the election of elders and chiefs, women were barred (Pienyü, 2017). The Angami society is highly patriarchal. It is the male members who are attributed with the status of being the head of the family. Women were never considered capable of leading the family and therefore, women were never allowed to make decisions on behalf of their family even on the death of their husbands. Women were projected to be innately unfit to inherit freedom and independence.

The role of women in society saw a period of transformation post India's independence. A war-like situation engulfed in various parts of Nagaland caused by a conflict between armed forces and insurgents. In many villages the male members were refrained from going out of their villages by the armed forces, as such, women had to travel to collect information and also to communicate with the neighboring villages. Women leaders acted as

mediators between the insurgents and the armed forces during the conflict between these two forces. As mentioned by Medokhrienuo (Personal communication, March 22, 2019), women were even imprisoned because of their involvement in the conflict as they were suspected to be leaking information. In some villages like Mima, women leaders take the initiative of collecting supplies for the armed forces during their routine or surprise inspection of the villages. As male members were not allowed to go out of their homes, the priorities increased as they had to shoulder the responsibility of being the bread winner of the family as well as the peace maker in the village (Senuo, personal communication, May 24, 2023).

Khala has observed and recorded the experiences of *Sumi* women who were also caught up in a similar situation. She mentions that women provided food and shelter to insurgents, either from fear or sympathy. Some women were even forced to carry food and other materials for the insurgents and act as mediators under compulsion. Further, during search operations undertaken by the armed forces, women have been blamed and punished for giving shelter to insurgents (Khala, 2012). Although both men and women face violence and discrimination at the hands of the oppressor, men emerge as heroes and martyrs while women who suffered for their involvement in conflicts became objects of shame within their homes and communities. The traditional society deeply rooted in male hegemony fails to recognize the roles played by women. Angami women's notable involvement in the conflict situation would not have been properly accorded without the narratives of women.

Women's organizations or society exists in every Angami village. These bodies have social and political roles in the village. In the present day, the function and role of women's organizations are extremely limited. Angami women are still trapped in the traditional norms of unequal power relations. In a society where there is no support for female leadership the aspirations of women in politics are being questioned. Although these bodies were recognized in the Village Council, their significance and impact on law and order is narrow.

There are no women representations in the Village Council or Panchayat bodies till today. The exclusion of women from decision-making bodies and leadership which continues till today is being perpetuated through customary practices and laws.

Despite the hurdles and challenges posed toward women's active participation in law-making bodies, for the first time, after 60 years of statehood, Nagaland got its first two women Members of Legislative Assembly, with Hekani Jakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse winning from the Dimapur-III and Western Angami, respectively in the 2023 general election. Their victory marks a breakthrough in the male dominated realm of politics. It also proved that the potential of women goes beyond the traditional roles imposed on women. The achievements of these courageous women have inspired, and will continue to motivate the present generations for their commendable feat conquered by breaking the barriers of male hegemony.

Chapter 5

Changing Position of Women

5.1 Impact of Education:

In the pre-colonial era, the mode of education was informal and mostly transmitted orally in social institutions such as the *tehuba/kichüki*. In the traditional Angami society, the *Kichüki* (Dormitory for boys) served as a formal institution for imparting the knowledge of traditional values and beliefs among the male population of the village. Women were not included in the participation in such places. Girls receive their education at home, where their mothers are tasked with instilling in them the virtues and characteristics of femininity. In the past, cultural values, ethos, and beliefs were passed on orally through meeting physically which strengthened the bond between family members and fostered a sense of community feeling. The kitchen is an important place of interaction among family members, well-wishers, and guests. It serves as a place for parents to educate their children on lessons of social etiquette, taboos, and cultural values (Yakhrienuo, personal communication, October 24, 2021).

Education plays a vital role in bringing progressive change in society. While education is being credited for elevating the position of women, it is an undeniable fact that Angami women were not given equal privilege with their male counterparts in getting access to education. Women's limited access to education is a result of social attitudes, beliefs, and conventions (Sabbana, 2007). Due to the scarcity of resources, women getting an education are perceived to be a waste of resources because they are not permanent members of the family. As stated by Neisanu, (Personal communication, March 13, 2019) women were not allowed to attend school due to the inability of the parents to afford education for all of the children, thus, choosing the male child to go to school. This indicates that even in the field of education, societal norms dictate the fate of women by deciding who is fit to enjoy this privilege. It is strongly believed that women's education could undermine the social order

and divert attention from power dynamics in a patriarchal society. More importantly, the education of women is perceived to be a waste of time and money since they are not permanent members of the family.

Besides the financial barriers, the strict division of roles based on gender in Angami society has also directly caused problems in women's access to education. The implementation of household responsibilities on women at a very young age has caused impediments in the acquisition of education. In Angami society, young girls are burdened with the task of household chores and taking care of their siblings, while boys of the same age are out playing or taking part in the *kichiiki*. Women who expressed enthusiasm to go to school were reprimanded for having such unworthy thoughts (Seyieneino, personal communication, October 24, 2021). Such treatment has strongly overpowered the psychological where later in their lives, women do not feel the need to secure education. Significantly, the emphasis on gender roles has created discrimination and setbacks toward women's education.

The introduction of Christianity has brought tremendous changes in the social, and religious life of the Angamis. However, education among Angami women was slow and limited to the urban upper strata of society. Women from rural areas were given the choice to attend night schools. Though it was an informal way of imparting education, it enabled women from low-income backgrounds to get access to education (Vichü-ü, personal communication, January 28, 2019). Subsequently, as time progressed, women were offered the opportunity of formal education. Education played a vital role in empowering women in Angami society. It promotes social mobility and economic stability. Education equips Angami women with confidence and independence which was not known to them in the past. As expressed by Abeiü (personal communication, January 15, 2019), women have become better performers in all aspects of life, particularly in the field of academics.

The advent of urbanization and industrialization has changed the pattern of education, communication, and social interactions (Pienyü, 2017). The position of women has changed drastically in recent times. The cause of this change can also be attributed to factors such as the availability of opportunities for women in education. Women were deprived of receiving education at par with their male counterparts, yet, they had to compete on the same level in all fields of academics and job opportunities without getting any form of concession. The most prominent impact of education on the lives of women was that it has equipped them with the knowledge of venturing out of their domestic confinement and getting engaged in unconventional activities.

Discrimination based on gender is still prevalent in Angami society. Women are not given equal opportunities to attend the schools of their choice. In fact, in low-income households in rural areas, the majority of children who were never enrolled in schools are girls. The concept of education for all, irrespective of gender is true on the outer aspect of access to schooling. However, this becomes debatable when we further examine the access and opportunity to quality education in rural areas. Even today, girls are preferred to be sent to government schools because of low cost and easy accessibility in rural areas.

Table 11: District Level Wise Enrollment in Government schools

Sl. No	District	Pre- Primary (PP)		Primary (Classes I-V)		Upper Primary (Classes VI- VIII)		Secondary (Classes IX- X)		Hr. Sec (Classes XI-XII)	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1.	Dimapur	5959	5814	9245	9839	3905	5056	1520	2223	533	678
2.	Kohima	1018	995	2141	2425	1441	1898	899	1152	646	764

Table 10 shows the number of enrollment of boys and girls in government schools of Kohima and Dimapur districts. From the data, it is clearly indicated that the enrollment of girls in government schools is higher than boys from Primary level (Class I) till Secondary Level (Class XII). The findings of this data can form a basis to support the prevalence of gender preference in the enrollment of girls to the government educational institutions.

5.2 Self-Help Groups and Their Impact on Village Economy

It is estimated that Nagaland has a total of 12,424 Self Help Groups (SHGs). The establishment of semi-governmental institutions such as Self-help groups in rural areas has had a profound impact on the individual lives of women as well as on the family. The Self-Help Groups are voluntary associations of persons formed by 10-20 members (women), intending to pursue effective action and achieve common goals (Mishra, 2014). In almost all of the Angami villages SHGs were established to support women in setting up small businesses, thereby, allowing them a platform to make decisions independently and improve their living standards. Women in rural areas have little to no knowledge of market loans, therefore, the introduction of such a network of financial assistance has created awareness of the opportunities that are beneficial for women. The role of Self- Help Groups (SHGs) has a positive impact on the upliftment of women's status as well as in the household economy. Any member of the group can get access to financial assistance in the form of loans and collective economic activities.

With a mission to eradicate poverty in a time-bound manner, the Ministry of Rural Development of India launched National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in 2011 by restructuring Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). NRLM works towards achieving universal financial inclusion of all the poor households which are organized into SHGs. NRLM works on both demand and supply sides of financial inclusion. On the demand

side, it promotes financial literacy among the poor and provides catalytic capital to the SHGs and their federations. On the supply side, NRLM coordinates with the financial sector to deliver credit and related services to SHGs and their federations (A Handbook on SHG- Bank Linkage, 2017).

The Organizational Structure

The SHGs are supervised at the Block level according to the administrative circle division. It is headed by the Block Program Manager (BPM), assisted by the Manager, and a Block Level Federation comprising the elected representatives from the SHGs. For effective communication and functioning, 2 members from each village-level Organization (VLO) are sent as representatives to the Block Level. At the Block Level, monthly or weekly meetings are conducted whereby the VLO representatives are required to attend. In view of gaining greater participation, the travel expenses for each meeting are covered by the Block Level and a stipend of Rs 300 in the form of a sitting fee is allocated to those who attended. At the village level, the SHGs are managed by the village-level organization consisting of five executive members. Villages with a larger number of SHGs are allowed to set up 2 VLOs.

All the funds are forwarded to the VLO of each village whose responsibility is to distribute the funds to the SHGs under its supervision. The role and function of the VLO are crucial as they control and allow the funds to the members. The criteria for the formation of new SHGs are based on the number of members available to enroll in a group. At least 7-8 members are required to set up as a group. At the village level, the SHGs hold meetings according to their convenience. The active groups organize monthly meetings to assess their progress and also to discuss matters of communal significance and common funds (Joshi and Rao). As informed by (Dzüthoneinu, personal communication, January 16, 2019) reports on

financial status are given during such meetings, enabling the group members to devise year plans and policies accordingly.

Types of financial assistance

The SHG-Bank Linkage Programme is the key strategy for delivering financial services to the poor in a sustainable manner. SHGs facilitate women's empowerment through credit-based financial aid, training, and addressing gender as well as societal issues (Joshi and Rao, 2017). The funds are equally distributed to each VLO irrespective of the size of the members. Each member of SHGs has the privilege and access to secure loans on their behalf, and the husband or family members can also avail loans on behalf of the registered SHG member (Neilakuonuo, personal communication, May 26, 2024). This policy has enabled many unemployed youths to secure loans and start their entrepreneurship. Loans are allocated according to the types of enterprise (Table 1). The interest rate of all the loans is set at the same grade at the Block Level and is set at Rs 9/- per Rs 1000/-. There is availability of insurance for certain types of loans. For example, loans extended for piggery are insured with Rs 20,000/- if the pigs bought through this fund and reared for more than six months have succumbed to the attack of any diseases.

Table: 12 Types of Loan Enterprises and Amount Allocated.

Sl. No	Types of Loans	Amount	Duration	No. of Beneficiaries
1.	Poultry	1 Lakh	1 year	Limited
2.	Piggery	1 Lakh	1 year	Limited
3.	Mushroom Cultivation	70,000	1 Year	Unlimited
4.	Shopkeepers and other Business	3-4 Lakh	4 Years	Limited

Apart from money loans, the VLOs are also allocated with a Relief Fund of Rs 1 Lakh. This Fund is directed to assist low-income families in need of financial support for the education of their children and for old-aged members of the village. The fund is distributed by identifying the suitable beneficiaries. The interest rate for the loan money under this fund is set by the VLOs and is usually fixed at a lower value.

Table: 13 Goods and Supplies donated to the VLOs.

Sl.No	Name of the Goods and Supplies
1.	Power Tiller
2.	Motor Pump
3.	Grinding Machine
4.	Mini Fridge
5.	Cooking Utensils
6.	Weighing machine
7.	Plastic Chairs
8.	Steel Almirah
9.	Plastic Containers
10	Computer

Besides the provision of financial assistance, the VLOs also receive donations in the form of goods and supplies. The objective of supplying these items is aimed at helping the village community. Members of the community can avail of these items on a rental basis at lower rates. An amount of Rs 20,000/- as funds available for the members of the SHGs on their demise.

Under the VLOs, few women members also get the opportunity to work and get monthly salaries. The Master Bookkeeper keeps a record of all the activities of the SHGs under a VLO and receives a monthly salary of Rs 3,000/- leading to an earning of Rs 36,000/- annually. The Village Facilitator is paid Rs 3,000/- per month, leading to an annual income of Rs 36,000/-. Two salaried members are works as Community Service Providers (CSPs) – i) In charge of Animal Husbandry ii) In charge of Agriculture, both earning Rs 2,500/- per month and an annual income of Rs 30,000/- respectively. The employment of SHG members enhances the living conditions of young mothers who have secured partial education having no other means of income. It also provides an opportunity for women to expand their knowledge and experience in commerce and banking.

The greater impact of the SHGs in the village community is noticeable in its new policies aimed at providing skill-based training to the dropout students and educated unemployed youth in the fields of airlines, hotel management, carpentry, electrical management, etc., (Thejaseno, personal communication, October 23, 2021). By tapping into the development of human resources and its potential, the impact of SHGs is not limited to the empowerment of women but it reaches out to the entire village community. Plans are also focused on the weaving industry and women's health.

The formation of SHGs not only provides access to financial assistance but also motivates women to uplift their economic position in society. Joshi and Rao, have observed that women involved in SHGs are more likely to engage and be involved in societal gatherings, and decision-making and are conscious of the various social and economic matters (Joshi and Rao, 2017). Through their monthly interactions, women get the opportunity to share their innovative ideas, design plans, and policies, and also boost their self-esteem. Women representing at the Block Level get opportunities to attend collaborative seminars and workshops in different states as part of exposure trips. Such programs have

enabled them to observe different cultures and initiate new business modules that would be beneficial for their community. In low-income households, the living conditions have been improved with better nutrition, education, and health.

Results of a survey conducted in Mima Village reveals that in the year 2022, 3 SHGs members were able to successfully set up grocery shops in the village, 1 member set up a clothing shop in Kohima. In the year 2023, 4 members provided school fees for their children. Also in the year 2024, 2 members extended loans to an unemployed youth for the purchase of commercial car, 3 members started mushroom cultivation through the access of financial loans from SHGs. Similar results were observed in other villages such as Mezoma, where SHGs members have availed loans for setting up small scale businesses such as piggery and poultry.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Discussion

The Angami society, like any other tribal society, is dependent upon land and livestock rearing. Agriculture is the backbone of the village economy, and land is the most important asset. The wealth of a person is measured by the number of cultivable lands a person owns. The cultivation of rice was the main occupation of the people. Besides agriculture, poultry rearing, piggery, and cattle rearing were some activities engaged by the people which also serves as the main source of nutrition, and food for the people. The economy of the village was sustained with the production of variety of crops from the practice of jhum and terrace cultivation. The indigenous knowledge and technology in making agricultural tools, balancing soil fertility, protection of crops, and seed preservation incorporated in the production process have enabled the Angamis to become self-sufficient. In the Angami society, women play a multifarious socio-economic role both inside and outside of their homes. Women are one of the most productive populations in Angami village economy. Almost all religious and agricultural activities revolved around them.

The status of *liedepfü* (the first reaper) is ordained upon a virtuous and trustworthy woman and her role in agriculture is very crucial. Similarly, the religious ritual of *kizhie/kidie* is performed by women. However, Angami women were always considered as the inferior gender. Gender subalternity is apparent in Angami society. Drawing a co-relation between the role of the *liedepfü* (the first reaper) to that of the role of women in society, it clearly shows how belief become a reality. *Liedepfü* symbolizes fertility and the multiplication of one's wealth. This belief in the role of the priestess may have been a powerful influence in the traditional society and was reflected upon all women as the income generator. Though no

role in the decision-making and other administrative activities, yet a significant role is given in the economic production. Therefore, among the Angami people, the analysis shows that in the nature of work distribution in income generation, women outnumber the male members and as such women may be considered as the backbone of the economy.

Throughout history, the status of Angami women in the family and society is defined by the patriarchal values of male domination. The gender roles followed in Angami society have put women in an inferior position to men. In Angami society women were marginalized and their labor unrecognized. Household chores and agricultural work were considered to be the domain of women, while men were given the role of protecting the family and the village community. There is a competitive spirit among the people to fulfill the agricultural activities in each season. It is considered shameful to delay the agricultural task. As mentioned by Kereivile (personal communication, January 16, 2019), women were labelled as lazy and would be held accountable for incomplete work. Therefore, it suggests that work load between men and women comparatively lie in the ratio of 1:3. As such, women work harder to preserve their reputations by conforming to social standards and expectations placed upon them. However, the contribution of women in providing food, clothing and nutrition to the family was devalued. The gender conception of men working outside and women works within the four walls of their house does not form a valid concept as far as the Angami women are concerned.

In every patriarchal society, traditions and culture support male domination and superiority in all facets of life. In terms of labor wages Angami women face discrimination by getting paid lesser than their male counterparts. Despite the equal amount of working hours contributed by men and women for the same work, women were paid 20% lesser in all agricultural activities. In Angami society, the output of male labor is perceived to be a greater amount than female, the assumption being manifested on reasons of the physical build of

men. In rural areas female labor is available all through the year, this may be one factor which is contributing to the exploitation of the female workforce. The backwardness of women and her inferior status can be looked into from the lens of society's denial to recognize women's potentialities and her contributions. The persisting ideas that marginalizes women is traced to the continuity of the irrelevant traditional practices that positioned women as just homemakers and this perpetuates the men-women dualism.

Angami women have contributed significantly to the sustenance of the economy by engaging in the majority of agricultural activities and entrepreneurship. However, the contribution of women continues to be inadequately addressed in the historical records. Women continue to be marginalized in all aspects of life. This research is conducted with a critical examination of the role and participation of women in the village economy and society at large. Through in-depth research in 20 Angami villages by surveying and conducting personal interviews, the neglected history of women's work participation, and her contribution to the economic progress of the family is brought to light which shows that major economic transformation in the village is brought about by women's active participation in agriculture and its related pursuits.

Women consist of one of the major segments of society and their contributions towards the economic development cannot be undermined. On critical examination of the division of labor between male and female, it shows how all members of the village community are equal co-workers, and major agricultural tasks are being accomplished through a co-operative communal labor system. In fact, this co-operative community work system in reciprocity for mutual benefit is a general feature in all Naga society. However, beneath this common workforce, lay the enduring activities performed by women for the family as well as for society. The productive inputs made by women in terms of work hours or income generated in the family shows that the driving force behind economic prosperity

and the well-being of the family and society in general lies in enterprising activities of women. Angami women supported the family through various combinations of subsistence production, small-scale commodity production and are also engaged in all activities to income-generating sources.

Looking into the role of women in the economy, the study shows amazing and impressive knowledge and skills possessed by women which are essential for sustainable development. In fact, the study reveals a very dynamic aspect of the Angami women's socio-economic life which is generally overlooked. The experiences of women in entrepreneurship varied in different Angami areas. During a personal interview conducted with Kereivile of Kidima Village of Southern Angami area, it was mentioned that her first business startup was the sale of *zu* (local rice beer) which was sold at 25 paise- per cup. Kidima village is situated at a far distance from the state's capital and lack infrastructural development such as roads, thus it limited the entrepreneurial prospects. Whereas women from Chakhro areas have early engagement with trade and commerce. Women from Medziphema and Rüzaphema village under Chakhro Angami area, were successfully conducting trade in pineapple. Lorheno cited that at a young age she started selling pineapples at 50-65 paise during the 1970's. She also mentions that in the year 1983 she profited Rs 40000/- and continued her business till marriage. Reflecting on the different entrepreneurial avenues, Angami women with their resilient character enhanced the living standards of the family. Despite the limited networks of communication and mobility women had productively sustained the village economy in various capacities. By giving insight into this neglected aspects of women in economy, the research provides a foundation for the inclusion of women's experiences and perspectives in the historical record of the village economy of the Angamis.

Today all the different Angami areas have well established transport facilities which enable women to freely transport their local produce and supply to urban markets. Among the cash crops, women of Southern Angami areas make the most profit from the produce of millets, maize, sugarcane, potato, and cabbage. The western Angami women supply items such as garlic, cabbage, potato, pumpkin. The Chakhro Angami areas continue to dominate the production of pineapple. While the Northern Angami areas supply varied commodities such as yam, chilly, ginger etc. The modern networks of communication and the increase of productivity provides better opportunity for women to find market values for the local produce.

The study divulges remarkable enterprising activities of women both in rural and urban areas. Their ability to effectively fulfill their duties as a daughter and a wife in the family, while balancing their entrepreneurial activities reflects the multidimensional capabilities of Angami women. Women not only provided clothing to family members but they contributed as keepers of tradition through the practice of weaving. The input of traditional knowledge in procuring and producing food necessitated the commercialization of locally produced crops and livestock which has positively enhanced the livelihood of the family. In a broader sense, the contribution of women has supported the village economy by reducing poverty and providing food security for the community.

The Angamis establish a close relationship and understanding with their environment. This is significantly mirrored in the ingenious methods adopted by them in making their tools and implements. The tools made of carved wood and bamboo are still effectively used by farmers. The techniques applied to protect their crops and improve yield suggests the heightened level of importance agriculture occupies in the household as well as the village economy. Although, machines have lightened the burden of human labor and increased productivity. The study reveals that the work of women was never limited. In many Angami

villages, the work of ploughing is performed by power tillers which have provided a source of relief for those regions which are viable for the application of such technology. However, it is also understood that the use of machines is not suitable in all the villages. The geographical location of a village determines the usage of power tillers and other machinery. Therefore, women in villages such as Khonoma, Mezoma, Kigwema, etc, still perform all the agricultural tasks manually. Therefore, one cannot simply make conclusions based on the general observations without taking into consideration the experiences and realities of women in different regions.

As observed during village surveys, one of the main characteristics of jhum cultivation is the rotation of fields rather than the rotation of crops. Jhum fields are abandoned mostly after 2 years of cultivation. The ability to incur huge income attracts local farmers to opt for high productivity in practices while ignoring the negative impacts of their actions. The excessive use of land for cultivation and deforestation has crippled the rich natural vegetation in many villages. In the present scenario, as the entire population is battling with the effects of climate change the traditional agriculture practices need to be reformed.

Policies directed towards the improvement of land management, and water management can be implemented to increase the productivity in agriculture. Agronomic practices such as inter-cropping, terracing, and mixed cropping with legumes to increase the reliance on biological fertility of the land were the results of Indigenous knowledge which are still followed. By incorporating these methods environmental pollution could be substantially reduced and the use of modern agricultural inputs such as chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides can be controlled. Fostering indigenous technologies and knowledge in modern agricultural practice through the intensification of interaction among local networks

and organizational arrangements could promote the wider use of organic crop production methods and sustain environmental health.

However, it is noteworthy to mention the tremendous change and impact that a foreign culture has contributed to the Angami society. In an attempt to make an influence in society, the Christian missionaries presented new ideologies and perspectives in the social life of the people. For example, in the traditional religious life of the Angamis (*Pfutsana*), most of the forbidden actions have their roots in the supernatural influence, however, the doctrines of Christianity did not corroborate with the ideologies of the supernatural beliefs of the Angamis. Although, the cultural and religious beliefs of the Angamis were compromised, the advent of Christianity has brought a momentous shift in the lives of Angami women with access to education by introducing night schools for rural women. Significantly, the position of women changed in the society through formal education. Education has empowered Angami women to break the barriers of taboo that controlled the entire aspects of their lives.

Nagas have gone through significant changes since the colonial times in the areas of religion, politics, economy, and some aspects of culture. But when it comes to customary practices and law, it still forms the core identity of the Nagas and the status determiner of Naga women in general. Apart from the irrelevant customary practices, there is the need for the preservation of traditional knowledge and art that gives the other identity as a community or as a tribe. The tradition of weaving finds a common place and value among the different Naga tribes. The practice of the age-old method of loin loom weaving has served as a way of preserving the rich and vibrant culture of the Nagas. Nagas are strikingly known for their colourful traditional attires and costumes which is one of the core identity markers. Similarly, in Angami culture, the practice of weaving also holds a prominent place in preserving the ideals and beliefs of the people. Preservation of traditional knowledge and art needs to be incorporated in the policies and programmes of the government. The present generation faces

a great threat in losing identity to foreign culture. During the early period of globalization, the use of traditional cloth was replaced by the availability of Western clothes. The pattern and choice of fashion were heavily controlled by the influence of modernity. However, in the last 7-9 years, traditional mekkelas and shawls have gained attention and popularity among the middle-aged groups of women of the Angamis with the influence of social media playing a positive role in advertising these products. The promotion of cultural shows in educational institutions, trade fairs, and festivals have also created awareness among the present generation.

Today, the traditional woven cloth continues to symbolize the rich heritage of the Angamis. It is also emerging as fashionable pieces designed and incorporated with modern ideas. The preservation of the traditional weaving method allows the younger generation to support sustainable trade practices through their fashion choices. The vibrant handwoven fabric is a representation of the rich cultural legacy that is showcased through imaginative patterns. Women have been showing increased interest in using handwoven products such as traditional shawls and mekhela. Promoting our culture and tradition immensely facilitates the demand for these products. This study suggests that the weaving industry benefits the local economy by reducing poverty and raising living standards in rural areas. Women from different Angami regions are connected through the production of traditional attires which also facilitated the business opportunity in other entrepreneurial avenues. It is observed during the study that women from low-income household face financial problems to purchase the materials. In addition, women are also expected to perform all the household chores which minimize the time invested in weaving thereby adversely affecting their income. As such, the weaving industry needs to be developed and supported by providing financial loans/assistance for weavers to purchase their materials. It is observed that product quality, design, and colors positively impact the purchase of handwoven cloth. Training on skills and

creative designs can also help to expand the market and demand for handwoven cloth among young consumers. In this regard, the government can create schemes to assist and provide training on vocational skills that can improve the economy.

In the present age, the Angami society is transformed and projects all aspects of modernity. However, the societal expectations of women in household management have never changed. The work of women in the household is still viewed as unproductive because they do not generate income by performing these tasks. Although changes are seen in the structural aspect of the village, this has not changed or contributed to the elevation of the status of women. It needs to be understood that the factor responsible for the stagnant and low position of women as embedded in the customary laws and practices of the Angami society. Unless women were given equal opportunities, access, and freedom in the field of socio-economic and politics the status elevation of women would not see the light of day. The exercise of rights and freedom by Angami women is still constrained by cultural considerations. The lack of support from men has largely contributed to the low self-esteem of women in leadership. In rural areas, women do not express a keen interest in taking part in village council meetings and public forums.

Capacity-building initiatives, such as leadership training are crucial for ensuring the active participation of women in society. Through these initiatives, women can be given special support in developing positive self-esteem, and become aware of effective communication to improve their oratory skills. The government has initiated several schemes for the upliftment and empowerment of tribal women. However, the accessibility of such schemes was mostly enjoyed by the urban population. The rural women were often kept in abeyance due to their ignorance or lack of knowledge.

Even today, in the pretense of protecting women, many traditional customs and practices have constrained the participation of women in different platforms. In the fields of

politics and leadership, women still do not get the support from male members of the society. The influence of tradition and the customary laws have oppressed the marginalized group of people i.e., women in Angami society. The structure of masculine hegemony in gender relations promotes and advocates the notion of the superiority of men over women. Angami men boldly claim and enjoy the status of being the breadwinner, and head of the family. Social norms on the role of women in the family and preconceived ideas of what is appropriate work for women are among the factors perpetuating sectoral and occupational segregation between women and men and further reinforcing inequality. The potential of women is restricted owing to a lack of training, education, and access to property such as land. Many of these challenges are linked to gender-based inequality and discrimination.

Despite the setbacks and impediments toward the progress of Angami women, many women emerged as pioneers and torchbearers in the fields of medicine, academics, civil servants as well as in politics through hard work and merit. As workers, entrepreneurs, and custodians of traditional knowledge, the contributions of Angami women are unique. However, even in the present age, cultural hegemony and stereotypes continue to serve as barriers for women to make decisions for themselves. As such empowerment is key not only to the well-being of individuals, families, and rural communities but also to overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide. Most importantly, the inter-linkage of irrelevant customary laws, traditions and culture which determines the position of women needs to be changed or modified in relation to the changing times.

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